



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

AUGUST, 2022

Week-4

22-31 Aug, 2022

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

22nd AUGUST, 2022

23rd Central Zonal Council Meeting

- **Context:** Union Home and Cooperation Minister Shri Amit Shah chaired the 23rd meeting of the Central Zonal Council at Kushabhau Thakre International Convention Centre at Bhopal.
- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami participated in the meeting while Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel took part in the meeting virtually.

Key highlights:

- The 23rd meeting of the Central Zonal Council discussed the significant progress made towards expansion of banking facilities within 5 kms of all villages as per the vision given by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi for expansion of the banking network in rural areas.
- The online Sakhi Dashboard is being operated by the Government of India under the 'Sakhi – One Stop Center' for safety of women.
- The issue of release of grants to State Home Guards and declaring Bhopal, Indore and Raipur airports as international airports was also discussed in the meeting.

About Zonal Council

- Zonal Councils are the statutory bodies. They are established by an Act of the Parliament, States Reorganisation Act of 1956. The act divided the country into five zones- Northern, Central, Eastern, Western and Southern and provided a zonal council for each zone.
- **The Northern Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Territory of Delhi and Union Territory of Chandigarh.
- **The Central Zonal Council:** It comprises the States

of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

- **The Eastern Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Sikkim and West Bengal.
- **The Western Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli
- **The Southern Zonal Council:** It comprises the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry.

Organizational Structure:

- **Chairman:** The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils.
- **Vice Chairman:** The Chief Ministers of the States included in each zone act as Vice-Chairman of the Zonal Council for that zone by rotation, each holding office for a period of one year at a time.
- **Members:** Chief Minister and two other Ministers as nominated by the Governor from each of the States and two members from Union Territories included in the zone.
- **Advisers:** One person nominated by the NITI Aayog for each of the Zonal Councils, Chief Secretaries and another officer/Development Commissioner nominated by each of the States included in the Zone.

Rashtriya Puruskar Portal

- **Context:** The Union Government has brought together all the awards of the various Ministries, Departments and agencies of the government under one platform Rashtriya Puruskar Portal.

Key highlights:

- This common portal will ensure transparency and public partnership.
- The portal facilitates every citizen or organisation to nominate individuals or organizations for various awards instituted by the government.

- Individuals and organisations can visit Rashtriya Puruskar Portal www.awards.gov.in for making their nominations or recommendations for various awards constituted by the government.
- This common portal has been developed by the government to bring together all the awards under one digital platform.

Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2022-23 (Series II)

- **Context:** The government, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, will be offering a discount of Rs 50 per gram to those investors who will apply online and the payment against their application is made through the digital mode.

Key highlights:

- Recently, Government of India, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, decided to issue Sovereign Gold Bonds in tranches for 2022-23.
- The SGB scheme was launched in November 2015 with an objective to reduce the demand for physical gold and shift a part of the domestic savings – used for the purchase of gold – into financial savings.
- The Gold Bonds are issued as Government of India Stock under the Government Securities (GS) Act, 2006.
- These are issued by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on behalf of the Government of India.
- Bonds are sold through Commercial banks, Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL), designated post offices and recognised stock exchanges, National Stock Exchange of India Limited and Bombay Stock Exchange, either directly or through agents.
- The bonds are restricted for sale to resident individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), trusts, universities and charitable institutions.
- Issue Price: Gold bond prices are linked to the price of gold of 999 purity (24 carats) published by India Bullion and Jewellers Association (IBJA), Mumbai.
- A fixed rate of 2.5% per annum is applicable on the scheme, payable semi-annually.

- The interest on Gold Bonds shall be taxable as per the provision of Income Tax Act, 1961
- The issue price of the bond during the subscription period will be 5,197 rupees per gram.

23rd AUGUST, 2022

National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS)

- **Context:** Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently inaugurated the National Automated Fingerprint Identification System (NAFIS).

