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India's Best Institute for IES, GATE & PSUs

**MADE EASY
WEEKLY
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WEEK-4

22nd August - 31st August, 2021

TARGETED EXAMINATIONS

**CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Exams,
SSC and Banking Exams**

22nd AUGUST 2021

China's new Online Privacy Law

- China has recently passed a data protection law setting out tougher rules on how companies collect and handle their users' information.

About the new rule:

- The Personal Information Protection Law (PIPL) lays out for the first time a comprehensive set of rules around data collection, processing and protection, that were previously governed by piecemeal legislation.
- The law will take effect on November 1, 2021. The full text of the final version hasn't yet been released.
- Under the new rule, China targets tech giants who are collecting personal data.
- Under it, China's top legislative body, state as well as private entities handling personal information are required to reduce data collection and obtain user consent before processing it.

■ NOTE:

New law has been modelled on the basis of the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation. This EU law is considered as the world's strictest online privacy protection laws.

Kigali Amendment to Montreal Protocol

- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for ratification of the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer for phase down of Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by India.

Key Points

- It comes close on the heels of similar decisions by the United States and China, the world's largest producers and consumers of HFCs. 122 countries had ratified the Kigali Amendment by the end of July 2021.

- India now requires to reduce its HFCs usage by 80% by 2047. China and the US have to achieve the same in 2045 and 2034.
- Under the ratification, hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) will be phased down early which in turn will make the Indian industry globally competitive across the climate-friendly cooling products.
- Ratification provided a big opportunity to India to be on course for the early phase down of HFCs by means of domestic innovation.

About Montreal Protocol (1989):

- It is an international treaty that regulates the production and consumption of nearly 100 man-made chemicals referred to as ozone depleting substances (ODS).
- The ODS, when released to the atmosphere, damages the 'stratospheric ozone layer' that protects the earth against the harmful levels of UV radiation from the sun.
- It mandated the complete phase-out of chlorofluorocarbons or CFCs and other ODS.

■ NOTE:

Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol is an international agreement that seeks to gradually reduce consumption and production of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs). This is a legally binding agreement that has been designed to create rights and obligations in international law..

AK-103 rifles

- India and Russia have recently signed a deal to immediately procure AK-103 Rifles.
- This deal was inked as a part of mega infantry modernisation programme.
- The AK-103 will be bulk produced by the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) with technology transfer.
- These will replace the INSAS rifles in use by the Indian Army.

About AK-103 Assault Rifle

- It is a Russian origin assault rifle, a derivative of the AK-74M, a modern upgrade on earlier AKM rifle or the famed 1940's rifle AK-47.
- The AK-103 can be fitted with a variety of sights, including night vision and telescopic sights, plus a knife-bayonet or a grenade launcher.
- It uses plastic components where possible instead of wood or metal.

23rd AUGUST 2021

Exercise Konkan 2021

- Exercise Konkan 2021 was held in the English Channel in between INS Tabar and HMS Westminster.
- Konkan exercise witnessed the participation of integral helicopters of two ships and Falcon Electronic Warfare aircraft.
- The naval exercise Konkan 18 is held between the navies of India and the United Kingdom. It is based on the long-term strategic relationship between them.
- This exercise provides a platform for the Navies to periodically conduct exercises at sea and in harbour in order to build interoperability and share best practices.

NOTE:

INS Tabar is the third Talwar-class frigate in the Indian Navy, which was commissioned on April 19, 2004 in Kaliningrad, Russia. This warship can handle air or surface or subsurface missions and defend herself.

UNICEF Report

- According to a new report by UNICEF, Children in India are at extreme high risk of impacts of climate crisis.

Key Findings of report

- As per report, India is among four South Asian countries where children are most at risk.
- The Report ranks countries based on children's exposure to climate and environmental shocks such as cyclones and heatwaves, as well as their vulnerability to those shocks based on their access to essential services.
- Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan and India are among four South Asian countries where children are at extremely high risk of the impacts of the climate crisis, with a ranking of 14th, 15th, 25th and 26th respectively.
- CCRI has placed India as one of the 33 extremely high-risk countries with flooding and air pollution being the repeated environmental shocks leading to socio-economic adverse consequences for women and children.

