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**MADE EASY
WEEKLY CURRENT
AFFAIRS**

WEEK-4

22nd July - 31st July

Targeted Examinations:

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

Current Affairs MADE EASY

(22nd July to 31st July 2020)

22nd July 2020

Dhruvastra

- India recently tested an indigenously developed anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system called Dhruvastra. The ATGM underwent three flight trials at the Integrated Test Range located in Chandipur, Odisha.
- Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the helicopter-launched Dhruvastra is designed to destroy enemy battle tanks, armoured vehicles and bunkers.
- Dhruvastra is designed as a customised and updated version of the 'Nag Helina' range of DRDO's anti-tank destroyers.
- ATGMs are used to destroy both medium and long-range targets. These missiles utilise laser, TV cameras and other forms of guidance systems to locate the target.

National Defence Authorisation Act

- The US House of Representatives passed bipartisan legislation to de-escalate the tensed situation between India and China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in UT of Ladakh. The Act slammed China's aggression against India in the Galwan Valley.
- The National Defence Authorisation Act for the year 2021 also condemns the Chinese aggressions all over the world, especially in and around South China Sea.
- The resolution of the Act was brought in by Indian-American Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi.
- **Remarks:** China has border issues with every country it shares its international borders. It has been building military bases on the artificial islands created in the South China Sea. The region is also claimed by Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines, Vietnam and Taiwan.

UPI Auto Pay

- The National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) has launched UPI Auto Pay feature for recurring payments.
- The feature can be used for multiple financial purposes such as booking bus pass, utility payment, paying DTH, train ticket among others.
- Unified Payment Interface (UPI) was developed by NPCI. The interface is regulated by Reserve Bank of India.

23rd July 2020

Cooling Emissions and Policy Synthesis Report

- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Energy Agency (IEA) released a report 'Cooling Emissions and Policy Synthesis'. The report cited benefits of cooling efficiency and Kigali Amendment report.
- According to the report, the world will need at least 14 billion cooling appliances by the year 2050.
- The report says that the air-conditioners use Hydrofluorocarbons which are Greenhouse gases and emission of these gases significantly contributes to Global Warming.
- **Kigali Agreement**
 - Kigali Agreement that was signed in 2016, is an amendment to the Montreal Protocol. It aims for the phase-down of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) by cutting their production and consumption. The goal is to achieve over 80% reduction in HFC consumption by 2047.
 - The amendment will avoid up to 0.5 °C increase in global temperature by the end of the century.

Tianwen1

- China has launched its first successful Mars probe named 'Tianwen 1' through its powerful Long March 5 rocket from the Wenchang spacecraft launch site.
- It was launched with objectives to orbit and land on Martian soil and to send a rover to roam around the landing site. It has also tasked to conduct investigations into geological structure, atmosphere, environment, soil and water of Mars.
- **Do You Know?**
India was the first Asian country to successfully send an orbiter to Mars, through its Mission Mangalyaan in 2013.

Digantara

- Digantara is a Space start-up company that has developed India's first in-orbit space debris monitoring and tracking system. The system works on Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) technology which will provide global real-time earth surveillance. This is to be achieved by deploying a constellation of cost-efficient nano satellites in the Low Earth Orbit (an altitude of less than 1000 km).
- The system will help international space agencies to track and map space debris. This will aid to minimize the major threats of future space exploration.

24th July 2020

ANASIS II

- South Korea recently launched its first ever military satellite named 'ANASIS II' to defend itself against its neighbour and nuclear-armed North Korea. It was launched through Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida, US.
- The launch of ANASIS II has made South Korea the 10th country in the world to have its own military communication satellite.
- The rocket was launched by SpaceX of the US. This is the twelfth launch of SpaceX in 2020.

Karnataka Digital Economy Mission

- The Karnataka Cabinet has cleared the formation of Karnataka Digital Economy Mission, which is being launched under the provision of Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013.
- Under the Mission, the Karnataka Government will hold 49% of shares of the companies and the rest 51% by the industries and other stakeholders.
- Earlier, e-commerce and startup companies operating under Technology Mission were governed by few government agencies.