Key Highlights

- National Automated Fingerprints Identification System (NAFIS) project is a country-wide searchable database of crime- and criminal-related fingerprints.
- NAFIS is developed by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).
- The web-based application functions as a central information repository by consolidating fingerprint data from all states and Union Territories.
- According to a 2020 report by the NCRB, it enables law enforcement agencies to upload, trace, and retrieve data from the database in real time on a 24x7 basis.
- NAFIS assigns a unique 10-digit National Fingerprint Number (NFN) to each person arrested for a crime. This unique ID will be used for the person's lifetime, and different crimes registered under different FIRs will be linked to the same NFN. The ID's first two digits will be that of the state code in which the person arrested for a crime is registered, followed by a sequence number.
- According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, NAFIS, would help in the quick and easy disposal of cases with the help of a centralised fingerprint database.
- NAFIS will "provide the much-needed unique identifier for every arrested person in the CCTNS (Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems) database as both are connected at the backend.

Tomato Flu

- **Context:** A new illness Tomato Flu or Tomato Fever, has been found in Kerala and Odisha. So far, 82 children have been reportedly infected with the disease.

Key Highlights

- According to Lancet study, the common infectious disease targeting mostly children aged one to five years and immunocompromised adults could also be a new variant of hand, foot, and mouth disease
- The tomato flu was first identified in Kerala's Kollam district.
- The study said the tomato flu virus shows symptoms similar to those of Covid-19 but the virus is not related to SARS-CoV-2.
- Rather than a viral infection, tomato flu could be an after-effect of chikungunya or dengue fever in children.
- The flu was named on the basis of the eruption of red and painful blisters throughout the body that gradually enlarge to the size of a tomato.
- The primary symptoms observed in children with tomato flu are similar to those of chikungunya, which include high fever, rashes, and intense pain in joints. Other symptoms include joint swelling, nausea, diarrhea, dehydration, joint aches and high fever. In some cases, patients also reported the development of rashes on their skin.
- The treatment for tomato flu is similar to the treatment of chikungunya, dengue and hand, foot, and mouth disease. Patients are advised to isolate, rest, plenty of fluids, and hot water sponge for the relief of irritation and rashes.

Hydrogen Fuel Bus

- **Context:** Union minister Jitendra Singh recently unveiled India's first indigenously developed hydrogen fuel cell-powered bus.

Key Highlights

- A hydrogen fuel cell bus developed by KPIT-CSIR in Pune was unveiled by Jitendra Singh, Union minister of state for Science and Technology.
- The hydrogen fuel cell uses hydrogen and air to generate electricity, producing only heat and water in the process.
- Hydrogen fuel cells like the one present in the bus produce electricity by combining hydrogen and oxygen atoms. The two gases react across an electrochemical cell similar to a conventional battery cell to produce electricity, water and small amounts of heat. This electricity is then used by electric motors to propel the vehicle forward.

About Hydrogen fuel Cell

- Hydrogen Fuel cells work in a similar manner to conventional batteries found in electric vehicles but they do not run out of charge and don't need to be recharged with electricity. They continue to produce electricity as long as there is a supply of hydrogen.
- Just like conventional cells, a fuel cell consists of an anode (negative electrode) and cathode (positive electrode) sandwiched around an electrolyte.
- Hydrogen is fed to the anode and air is fed to the cathode.
- At the anode, a catalyst separates the hydrogen molecules into protons and electrons and both subatomic particles take different paths to the cathode.
- The electrons go through an external circuit, creating a flow of electricity that can be used to power electric motors. The protons, on the other hand, move to the cathode through the electrolyte. Once there, they unite with oxygen and electrons to produce water and heat.

Advantages

- The primary advantage of hydrogen fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEV) is that they produce no tailpipe emissions. They only emit water vapor and warm air.

- They are more efficient than internal combustion engine vehicles.
- Hydrogen can be refilled in a fuel cell vehicle in a matter of minutes, nearly as fast as an internal combustion engine can be refilled with fossil fuels.

24th AUGUST, 2022

Delhi's Excise Policy 2021-22

- **Context:** The Delhi Excise Policy 2021-22, which sought to ensure optimum revenue for the State government and confront the sale of spurious or bootlegged liquor ran widespread allegations of “procedural lapses”.

