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**MADE EASY
WEEKLY CURRENT
AFFAIRS**

WEEK-2

8th July - 14th July

Targeted Examinations:

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

Current Affairs MADE EASY

(8th July to 14th July 2020)

8th July 2020

Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

- The Union Cabinet has approved 'Agriculture Infrastructure Fund' as a part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat package.
- Under the scheme, the financial support of up to Rs. 1 lakh crore will be provided as loans through the banks and financial institutions to the agricultural sectors such as Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Start-ups, Primary Agricultural Credit Societies, Agri-entrepreneurs, etc.
- **Key Highlights:**
 - The duration of the scheme is for 10 years, i.e. from the financial year 2020-21 to 2029-30.
 - Management Information System (MIS) platform will be used for managing and monitoring the Agriculture Infrastructure Fund.
 - Out of Rs. 1 lakh crore loan, amount of Rs 10,000 crore will be sanctioned and disbursed in the current 2020-21 financial year while Rs 30,000 crore will be granted in each of next three upcoming financial year.
 - The rate of interest will be 3 percent per annum. This rate of interest will be applicable for a loan of up to Rs 2 crore.
 - The moratorium for repayment of the loan will vary from a maximum of 2 years to a minimum of 6 months.
 - Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) will provide credit guarantee coverage to eligible borrowers. The credit guarantee coverage will be provided for loans of up to Rs 2 crore.

USA formally quit WHO

- The United States of America formally issued notification to quit the World Health Organisation (WHO), a specialized agency of the United Nations which is responsible to manage and monitor public health globally.
- As per the notification, the United States Government has submitted its notice to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to withdraw from the WHO by the 6th of July, 2021.
- Earlier, citing the mishandling of global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and accusing China's domination on the organisation, the President Donald Trump froze the funding of the WHO.
- The USA is the largest contributor to the annual budget of the WHO. About 15 percent of the WHO's total funding has been made by the USA.

Mission Sagar

- Mission Sagar was launched to deliver assistance to India's maritime neighbours in combating the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Under the Mission, the Government of India had sent COVID-19 related essential Medicines (including Hydroxychloroquine tablets and Ayurvedic Medicines), Medical Assistance Teams, and about 600 tonnes of food items to its neighbouring countries, including Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Seychelles and Comoros Islands.
- Indian Naval Ship INS Kesari was deployed for the Mission Sagar.
- SAGAR is an acronym for 'Security and Growth for All in the Region'.
- **Context:** Indian Navy completed the Mission Sagar successfully when INS Kesari returned to India after travelling 7,500 nautical miles over the 49 days. The Mission was launched on 10th May 2020.

Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs)

- The Union Cabinet has given approval for developing Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs) as a sub-scheme under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) for the Urban poor and migrants.
- The sub-scheme was announced by the Union Finance Minister as a part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- ARHCs will be made in urban centers of the country where urban migrant workers will be able to avail houses at an affordable rent. These complexes will benefit a large number of workers, service providers, students, etc. from rural areas or small towns when they move towards the urban centers in search of better opportunities.
- **Key Highlights**
 - Under ARHCs, at present approximately 3 lakh beneficiaries will be covered.
 - Private and Public entities will be offered special incentives at priority sector lending rate and concessional loans from banks and tax relief for developing ARHCs in urban centers on their available vacant lands for a period of 25 years.
 - The Housing Complexes of the Government that are vacant at present will be converted into ARHCs.
 - For the projects using innovative technologies for construction under the ARHCs, an estimated Rs. 600 crore of expenditure will be made in the form of the Technology Innovation Grant.

Operation Samudra Setu

- In an effort to repatriate Indian Citizens from overseas, the Operation Samudra Setu was launched in May 2020 by the Indian Navy.
- Four Naval Ships had participated in Operation Samudra Setu, namely INS Jalashwa (Amphibious transport dock) and INS Airavat, INS Shardul, and INS Magar (Landing Ship Tanks). These four Indian Navy Ships have streamed more than 23,000 km to

bring back the Indian citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic from Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Iran.