D.P. Singh Committee on Higher Studies

- The Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (Now, Ministry of Education) has set a committee under the chairmanship of UGC Chairman D.P. Singh, to frame guidelines to ensure that more students stay in India and continue their higher studies.
- The committee has been set up to address the issues of students who aspire to go abroad and students who are returning from abroad due to COVID-19 crisis.
- **The Committee will focus on:**
 - Options of joint degree programmes
 - Options to link academia and industries
 - Lateral entry options to Indian Higher Education Institutes
 - Possibilities to bring online lectures by eminent faculties abroad
 - Mechanisms for starting multi-disciplinary and innovative programmes

25th July 2020

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan

- The Unnat Bharat Abhiyan is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Education (formerly Ministry of Human Resource Development).
- The programme aims to link a higher education institute with at least 5 villages. The institutes using their knowledge base will contribute to social and economic betterment of these village communities. So far 13,702 villages have been adopted by 2,474 institutes.
- **Context:**
 - The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) operating under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has signed an agreement with IIT Delhi to implement Unnat Bharat Abhiyan.
 - As per the agreement, the tribal entrepreneurs working under the Van Dhan programme of TRIFED to get access of research works of several institutions that are part of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Health Ministers' Meeting

- The Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan attended Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Health Ministers' meeting through video-conference.
- **Key Highlights:**
 - During the meet, the Minister highlighted that India has taken bold measures of implementing lockdown at the earliest to contain COVID-19 virus spread.
 - The disease surveillance programme of India has enrolled 3.2 million persons for community-based follow ups.
 - India informed the member countries that it uses Arogya Setu and ITIHAS apps to track COVID-19 spread and RT-PCR application for testing.
 - India suggested to set up a new group of traditional medicines, and to conduct free online seminars on COVID-19.

ASTHROS Mission

- NASA is planning to launch ASTHROS Mission from Antarctica in December 2023. The mission is to spend three weeks observing air currents above the continent.
- ASTHROS is an acronym for 'Astrophysics Stratospheric Telescope for High Spectral Resolution Observation as Sub-millimetre wavelengths'.
- Under the ASTHROS Mission, it will send a football stadium-sized balloons into the stratosphere. The balloon will observe wavelengths of invisible light from the earth. The balloon has a telescope, sub systems, science instruments, electronic systems and cooling system.

- The Mission will find answers about unsolved puzzles of giant stars and their formation in the Milky Way Galaxy. The mission for the first time will detect and map the presence of two specific types of nitrogen ions. These ions will help to reveal places where winds from supernova explosions massive stars helped to reshape the gas clouds.

26th July 2020

Kargil Vijay Diwas

- India observed Kargil Vijay Diwas on July 26, 2020, to mark India's victory over Pakistan in the Kargil war. On this day, India culminated 'Operation Vijay' and declared victory after three-month long battle in Kargil.
- The Kargil War was an armed conflict between India and Pakistan that took place along Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir in 1999. India used its air power on a large scale for the first time in Kargil war after India-Pakistan War of 1971.

Khelo India Youth Games

- Haryana is to host the fourth edition of Khelo India Youth Games which has been scheduled to be conducted after Tokyo Olympics.
- The Khelo India scheme was launched to improve sports culture in India. The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- Under the Khelo India, the Sports Authority of India has transferred Rs 30,000 to the accounts of Khelo India athletes to help them during COVID-19 crisis. To achieve this, a fund of Rs 8.25 crores was allocated.

Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana

- The Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana has been launched by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC). It reaches out to potters in the states of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Odisha, Bihar, and Gujarat.
- The scheme provides support to potters in training for advanced pottery products, market linkages and visibility through KVIC exhibitions and latest and new technology pottery equipment like that of electric potter wheels (Chaak).
- **Context:** The Union Home Minister Amit Shah distributed 100 electric potter wheels under Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana of KVIC. The electric potter wheels were distributed to the marginalized potter community under Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

27th July 2020

Mausam

- Union Ministry of Earth Sciences has launched a mobile application named 'Mausam' that will provide city-wise weather forecasts and warnings. The application will provide information such as humidity, temperature, wind speed, direction for around 200 cities.
- **Key Highlights**
 - The information in the application is to be updated 8 times a day.
 - The application will also provide three hourly warnings about the local weather phenomena.
 - It will provide forecast for the next seven days for around 450 cities in the country.
 - The App will issue colour coded alerts twice a day up to five days to warn people ahead of dangerous weather. The colour coded alerts include red, orange and yellow.
 - The Mausam Application provides services such as 'Nowcast' which gives hourly warnings of localised weather phenomena for around 800 stations.
- The application was designed and developed by International Crops Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), and Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM).

