



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

AUGUST, 2022

Week-3

15-21 Aug, 2022

★★ Useful for ★★

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

15th AUGUST, 2022

Mukhyamantri Anuprati Coaching Yojana

• **Context:** Rajasthan Government plans to spend over Rs 17 crore this financial year for providing coaching to students for competitive exams under “Mukhyamantri Anuprati Coaching Yojana”.

Key Highlights

- ‘Mukhyamantri Anuprati Coaching Yojana’ was introduced by Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in 2021-22.
- The state government aimed to provide free coaching to 10,000 students last year and out of more than one lakh applications, around 9,000 students were selected. The government allotted Rs 3.65 crore for the year 2021-22 and spent Rs 3.54 crore.
- For the current financial year, the state government has allotted Rs 17.15 crore and the number of seats, too, has increased to 15,000.

Key features

- Students from scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, other backward classes, minority, economically-backward classes and specially-abled — whose family’s annual income is Rs 8 lakh or less — are eligible to avail the benefits of this free coaching scheme.
- Under the coaching scheme, students are prepared for various exams, including civil services, Rajasthan Administrative Service or Rajasthan State Subordinate Service Combined Competitive Examination, Rajasthan Eligibility Examination for Teacher (REET), IIT JEE and medical college entrance exams, among others.
- Under this scheme, 116 coaching institutes submitted their proposal online to impart coaching for one or two examinations and the state-level committee listed 47 coaching institutions.

- If any student is allotted a coaching institute in another city, the government pays an additional Rs 40,000 per annum for boarding and lodging.

‘Golden Joint’ of Chenab Railway

- **Context:** ‘Golden Joint’ of the Chenab railway bridge was inaugurated recently, which is the World’s highest railway bridge.

Key Highlights

- To commemorate ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’, the world’s highest bridge in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir was decked up with the Tricolor by the workers on this occasion.
- The project is part of the ambitious 272-km long railway line from Udhampur to Baramulla joining Jammu with the Kashmir valley as an all-weather high-speed alternative, named the ‘Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link Project’.
- The bridge comprises 93 deck segments, each weighing around 85 tonnes, launched simultaneously from both ends of the valley over the massive steel arch and work on joining five segments in full progress on the single line linking Katra (Jammu) with Qazigund (Kashmir), some 75 km away.
- Given the height, the extreme weather conditions, and strong gales that often lash the valley, the sophisticated automatic signaling system installed on both sides will stop the trains from crossing the bridge if wind speeds there touch 90-kmph.
- To ensure quality and safety, a NABL laboratory was set up at the Afcons site to monitor quality at all stages, weld sample tests, etc, saving huge time, and NR permitted the use of a Phased Array Ultrasonic Testing Machine to inspect welds for the first time in the country.
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Omicron vaccine

- **Context:** The UK's drug regulator had approved an updated Moderna vaccine against COVID-19 that targets the Omicron variant as well as the original form of the virus.

Key Highlights

- The UK has become the first country to approve a so-called "bivalent" COVID vaccine that targets both the original strain of COVID-19 and the newer Omicron variant.
- Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) chief executive June Raine said data from a clinical trial had shown it prompted a "strong immune response" against the original virus and Omicron.
- The MHRA said the vaccine was also found to generate a "good response" against two Omicron subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5, which have partly driven a wave of new cases of the disease in Europe and the United States.
- The vaccine had the same "typically mild" side effects as the original Moderna jab.

16th AUGUST, 2022

Intranasal COVID-19 vaccine

- **Context:** Bharat Biotech International Limited (BBIL) has completed the clinical development for Phase III trials and booster doses for the BBV154 intranasal COVID-19 vaccine.

Key Highlights

- Data from both phase III human clinical trials have been submitted for approval to national regulatory authorities. If approved, BBV154 would be the country's first intranasal COVID-19 vaccine.
- Two separate and simultaneous clinical trials were conducted to evaluate the vaccine as a primary dose (two-dose) schedule, and a heterologous booster dose for subjects who have previously received

two doses of the two commonly administered Covid vaccines in India.