- **Context:** The Operation Samudra Setu came to end which lasted over 55 days, in which 3,992 Indian citizens were brought back to their homeland via the sea route by the Indian Navy.

Bubonic Plague

- Bubonic plague is a type of plague which infects a person's lymphatic system (which is a part of their immune system), causing inflammation in the lymph nodes. If left untreated, the bubonic plague can also convert into either pneumonic or septicemic plague. Its symptoms include fever, chills, weakness and headaches.
- The plague is a disease caused by the bacteria *Yersinia pestis*, which is found in animals, particularly rodents. It can be transmitted to humans through infected animals and fleas.
- **Context:** Bayannur, a city in northern China, is on high alert after a suspected case of Bubonic plague was reported there recently. Besides, authorities in the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region announced a level III warning of plague prevention and control.

CAATSA

- Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) is a federal law of USA that imposed sanctions on Iran, North Korea and Russia. It includes sanctions against countries that engage in significant transactions with Russia's defence and intelligence sectors. It was enacted in the year 2017.
- **Context:** The USA has urged all its allies and partners to forgo transactions with Russia, otherwise they may face sanctions under the CAATSA.

9th July 2020

Open Sky Policy

- Open Sky is an agreement that encourages connectivity and passenger travel between the two countries as well as reduction in airfares on these routes.
- The National Civil Aviation Policy, 2016, allows the Indian government to enter into Open Sky air services agreement on a reciprocal basis with SAARC nations as well as countries beyond a 5,000 kilometre radius from New Delhi. It implies that nations within this distance need to enter into a bilateral agreement and mutually determine the number of flights that their airlines can operate between the two countries.
- India has already signed Open Sky agreements with Greece, Jamaica, Guyana, Czech Republic, Finland, Spain and Sri Lanka.
- **Context:** The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has announced that it wants to have an Open Sky agreement with India.

Amazonia-1

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to launch Amazonia-1 which is the first earth observation satellite entirely developed by Brazil.
- Amazonia-1 is the first satellite that has been completely designed, integrated, and tested by Brazilian Space Agency (AEB), also when launched successfully; it will be the first satellite to be completely operated by Brazil.
- The launch is based on an agreement that was signed in 2004 between India and Brazil for cooperation in the field of outer space. As a part of the framework agreement, ISRO will be launching a micro-satellite of the Brazilian Space Agency (AEB). This microsatellite will be for atmospheric studies as per the agreement.

Start-up Policy 2020

- The Cabinet of the Uttar Pradesh Government has given its approval to an independent and comprehensive 'Startup Policy 2020' for making the State more conducive for Start-ups. It aims to corporatize more than 10,000 start-ups across the state in 5 years.
- Under the policy, 100 incubators will be set up across all the 75 districts of the State by making sure at least one incubator in a district has been set up.
- As per Government estimates, this Start-up Policy will generate 50,000 direct and 1,00,000 indirect jobs across the state.
- This Start-up fund will be managed by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

BLUIS

- The Odisha Government has launched a web and mobile-based system BLUIS (Bhubaneswar Land Use Intelligence System)- a geo-tagged repository that would monitor and detect all government lands in Bhubaneswar. This will be done by using high-resolution satellite imagery.
- It was launched due to the lack of adequate transparency and accountability in the current manual mode of mechanism that is being used for decades for the detection of encroachments in government lands. In case of any attempt to change the use of government land in Bhubaneswar, BLUIS will raise alarm and guide the enforcement staff to the exact location of encroachment.
- By launching this, Odisha became the first state in the country to use satellite technology and artificial intelligence for land mapping.

Mongolian Kanjur Manuscripts

- The Union Ministry of Culture has decided to reprint all the 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur Manuscripts, under the National Mission for Manuscripts.

