

NEWS ANALYSIS

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Lead Article

Smart City Mission: Challenges and Way ahead

In news: The Union Ministry of Urban Development's ministry recently released its fourth list under the Smart City Mission, taking the total number of cities picked under the Centre's flagship project to 90 — 10 more cities will be included in the project.

Background:

Smart Cities can be defined as “places where information technology is combined with infrastructure, architecture, everyday objects, and our own bodies to address social, economic, and environmental problems”. One of the stated objectives of the Smart City Mission is to act as a corrective to a lopsided developmental pattern. The mission intends to “create employment and enhance incomes for all, especially the poor and disadvantaged leading to inclusive cities”.

Official data shows that merely half of the urban households have water connections, a third have no toilets, the national average for sewage network coverage is a low 12 per cent, and on an average only about 10 per cent of the municipal solid waste is segregated. Public transportation and public schools and hospitals are woefully disproportionate to the population densities within cities.

Issues:

- Although India's Smart Cities Mission has identified more than 20 priority areas, interventions by the respective agencies are weak.
- The emphasis on inclusive development has been diluted. Only 26 of the cities selected last week have plans to provide affordable housing, education and medical facilities.
- Smart city plans have also not found a way to deal with recurring problems. For instance, Aizawl, which found a place in

the urban development ministry's latest list, was in the grip of a severe water crisis in the third week of this month. The shortage was caused by damages to water pipelines by floods — a problem which the city has not yet addressed effectively. Guwahati, amongst the earliest to be included in the smart city list, also has no effective plan to deal with floods that ravage it every year.

- The path chosen to leapfrog to the level of urbanisation in the developed nations can lead to creation of uneven geographies.
- For urban planners, a greater concern is an urbanisation process that accords primacy to technology — a field where the private sector has unchallenged monopoly — over the basic needs of the city.
- Plans and models till now that show that almost 80 per cent of the funds are being channelized to less than three per cent area of many mission cities. These are mostly well-off enclaves that already have decent infrastructure in place and are more likely to yield a dividend for private investors.
- The government does have plans to promote start-ups and infrastructure projects. But these projects are concentrated in tiny pockets in the selected cities — nearly 80 per cent of the Centre's funds are skewed towards them. For example, in Pune, from where Prime Minister flagged off the Smart City projects last year, around 75 per cent of the investment will be used for the development of a 3.6 sq km area in the Aundh-Baner-Balewadi pocket, which comprises a little more than 1 per cent of the city's total area.
- Unless this urban entropy is addressed first, an overbearing emphasis on application of digital technology or developing smaller areas in an attempt at instant urbanism can have disastrous socio-spatial consequences.

- The Smart City mission bypasses democratic processes by executing projects through Special Purpose Vehicles wherein private corporations can have up to 40 per cent share-holding.

Way ahead:

- The Centre has adopted a ‘managed urbanisation’ approach in the chosen cities, with the powers of municipal councils delegated to a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), under the Companies Act, that will act in its own wisdom. Given that this is the model adopted by the two-year-old Mission, the Centre must present a status report on what the SPVs have achieved so far.
- Any serious attempt at improving the quality of life in cities would depend on how governments approach data. It would be smart, for instance, to use sensors to estimate the flow of vehicles and pedestrians, and create smartphone applications for the public to report on a variety of parameters.
- Making such data open would enable citizens’ groups to themselves come up with analyses to help city administrators make decisions, boost transparency and make officials accountable. Example-Making street-level waste management data public would lead to a heat map of the worst sites, compelling managers to solve the problem.
- Access to special funding should make it mandatory for all public transport providers — city bus corporations, Metro Rail and suburban trains — to provide real-time passenger information in the form of open data, an inexpensive global standard that raises both access and efficiency through smartphone applications.
- The city development plans should be aligned with some of the government’s employment-generating initiatives, such as Make In India.
- It is alright to overlay the city’s infrastructure with technology but, for

starters, adequate infrastructure must be in place at a city-wide level. Creation of Smart Cities is a welcome step, but in the process of urbanisation gentrification should not take place.

Conclusion:

The ideology that guides the smart cities plan should recognise that the vibrant life of cities depends on variety and enabling environments, rather than a mere technology-led vision. Pollution-free commons, walkability and easy mobility, with a base of reliable civic services, is the smart way to go. As the Centre finalises the list of cities, it needs to remind itself of the original goal of the Smart City Mission — making cities inclusive.

National Events

MoU Signed between Indian Navy and Space Application Centre Indian Navy and the Space Application Centre has signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Data Sharing and Scientific cooperation in the field of Meteorology and Oceanology. As per the MoU, the scientific advancements and expertise achieved by SAC would be synergised into the Indian Naval efforts in order to keep the Indian Navy abreast with rapid developments that has taken place in the field of Environment Sciences and Satellite Data acquisition technology. The MoU has further enhanced the already established collaboration between the two organisations. The broad areas of cooperation under the MoU are: sharing of non-confidential observational data for pre-launch sensor calibration and post launch satellite data validation, operational use of SAC generated weather products, provisioning expertise for installation of various satellite data processing modules at Naval METOC organisations, performing calibration and validation for ocean models, transfer of technology to produce weather information,

training on latest technology and sharing of subject matter experts between the organisations facilitating effective knowledge transfer.

