



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

MARCH, 2024

Week-2

08-14 March, 2024

★★ Useful for ★★

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

8th MARCH, 2024

e-Kisan Upaj Nidhi

- **Context:** Recently, the union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Commerce and Industry and Textiles launched 'e-Kisan Upaj Nidhi' (Digital Gateway).

Key Highlights:

- It is a digital gateway of Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA).
- To ease the farmers' warehousing logistics and aid the farmers in receiving fair prices for their produce.
- It is an initiative of the Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution and Commerce and Industry and Textiles
- E-Kisan Upaj Nidhi' platform with its simplified digital process can ease the procedure of farmers' storage at any registered WDRA warehouse for a period of 6 months at 7% interest per annum.
- It will integrate e-Kisan Upaj Nidhi and e-NAM to enables farmers to leverage interconnected markets, extending benefits beyond government Minimum Support Price (MSP).
- This initiative with no collateral, extra security deposit policy aims to prevent distress sales by farmers, enabling better post-harvest storage opportunities.

About Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA)

- WDRA operates as a statutory authority under the Department of Food and Public Distribution. Its headquarter is at New Delhi
- It was established in October 2010 under the Warehousing (Development and Regulation) Act, 2007 to develop and regulate warehouses, promote negotiability of warehouse receipts, and facilitate orderly growth of the warehousing business in India.

Project Seabird

- **Context:** The Defence Minister inaugurated the infrastructure projects at the Indian Navy's Karwar base under Project 'Seabird.'

Key Highlights:

- The Project includes two major piers and seven residential towers. The expansion of the naval base is crucial for accommodating a growing fleet and enhancing operational capabilities.
- The first phase of Project Seabird, concluded in 2011, was designed to accommodate 10 ships.
- The Phase-IIA of the project includes berthing facilities for 32 ships and submarines, along with 23 yardcraft.
- It is a naval infrastructure project which entails the creation of a naval base at Karwar (Karnataka) on the west coast of India.
- It was approved in 1999 following the Pokhran-II by the then Union Defence Minister George Fernandes.
- Post-Indo-Pak War of 1971, there felt a need for an additional naval base since Mumbai Harbour faced congestion, which led to security issues for its Western Fleet.

India's first under-river metro tunnel

- **Context:** Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first under-river metro tunnel in Kolkata.

Key Highlights:

- The metro tunnel is part of the East-West Metro corridor and passes under the Hooghly River, between Howrah Maidan and Esplanade.
- The stretch also has the deepest metro station in the country — the Howrah metro station at around 32 metres below the ground.
- The first underground metro operation in India was started in Kolkata in 1984.
- The metro network in India is currently the third biggest in the world after the USA and China.

9th MARCH, 2024

National Youth Parliament Festival 2024

- **Context:** Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports organised the inaugural of the finals of the National Youth Parliament Festival, 2024

Key Highlights:

- Yatin Bhaskar Duggal from Haryana won the first prize in the National Youth Parliament Festival, 2024.
- First National Youth Parliament Festival was organized in 2019.
- The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports through the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) and National Service Scheme (NSS) has been organizing the Youth Parliament.
- These Youth Parliaments are aimed at strengthening the roots of democracy; inculcate healthy habits of discipline, tolerance of the view of others and to enable youths to know about practices and procedures of the Parliament.

V-SAT stations

- **Context:** The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is planning to collaborate with ISRO to deploy V-SAT stations on a pilot basis for around 80 tribal villages to bring internet services to these geographically remote and challenging areas that have long been without connectivity.

Key Highlights:

- A Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) is a two-way satellite ground station equipped with a dish antenna ranges from 75 cm to 1.2 meters.
- VSATs facilitate two-way communication via satellite. They relay data between small remote Earth stations (terminals) and other terminals (in mesh topology) or central Earth station "hubs" (in star topology).