- Kanjur is a word by Lord Buddha which means ‘Concise Orders’ in the Mongolian language. These texts have been translated from the Tibetan language and are one of the most important religious texts in Mongolia.

10th July 2020

Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Plant

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 750 MW Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Plant which is one of the largest single-site solar power project in India. The Project is located in Gurh Tehsil of Madhya Pradesh’s Rewa district. It is spread over 1,590 acres of land.
- For the successful implementation of the power project, the Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL)- a joint venture company between Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) and Madhya Pradesh Urja Vikash Nigam Limited (MPUVNL) was set up. The entire cost of the solar power project is worth around Rs 4000 crore.
- Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) is an institutional customer of the project which will be using 24 percent of the power generated by it.
- International Finance Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank Group is the transaction adviser for this solar power project.

Malabar Exercise

- Malabar Exercise was begun as a bilateral naval exercise between India and the USA in 1992, and was expanded into a trilateral format with the inclusion of Japan in 2015. It has been delayed this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Context:**
 - India has to consider the inclusion of Australia into the Malabar exercise. Once the government takes a decision to include Australia, as per procedure, the other partner nations USA and Japan have to be informed to secure their consent, after which a formal invitation would be extended to Australia.
 - China has been opposing the exercise fearing rising militarisation of the coalition.

Samadhan se Vikas

- Samadhan se Vikas is a one-time settlement scheme introduced by Haryana Government for the recovery of long-pending dues on account of External Development Charges (EDC) and Infrastructural Development Charges (IDC).
- The scheme is modelled on the Vivad se Vishwas scheme launched by Government of India.

11th July 2020

Hagia Sophia



- Hagia Sophia is a historic house of worship located in Istanbul, Turkey. It was constructed in 537 AD as a cathedral in the Christian Byzantine Empire but was converted into a mosque after the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in the year 1453. It is a UNESCO world heritage site.
- In 1935, in the early days of the modern secular Turkish state under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, it became a museum.
- **Context:** Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President of Turkey, has declared Hagia Sophia as a mosque which will be open to Muslim worship after a top court ruled that the building's conversion to a museum was illegal.

ATL App Development Modules

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) of NITI Aayog has launched 'ATL App Development Modules' under its initiative Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL). The modules have been launched in line with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative for transforming school students from users of the smartphone-based applications to innovative developers of the smartphone-based applications.
- The Modules are a part of an online course available at free of cost for everyone. The online course consists of a total of 6 project-based learning modules through which the school children can learn to build mobile applications.
- Once implemented, it will be the largest App learning initiative in the world. At present, in over 660 districts in the country, 5100 Atal Tinkering Labs have been already established.
- It has been developed in the collaboration with Plezmo- a mobile application of Gunakar Private Limited- an Indian Start-up Company.

GOAL Project

- GOAL which is an acronym for 'Going Online As Leaders' is an initiative under which 5,000 youths from the Tribal Communities of the country will be identified and empowered so that they can become the change-makers in the three core areas: Literacy, Life Skills, and Leadership & Entrepreneurship.
- The GOAL Project was launched by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in partnership with Facebook India.
- The project will bridge the gap between the youths and the Mentors/Mentees; they require acquiring the skills and abilities that will help them to develop the leadership skills.
- **Context:** A webinar was conducted by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for the sensitization of the Members of Parliaments from Schedule Tribe (ST) constituencies. It has been decided to implement the GOAL project with 5000 youths and 2500 Mentor/ Mentees in phased manner over the next 5 years.

India Cycles4Change Challenge

- It is an initiative of the Smart Cities Mission under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to inspire and support Indian cities to quickly implement cycling-friendly initiatives in response to COVID-19.
- The Challenge aims to help cities connect with their citizens as well as experts to develop a unified vision to promote cycling.