About CCRI

- These findings were published in UNICEF's report titled: "The Climate Crisis Is a Child Rights Crisis: Introducing the Children's Climate Risk Index" (CCRI).
- CCRI is the first focussed report on children by UNICEF. The index ranks countries on the basis of children's exposure to climate and environmental shocks like cyclones and heatwaves including the vulnerability to those shocks on the basis of their access to essential services.

NTPC's floating solar PV project

- NTPC Limited has commissioned the largest floating solar PV project of 25 MegaWatt on the reservoir of its Simhadri thermal station in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

Key Facts

- This is also the first solar project to be set up under the Flexibilisation Scheme, notified by the Government of India in 2018.

- The floating solar installation has a unique anchoring design which is spread over 75 acres. This floating solar project has the potential to generate electricity from more than one lakh solar PV modules.
- This will not only help to light around seven thousand households but also ensure at least 46 thousand tons of carbon dioxide is not emitted every year during the lifespan of this project.

■ NOTE:

NTPC has also planned to set up a hydrogen-based micro-grid system at Simhadri on a pilot basis. NTPC has also become the first energy company of India to declare its energy compact goals under the UN High-level Dialogue on Energy (HLDE).

24th AUGUST 2021

India's First Smog Tower

- The Chief Minister of Delhi inaugurated a 'smog tower' in Connaught Place and said similar towers would be built across the city, if results of the current pilot project are satisfactory.

Key Points:

- Smog towers are structures that are designed as large-scale air purifiers in order to reduce air pollution particles.
- The smog tower is a 24 metre-high structure fitted with fans and air filters. This is to solve the problem of Air Pollution in Delhi.
- It will draw in polluted air from the top and release filtered air near the ground through fans fitted on the sides. The tower has 40 big fans and 5,000 filters to clean the air.
- These are electrostatic air filters that can filter out microparticles, including those that constitute smoke, household dust and pollen, according to the

project description. A Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system has been installed in the tower to collect data and monitor its functioning.

- This tower has been established as a pilot project and detailed studies will be conducted on its performance. IIT-Delhi and IIT-Bombay will analyse data and submit a report on the effectiveness of the tower.

■ NOTE:

Central government will build a 25-metre-tall smog tower at Anand Vihar. It is likely to become operational by August 31.

Malabar Naval Exercise

- The Quad countries India, the U.S., Australia and Japan, carry out the next edition of the Malabar naval exercise off the coast of Guam amid mounting global concerns over China's growing military muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific region.

Key Points:

- The sea drill will be conducted off Guam island, which is a territory of the US. It is located 2,500 km east of the Philippines.
- The annual exercise will be a four-day affair.
- Indian stealth frigate INS Shivalik and anti-submarine warfare corvette INS Kadmat arrived in Guam, an island territory of the U.S. in the Western Pacific,
- The Malabar-21 will witness high-tempo exercises among destroyers, frigates, corvettes, submarines, helicopters and long-range maritime patrol aircraft of the participating navies.

■ NOTE:

Malabar exercise is an annual naval exercise between the navies of India, Japan, Australia and the USA. It is held alternately in the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean.

Hurriyat groups

- The central government is going to ban Hurriyat groups under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) which has been spearheading the separatist movement in Jammu and Kashmir for over two decades.
- This decision was taken after the National Investigation Agency (NIA) found that outfits linked with the Hurriyat raised money to fund terror in Jammu and Kashmir.

About Hurriyat:

- The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) was a political platform of the separatist movement in 1993.
- It was an extension of the conglomerate parties of disparate ideologies, held together by their common position that Jammu & Kashmir was “under occupation of India”.
- At a time when militancy was at its peak, this conglomerate represented the political face of the militant movement, and claimed to “represent the wishes and aspirations of the people”.
- It had brought together two separate, but strong ideologies: those who sought J&K’s independence from both India and Pakistan, and those who wanted J&K to become part of Pakistan.

■ NOTE:

UAPA is an Indian law which was enacted with the aim of preventing unlawful activities and associations in India. Main objective of UAPA was to make powers available to deal with activities against the integrity and sovereignty of India.

25th AUGUST, 2021

Arunachal Pradesh Draft Inheritance Bill

Context: The Arunachal Pradesh State Commission for Women (APSCW) has been urged to scrap certain provisions from the proposed Arunachal Pradesh

Marriage and Inheritance bill, keeping in view the public sentiment and the state’s interest.