- Being an intranasal vaccine, BBV154 could produce local antibodies in the upper respiratory tract, which may provide the potential to reduce infection and transmission. The nasal delivery system has been designed and developed to be cost-effective in low and middle-income countries.
- If approved, this intranasal vaccine will make it easier to deploy in mass immunization campaigns with an easy-to-administer formulation and delivery device.
- The BBV154 is a recombinant replication-deficient adenovirus vectored vaccine with a pre-fusion stabilized spike protein. This vaccine candidate was evaluated earlier in phase I and II clinical trials with successful results. BBV154 has been specifically formulated to allow intranasal delivery.
- BBV154 has been developed in partnership with Washington University St Louis. Product development, manufacturing scale-up, formulation and delivery device development, including human clinical trials, were conducted by Bharat Biotech.
- The Center partly funded product development and clinical trials through the Department of Biotechnology's COVID-19 Suraksha programme.

Ladakh dPal rNgam Duston Award

- **Context:** The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh celebrated 'Ladakh dPal rNgam Duston' on the occasion of UT of Ladakh Declaration Day at Sindhu Ghat with the theme 'The Glory of Ltsangpo Singe Khababs'.

Key Highlights

- The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Leh celebrated 'Ladakh dPal rNgam Duston' with the theme 'The Glory of Ltsangpo Singe Khababs'.
- Highest civilian honor of Ladakh "dPal rNgam Duston" was recently conferred to Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama. He was honored for his contribution towards humanity.

- It was also an attempt to raise awareness among all regarding the ecologically fragile environment of Ladakh and the need to act sustainably.

Him Drone-a-thon Programme

- **Context:** The Indian Army in collaboration with the Drone Federation of India has launched the 'Him Drone-a-thon' programme.

Key Highlights

- This initiative in line with Atmanirbhar Bharat in defense manufacturing is aimed to catalyze and provide focused opportunities to the Indian drone ecosystem to develop path-breaking drone capabilities for meeting requirements of frontline troops.
- The Indian Army's support to the indigenous drone ecosystem is based on the principle that 'good available indigenously' is better than the 'best available globally'. However, gradual enhancement in technology demanded by defense forces is likely to incentivise manufacture of better and more capable drone products.
- The 'Him Drone-a-thon' programme is pan India sustained connect between all stake holders including industry, academia, software developers and drone product manufacturers.
- It will be conducted in stages with quantifiable parameters (like altitude, weight, range, endurance etc.) being progressively enhanced based on demonstrated capabilities. Broad activities planned include interactions & ideation between users, development agencies, academia etc., seeking of industry responses, visits by development agencies to operational locations to understand the ground perspective & requirements, handholding of development agencies for internal development & on-ground trials and actual conduct & evaluation of drone products.
- As a start point, developments in the following categories are included:
 - Logistics/ Load carrying Drone in High Altitude Areas.

- Autonomous Surveillance/ Search & Rescue Drone.
- Micro/ Nano Drones for Fighting in Built Up Areas.

17th AUGUST, 2022

Panch Pran

- **Context:** On the occasion of 75th Independence Day anniversary, Prime Minister Narendra Modi set a 'Panch Pran' (five resolves) target to make India a developed nation in 25 years.

Key Highlights

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised to focus its strength on fulfilling the "Panch Pran" in the next 25 years in the run up to the centenary of its independence.
- In his extremely evocative speech, Prime Minister also called out "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisaan, Jai Vigyaan, Jai Anusandhan". The addition of "Jai Anusandhan" marks the significance of research in the 21st century.
- He spelt out the five pledges as a resolve for a developed India:
 1. Making India a developed country by 2047
 2. Removing any trace of the colonial mindset
 3. Taking pride in our legacy
 4. Strength of unity
 5. Fulfilling the duties as a citizens

William Samoei Arap Ruto

- **Context:** William Samoei Arap Ruto is declared the winner of Kenya's presidential election.

Key facts

- William Samoei Arap Ruto, born 21 December 1966, is a Kenyan politician who is the president-elect of Kenya and has served as the country's deputy president since 2013.
- Ruto was elected Deputy President alongside President Uhuru Kenyatta on the Jubilee Alliance ticket in the 2013 presidential election.