- **SAC** : Space Applications Centre (SAC) is one of the major centres of ISRO. It was established in the year 1972. It primarily focuses on the design of space-borne instruments for ISRO missions. It also develops applications of space technology covering the fields of communication, broadcasting, navigation, disaster monitoring, meteorology, oceanography, environment monitoring and natural resources survey for societal benefits. It is headquartered in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

PM Launches Narmada Seva Mission for Conservation of Narmada

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the Narmada Seva Mission for the conservation of river Narmada, which is a lifeline of Madhya Pradesh. Prime Minister released a road map for the series of steps to be taken for the conservation of Narmada river. The roadmap envisaging the conservation efforts has been taken after wide-ranging consultations with various stakeholders, including environmentalists, river conservation experts among others. The event was held at Amarkantak in Anoopur district of Madhya Pradesh. The event also marked the conclusion of 'Namami Devi Narmade Sewa Yatra'. **Namami Devi Narmade Sewa Yatra** Namami Devi Narmade Sewa Yatra was launched on December 11, 2016 from Amarkantak, the origin place of the River Narmada. The yatra covered a distance of 3,344 km and passing through over 1,100 villages and towns and concluded on May 15, 2017. The yatra is hailed as as the world's "biggest river conservation campaign with public participation."

Background

- The river Narmada originates from the Maikal hills and flows 1,312 km before draining through the Gulf of Khambhat

into the Arabian Sea. Narmada, Tapti and Mahi are the only three major rivers in the country that flows from east to west. The river acts as a source of irrigation to about 17 lakh hectares of land and provides drinking water to more than four crore people. It also acts as a source for generating over 2400 megawatts of power from hydropower plants situated on the river. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) recently has found out in the Narmada river at least in three stretches water quality is not even fit for bathing. The Madhya Pradesh state government in its budget estimate for 2016-17 has allocated Rs 2095.31 for the Narmada valley development. In the state more than 700 Narmada seva committees and over 74000 Narmada sevaks have registered to protect the river.

Public Affairs Index 2017 (PAI-2017)

Kerala and Tamil Nadu have secured first and second rankings for the second consecutive year in public affairs index (PAI) released by the Public Affairs Centre (PAC), Bengaluru. Gujarat has been ranked third followed by Karnataka and Maharashtra at the fourth and fifth position respectively in governance indicators. The last four positions among the large states has been occupied by Bihar (18th), Jharkhand (17th), Odisha (16th) and Assam (15th). Among the 12 small states which have been categorised as small as they have population less than two crore, Himachal Pradesh has been ranked first followed by Goa and Mizoram. Delhi which occupied third position in 2016 index has slipped to ninth position in 2017. The last four positions among small states have been occupied Meghalaya (12th), Arunachal Pradesh (11th) and Jammu and Kashmir (10th).

- **Themes** : The survey was carried out based on 10 themes, 26 focus subjects and 82 indicators. The report was based on the following themes: essential infrastructure, support to human

development, social protection, women and children, crime, law and order, delivery of justice, environment, transparency and accountability, fiscal management and economic freedom. In the category of essential infrastructure, Punjab has been adjudged as the best performer among all States followed by Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat. In the category of human development, Kerala, Maharashtra, and Punjab are the best performers while Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Assam are the worst performers. In implementation of social protection policies, Kerala, Assam and Madhya Pradesh are the best performers while Telangana, Haryana and Punjab are the worst performers as they lagged behind other states in executing various State and Central government schemes. In the category of women and children, Kerala has been adjudged as the best performer while Jharkhand, Haryana and Maharashtra are poor performers. In the category of fiscal management, Telangana has been adjudged as the best performer while Andhra Pradesh has been labelled as the poor performer. In maintaining law and order, delivery of justice and environment categories, Tamil Nadu has been adjudged as the best performer but the state has been ranked last in the parameter of transparency and accountability in the administration. In the category of economic freedom, Gujarat has secured top rank while Bihar has secured the last rank.

PAC : Public Affairs Centre (PAC), Bengaluru had come up with a Public Affairs Index (PAI) to rank governance inter-state by using data available in the public domain in key areas of governance. Public Affairs Centre (PAC) is a not for profit think tank, established in 1994 with a mandate to improve the quality of governance in India. The

genesis of PAC is attributed to Dr. Samuel Paul in the early nineties. The objective of Public Affairs Index (PAI) is an attempt to bring together the states of the country which are culturally, economically and socially diverse, into a common data-driven framework in order to facilitate an interstate comparison. A well-framed methodology backed by statistical data from government sources, has been included in the study to provide insights into the subject of good governance.

