



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

NOVEMBER, 2023

Week-4

22-30 Nov., 2023

★★ Useful for ★★

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

22nd NOVEMBER, 2023

National Pharmacy Commission Bill, 2023

- **Context:** The Union Health Ministry has sought comments from the general public on the proposed National Pharmacy Commission Bill, 2023.

Key Highlights:

- Its objective is to repeal the Pharmacy Act of 1948 and replace the Pharmacy Council of India with a national commission.
- The head office of the commission shall be at New Delhi. It shall consist of a Chairperson, thirteen ex officio Members and Fourteen part-time members.
- To provide for a pharmacy education system that improves access to quality and affordable pharmacy or pharmaceutical education, ensures availability of adequate and high quality pharmacy professionals in all parts of the country that promotes equitable and universal healthcare to all citizens.
- The proposed Bill encourages pharmacy professionals to adopt latest pharmacy research in their work and to contribute to research.
- It calls for a periodic and transparent assessment of pharmacy institutions, and enforcing high ethical standards in all aspects of pharmacy services.
- The Pharmacy Ethics and Registration Board will maintain a National Pharmacy Register which will have details of pharmacy professionals to ensure transparency.
- It provides for an effective grievance redressal mechanism

Emissions Gap Report 2023

- **Context:** The Emissions Gap Report 2023 titled "Broken Record – Temperatures hit new highs" has been released.

Key Highlights:

- Emissions Gap Report released by UN Environment Programme (UNEP)
- It tracks the gap between where global emissions are heading with current country commitments and where they ought to be to limit warming to 1.5°C.
- In 2022, we had 86 days that surpassed the 1.5-degree Celsius temperature mark due to a record-breaking rise in global greenhouse gas emissions.
- There has been progress since the Paris Agreement was signed in 2015. Greenhouse gas emissions in 2030 were projected to increase by 16% at the time of the agreement's adoption. Today, the projected increase is 3 percent. However, predicted 2030 greenhouse gas emissions still must fall by 28% for the Paris Agreement 2°C pathway and 42% for the 1.5°C pathway.
- The United States of America accounts for 4 percent of the current world population but contributed 17 percent of global warming from 1850 to 2021 including the impact of methane and nitrous oxide emissions. India, by contrast, accounts for 18 percent of the world population, but till date only contributed 5 percent of warming.
- Globally, the 10 percent of the population with the highest income accounted for nearly half (48 percent) of emissions with two thirds of this group living in developed countries. The bottom 50 percent of the world population contributed only 12 percent of total emissions.
- Global GHG emissions increased by 1.2 per cent from 2021 to 2022 to reach a new record of 57.4 gigatons of CO₂ equivalent (GtCO₂e).
- The emissions of three biggest emitters China, United States and India has increased in 2022. But the emissions of the European Union, Russia and Brazil have gone down a bit.
- The COVID-19 slowdown in 2020 only reduced emissions by 4.7% from 2019, showing the limited impact of this pause.

23rd NOVEMBER, 2023

Operation Karuna

- **Context:** India launched 'Operation Karuna' to assist Myanmar which has been devastated by Cyclone Mocha.

Key Highlights

- India has launched "Operation Karuna" to provide humanitarian assistance for people in Myanmar, which is affected by Cyclone Mocha.
- The Indian Navy ships carried emergency food items, tents, essential medicines, water pumps, portable generators, clothes, sanitary and hygiene items, etc.
- It has caused widespread devastation in Bangladesh and Myanmar, causing widespread loss of life and property in both these countries.
- Cyclone Mocha is a tropical cyclone that originated in the Bay of Bengal.
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has classified it as a very severe cyclonic storm.
- The name of the storm 'Mocha' has been suggested by Yemen.
- The cyclone has been named after a Red Sea port city known for its coffee production. The city also gave its name to the popular beverage, café Mocha.

Langlands Program: The world's biggest Math project

- **Context:** Langlands Program provides a beautifully intricate set of connections between various areas of mathematics, pointing the way toward novel solutions for old problems in mathematics.

Key Highlights:

- It is the world's biggest math project and can be likened to building bridges across mathematical cultures with different objects and languages.
- It is named after Robert Langlands, a mathematician at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.

