



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

MARCH, 2022

Week-3

15-21 March, 2022

★★ Useful for ★★

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

15th MARCH 2022

Khel Mahakumbh

- **Context:** Recently, PM Modi launched the Khel Mahakumbh 2022 at Sardar Patel Stadium in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Khel Mahakumbh 2022 will be the 11th Khel Mahakumbh event.

About Khel Mahakumbh

- Khel Mahakumbh is an annual sports competition organized by the Gujarat government. It was started in 2010 and has revolutionized sports in Gujarat.
- The first Khel Mahakumbh in 2010 witnessed the participation of 13 lakh players in 16 sports. In 2019's Khel Mahakumbh, the participation increased to 40 lakh players participated in 36 sports and 26 para-sports.
- Due to COVID-19, the Khel Mahakumbh could not be organized for the last two years.
- There is no age limit for Khel Mahakumbh. Any person of a minimum of 09 years can register through the online portal to take part in the Khel Mahakumbh 2022.
- Both traditional and modern sports events are conducted viz. kabaddi, kho-kho, tug of war, yogasana, mallakhambh, tennis, fencing, etc.

International Day to Combat Islamophobia

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has recently adopted a resolution to proclaim March 15th as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia.

Key Highlights

- The resolution regarding International Day to Combat Islamophobia was introduced by Pakistan's permanent representative to United Nations (UN), Munir Akram.
- The resolution was introduced on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries, under the agenda item Culture of Peace. The

resolution was sponsored by 57 member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and eight other countries including China and Russia.

- India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) Ambassador T S Tirumurti, expressed concern over phobia against one particular religion being elevated to the level of an international day.
- India wants the UN to remain above religious matters, as there is a possibility of the UN being divided into religious camps, rather than being a platform of peace & harmony.

Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN)

- **Context:** The Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj recently launched Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) in Assam.

About ULPIN Project

- Under this project, every land parcel in Assam will have a 14-digit alphanumeric geospatial Unique Identification Number (UIN). Thus, ULPIN will act as an Aadhaar card for land.
- The first step in this process is the survey of non-cadastral villages and a re-survey of all cadastral villages. The next step is end-to-end integration of digitalized land records and maps, which will pave the way for the generation of ULPIN for the land parcel.
- ULPIN project will pave the way towards the implementation of conclusive titling and will help in the quick resolution of the land disputes in the state.

NOTE:

Mission Basundhara is a mission launched by the government of Assam to streamline and make land revenue services accessible to all, thereby promoting ease of doing business environment in the land management ecosystem of Assam. 'Mission Basundhara' aims to reduce the pendency in the updation of the land records.

16th MARCH 2022

My EV Online Portal

- **Context:** An online portal “My EV” has recently been launched by the Delhi government for the purchase and registration of electric autos in Delhi.

Key Highlights

- The My EV portal is accessible to all users on the website of the Delhi government’s transport department.
- The portal will enable holders of the Letter of Intent (LoI) to purchase electric autos and also claim the incentives provided by the Delhi government. Around 4,261 Letters of Intent (LoIs) for electric autos are being given by the Delhi government.
- There is a 33% reservation provided for women.
- The online portal will ensure that the interest subvention on the loans is provided to beneficiaries via a smooth automated channel.
- The Delhi government will provide a 5% interest subvention on loans on the purchase of electric autos under the Delhi Electric Vehicle Policy.

Bahini Scheme

- **Context:** The government of Sikkim is set to announce the Bahini scheme in its annual Budget later this month.

Key highlights of Bahini scheme

- The Bahini scheme aims to provide secondary and senior secondary school-going girls with 100% access to free and safe sanitary pads.
- Under the Bahini scheme, Vending machines will be installed in 210 secondary and senior secondary government schools of Sikkim to provide free sanitary pads.
- The scheme will cover 18,665 adolescent girls studying in government schools in Sikkim.
- This is the first time in India that a state decided to cover all girls studying in Class 9-12.

- Under the scheme, incinerators will also be installed at the schools to dispose of pads.
- The main aim of the Bahini scheme is to curb the dropout of adolescent girls from schools. The scheme also raises awareness about menstrual hygiene among school-going adolescent girls.

Employees’ Provident Fund Organization (EPFO)

- **Context:** Employees’ Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) has decided to reduce the interest on provident fund (PF) deposits from 8.5% in 2020-21 to 8.1% in 2021-22.

Key highlights

- The interest rate of 8.1% will be the lowest interest rate since 1977-78 when the figure stood at 8%. This cut in interest will impact five crore subscribers of the provident fund (PF).
- Earlier, EPFO had cut the provident fund (PF) deposits rate to a seven-year low of 8.5% for 2019-20. The interest rate was kept unchanged in the fiscal year 2020-21.

