



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

AUGUST, 2023

Week-1

1-7 August, 2023

★★ Useful for ★★

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

1st AUGUST, 2023

National Deep Tech Startup Policy (NDTSP)

- **Context:** The National Consortium and Working Group set up by the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council has released the Draft National Deep Tech Startup Policy (NDTSP) for public consultation.

Key Highlights:

- Draft National Deep Tech Startup Policy (NDTSP) is strategically formulated to stimulate innovation, spur economic growth and promote societal development through the effective utilization of deep tech research-driven innovations.
- Aim of the policy is to address the challenges confronting deep tech startups through definitive policy interventions to create a conducive ecosystem.
- It is prepared by National Consortium and Working Group set up by the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC),
- The policy restates the government's disappointment with international agreements that it argues have left India on the backfoot in terms of manufacturing and development power.
- The policy calls for a more multi-pronged approach to protect Indian interests. The need of the hour is a coordinated, comprehensive push to optimally engage with international partners and multilateral institutions to push the Indian Deep Tech Ecosystem.
- The policy also suggests resource-intensive policy approaches to attract global talent, such as offering networking opportunities to international deep tech startups and experts interested in relocating and contributing to the local ecosystem.
- This policy complements and adds value to the existing Startup India policies, programmes and initiatives, by fostering a conducive ecosystem for deep tech startups to thrive and address their unique and complex challenges.

The policy suggests necessary changes in nine policy areas such as:

- Nurturing Research, Development & Innovation
- Strengthening the Intellectual Property Regime
- Facilitating Access to Funding
- Enabling Shared Infrastructure and Resource Sharing
- Creating Conducive Regulations, Standards, and Certifications
- Attracting Human Resources & Initiating Capacity Building
- Promoting Procurement & Adoption
- Ensuring Policy & Program Interlinkages
- Sustaining Deep Tech Startups.

Hydrogen Production from Methanol

- **Context:** Researchers have developed a new process of producing hydrogen from methanol through a catalytic reaction under ambient conditions.

Key Highlights:

- Hydrogen is considered one of the cleanest sources of energy that can be easily obtained from indigestible biomass or bio-derived alcohols.
- Various methods can generate hydrogen but the cost of hydrogen depends on how environmentally friendly and energy efficient the production process is.
- For instance, Water and methane are the main sources of hydrogen on Earth but extracting pure hydrogen from them consumes a lot of energy through techniques such as natural gas reforming electrolysis and water-splitting reactions.
- Notably, Methanol can serve as a potential candidate for obtaining hydrogen due to its gravimetric hydrogen content of 12.6% and its effective conversion to H₂ and CO₂ as final products.
- Researchers have developed a new process of producing hydrogen from methanol through a catalytic reaction under ambient conditions.
- This method offers a sustainable and green method of manufacturing the much-needed Hydrogen fuel.

2nd AUGUST, 2023

Recently Granted G.I. Tags from Tamil Nadu

- **Context:** The Geographical Indications Registry has granted the GI tag to three famous products from Tamil Nadu, namely Jaderi Namakatti, Chedibutta Saree and Kanniyakumari Matti Banana.

Key Highlights:

Jaderi Namakatti:

- These are clay sticks that are white in colour. They are usually available in finger-like shape with a smooth texture.
- They are used to adorn the foreheads of idols, men and temple elephants.
- The namakatti is made up of the rich deposit of hydrous silicate minerals that form fine grain particles of clay. The clay is processed and shaped in a finger-like structure.
- The production of namakatti depends on the climatic condition as it needs a lot of sunlight to dry.

Chedibutta Saree:

- It is a handloom saree which depicts the Chedibutta design in art silk and cotton mix fabric.
- The name 'Chedibutta' is a combination of two Tamil words- 'Chedi' (plant) and 'Butta' (repeated motif or design).
- The iconic 'plant and flower' motif is woven on the border and pallu (edge of the saree).
- The Sowashtra community are the primary weavers.

Kanniyakumari Matti Banana:

- Matti banana is a traditional table banana cultivar of medicinal value.
- The fruit is highly fragrant, sweet with sub-acid flavour, firm texture and powdery nature.
- The Matti banana fruit looks like the mouth of a crocodile hence it is also called 'Crocodile Finger Banana'.

Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023

- **Context:** The Lok Sabha passed the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2023.

Key Highlights:

- The Bill establishes the National Capital Civil Services Authority (NCCSA) which consists of the Chief Minister, Chief Secretary of Delhi, Principal Home Secretary of Delhi.
- The Authority will make recommendations to the Lieutenant Governor (LG) regarding transfers and postings of officials and disciplinary matters.
- The Bill empowers the LG to exercise his sole discretion on several matters including those recommended by the National Capital Civil Services Authority and the summoning, prorogation and dissolution of the Delhi Legislative Assembly.
- It authorizes department secretaries to bring to the notice of the LG, the Chief Minister and the Chief Secretary any matter that may bring Delhi Government into controversy with the Central Government.

