

SMART ABHYAS

Current Affairs Monthly

DECEMBER 2018

IN THIS MONTH'S MAGAZINE

Data interception authorised
by the Centre

Leopards in India in danger

Silao Khaja gets GI tag

and more.....

ANAK KRAKATOA ERUPTS

A devastating tsunami caused by a volcanic eruption struck without warning in Indonesia taking the lives of many and leaving many more shocked.....



Also read how the Javan rhino might go extinct because of Indonesia's natural disasters

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December 2018

Rajya Sabha TV and Lok Sabha
TV compilations

All India Radio Spotlight
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Dear aspirants

A note from Smart Abhyas



Smart Abhyas

LIKE WHAT WE ARE DOING ?

We at Smart Abhyas started this initiative with the intention of providing quality content to every single CSE aspirant out there. If you think we are on the right track please let us know by mailing us at smartabhyas@gmail.com, your feedback would mean a lot to us.

WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING TO IMPROVE

Any suggestions that would help us enhance the quality of our content, the presentation of our content or anything important for that matter can be brought to us by mailing us at smartabhyas@gmail.com.

TELL A FRIEND

It would mean the world to us if you think that the content we are providing is worthwhile and spread the word to fellow aspirants out there.

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Geography, Ecology and Biodiversity

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9. Asiatic Lion Conservation Project launched
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11. Lalitgiri in Odisha
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13. Ring of Fire : What you need to know
14. Poaching of leopards in India a cause of worry
15. Flowers originated 50 million years earlier than thought: Study
16. Salinity driving away Ganges River dolphin

Economy

1. GDP back series data : What you need to know
2. World Bank unveils USD 200 bn in climate action investment for 2021-25
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Government Schemes and Initiatives

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Science and Technology

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4. Chemputer to revolutionise drug production
5. Aircraft Carriers and their importance in the present scenario
6. Deaths due to air pollution disproportionately high in India
7. Bioplastics : Are they actually better than plastics ?
8. Agni V does it again
9. Port Community System 'PCS1x'
10. Voyager 2 has reached interstellar space
11. 'Deep Submersible Rescue Vehicle' inducted into Navy
12. Vaccine to save bees from extinction
13. Biomedical engineers an integral part of the evolving medical industry
14. GSAT-7A : Indian Navy to be boosted by the communication satellite
15. Agni-IV test fired successfully

International Relations, Summits and Meetings

1. India to chair Kimberley Process from 1st January 2019
2. Qatar to leave OPEC
3. India Water Impact Summit-2018
4. UN launches new framework to combat terrorism
5. Information Fusion Centre (IFC) for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)
6. Katowice Summit offers something in the end
7. Japan to withdraw from the International Whaling Commission (IWC)

Point Blank (Facts for prelims)

1. 1st ever Indo-Indonesian Business Forum
2. Cope India 2018
3. Sangai Festival 2018
4. Maharashtra approves 16% Maratha quota in jobs and education
5. 3rd ASEAN – India Business Summit (AIBS)
6. Indian economy likely to grow at 7-7.4% in FY19: NCAER
7. SHINYUU Maitri-2018
8. FSSAI launches new campaign to eliminate trans fats by 2022
9. TIPS Instant Payment System
10. Six-member panel to sell 149 fields of ONGC, OIL to private companies
11. International Conference on Bears
12. First 2-Day India-ASEAN InnoTech Summit
13. India's first private satellite
14. Annual Start-up India Venture Capital Summit 2018
15. Second meeting of the NITI Forum for the North East
16. Number of patents granted by India shot up by 50% in 2017
17. Shahpurkandi dam on river Ravi in Punjab
18. Dr Krishnamurthy Subramanian appointed new Chief Economic Advisor
19. Exercise Hand-In-Hand
20. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy conferred Skoch Award for National Significance
21. Global Hackathon on Artificial Intelligence
22. Centre empowers Lieutenant Governors, Administrators to set up Special Courts
23. UN launches new framework to combat international terrorism
24. India's first underwater museum
25. Exercise Aviandra 2018: India-Russia
26. Online portal "ENSURE" has been launched
27. World's first floating nuclear power plant
28. India Post Launches E-commerce Portal
29. Kaiga nuclear plant sets World Record
30. Third Edition of the Women Transforming India Awards
31. Meghdoot Award
32. India's First Military Flight using Blended Bio-Jet Fuel
33. Brightest Object in the Universe
34. Russia successfully tests hypersonic missile Avangard
35. Three Andaman Islands to be renamed
36. Mission Gaganyaan given green signal

Polity and Social Issues

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2. India's Sustainable Development Goals
3. PARTNERS Forum 2018
4. Political Funding
5. Start-Up Ranking
6. Facebook: Breach of Trust

Geography, Ecology and Biodiversity

1. Andaman – home to India's Fauna
2. Red- Disk Bushbrown butterfly
3. Hog deer
4. COP24 at Katowice
5. Portulaca Plant Species
6. Saturn to lose its iconic rings

Science and Technology

01. Insight Lands on Mars
02. ISRO launched HYSIS
03. Water Recycle and Reuse
04. Growth Telescope
05. Research at Antarctica
06. Mosquito Control

07. ISRO's GSAT-7A launched

08. Monitoring Floods

All India Radio (Spotlight Analysis)

1. A discussion on G20 Summit and Changing Global Scenario
2. A discussion on Glorious History of Indian Navy
3. A discussion on bilateral relations between India and UAE
4. A discussion on Armed Forces Flag Day
5. A discussion on recent developments in GST
6. A discussion on NITI Aayog Comprehensive National Strategy
7. A discussion on State Start-up ranking 2018

POLITY AND SOCIAL ISSUES

India's first indigenous film festival

What is the issue ?