‘CASO’ to be Reintroduced as Part of Counter Terrorism Operations

Indian Army has planned to re-introduce cordon and search operations (CASO) as a part of its counter terrorism operations after a gap of 15 years. The major objective behind the reintroduction of combing operations is to bring the situation in the Kashmir Valley under control. Hereafterwards, Army will carry out CASO in a major way to flush out militants in the militancy-hit areas of Kulgam, Pulwama, Tral, Budgam and Shopian in south Kashmir, indicating a change in strategy.

Background

CASO was a regular feature of Army's counter-terrorism operations in the 1990s. The security forces made use of "area domination and sweep" operations in the 1990s. During those times, such operations were commonly conducted by the Indian Army. Later, following the complaints of discomfort caused to the local population, the Army switched to specific intelligence-based operations involving small teams and CASO was discontinued. The recent decision to re-introduce CASO comes against the backdrop of the recent killing of unarmed Kashmiri Army officer Lieutenant Ummer Fayaz in Shopian by militants. Recently, the Army, security forces and police had also carried out a massive cordon and combing operation in south Kashmir's Shopian district following the recent militant attacks on policemen and banking facilities.

It was the first time in 15 years that the combing operation of this magnitude involving 4,000 troops was conducted by the security forces.

May 11: National Technology Day

National Technology Day is being observed across India on May 11 to mark India's technological advancements. 2017 National Technology Day Theme: 'Technology for inclusive and sustainable growth'.

Significance

The day is being commemorated to celebrate the anniversary of first of the five tests of Operation Shakti (Pokhran-II) nuclear test, held on 11 May 1998 in Pokhran, Rajasthan.

The operation was led by the former President APJ Abdul Kalam. After conducting two more tests as a part of the Pokhran-II/Operation Shakti initiative, India was declared as a nuclear state by the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. On this same day country's first indigenous aircraft Hansa-3 was test flown at Bangalore. India also conducted successful test firing of the Trishul missile on the same day. The Trishul missile was developed as a part of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The Trishul Missile got inducted by the Indian Army and Indian Airforce. Considering all these technical achievements, 11 May was chosen to be commemorated as National Technology Day. To commemorate this day, Technology Development Board (TDB) has instituted a National Award. This award is conferred on to various individuals and industries by the President for their successful achievement in commercialization of Indigenous Technology.

India elected as President of UN-Habitat

India has been unanimously elected as the President of the UN-Habitat. UN-Habitat, an organ of the United Nations' Organisation (UNO) reports to the United Nations General Assembly. UN-Habitat promotes socially and

environmentally sustainable human settlements across the world. India has been elected as the President of UN-Habitat after a gap of 10 years. This is only the third time that India has been elected as the President of UN-Habitat after 2007 and 1988. The UN-Habitat was established in 1978. The Governing Council of UN-Habitat is an inter-governmental policy making and decision making body that aims to promote integral and comprehensive approach to human settlements, assist the countries and regions in addressing human settlement problems and strengthen cooperation among countries over the issue of human settlement. Subsequent to the election, Union Minister of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation M.Venkiah Naidu will preside over the deliberations of the Governing Council of UN-Habitat for the next two years. Accordingly he will chair the 26th Meeting of 58 member Governing Council of UN-Habitat in Nairobi, Kenya. The theme of the meeting is "Opportunities for effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda" He will also chair the Bureau Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Ministers' Conference on Housing and Urban Development in Nairobi. The New Urban Agenda which was adopted by the world community at Quito, Ecuador would focus on inclusive, sustainable and adequate housing for a better future and sustainable urbanization and integrated human settlements.

UN-Habitat

UN-Habitat, also known as United Nations Human Settlements Program is a UN agency responsible for sustainable urban development and human settlements. It was established in 1978 and has its headquarters in the UN Office at Nairobi, Kenya. It is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. It is also a member of UNDP. UN-Habitat works in more than 70 countries in

five continents focusing on seven areas: Urban Legislation, Land and Governance; Urban Planning and Design; Urban Economy; Urban Basic Services; Housing and Slum Upgrading; Risk Reduction and Rehabilitation; Urban Research and Capacity Development.

International News:

US to Sell high-tech chemical protective clothing to India The United States will be selling high-tech Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology (JSLIST) protective clothing worth \$75 million to India. For the first time, the Pentagon has notified the sale of CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear) Support Equipment, the Joint Service Lightweight Integrated Suit Technology (JSLIST) protective clothing, to the US Congress. The entire package includes 38,034 M50 general purpose masks, 38,034 units of suits, trousers, gloves, boots and NBC bags; 854 aprons; 854 alternative aprons; 9,509 Quick Doff Hoods; and 114,102 M61 filters.

Significance

JSLIST protective clothing when used with the chemical protective mask would shield the Indian Soldiers from exposure to any kind of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear warfare that can result in a serious injury. The protective clothing includes the suit, boots and gloves, pairs of trousers and NBC bags and can be worn for up to 24 hours in contaminated areas.