Key Highlights:

- This has forced the government to scrap it with effect from August 1, 2022
- Under the new policy, the number of liquor vends in Delhi would have increased from around 630 to 850 — all privately owned and operated.
- One person could hold more than one liquor retail license and the “heavily regulated” excise regime was to be eased for business.
- The revamped excise policy ran into controversy as private liquor vends were opening up across the capital.
- Many of these vends were sealed by the MCD for various violations related to non-conforming areas where certain businesses such as liquor retail are not allowed.

Aqua Bazar

- **Context:** The Union Minister for Fisheries launched the Online Market Place feature, Aqua Bazar, in the MatsyaSetu mobile app during the ninth general body meeting of the National Fisheries Development Board.

Key Highlights:

- Through this platform, any registered vendor can list their input materials.

- The listed items will be displayed in the marketplace based on geographical proximity to the app user.
- The listings are categorized into the following major categories, fish seeds, input materials, services, jobs, and table fish.
- Every listing will contain detailed information about the product, price, available quantity, supply area, etc. along with the seller's contact details.
- The needy farmers/stakeholders can contact the vendors and fulfill their procurements.
- It also allows the fish farmers to list their grown table-size fish/fish seeds for sale with an option to indicate the date of availability along with the price offer.
- Interested fish buyers will contact the farmers and offer their prices.

ONGC's Geothermal Power Plant

- **Context:** ONGC stated drilling its first well at Puga (Ladakh) to generate electricity using geothermal power to reduce the dependence of Ladakh on diesel-run generators.

Key highlights:

- Puga hot spring area, located at the junction of the Indian and Tibetan plates along the Indus Suture Zone, has the greatest potential for the near-term development of geothermal energy in the Indian subcontinent
- As per the Geological Survey of India, there are around 340 geothermal hot springs in India (e.g., Chummathang (Ladakh), Cambay (Gujarat), Khammam (Telangana), Tattapani (Chhattisgarh), and Ratnagiri (MH).
- Though, India has been one of the earliest countries to begin geothermal projects way back in the 1970s, but at present, there are no operational geothermal plants in India.
- The top five countries in terms of geothermal power generation are the US, Philippines, Indonesia, Mexico and New Zealand.

Supreme Court's ruling on Benami Act

- **Context:** The Supreme Court has ruled that Section 3(2) of the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988 is unconstitutional as it is manifestly arbitrary.

About the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016

- In an attempt to curb black money, in July 2016, Modi government decided to amend the original act which was subsequently passed by the Parliament of India as "The Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016".
- The Government notified the provisions of the act to come into force from 1 November 2016.
- The act defines a 'benami' transaction as any transaction in which property is transferred to one person for consideration paid by another person.
- Such transactions were a feature of the Indian economy, usually relating to the purchase of property (real estate), and were thought to contribute to the Indian black money problem.
- The act bans all benami transactions and gives the government the right to recover property held benami without paying any compensation.

Cloudbursts

- **Context:** Over 20 people have been killed in the destruction caused by cloudbursts and flash floods in different parts of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand recently.

About Cloudbursts:

- A cloudburst is a localised but intense rainfall activity. Short spells of very heavy rainfall over a small geographical area can cause widespread destruction, especially in hilly regions where this phenomenon is the most common.
- A cloudburst has a rainfall of 10 cm or more in an hour over a roughly 10 km x 10-km area is classified as a cloudburst event.

- Cloudbursts are not uncommon events, particularly during the monsoon months.
- Most of these happen in the Himalayan states where the local topology, wind systems, and temperature gradients between the lower and upper atmosphere facilitate the occurrence of such events.
- Specific cloudburst events cannot be forecast.
- No forecast ever mentions a possibility of a cloudburst.

25th AUGUST, 2022

Kerala Savari

- **Context:** Kerala recently launched 'Kerala Savari', the country's first taxi service owned by the government, to ensure fair and decent service to passengers along with fair remuneration to auto-taxi workers.

