Daily Current Affairs

Posted at: 01/01/2019

SWAYAM Platform

Why in news?

Recently Minister of State (HRD) shared the success of the SWAYAM Platform in Lok Sabha.

About SWAYAM:

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)has embarked on a major and new initiative called 'Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds' (SWAYAM), which provides one integrated platform and MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) portal for online courses, using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and covering all higher education subjects and skill sector courses.
- Till date, more than 39 Lakhs learners have been enrolled in more than 1600+ MOOCs courses that have been run through SWAYAM.
- 60,000 persons have completed the courses. Credit transfer facility up to 20% is enabled through the notification issued by UGC/AICTE-'Credit Framework for online learning courses through SWAYAM Regulation 2016'.
- It is the endeavor of MHRD to align the courses on the SWAYAM portal with the curriculum of Universities.
- All the courses are interactive, prepared by the best teachers in the country and are available, free of cost.
- More than 1,000 specially chosen faculty and teachers from across the Country have participated in preparing these courses.
- In order to ensure best quality content are produced and delivered, 9 National Coordinators have been appointed: They are, University Grants Commission (UGC) for Post-Graduation Education, Consortium for Education Communication (CEC) for Under-Graduate Education,

NPTEL Consortium of 7 Indian Institutes of Technologies & Indian Institute of Science for Engineering, National Council for Education Research & Training (NCERT) & National Institute for Open Schooling (NIOS) for School Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU)for out of the School Students, Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore for Management Studies , National Institute for Technical Teachers' Training (NITTTR) for teachers training program and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) for ARPIT Courses (Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching), Self-paced & Courses by Foreign Universities.

- The Faculty Development Programmes (FDP) is also being developed through SWAYAM. Fifteen lakh untrained teachers are getting trained under DElEd programme of NIOS delivered through SWAYAM.
- The Government has launched Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT), a major and unique initiative of online professional development of 15 lakh higher education faculty using the MOOCs platform of SWAYAM.
- 92 Universities have come forward in accepting credit transfer for courses done through SWAYAM Platform. The number of courses offered under SWAYAM during the current academic yearis 1082 courses.
- The number of users including students, teachers, professionals, sr. citizens, housewives etc.who have registered for various courses under SWAYAM are 25,57,118 andthe registrations during the current academic year are 4,36,431.
- The Online Courses delivered on SWAYAM, are going to reduce the digital divide. It shall, turn out to be a disruptive technology and change the present business model of higher education.
- Since the MOOCs on SWAYAM is integrated with conventional education, it shall bring-in tremendous learning opportunity in coming days and shall prove to be a game changer in the education sector.

Promotion of GI products

Why in news?

Recently Government explained achievements regarding Promotion of GI products.

Important Facts:

- Geographical Indications (GIs) are registered as per the provisions of the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999. As on 24.12.2018, 330 GIs have been registered.
- The Government has undertaken several steps for promotion of Indian products registered as GIs like participation in trade fairs and other events to promote and create awareness on GIs and increase the sales of GI products, promotion of GIs through social media, involving State governments and Union Territory administration and other relevant organizations for facilitation of GI producers.
- Authorized Users are registered as per the provisions of Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999. Till 30.11.2018, the GI Registry, Chennai has received 4850 GI authorized user applications, out of which 3607 GI authorized users have been registered.
- The remaining 1243 pending applications have already been examined and report issued to the applicants to remedy deficiencies, which include providing supporting documents and complete applicant details.
- In order to spread awareness for registration of GI authorised users, awareness programmes are conducted for concerned stakeholders at various places in the country.
- The processing of an application for registering a geographical indication for any goods involves issuing of a preliminary examination report to remedy deficiencies in the application, if any.
- Thereafter, a consultative group comprising of subject experts is constituted to evaluate and ascertain the correctness of the particulars furnished in the application and its supporting documents. Based on the recommendations by the consultative group, an examination report is issued to the applicant.
- After necessary compliances to conditions and removal of objections, if any, the application is accepted and published for public to file opposition, if any, within the stipulated period. If no opposition is received, or if it is disposed off in favour of the applicant, the GI is registered.

- In the case of an application for registration as authorized user, it is examined and deficiencies, if any, communicated to the applicant. Once these are removed, the application is registered.
- The onus of removing the deficiencies and complying with the conditions lies with the applicant, the time taken for which may delay the disposal of the application.
- The online system of filing GI applications is operational since March, 2015. However, examination of the application is done offline. There is no proposal to make the system of examination online.

