

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**Shagun: Integrated Online Junction for School Education**

The Union Human Resource Development Minister has launched one of the world's largest Integrated Online Junction for School Education 'Shagun'. It is an online junction of different websites and portals into a single platform to enhance the accessibility of information relating to schools. It will ensure a holistic approach to transforming the education sector.

Shagun

- It is an initiative to improve school education system by creating a junction for all online portals and websites relating to various activities of the Department of School Education and Literacy in the Government of India and all States and Union Territories.
- The term 'Shagun' is coined from two different words- 'Shala' meaning Schools and 'Gunvatta' meaning Quality.
- The portal seeks to provide a very robust feedback mechanism which will increase public participation and will ensure accountability and transparency.
- It also provides vital information relating to the availability of nearby schools, navigable distance vis-a-vis aerial distance between schools.

Integrated National School Education Treasury

- Union Human Resource Development Minister has also announced the setting up of the Integrated National School Education Treasury (INSET).
- It will envisage a fully integrated, accessible and seamless information network for all parameters relating to the students, teachers, and schools in the country.
- The main focus of INSET will be on the following areas:
 - Reinforcing and cleaning the data of the Integrated Online Junction through feedback from Stakeholders.
 - Ensuring full interoperability among the websites, portals and applications which are already hosted in the junction.
 - Creating high-quality e-contents, including quizzes and puzzles to enhance learning and also for teachers in aiding classroom transactions.
 - Using artificial intelligence and deep machine learning in a variety of ways to enhance the quality of school education including for designing evidence-based inventions.

India Child Well-Being Index

The India child well-being index was released by the NGO World Vision India and research institute IFMR LEAD.

Methodology:

- The India child well-being index is a tool designed to measure and track children's well-being comprehensively.

- The three dimensions of the index include (1) healthy individual development, (2) positive relationships and (3) protective contexts.
- Focusing on the three key dimensions, 24 indicators were selected to develop the index.

Key findings:

- Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Puducherry topped the child well-being index.
- Meghalaya, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh featured at the bottom of the list.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS

G7, BIARRITZ SUMMIT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a visit to Biarritz, France at the invitation of President Macron for the 2019 G-7 Summit as 'Biarritz Partner' from 25-26 August 2019.

About:

- The 45th G7 summit was held on 24–26 August 2019, in Biarritz, France with the theme "Fighting Inequality". Key highlights of the summit:
- The G7 commits to reaching an agreement in 2020 to simplify regulatory barriers and modernize international taxation within the framework of the OECD.
- The G7 shares the common objective to ensure that Iran never acquires nuclear weapons.
- In an opaque reference to the Russian military intervention in Ukraine (2014–present), France and Germany announced that they will organize a Normandy format summit in the coming weeks to achieve tangible results.
- In light of the 2019 Hong Kong anti-extradition bill protests, the G7 reaffirmed the importance of the 1984 Sino-British agreement on Hong Kong and calls for avoiding violence.
- On the sidelines of summit, PM Modi met USA President Donald Trump and discussed various issues including Kashmir. After the meeting, Trump said Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and both the countries will sort it out themselves.
- Trump and Emmanuel Macron agreed that Russia should be invited to the next G7 Summit in 2020 (In 2014, the G7 declared that a meaningful discussion was currently not possible with Russia in the context of the G8. Since then, meetings have continued within the G7 process).

Related Info :

- The Group of Seven (G7) is an international intergovernmental economic organization consisting of seven advanced economies in the world: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- Biarritz is a city on the Bay of Biscay, on the Atlantic coast in southwestern France. It is located 35 kilometres from the border with Spain.

International Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

The Union Cabinet has given retrospective approval for the establishment of an International Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) in New Delhi.

- The CDRI is proposed to be launched at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York, USA on 23rd September 2019.
 - Being organized by the UN Secretary-General, the summit will bring together the largest number of Heads of States to generate commitments for combating the effects of climate change and resulting disasters and will provide the high-level visibility required for the CDRI.
- The charter for the coalition will be finalized after taking inputs from potential member countries by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs.
- Focus on disaster resilient infrastructure would simultaneously address the loss reduction targets under the Sendai Framework, address a number of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and also contribute to climate change adaptation.

Expected Role

- To serve as a platform where knowledge is generated and exchanged on different aspects of disaster and climate resilience of infrastructure.
- It will create a mechanism to assist countries to upgrade their capacities and practices, with regard to infrastructure development in accordance with their risk context and economic needs.
- It would address concerns that are common to developing and developed countries, small and large economies, countries at early and advanced stages of infrastructure development, and countries that have moderate or high disaster risk.

World's First Facial Biometric Seafarer Identity Document

India has become the first country in the world to issue Biometric Seafarer Identity Document (BSID), capturing the facial biometric data of seafarers. The project has been launched by the Ministry of Shipping. The new card is in confirmation of the Convention No. 185 of the International Labour Organisation on BSID. India ratified the Convention in October 2015.