Key highlights

- Operated by the Motor Workers Welfare Board under the aegis of the Labor Department, the Kerala Savari ensures safe travel for the public at 'government approved fares' without any 'surge pricing'.
- The 'Kerala Savari' app would be made available to the public on online platforms shortly as it is under the scrutiny of Google now.
- Unlike other online platforms, there will be no fluctuation in fares on Kerala Savari.
- In Kerala Savari, there will be a single fare. A service charge of only eight per cent will be charged, making it cheaper than other online taxi services.
- The amount collected as service charge along with the rate fixed by the government will be utilised for the implementation of the scheme and for providing promotional incentives to passengers and drivers etc.
- Safety is another specialty of Kerala Savari. Every driver must have a police clearance certificate. The Kerala Savari app will have a panic button system for help in case of emergencies. Either driver or passenger can press this button without letting know each other. This will help in getting the services of the concerned enforcement agencies faster.

Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (Ukraine)

- **Context:** Recently, Russian forces seized the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Powerplant, the largest nuclear power plant in Europe.

Key highlights

- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has raised alarms about the shelling that is taking place at the Russian-controlled Zaporizhzhia Power plant.
- Both Russia and Ukraine have accused each other of attacking the plant and of “nuclear terrorism”.
- Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant is the largest plant in Europe and among the 10 largest in the world; it generates half of Ukraine’s nuclear-derived power.
- The plant has a total capacity of about 6,000 megawatts, enough for about four million homes.
- It is located in the southern Ukrainian steppe on the Dnieper River, some 550km (342 miles) southeast of Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv, and about 525km (325 miles) south of Chernobyl.
- Currently, the plant is operated by Ukrainian staff but Russian military units guard the facility.
- The Zaporizhzhia plant is also located about 200km (125 miles) from Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014.
- Ukrainian operator Energoatom said the Russian forces occupying the area were preparing to “connect the plant to the Crimean electricity grid.

Drought in China

- **Context:** Southern China has recorded its longest continuous period of high temperatures since records began more than 60 years ago.

Key Highlights

- The intensity, impact, scale and duration of the heatwave in China this summer have broken all records.
- A nationwide drought alert was issued on August 19, 2022 as the long-running heatwave in the country’s

southwest region was forecast to continue well into September.

- A red alert, the highest in China’s four-tier weather warning system for extreme heat, was issued for the 10th consecutive day.
- A chart from the National Climate Center showed that swathes of southern China, including the Tibetan Plateau, were experiencing “severe” to “extraordinary” drought conditions.
- The worst-affected area - the Yangtze river basin, stretching from coastal Shanghai to Sichuan province in China’s southwest- is home to over 370 million people and contains several manufacturing hubs including the megacity of Chongqing.
- The record-breaking heatwave has caused its rivers, including the Yangtze, to dry up. The Yangtze is the longest river in Asia.

26th AUGUST, 2022

World’s First Hydrogen-powered Passenger Train

- **Context:** Germany has launched the world’s first fleet of hydrogen-powered passenger trains Coradia iLint.

Key Highlights

- The world’s first completely emission-free train powered by hydrogen is officially running in Germany.
- The train cost \$86 million, according to a report by Fuel Cell Works, and will begin by transporting passengers between two stops just outside of Hamburg.
- Coradia iLint trains have a range of up to 1,000 kilometres (621 miles) and a maximum speed of 140 kmph (87 mph).
- By using hydrogen produced with renewable energy the trains will save 1.6 million litres (more than 422,000 gallons) of diesel fuel a year.
- Hydrogen is currently produced as a byproduct in chemical processes, but German specialty gas company Linde plans to manufacture it locally using only renewable energy within three years.

- Initial service on the train is "preliminary," and older diesel-fueled trains will serve as a backup in case there are adjustments needed in the first few months of service.
- The trains manufactured by French company Alstom are operated by regional rail company LNVG on routes between the northern towns of Cuxhaven, Bremerhaven, Bremervoerde, and Buxtehude.

UNESCO Peace Prize, 2022

- **Context:** The former Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel was awarded UNESCO Peace Prize 2022 for her efforts to welcome refugees.