About Geographical Indication tag:

- A geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign used on products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g. a town, region, or country).
- The use of a geographical indication, as a type of indication of source, may act as a certification that the product possesses certain qualities, is made according to traditional methods, or enjoys a certain reputation, due to its geographical origin.
- Appellation of origin is a subtype of geographical indication where quality, method and reputation of a product strictly originate from the delineated area defined under its intellectual property right registration.
- India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection)Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15th September 2003.
- Darjeeling Tea was the first Indian product to get the geographical indication tag. In 2004, the famous beverage got the recognition.
- India has 236 GI products registered so far and over 270 more products have applied for the label.

Ministry of Food Processing Industries

Why in news?

Recently Government has released year long achievement in Food Processing Industries.

Highlights:

The efforts of the Ministry have led to a FDI in the food processing sector in India rising by 24 per cent in 2017-18.

Highlights of the major achievements are as follows

1. Mega Food Parks:

- Ministry of Food Processing Industries is focusing on boosting the food processing industry so that agriculture sector grows exponentially and become a major contributor to doubling the farmer's income and aid 'Make in India' initiative of the government.
- To give a major boost to the food processing sector by adding value and reducing food wastage at each stage of the supply chain with particular focus on perishables, Ministry of Food Processing Industries is implementing Mega Food Park Scheme in the country.
- Mega Food Parks create modern infrastructure facilities for food processing along the value chain from farm to market with strong forward and backward linkages through a cluster based approach.
- Common facilities and enabling infrastructure is created at Central Processing Centre and facilities for primary processing and storage is created near the farm in the form of Primary Processing Centers (PPCs) and Collection Centers (CCs). Under the Scheme, Government of India provides financial assistance upto Rs. 50.00 Crore per Mega Food Park project.

2. Creation/Expansion of Food Processing Preservation Capacities(CEFPPC)- 134 projects have been approved under the scheme till date.

3. Intergrated Cold Chain

- Ministry of Food Processing Industries is implementing the Scheme of Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure as one of the component of Pradhan Mantri Kisan SampadaYojana with the objective of arresting post-harvest losses of horticulture & non-horticulture produce and providing remunerative price to farmers for their produce.
- The integrated cold chain and preservation infrastructure can be set up by individuals, groups of entrepreneurs, cooperative societies, Self

Help Groups (SHGs), Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), NGOs, Central/State PSUs, etc.

- The scheme is primarily private sector driven and proposals under this scheme are invited through Expression of Interest (EOI).

4. 81 projects have been approved by Inter Ministerial Approval Committee (IMAC).

5. Creation of Backward and Forward Linkage-70 projects have been approved under the scheme till date Agro processing Clusters-33 projects have been approved under the scheme till date.

6. Towards cleanliness

- Efforts towards cleanliness were undertaken under SwachhtaPakhwada which was observed from 16th to 31st October. On the first day the Minister launched the campaign with the inauguration of a book "**Waste to Wealth Technology**" prepared by Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology, Thanjavur, Tamilnadu.
- During the campaign industry bodies like ASSOCHAM, FICCI, DICCI, PHDCCI, AIFPA and CII organised Swachhta Awareness Programme and training camps for street vendors on food safety across New Delhi.
- The Minister conferred prizes to cleanest Mega Food Parks and Cold Chains.

7. Modalities of Operation GREENS:

- Operation Greens was announced in the Budget speech of 2018-19 with an outlay of Rs 500 crores to stabilize the supply of Tomato, Onion and Potato(TOP) crops and to ensure availability of TOP crops throughout the country round the year without any price volatility.
- A major step was taken when the Ministry declared a two pronged strategy for operationalization of the scheme which comprises of

1. Short term Price Stabilisation Measures consisting of a provision of 50% of the subsidy on

a. Transportation of Tomato Onion Potato(TOP) Crops from production to storage;
b. Hiring of appropriate storage facilities for TOP Crops;

2. Long Term Integrated value chain development projects.

 a. Capacity Building of FPOs & their consortium
 b. Quality production
 c. Post-harvest processing facilities
 d. Agri-Logistics
 e. Marketing / Consumption Points
 f. Creation and Management of e-platform for demand and supply management of TOP Crops.

8. Budget Provisions:

- Allocation for Ministry of Food Processing Industries was doubled in the Budget 2018-19 to Rs. 1400 Crores and Rs. 500 crore was allocated for 'Operation Greens' to address price volatility of perishable commodities like Tomato, Onion and Potato (TOP).
- The Ministery also initiated a proposal for the setting up of a Specialized Agro Processing Financial Institutions to unlock finance for establishing food processing industries.
- These institutions would help overcome the deterrents faced while installing food processing projects that are capital intensive and have long gestation period, by ensuring timely, accessible and affordable credit to this sector.

9. Skill Development

The Ministry launched a new sub-scheme i.e. Scheme for Human Resources and Institution – Skill Development (SHRISD) for assisting skilling infrastructure and Development of Course Curriculum with a budget outlay of Rs.27.50 Crore from 2017-18 to 2019-20.