- In 2018, he was awarded the Abel Prize for "his visionary program connecting representation theory to number theory" To find connections between two far-flung areas of mathematics – number theory and harmonic analysis.
- It seeks to do this by connecting every Galois group with automorphic functions, allowing mathematicians to investigate polynomial equations using tools from calculus.
- In 1994, Andrew Wiles and Richard Taylor applied Langlands' conjectures to prove Fermat's last theorem.
- It can help mathematicians create new automorphic functions from preexisting ones. Such efforts could be crucial to prove the Ramanujan conjectures (speculations), many of which remain unsolved.
- Can evolve into new fields of mathematics– For example, Geometric Langlands. It investigates connections between algebraic geometry and representation theory.
- Mathematicians have suggested connections between Geometric Langlands and physics, particularly for studying electromagnetic waves.

SATHEE Portal

- **Context:** The Ministry of Education has asked States to encourage aspirants to utilize the newly launched portal for exam preparation named SATHEE.

Key Highlights:

- SATHEE is an open learning platform available to students at no cost launched by Ministry of Education in association with IIT Kanpur. Its full form is Self Assessment Test and Help for Entrance Exams.
- To help students gain access to training and coaching for competitive examinations for free.
- Currently, digital learning material on the platform is available in four languages — English, Hindi, Odia, and Telugu. Plan is to extend it to 13 languages.
- The platform will help the students who are not able to afford the costly entrance exam guidance and coaching.

- The initiative is in line with the National Education Policy, with the goal to provide inclusive and high quality education.
- 5. Extraordinarily high melting point, only surpassed by tungsten and rhenium.

24th NOVEMBER, 2023

Tantalum: A rare metal

- **Context:** A team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar has found the presence of tantalum in the Sutlej river sand in Punjab.

Key Highlights:

- Discovered in 1802 by Anders Gustaf Ekenberg in minerals obtained from Ytterby, Sweden and named after Greek mythological figure Tantalus.
- Tantalum capacitors store more electricity in smaller sizes with minimal leakage. This makes it ideal for portable electronics like smartphones, laptops, and cameras.
- Due to its high melting point, it is used as a substitute for platinum, which is more expensive.
- Used to make components for chemical plants, nuclear power plants, aeroplanes and missiles.
- Used in surgical equipment and implants due to its inertness with bodily fluids.
- Tantalum carbide (TaC) and graphite composite is one of the hardest materials. This is used on the cutting edges of high-speed machine tools.

Tantalum Properties:

1. Grey, heavy and very hard metal.
2. Highly corrosion resistant as it forms an oxide layer on exposure to air which is extremely difficult to remove.
3. Ductile when pure which means it can be stretched, pulled or drawn into a thin wire or thread without breaking.
4. Immune to most chemical attacks below 150°C. It can be attacked only by hydrofluoric acid, acidic solutions containing the fluoride ion, and free Sulphur trioxide.

Rapid Innovation and Startup Expansion (RISE)

- **Context:** The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) under NITI Aayog has launched a new accelerator program called Rapid Innovation and Startup Expansion (RISE).

Key Highlights:

- RISE launched by India and Australia to support startups and small to mid-sized enterprises (SMEs) working on circular economy technologies and solutions in India and Australia
- Its Partnership between CSIRO, Australia's National Science Agency and Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).
- It focuses on themes related to Climate Smart Agriculture, Clean Economy, Waste and Circular Economy and also Climate Smart Mobility.
- It will help in addressing common challenges in environment and climate technology areas.
- It will help create jobs and reduce waste.
- It will Strengthen diplomatic ties between the two countries.

Exercise AUSTRAHIND-23

- **Context:** The Indian Armed Forces contingent has departed to take part in the second edition of Joint Military Exercise AUSTRAHIND-23 being held in Perth, Australia.

Key Highlights:

- It is a joint military exercise between India and Australia.
- To foster collaborative partnership and share best practices between the two sides.
- The exercise will help promote exchange of ideas and jointly rehearse tactics, technique and procedures for conducting tactical operations.

• Other Exercises between India and Australia:

1. **Exercise AUSINDEX:** It is a biennial bilateral maritime exercise between the Indian Navy and Royal Australian Navy (RAN). The first edition of the exercise took place in 2015.
2. **Exercise Pitch Black:** It is a biennial multilateral air combat exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) since 1981. The Indian Air Force had taken part in the exercise for the first time in 2018.