Key Highlights

- All jury members, including jury chairman and 2018 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Denis Mukwege, were impressed by Merkel's courageous decision to welcome more than 1.2 million refugees from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Eritrea in 2015.
- In the summer of 2015, as refugees were streaming into Europe, Merkel opened her country's borders and famously declared to Germans "Wir schaffen das", "We can do this."
- The Award, officially called the Félix-Houphouët-Boigny Peace Prize, is named after the late former president of Côte d'Ivoire.
- It has been awarded each year since 1989 to individuals, organisations or institutions that have endeavored to promote, seek or maintain peace.

Arth Ganga Model

- **Context:** G. Asok Kumar, the Director General of the National Mission for Clean Ganga, highlighted the Arth Ganga model during his virtual keynote address to the Stockholm World Water Week, 2022.

Key Highlights

- National Mission for Clean Ganga hosts virtual session on the first day of the Stockholm World Water Week 2022.

- During his keynote address, G. Asok Kumar stated that it strives to contribute at least 3% of the GDP from the Ganga Basin itself, and added that the Arth Ganga project's interventions are in accordance with India's commitments towards the UN sustainable development goals.
- World Water Week is the leading annual event on global water issues, organized by 'Stockholm International Water Institute' (SIWI) since 1991.
- The theme for World Water Week 2022 is "**Seeing the Unseen: The Value of Water.**"

About Arth Ganga Model

- PM Modi first introduced the concept during the first National Ganga Council meeting in Kanpur in 2019, where he urged for a shift from Namami Gange, the Union Government's flagship project to clean the Ganga, to the model of Arth Ganga.
- It focuses on the sustainable development of the Ganga and its surrounding areas, by focusing on economic activities related to the river.
- At its core, the Arth Ganga model seeks to use economics to bridge people with the river.
- **Under Arth Ganga, the government is working on six verticals:**
 1. The first is Zero Budget Natural Farming, which involves chemical-free farming on 10 km on either side of the river and the promotion of cow dung as fertiliser through the GOBARdhan scheme.
 2. The Monetization and Reuse of Sludge & Wastewater is the second, which seeks to reuse treated water for irrigation, industries and revenue generation for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).
 3. Arth Ganga will also involve Livelihood Generation Opportunities, by creating haats where people can sell local products, medicinal plants and ayurveda.
 4. The fourth is to increase public participation by increasing synergies between the stakeholders involved with the river.

5. The model also wants to promote the cultural heritage and tourism of Ganga and its surroundings, through boat tourism, adventure sports and by conducting yoga activities.
6. The model seeks to promote institutional building by empowering local administration for improved water governance.

27th AUGUST, 2022

Automatic Number Plate Reader (ANPR) Cameras

- **Context:** The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is planning to remove toll plazas on national highways. Instead, it will use cameras to capture number plates and charge owners of vehicles.

Key Highlights

- Congestion at toll plazas on national highways continues to impact commuters despite 97 per cent of tolling happening through FasTags.
- In light of this, the Road Transport and Highways Ministry is now moving ahead with a plan to replace toll plazas with cameras that could read number plates, also known as Automatic Number Plate Reader (ANPR) cameras.
- According to the report, the cameras will read the vehicle number plates and automatically deduct toll fee from the bank accounts of the vehicle owners.
- The entries and exits of the toll roads will have these cameras installed.
- Only those number plates that have come after 2019 will be registered by these cameras.
- The government plans to come up with a scheme to replace older number plates in the process.

Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022

- **Context:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India published the Battery Waste Management Rules, 2022 to ensure environmentally sound management of waste batteries.

Key Provisions under the Rule

- **Types of Batteries covered:** The rules cover all types of batteries, viz. Electric Vehicle batteries, portable batteries, automotive batteries and industrial batteries.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR):** The producers (including importers) of batteries are responsible for collection and recycling/refurbishment of waste batteries and use of recovered materials from wastes into new batteries.
- **Prohibits disposal in landfills:** EPR mandates that all waste batteries to be collected and sent for recycling/refurbishment, and it prohibits disposal in landfills and incineration. To meet the EPR obligations, producers may engage themselves or authorise any other entity for collection, recycling or refurbishment of waste batteries.
- **Centralized online portal:** For exchange of EPR certificates between producers and recyclers/refurbishers to fulfil the obligations of producers.
- **Setting industry for collection and recycling:** The rules promote setting up of new industries and entrepreneurship in collection and recycling/refurbishment of waste batteries.
- **Minimum percentage of recovery:** Mandating the minimum percentage of recovery of materials from waste batteries under the rules will bring new technologies and investment in recycling and refurbishment industry and create new business opportunities.
- Online registration & reporting, auditing, and committee for monitoring the implementation of rules and to take measures required for removal of difficulties.
- **Compensation:** On the principle of Polluter Pays Principle, environmental compensation will be imposed for non-fulfilment of Extended Producer Responsibility targets, responsibilities and obligations set out in the rules.