Key Highlights:

- The bill is made applicable to any person who belongs to any indigenous scheduled tribe of Arunachal Pradesh. It provides that a marriage between parties may be solemnized according to local customary rites and rituals of the either party.
- The bill also provides for restitution of conjugal rights stating when either of the party has, without reasonable excuse, withdrawn from the society of the other, the aggrieved party may apply by petition to the district court for restitution of conjugal rights.
- Marriage solemnized after the commencement of the act can be dissolved on various grounds.
- A wife who is unable to maintain herself can file application to the court for maintenance. The court may order that the husband shall pay to her an appropriate lump sum of permanent alimony.
- Every person who, being at the time married, procures a marriage of himself or herself to be solemnized under this Act shall be deemed to have committed an offence under Section 494 or Section 495 of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860), as the case may be, and the marriage so solemnized shall be void.

Issues related to Bill:

- An Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe (APST) woman married to non-APST man shall enjoy any immovable property inherited from the head of the family in her lifetime.
- In the event of her death, her husband and her heirs would have full rights of it for disposal and alienation to any indigenous tribe of Arunachal Pradesh.
- Because of these Provisions, the draft Bill is termed as “Anti-tribal”, “Anti-Arunachal”, violative of customary laws and an invitation to outsiders to take over tribal land through marriage.

Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)

Context: The Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) has brought high-speed internet to some of the remotest tribal hamlets in Kerala. It has been done with the use of long-distance Wi-Fi.

About JSS:

- The Scheme of Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) was formerly known as Shramik Vidyapeeth. It has been implemented through a network of NGOs in the country since 1967. It is an initiative for skill development in rural areas.

Key objectives of JSS:

- To improve the occupational skills and technical knowledge of persons having level of education upto 8th standard and other school dropouts beyond 8th standard.
- To create a pool of master trainers working across the department/agencies of skill development through training/orientation programmes.
- To widen the range of knowledge and understanding of social, economic and political systems and create awareness about the environment.
- To promote self-employment and facilitate financial support including loans for the target groups through linkage with credit and consortium membership.

About long-distance Wi-Fi

- Long-distance Wi-Fi works on 5GHz frequency. Using this technology, high-speed internet could be provided even up to 100 km without any transmission loss.
- Servers have been setup in such a way to help a minimum of 250 users use the Net concurrently.

Mermaid Species of Algae

- After nearly four decades, a new species of algae known as 'Mermaid algae' has been discovered on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The species has been named as 'Acetabularia jalakanyakae'.



- It consists of a single gigantic cell with a nucleus, which is its main characteristic.
- The species is the first of the genus Acetabularia to be discovered in India. Another feature of Acetabularia is their regenerative potential.

26th AUGUST, 2021

National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP)

- The Union Government recently launched the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) in an effort to list out the government's infrastructure assets to be sold over the next four-years.

Key Highlights

- The programme has objective to unlock the value of investments in brownfield public sector assets by tapping institutional and long-term capital, which can thereafter be leveraged for public investments.
- The four-year National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) will unlock value in brownfield projects by engaging the private sector, transferring to them the rights but not the ownership in projects.
- The components of project are roads, railways and power sector assets which will comprise over 66 per cent of the total estimated value of the assets to be monetised, with the balance coming from sectors including telecom, mining, aviation, ports, natural gas and petroleum product pipelines, warehouses and stadiums.
- Currently, only assets of central government line ministries and CPSEs in infrastructure sectors have been included. Monetization through disinvestment and monetization of non-core assets have not been included in the NMP.

Significance:

- Asset Monetisation needs to be viewed not just as a funding mechanism, but as an overall paradigm shift in infrastructure operations, augmentation and maintenance considering the private sector's resource efficiencies and its ability to dynamically adapt to the evolving global and economic reality.

- Considering that infrastructure creation is inextricably linked to monetisation, the period for NMP is co-terminus with the balance period under National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) i.e for FY 2022-2025.
- NMP is indicatively valued at Rs 6.0 lakh crore for 4 years.

Panjshir Valley

Context: After occupying most of the area of Afghanistan including Kabul, the Taliban is preparing to take control of Panjshir province which is putting formidable resistance to Taliban. It is the area remaining out of control of major powers over the decades of war.



- Panjshir is a valley in north-central Afghanistan, near the Hindu Kush Mountain range. It is divided by the Panjshir River. Panjshir means “Five lions”.
- The valley is home to Afghanistan’s largest concentration of ethnic Tajiks.
- The valley is also known for its emeralds, which were used in the past to finance the resistance movements against those in power.