India's Vision of \$5 Trillion Economy

- **Context:** Government has informed the Lok Sabha about the steps taken to make India a \$5 trillion economy.

Key Highlights:

- Government's roadmap to achieve a \$5 trillion economy involves focusing on macro-level growth while ensuring comprehensive welfare at the micro level.
- The roadmap also includes promoting digital economy and fintech, technology-enabled development, energy transition, climate action, and relying on a virtuous cycle of investment and growth.
- The major reforms include Goods and Services Tax (GST), Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), a significant reduction in the corporate tax rate, Make in India and Start-up India strategies and Production Linked Incentive Schemes.

- Government has focused on a capex-led growth strategy to support economic growth and attract investment from the private sector by increasing its capital investment outlay substantially during the last three years.
- The Central Government's capital expenditure has increased from 2.15% of GDP in 2020-21 to 2.7% of GDP in 2022-23.
- Union Budget 2023-24 has taken steps to sustain the high growth of India's economy. These include a substantial increase in capital investment outlay for the third year in a row by 33% to 10 lakh crore (3.3% of GDP). Direct capital investment by the Centre is also complemented by Grants-in-Aid to States for the creation of capital assets.

3rd AUGUST, 2023

Contractual Dispute Settlement Scheme

- **Context:** Government of India has launched the Vivad se Vishwas-II scheme for settling contractual disputes involving the government and government-undertakings.

Key Highlights:

- Vivad se Vishwas-II Scheme was announced in the Union Budget 2023-24.
- Its aim is to resolve the government's contractual disputes with private parties, clear the backlog of litigation and improve the ease of doing business.
- The scheme will apply to all domestic contractual disputes where one of the parties is either the Government of India or an organization operating under its control.
- The scheme will cover cases where the court order was passed by 30 April 2023, and the arbitral order given by 30 January 2023.
- Under the scheme, for court orders passed on or before 30 April 2023, the settlement amount offered to the contractor will be up to 85 per cent of the net

amount awarded or upheld by the court. For arbitral orders passed on or before 1 January 2023, the settlement amount offered is up to 65 percent of the net amount awarded.

- Eligible claims will be processed only through the government e-marketplace.

Himalayan Vulture

- **Context:** Himalayan vultures have not only survived in the hot and humid weather but also contributed to India's first captive breeding success story of Himalayan vultures at Assam State Zoo in Guwahati.

Key Highlights:

- Himalayan Griffon vulture or Himalayan Vulture inhabits the higher regions of the Himalayas and the Tibetan Plateau.
- This species is distributed from western China, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan, east through the Himalayan mountain range in India, Nepal and Bhutan, to central China and Mongolia.
- They can fly at an elevation of up to 5,500 metre with help of their wide and powerful wings.
- Its IUCN Status is Near Threatened.
- In India, a total of nine species of vultures are found. Out of these six species are resident (white-rumped vulture, Indian vulture, slender-billed vulture, red-headed vulture, bearded vulture and Egyptian vulture) and three species are migratory (cinereous vulture, griffon vulture and Himalayan vulture).

4th AUGUST, 2023

Harmonised System of Nomenclature (HSN)

- **Context:** The Government of India had imposed restrictions on imports of laptops, all-in-one personal computers and tablets under HSN Code 8471. Though, the restrictions have been lifted and will be implemented from November 1, 2023.

Key Highlights:

- The restrictions had been imposed under HSN Code 8471 on seven categories of electronic gadgets.
- The Harmonised System of Nomenclature (HSN) code is a classification system used to identify products for taxation purposes.
- HSN Code 8471 is used to identify devices that are designed to perform data processing tasks.
- With the curbing imports of these devices, the government aims to reduce reliance on foreign markets and encourage the growth of local manufacturing capabilities.
- This move will give a direct boost to the Center's Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for IT hardware.
- The highest share of imports is in the category of personal computers including laptops, and palmtops, under which imports from China stood at \$558.36 million in April-May this year as against \$618.26 million in the year-ago period. China accounts for roughly 70-80 per cent of the share of India's imports of personal computers, laptops.
- People who travel abroad can bring along one laptop, tablet, all-in-one personal computer, or ultra-small form factor computer in their baggage without import restrictions when returning to India. The exemption applies to items bought from e-commerce platforms and shipped via post or courier.
- An exemption is also provided for up to 20 items per shipment, particularly for research, testing, evaluation, repair, re-export, and product development. The imports are permitted under the condition that they are used solely for their stated purposes and not sold.