Background

- Development of BSID is very significant against the backdrop of the increase in seafaring activities.
- BSID will provide a foolproof identification to seafarers which will facilitate:
 - Seafarer's movement,
 - Ease of getting jobs,
 - Identification of seafarers from any location in the world.
- The shipping sector is seeing major developments in the areas of coastal shipping, inland waterways and other maritime activities.

- These major developments will increase the number of Indian seafarers in the international shipping industry.
- The total number of Indian seafarers who were employed on Indian or foreign flag vessels increased by 35% from 2017 to 2019.

Biometric Seafarer Identity Document

- It will have a biometric chip embedded in it.
- The card has two optical security features:
 - Micro prints/micro texts
 - Unique Guilloche pattern.
- A software has been developed for capturing the facial biometrics and its authentication through the public key infrastructure.
- A record of each Seafarer Identity Document (SID) issued will be maintained in a national database and its related information will be internationally accessible.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Revised FDI Norms

Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for the review of Foreign Direct Investment in various sectors. This will result in making India a more attractive FDI destination, leading to benefits of increased investments, employment and growth. As of March 2019, Singapore remains India's top FDI source, twice that from Mauritius.

Revised Norms

- 100% FDI under automatic route is permitted for sale of coal, for coal mining activities including associated processing infrastructure.
- The government has allowed 100% FDI through the automatic route for contract manufacturing.
- It will augment the Make in India initiative and will attract global companies in India looking to establish alternative manufacturing hubs
- Easing norms for FDI in Single Brand Retail Trading (SBRT): Retail trading through online trade by SBRT, can also be undertaken prior to the opening of brick and mortar stores (it should be opened within 2 years from the date of start of online retail).
 - Online sales will lead to the creation of jobs in logistics, digital payments, customer care, training and product skilling.
- It has been decided to permit 26% FDI under government route for uploading/streaming of News & Current Affairs through Digital Media, on the lines of print media.
- In India, FDI policy provisions have been progressively liberalized across various sectors in recent years to make India an attractive investment destination.
 - Some of the sectors include Defence, Construction Development, Trading, Pharmaceuticals, Power Exchanges, Insurance, Pension, Other

Financial Services, Asset reconstruction Companies, Broadcasting and Civil Aviation.

- Due to these measures, a total FDI into India from 2014-15 to 2018-19 has been \$ 286 billion.
- Despite the dim global picture (UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2019), India continues to remain a preferred and attractive destination for global FDI flows.
- India seeks to use this potential to attract far more foreign investment which can be achieved inter-alia by further liberalizing and simplifying the FDI policy regime.

ISSUES RELATED TO INTERNAL SECURITY AND DISASTER MANAGEMENT

India Security Summit

The 12th India Security Summit with the theme "Towards New National Cyber Security Strategy" was held on the 28th of August, 2019 in New Delhi. During the conference, many issues were discussed such as protection of critical national infrastructure, emerging cyber threats: incidents, challenges and responses. It was also highlighted that in a digital world, security is one of the challenging areas and new tools and technologies must be developed at a faster rate for cybersecurity.

Some Measures Taken to Counter Cyber Threats

- Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C): This scheme has been rolled out by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for the period 2018-2020, to combat cybercrime in the country, in a coordinated and effective manner.
- Cyber Swachhta Kendra: The "Cyber Swachhta Kendra" (Botnet Cleaning and Malware Analysis Centre) is a part of the Government of India's Digital India initiative under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
 - It intends to create a secure cyberspace by detecting botnet infections in India and to notify, enable cleaning and securing systems of end users so as to prevent further infections.
 - It has been set up in accordance with the objectives of the National Cyber Security Policy, which envisages creating a secure cyber ecosystem in the country.
 - This centre is being operated by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) under the provisions of Section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000.
- Further, the Central Government has taken steps to spread awareness on cybercrime, issue cyber-related alerts/ advisories, capacity building/ training of law enforcement officers/ judges/ prosecutors, improving cyber forensics facilities etc. to prevent cybercrime and expedite investigations.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC

Coprolite

- The scientists have found the oldest parasite DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) in the Coprolite of a prehistoric Puma in Argentina.
- Coprolites are fossilised faeces belonging to animals that lived millions of years ago.
- Scientists can analyse and study the shape and size of coprolites and depending on the location they were found in, scientists can figure out the animal from which they came as well as uncover what those animals ate.
- For instance, if there are bone fragments in the faeces, it tells scientists that the animal might have been a carnivore. Tooth marks can reveal how the animal ate.

Plant To Convert Plastic Waste Into Diesel

Union Minister for Science and Technology inaugurated a waste plastics to diesel plant in Dehradun.

About:

- Location: The plant has been set up in CSIR- Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP) whose scientists will process waste plastics into fuel.
- Capacity: It has the capacity to produce 800-litre diesel from one tonne of plastic. The fuel will be of automotive grade. It meets the specifications for use in vehicles. This will be made available to government, police and army vehicles for regular use.
- Technology: Using the technology, polyolefinic waste can be converted into diesel. This type of waste accounts for about 70 % of total plastic waste in the country and is the least bio-degradable.
- Bodies involved: The technology has been developed by the scientists of the CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum, Dehradun under the GAIL's sponsorship. GAIL (India) has sponsored the technology development and provided technical support for the endeavour.

