DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 20-07-2023

NATIONAL NEWS

President Conferred Bhoomi Samman 2023

- Indian President Draupadi Murmu presented the "Bhoomi Samman" 2023 at a function organized by the Union Ministry of Rural Development at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.
- The awards were received by the State Secretaries and District Collectors along with their teams who have shown excellence in achieving completion of major components of the Digital India Land Records Modernization Program (DILRMP).
- Officers of the team of total 68 districts including nine secretaries of Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Tripura and West Bengal were honored at the Bhoomi Samman-2023 function held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- Among these, 57 officers from 19 districts of Odisha, 35 officers from 15 districts of Madhya Pradesh, who received maximum awards, were awarded Bhoomi Samman by the President.

TCRM Matrix Framework Unveiled by NITI Aayog

- NITI Aayog released the Techno-Commercial Readiness and Market Maturity Matrix (TCRM Matrix) framework for promoting innovation and entrepreneurship in India.
- The TCRM Matrix Framework released by NITI Aayog is a pioneering assessment tool developed to revolutionize technology assessment, foster innovation and encourage entrepreneurship in India.
- This action plan paper highlights the historical evolution of the Technology Framework, including the Technology Readiness Level (TRL), Commercialization Readiness Level (CRL), and Market Readiness Level (MRL) scales.
- By building on the core principles of these frameworks, the TCRM Matrix Framework presents an integrated assessment model that provides deep insights and actionable intelligence to stakeholders at every stage of the technology development cycle.
- The Action Plan paper provides clear guidelines for integrating the TCRM Matrix framework within the wider innovation ecosystem.
- The launch of the Techno-Commercial Readiness and Market Maturity Matrix (TCRM Matrix) framework is a milestone for India's innovation and entrepreneurship landscape.

New Panel to Review All Surveys Conducted Under NSO

- The Union government has established a new oversight mechanism to review data from the National Statistical Office (NSO).
- The Standing Committee on Economic Statistics (SCES) set up in 2019 will be replaced by a Standing Committee on Statistics (SCoS).
- Pronab Sen, India's first chief statistician, has been named as the chairman of the new committee.
- SCES was responsible for reviewing economic indicators related to the industrial sector, the services sector, and the labour force statistics.
- The SCoS will have a broader mandate to review the framework and results of all surveys being conducted under the NSO.
- SCoS jurisdiction will be beyond economic data and advise the Ministry on technical aspects for all surveys.
- This new panel will have 10 members and 4 non-official members who are eminent academics.
- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) issued notification regarding this on 13 July 2023.
- SCoS work includes the identification of data gaps that need to be filled by official statistics.
- It has also been given authority to explore the use of administrative statistics to improve data outcomes.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway

- The India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Highway is a regional connectivity project covering approximately 1,360 km (845 mi) that aims to connect India, Myanmar and Thailand.
- The project was proposed by former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and approved in 2002. Its construction began in 2012 and is being implemented in several phases.
- The Ministry of External Affairs in India, in collaboration with Myanmar and Thailand, is responsible for project implementation, with funds allocated from the Ministry of Finance.

- The highway starts from Moreh in Manipur, India, passes through Myanmar and ends at Mae Sot in Thailand. The India-Myanmar Friendship Road is the first section connecting Tamu/Moreh to Kalemyo and Kalewa.

- India's contribution to the project includes the construction of 69 bridges along with access roads on the 74-km Kalewa-Yagyi road section and the 70-km Tamu-Kyygon-Kalewa (TKK) road section in Myanmar.

BANKING

DICGC Asks Insured Banks to Display Its Logo and QR Code

- The Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) has asked all insured banks to display the DICGC Logo and QR code (quick-response code) linked to its website on the banks' internet banking portals and websites.

- These decisions have been taken to enhance awareness about Deposit Insurance.

- This will allow customers to conveniently identify banks covered by the Deposit Insurance Scheme of DICGC.

- All banks are required to comply with the circular effective from September 1, 2023.

- All commercial banks including branches of foreign banks functioning in India, local area banks and regional rural banks are insured by the DICGC.

Tata AIG General Insurance as Lead Non-Life Insurer for Maharashtra

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has selected Tata AIG General Insurance Company Limited as the non-life insurer for the State of Maharashtra.

- It is to initiate and drive activities in collaboration with all other non-life and health insurance companies to increase insurance penetration in the State in line with its vision "Insurance for all by the year 2047".

- Tata AIG General Insurance Company Limited will collaborate with all non-life and health insurance companies working in the state of Maharashtra, the IRDAI, and the State Government.