- From 1998 to 2013, Ruto served as a Member of Parliament (MP).
- From August to December 2002, he was Minister of Home Affairs in the Daniel Arap Moi administration. He later served as Minister of Agriculture in the Mwai Kibaki administration from 2008 to 2010, and as Minister of Higher Education from April to October 2010.

SBI's first dedicated branch for start-ups

- **Context:** SBI has opened its first-ever startup branch in Bengaluru, which will be dedicated to fund and support early-stage entrepreneurs in setting up new companies till their listing on stock exchanges.

Key Highlights

- The facility comes under a pact between the Karnataka government and SBI to further boost the state's startup ecosystem.
- It is the first in the country to provide financing to support startup growth, facilitating entrepreneurs.
- The exclusive branch for startups will provide services such as loans, deposits, transaction banking, outward and inward remittances, payments, cash management, forex, insurance, custodial services, capital market and legal advisory, structuring, demat and trading.
- This branch will be a hub for various stakeholders involved in startup ecosystem and cater to end-to-end financial and advisory services.
- SBI entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Karnataka Digital Economy Mission (KDEM) to boost the prevailing startup ecosystem for the state. Subsequently, SBI will also explore and open startup branches across three clusters (Mysore, Mangalore and Hubblili-Belagavi) to facilitate and support startups based out of these clusters.
- Karnataka was adjudged the best performer in the central government's States' Startup Ranking-2021 for developing a strong startup ecosystem through

holistic and inclusive policies for sector-focused incentives, regulatory sandboxes and supporting innovation in disruptive sectors.

18th AUGUST, 2022

Manthan Platform

- **Context:** The Government of India unveiled a platform to drive collaboration between the industry and research institutes to implement technology-based social impact innovations and solutions in the country.

Key Highlights

- With the view to implementing technology-based social impact innovations and solutions in India, the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) office to the Government of India announced the launch of the Manthan platform.
- Manthan platform is envisioned to build and nurture industry participation in R&D.
- Powered by NSEIT, the Manthan platform will help scale up interactions among stakeholders, facilitate research and innovation, and share challenges in various emerging technologies and scientific interventions, including those that make a social impact.
- Led by the Office of PSA, Manthan will facilitate knowledge transfers and interactions through information exchange sessions, exhibitions, and events to develop a framework for future science, innovation, and technology-led growth.

Paalan 1000 National Campaign

- **Context:** Union Government recently launched the Early Childhood Development Conclave, Paalan 1000 National Campaign and Parenting App in Mumbai.

Key Highlights

- Paalan 1000 - Journey of the First 1000 Days', focuses on the cognitive developments of children in the first 2 years of its life.

- Paalan 1000 combines early years coaching for parents, families and other caregivers with services designed to meet families' basic needs. Infants and toddlers are shaped by their experiences – and those experiences are shaped by their caregivers.
- Caregivers are crucial for a strong start in the first years of life.
- The programme is aligned with the mission of the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK), emphasizing responsive care and focusing interventions on the first 1000 days.
- PAALAN 1000 parenting app will provide caregivers with practical advice on what they can do in their everyday routine and will help resolve the various doubts of parents and will direct our efforts in the development of a child.
- Cognitive development of children under 2 years is a major focus area of this PAALAN 1000, and have focused on the 6 principles on Maximize Love, Talk & Engage, explore through Movement and Play, Read and Discuss Stories, Mother's Engagement with the Child while Breastfeeding and Managing Stress and Staying Calm.

'Medicine from the Sky' Project

- **Context:** Arunachal Pradesh carried out a successful launch of the first flight of drone service 'Medicine from the Sky' from Seppa to Chayang Tajo in East Kameng district.

Key Highlights

- Arunachal Pradesh government conducted a pilot project of using drones in healthcare, agriculture and disaster management in collaboration with the World Economic Forum.
- Based on the field assessment report, the pilot project 'Medicine from the Sky' was launched on August 15, the day marking 75 years of India's independence, from Seppa village.
- The pilot project funded by USAID (United States Agency for International Development) and executed

by Red Wings Labs will provide a clear picture of operational issues, financial feasibility and regulatory issues, based on which the government will make a policy and take steps for phased adoption of this emerging technology.

- 'Medicine from the Sky' project was launched in Telangana in September 2021.