25th NOVEMBER, 2023

Ayurveda Gyan Naipunya Initiative (AGNI)

- **Context:** The Central Council for Research in Ayurveda Sciences (CCRAS) has launched the Ayurveda Gyan Naipunya Initiative (AGNI).

Key Highlights:

- It is launched by Central Council for Research in Ayurveda Sciences (CCRAS), Ministry of AYUSH.
- To promote the culture of reporting evidence-based practices among the Ayurveda Practitioners.
- To provide a platform to the Ayurveda practitioners for reporting their innovative practices & experiences in various disease conditions.
- To document successful treatments for various diseases for the purpose of education and academics.
- To identify interested practitioners for collaboration and capacity building through training in research methods and clinical practices.
- To undertake research for mainstreaming pragmatic practices through scientific validation and evidence-based appraisal.

Golden Gate Declaration

- **Context:** The 30th Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Summit 2023, held in San Francisco, United States, concluded with the adoption of Golden Gate Declaration.

Key highlights:

- This declaration builds upon previous APEC work and focuses on key areas such as resilience, sustainability, interconnection, innovation, and inclusion.
- The declaration underscores the commitment to "Creating a resilient and sustainable future for all"
- San Francisco Principles focus on integrating inclusivity and sustainability into trade and investment policy. They are part of broader commitment made in Golden Gate declaration.
- In the Golden gate declaration document the leaders have reaffirmed their determination to deliver a free, open, fair, non-discriminatory, transparent, inclusive, and predictable trade and investment environment.
- The leaders reaffirm the importance of the rules-based multilateral trading system, with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, which continues to catalyze region's extraordinary growth. The declaration seeks to reform WTO by 2024.
- They reaffirm their commitment to keep markets open and address supply chain disruptions by building secure, effective, resilient, sustainable, and open supply chains.
- They will pursue and encourage efforts to triple renewable energy capacity globally by 2030.
- They commit to fully implement the Food Security Roadmap Towards 2030 as a pathway to make our agri-food systems more resilient, productive, innovative, and sustainable.
- They will extend their support MSMEs to expand into regional and global markets, including by integrating into global value chains, through collaboration with large enterprises, and through the use of digital tools and technologies.
- They reaffirm their commitment to create an enabling, inclusive, open, fair and non-discriminatory digital ecosystem for businesses and consumers.

26th NOVEMBER, 2023

Indian Sugar Industry

- **Context:** International Sugar Organisation (ISO) has announced that India will chair the organization for 2024.

Key Highlights:

- India is the largest consumer (15%) and second largest producer (20%) of sugar in the world.
- India is the 3rd largest country in the world in ethanol production after the USA and Brazil. The ethanol blending percentage in India has increased from 5% in 2019-20 to 12% in 2022-23.
- Despite record high global sugar prices, India ensures the cheapest sugar to its people.

About International Sugar Organisation (ISO):

- It is a Intergovernmental body Established in 1968.
- Its aim is to improve conditions on the world's sugar market through debate, discussions, seminars and workshops.

Exercise Surya Kiran- XVII

- **Context:** India- Nepal joint military exercise Surya Kiran- XVII commences at Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand.

Key Highlights:

- It is an annual event and conducted alternatively in the two countries
- To enhance interoperability in jungle warfare, counter terrorism operations in mountainous terrain and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief under United Nations Charter on peacekeeping operations.
- The exercise will focus on use of drones and counter drone measures, medical training, aviation aspects and also environment conservation.

NASA's Psyche spacecraft

- **Context:** Recently, NASA's Psyche mission sends signals to Earth from 16 million kilometres away.

Key Highlights:

- The goal of the Psyche mission is to reach a special metal-rich asteroid named psyche that is orbiting the Sun between Jupiter and Mars.
- The uniqueness of asteroid Psyche is that it appears to be the exposed nickel-iron core of an early planet, one of the building blocks of our solar system.
- The mission is led by Arizona State University.
- NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory is responsible for mission management, operations and navigation.
- The spacecraft has a payload that includes an imager, magnetometer, and a gamma-ray spectrometer.
- The key enabler for the mission is a cutting-edge technology called Deep Space Optical Communications (DSOC), which utilises high-bandwidth lasers or optical communications.
- The spacecraft will not land on the asteroid, but will orbit it from August 2029 through late 2031.
- Psyche uses solar-powered hall effect thrusters for propulsion and orbital maneuvering, the first interplanetary spacecraft to use that technology.
- It's also the first mission to use laser optical communications beyond the Earth-Moon system.