- It will create awareness of existing government schemes, enhancing insurance reach and accessibility across the state at the Gram Panchayat, district and state levels.

- The IRDAI has also identified key segments such as Motor Insurance, Health Insurance, and Crop Insurance, support of Micro Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), and employment-related.

- Tata AIG will also assist in promoting the adoption of flagship government schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY).

RANKS, INDICES & REPORTS

Henley Passport Index 2023

- Singapore has topped the Henley Passport Index 2023, becoming the most powerful passport in the world.
- India is currently ranked 80th along with Togo and Senegal.
- Indian passport holders now enjoy visa-free access to 57 countries, reflecting the country's enhanced global travel privileges.
- Singapore passport holders are granted visa-free access to an impressive 192 out of 227 global travel destinations.
- Three European countries, namely Germany, Italy and Spain, now rank second in the index. Their passports provide visa-free access to 190 destinations.
- Japan, which held the top position for the last five years, is now ranked third in the index.
- Austria, Finland, France, Japan, South Korea, Luxembourg, and Sweden are also in third place, their passport holders can travel to 189 destinations without visa.

'Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2022' Report

- The ITI Commission released the 3rd edition of 'Export Preparedness Index (EPI) 2022' for the States/UTs of India.

- The report was released by Vice President Suman Berry and other officials.

- It aims to promote India as a global export player by leveraging regional competitiveness and diversity.

- The focus is on export performance both at the state and district levels.

- Policy pillar: Evaluates the adoption of the export-related policy ecosystem and institutional framework at the state and district levels.

- Business Ecosystem: Assesses the business environment, supporting infrastructure and transport connectivity in the States/UTs.

- Export ecosystem: Focuses on export-related infrastructure, business support and research and development (R&D) to foster innovation.

- Export Performance: Measures the growth, concentration and global market footprint of a state's exports.

- Coastal states including Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat performed well in all categories.

DEFENCE

INS Sahyadri and INS Kolkata Arrive at Jakarta

- INS Sahyadri and INS Kolkata, two flagship ships of the Indian Navy, arrived at Jakarta on to participate in a bilateral maritime exercise with the Indonesian Naval Forces.
- On arrival at Jakarta, both the naval ships of the mission deployed in the South-Eastern IOR were accorded a warm welcome by the Indonesian Navy.
- The Indian and Indonesian navies will engage in an elaborate program of professional interactions, joint yoga sessions, sports events and cross-deck visits, with an aim to strengthen mutual cooperation and understanding between the two navies.
- Both the ships will also participate in the Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) at sea with the Indonesian Navy to further strengthen the high level of interoperability that both navies have from the Middle East.
- INS Sahyadri is the third indigenously designed and built stealth frigate of the Project-17 class.
- INS Kolkata is the first indigenously designed and built Project-15A class stealth destroyer.
- Both these ships have been built at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited, Mumbai.

Joint Military Exercise ‘Nomadic Elephant – 2023’

- An Indian Army contingent comprising 43 personnel left for Mongolia to take part in a joint military exercise ‘Nomadic Elephant 2023’ between India and Mongolia.

- Nomadic Elephant 2023 is the 15th edition.

- Nomadic Elephant 2023’ is scheduled from 17 July 2023 till 31 July 2023.

- Indian Army soldiers from the Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry Regiment and Soldiers of the Mongolian Armed Forces Unit 084 are participating in the exercise.

- It will focus on counter-terrorism operations in mountainous terrain under a United Nations mandate.

- It is to strengthen positive military relations, share best practices, enhance interoperability, and foster camaraderie, bonhomie, and friendship between the two armies.

- During the exercise, Indian and Mongolian troops will engage in various training activities designed to enhance their skills and capabilities.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

IIT-Kharagpur to Develop Tamper-Proof Signalling System

- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur, is developing a tamper-proof signalling system based on blockchain technology for the Indian Railways.

- The system is going to be embedded with enhanced safety measures; the new system would complement the existing Data Logger which is considered the 'Black Box' of rolling stock.

- The system would complement the Data Logger which was limited by its centralised storage facility, lack of tamper-evident data, and limited access control.

- The new blockchain system would address these limitations by storing data in a distributed ledger, using cryptography to ensure data integrity, and making data accessible to all stakeholders.

- This would make the new system more secure, transparent, and efficient than the current system.
- It would enable secure data sharing among stakeholders and automate processes with smart contracts and create tamper-evident audit trails.
- The new blockchain system would address all these limitations by storing data in a distributed ledger by using cryptography to ensure data integrity and make data accessible to the involved stakeholders.