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**MADE EASY
WEEKLY
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WEEK-2

08th March - 14th March, 2021

**Targeted Examinations:
CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Exams,
SSC and Banking Exams**

8th MARCH 2021**SMS Scrubbing**

- Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) have started implementing the second step of the SMS Law.
- Earlier, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) have recently notified that every SMS content will have to be verified before it is delivered to the users.
- This SMS content verification method is known as SMS scrubbing. This procedure was initiated after several delays on 8 March. When this programme was phased out, unverified and unregistered SMS messages were blocked by telecommunications operators.
- Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) is a statutory body which regulates the telecommunications sector in India.

2030 Digital Compass Plan

- The European Union has released its plan called “2030 Digital Compass Plan at the time when COVID-19 pandemic exposed the 27-countries reliance on the key technologies owned by the Chinese and the U.S. companies.
- The 2030 plan highlights the importance of semiconductors which are used in the connected cars, internet-linked devices, smartphones, high performance computers and artificial intelligence.

Key Details:

- The European Union aims to produce the 5th global output of the cutting-edge semiconductors by the end of this decade.
- This is making ways for Europe to boost the quantum capabilities by 2030.
- The plan also called for 10,000 climate-neutral facilities to help Europe in developing its own cloud infrastructure by 2030.

- It also seeks to make its first quantum computer in five years.
- The plan also aims for covering all the European households with the Gigabit network by 2030. It also seeks to cover all populated areas by 5G.

Desh Bhakti Budget

- The Delhi Government recently presented 69,000-crore budget for the financial year 2021-22 which was themed on patriotism.
- While presenting the budget, Government announced that it has decided to celebrate 75th Independence Day of India.

Key Highlights of Budget:

- Under the “Deshbhakti Budget”, the government has proposed to allocate Rupees 45 crores in order to install high masts so as to hoist the national flag at 500 places in Delhi.
- The government also seeks to increase the per capita income of Delhi in order to reach the level of Singapore by 2047.
- The Deshbhakti period will be organised in the schools.
- The government will also allocate rupees 10 crores for the programmes on Bhagat Singh’s life during the Deshbhakti celebrations.

9th MARCH 2021**NASA-ISRO SAR (NISAR)**

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) with collaboration with National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has completed the development of Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) which has the capability of producing extremely high-resolution images for joint earth observation satellite mission.
- NISAR is a joint collaboration for the dual-frequency L-Band and S-Band SAR for the earth observation.

- NISAR is the first satellite mission which will use two different radar frequencies called L-band and S-band. These radar frequencies will be used to measure the changes in Earth's surface less than a centimetre across.
- This mission will be launched in the year 2022 from the Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. The payload was shipped from the Ahmedabad-based Space Applications Centre (SAC) to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) of NASA.

Akshya Patra: All-Women Art Exhibition

- On the occasion of International Women's Day, the all-women art exhibition titled as "Akshya Patra" was inaugurated at the Lalit Kala Akademi.
- This art exhibition is being organised at the Rabindra Bhavan Galleries and will conclude on March 20, 2021.
- The art exhibition will showcase around 250 artworks from across the 12 countries.
- It will also bring about both the Indian and the international participants to the fore tribal, international and contemporary. This art exhibition has been themed around many faces and benefactions of Mother Nature.

About Lalit Kala Akademi

- Lalit Kala Akademi is the national academy of fine arts in India. This Academy is an autonomous organisation which was established in the year 1954 at New Delhi.
- It aims to promote and propagate the understanding of Indian art across the globe. It also provides scholarships and a fellow program besides sponsoring & organising the exhibitions across the world.
- It was established and founded by the Union Ministry of Culture.
- It is headquartered at the Ravindra Bhawan, New Delhi.

Sub-Mission on Agroforestry scheme

- The Central Silk Board (CSB) and the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to implement the Agro-forestry in silk sector under the Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF) Scheme. It is based on convergence model.

Convergence Model

- The convergence model in the silk sector will be implemented with the aim of incentivizing the farmers so as to implement the sericulture-based Agroforestry models. This model will add another dimension to the agroforestry in order to get the faster returns and support the production of varieties of silks.

About Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF) Scheme

- The SMAF Scheme was launched in the year 2016 and has been implemented by the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DAC & FW) in accordance with the recommendation of National Agroforestry Policy, 2014.
- India was the first country that launched this comprehensive policy.

NOTE:

Note: Central Silk Board is a statutory body which was established under the Ministry of Textile in 1948 by the Act of Parliament.

Earth's Hidden Layer

- The Scientists from International Seismological Centre have recently detected the signs of a hidden structure inside the core of Earth. This layer is being termed as the 'fifth layer'.
- As per the long-standing narrative, there exists four layers namely; crust, mantle, outer core and inner core.

- Apart from this, the scientists have also spotted reportedly some changes in the structure of iron within the inner core. These changes suggest that a new 'boundary line' is stretching for about 650 kilometres from the centre of the Earth.

About Discovery:

- Scientists were long suspecting about the fifth layer after they studied the travel time data of the seismic waves which are travelling inside the Earth.
- The data was captured by the International Seismological Centre, following which, the scientists and researchers used their new algorithm in order to search and discover the evidence of changes in structure of the inner core of the Earth.

10th MARCH 2021

AIP Technology

- The Defense Research & Development Organization (DRDO) recently conducted the final development test of the Air Independent Propulsion (AIP).

Air Independent Propulsion (AIP)

- AIP is a marine propulsion technology which allows the non-nuclear submarine to operate without providing access to the atmospheric oxygen by surfacing or by using the snorkel.
- This technology is based on the Phosphoric Acid Fuel Cell. Thus, the AIP fitted submarine does not require a surface for charging its batteries and this way it can remain underwater for long periods.
- This system also makes the sub-surface platform more deadly by turning it quieter than the nuclear submarine.
- Apart from India, France, China, United States, United Kingdom and Russia are using this technology.
- The Indian Navy has planned to retrofit all of its Kalvari class non-nuclear attack with the AIP system in its first upgrade.

NOTE:

The Kalvari class submarine has a weight of 1615 tonne. The submarine is being built by Mazagon Dock Limited in association with the French Naval Group.

SmartUp Unnati programme

- The HDFC Bank has launched the "SmartUp Unnati mentoring Programme" which to provide its support to the women entrepreneurs.
- It was launched on the occasion of International Women's Day. Under this programme, the senior women leaders from the HDFC Bank with the expertise will mentor the women entrepreneurs so as to help them in achieving their goals in next one year.
- This programme is available for the existing customers of the bank.
- It will initially target more than 3,000 women entrepreneurs who are associated with the SmartUp programme of the bank.

About SmartUp Programme

HDFC Bank launched the SmartUp programme in the year 2018. Under this programme, HDFC is working with the state governments, incubators and accelerators in a bid to promote entrepreneurship.

Non-fungible Token

- The American rock band named Kings of Leon has released a music album as a Non-fungible Token (NFT). The band has become the first ever to distribute digitised art.

About Non-Fungible Token

- Non-Fungible Token is a special type of cryptographic token which represents some things which are unique.
- NFT is opposite to the cryptocurrencies such as bitcoin.

- It is a type of crypto-asset that represents several numbers of assets such as tickets, artforms, and music.
- These tokens can also be used in online gaming, crypto art and digital collectibles.

11th MARCH 2021

Economic Freedom Index 2021

- The Heritage Foundation, a US-based think-tank, recently launched the “Economic Freedom Index”.
- The index was prepared by covering 184 countries this time for the period of July 2019 to June 2020.

Major Highlights

- In the index, Singapore topped the global ranking for the second consecutive year.
- The second place was obtained by New Zealand with its score of 83.9 points. Australia has obtained the third position with 82.4 points. Switzerland has scored 81.9 points and acquired the fourth position. While, Ireland obtained the fifth position with 81.4 points.
- India has obtained a score of 56.5 this year which is ranked at the middle among Asia-Pacific countries that is 26th out of 40 Asia-Pacific countries.

About Index of Economic Freedom

- Index of Economic Freedom is an annual index and ranking which was created in the year 1995 by the conservative think-tank called The Heritage Foundation and The Wall Street Journal.
- It measures the degree of economic freedom among the world's nations.

