

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY**MONGOLIAN KANJUR**

The first set of five volumes of Mongolian Kanjur published under the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM) was recently presented to the Government of Mongolia.

About:

- Mongolian Kanjur, the Buddhist canonical text in 108 volumes is considered to be the most important religious text in Mongolia. In the Mongolian language ‘Kanjur’ means ‘Concise Orders’- the words of Lord Buddha in particular.
- Mongolian Buddhists worship the Kanjur at temples and recite the lines of Kanjur in daily life as a sacred ritual. The language of the Kanjur is Classical Mongolian.
- The Ministry of Culture has taken up the project of reprinting of 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur under the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM). It is expected that all the 108 volumes of the Mongolian Kanjur will be published by March, 2022.

National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM)

- The National Mission for Manuscripts was launched in 2003 by the Government of India, under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, with the mandate of documenting, conserving and disseminating the knowledge preserved in the manuscripts.
- One of the objectives of the mission is to publish rare and unpublished manuscripts so that the knowledge enshrined in them is spread to researchers, scholars and general public at large.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.**EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTION HEALTH SCHEME (ECHS)**

Ministry of Defence (MoD) announced that Unmarried permanently disabled sons of ECHS beneficiaries will be eligible to get benefits of ECHS facilities even after attaining 25 years.

About:

- The unmarried permanently disabled and financially dependent sons of Ex-Servicemen Contribution Health Scheme (ECHS) beneficiaries who have become disabled after attaining the age of 25 years will now also be eligible for benefits under the schemes.
- This was decided by the Ministry of Defence (MoD), Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW).
- This follows a similar decision for the beneficiaries of the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) in January this year.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**INDIA GLOBAL WEEK 2020**

Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the India Global week 2020, an international event on India’s globalisation. It’s theme is “Be The Revival: India and a Better New World”.

About:

- The three-day virtual conference, being organised in the UK, is being held from 9 to 11 July.
- It is being organized by India Inc. Group – the UK-headquartered media house behind flagship publications ‘India Global Business’ and the recently-launched diaspora news network ‘iGlobal’.
- India Global Week- 2020 will have 5,000 global participants from 30 nations. In all, 250 global speakers will address the virtual conference in 75 sessions.
- It will also feature a special 100th birth anniversary concert in tribute to the sitar maestro Ravi Shankar by three of his most eminent students

SRI LANKA, MALDIVES ARE NOW MEASLES-FREE

The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that Measles and rubella have been eradicated from Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

About:

- With this, Maldives and Sri Lanka became the first two countries in WHO South-East Asia Region to achieve measles and rubella elimination ahead of the 2023 target.
- A country is verified as having eliminated measles and rubella when there is no evidence of endemic transmission of the measles and rubella viruses for over three years in the presence of a well performing surveillance system.

- In September 2019, member countries of WHO South-East Asia Region set 2023 as target for elimination of measles and rubella, revising the goal of the flagship programme that since 2014 had focused on measles elimination and rubella control.
- Bhutan, North Korea and Timor-Leste are other countries in the Region who have eliminated measles.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES

REWA SOLAR PROJECT

Prime Minister Modi will dedicate to the nation the 750 MW Solar Project set up at Rewa, Madhya Pradesh on July 10, 2020.

About:

- This Project comprises of three solar generating units of 250 MW each located on a 500 hectare plot of land situated inside a Solar Park (total area 1500 hectare).
- The Solar Park was developed by the Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL), a Joint Venture Company of Madhya Pradesh UrjaVikas Nigam Limited (MPUVN), and Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), a Central Public Sector Undertaking.
- This project will reduce carbon emission equivalent to approx. 15 lakh ton of CO₂ per year.
- The Rewa Solar Project was the first solar project in the country to break the grid parity barrier.
- The project is also the first renewable energy project to supply to an institutional customer outside the State, i.e. Delhi Metro, which will get 24% of energy from the project with remaining 76% being supplied to the State DISCOMs of Madhya Pradesh.
- It has also received World Bank Group President's Award for innovation and excellence.