Uday Umesh Lalit

- **Context:** Justice Uday Umesh Lalit has been sworn-in as Chief Justice of India.



Key Highlights

- Justice Uday Umesh Lalit was sworn in as the 49th Chief Justice of India, a day after Justice NV Ramana retired from the highest judicial post.
- CJI NV Ramana had recommended UU Lalit's name to the Union Law ministry as his successor.
- President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath of office of the Chief Justice of India to Justice Lalit at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- Justice Lalit will have a brief tenure of 74 days as the head of India's judiciary and will retire on 8 November, 2022.
- Justice Lalit was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court on August 13, 2014.
- He was designated as a senior advocate by the Supreme court in 2014.
- He was also appointed a special public prosecutor for the CBI to conduct the trial in the 2G spectrum allocation case.

28th AUGUST, 2022

Krishnamurthy Subramanian

- **Context:** India's former Chief Economic Adviser Krishnamurthy Subramanian has been appointed to the post of Executive Director (India) at the IMF, with effect from November 1, 2022.



Key Highlights

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved former Chief Economic Adviser Krishnamurthy Subramanian for the post of Executive Director (India) at the International Monetary Fund for a period of three years starting November 1, 2022, or until further orders.

- Mr. Subramanian, who is currently a Finance Professor at the Indian School of Business, will replace Surjit S. Bhalla who was appointed to the role in 2019.
- The IMF's EDs are elected for a period of two years through voting by the Governors representing the respective constituency countries.
- India is in a 4-country constituency having India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan as members.

Sameer V. Kamat

- **Context:** The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) appointed distinguished scientist, Dr Samir V Kamat, as chairman.



Key Highlights

- Dr Samir V Kamat, who is Director General, Naval Systems & Materials (NS&M), will succeed G Satheesh Reddy, who has been named as scientific adviser to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, according to a Personnel Ministry order.
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved Kamat's appointment from the date of his assumption of charge till he attains the age of 60 years.
- He obtained B Tech. (Hons) in Metallurgical Engineering from IIT-Kharagpur in 1985 and PhD in Materials Science and Engineering from Ohio State University in 1988.
- He joined DRDO at DMRL, Hyderabad, in 1989. He took over as the director of the lab in 2015. Kamat assumed charge as NS&M Director in 2017.
- Over the last 25 years, Kamat has made significant contributions in the area of microstructure-mechanical property correlations in advanced materials such as particulate reinforced metal matrix composites, ceramic matrix composites, aluminium-lithium alloys, high strength aluminium alloys and titanium alloys which led to their development for various defence applications.

Parivar Kalyan Card Scheme

- **Context:** The Central Government has given its nod to the Uttar Pradesh government's Family ID plan — the Parivar Kalyan Card — adding to the list of state-specific unique id schemes in India.

Key Features

- The Parivar Kalyan Card (PKC) Scheme was announced by the UP state's government to establish a comprehensive database of the state's family units and identify beneficiaries for its various schemes including employment, pensions, and housing benefits.
- The PKC will provide a unique 12-digit ID number for each family, and the initial collection of data for families will be conducted through Ration cards.
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) has allowed state government to link Aadhaar data with the PKC.
- The initial registration for the PKC has been kept voluntary, and those seeking avail of the various government schemes will be able to register with their Aadhaar numbers.
- Once registered, the data for each member of the family would be verified against the centralised database, and they would then be individually linked to specific government schemes according to their eligibility.
- The planning department cannot begin mapping the families without informing and educating the residents regarding the exact reason for obtaining their Aadhaar Data, and thereafter acquiring their consent.
- Aadhaar numbers cannot be displayed on government websites except for the last four digits.
- Those UP residents who already have ration card will be able to use them as their family ID. At present, there are nearly 150 million Aadhaar-validated ration-card holders (60 per cent of the state's population) who can use these as their family ID.