Way ahead: IIP and GAIL have planned to roll out the technology nation-wide after six months of operation of the pilot plant.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The only secret behind a good day is a good attitude.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns:: Critically Examine the G7 Summits. Highlight the objective of the recently held summit in Biarritz, France.

Answer: The G7, originally G8, was set up in 1975 as an informal forum bringing together the leaders of the world's leading industrial nations. The summit gathers leaders from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom the United States.

G7 Summit is an event conducted annually where world leaders from the above seven powerful economies of the world come together to discuss burning issues happening around the globe. They, by mutual understanding, also form policies or figure out remedies for the concerned issue. G7 is capable of setting the global agenda because decisions taken by these major economic powers have a real impact. Thus, decisions taken at the G7 are not legally binding, but exert strong political influence.

Criticisms:

- G7 gatherings tend to attract thousands of protesters, and it is protested by thousands every year.
- Many protesters claim the G7 – which has no representative from any African, Russian or Middle Eastern nation – is completely outdated.
- Protest groups also use the worldwide platform as a stage to lobby and campaign on issues that are important to them.
- G7 leaders are creating a wide gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' both in their countries as well as across the globe, according to a new report published by non-profit Oxfam International. As a result, they are making the fight against alleviating poverty more difficult, claimed the report.

Highlights of the recent Summit:

The 45th Annual G7 Summit was held in the French town of Biarritz. On the agenda for this year's summit will be the ongoing trade war between the United States and China, the European-backed nuclear deal with Iran currently opposed by President Trump, and the unrest that continues to unfold in Hong Kong. The 2019 G7 Summit, presided over by France, will focus on fighting inequality. France has identified the following five objectives for the Summit:

- fighting inequality of opportunity, promoting in particular gender equality, access to education and high quality health services;
- reducing environmental inequality;
- strengthening the social dimension of globalization;
- taking action for peace against security threats and terrorism; and

- tapping into the opportunities created by digital technology and artificial intelligence (AI).

Way Forward:

- Work towards implementing tax models for the rich individuals and corporations to pay their fair share of tax.
- Consider how new and existing wealth taxes could be used as a tool to fight poverty and inequality.
- Invest in healthcare and education and provide aid to developing countries.
- Work towards limiting greenhouse gas emissions down to zero well before mid-century.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQ

1. With reference to 'Shagun', which of the following statements is/are correct?
 1. It is launched by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
 2. It is an online junction of different websites and portals into a single platform to enhance the accessibility of information relating to schools.
 3. It will ensure a holistic approach to transforming the education sector.Select the correct answer using the code given below:
(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 3
(c) 2 only (d) **2 and 3**
2. With reference to 'Biometric Seafarer Identity Document (BSID)', consider the following statements:
 1. After the U.S and China, India is the third country in the world to issue Biometric Seafarer Identity Document (BSID).
 2. BSID is issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
 3. International Labour Organization (ILO) convention C-108 deals with the Seafarers' Identity Document.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 only
(c) **3 only** (d) 1 and 3 only
3. Consider the following statements:
 1. The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is an international agreement to which States and regional economic integration organizations adhere voluntarily.
 2. Star Tortoise is listed under Appendix I of the CITES and therefore enjoys the highest degree of protection.
 3. The IUCN has listed Star Tortoise under the Endangered category.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only (b) **1 and 2**
(c) 2 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3
4. Consider the following statements:
 1. Recently, the oldest parasite DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) was discovered in the Coprolite of a prehistoric Puma in Argentina.
 2. Coprolites are fossilized faeces belonging to animals that lived millions of years ago.
 3. Analysis of coprolites can provide information about animals location and their eating habits.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2
(c) 2 and 3 (d) **1, 2 and 3**
5. With reference to India child well-being index, consider the following statements:
 1. It was released by the UNESCO.
 2. Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Puducherry topped the child well-being index.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 only (b) **2 only**
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. With reference to plastic waste, consider the following statements:
 1. Recently Union Ministry of Science and Technology set up a waste plastic to diesel plant in Noida.

2. Polyolefinic waste accounts for about 70 % of total plastic waste in the country and is the least biodegradable.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only **(b) 2 only**
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

7. With reference to the review of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy by the Union Cabinet, consider the following statements:

1. It has been decided to permit 26% FDI under government route for uploading/ streaming of News & Current Affairs through Digital Media, on the lines of print media.
2. It has been decided to permit 100% FDI under automatic route for sale of coal, for coal mining activities including associated processing infrastructure.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

8. With reference to the 45th G7 summit, consider the following statements:

1. It was held in Biarritz, France and the theme is "Fighting Inequality".
2. The G7 commits to reaching an agreement in 2020 to simplify regulatory barriers and modernize international taxation within the framework of the OECD.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2