19th AUGUST, 2022

Bioengineered Cornea Implant

- **Context:** For the first time, researchers in Sweden have been able to create a successful alternative -bioengineered cornea implants made of collagen derived from pig skin.

Key Highlights

- The implant was used to successfully restore the vision of 20 people in India and Iran, most of whom were blind due to keratoconus, a disease that leads to thinning of the cornea.
- As a substitute for human corneas, the researchers utilized medical-grade collagen derived from pig skin, a byproduct of the food industry that is already used in medical devices for glaucoma surgery.
- This is not only cheaper and easier to access than donated corneas, but requires a less invasive procedure and can be stored for a significantly longer period-up to two years, as per the study.
- The researchers developed a minimally invasive method without the use of stitches, where a small incision is made in the patient's eye, and the implant is inserted over the existing cornea. This can be done with high-precision lasers or by using readily available surgical instruments.
- Not only was the procedure safe for all 20 participants, the researchers found that 2 years after the operation, none of the patients were blind anymore. Furthermore, 3 of the Indian participants who had earlier been blind, had perfect (20/20) vision after operation.

Government launched NAMASTE initiative

- **Context:** NAMASTE is an initiative to ensure the safety of sanitation workers.

Key Highlights

- NAMASTE is a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) as a joint initiative of the MoSJE and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).
- NAMASTE envisages safety and dignity of sanitation workers in urban India by creating an enabling ecosystem that recognizes sanitation workers as one of the key contributors in operations and maintenance of sanitation infrastructure.
- NAMASTE aim at providing access to alternative livelihoods support and entitlements to reduce the vulnerabilities of sanitation workers and enable them to access self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities and break the inter-generationality in sanitation work.
- In addition, NAMASTE would bring about a behavior change amongst citizens towards sanitation workers and enhance demand for safe sanitation services.
- NAMASTE aims to achieve the following outcomes:
 - Zero fatalities in sanitation work in India
 - All sanitation work is performed by skilled workers
 - No sanitation workers come in direct contact with human fecal matter
 - Sanitation workers are collectivized into SHGs and are empowered to run sanitation enterprises
 - All Sewer and Septic tank sanitation workers have access to alternative livelihoods
 - Strengthened supervisory and monitoring systems at national, state and ULB levels to ensure enforcement and monitoring of safe sanitation work
 - Increased awareness amongst sanitation services seekers (individuals and institutions) to seek services from registered and skilled sanitation workers.

20th AUGUST, 2022

Mandla: India's first completely "functionally literate" district

- **Context:** Tribal-dominated Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh has become the first completely "functionally literate" district of India.

Key Highlights

- Literacy rate in the district was 68 per cent as per a survey in 2011, while another report in 2020 pointed out that over 2.25 lakh people were not literate in the district and most of them were tribals living in the forest areas.
- A person can be called functionally literate when he or she is able to write his or her own name, to count and read and write in Hindi.
- Keeping this in mind, the government launched a major campaign to make tribals of Mandla functionally literate by roping in the school education department, women and child development department, anganwadi and social workers to educate women and senior citizens.
- Within two years, the entire district has become functionally literate, claiming that people were able to write their names, count and read, making Mandla the first district in the country to achieve this distinction.

Monkeypox Test-kit

- **Context:** India has developed the first indigenously-developed RT-PCR kit for testing monkeypox disease.

Key Highlights

- The first indigenously-developed RT-PCR kit for testing monkeypox was launched at Andhra Pradesh Medtech Zone (AMTZ).
- Developed by Transasia Bio-Medicals, the kit was unveiled by Principal Scientific Adviser to the Center Ajay Kumar Sood.

- Founder-chairman of Transasia Suresh Vazirani said the kit would help in early detection and better management of the infection which the WHO declared a public health emergency of international concern.
- The technologically advanced production facility at AMTZ has the capacity to manufacture over 200 million monkeypox test kits per month.
- India so far has reported ten cases of monkeypox.

Draft Solar Energy Policy-2022

- **Context:** Uttar Pradesh government is planning to achieve an ambitious target of producing 16,000mw renewable power by 2026-27 and developing 20 cities comprising 10lakh households as 'solar cities' over the next five years.

