



Daily Current Affairs

Posted at: 18/12/2018

'Adopt A Heritage' project

Why in news?

Recently Minister of State (independent charge) for Culture has given information about 'Adopt A Heritage' project in Loksabha.

About 'Adopt A Heritage' project:

- The 'Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan' scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India.
- It was launched in September 2017 on World Tourism Day by President. Under it, the government invites entities, including public sector companies, private sector firms as well as individuals, to develop selected monuments and heritage and tourist sites across India.
- Development of these tourist sites calls for providing and maintaining basic amenities, including drinking water, ease of access for the differently abled and senior citizens, standardised signage, cleanliness, public conveniences and illumination, along with advanced amenities such as surveillance systems, night-viewing facilities and tourism facilitation centres.
- The sites/monument are selected on the basis of tourist footfall and visibility and can be adopted by private and public sector companies and individuals — known as Monument Mitras — for an initial period of five years.
- The Monument Mitras are selected by the 'oversight and vision committee,' co-chaired by the Tourism Secretary and the Culture Secretary, on the basis of the bidder's 'vision' for development of all amenities at the heritage site.

- There is no financial bid involved. The corporate sector is expected to use corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds for the upkeep of the site. The Monument Mitras, in turn, will get limited visibility on the site premises and on the Incredible India website.
- The oversight committee also has the power to terminate a memorandum of understanding in case of non-compliance or non-performance.

Why does it matter?

- The project kicked up a storm after reports that private entity Dalmia Bharat, under an MoU, would build infrastructure and maintain the iconic Red Fort.
- Dalmia Bharat has committed 25 crore for the purpose. The Opposition termed it an attack on the idea of India, alleging that the government was handing over the symbol of India's independence to private parties. The government said the scheme would help to increase tourist footfall.

What lies ahead?

- The government intends to expand the 'Adopt a Heritage' scheme. Under the scheme, the government has put up a list of over 93 ASI monuments that can be bid for by private and public sector firms, as well as individuals.
- This is a pretty small list, as the ASI protects 3,686 ancient monuments and archaeological sites, including 36 world heritage sites. So far, 31 agencies or Monument Mitras have been approved to adopt 95 monuments/tourist sites.

Project 'Mausam'

Why in news?

Recently Minister of State (independent charge) for Culture has given information about 'project Mausam' in Loksabha

About Project Mausam:

- The project was launched in June, 2014.
- Project 'Mausam' is the initiative of Ministry of Culture to be implemented by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) as the nodal agency with research support of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and National Museum as associate bodies.
- This project aims to explore the multi-faceted Indian Ocean 'world' - collating archaeological and historical research in order to document the diversity of cultural, commercial and religious interactions in the Indian Ocean.
- Project Mausam purposes to determine the versatile Indian Ocean "world" -expanding from East Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, the Indian subcontinent and Sri Lanka to the Southeast Asian archipelago.
- It also aims to promote research on themes related to the study of Maritime Routes.
- The main objective of the project is to inscribe places and sites identified under Project Mausam as trans-national nomination for inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Some of the major achievements are: -

1. A national conference organized by ASI and Kerala Tourism in November, 2014 at Kochi, Kerala.
2. Exhibition on Unearthing Pattanam; Histories, Cultures and Crossings at National Museum in November, 2014.
3. Seventeen lectures were held on various themes related to Project Mausam by IGNCA
4. An exhibition on 'Africans in India: A rediscovery' in IGNCA.
5. Symposium on 'Maritime culture of India and its potential' in January, 2017.

IMPRESS scheme

Why in news?

Recently Minister of State (HRD) has given information about

IMPRESS scheme in Lok sabha.

About IMPRESS scheme:

- The Government of India, in August 2018, had sanctioned the scheme “Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences (IMPRESS)” at a total cost of Rs. 414 Cr for implementation up to 31.03.2021.
- Under the Scheme, 1500 research projects will be awarded for 2 years to support the social science research in the higher educational institutions and to enable research to guide policy making.
- The Indian Council of Social Science and Research (ICSSR) will be the project implementing agency.