27th NOVEMBER, 2023

Ayushman Bharat – Health and Wellness Centres (AB-HWCs)

- **Context:** The Union Health Ministry has decided to rename the Ayushman Bharat-Health and Wellness Centres to “Ayushman Arogya Mandir”.

Key Highlights:

- These centers will also have a new tagline -‘Arogyam Parmam Dhanam’.

- AB-HWCs started in 2018 and launched under Ayushman Bharat Programme , National Health Policy, 2017
- To move away from selective health care to a more comprehensive range of services spanning preventive, promotive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative care for all ages.
- 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs) to be established. Till now, 1.6 lakh HWCs have been established, which is more than the target.
- It is 60% funding by center and 40% by states.
- **Services Provided:**
 1. Maternal and child health care.
 2. Services to address communicable and non-communicable diseases.
 3. Services for elderly and palliative care.
 4. Free essential medicines and diagnostic services.
 5. Tele-consultation and health promotion including wellness activities like Yoga.

Compressed Biogas

- **Context:** The National Biofuels Coordination Committee (NBCC) gave its nod to mandatory blending of CBG with compressed natural gas (CNG) for transportation and piped natural gas (PNG) for households starting 2025-26 (FY26).

Key Highlights:

- The compulsory blending obligation will be 1 percent of total CNG and domestic PNG consumption for FY26, 3 percent for FY27, and 4 percent for FY28. The obligation mandates 5 per cent blending from FY29.
- A Central Repository Body (CRB) will be responsible for monitoring and implementing the blending mandate.
- The key objectives of the CBO (compulsory blending obligation) are to stimulate demand for CBG in the CGD sector, import substitution for liquefied natural gas (LNG), saving in forex, promoting circular economy and to assist in achieving the target of net-zero emission.

Guide on Gender-Inclusive Communication

- **Context:** The Union Minister for Women and Child Development will launch the “Guide on Gender-Inclusive Communication”

Key Highlights:

- Gender-inclusive communication refers to a way of communicating that acknowledges and respects all genders, avoiding language or expressions that reinforce gender stereotypes or exclude individuals based on their gender identity.
- It is prepared by Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), National Gender and Child Centre (NGCC), Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) along with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and UN Women.
- It aims to create an inclusive environment where people of all gender identities feel valued and respected.
- To further strengthen ‘Nari Shakti’ and to promote gender equality and empowerment.
- Avoiding language or expressions that reinforce stereotypes about specific genders. For instance, avoiding phrases like “act like a man” or “you throw like a girl.”
- Using inclusive terms like “everyone,” “folks,” or “people” instead of gender-specific terms like “guys” or “ladies.”
- Acknowledging the diversity of gender identities beyond the traditional binary concept of male and female, including non-binary, transgender, and other identities.
- These guidelines will help in creating a society where women are not just equal partners in the country’s progress but are also aligned with the Prime Minister’s vision of a ‘Women led Development’.

28th NOVEMBER, 2023

Booker Prize 2023

- **Context:** Irish author Paul Lynch's "Prophet Song" was named the winner of the Booker Prize 2023, beating author Chetna Maroo's debut novel "Western Lane".

Key Highlights:

- The "Prophet Song" is based on the unrest in western democracies, refugee crisis and impact of this modern chaos.
- It tells about the terrifying plight of a woman seeking to protect her family in an Ireland descending into totalitarianism.
- Last year, Shehan Karunatilaka won the Booker prize for The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida.

A Call for safer and healthier working environments: ILO

- **Context:** The International Labour Organization (ILO) has released a report titled "A Call for safer and healthier working environments".