INTERNAL SECURITY, DISASTER MANAGEMENT

OPIUM SEIZURES

The fourth highest seizure of opium in 2018 was reported from India, after Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, according to the latest World Drug Report of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

About:

- The maximum of 644 tonnes of opium was seized in Iran, followed by 27 tonnes in Afghanistan and 19 tonnes in Pakistan. In India, the figure stood at four tonnes in 2018.
- In terms of heroin seizure (1.3 tonnes), India was at the 12th position in the world. Again, Iran reported the highest seizure of heroin (25 tonnes). Heroin is manufactured from the morphine extracted from the seed pod of opium poppy plants.
- Close to 97% of the total global production of opium in the past five years came from only three countries. Afghanistan accounted for 84% of the global opium production, Myanmar accounted for 7% and Mexico accounted for 6%.
- The global area under opium poppy cultivation declined for the second year in a row in 2019. It went down by 17% in 2018 and by 30% in 2019.
- The opiates seized in the largest quantity in 2018 continued to be opium (704 tonnes), followed by heroin (97 tonnes) and morphine (43 tonnes).
- Quantities of seized opiates remained concentrated in Asia, notably in south-west Asia (70%).

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

PROJECT GRYPHON

Microblogging platform Twitter said that it is building a subscription platform under the codename "Gryphon".

About:

- Gryphon team of web engineers are closely collaborating with the payments team and the Twitter.com team.
- Twitter has been working on a subscription service for its business customers with additional features since 2017. This will diversify the social media company's revenue stream, which is currently almost entirely dependent on advertising.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY

PATROLLING POINTS (PPs)

The standoffs between Indian and Chinese troops in Ladakh on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), where initial steps towards disengagement have taken place, are around a number of patrolling points (PPs) in Galwan, Hot Springs and Gogra areas.

About:

- Patrolling Points (PPs) are identified and marked on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), which are patrolled with a stipulated frequency by the security forces.
- Significance: They serve as a guide to the location of the LAC for the soldiers, acting as indicators of the extent of 'actual control' exercised on the territory by India. By regularly patrolling up to these PPs, the Indian side is able to establish and assert its physical claim about the LAC.
- Not all of the Patrolling Points are numbered. Some of the PPs are prominent and identifiable geographical features, such as a pass, or a nala junction where no numerals are given.
- Almost all of the Patrolling Points are on the LAC, except for the Depsang plains in northern Ladakh, where PP10, PP11, PP11A, PP12 and PP13 – from Raki Nala to Jivan Nala – do not fall on the LAC. These are short of the LAC, on the Indian side.
- The PPs are not posts and thus not manned. They are just physical markers on the ground, chosen for their location and have no defensive potential or tactical importance for the Army.

Related Info :

- PPs 10 to 13 in Depsang sector, PP14 in Galwan, PP15 in Hot Spring, and PP17 and PP17A in Gogra are currently being disputed by both sides, where the standoffs have taken place in the past nine weeks.

OPERATION SAMUDRA SETU

Operation Samudra Setu, which was launched on 05 May 2020 as part of the national effort to repatriate Indian citizens from overseas during the COVID-19 pandemic has culminated after successfully bringing 3,992 Indian citizens back to their homeland by sea.

About:

- Indian Naval Ships Jalashwa (Landing Platform Dock), and Airavat, Shardul and Magar (Landing Ship Tanks) participated in this operation which lasted over 55 days and involved traversing more than 23,000 kilometers by sea.
- This operation was undertaken by the Indian Navy in close coordination with Ministry of External Affairs, Home Affairs, health and various other agencies of the Government of India and State Governments.
- Indian Navy has previously undertaken similar evacuation operations as part of Operation Sukoon in 2006 (Beirut) and Operation Rahat in 2015 (Yemen).

Related Info :

- Another Landing Ship (Tank) Kesari undertook 'Mission SAGAR', carrying 580 tonnes of food aid and medical stores including ayurvedic medicines to Maldives, Mauritius, Madagascar, Comoros Islands and Seychelles, covering over 14,000 km in 49 days.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Explain the working and advantages of Aarogya Setu App in preventing the spread of COVID-19.

