



Daily current affairs

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Urban Cafe: River for Habitat

Why in News?

The **National Mission for Clean Ganga** partnered with **UN Habitat** to organize a policy dialogue- 'Urban Cafe: River for Habitat' in New Delhi on the occasion of **World Cities Day 2018**.



Outcomes:

- Experts in the sector got together to discuss the deep *association that rivers have with various aspects of human civilization* - our cities, our economy and various facets of our daily lives, the challenges to maintaining healthy river ecosystems and ways to deal with the same.
- They emphasized on the intrinsic relationship between river and economy which has to be a win-win situation for both. River and river basins should be seen as '*national capital or asset*'.
- They also stressed on developing an **Urban River Plan** from where the river enters the city and where it exits.
- Emphasizing the importance of **ghats**, the experts further noted that not only do ghats connect river to the people but also promote safety of the river and people.
- The experts further stressed upon *advocacy and resolve combined with public participation* as vital elements for restoring our river ecosystems.

About UN-Habitat:

- The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is the **United Nations agency for human settlements and sustainable urban development**.
- It was established in **1978 as an outcome of the First UN Conference on Human Settlements and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat I)** held in Vancouver, Canada in 1976.
- UN-Habitat maintains its **headquarters at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Kenya**.
- It is **mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities** with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.

- It is **a member of the United Nations Development Group**.
 - The mandate of UN-Habitat derives from the **Habitat Agenda**, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996. The **twin goals of the Habitat Agenda** are adequate shelter for all and the development of sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world.
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International Solar Alliance (ISA)

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given ex-post facto approval for moving **a Resolution in the first Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) for amending the Framework Agreement of the ISA for opening up the ISA membership to all countries that are members of the United Nations**.

Expected benefits:

- Opening the membership of the ISA will put solar energy in global agenda with the **universal appeal for developing and deploying solar energy**.
- It will make **ISA inclusive**, whereby all member countries that are members of the United Nations could become member. Expanding membership will lead to ISA initiative benefitting the world at large.

What is International Solar Alliance?

International Solar Alliance or ISA includes 121 countries consisting of those countries which are **located between the tropic of cancer and tropic of Capricorn**.

Why only these countries? These countries are located at **the shortest distance from the Sun** that is why solar energy is available in these quantities throughout the year.

Target: The ISA has set a target of 1 TW of solar energy by 2030.

The objectives of the alliance are expected to be achieved by focusing on key areas such as promoting research & development in solar technologies, formulating programmes to publicize solar applications, evolving an innovative financial mechanism that reduces the cost of capital, framing a common knowledge e-portal, providing a conducive atmosphere for promotion and absorption of solar energy technologies.



ISA and India:

- International Solar Alliance (ISA) is the **first international organization that has secretariat in India**.
- India, with a target to produce 100 GW of solar energy by 2022, would **account for a tenth of ISA's goal**. "India will produce 175 GW electricity from renewable sources by

2022 and 100 GW will be from solar energy.

- Distribution of **28 crore LED bulbs in three years** has saved \$2 billion and 4 GW of electricity. India will also provide 500 training slots for ISA member-countries and start a solar tech mission to lead R&D.
 - Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) and **Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) announced contribution of US \$ 1 million each to the ISA corpus fund.**
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Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers

Why in News?

The All-India CPI-IW for September, 2018 remained stationary at 301 (three hundred and one). On 1-month percentage change, it remained static between August, 2018 and September, 2018 and it was also static between the corresponding months of previous year.

What is CPI (IW)?

- Released by the Ministry of Labour & Employment, Consumer price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers is designed to measure a change over time in prices of a given basket of goods and services consumed by a defined population (i.e. Industrial Workers).
 - This Index is compiled for Industrial Workers residing in 70 centres of industrial importance in the country. These 70centres were distributed among the states in proportion to the industrial employment. The indices for all the 70 centres are compiled and released every month on the basis of the weights derived from the working Class Family.
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“Shanghai Cooperation Organization Joint Exercise on Urban Earthquake Search & Rescue -2019”

Why in News?

The two-day long preparatory meeting of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization Joint Exercise on Urban Earthquake Search & Rescue- 2019 has begun.** This marks the first phase of the main exercise scheduled for 21-24 February, 2019 in Delhi by India. The **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has been entrusted with the responsibility of organizing the exercise by Government of India.**



Why the need?

Interdependency: The increasing trends of disasters especially hydro-metrological disasters in the region. As all the countries are interconnected with each other, hence action in one part of world affects the other part. the challenges in disaster management are common in the world. If it becomes possible to prevent and reduce the impact of disasters, it will be a huge global benefit.

India has always been at the forefront of the Disaster Risk Resilience (DRR) efforts by hosting the South Asian Annual Disaster Management Exercise (SAADMEx), Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) and Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Corporation (BIMSTEC).

What is SCO?