NIDHI Programme

- **Context:** The Union Minister of Science & Technology (DST) has informed Lok Sabha about the NIDHI Programme.

Key Highlights:

- Its nodal department is Department of Science & Technology (DST).

- It was launched in 2016.
- Its aim is to promote S&T based entrepreneurship and startup ecosystem across the country and to nurture start-ups through scouting, supporting and scaling of innovations.
- The components of NIDHI are designed to support ideas and innovators since their early startup journey and link them to the entire market value chain.
- NIDHI-Entrepreneur in Residence (EIR) Inspiring graduating students to take entrepreneurship by providing fellowship
- NIDHI-Promotion and Acceleration of Young and Aspiring Technology Entrepreneurs (PRAYAS) Supports innovators and startups technically and financially from Idea to Prototype stage.
- NIDHI – Inclusive-Technology Business Incubator (ITBI) Programme has been rolled out to increase outreach of incubation programs in terms of geographies, gender etc.

Mediation Bill, 2021

- **Context:** Rajya Sabha has passed the Mediation Bill, 2021.

Key Highlights:

- Mediation is a type of ADR (alternative dispute resolution), where a dispute is referred to a neutral person, who engages with the warring parties and tries to find a solution agreeable to both.
- Courts have regularly been ordering mediation to settle civil, commercial, and family disputes among others.
- Persons can try to settle civil or commercial disputes through mediation before approaching any court or tribunal. However, the pre-litigation mediation is voluntary and not mandatory.
- A party may withdraw from mediation after two mediation sessions.
- Mediation process must be completed within 180 days, which may be extended by another 180 days by the parties.

- Mediation Council of India will be set up. Its functions include registering mediators, and recognising mediation service providers and mediation institutes (which train and certify mediators).
- Mediations are ordered by the courts and when a dispute is thus settled, the settlement agreement is converted into a decree by the court, thus making it binding on the parties. However, the Mediation bill puts a mediated settlement agreement on par with a court judgment without the need for any further court sanction.
- Mediation agreements can only be challenged on grounds of fraud, corruption, impersonation, or relating to disputes not fit for mediation.
- The app integrates its services with various bank portals, making it convenient for users to recharge their FASTags, avail monthly passes, and access other FASTag-related banking services – all within a single platform.

Net Zero Emissions Target

- **Context:** Union Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change has informed Lok Sabha about India's net zero emissions target and the measures it has taken to address the rapidly growing environmental problems in the country.

Key Highlights:

- India is an emerging economy whose priority is to achieve development and poverty eradication goals. Due to this, Greenhouse emissions are bound to increase.
- However, it is to be noted that India's historical cumulative emissions from 1850 to 2019 amount to less than 4 percent of cumulative carbon dioxide emissions of the world from the pre-industrial era, despite being home to 17% of the world's population.
- Hence, India's responsibility for global warming thus far has been minimal and even today its annual per capita emissions are only about one-third of the global average.
- At COP 26 in November 2021, India has committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2070.
- India's long-term low-carbon development strategy submitted to the UN is guided by principles of equity, climate justice, and the idea of Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities.

The strategy rests on seven key transitions to low-carbon development pathways:

1. Low-carbon development of electricity systems consistent with development
2. Develop an integrated, efficient and inclusive transport system

5th AUGUST, 2023

'Rajmargyatra' App

- **Context:** The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has launched the 'Rajmargyatra' app.

Key Highlights:

- Rajmargyatra is a citizen-centric unified mobile application. It empowers travelers with comprehensive information on Indian National Highways while also offering an efficient complaint redressal system.
- Its aim is to create a seamless, user-friendly experience for highway users, fostering a safer and more enjoyable journey on Indian National Highways.
- The app serves as a one-stop repository of essential information for National Highway users. Get real-time weather conditions, timely broadcast notifications, and access to details about nearby toll plazas, and other essential services that ensure a seamless and safe journey on National Highways.
- The app comes equipped with an inbuilt complaint redressal and escalation mechanism. Users can easily report highway-related issues, attaching geo-tagged videos or photos for better clarity. Users can also track the status of their grievances for complete transparency.

- Promote adaptation in urban design, energy and material efficiency in buildings
- Promoting economy-wide decoupling of growth from emissions and development of an efficient, innovative low emission industrial system
- Development of carbon dioxide removal and related engineering solutions
- Enhancing forest and vegetation cover
- Economic and financial needs of low-carbon development.

6th AUGUST, 2023

Einstein Cross

- Context:** Astronomers have discovered a stunning, rare example of an “Einstein Cross” splitting and magnifying light from the far depths of the universe.