Chakmas and Hajongs

- **Context:** Arunachal Pradesh government has taken a decision to relocate Chakma and Hajong settlers beyond the State.

About Chakma and Hajong

- Chakmas and Hajongs were originally residents of Chittagong Hill Tracts in the erstwhile East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). They left their homeland when it was submerged by the Kaptai dam project in the 1960s.
- The Chakmas, who are Buddhists, and the Hajongs, who are Hindus, also allegedly faced religious persecution and entered India through the then Lushai Hills district of Assam (now Mizoram).

- The Government moved the majority of them to the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA), which is now Arunachal Pradesh. Their numbers have gone up from about 5,000 in 1964-69 to one lakh. At present, they don’t have citizenship and land rights but are provided basic amenities by the state government.

27th AUGUST, 2021

UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA)

Context: There is discussion among member countries for the renewal of the mandate of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), which expires on September 17.

About UNAMA

- UNAMA was established on 28 March 2002 by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1401. It was basically established to assist the state and the people of Afghanistan in laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development.
- Its original mandate was to support the implementation of the Bonn Agreement of 2001.
- Reviewed annually, this mandate has been altered over time to reflect the needs of the country.
- UNAMA is an integrated mission, which means that all UN agencies, funds and programmes, work in a multidimensional and integrated manner to better assist Afghanistan according to nationally defined priorities.

Key decisions of Bonn Agreement

- The United Nations and several other international actors played major roles in pushing the negotiations forward, and the Bonn Agreement was forwarded by the U.N. Security Council.

- Under this, the Emergency Loya Jirga (Grand Council) of 2002 established the transitional administration, a new Constitution was ratified in early 2004, and presidential and parliamentary elections were held in 2004 and 2005.

TN Wage Employment Scheme

- Tamil Nadu Government on the lines of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) has proposed an urban employment scheme. It seeks to improve the livelihood of urban poor.
- Under the scheme, workers will be used for activities such as desilting of water bodies and maintenance of public parks and other places.

Need:

- Unlike other States, the urban population in Tamil Nadu is growing fast and it would reach 60% of the total population by 2036.
- A total of four crore people is now living in urban areas, accounting for 53% of the total population. But, many of them had lost their jobs because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

About MGNREGA:

- The scheme was introduced in 2005 as a social measure that guarantees “the right to work”.
- The key tenet of this social measure and labour law is that the local government will have to legally provide at least 100 days of wage employment in rural India to enhance their quality of life.
- It has objective to generate paid rural employment of not less than 100 days for each worker who volunteers for unskilled labour, creation of durable assets in rural areas such as wells, ponds, roads and canals, reducing urban migration from rural areas, among others.

Yuktdhara



Bhuvan - Yuktdhara

Geospatial Planning Portal for Geo-MGNREGA
Features: Landscape Familiarization | Activity & Area Identification | Map Composition

- Yuktdhara is a Geospatial Planning Portal for facilitating Gram Panchayat level planning of MGNREGA. It is a new portal under 'Bhuvan'.
- It has been launched by the Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.
- The platform will serve as a repository of assets (Geotags) created under various national rural development programmes i.e. MGNREGA, Integrated Watershed Management Programme, Per Drop More Crop and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana, etc.

28th AUGUST, 2021

Electronic Visa (e-visa)

Context: India has decided to invalidate or cancel all visas issued to Afghan nationals, as the Taliban has virtually captured the country. Now, all Afghans must enter India now only on special e-visas applied online.

The government was concerned that passports deposited by Afghan nationals for visas could get into the hands of anti-India terror groups. As a result, the Home Ministry decided to cancel them.

About e-Visa

- The e-visa system is an innovation introduced by the government in 2014. The facility was expanded in 2017-2018.
- The process was started in the 2010 Tourist Visa on Arrival (TVOA) scheme for Japan, Singapore, Finland, Luxembourg and New Zealand. The government merged the TVOA with Electronic Travel Authorisation, thereby creating the e-visa.

- An e-visa also called Electronic Visa is provided in five categories—tourist, business, conference, medical, and medical attendant.
- The facility is not available for the citizens of Pakistan and they are expected to apply for regular visas from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad.