- Seen as **a counter to the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)**, SCO is a Eurasian political, economic and military organisation which was founded in 2001 in Shanghai by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- These countries, **except for Uzbekistan, had been members of the Shanghai Five**, founded in 1996; after the inclusion of Uzbekistan in 2001, the members renamed the organisation.
- Its headquarters is located in Beijing, China.
- India, which has had an observer status for the past 10 years, was accepted along with Pakistan as full members of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2017.
- It has now eight members: China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan.



Observers: SCO has Afghanistan, Iran, Mongolia and Belarus as observers.

Relationship with UN: The SCO has established relations with the United Nations, where it is an observer in the General Assembly, the European Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Commonwealth of Independent States and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

MSME Support and Outreach Programme

Why in News?

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi will launch the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Support and Outreach Programme. Various announcements and deliverables focused on access to credit, access to market, hand holding and facilitation support measures etc. for MSME Sector are likely to be announced on this occasion.

What are MSME's?

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act, 2006, deals with the definition of MSMEs based on:

- The investment in plant and machinery for those engaged in manufacturing or production, processing or preservation of goods.
- The investment in equipment for enterprises engaged in providing or rendering of services.



Issues faced by MSME:



What needs to be done?



Various initiatives in support of the MSME sector:

Public Procurement Policy 2012: Each Ministry/PSU shall set an annual goal and procure minimum 20% from MSME within 3 years. In many FDI proposals such as FDI in Retail, there is a clause that 20-30% inputs shall be procured only from MSME.

Labour Reforms: Introduction of ShramSuvidha Portal to compliance with labour laws, flexible & time bound labour inspection scheme and Unique Labour identification number (LIN) to every unit.

Mudra Scheme: This is the first ever credit scheme designed for micro entrepreneurs or household enterprises. Lesser documents formality, no collateral and cheap interest rate are some of the major features of this scheme. Connecting last mile financier with Mudra bank is another remarkable feature of the scheme to provide credit facility to each household enterprise.

Udyog Aadhaar Memorandum (UAM): This is a path breaking step to promote ease-of-doing-business for MSMEs in India as the UAM replaces the filing of manual Entrepreneurs' Memorandum (EM part-I & II) with online facility of filing EM and each MSME to instantly get a unique Udyog Aadhaar Number (UAN). The information sought is on self-certification basis and no supporting documents are required at the time of online filing of UAM.

A Scheme for Promotion of Innovation, Rural Industry and Entrepreneurship (ASPIRE): ASPIRE has been launched with an objective to set up a network of technology centers, incubation centers to accelerate entrepreneurship and also to promote start-ups for innovation and entrepreneurship in rural and agriculture based industry with a fund of Rs 210 Cr.

Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI): The objectives of SFURTI is to organize the traditional industries and artisans into clusters to make them competitive and provide support for their long term sustainability by way of enhancing the marketability of products, improving the skills of artisans, making provision for common facilities and strengthening the cluster governance systems.

Stand Up India: Recently government approved “Stand-Up India Scheme” to promote entrepreneurship among SC/ST and Women entrepreneurs. The Scheme is intended to facilitate at least two such projects per bank branch, on an average one for each category of entrepreneur. It is expected to benefit at least 2.5 Lakh borrowers in time limit of 36 months from the launch of the Scheme.

Credit Linked Capital Subsidy Scheme: it has been implemented by the government for upgradation of technology. Under this 15% (subject to maximum of Rs.15.00 lakhs) upfront subsidy on capital investment for technology upgradation is provided to micro and small enterprises for modernization of their production equipment(plant and machinery).

Zero Defect and Zero Effect Scheme: To enable the advancement of Indian industry to a position of eminence in the global marketplace and leverage India’s emergence as the world’s supplier through the ‘Made in India’ mark.

Corpus of Credit Guarantee Trust Fund for Micro, and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) augmented:

1. Corpus of the Trust augmented from Rs. 2,500 crore to Rs. 7,500 crore and will be fully funded by the Government of India.
2. Coverage of the loans covered under the Credit Guarantee Scheme from Rs.1 crore to Rs.2 crore increased.
3. Coverage of the Credit Guarantee Scheme for loans being extended to Micro and Small Enterprises by NBFCs increased

MSME Delayed Payment Portal - MSME Samadhaan <http://samadhaan.msme.gov.in> launched: This Portal will empower Micro and Small entrepreneurs across the country to directly register their cases relating to delayed payments by Central Ministries/Departments/CPSEs/State Governments. The Portal will give information about the pending payment of MSEs with individual CPSEs / Central Ministries, State Governments, etc.

Public Procurement Portal for MSEs - MSME Sambandh <http://sambandh.msme.gov.in> launched: The Portal will help in monitoring the implementation of the Public Procurement from MSEs by Central Public Sector Enterprises(CPSEs). Using this Online Portal, the Ministries and CPSEs can assess their performance.