‘Women Will’ Web Platform

- Google launched a new web platform ‘Women Will’ on the occasion of “International Women’s Day”, which will provide its support to 1 million rural women

in India in order for them to become entrepreneurs with the help of accelerator programmes, business tutorials and mentorship.

- This web portal will offer guidance to the aspiring women in villages to turn their interest or a hobby like beauty services, tailoring, home tuition, food processing, etc. into business. The Portal can be accessed in English and Hindi languages.
- In the initial phase, Google will work with 2,000 Internet Saathis in order to help women turn entrepreneurs.

Internet Saathi Programme

- The Internet Saathis Programme was launched by Google and Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai in 2015 with the objective of imparting digital literacy training to women across villages.

INS Karanj

- The Indian Navy recently inducted INS Karanj, the third Scorpene-class conventional diesel-electric submarine into the service.
- The submarine was built by Mazagon Dock Limited, under technology transfer from the Naval Group of France.
- INS Karanj is the part of Six Scorpene submarines which are being built under Project-75.

About Project-75

- The Project 75I-class submarine is a follow-on of the Project 75 Kalvari-class submarine for the Indian Navy.
- In the late 1990s, around the time of Kargil war, a three-decade plan took shape for indigenous construction of submarines.
- It was known to have two separate series of submarine building lines – codenamed Project 75 and Project 75I — in collaboration with foreign entities.
- Under the Project-75, the first submarine of the class called INS Kalvari was commissioned in 2017.

12th MARCH 2021

Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi

- The Union Cabinet has recently approved the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi (PMSSN) as a single non-lapsable reserve fund.
- It has been approved for the share of health from proceeds of Health and Education Cess which is levied under the Section 136-b of Finance Act, 2007.
- This fund is significant because the fund will ensure the enhanced access of universal and affordable health care with the availability of earmarked resources. It will also ensure that this amount does not lapse with the end of fiscal year.

About Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi

- Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Nidhi is a non-lapsable reserve fund for the Health in the Public Account. This fund will comprise the proceeds from the share of health in the Health and Education Cess.
- This fund will be used for the flagship schemes of the Health Ministry including the National Health Mission, Ayushman Bharat – Health and Wellness Centres, Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana and for the emergency & disaster preparedness and responses in cases of health emergencies.
- The fund will be administered and maintained by the Ministry of Health & Family welfare.

Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- The Parliament has passed the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2021 which seeks to amend the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.
- The Bill comprises the provisions of dealing with the domestic and international arbitration. It defines the law to conduct conciliation proceedings.

- It replaces the Ordinance that was promulgated on November 4, 2020, consisting of the same provisions.

Provisions of the Bill

- The Bill has provisions of “Automatic stay on awards”. The previous Act had allowed the party to file an application in order to set aside the order given in the arbitration proceeding.
- It specifies that the court can stay the arbitral award, even if there is pendency of setting aside of application, when the court is satisfied that relevant arbitration agreement or contract or making of award was induced by fraud or corruption.
- Schedule 7 of Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 specifies some qualifications, experience, and accreditation norms for the arbitrators. The arbitrator must be:
 - An officer of Indian Legal Service.
 - An advocate under the Advocates Act, 1961 along with the 10 years of experience.
- The bill of 2021 removes the Schedule 7 for arbitrators and mentions that these qualifications, experience, and norms will only be specified under regulations by the regulators.

Remarks

- The Arbitration and Conciliation Act of 1996 is the main governing law of the arbitration. It was enacted with the aim of consolidating and amending the law related to the international commercial arbitration, domestic arbitration and enforcement of the foreign award.
- It also seeks to define the law related to conciliation.

‘Xcelerator Bengaluru’ Initiative

- The Karnataka Government has launched the “Xcelerator Bengaluru Initiative” in the bid to provide support to the women-owned micro-businesses.