Background

The India-US defence partnership is among the fastest growing in the world. In the past few years, the US has signed more than \$10 billion in defence sales to India. This also the first major foreign defence sale approved by the Trump administration. Obama administration had designated India as a major defence partner, which places India at par with other major allies of the US in

terms of defence trade and sharing of technologies. In June 2015, India and the US had renewed this Defence Framework Agreement for the next 10 years. The Defence framework paves way for high level strategic discussions, continued exchanges between armed forces of both countries, and strengthening capabilities. India's formal cooperation with US in the area of defence also includes bilateral engagement on defence through the Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) and the India-US Research, Development, Testing and Evaluation (RDT&E) Agreement. While the DTTI facilitates cooperation in defence research and development, the RDT&E Agreement facilitates co-production and co-development of projects like sharing and design of aircraft carrier technology and explore possible cooperation on development of jet engine technology.

China's C919 Passenger Jet completed its Maiden Flight China's home-grown C919 passenger jet has completed its maiden flight. China's C919 is a symbol of China's ambitions to take market share from Boeing and Airbus in the lucrative global jet market estimated to be worth \$2 trillion over the next two decades. It is a part of China's broader "Made in China 2025" plan aimed at boosting its domestic high-tech manufacturing. As a part of its maiden flight, C919 passenger jet undertook an 80-minute flight flying over the Yangtze River delta and touched down at Shanghai's international airport.

C919 : C919 is a made by state-owned Commercial Aircraft Corporation of China (COMAC). The aircraft can carry 158-168 passengers. The aircraft was conceived in 2008. The aircraft has been built relying on overseas technology firms including General Electric, France's Safran, Honeywell International Inc and United Technologies Corp subsidiary UTC Aerospace Systems. China's Eastern Airlines has placed 570 orders from 23 customers.

Issues : C-919 will require years of tests to get certified in China, as well as in the United States and Europe. This will take years from first flight to commercial usage. For instance, China's first home-made jet, the regional ARJ-21, received its certification six years after its first flight. In addition without the certification by European and U.S. regulators, it cannot sell the jet in those countries that accept its certification standards. Hence, it would be difficult for the COMAC and its partner United Aircraft Corp to sell the jet in a global market dominated by Boeing and Airbus. Boeing has 100 years of experience in the aviation market while the Airbus has over 40 years experience.

Places In News

West Bengal makes Bengali Mandatory in all Schools West Bengal State government has made Bengali mandatory in all schools, including private English medium schools. Henceforth, it would be compulsory for all schools including English medium schools affiliated to boards other than West Bengal Board of Secondary Education to teach Bengali as an optional subject from Class I so that students can study it either as a second or third language. At present, teaching of Bengali is not mandatory in the schools. Apart from Bengali, English and Hindi, students can opt for other languages such as Urdu, Gurumukhi, Nepali and Ol-chiki as the medium of instruction in schools of the State.

Background

The decision of the West Bengal government making Bengali compulsory in schools comes at the backdrop of Kerala government's recent promulgation of an ordinance in April making Teaching of Malayalam compulsory in all schools of Kerala. Earlier, the Left Front government had abolished teaching of English in primary

sections of West Bengal in 1984. But teaching of English was reintroduced in 1992 to Class V, in 1998 to Class III and finally in 2003 to all classes from Class I onwards

India's First Bio Refinery Plant inaugurated in Pune Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated India's First Integrated Bio-refinery for Renewable Fuels & Chemicals for producing ethanol from a variety of biomass. The plant is situated at Rahu in Pune district of Maharashtra. The demonstration plant has been built by Praj industries. The inaugurated Bio-refinery plant is capable of producing one million litres of ethanol per annum by processing a variety of biomass like rice and wheat straw, cotton stalk, bagasse, cane trash, corn cobs & stover with superior product yields. In 2015, the Government has asked Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to target 10 % blending of ethanol in as many States as possible. The fuel doping programme that required blending of 5% ethanol had started in November 2012. It was notified under the Motor Spirits Act on January 2, 2013. The Government has also allowed the OMCs to procure ethanol produced from other non-food feedstocks, like cellulosic and lignocellulosic materials including petrochemical route.

Significance

Biofuel is cost-effective and pollution-free. Ethanol blending is the practice of blending petrol with ethanol. Globally many countries including India, have resorted to ethanol blending to reduce vehicle exhaust emissions. The inauguration of the refinery paves the way for stepping up 20% ethanol blending program and can reduce the import burden of crude petroleum.

Biofuels : Biofuels are fuels which are in some way derived from biomass. The term covers solid biomass, liquid fuels and various biogases and also denotes Biodiesel, Bio-alcohol and bio-gasoline. Common Biofuel Crops The most common Biofuel

crops include Corn, Rapeseed/Canola, Sugarcane, Palm Oil, Jatropha, Soyabean, Cottonseed, Sunflower seeds, Wheat, Sugarbeet, Cassava, Algae, Coconut, Jojoba, Castor Beans etc.