The broad **objectives** of the scheme are:

- To identify and fund research proposals in social sciences with maximum impact on the governance and society.
- To focus research on (11) broad thematic areas such as : State and Democracy, Urban transformation, Media, Culture and Society, Employment, Skills and Rural transformation , Governance, Innovation and Public Policy, Growth, Macro-trade and Economic Policy, Agriculture and Rural Development, Health and Environment, Science and Education, Social Media and Technology, Politics, Law and Economics. The sub- theme areas will be decided on the basis of Expert Groups’ advice before notifying the scheme and calling for applications.
- To ensure selection of projects through a transparent, competitive process on online mode.
- To provide opportunity for social science researchers in any institution in the country, including all Universities (Central and State), private institutions with 12(B) status conferred by UGC.
- ICSSR funded/ recognized research institutes will also be eligible to submit research proposals on the given themes and sub-themes.

Background:

- The Government has approved “Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education by 2022”, as per which the scope of institutions to be funded through Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) has been enlarged to encompass School Education and Medical Education

institutions, apart from Higher Education.

- The total authorized equity capital of HEFA has been raised to Rs.10,000 crore, with the facility to leverage additional resources from the market, based on requirement. A total Government equity of Rs. 6,000 Crore, has been approved.
 - All funds for educational infrastructure in centrally funded educational institutions will henceforth be in the form of ten year loans through HEFA to the institution, the interest liability of which would be borne by the Government.
 - The principal repayment would be undertaken by the institutions in part or full depending on their age profile and financial capability. For new institutions and those which have limited internal fund generating capacity, the entire principal and interest repayment would be undertaken by the Government.
 - There is an additional window of financing for school and medical education institutions where the sponsoring Department would undertake to repay the principal and interest to HEFA. So far, HEFA has approved projects of Rs. 24430 Crore with total loan amount of Rs. 12307 Crore.
-

Government initiatives to promote e-Education

Why in news?

Recently Government of India explained its initiatives to promote e-Education.

1. ICT in Education Curricula for School system:

- ICT in Education Curricula for students, teachers and teacher educators has been developed at the national level and being implemented across the country.
- 805 MRPs/ KRPs of thirty six States/UTs were oriented on ICT curriculum for students and teachers and their roll out in respective states. Guidelines for teacher, student and schools on cyber safety and security have been published.

2. e-pathshala:

- e-pathshala has been developed by NCERT (National Council for Educational Research and Training) for showcasing and disseminating all educational e-resources including textbooks, audio, video, periodicals and a variety of other print and non-print materials.
- So far, 3444 audios and videos, 698 e-books (e-pubs) and 504 flip books have been made available on the portal and mobile app.

3. Shagun portal:

- A web portal called ShaGun (from the words Shaala and Gunvatta) which has two parts, one of which is a Repository of good practices, photographs, videos, studies, newspaper articles etc on school education, State /UT wise has been developed which is in public domain.
- Its purpose is to showcase success stories and also to provide a platform for all stakeholders to learn from each other. This also instills a positive competitive spirit among all the States and UTs.

4. National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER)

- The National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER) is an initiative to bring together all digital and digitisable resources across all stages of school education and teacher education.
- So far, 13635 files including 401 collections, 2722 documents, 565 interactive, 1664 audios, 2581 images and 6105 videos have been made available over the portal. State/ UTs are motivated to contribute resources on NROER and create OERs for their own State/ UT.

5. SWAYAM:

- The 'Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds' (SWAYAM) an integrated platform for online courses, using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and covering school (9th to 12th) to Post Graduate Level.
- SWAYAM provides one integrated platform and portal for online courses, using information and communication technology (ICT) and covering all higher education subjects and skill sector courses to ensure that the every student in the country has access to the best

quality higher education at affordable cost.

- It also offers online courses for students, teachers and teacher educators.

6. SWAYAM PRABHA:

- A programme for utilization of satellite communication technologies for transmission of educational e-contents through 32 National Channels i.e. SWAYAM PRABHA DTH-TV has been launched.
- Everyday four hour fresh slot is telecast and repeated 5 more times in 24 hours to provide learning opportunities for the stake holders, as per their convenience. Besides, NIOS is running 5 channels for teachers, for secondary and senior secondary levels and for sign language.

7. National Digital Library (NDL):

- The National Digital Library of India (NDL) is a project to develop a framework of virtual repository of learning resources with a single-window search facility. There are more than 153 Lakh digital books available through the NDL.