- They find use in providing connectivity to remote locations, supporting transportable or on-the-move communications (using phased array antennas), and enabling mobile maritime communication.
- VSATs rely on satellite signals instead of physical links like Ethernet cables, reducing the risk of structural issues and eliminating the need for extensive infrastructure.
- VSAT systems can operate independently for local telecommunication networks, serving as a backup for wired networks in case of failure.
- VSATs can be installed in remote locations with minimal infrastructure requirements, as satellite signals can be redirected to various locations through a central hub.

Dry Ice

- **Context:** Recently, customers at a Gurgaon restaurant were hospitalized after consuming dry ice mistaken as mouth freshener.

Key Highlights:

- It is solid carbon dioxide (CO₂) at a temperature of approximately -78.5°C (-109.3°F).
- It is formed by compressing and cooling gaseous carbon dioxide until it reaches its solid state without passing through the liquid phase (Sublimation process).
- It is commonly used as a cooling agent in various applications, such as preserving perishable items.
- Direct contact with dry ice can cause frostbite or burns due to its extremely low temperature.

10th MARCH, 2024

Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)

- **Context:** The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has recently approved the project for the design and development of India's fifth-generation fighter jet, Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA).

Key Highlights:

- It is an Indian fifth-generation stealth, multirole combat aircraft. It is being developed for the Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy.
- It is designed by Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) – an Aircraft Design Agency under Ministry of Defence.
- It will be produced by a public-private joint venture between the DRDO, HAL and an Indian private company.
- It is designed as a single-seat, twin-engine combat aircraft.
- Weight- 25-tonne twin-engine stealth aircraft with an internal weapons bay and Diverterless Supersonic Intake. This has been developed in India for the first time.
- It will perform operations like Air supremacy, Ground-Strike, Suppression of Enemy Air Defenses (SEAD) and Electronic Warfare (EW) missions.
- It will replace the Sukhoi Su-30MKI air superiority fighter, which forms the backbone of the IAF fighter fleet.

IndiaAI Mission

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet approved the IndiaAI Mission for the next five years.

Key Highlights:

- The Mission will be implemented by 'IndiaAI' Independent Business Division (IBD) under Digital India Corporation (DIC).
- The IndiaAI mission will establish a comprehensive ecosystem catalyzing AI innovation through strategic programs and partnerships across the public and private sectors.
- The ecosystem will comprise AI compute infrastructure of 10,000 or more Graphics Processing Units (GPUs), built through public-private partnership.
- Further, an AI marketplace will be designed to offer AI as a service and pre-trained models to AI innovators.
- It will act as a one-stop solution for resources critical for AI innovation.

- The initiative will focus on developing/scaling/promoting adoption of impactful AI solutions with potential for catalyzing large scale socio-economic transformation.
- It is conceptualized to mitigate barriers to entry into AI programs and will increase AI courses in undergraduate, masters-level, and Ph.D. programs.
- It is conceptualized to support and accelerate deep-tech AI startups and provide them streamlined access to funding to enable futuristic AI Projects.
- The Safe & Trusted AI pillar will enable the implementation of Responsible AI projects including the development of indigenous tools and frameworks, self-assessment checklists for innovators, and other guidelines and governance frameworks.
- The approved IndiaAI Mission will propel innovation and build domestic capacities to ensure the tech sovereignty of India.
- It will also create highly skilled employment opportunities to harness the demographic dividend of the country.
- It will drive responsible, inclusive growth of India's AI ecosystem.
- IndiaAI Mission will help India demonstrate to the world how this transformative technology can be used for social good and enhance its global competitiveness.

11th MARCH, 2024

National Creators Awards

- **Context:** Prime Minister Modi presented the first ever National Creators Award at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

Key Highlights:

- The National Creators Award is an effort to recognize excellence and impact across different domains.
- The award is envisioned as a launch pad for using creativity to drive positive change.

- The award will be provided across twenty categories including the Best Storyteller Award; The Disruptor of the Year; Green Champion Award; Best Creator For Social Change; Best Travel Creator Award; Swachhta Ambassador Award; etc.

UNNATI – 2024: Uttar Poorva

Transformative Industrialization Scheme

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet approved the Uttar Poorva Transformative Industrialization Scheme, 2024 (UNNATI – 2024).