■ DO YOU KNOW? _____

The Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal ministry that issues visas to foreigners.
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Havana Syndrome

Context: Nearly five years ago a mysterious neurological illness, referred to as “Havana syndrome”, started to afflict American diplomats and intelligence operatives in Cuba, China, and other countries. Now, a report by the National Academies of Sciences (NAS) has found “directed” microwave radiation to be its “plausible” cause.

About Havana syndrome

- In late 2016, US diplomats and other employees stationed in Havana reported feeling ill after hearing strange sounds and experiencing odd physical sensations in their hotel rooms or homes.
- The symptoms included nausea, severe headaches, fatigue, dizziness, sleep problems, and hearing loss, which have since come to be known as “Havana Syndrome”.
- The directed pulsed RF energy appears to be the most plausible mechanism in explaining these cases among those that the committee considered.

SUJALAM Campaign

- The Ministry of Jal Shakti has begun ‘SUJALAM’, a ‘100 days campaign’ as part of the ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’.
- The objective of the campaign is to create more and more ODF Plus villages by undertaking waste water management at village level. This is done particularly through creation of 1 million Soak-pits and also other grey water management activities.
- The campaign will not only build desired infrastructure i.e. soak pit for management of greywater in villages but will also aid in sustainable management of waterbodies.
- The campaign would boost the momentum of Swacch Bharat Mission- Grameen phase II activities through community participation.

About Open defecation Free (ODF)

A city/ward is notified as ODF city/ward if, at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating in the open.

About ODF+

A city, ward or work circle could be declared ODF+ if, “at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating and/or urinating in the open, and all community and public toilets are functional and well-maintained.”

About ODF++

The ODF++ protocol adds the condition that faecal sludge/septage and sewage is safely managed and treated, with no discharging and/or dumping of untreated faecal sludge/septage and sewage in drains, water bodies or open areas.

NOTE:

- ODF+ and ODF++ were launched in August 2018 to further scale up and sustain the work undertaken by the cities after achieving the ODF status under Phase I of the Swachh Bharat Mission — Urban (SBM-Urban).
- Cities that had been certified ODF at least once, on the basis of the ODF protocols, are eligible to declare themselves as ODF+ & ODF++.

29th AUGUST, 2021**Tokenisation**

Context: The Reserve Bank has extended the scope of 'tokenisation' to several consumer devices, including laptops, desktops, wearables such as wristwatches and bands, as well as Internet of Things devices, beyond the original permission for mobiles and tablets.

- Tokenisation refers to replacement of actual card details with an alternate code called the "token", which shall be unique for a combination of card, token requestor (i.e., the entity which accepts request from the customer for tokenisation of a card and passes it on to the card network to issue a corresponding token) and device (referred hereafter as "identified device").
- A tokenised card transaction is considered safer as the actual card details are not shared with the merchant during transaction processing.

Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP)

Context: Maldives government has officially signed an agreement with Mumbai-based company AFCONS, for the construction of the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP).

About Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP):

- This infrastructure project involves the construction of a 6.74-km-long bridge and causeway link that will connect the Maldives capital Male with the neighbouring islands of Villingli, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.
- This project was funded by India in a grant of \$100 million, with a line of credit of \$400 million.
- The GMCP is not only the biggest project India is doing in the Maldives but also the biggest infrastructure project in the Maldives overall.
- This project is significant because it facilitates inter-island connectivity in the country. Also, the GMCP is concrete proof that India is a robust development partner of the Maldives in addition to being the First Responder in times of any emergency in the Maldives.

NOTE:

The Line of Credit (LOC) is not a grant but a 'soft loan' provided on concessional interest rates to developing countries, which has to be repaid by the borrowing government.

India's first Green Hydrogen Plant

Indian Oil Corporation to build India's first Green Hydrogen Plant at Mathura refinery. This plant will be an addition in order to expand the existing crude oil refining capacity by 25 million tonnes per annum.

Key Highlights

- Indian Oil has been pursuing its ambitious plans of hydrogen production across various types such as in renewable power to generate green hydrogen.

- Recently, Indian oil conducted a recent hydrogen fuel cell experiment in Delhi, in which 50 CNG BS-IV buses were converted to run on HCNG fuel. This experiment has revealed significant benefits in reducing exhaust emissions and improving fuel economy.
- It will also operate 15 fuel cell buses in Delhi-National Capital Region along with Tata Motors.