World Wildlife Crime Report

- The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime recently released the World Wildlife Crime Report which highlights trafficking in protected species.
- **Key Highlights:**
 - The report says that around 6,000 species have been seized between 1999 and 2018. The rhinos are poached for their horns whereas Pangolins are seized for their scales.
 - The report says that India and Thailand source 82% of illegal shipment of tiger body parts.

Dare to Dream

- The Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) launched an innovative contest 'Dare to Dream' on the death anniversary of Dr APJ Abdul Kalam which falls on 27th July.
- The Dare to Dream is an open challenge that promotes innovators and start-ups in the country. The challenge promotes individuals and start-ups for innovation in aerospace technologies. The award money for the winners is up to Rs 10 lakhs.

28th July 2020

Hong Kong: China suspends Extradition Treaties

- China announced the suspension of extradition treaties of Hong Kong with Canada, Britain and Australia. It has been done under its New Security Law in Hong Kong. According to the law, China gained control over external affairs and defence of Hong Kong.
- Extradition is an act under which a jurisdiction delivers a person convicted or accused of committing crime in another jurisdiction. It is a cooperative law enforcement process that depends on the arrangements made between the respective countries.
- India does not have Extradition treaty with Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Maldives, Myanmar and Pakistan. On the other hand, India has extradition treaties with Australia, Britain, Canada, Italy and USA.

COVISHIELD

- The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) has announced that it will take up clinical trials of COVISHIELD- a COVID-19 vaccine developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca.
- The trials are being considered by CDSCO after the request from Serum Institute of India.
- The phase III of the trials is to be conducted in India. During this phase, around 4000-5000 people shall be tested. The vaccine is already being tested in UK, South Africa, and Brazil.
- **Current Status:**
 - India is planning to launch COVAXIN, a COVID-19 vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech and ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research).
 - ZyCov-D is another vaccine that is under trials in India that has been developed by Zydus Cadila.

29th July 2020

Rafale

- The first set of five Rafale multi-role Combat Fighter jet landed in Ambala airbase on 29th July to join Indian Air Force.
- The fighter jets covered a distance of about 7,000 km from France to India and took a single halt throughout the journey in an airbase in the UAE. The fighter jets will be made fully operational with immediate effect.
- Rafale is capable of conducting any type of sortie mission including interdiction, aerial reconnaissance, air supremacy, close air support, ground support, in-depth strike, anti-ship strike and nuclear deterrence missions.

- The jets are to be armed with deadly weapons, radars, advanced electronics, electronic warfare systems and self-protection suites. It includes Israeli helmet mounted displays, radar enhancements, cold start capability from high altitude regions, low-band jammers, infrared search and tracking system and flight data recording.
- **Key Specifications**
 - Combat range: 1,850 km
 - Maximum speed: Mach 1.8 [Mach number is the ratio of the flow velocity (i.e. speed of an aircraft) to the speed of sound].
 - Fuel capacity: 4,700 kg for single-seater and 4,400 kg for double seater.
- **Background**
 - The Government of India had signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) with Dassault Aviation of France in the year 2016 for 36 Rafale fighter jets. The deal was signed for Rs 59,000 crores.
 - With the first set arriving, the rest of 31 jets are to be delivered by 2021.
 - As a part of the contract, the Indian pilots were provided complete training on weapon system and aircraft by Dassault.

Global Tiger Day

- Global Tiger Day is observed on July 29 every year to create awareness for tiger conservation. It promotes a system to protect natural habitats of tigers and raise public awareness.
- The decision to celebrate the day was taken at the Saint Petersburg Declaration on Tiger conservation that was signed in 2010.
- The Global Tiger Day 2020 had the slogan, “Their Survival is in our hands”.
- **The Tigers Report 2018**
 - The Tigers Report 2018 was released by Union Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar on the eve of Global Tiger Day 2020.
 - As per the Report, an increasing rate of 6% per annum of Tiger population was observed in India from the year 2006 to 2018.
 - A book titled ‘Tigers, Co-predators, and Prey in India’ and a map titled ‘Securing India’s small cats’ were released.

