

**NATIONAL****Kala Utsav National Competition**

Union Minister of HRD will inaugurate “Kala Utsav” (Festival of Arts) at Bal Bhavan, New Delhi. Kala Utsav is an initiative of the Department of School Education and Literacy of the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Students representing Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and Navodaya Samiti will also be competing.

Background:

Kala Utsav National Competition was launched in 2015. It aims to promote arts in education by nurturing and showcasing the artistic talents of school students, children with special needs too will have the opportunity to display their talents.

**INTERNATIONAL AND BILATERAL****Israel became a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)**

Israel became a full member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The FATF membership will tag Israel as an attractive country for international investment and improve the status of the Israeli financial sector and its ability to operate in the global economy.

Financial Action Task Force:

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 by the Ministers of its Member jurisdictions.
- The objectives of the FATF are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
- The FATF is, therefore, a “policy-making body” which works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas.
- The FATF has developed a series of Recommendations that are recognised as the international standard for combating of money laundering and the financing of terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

**CAG has become the Vice Chairman of the UN Panel of Auditors**

Comptroller and Auditor General Rajiv Mehrishi has become the Vice-Chair of the UN Panel of Auditors.

UN Panel of Auditors:

- The United Nations Panel of Auditors consists of External Auditors of the United Nations and its agencies.
- The United Nations General Assembly in 1959 established the Panel of External Auditors, comprising the individual external auditors of the United Nations system, who are also Heads of Supreme Audit Institutions.
- Presently, the panel consists of 11 countries — India, Germany, Chile, Canada, France, Italy, Philippines, Ghana, Indonesia, Switzerland and United Kingdom. Currently, the panel is chaired by the Comptroller and Auditor General of the UK.

Functions of the Panel of External Auditors:

- Panel Members share experiences and methodologies so as to ensure uniformity of external audit practices throughout the United Nations system.
- Panel Members provide independent assurance to Member States and other stakeholders in relation to the proper use of the Organizations’ resources as well as their economic, efficient and effective use.
- They also play a significant role in assisting the Organizations to improve their operations and their internal control activities.
- The findings and recommendations of Panel Members are taken seriously, and the status of recommendations is closely monitored to ensure timely and effective implementation.

### **Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

To mark the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the global leaders inked this historical accord to help millions of women and men who are not exercising their basic human rights.

The Conference was hosted by the Government of Marrakesh, Morocco as agreed to by UN member states in the 'New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants'.

**Aim:** The aim of the Global Compact is to improve the cooperation and management of cross-border movements of people. The Global Compact also makes clear that it is legally non-binding, fully respecting the sovereignty of all States.

#### **Objectives of the Compact**

- The Global Compact encompasses 23 objectives to help manage migration at all levels – global, national and local. The issues were discussed on these lines,
- Adverse drivers that impede people from accessing sustainable livelihoods in their countries of origin
- Risks and vulnerabilities faced by people during various stages of migration
- Concerns of states and communities
- The economic and social effects and implications migration may have on social and environmental levels as communities undergo demographic changes.
- It strives to create conditions to help migrants add value to societies through their human, economic and social contributions to sustainable development.

#### **4 key objectives of Global Compact for Migration**

- Ease the pressures on host countries
- Enhance refugee self-reliance
- Expand access to third-country solutions
- Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

## ECONOMY

### **Online portal “ENSURE”**

Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare launched a portal ENSURE – National Livestock Mission-EDEG developed by NABARD and operated under the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries.

#### **Entrepreneurship Development and Employment Generation (EDEG):**

- Under the Mission's component EDEG, subsidy payment for activities related to poultry, small ruminants, pigs etc., through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) goes directly to the beneficiary's account.
- To make it better, simpler and transparent, the NABARD has developed an online portal “ENSURE” which makes the information related to beneficiary and processing of application readily available.

#### **Benefits:**

- The flow of information/funds will be quicker and more accountable.
- The burden of extra interest due to delay in the disbursal of the subsidy would now be reduced.
- Accessing the portal will be on real-time basis and list of beneficiaries can be easily prepared.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### **PCS 1x System**

Indian Ports Association (IPA) under the guidance of Ministry of Shipping launched the Port Community System 'PCS1x'.

**Significance:** The platform has the potential to revolutionize maritime trade in India and bring it at par with global best practices and pave the way to improve the Ease of Doing Business world ranking and Logistics Performance Index (LPI) ranks.

### PCS 1x:

- 'PCS 1x' is a cloud based new generation technology, with user-friendly interface.
- This system seamlessly integrates stakeholders from the maritime trade on a single platform.
- The platform offers value added services such as notification engine, workflow, mobile application, track and trace, better user interface, better security features, improved inclusion by offering dashboard for those with no IT capability.
- Another major feature is the deployment of a world class state of the art payment aggregator solution which removes dependency on bank specific payment eco system.
- It is an initiative that supports green initiatives by reducing dependency on paper.
- It has been developed indigenously and is a part of the 'Make in India' and 'Digital India'

**Indian Ports Association (IPA):** IPA was constituted in 1966 under Societies Registration Act, with the idea of fostering growth and development of all Major Ports which are under the supervisory control of Ministry of Shipping.

### **NASA's OSIRIS-REx spacecraft found evidence of water on asteroid Bennu**

NASA's Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer (OSIRIS-REx) spacecraft has found water locked inside asteroid Bennu. Bennu is too small to have ever hosted liquid water, but this finding does indicate that liquid water was present at some time on Bennu's parent body, a much larger asteroid.

**OSIRIS-Rex:** It launched in September 2016 is NASA's first asteroid sampling mission i.e. it will survey surface, collect sample and deliver it safely back to Earth. It had reached its destination Bennu asteroid in December 2018 after travelling through space for more than two years and travelling over two billion kilometres. Samples returned by the mission to Earth in 2023 will enable scientists to find new information about the history and evolution of our solar system.

**Bennu:** It is near-Earth carbonaceous asteroid about the size of a small mountain in the Apollo group. It was discovered in September 1999 by the LINEAR Project. It is one of oldest known asteroids which is considered as remnant from early in formation of solar system and orbits close to Earth's path around Sun.. It is carbon-rich asteroid and believed to be the type of asteroids that may have chemical building blocks of life, along with lots of water. So, analysis of returned sample from it could help to reveal key insights about early solar system and the origin of life on Earth. It is potentially hazardous asteroid and there is very slight chance it could strike into Earth in the late 22nd century

## ENVIRONMENT

### **'Eco-sensitive zones'**

The Supreme Court has directed the Union Environment Ministry to declare 10 km area around 21 national parks and wildlife sanctuaries across the country as 'eco-sensitive zones'. The court took the initiative after its amicus curiae informed the court that the State governments have taken no effort to protect the area around these sanctuaries and parks.

#### **Eco-sensitive zones:**

- The Environment Protection Act, 1986 does not mention the word "Eco-sensitive Zones".
- The section 3(2)(v) of the Act, says that Central Government can restrict areas in which any industries, operations or processes shall not be carried out or shall be carried out subject to certain safeguards
- Besides the section 5 (1) of this act says that central government can prohibit or restrict the location of industries and carrying on certain operations or processes on the basis of considerations like the biological diversity of an area, maximum allowable limits of concentration of pollutants for an area, environmentally compatible land use, and proximity to protected areas.
- The above two clauses have been effectively used by the government to declare Eco-Sensitive Zones or Ecologically Fragile Areas (EFA). The same criteria have been used by the government to declare No Development Zones.