Daily current affairs

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Difference between HECI(Higher Education Commission of India) and UGC(University Grants Commission)

- One of the key differences between HECI and UGC will be that UGC had the authority to assess quality of an institute and release grants. The new body, HECI, will not have the authority to release grants, and grants would be released directly from the Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- Earlier UGC used to inspect institutions for quality and academic standards. HECI will replace the inspection modal with 'transparent disclosure'.
- Another area where HECI will divert from UGC is in dealing with bogus institutions. UGC, from time to time, used to publish list of fake institutions. HECI will have the power to close or penalize fake institutes as well as such institutes which do not adhere to the recommended academic standards.

Kabir

- Kabir was a 15th-century Indian mystic poet and saint, whose writings influenced Hinduism's Bhakti movement and his verses are found in Sikhism's scripture Guru Granth Sahib.
- Kabir is known for being critical of both Hinduism and Islam, stating that the former was misguided by the Vedas, and questioning their meaningless rites.
- Reacting to the authority of the Vedas and the Quran he put emphasis on the inner virtues of man.
- Kabir suggested that True God is with the person who is on the path of righteousness, considered all creatures on earth as his own self, and who is passively detached from the affairs of the world.
- Kabir did not believe in idol worship nor did he believe in caste system.

Source: The Hindu

Blockchain technology

A blockchain is a decentralized, distributed and public digital ledger that is used to record transactions across many computers so that the record cannot be altered without the

alteration of all subsequent blocks and the consensus of the network.

- This allows the participants to verify and audit transactions inexpensively.
- A blockchain database is managed autonomously using a closed group network and a distributed time stamping server.

Blockchain technology can be integrated into multiple areas.

- The primary use of blockchains today is as a distributed ledger for cryptocurrencies, most notably bitcoin.
- While a few central banks, in countries and regions such as India, China, Hong Kong, United States, Sweden, Singapore, South Africa and the United Kingdom are studying issuance of a Central Bank Issued Cryptocurrency (CICC)

Blockchain technology has a large potential to transform business operating models in the long term.

- Blockchain distributed ledger technology is more a foundational technology—with the potential to create new foundations for global economic and social systems—than a disruptive technology, which typically "attack a traditional business model with a lower-cost solution and overtake incumbent firms quickly".
- The use of blockchains promises to bring significant efficiencies to global supply chains, financial transactions, asset ledgers and decentralized social networking

Blockchain technology in India

- The Centre is considering a proposal to set up a Centre of Excellence for blockchain technology in Hyderabad to drive innovation.
- Hyderabad may house first government blockchain centre
- Technology to be put to use to secure land records in Telangana

Source: The Hindu

Orange crocodiles

- The West African state of Gabon is famous for its biodiversity but in a galaxy of spectacular finds, one stands out: orange crocodiles.The crocodiles inhabit the Abanda caves in a remote area with around 20 other cave systems.
- Scientists looking for traces of ancient human life stumbled upon the unusual reptiles decade ago as they searched in the gloom of isolated caves in Gabon.
- Dwarf crocodiles (Osteolaemus tetraspis) are a well-studied species, but the ones in the cave complex stand out in the way they have adapted to their habitat.the subterranean creatures have developed a specific "genetic signature," apparently from adapting to life underground, and this is transmitted from generation to generation

Source: The Hindu

Saturn - Cassini Spacecraft

- The Cassini–Huygens mission, commonly called Cassini, was a collaboration between NASA, the European Space Agency (ESA), and the Italian Space Agency (ASI) to send a probe to study the planet Saturn and its system, including its rings and natural satellites.
- The Flagship-class robotic spacecraft comprised both NASA's Cassini probe, and ESA's Huygens lander which landed on Saturn's largest moon, Titan.
- Cassini was the fourth space probe to visit Saturn and the first to enter its orbit.`

Source: The Hindu