30th July 2020

National Education Policy, 2020

- The Union Cabinet approves National Education Policy 2020, paving way for transformational reforms in school and higher education systems in the country after 34 years.
- The aim of the Policy is to create an education system which is deeply rooted in Indian ethos and can rebuild India as a global knowledge superpower, by providing high-quality education to all.

Key Highlights of the Policy:

- Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) to be renamed as Ministry of Education.
- Public spending on education by Centre and states to be raised to 6% of the GDP.
- The National Educational Technology Forum will be created for the exchange of ideas on use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning and administration.
- **School Education:**
 - The NEP proposes changing the existing 10+2 structure with 5+3+3+4 design covering the children in the age group 3-18 years. Under this:
 - Five years of the Foundational Stage: 3 years of pre-primary school and Grades 1-2.
 - Three years of the Preparatory (or Lower Primary) Stage: Grades 3-4-5.
 - Three years of the Middle (or Upper Primary) Stage: Grades 6-7-8
 - Four years of the High (or Secondary) Stage: Grades 9-10-11-12.
 - A child's mother tongue will be used as the medium of instruction till class 5.
 - Universalise the pre-primary education (age range of 3-6 years) by 2025.
 - Universalization of Education from pre-school to secondary level with 100% Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030.
 - A new school curriculum with coding and vocational studies from class 6 will be introduced.
 - A National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy will ensure basic skills at the class 3 level by 2025.
 - Board exams will test core competencies rather than memorising facts, with all students allowed to take the exam twice.
- **Higher Education:**
 - The M.Phil degree will be abolished.
 - By the year 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a four-year integrated B.Ed.
 - Four year undergraduate degrees with multiple entry and exit options will be introduced.
 - A new regulator for all higher education except medical, legal courses will be established.
 - College affiliation system to be phased out in 15 years, so that every college develops into either an autonomous degree-granting institution, or a constituent college of a university.

Note: National Education Policy was framed by a panel headed by former ISRO Chairman K. Kasturirangan.

National Clinical Registry

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in collaboration with AIIMS, is creating National Clinical Registry for COVID-19 patients, which will act as a platform to conduct clinical trials and study its response against the deadly virus.
- The main purpose of creating the registry is to understand the nature of the disease and to study how it is affecting different people in a different manner.
- As of now, a total of 15 institutions will create a network to implement the project.
- The government is focusing on the collection of data in a more systematic, structured, and a scientific way which could later be used as a repository. A team of experts such as clinicians, scientists, analysts, and biostatistics will be in-charge of the registry.

31st July 2020

AJO-Neo

- The Satyendra Nath Bose National Centre for Basic Sciences (SNBNCBS), Kolkata, under the Department of Science and Technology, has developed a device named 'AJO-Neo' for no-touch and painless non-invasive bilirubin level screening in newborns.
- The device is capable of measuring bilirubin levels in premature as well as natural birth babies irrespective of menstrual or Chronological age, sex, risk factors, feeding behavior or skin color.
- **Importance**
 - It can deliver reports within 10 seconds to the doctor, as conventional methods of blood testing require time.
 - The detection of neonatal blood bilirubin (Hyperbilirubinemia) faster is extremely important to avoid neuro-psychiatric problems in newborn babies.

Mars 2020 Mission: Perseverance Rover

- NASA has launched its Mars Perseverance Rover mission from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida. After covering 300 million miles the Mars Perseverance Rover is expected to land on 18th February 2021.
- The main objective of the Mars Perseverance Rover is to search for signs of ancient life and collect rock and soil samples from Mars surface.
- **Key Highlights:**
 - Perseverance rover is carrying high lens cameras to capture several views while landing and microphones, which will be the first to record sounds on another planet.
 - It is carrying a helicopter named 'Ingenuity' which is an experiment carried by NASA and if it works, it will be the first powered flight on another planet.