About EPFO

- Employees’ Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) is the statutory body founded in 1952. It works under the Ministry of Labour and Employment and is responsible for the regulation, management, and administration of provident funds (PF) in India.
- EPFO also manages social security agreements (SSA), which are bilateral agreements between India and foreign countries to protect the interests of international workers.

About UAN

- The Universal Account Number (UAN) is a 12-digit number launched by Government of India in 2014. UAN is allotted to employees covered by Employees’ Provident Fund Organization (EPFO), to enable Provident Fund (PF) number portability.

- EPFO generates UAN for each Provident Fund (PF) member. UAN remains the same throughout an employee's lifetime and does not change between jobs.

17th MARCH 2022

Trends in International Arms Transfers Report

- **Context:** Recently, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) published the "Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2021" report.

Key highlights

- According to the report, India is the largest importer of arms globally and in 2017-21, India accounted for 11% of global arms imports. Both 2012-16 and 2017-21 Russia was the largest supplier of arms to India.
- During the same period, India's imports from France increased and France became India's second-largest supplier of arms.
- In 2017-21, India, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Australia, & China were the five largest arms importers, whereas U.S., Russia, France, China, & Germany were the five biggest arms exporters.
- Top five importers accounted for nearly 38% of global arms imports during the 2017-21 period.
- Top five exporters accounted for nearly 77% of global arms exports during the 2017-21 period.
- The report noted that the volume of global arms transfers during the 2017-21 period was 4.6% less as compared to the 2012-16 period. However, the global arms transfers during the 2017-21 period were 3.9% more as compared to the 2007-11 period.

Credit Guarantee Scheme for Subordinate Debt (CGSSD)

- **Context:** Recently, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) announced the extension of the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Subordinate Debt (CGSSD) by another year.

Key facts

- Launched in June 2020, the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Subordinate Debt (CGSSD) was initially valid till March 31st, 2021. However, the scheme was later extended till March 31st, 2022 to continue to help the stressed Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- The latest extension till March 31st, 2023 was based on the requests received by the MSME ministry from various stakeholders of the scheme.

About CGSSD

- The scheme provides credit facility to the promoters of stressed MSMEs that are eligible for restructuring as per RBI guidelines. This credit facility is provided through banks and this facility is even available to Special Mention Accounts (SMAs)-2 and non-performing asset (NPA) accounts.
- According to the 2021-22 annual report of the MSME ministry, there is a proposal to modify the scheme guidelines, as the scheme hasn't seen much traction among eligible MSMEs.

About Special Mention Accounts (SMAs)

- The Special Mention Accounts (SMAs) are those accounts that show indications of bad asset quality within 90 days, before being identified as non-performing asset (NPA) accounts.
- SMA-0 accounts are the ones with payments overdue for 1-30 days. SMA-1 accounts and SMA-2 accounts are the accounts having payments overdue for 31-60 days & 61-90 days, respectively.

Crop Diversification Index

- **Context:** Telangana is the first state in the country to record its crop diversification patterns in the form of an index.

About Crop Diversification Index

- The crop diversification index has a base value of one, which represents the percentage of total

cultivated area devoted to a single crop. If the index value is higher, it denotes that the crops are more diversified.

- The present crop diversification index was calculated using the area under 77 different crops grown in the state, which includes all food, non-food, cash crops, and area under floriculture.
- In Telangana, many districts have index values ranging from 0 to 5.
- The crop diversification index will serve as a baseline for future crop diversification in the state.

18th MARCH 2022

River Rejuvenation Project

- **Context:** Recently, Ministry for Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) announced the project for the rejuvenation of 13 major rivers in the country.

Key facts

- Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) prepared the detailed project reports (DPRs) of the 13 rivers selected for rejuvenation.
- The cost of the project is projected to be 19,342.62 crores and will take five years to be implemented.
- The plan is to rejuvenate rivers by creating riparian forests or planting trees along the river. This project could increase India's forest cover by up to 7,417 square kilometers.
- These forests will create creating carbon sinks, as they absorb atmospheric carbon dioxide; thereby helping India in meeting the carbon sequestration goals.
- India had pledged to create a carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO₂e by 2030. In 2015, as a part of the Bonn Challenge, India pledged to restore 5 million ha of degraded land by 2030.
- The river rejuvenation project seeks to achieve the following four goals:

- Sustainable management of rivers and their landscapes
- Biodiversity conservation and ecological restoration
- Improving sustainable livelihoods
- Knowledge management
- The 13 Rivers that will form part of the rejuvenation project include:
 - **Himalayan Rivers:** Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej, Yamuna, and Brahmaputra.
 - **Peninsular Rivers:** Narmada, Godavari, Mahanadi, Krishna, and Cauvery.
 - **Inland drainage River:** Luni.
- These 13 rivers cover nearly 57.45% of India's geographical area.