Also discuss concerns associated with it and suggest measures to address such concerns.

Answer:

Aarogya Setu (means "bridge to health" in Sanskrit) App is an Indian mobile application for tracking COVID-19. This contact tracing technology was developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC) under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY). The application has become the world's fastest app to reach 50 million downloads in just 13 days.

Working Principles

- The app uses the phone's Bluetooth and GPS capabilities. It uses location data to point out people that have come in close proximity with any Covid-19 positive patient. The application requests for access to location at all times and also asks for Bluetooth access after download.
- It keeps a record of all other Aarogya Setu users that it detected nearby using Bluetooth. It also uses a GPS log of all the places that the device had been at 15-minute intervals.
- After download, a self-assessment test is put forward where the user is asked about their current health and whether they are showing any of the symptoms of Covid-19. The user will also have to declare their travel history.
- The app considers Bluetooth range as a proximity sensor under which the user can be infected by another Covid-19 positive patient. When two smartphones with the app installed in them come in each other's Bluetooth range, the app will exchange information. If one of the users is positive, the

other person will be alerted about the possibility of being infected. These potential cases are then notified to the government for further testing.

Advantages

- The application acts as a one-stop solution for spreading awareness about COVID-19, helping self-diagnose users and provide updates to the authorities on new cases.
- Moreover, since Bluetooth technology is being used, no internet is not an issue.
- It also recommends precautionary measures to the users and social distancing practices amidst COVID-19.
- It could also be used as an e-pass for travelling from one place to another.

Concerns

- The Aarogya Setu app been made mandatory for citizens living in containment zones and for all govt and private sector employees, or employees involved in any form of product delivery. It has also been made compulsory for air and train travel. However, the app has been questioned on few grounds -
- The data collected by the Aarogya Setu app is broadly divided into four categories — demographic data, contact data, self-assessment data and location data, collectively called response data. But concerns have been raised by experts and even ethical hackers on the privacy of data. Critics say that Aarogya Setu could infringe privacy as there was no clarity on how data would be shared between the two applications.
- The policy goes into some detail on where and how long the data will be retained. But the data being shared with third parties was one of the biggest concerns as it was left open ended and had a possibility of misuse. This puts personal information at risk.
- Further, the process of de-identifying the data should have been detailed, given that reversing de-identification was not difficult.
- Under the Terms of Service (TOS), the government is obligated to delete certain personal data after a 30-day time period. However, there exists no framework to check compliance of the same.
- Moreover, the closed source architecture of the application violates the transparency principle.
- The usage of the app is being imposed through executive order instead of having legislative sanction. Former Supreme Court judge BN Srikrishna said the drive to make people use the app was "utterly illegal", as it is not backed by any law.

Measures To Be Taken

The government must address the privacy concerns raised by the experts. Recently, the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology issued a data-sharing and knowledge-sharing protocol for the Aarogya Setu app, laying down guidelines for sharing such data with government agencies and third parties. However, more such measures need to be taken:

- The decision of such nature should be backed by a personal data protection law.
- The government should list the third parties with which the data can be shared.
- There should be more transparency on the inner workings of an app which is asking for the personal details of millions of citizens.
- More safeguards need to be put in place against data thefts and other breaches.
- The app should be made open source to maintain transparency and balance between disease control and citizen's privacy. For example, in Singapore, the TraceTogether app can be used only by its health ministry to access data. It assures citizens that the data is to be used strictly for disease control and will not be shared with law enforcement agencies for enforcing lockdowns and quarantine.

Conclusion

- Across India, there are efforts to build databases of people's health records to enable easier treatment, including through telemedicine. If instances of misuse of the Aarogya Setu app emerge, then people will not trust other government initiatives involving health records, even if they are undertaken with due care, inclusive consultations, and respect for privacy. Therefore, these issues must be addressed.
- Currently, India's personal data protection bill is in the process of being approved by Parliament. It should be passed addressing all issues associated with the data protection concerns of the citizens.