Key Highlights:

- Government of India has formulated New Industrial Development Scheme, UNNATI as a Central Sector Scheme for the development of Industries and generation of employment in the states of North East Region.
- The scheme will be effective from the date of Notification and up to 2034 along with 8 years of committed liabilities.
- Districts are categorized in two zones: Zone A (Industrially Advanced Districts) & Zone B (Industrially Backward Districts).
- 60% of the outlay of Part A has been earmarked to 8 NE states and 40% on First-In-First-Out (FIFO) basis.

Sudha Murty : Nominated to Rajya Sabha

- **Context:** Sudha Murty has been nominated to the Rajya Sabha by President Droupadi Murmu.

Key Highlights:

- She is a renowned author, philanthropist, and former chairperson of Infosys Foundation and has made immense contributions to social work, education, and literature. She has also received Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan.
- Currently, the Rajya Sabha has a strength of 245 members which represent States and Union Territories of Delhi and Puducherry. Out of the total

245 members, 12 are directly nominated by the President who are veterans in the field of art, literature, sports, science etc.

- Based on population, each state is allocated a certain number of candidates in the Upper House. For instance, Uttar Pradesh has 31 Rajya Sabha seats while Goa has one.
- As per the Allocation of Business Rules, 1961, “Nominations to the Rajya Sabha” is allocated to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- Nominated members of the Rajya Sabha possess the same powers and privileges as elected MPs, allowing them to participate fully in House proceedings. However, they are unable to vote in the election of the President, though they retain the right to vote in the election of the Vice-President.

12th MARCH, 2024

Pritzker Architecture Prize

- **Context:** Japanese architect Riken Yamamoto was declared winner of the 2024 Pritzker Architecture Prize.

Key Highlights:

- The Pritzker Architecture Prize is the highest international honor for architects.
- The Prize was founded in 1979 by Jay A. Pritzker, funded by the Pritzker family and sponsored by the Hyatt Foundation.
- Architects from Japan have won the largest number of Pritzkers.
- Kenzo Tange was the first Japanese winner in 1987, and Yamamoto is the ninth laureate from Japan.
- The only Indian laureate is the late Balkrishna Doshi (2018).

India-EFTA trade deal

- **Context:** India has recently signed a free trade agreement (FTA) with four European countries-Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.

Key Highlights:

- Signed between-India & four European countries- Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.
- The FTA envisions a goal of reaching \$100 billion in investments in India and creation of 1 million jobs within 15 years.
- It will ensure tariff reduction, increase in market access, and simplification of customs procedures.
- For the first time, the FTA also included a chapter on commitments to human rights and sustainable development.
- The pact could serve as a template when dealing with developed nations, who will have greater market access in a high tariff country like India and have investments to offer.

About European Free Trade Association (EFTA):

- The European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is an intergovernmental organization set up for the promotion of free trade and economic integration to the benefit of its four Member States – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland – and the benefit of their trading partners around the globe.
- It was founded by the Stockholm Convention in 1960.

13th MARCH, 2024

Gorsam Kora Festival

- **Context:** Recently, the Gorsam Kora Festival was celebrated as 'India-Bhutan Friendship & Shared Cultural Heritage of Himalayan Buddhism' in Tawang of Arunachal Pradesh.

Key Highlights:

- It is an annual festival, celebrated in the scenic Zemithang Valley along the Nyanmjang Chu River of Tawang district in Arunachal Pradesh, India.
- It is held at the Gorsam Chorten, a 93-foot-tall Stupa built during the 13th century AD by a local monk, Lama Pradhar.
- This landmark is older than the Tawang Monastery, and is an icon for Himalayan Buddhism.

- It is observed during the last day of the first month of the Lunar calendar.
- It features a diverse array of events, including enthralling performances by local cultural troupes and the Indian Army bands, and martial performances like Mallakhamb and Zanjh Pathaka.
- It symbolises the enduring friendship between India and Bhutan.
- The 14th Dalai Lama found refuge upon his escape from Tibet in 1959 in Zemithang Valley.
- The Gorsam Chorten is modelled after the Boudhinath Stupa of Nepal and has a spiritual companion, the Chorten Kora in Trashiyangtse of Bhutan, built in 1740.

Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) rules 2024 notified

- **Context:** The Home Ministry has recently notified the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) rules, 2024. These rules enable the implementation of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) passed by the Parliament in 2019.

Key Highlights:

- The objective of the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019 is to modify the Citizenship Amendment Act of 1955. It provides Indian citizenship to particular categories of illegal migrants.
- It proposes that six minorities—Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan won't be considered illegal immigrants if they enter India without proper documents on or before December 31, 2014.
- The main goal is to help non-Muslim migrants from India's neighboring Muslim-majority countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh) to obtain citizenship.
- The amendment reduces the period of residency from 11 years to 5 years, for acquiring permanent citizenship through naturalization.

- Individuals belonging to specified communities are granted immunity from criminal prosecution under the Foreigners Act of 1946 and the Passport Act of 1920, provided they arrived in India on or before December 31, 2014.
- The provisions on citizenship for illegal migrants will not apply to two categories:
 - a. Regions protected by the 'Inner Line Permit'.
 - b. Areas covered under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

14th MARCH, 2024

Bharat Shakti Exercise

- **Context:** Recently, the Prime Minister of India witnessed the Exercise Bharat Shakti in Pokhran, Rajasthan.

Key Highlights:

- It is a mega tri-service military exercise, and a synergised demonstration of indigenous defence capabilities in the form of a tri-services live fire and manoeuvre exercise.
- It showcased the 'shock and awe' impact that the armed forces seek to achieve in an operational situation with manoeuvre and fighting capabilities.
- It demonstrated the LCA Tejas, ALH Mk-IV, Mobile Anti-drone System, T90 Tanks, Dhanush, K9 Vajra, and Pinaka Rockets and Satellite System.
- 'Bharat Shakti' displayed an array of indigenous weapon systems, by showcasing the prowess of India's indigenous defence capabilities and nation's Aatmanirbharata initiative.
- It was a testament to India's growing self-reliance in defence manufacturing and its commitment to safeguarding its borders.
- It simulated realistic, synergised, multi-domain operations displaying integrated operational capabilities of the Indian Armed Forces to counter threats across land, air, sea, cyber, and space domains.

India was the top arms importer in 2019-2023: SIPRI

- **Context:** According to the latest data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India was the world's leading arms importer for the period 2019-2023. India's arms imports saw a 4.7% increase compared to the period from 2014 to 2018.

Key Highlights:

- Russia is still India's main arms supplier, making up 36% of imports. However, it's the first time since 1960-1964 that Russia's deliveries comprised less than half of India's arms imports in a five-year period.
- After Russia, France (33%) stands as India's second-largest arms supplier, while the US (13%) ranks as the third-largest provider of weapons to India.
- Asia and the Middle East are the leading
- The report shows a notable 94% rise in European arms imports from 2014-2018 to 2019-2023 which is likely due to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.
- In 2019-2023, European countries imported over half of their arms, 55%, from the U.S., which increased from 35% in 2014-2018.
- The United States, the biggest arms supplier globally, experienced a 17% increase in exports from 2014-2018 to 2019-2023. Meanwhile, France became the world's second-largest arms supplier, with exports growing by 47%.

'Statue of Valour' of Ahom general Lachit Borphukan

- **Context:** Prime Minister Modi unveiled the 125-foot tall 'Statue of Valour', of Ahom general Lachit Borphukan

Key Highlights:

- He was born in 1622, in Charaideo, Assam.
- He was chosen as one of the five Borphukans of the Ahom kingdom by king Chakradhwaj Singha, and given administrative, judicial, and military responsibilities.

- He is best known for his leadership during the Battle of Saraighat in 1671 against the Mughal forces led by Raja Ramsingh under Aurangzeb.

About Ahom Kingdom:

- It was established by Chaolung Sukapha in the 13th century.
 - It endured for six centuries as the ruling power in Assam.
 - The Ahoms governed the region until it was annexed to British India in 1826 through the signing of the Treaty of Yandaboo.
- 