RBI Framework for Micro-finance Lenders

- **Context:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently announced Regulatory Framework on microfinance loans.

Key details

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has done away with the margin caps on the pricing of small loans given by non-banking financial company-microfinance institutions (NBFC-MFIs).
- Earlier, there was a limit on the interest rate charged by microfinance lenders. The maximum interest rate was 10-12% above the cost of funds incurred by the institution or 2.75 times the average base rate of the five-largest commercial banks, whichever is lower.
- According to the new directions, all microfinance lenders must bring out a board-approved policy regarding the pricing of loans.
- A detailed interest rate model should be prescribed in the policy document, which includes various components of interest rate, such as cost of funds, risk premium, margin, etc.
- Annual household income, to be eligible to avail microfinance level has been raised to 3 lakh. Thus, the market size of microfinance lending will be

increased. Earlier, the annual household income limit to avail microfinance loans was 25 lakh in rural areas and 2 lakh in other areas.

Meri Policy Mere Haath Campaign

- **Context:** Meri Policy Mere Haath campaign was launched in Hassan, Karnataka.

About Meri Policy Mere Haath campaign

- 'Meri Policy Mere Haath' campaign is part of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. The campaign is aimed at motivating all farmers in the country to insure their crops.
- Under this program, every farmer who has taken insurance under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) will get the policy documents at their doorstep.
- The campaign empowers the farmers through crop insurance awareness and by bringing the insurance policy to their doorsteps.
- The campaign will also help in increasing the direct communication between the farmers and insurance companies.

About Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) was introduced to provide financial support to farmers suffering crop loss or damage to crops arising out of natural calamities.
- In the last six years, around 36 crore farmers got associated with the scheme. Farmers, whose crops got damaged due to natural calamities, got compensation of more than one lakh crore rupees.
- Earlier, the insurance under the scheme was mandatory for farmers who took the agricultural loan. But in 2020 the scheme is made voluntary for all farmers.

19th MARCH 2022

US Fed Rate Hike

- **Context:** In the first hike since 2018, the US Federal Reserve increased the interest rates by 25 basis points.

Key facts

- In February 2022, the inflation in the United States reached 7.9%, which is the highest in 40 years.
- The Russia-Ukraine war has also led to an increase in global commodity prices. Thus, there is upward inflation pressure. Hence, the interest rates have to be increased to reduce the money supply in the market and curb inflation.
- The US Federal Reserve projected that its policy rate would hit a range between 1.75% and 2% by end of 2022.

Impact on India

- If the interest rates are hiked in the United States, it will make investments in the U.S. attractive as there will be higher returns. Thus, foreign investors will pull out their money from emerging markets like India and invest in the US for safe and secure returns. If the shift of capital from India continues, it will result in the weakening of the rupee against the dollar. If the rupee weakens it will result in imported inflation for India.
- The US Federal Reserve's decision to hike interest rates will have a significant impact on the monetary policy review of RBI at the next Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting scheduled in April. This shift of capital from India will put pressure on RBI to hike interest rates.

Carbon Dioxide Tariff

- **Context:** The European Union (EU) countries decided to impose the world's first carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions tariff on imports of polluting goods.

Key facts

- The aim of imposing this tariff is to protect the European industry, as the European market is flooded by cheaper goods made in countries with weak environmental rules.
- According to the EU, this carbon border tariff is an attempt to create a level playing field by imposing the same carbon dioxide (CO₂) costs on EU companies and those abroad.
- EU held that this move will avoid any carbon leakage and will also encourage partner countries to establish strong environmental rules and carbon-pricing policies.
- This will also help European Union (EU) countries in their fight against climate change.
- This carbon tariff proposal is part of EU climate change policies aimed at reducing EU's carbon emissions by 55% by 2030 from the 1990 levels.

20th MARCH 2022

Dishaank App

- **Context:** Dishaank is an application developed by Karnataka Govt. to ensure easy access to land records.

Key details

- The Dishaank app is developed under the Geographical Information System (GIS) program of the Karnataka State Remote Sensing Applications Center (KSRSAC).
- The Survey Settlement and Land Records (SSLR) unit of Karnataka's revenue department is ensuring easy availability of original land records through Dishaank.
- The Dishaank app provides information about the land, which includes the name of the landowner, the extent of land, type of ownership, type of land, litigations, land category, and any other active transactions being done on the land.
- Availability of digitized, scanned & geo-referenced maps, made it easier to build the app.