12th July 2020

NEOWISE

- The recently discovered comet called C/2020 F3, also known as NEOWISE after the NASA telescope that discovered it, will make its closest approach to the Earth on July 22, 2020.
- The comet, which takes 6,800 years to complete one lap around its orbit, will be at a distance of 103 million kilometers while crossing Earth's outside orbit.
- **Do You know?**
 - **Asteroid:** A relatively small, inactive, rocky body orbiting the Sun.
 - **Comet:** A relatively small, at times active, object whose ices can vaporize in sunlight forming a tail of dust or gas.
 - **Meteoroid:** A small particle from a comet or asteroid orbiting the Sun.
 - **Meteor:** The light phenomena which results when a meteoroid enters the Earth's atmosphere and vaporizes, i.e. a shooting star.
 - **Meteorite:** A meteoroid that survives its passage through the Earth's atmosphere and lands upon the Earth's surface.

ASEEM Portal

- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has launched a digital portal Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM) which aims to bridge the demand-supply gap in the market across all the sectors in the country for the skilled workforce.
- The portal will be used as a match-making engine by providing real-time data analytics that will help to map skilled workers with the jobs available.
- The portal is developed and managed by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).

NATGRID

- National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) is the integrated intelligence master database structure for counter-terrorism purpose connecting databases of various core security agencies.
- It seeks to become the one-stop destination for security and intelligence agencies to access database related to immigration entry and exit, banking and telephone details of a suspect on a secured platform. It was conceptualised in 2009 after the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks.
- **Context:** NATGRID has signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) to access the centralised online database on FIRs and stolen vehicles.

13th July 2020

Voluntary National Review (VNR)

- VNR is a process through which countries assess and present progress made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The purpose is to present a snapshot of where the country stands in SDGs implementation, with a view to help accelerate progress through experience sharing, peer-learning, identifying gaps and good practices, and mobilizing partnerships.
- **Context:** NITI Aayog recently presented India's second Voluntary National Review at UN's High-Level Political Forum. NITI Aayog has the mandate of overseeing the adoption and monitoring of SDGs at the national and sub-national level.

Roko-Toko Campaign

- Madhya Pradesh Government to launch a campaign named 'Roko-Toko' which will focus on those who are not wearing masks in the State amid COVID-19 surge.
- As wearing a mask is mandatory in public places across the state, the volunteers will be tasked to provide a mask to those who are not wearing it in public places and further a Rs. 20 will also be charged from the person as a cost for the mask.

- Under the guidelines of the campaign, it has been informed that in every district across the state, the District Magistrate will be responsible for selecting the organizations for volunteering.
- The masks under the campaign will be provided to the volunteers or organizations by Urban Local Bodies under the Jeevan Shakti Yojana which was launched by Madhya Pradesh Government in April 2020.

14th July 2020

Shudh

- IIT Kanpur has developed an ultraviolet sanitizing device named Shudh which is capable to disinfect 10 ×10 square feet room in just 15 minutes. The device is smartphone-operated and has six UV lights, each is of 15 watts.
- The device can be used to assist at highly prone places such as hotels, hospitals, malls, offices and schools.
- Usually, an Ultraviolet-C (UV-C) ray is used to kill microorganisms which include drug-resistant bacteria as well. It is the most dangerous to human beings, especially to their skin and eyes. UV-C light does not reach the earth surface as the ozone layer absorbs it. It is generated in scientific labs.

Chabahar Port-Zahedan Railway Line Project

- The Government of Iran has decided to drop India from the construction of the Chabahar Port-Zahedan Railway Line Project and now will be proceeding with the construction of the project on its own. The reason cited for dropping is the delay of funds from India.
- The agreement for the development of the Chabahar Port and for the construction of a 628 km railway line from Chabahar port to Zahedan (the nearest border of three countries- Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan) was signed in 2016 as a part of India's commitment in development of trade with Iran and Afghanistan.
- If India had part of this Railway Project, it would have served it an alternative trade route with Afghanistan and the rest of Central Asian countries, bypassing Pakistan.