- The “Xcelerator Bengaluru” is a curated six-month accelerator programme which seeks to provide its support to the women so as to help in scaling the women-owned micro-businesses.
- This initiative is jointly organised by the Consortium of Women Entrepreneurs’ Associations, Global Alliance for Mass Entrepreneurship (GAME) and Federation of Karnataka Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FKCCI).
- It is designed and executed in partnership with the Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka (AWAKE)- an organisation dedicated to empower the women by entrepreneurship development.
- It is co-designed and co-created with the help of practitioners in women entrepreneurship development organisations, successful entrepreneurs and academics.
- During the exercise, both the armies shared their expertise and skills with respect to the counter-terrorism operations under the mandate of United Nations in Mountainous or Urban or Rural scenarios.
- The joint exercise provided a link to the military and diplomatic ties of the two countries. It also signifies the strong resolve of both the countries to counter-terrorism.
- DUSTLIK was the first-ever joint military exercise between the armies of India and Uzbekistan. The exercise took place in the year 2019 in Uzbekistan.

Fugaku: World’s most Powerful Supercomputer

- The Japanese scientific research institute called RIKEN and Fujitsu started developing the “Fugaku” six years ago, which is now the world’s most powerful supercomputer. This supercomputer is now available for research use.

Key Highlights:

- This supercomputer has been developed with the aim of making the device core of the computing infrastructure of Japan.
- It was tested for the particular projects in order to combat COVID-19 pandemic.
- Fugaku has been developed with the goal to achieve research results which ultimately will help in building a long-lived and healthy society, better energy use and disaster mitigation.
- The supercomputer has topped the Top500 list, which is a Supercomputer benchmark index, for the second year in line.
- It has been developed to implement the high-resolution, large-scale and long-duration simulation.
- Fugaku has been named after an alternative name for Mount Fuji.

13th MARCH 2021

Tirath Singh Rawat

- Tirath Singh Rawat became the new Chief Minister of Uttarakhand after the former CM Trivendra Singh Rawat resigned from the post.

About Tirath Singh Rawat

- He is the Lok Sabha MP from Garhwal.
- He was the BJP party chief in the state of Uttarakhand from 2013 to 2015.
- He was also elected as an MLA from the Chaubattakhal Constituency and remained in the position from 2012 to 2017.
- He also acted as the first education minister of the Uttarakhand when it was carved out as a separate state.

DUSTLIK-II

- The India–Uzbekistan joint military exercise “DUSTLIK II” recently held at Ranikhet in Uttarakhand. It is the second edition of the annual bilateral joint exercise of both the armies.

14th MARCH 2021

Quad Leaders' Virtual Summit

- Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi participated in the first Leaders' Summit of the Quadrilateral Framework along with the Prime Minister of Australia, Scott Morrison; Prime Minister of Japan, Yoshihide Suga and President of the United States of America, Joseph R. Biden.

Key Highlights of Meeting:

- The Quad Leaders discussed the regional and global issues which are of shared interest.
- They also exchanged their views on several practical areas of the cooperation to maintain a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
- The virtual summit also provided the countries an opportunity to exchange their views on the contemporary challenges like resilient supply chains, maritime security, climate change and emerging and critical technologies.
- Leaders also discussed the ongoing efforts to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

About Quadrilateral Framework (Quad):

- QUAD is an informal strategic forum comprising India, United States, Japan, and Australia. The forum is maintained by summits, military drills and information between member countries.
- This diplomatic and military arrangement is taken as a response to increasing Chinese economic and military power.

Bamiyan Buddha

- Recently, the Bamiyan Buddha statues of Afghanistan were brought back to life with the help of 3D projection in the event held in the Bamiyan Valley of Afghanistan. The event called "A Night with Buddha" was held on the anniversary of annihilation of previous statues which was destroyed by Taliban.
- The statues of Bamiyan Buddha, which found the place among the tallest statues of the world once, were broken into small pieces by Taliban. Taliban started blowing up the two of the Buddha statues of Bamiyan Valley of Afghanistan in the month of March 2001.

About Bamiyan Buddhas

- Bamiyan Buddhas were two 6th-century monumental statues of Gautama Buddha. The statues were carved into the side of a cliff located in the Bamiyan valley of Central Afghanistan.
- The smaller buddha or the Eastern Buddha had the height of 38 m while the larger buddha or the Western Buddha was 55 m in height.

Gandhara Art:

- The Bamiyan Buddhas statues represented a classic blend of Gandhara art style or the blend of artistic style of Guptas, Sassanian & Hellenistic style. The statues were called by locals as male "Salsal" meaning "light shines through the universe" and female "Shamama" meaning "Queen Mother".