Key Highlights:

- A foreground elliptical galaxy located about 6 billion light-years away from Earth has warped and quadrisectioned a bright beam of light from a background galaxy approximately 11 billion light-years away.
- It is a rare arrangement that astronomers will study to get a better understanding of the universe.
- The background light emitted by a quasar, which is a young galaxy with a supermassive black hole at its center.
- It consumes immense amounts of matter and blasts out enough radiation to shine more than a trillion times more brightly than the brightest stars
- Einstein’s theory of general relativity describes the way massive objects warp the fabric of the universe, called space-time.
- Einstein discovered that gravity is not an unseen force but rather a consequence of space-time curving and distorting in the presence of matter and energy.
- Light, though usually traveling in a straight line, bends when passing through highly curved regions of space-time creating a halo-like effect.

- In this case, Earth, the lensing galaxy and the quasar have aligned to perfectly duplicate the quasar’s light, arranging them along a so-called Einstein ring.

Digital Health Incentives Scheme (DHIS)

- Context:** The National Health Authority (NHA) has announced the extension of its Digital Health Incentives Scheme (DHIS) under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM) till 31st December 2023.

Key Highlights:

- It was launched on 1st January, 2023 as part of the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission
- Its aim is to give a further boost to digital health transactions in the country under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM).
- Under the scheme, the eligible health facilities and digital solutions companies shall be able to earn financial incentives of up to Rs. 4 crores based on the number of digital health records created and linked to ABHA (Ayushman Bharat Health Account) numbers of the patients.
- This incentive can be availed by the health facilities (hospitals, diagnostic labs) and Digital Solution Companies registered with ABDM’s Health Facility Registry (HFR).
- This scheme has proven to be a significant catalyst in promoting the adoption of digital health technologies and practices in healthcare delivery across the country.

7th AUGUST, 2023

Manas National Park

- Context:** The All-India Tiger Estimation 2022 has indicated that Assam’s Manas National Park and Tiger Reserve is moving from a low to high-tiger-density area.

Key Highlights:

- Manas National Park is located in Assam. It is a UNESCO Natural World Heritage site, a tiger reserve and a biosphere reserve.

- Manas is located at the foothills of the Eastern Himalayas.
- The name of the park originated from the Manas River. The Manas River is a major tributary of Brahmaputra River, which passes through the heart of the national park.
- It shares a common border with the Royal Manas National Park of Bhutan.
- The monsoon forests of Manas lie in the Brahmaputra Valley semi-evergreen forests ecoregion.
- The combination of Sub-Himalayan Bhabar Terai region with riverine succession leading up to the Himalayan subtropical broadleaf forests makes it one of the richest biodiversity areas in the world.
- The Park is home to many endangered species like Assam roofed turtle, golden Langur, hispid hare, and pygmy hog. It is also famous for its wild water buffaloes.
- There is only one forest village, Pagrang, in the core of the national park. Apart from this village 56 more villages surround the park.
- Manas National Park faces threats such as encroachment (for farm activity), impact from upstream hydroelectric projects in Bhutan, improper protection and management of grasslands, invasive plants as well as some amount of poaching.
- As stated by the ministry, the 'ISO Bill-2023' is essentially an 'enabling Act' and it does not propose any change in the existing Service Acts/ Rules/Regulations which are time-tested and have withstood judicial scrutiny over the last six decades or more.
- The Bill would also pave the way for much greater integration and jointness amongst the three Services.

Study in India Portal

- **Context:** Recently, the Study in India (SII) Portal was launched to re-establishing India as a global hub of education.

Key Highlights:

- Study in India Portal is a dedicated website that will provide comprehensive information about the Indian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).
- The website will illustrate academic programs i.e. undergraduate (UG), postgraduate (PG), Doctoral level programs as well as courses in Indian Knowledge System like Yoga, Ayurveda, classical arts etc.
- The website-portal will present information about the academic facilities, research support, and related information. The website will have the provision for students to apply in more than one institute/course of their choice.
- The portal will provide an integrated one-stop solution for student registration and visa application process.
- Portal will help in making India a preferred destination for higher education.
- SII will establish a strong international footprint of brand 'India' in the education sphere.
- The presence of international students will also benefit the domestic students by connecting them more closely to the globalizing world and preparing them better from the global workplace.

Inter-Services Organisation (Command, Control and Discipline) Bill, 2023

- **Context:** The Lok Sabha recently passed the Inter-Services Organisation (Command, Control and Discipline) Bill, 2023.

Key Highlights:

- The Inter-Services Organisation (Command, Control and Discipline) Bill, 2023 seeks to empower Commander-in-Chief and Officer-in Command of Inter-Services Organisations (ISOs) with all disciplinary and administrative powers in respect of the personnel serving in or attached to such organisations.