29th AUGUST, 2022

Smriti Van Memorial

- **Context:** The Prime Minister inaugurated the Smriti Van Memorial in Bhuj district.

Key Highlights:

- Smriti Van has been built in an area of around 470 acres to celebrate the spirit of resilience shown by the people after the death of around 13,000 people who had lost their lives during the 2001 earthquake which had its epicenter in Bhuj.
- The Memorial carries names of the people who had lost their lives during the earthquake.
- The state-of-the-art Smriti Van Earthquake Museum is segregated in seven blocks based on seven themes: Rebirth, Rediscover, Restore, Rebuild, Rethink, Relive and Renew.
- The Galleries in this block address the massive relief effort undertaken by individuals as well as organisations.
- In this block we can learn about Gujarat's rebuilding initiatives and success stories post 2001 earthquake.
- The experiences of an earthquake is designed in a 5D simulator and is meant to give the visitor the ground reality of an event at this scale
- It also provides people with a space for remembrance where they can pay homage to the lost souls.

Joint Rivers Commission of India and Bangladesh

- **Context:** The 38th Meeting of Ministerial-level Joint Rivers Commission of India and Bangladesh was held in New Delhi.

Key Highlights:

- The Indian delegation was led by Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat. The meeting was held after a long gap of 12 years.

- The Joint Rivers Commission of India and Bangladesh was constituted in 1972 as a bilateral mechanism to address issues of mutual interest on common / border / transboundary rivers.
- India and Bangladesh share 54 rivers, of which 7 rivers have been identified earlier for developing the framework of water sharing agreements on priority.
- They also agreed to widen this area of ongoing cooperation by including 8 more rivers for data exchange. The matter will further be discussed at the Technical Level Committee of Joint Rivers Commission (JRC).
- In addition to this, discussions were held on ongoing bilateral issues of mutual interest including river water sharing of common rivers, sharing of flood data, addressing river pollution, conducting joint studies on sedimentation management, river bank protection works etc.
- Both sides- India and Bangladesh, finalized the text of MoU on Interim Water Sharing of Kushiyara river. They also welcomed finalization of the design and location of water intake point on the Feni River to meet the drinking water needs of Sabroom town in Tripura as per the October 2019 India -Bangladesh MoU on this subject.
- One of the important areas of cooperation, where India has been assisting Bangladesh, is sharing of real time flood data. India has recently extended the period of flood data sharing beyond October 15 to help Bangladesh address unforeseen flood events.
- Nepal foreign minister Khadka told the Indian ambassador that all “political parties in Nepal should have a unanimous view about the Agnipath scheme” and requested India to stop the recruitment until a consensus is reached.
- Nepalese youths have been recruited in the Indian Army for a long time since the Tripartite agreement signed between Nepal, India and UK in 1947 made a provision to recruit Nepalese youths in British and Indian Armies.
- The Indian Army's Gorkha regiments have 43 battalions and they comprise Indian soldiers as well as those recruited from Nepal.

PEN-PLUS Strategy

- **Context:** Africa has adopted a new strategy to boost access to the diagnosis, treatment and care of severe non-communicable diseases (NCD).

Key Highlights

- The health ministers, gathering for the Seventy-second session of the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Committee for Africa in Lomé, Togo, adopted the strategy known as PEN-PLUS, A Regional Strategy to Address Severe Noncommunicable Diseases at First-Level Referral Health Facilities.
- The strategy supports building the capacity of district hospitals and other first-level referral facilities to diagnose and manage severe noncommunicable diseases early, resulting in fewer deaths.
- The strategy adopted urges countries to institute standardized programmes to tackle chronic and severe noncommunicable diseases by ensuring that essential medicines, technologies and diagnostics are available and accessible at district hospitals.
- NCDs include heart diseases, cancers, diabetes, asthma among others.
- Only 36% of countries in the African region reported having essential medicines for noncommunicable diseases in public hospitals, according to a 2019 WHO survey.