About Mathura Refinery

- It is the 6th refinery owned by Indian Oil Corporation and is located in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh.
- It processes low sulphur crude from Bombay High, high sulphur crude from Middle east and imported low sulphur crude from Nigeria.
- Its construction started in October 1972. Former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi has laid down the foundation stone.

30th AUGUST 2021

First G20 Ministerial Conference on Women's Empowerment

- The Union Minister of Women & Child Development, Smriti Irani recently addressed the First ever G20 Ministerial Conference on Women's Empowerment. The Conference was held at Santa Margherita Ligure, Italy in a hybrid format.

Key Points

- During the conference, India highlighted its commitment of addressing gender and women centric issues by means of mutual cooperation.
- India also noted several initiatives undertaken by its government towards bringing gender equality, strengthening women's safety & security and ensuring better healthcare.

- India also joined the Gender Equality Ministers of the G20 for the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women through cooperation and coordination at all the relevant fora.

About G20

- G20 is an informal group comprising of 19 countries and the European Union besides the representatives from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.
- G20 represents about two-thirds of world's population, 85% of world's gross domestic product, 80% of world's investment and 75% of world's trade.

Shared Destiny-2021 Defence Exercise

- Militaries of China, Mongolia, Thailand and Pakistan are set to take part in a multinational peacekeeping exercise called "Shared Destiny-2021".

Key Highlights

- It will be organised by the People's Liberation Army at the combined-arms tactical training base in central Henan province of China from September 6 to 15, 2021.
- All the participating countries will dispatch about 1,000 troops to be the part of drills. 1000 troops will involve units of infantry, security, fast response, engineering, helicopter, transportation and medical service.
- Exercise will be held in close-to-real battlefield environment that will be set in accordance with international, professional and realistic combat standards.
- In the peacekeeping exercise, battlefield environment will be created by conducting drills of battlefield reconnaissance, security guarding & patrol, protection of civilians, protection to armed escort, response to violent & terrorist attacks, construction of temporary operation base and battlefield first aid & pandemic control for responding to UN's Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

EASE 4.0

- The Ministry of Finance recently launched the fourth edition of Public Sector Bank (PSB) Reforms Agenda called 'EASE 4.0' for the financial year 2021-22. EASE 4.0 is a simplified, tech-enabled and collaborative banking.
- On the occasion, Finance Minister launched the annual report for PSB Reforms Agenda EASE 3.0 for the year 2020-21 and also witnessed the awards ceremony to felicitate the best performing banks on EASE 3.0 Banking Reforms Index.

Key Highlights

- SBI, Bank of Baroda (BoB), and Union Bank of India (UBI) won the awards for best performing banks on the basis of EASE index.
- Indian Bank won the award for best improvement from baseline performance.
- SBI, BoB, UBI, Punjab National Bank and Canara Bank also won the top awards across different themes of PSB Reforms Agenda EASE 3.0.

Objectives of EASE 4.0

- EASE 4.0 reforms to look after four key initiatives to be adopted by public sector banks:
 - Smart lending backed by analytics
 - 24x7 banking with resilient technology & cloud-based IT systems.
 - Data enabled agriculture financing.
 - Collaboration with the financial ecosystem.

31st AUGUST 2021

Jallianwala Bagh

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently virtually inaugurated the renovated Jallianwala Bagh complex in Amritsar.

Key Highlights about renovation project

- A 28-minute Sound and Light show re-enacting the events of April 13, 1919, will be shown every evening. A Salvation Ground has been built for visitors to sit in silence to honour the martyrs.
- Several new sculptures of martyrs have come up.
- Four new galleries have been created through adaptive re-use of underutilised buildings in the complex. The galleries depict the history of Punjab, history of the freedom movement, and the Gadar movement.
- It also has a sculpture of Guru Nanak Dev, Sikh warrior Banda Singh Bahadur, and a statue of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Controversy regarding the latest revamp

- The Jallianwala Bagh has undergone several repairs and touch-ups over the years. But the narrow passage leading to the Bagh, had remained untouched for almost 100 years. While many other things changed, the thin entrance made of Nanakshahi bricks through which Dyer's soldiers marched into the Bagh, continued to evoke the horrors of that day. In July 2020, it was rebuilt into a gallery with murals, leaving no trace of the old passage.
- The famous 'Shahidi Kuwa' or Martyrs Well, into which people jumped to escape the hail of bullets, is now enclosed in a glass shield — the decision has been criticised since it is perceived to restrict the view.