Persons In News

Edouard Philippe appointed as Prime Minister of France French President Emmanuel Macron has appointed Edouard Philippe as the new prime minister of France. At 46, Edouard Philippe would be the second-youngest Prime Minister of France after Laurent Fabius (1984 to 1986), who was 37 at the time of appointment. Philippe is the Mayor of the port city Le Havre since 2010 and is a member of the Les Républicains party. Edouard Philippe appointment as the new Prime Minister comes at the backdrop of Emmanuel Macron's plans to draw support from the conservative opposition and appeal to rightwing voters in elections for the National Assembly to be held next month. Although, Emmanuel Macron has won with 66% of the vote, his party En Marche!, which was founded only last year has never held a single National Assembly seat. Macron needs to have a majority in the National Assembly to have the mandate to push his legislative agenda through.

Justice Mudgal elected as Chairman of FIFA Governance Committee Retired judge of Delhi High Court Justice Mukul Mudgal has been elected as the Chairman of FIFA Governance committee at the FIFA's 67th Congress held in Bahrain's capital city of Manama. Justice Mudgal was proposed for the vacant position by the FIFA Council after former chief Miguel Maduro was removed for his role in allegedly blocking Russian World Cup official Vitaly Mutko from retaining his seat on ruling council. Justice Mudgal will have a term of office of four years which would come into effect immediately. Olli Rehn

of Finland has been elected as Justice Mudgal's deputy. Olli Rehn is the former Vice-President of the European Commission. Justice Mudgal has served as the Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court from 2009 to 2011. In May last year, he was appointed as Deputy Chairman of the governance committee during the FIFA Congress in Mexico.

Vinay Mohan Kwatra Appointed as Ambassador to France Diplomat Vinay Mohan Kwatra has been appointed as India's next ambassador to France. He is currently serving as joint secretary in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO). Kwatra will succeed Mohan Kumar who is due to retire soon. Kwatra has served in Indian diplomatic missions in China and the US and has experience dealing with the UN organisations such as International Labour Organisation (ILO) and World Health Organisation (WHO). In the MEA, he had served as the joint secretary in charge of the counter-terrorism division in the MEA.

Sanjay Mitra Appointed as Next Defence Secretary The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the appointment of 1982 West Bengal cadre IAS officer Sanjay Mitra as the next defence secretary. He will have a fixed tenure of two years. Prior to this appointment, Mitra was the secretary in the ministry of road transport and highways.

Other appointments

- **Anant Kumar Singh**, a 1984 batch IAS officer of Uttar Pradesh has been appointed as the secretary in the textiles ministry. Anant Kumar Singh is the first officer from the 1984 batch to get the secretary-level appointment.
- **Rashmi Verma** who was the secretary in the textiles ministry has been moved to a similar position in the ministry of tourism.
- **Rajiv Srivastava**, a 1981 batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre, will be the

next secretary in the ministry of woman and child development.

- **Leena Nair**, a 1982 batch IAS of Tamil Nadu Cadre has been made secretary in the ministry of tribal affairs.
- **Jagdish Prasad Meena** has been appointed as secretary in the department of consumer affairs.
- **BR Sharma**, a 1984 batch IAS officer of the Jammu and Kashmir cadre has been appointed as additional secretary in the home ministry.

Deaths

Justice Leila Seth: First Woman Chief Justice of a State High Court Passed Away Justice Leila Seth who became the first woman Chief Justice of a State High Court has passed away at the age of 86. She has also received the distinction of becoming the first woman to top the London Bar exam as well as the becoming the first female judge of the Delhi High Court. Leila Seth is the mother of the noted author Vikram Seth. Justice Leila Seth began her career in 1959 as an advocate in the Calcutta high court as well as in the Supreme Court. Justice Leila Seth had been on the panel of lawyers for the Bihar and the West Bengal government. Justice Leila Seth was made as a permanent judge of the Delhi High Court in 1980. In 1991, she was made as the Chief Justice of the Himachal Pradesh high court. Justice Leila Seth had also served as member of the 15th Law Commission of India (1997 to 2000). She was also member of the Justice JS Verma committee which was mandated to take a relook at the criminal laws after the December 16 gang rape incident. The committee's work resulted in the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013, that widened the definition of rape and made the punishment more stringent. Justice Leila Seth has also written a number of books, namely, an autobiography, titled 'On Balance', 'We, the Children of India'

(2010), 'Talking of Justice: People's Rights in Modern India' (2014).

Sports

Women's Cricket: India's Deepti Sharma and Poonam Raut Sets new Record The partnership of Deepti Sharma and Poonam Raut scored 320 in 45.3 overs in 45.3 overs to become the world's first pair, either male or female, to forge a 300-run opening-wicket partnership in One-Day Internationals (ODIs). The earlier best partnership for the first wicket in men's cricket was 286 scored by Sri Lanka's Upul Tharanga and Sanath Jayasuriya against England in 2006, and the best partnership for the first wicket for women's cricket was 268 scored by Sarah Taylor and Caroline Atkins against South Africa in 2008. Also, Deepti Sharma's 188 runs is now the second highest score in women's one-day international only behind Australia's Belinda Clark's unbeaten 229 against Denmark in 1997. She has also bettered the 138 runs scored by Jaya Sharma against Pakistan in 2005. The stellar performance of Deepti and Poonam resulted in India's massive 249-run win over Ireland in the quadrangular series in Potchefstroom, South Africa.