30th AUGUST, 2022

Recruitment of Gorkha soldiers under Agnipath Scheme

- **Context:** Nepal postponed rallies which were to be held in that country to recruit Gorkha soldiers for the Indian Army under the Agnipath scheme.

Key Issues

- Nepal has requested the Indian Army to postpone the recruitment of Nepalis until there is more clarity about the Agnipath tour-of-duty scheme.

- In most parts of Africa, severe noncommunicable diseases are treated at tertiary health facilities, which are mostly in large cities. This exacerbates health inequities, as it puts care beyond the reach of most rural, peri-urban and lower-income patients, who can often only easily access district hospitals and local health centers. These facilities lack the capacity and resources to effectively manage severe noncommunicable diseases.
- Only 36% of countries in the African region reported having essential medicines for noncommunicable diseases in public hospitals, according to a 2019 WHO survey.
- Noncommunicable diseases account for most of the out-of-pocket spending of patients in Africa and due to their chronic nature often leads to catastrophic health expenditures.
- As there is no treaty for conserving the health of vast swathes of the earth's oceans, a UN resolution in 2017 had decided to rectify this while setting 2022 as the deadline.
- Some aspects of negotiations included establishing marine protected areas to put limits on certain activities, environmental impact assessments or clearances for sustainability of works, financial support to countries and sharing other scientific knowledge.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature has said binding agreements are needed for this treaty to be effective.
- There has been talk of resistance from countries that engage in deep sea mining of minerals or are heavily invested in fishing.

31st AUGUST, 2022

UN High Seas Treaty

- **Context:** Negotiations involving 168 countries, including the European Union, to agree on a UN Treaty for High Seas.

About UN High Seas Treaty

- Also referred to as the 'Paris Agreement for the Ocean', the treaty to deal with Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction has been under discussion for several years.
- The proposed treaty concerns the ocean existing beyond the Exclusive Economic Zones that lie from the coast of a country to about 200 nautical miles or 370 km into the sea, till where it has special rights for exploration. Waters beyond that are known as open seas or high seas.
- The treaty was to be negotiated under the United Nations Convention on Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982 which governs the rights of countries regarding marine resources.

Need for treaty

- Ninety per cent of global warming is occurring in the ocean, according to the NASA website.
- The effects of ocean warming include sea level rise due to thermal expansion, coral bleaching, accelerated melting of Earth's major ice sheets, intensified hurricanes, and changes in ocean health and biochemistry.
- Excessive fishing has increased manifold over the years, and a third of species such as sharks and rays are at the risk of extinction, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

About United Nations Convention on Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS), 1982

- The UNCLOS led to the establishment of territorial sea boundaries 22 km offshore, deciding the region up to which countries could claim full sovereign territorial rights, as well as the 200 nautical miles EEZ limit.
- It also created the International Seabed Authority and other conflict-resolution mechanisms.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)

- **Context:** Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY), the National Mission for Financial Inclusion completed eight years of successful implementation.

Key Highlights:

- On the occasion 8th Anniversary of PMJDY, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that financial inclusion is a major step towards inclusive growth which ensures the overall economic development of marginalised sections of society.
- The PMJDY was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day address in 2014.
- PMJDY has become the foundation stone for the government's people-centric economic initiatives.
- More than 46.25 crore beneficiaries banked under PMJDY since inception, amounting to over one lakh 73 thousand crore rupees.
- 56 percent Jan-Dhan account holders are women and 67 percent of Jan Dhan accounts are in rural and semi-urban areas. 31.94 crore RuPay cards have been issued to PMJDY account holders.
- The continuation of PMJDY beyond 2018 saw a marked shift in approach to meet the challenges and requirements of the emerging financial inclusion landscape in the country.
- The underlying pillars of PMJDY, namely, Banking the Unbanked, Securing the Unsecured, and Funding the Unfunded have made it possible to adopt multi-stakeholders' collaborative approach while leveraging technology for serving the unserved and underserved areas as well.