- Citizens can easily avail themselves of the information about the land as recorded in the Bhoomi database. This will help in reducing land disputes and will bring transparency in the maintenance of land records.

About Bhoomi Project

- Bhoomi is a project to digitize Karnataka's land records. The project is jointly funded by the Government of India and the Government of Karnataka.
- The project was developed and implemented by National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- The objective of the project is to eliminate the problem of inefficiency and corruption in the maintenance of land records, especially at block-level offices.

Green Hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle (FCEV)

- **Context:** Union Ministry for Road Transport and Highways recently inaugurated a pilot project for Hydrogen-based advanced Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle (FCEV).

Key highlights

- This pilot project was initiated by Toyota Kirloskar Motor Pvt. Ltd. For this project, Toyota will work with International Center for Automotive Technology (ICAT).
- The project involves studying and evaluating the world's most advanced Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle (FCEV) called "Toyota Mirai" on Indian roads and climatic conditions.
- The aim is to spread awareness regarding Hydrogen, Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle (FCEV) technology, and disseminate the benefits to support a hydrogen-based ecosystem.

About FCEV

- Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle (FCEV) is powered by hydrogen. FCEV is environment-friendly, as it has zero tailpipe emissions. Thus, it is one of the best zero-emission solutions.

About Green Hydrogen

- Green hydrogen is the hydrogen produced using renewable energy through electrolysis. Green hydrogen helps to decarbonize various sectors such as road transportation.
- Introducing Fuel Cell Electric Vehicle (FCEV) technology to tap into the green hydrogen's potential will help in providing clean and affordable energy for all.

21st MARCH 2022

National e-Vidhan Application

- **Context:** Nagaland became India's first State Assembly to implement the National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) programme to become paperless.

About National e-Vidhan Application

- NeVA is a type of work-flow system that was deployed on NIC Cloud, MeghRaj which helps to conduct the proceedings of the House smoothly by the Chair of the House and also to conduct Legislative Business of the House in a manner which is paperless.
- NeVA aims to bring the country's legislatures together, in one platform thus creating a massive depository of data without having the complexity faced due to having multiple applications.
- NeVA is a member-centric and device neutral application that was created to equip the members to smartly handle various House Business by putting entire information regarding the contact details of members, list of business, rules of procedure, bulletins, notices, starred or unstarred questions, and answers, bills, committee reports, papers laid, etc. in their handheld devices such as tablets and equip all Departments and Legislatures to handle it efficiently.
- Each Member of the House has a secure page where they can submit questions and other notices.

- mNeVA is a user-friendly mobile version of NeVA that is accessible on both Android and iOS. mNeVA has made information about how legislatures conduct business available to the public which can be accessed any time and from any location.
- For the implementation of NeVA, the expense is funded by the Central government and the state government on a sharing basis of 90:10.

Kinzhal Missile

- **Context:** Recently, during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Russian military said to have used Kinzhal missiles to destroy a Ukrainian armed forces underground weapons facility in Deliatyn.

Key facts about the missile

- The Kh-47M2 Kinzhal is a Russian hypersonic aero-ballistic air-to-surface missile with nuclear capability.
- It has a range of more than 2,000 kilometres, a top speed of Mach 10, and the ability to undertake evasive manoeuvres at all stages of flight.
- It can be launched from Tu-22M3 bombers or MiG-31K interceptors and can carry both conventional and nuclear warheads.
- The missile is designed to hit NATO warships, posing a threat to Russia's strategic missile systems, as well as destroy NATO missile defence systems, ballistic missile defence ships, and land targets near the Russian borders.
- The missile accelerates to hypersonic speed within seconds of launch and performs movements during the flight to avoid enemy missile defences.
- The Kinzhal's high speed makes it significantly more effective at penetrating targets than lighter subsonic cruise missiles like the Tomahawk.

GI-tagged Agri Products

- **Context:** In line with the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' vision, the Central Government decided to give a renewed thrust to the use of geographical indications (GI) tag to promote India's unique agricultural products in the international markets.

Key facts

- There are 150 GI-tagged products in India, which are agricultural and food products. Out of 150 GI-tagged products around 100 registered GI products fall under the category of scheduled agricultural products (cereals, processed products, vegetables, etc).
- The two most popular GI-tagged agricultural products of India are Darjeeling Tea and Basmati Rice.
- In 2021, the Agricultural and Processed Food Export Development Authority (APEDA) facilitated the exports of GI-tagged agricultural products such as Kala Namak Rice, Naga Mircha, Bangalore Rose Onion, Nagpur Oranges, Madurai Malli, Jalgaon Banana, etc.
- APEDA also organized buyer-seller meets to the unique GI products from North East India such as Arunachal Orange, Tripura Queen Pineapple, Karbi Anglong Ginger, etc.