Key Highlights

- The state has rolled out a draft Solar Energy Policy-2022 which could get the cabinet's nod as the current solar policy (notified in 2017) has completed its five-year term.
- Of the total target, 10,000mw is expected to be produced by utilities and solar parks, around 4,000mw through rooftop and remaining 2,000mw through agriculture solar pump.
- Under the policy, 20 cities will be developed as 'solar cities' covering 10lakh residential households with solar rooftop installations across the state in five years.
- The cities selected are Lucknow, Kanpur, Prayagraj, Agra, Varanasi, Ghaziabad, Meerut, Bareilly, Aligarh, Moradabad, Saharanpur, Gorakhpur, Noida, Firozabad, Jhansi, Muzaffarnagar, Mathura, Ayodhya, Azamgarh and Mirzapur.
- Net metering facility will be given to residential consumers, under the facility, they can sell the excess power generated on their house to the area's distribution company.
- The proposed policy says that at least 21,000 un-electrified primary schools across the state, totaling a capacity of 40mw, will be covered with solar rooftop

installations while secondary schools, government colleges, technical institutions and universities will also be equipped with solar rooftops in a phased manner.

- The state will promote setting up of off-grid solar systems like solar power plants, solar street lights and solar PV pumps in anganwadi centers and schools.
- The state will also promote setting up of solar cold storages to increase the shelf life of agriculture produce and enhance farmers' income.
- The UPPCL, through its discoms, will purchase solar energy as per the renewable purchase obligation (RPO) for the price as determined by the regulator.
- The proposed policy offers 100% exemption on stamp duty on the land used for setting up solar power plant/solar park anywhere in the state.
- The proposed policy points out that the state has vast and largely untapped potential, availability of vast barren/un-cultivable unutilized government/private land in Bundelkhand.
- The state government will also provide capital interest subsidy to the extent of 5% per annum for five years in the form of reimbursement on loan taken for procurement of plant and machinery subject to annual ceiling of 50 lakh.

21st AUGUST, 2022

Mithila Makhana

- **Context:** The Central government has awarded a Geographical Indication (GI) tag to Mithila Makhana. With this move, growers will get the maximum price for their premium produce. Over five-lakh farmers of Mithila region of Bihar will benefit from this decision.

Key highlights:

- Due to the Geographical Indication Tag to Mithila Makhana in the festive season, people outside Bihar will be able to use this auspicious material with reverence.

- Once a product gets this tag, any person or company cannot sell a similar item under that name.
- This tag is valid for a period of 10 years and it can be renewed.
- Farmers will get a profit, making it easier for them to earn.

About Geographical Indication (GI) Tag:

A Geographical Indication (GI) is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. In addition, the qualities, characteristics, or reputation of the product should be essentially due to the place of origin.

New Labour Codes

- **Context:** Union Labor and Employment Ministry to form New Labour Codes to enhance industry productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of enterprises and contribution to national development and dignified life of workers.

Key highlights:

- New Labour Codes aim to create a litigation-free society and empower common citizen.
- It ensures higher participation of women in workforce, Government has eased restrictions for women's participation, including night shifts.
- Government is conducting surveys on migrant workers and on domestic workers.
- Government is trying to ensure payment of timely and minimum wages to all ensuring a dignified and minimum standard of living to workers. And Government has provided insurance cover to all workers.
- Centre has linked ESIC with National Health Mission so that Ayushman Yojana beneficiaries too get the benefit of treatment under ESIC hospital system.
- The Minister informed that 29 different Acts have been merged into four Labour Codes, namely Industrial Relations Code, Wages Code, Occupational Safety Code and Social Security Code. He added that the government rationalized old laws and considered occupational safety and wage standards to ensure fair wages for both men and women.

Antim Panghal

- Antim Panghal, 17-year-old Haryana wrestler has become the first Indian woman wrestler to win Gold medal at Under-20 World Wrestling Championship in Sofia, Bulgaria. She scored an 8-0 win over Atlyn Shagayeva of Kazakhstan in 53kg category to achieve this feat.
- This gold medal is historic in its own ways as India has never won any gold medal in women's wrestling at U20 World Championships.