Rafael Nadal Wins Madrid Open Title Rafael Nadal beat Dominic Thiem to clinch his fifth Madrid Open title. With this victory, he has won three straight titles after Barcelona Open and Monte Carlo Masters victories. Nadal will also move into the world's top four replacing 18-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer in the new rankings. Nadal has won his 30th ATP World Tour Masters 1000 title tying the all-time record with Serbia's Novok Djokovic. The Madrid Open is a men's and women's professional tennis tournament held every year in early May in Madrid, Spain. The tournament is classified as an

ATP World Tour Masters 1000 event on the Association of Tennis Professionals tour.

Sakshi Malik, Vinesh Phogat & Divya Kakran bags Silver Medals at the Asian Wrestling Championship

Sakshi Malik, Vinesh Phogat & Divya Kakran have bagged silver medals at the Asian Wrestling Championship held at the KD Jadhav Stadium in New Delhi. Though wrestler Sakshi, India's bronze medallist at the Rio Olympics was strong in her first two rounds against Uzbekistan's Nabira Esenbaeva and then Kazakhstan's Ayaulym Kassymova, she was defeated by Rio Gold medallist Risako Kawai of Japan and got settled for a silver medal in the 60 kg category. Divya Kakran and Vinesh Phogat bagged silver in the 69 kg and 55kg categories respectively. In the championship, 112 freestyle, 103 Greco-Roman and 83 female wrestlers are competing for 24 Gold and Silver, and 48 bronze medals. Asian Wrestling Championships are organized every year by the Asian Associated Wrestling Committee (AAWC). While the men's wrestling tournament began in 1979, women's tournament began in 1996.

India's Harpreet Singh wins bronze in Asian Wrestling Championship

Harpreet Singh has bagged bronze medal in Greco-Roman weight divisions in the Asian Wrestling Championship held at the K.D. Jadhav arena in the Indira Gandhi Stadium Complex in New Delhi. Harpreet clinched the bronze medal after beating his rival Jun Ji Na of China in 80 kg category. The other three Greco-Roman wrestlers, namely, Ravinder (66kg), Hardeep (98kg) and Naveen (130kg) failed to win any medal. The Greco-Roman category is generally not considered as Indian wrestlers forte. In the championship, 112 freestyle, 103 Greco-Roman and 83 female wrestlers will compete for 24 Gold and Silver, and 48 bronze medals. Asian Wrestling Championships are organized every year by

the Asian Associated Wrestling Committee (AAWC). While the men's wrestling tournament began in 1979, women's tournament began in 1996.

Science and Technology

Tejas Successfully Test Fires Air-to-Air Beyond Visual Range Missile

Tejas, the Light Combat Aircraft has successfully test fired Derby Air-to-Air Beyond Visual Range (BVR) missile in RADAR guided mode. The test was performed on a Manoeuvrable Aerial Target at the Interim Test Range (ITR), Chandipur. The objective behind the test was to assess the Derby integration with aircraft systems on-board Tejas including the aircraft avionics, fire-control radar, launchers and Missile Weapon Delivery System and evaluate its performance. The test firing achieved all its planned objectives and the missile hit directly on the target with complete destruction of it. The flawless launch is a major step towards clearing BVR capabilities on LCA aircraft for final operational clearance.

Tejas

The Indian Light Combat Aircraft is the world's smallest, light weight, multi-role combat aircraft in its class amongst modern supersonic aircraft. It is a single seat, single jet engine developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for the Indian Navy and the Air Force. The aircraft has delta wing configuration, with no tailplanes or foreplanes, features a single vertical fin. The LCA is constructed of aluminium-lithium alloys, carbon-fibre composites, and titanium. LCA integrates modern design concepts and the state-of-art technologies such as relaxed static stability, flyby-wire Flight Control System, Advanced Digital Cockpit, Multi-Mode Radar, Integrated Digital Avionics System, Advanced Composite Material Structures and a Flat Rated Engine.