About Jallianwala Bagh Massacre:

- On April 13, 1919, a Baisakhi day, the local residents in Amritsar decided to hold a meeting that day to discuss and protest against the confinement of Satya Pal and Saifuddin Kitchlew, two leaders fighting for Independence, and implementation of the Rowlatt Act, which armed the British government with powers to detain any person without trial.

- The crowd had a mix of men, women and children. They all gathered in a park called the Jallianwala Bagh, walled on all sides but for a few small gates, against the orders of the British. While the meeting was on and remained peaceful, the then Brigadier-General Reginald Edward Harry Dyer, who was wanting to teach the public assembled a lesson, ordered 90 soldiers to open fire on the crowd. As per local sources, thousands were killed while many tried in vain to scale the walls to escape. Many jumped into the well located inside the park.

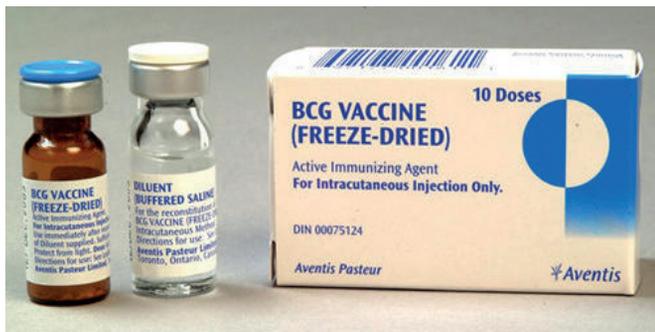
■ DO YOU KNOW?

Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, as a sign of condemnation, renounced their British Knighthood and Kaiser-i-Hind medal respectively.

Background:

- The monument was first opened by then President Dr Rajendra Prasad on April 13, 1961, as a tribute to the victims of the massacre on April 13, 1919.
- The Union Government set up the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Trust in 1951. The Prime Minister is the chairman, and permanent members include the President of Indian National Congress, Chief Minister of Punjab, Governor of Punjab, Union Minister in charge of Culture, and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) Vaccination



Context: 100 years has passed since the Bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG) vaccine was introduced to combat tuberculosis (TB) in 1921.

About BCG Vaccine

- Bacillus Calmette–Guérin (BCG) vaccine is a vaccine primarily used against tuberculosis (TB).
- BCG was developed by modifying a strain of Mycobacterium bovis (that causes TB in cattle). It was first used in humans in 1921.
- Currently, BCG is the only licensed vaccine available for the prevention of TB.
- In India, BCG was first introduced in a limited scale in 1948 and became a part of the National TB Control Programme in 1962.
- In children, BCG provides strong protection against severe forms of TB. This protective effect is far more variable in adolescents and adults, ranging from 0–80%.
- BCG also protects against respiratory and bacterial infections of the newborns, and other mycobacterial diseases like leprosy and Buruli's ulcer.

About Tuberculosis (TB)

- TB is caused by a bacterium called Mycobacterium tuberculosis, belonging to the Mycobacteriaceae family.
- In humans, TB most commonly affects the lungs (pulmonary TB), but it can also affect other organs (extra-pulmonary TB).
- Unlike other historically dreaded diseases like smallpox, leprosy, plague and cholera that have been either eradicated or controlled to a large extent, TB continues to be a major public health problem in the world.
- According to the WHO's Global TB Report, 10 million people developed TB in 2019 with 1.4 million deaths. India accounts for 27% of these cases.

Vande Bharat Express

Context: The Indian Railways plans to operate 102 Vande Bharat trains by March 2024.

About Vande Bharat Express:

- The Train18, later named Vande Bharat Express, was rolled out by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai under the Make in India initiative. The train was launched on 15 February 2019. It was showcased as India's first semi high-speed train with an operational efficiency of 160 kmph.
- As of Aug 2021, the Indian Railways operates two Vande Bharat trains, one from Delhi to Varanasi and the other from Delhi to Katra. Vande Bharat trains are self-propelled "engineless" train sets.
- Its faster acceleration and deceleration results in reduced train travel time.
- Some of its passenger friendly features include; European-style seats, diffused LED lighting, GPS-based infotainment systems, modular bio-toilets, fully sealed gangways for dust-free environment, centrally controlled entry/exit doors with sliding footsteps, divyang friendly toilet and automatic sliding cabin doors.