Key Highlights:

- The report will be discussed at the 23rd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work.
- Around 30 lakh workers globally die due to work-related accidents and diseases. Over 63% of these deaths occur in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Primary causes of work related deaths are Long working hours (55 hours or more per week), Exposure to occupational particulate matter, gases and fumes and Occupational injuries.
- Around 26 lakh deaths were due to work related diseases while work accidents resulted in 3.3 lakh deaths.
- The diseases that caused most work-related deaths were circulatory diseases, malignant neoplasms and respiratory diseases

About 23rd World Congress on Safety and Health at Work:

- Its aim is to create international connections, hear different perspectives, and learn new skills to lead safety and health in the future of work.
- **Theme for 2023:** "Shaping change: Collaborating for a healthier and safer world of work"

29th NOVEMBER, 2023

Rat Hole Mining

- **Context:** Rescuers are planning to use 'rat-hole' mining to rescue 41 workers trapped inside the collapsed Silkyara-Barkot tunnel in Uttarakhand.

Key Highlights:

- Rat hole mining is a method of extracting coal from narrow, horizontal seams prevalent in Meghalaya.
- In this mining process, narrow pits are dug into the ground.
- Once the pits are dug, miners descend using ropes or bamboo ladders to reach the coal seams.
- The coal is then manually extracted using primitive tools such as pickaxes, shovels and baskets.
- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) banned this practice in 2014 and retained the ban in 2015.
- The Meghalaya government then appealed the order in the Supreme Court.

Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award

- **Context:** Michael Douglas was honored with the Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Cinema at the 54th International Film Festival of India (IFFI) in Goa.

Key Highlights:

- The Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award is an international honor instituted by the International Film Festival of India.

- The recipient is honored for their outstanding contribution to the growth and development of World cinema.
- The award was formerly known as IFFI Lifetime Achievement Award and was first instituted in the year 1999 from the 30th IFFI.
- During the 52nd edition in 2021, on the occasion of the birth centenary of Satyajit Ray, the award was rechristened to “IFFI – Satyajit Ray Lifetime Achievement Award”.

Karmayogi Prarambh

- **Context:** Karmayogi Prarambh, an online orientation programme under the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions has marked its one-year anniversary.

Key Highlights:

- The programme aims to provide all the necessary details related to government policies for newly appointees recruited through Rozgar Melas.
- It includes a set of eight courses curated like effective communication, code of conduct for government employees etc. to help all Rozgar Mela appointees.

About Mission Karmayogi:

- It was launched in 2020 with the objective of enhancing governance through Civil Service Capacity Building.
- It aims to prepare civil service officers for the future by making them more “creative, constructive, imaginative, innovative, proactive, professional, progressive, energetic, enabling, transparent and technology-enabled.”
- It will cover all civil servants (including contractual employees) across different ministries, departments, organizations and agencies of the Union Government.
- The willing state governments will also be enabled to align their capacity building plans on similar lines.

Mission Karmayogi will have the following six pillars:

1. Policy Framework,
2. Institutional Framework,
3. Competency Framework,
4. Digital Learning Framework (Integrated Government Online Training Karmayogi Platform (iGOT-Karmayogi),
5. electronic Human Resource Management System (e-HRMS), and
6. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

30th NOVEMBER, 2023

Amplifi 2.0 Portal

- **Context:** The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched Amplifi 2.0 portal.

Key Highlights:

- It is launched by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. Its full form is Assessment and Monitoring Platform for Liveable, Inclusive and Future-Ready Urban India portal.
- To make raw data from Indian cities available on a single platform for academics, researchers and stakeholders to help data-driven policy making.
- The portal provides data on various services for several cities such as: Total diesel consumption , Number of water quality samples tested , Average annual healthcare expenditure , Total population residing in slums and Recorded fatalities from road accidents
- Currently, 258 urban local bodies have been onboarded and data for 150 cities is accessible on the platform. Eventually, data from the more than 4,000 Urban Local Bodies will be made available on the portal.

China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC)

- **Context:** Recently, China is “prioritising” the extension of the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor (CMEC) to Sri Lanka.

Key Highlights:

- CMEC was officially launched in 2018 as a framework for bilateral cooperation between China and Myanmar.
- It aims to improve connectivity between southwestern China (particularly Yunnan Province) and Myanmar through the development of transportation infrastructure, including roads, railways, and ports.
- It builds upon historical trade and economic ties between the two nations and seeks to modernize and expand infrastructure networks in the region.
- It is an indication that China is looking to scale up the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project in South Asia, with the extension to Sri Lanka.
- CMEC, being the most recent addition among the six land corridors within the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has gained prominence, displacing the previous focus on the Bangladesh China India Myanmar (BCIM) corridor.