China Simulates Lunar-like

Environment China has set up a 160-square-meter (1,720-square-foot) laboratory — dubbed as “Yuegong-1”, or “Lunar Palace” for simulating a lunar-like environment. Four Postgraduate students from the Beijing’s astronautics research university will live in the laboratory for up to 200 days in a bid to prepare for China’s long term goal of putting humans on the moon. The student volunteers would be sealed inside the cabin with no input from the outside world in order to simulate long-term, self-contained space mission. The cabin will have facilities for treatment of human wastes through bio-fermentation process. The experimental crops would also be grown in the laboratory with the help of food and waste by products. The cabin according to Chinese agencies represents the “world’s most advanced closed-loop life-support technology so far.” The Lunar Palace is hailed as the world’s third bioregenerative life-support base and the first to be developed in China. The Lunar Palace is the first of its kind facility to involve animals and microorganisms as well as plants and humans. It has two plant cultivation modules and a living cabin consisting of four bed cubicles, a common room, a bathroom, a waste-treatment room and a room for raising animals. Initially, a group of four students comprising two men and two women will be sealed inside the cabin for an initial stay of 60 days who will then be replaced by another group of four, who will stay for 200 days. Though, China does not have any plans to land its astronauts on moon for at least another decade, this project is expected to help it prepare lunar explorers for longer stays on the surface of the moon. Background China views the programme as a mark of its raising global stature and as a step to catch up with the United States and Europe. Recently, China’s first cargo spacecraft, Tianzhou-1, successfully docked with an orbiting space lab. However, so far China has been largely

replicating the activities carried out by the U.S. and Soviet Union decades ago. It was hailed as a major step towards China’s ambition of establishing a permanently manned space station by 2022. China has an ambitious plan of building a permanent space station by 2022, that will be in the orbit for at least 10 years. In May 2014, China conducted a 105-day experiment by placing a team comprising of two women and one man from Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics (BUAA) in ‘Moon Palace 1’, a 160-square-meter self-contained laboratory with an intention to prepare for placing astronauts in outer space for extended periods of time.

Science Express Climate Action

Special (SECAS II) Science Express The Science Express is 16 coach AC mobile train science exhibition of Department of Science & Technology (DST). The objective of the Express is to arouse interest of the young people in the field of science and technology. Since its inception, the programme is being managed by Vikram A Sarabhai Community Science Centre (VASCSC). The Science Express was launched from Delhi Safdarjung Railway station on October 30, 2007. The Express has so far completed 8 phases by travelling 1,41,800 km, with 455 halts, and 1602 exhibition days. Thus, it is has become the largest, longest running and the most visited mobile science exhibition with six entries in the Limca Book of Records. Since its inception, over 1.61 crore people had visited Science Express. The 8 phases completed by the train includes 4 phases of ‘Science Express’, which had showcased cutting edge research in science and technology being carried worldwide; 3 phases of ‘Biodiversity Special’ (SEBS) which had showcased the rich biodiversity of India; and one phase of ‘Climate Action Special’ (SECAS) that highlighted the global challenge of climate change.

SECAS II

The Science Express Climate Action Special (SECAS II) constitutes 9th Phase and will stop at 68 stations for science popularisation across the country till September covering a total distance of 19,000 km. The current ninth phase of the Science Express was flagged off on February 17 this year. The SECAS is a collaborative initiative of DST, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC), Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Railways, Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and Vikram A Sarabhai Community Science Centre (VASCSC). The Broad themes covered by SECAS-II are: Underlying reasons for climate change; impact of climate change and ways to reduce it; adaptation strategies and adaptation measures undertaken by India; mitigation and various programmes implemented; international negotiations for climate change etc.

India launches South-Asia satellite

The “South Asia satellite” for use by countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) region has been launched on May 5. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has hailed the satellite as an invaluable gift of India to South Asia and has further stated that the satellite “will go a long way in addressing South Asia’s economic and developmental priorities.” During the 2014 SAARC summit that held in Nepal, the plan for the satellite was announced and subsequently all SAARC countries have joined it except Pakistan. Hence, the beneficiaries of the satellite will be Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives. The total cost of launching the satellite (around Rs 235 crore) would be met by the Government of India.

Salient features

The 2,230 kg satellite called GSAT-09 has been built by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It is cuboid in shape and is built around a central cylinder. It has

12 Ku-band transponders. The satellite was launched from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota using a Geostationary Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Mk-II launch vehicle. It will have a mission life of over 12 years. The launch vehicle, GSLV-F09 is about 50m tall and is the 11th flight of the GSLV. Also, the launch is GSLV’s fourth consecutive flight with the indigenous Cryogenic Upper Stage (CUS) engine.

Significance

The satellite will provide a full range of applications and services in the fields of telecommunication and broadcasting applications, namely, Television, Direct-to-Home (DTH), Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSATs), Tele-education, Telemedicine and Disaster Management Support. Each of the participating countries would be able to use a dedicated transponder with a capacity of 36 to 54 Mhz for its own internal use. The participating countries would be made responsible for the content generation and its use.

Awards

Hollywood Actor Emma Watson bags first ever ‘genderless’ award

Hollywood actor Emma Watson has received the first-ever Genderless Acting Award for the Best Actor category at the MTV Movie and TV Awards. This is the first ever genderless award that doesn’t separate nominees based on their sex. The 2017 edition of the MTV Movie & TV Awards were held on May 7, 2017, in Los Angeles, California. It was the 26th edition of the awards. The MTV Movie & TV Awards is a film and television awards presented annually to winners decided online by the general public. Emma Watson is a British actress, model, and activist. She is famous for her role as Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter film series.

Economy

New IIP, WPI Series Introduced The government has released new-look index of industrial production (IIP) and the wholesale price index (WPI), which have been built on the new series of data. The new IIP and WPI series has been released by Chief Statistician of India and Secretary, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, and Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion to usher in greater accuracy and improved synchronisation leading to better policies.

Salient Highlights

Instead of the earlier 2004-05, base year for the IIP and the WPI will be 2011-12. Already, the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and gross value addition etc., have 2011-12 as the base year. The common base year of 2011-12 is aimed at reducing discrepancies.

IIP

The new series of IIP will include 809 manufacturing products and 55 mining products that are re-grouped into 521 item groups. The new series of IIP will include technology items like smart phones, tablets, LED television etc. A technical review committee has also been established to identify new items by ensuring that the series remains relevant. The committee is slated to meet at least once a year.

WPI

The number of items covered in the new series of the WPI has increased from 676 to 697. Overall, 199 new items have been added and 146 old items have been dropped. Under the primary articles, new vegetables and fruits like radish, carrot, cucumber, bitter gourd, mosambi (sweet lime), pomegranate, jackfruit, and pear have been added. Under the mineral group, new items like copper concentrate, lead concentrate and garnet have been added and other items like copper ore, gypsum, kaolin, dolomite, and magnesite have been dropped.

Under the manufacturing items, 173 new items including conveyer belt, rubber tread, steel cables, tissue paper, and wooden splint have been added, while 135 items like khandsari, poppadom, and video CD players have been taken out. Under the new series of WPI, weight of manufactured items has decreased to 64.2 per cent from 64.9 per cent in old series. Similarly, the weight of fuel and power has decreased to 13.1 per cent from 14.9 per cent. On the other hand, the weight of primary items have increased to 22.6 per cent from 20.1 per cent.

Significance

The IIP has been revised after a gap of 13 years and the obsolete items which are no longer in production in the index have been replaced with contemporary products in the new index making it to be more comprehensive in nature. Introduction of the new series would make all the key macroeconomic indicators such as IIP, WPI, CPI and national accounts to have a common base of 2011-12, paving way for easier comparisons among them. The new series indices have painted a healthier picture of the Indian economy in 2016-17 than that of the old series.

IMF: India will Grow at 7.7% in 2018-19 The International Monetary Fund in its regional economic outlook has predicted the growth rate of India as 7.2% in the 2017-18 fiscal and 7.7% in 2018-19 fiscal. The report has stated that the disruptions caused by the demonetisation would be offset by a favorable monsoon and continued progress in resolving supply-side bottlenecks. However, it has predicted the investment recovery to remain modest and uneven across sectors. Though weaknesses in bank and corporate balance sheets is likely to affect the near term credit growth, the report cites confidence and policy credibility gains and continued fiscal consolidation and anti-inflationary monetary policy to be the factors that underpin macroeconomic stability. According to the

report, IMF has recommended the removal of long-standing structural bottlenecks to enhance market efficiency. The report has revised the growth downward in India due to effects from the currency exchange initiative and in South Korea due to political uncertainty. According to the report, improving agricultural productivity in the labour-intensive agricultural sector remains a key challenge. It has said that much more needs to be done to address structural bottlenecks and improve market efficiency. Liberalising commodity markets as per the report will help in infusing more flexibility in the distribution and marketing of farm produce and will enhance the competitiveness, efficiency, and transparency in state agriculture markets. IMF has said that input subsidies to farmers should be administered through direct cash transfers as underpricing of agricultural inputs would have large negative impacts on agricultural output.

IMF: International Monetary Fund (IMF) was established on December 27, 1945 with stated objectives to promote international economic cooperation, international trade, employment, and exchange rate stability, including by making resources available to member countries to meet balance of payments needs. Its headquarters are in Washington, D.C. The IMF works to improve the economies of its member countries.

Miscellaneous

New Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine against Pneumonia Launched Minister for Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda has launched new Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine, PCV, for Pneumonia at Lal Bahadur Shastri Medical College Hospital in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh. The vaccine is a part of government's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP). Henceforth, the vaccine

will be administered under routine immunization programme. The vaccine would help in controlling pneumonia and reducing the child mortality rate. In India, more than 1 lakh children die of pneumonia every year. The vaccine will provide protection against 13 types of pneumococcal bacteria which results in pneumonia. This is the twelfth disease for which the Health Ministry has launched a vaccine. The vaccine Pneumococcal Conjugate protects against Streptococcus pneumonia and diseases such as pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections and meningitis. PCV was first introduced in 2000. The whole of Himachal Pradesh as well as six districts of Uttar Pradesh and seventeen districts of Bihar will be covered under the first phase of the immunisation programme.

Pneumonia

Pneumonia is caused by inflammation of the airspaces in the lungs. It is most commonly due to an infection. It is a leading cause of death for children under the age of five years around the world. It may be caused by bacteria, viruses or fungi. The most common bacterial type that causes pneumonia is Streptococcus pneumoniae. Signs and symptoms include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, and fatigue.

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