- India's first indigenous film festival will take place in Odisha in February of 2019.

More on the issue :

- It is an initiative of the activist film collective, **Video Republic**.
- The event will start at Bhubaneswar, move to Puri and then conclude at Niyamgiri.
- **It will showcase films made by indigenous people or by non-indigenous filmmakers in collaboration with the indigenous community.**
- The festival aims to be a platform for indigenous communities from around the world over to share, have a dialogue and to use cinema as a mode of united assertion, resistance and activism against exploitative forces.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION

Which among the following statements is false with reference to India's first indigenous film festival ?

- a) Aims to be a platform for indigenous communities to use cinema as a mode of united assertion, resistance and activism against exploitative forces
- b) It will showcase films made by indigenous people or by non-indigenous filmmakers in collaboration with the indigenous community
- c) It is an initiative of the activist film collective, Video Republic
- d) It will take place in Jharkhand

Solution: d

France is the most food sustainable country says Food Sustainability Index

What is the issue?

- France's aggressive measures to tackle food waste, promote healthy lifestyles and adopt eco-farming techniques helped it top a ranking of nations which assesses their food sustainability.
- The Netherlands, Canada, Finland and Japan rounded out the top five, and Rwanda scored highest among low-income countries.

About the index :

- The index ranks 67 countries, which make up 90% of the world's global GDP and over four-fifths of the global population, based on their food system sustainability.
- It was developed by **The Economist Intelligence Unit** with the think tank **Barilla Center for Food & Nutrition Foundation (BCFN)**.
- Food loss and waste, sustainable agriculture and nutritional challenges form the three components of the index.

More on the issue :

- **India was ranked 33rd** on the index
- India's foodgrain production has been increasing steadily over the years, reaching a record level in 2018. Despite the increase in food production, the Food Sustainability Index ranks India 33rd among 67 countries in 2018. China does better than India, while other BRICS partners are rated poorly.
- A comparison with the global scenario indicates that India does well on preventing food loss and wastage, but is below average in sustainable agriculture and is one of the worst while tackling nutritional challenges

A study on the implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act

What is the issue ?

- A study conducted by the Disability Rights India Foundation (DRIF) on the implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act, across 24 States, has revealed that more than half have not notified the State rules, despite a significant lapse of time.

More on the issue :

- Ten States, including Bihar, Manipur, Meghalaya, Odisha, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, have notified the State rules, the survey said.
- The study, conducted in collaboration with the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) and National Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD), said the Act, passed in December 2016, should have been notified by all States within six months.
- The study, which concentrated on the States' administrative machinery with respect to the Act, found that nearly 80% of the States had not constituted the funds for implementation of the RPWD Act.
- Among the five States to have constituted the funds, Tamil Nadu has allocated Rs.10 crore, while Himachal Pradesh has allocated Rs.5 crore.
- Though 62% of the States have appointed Commissioners for Persons with Disabilities, "the progress has not been substantial. Only three States have constituted Advisory Committees, comprising of experts, to assist the State Commissioners" the study noted.
- Out of the 24 States and Union Territories that responded to the study, Madhya Pradesh was ranked the highest, followed by Odisha, Meghalaya and Himachal Pradesh. Andaman and Nicobar Islands along with Jammu and Kashmir ranked the lowest. The national capital was ranked number 12.
- While 58% of the States have not notified Special Courts in the districts for trying offences under the Act, 87% have not appointed a Special Public Prosecutors as mandated by the law, the study said.

Freight Village in Varanasi

What is the issue ?

- The Ministry of Shipping has approved the development of a Rs 156 crore freight village in Varanasi adjoining the Inland Waterways Terminal on River Ganga.

More on the issue :

- The Varanasi freight village will be developed by the **Inland Waterways Authority of India**.
- It will serve as a cargo hub and a centre for aggregation and value addition. It will also provide support to stimulate the development of a professional logistics industry in Varanasi.

What is a freight village ?

- A freight village is a designated area where facilities for various modes of transportation, distribution of goods and other logistics are available in a synchronized manner on a large scale.
- The main function of freight villages is the management and utilization of various modes of transport, synergizing them and decongesting the existing mode of transportation.
- Freight villages are basically cargo aggregators which offer various logistic choices to a shipper/ cargo owner; i.e. choice of rail-road; rail-waterway; road-waterway. The choice is based on the optimal/ lowest logistic cost that can be derived from the shipper/ cargo owner.

How will freight villages help ?

- Delivery and coordination of various freight-related activities under one roof ensures ease of doing business and makes it possible to realize high truck capacity due to which economic efficiency and activity of the enterprises on site can be improved
- The freight village can potentially cater to a diverse cargo profile including containers, bulk and break-bulk cargo, liquid bulk and bagged cargo.

Why a freight village at Varanasi ?

- A World Bank pre-feasibility study has found Varanasi to be a suitable site for the freight village.
- The city is located strategically and is a focal point in the logistics chain of Eastern Transport Corridor of India where the National Waterways-1, Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC), National Highway-7 and National Highway-2 pass through.
- The volume of traffic on the inland waterway to Varanasi is expected to increase with the commissioning of the multimodal terminal being built under the Jal Marg Vikas project.

Cabinet approves National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems

What is the issue ?

- The Union Cabinet has approved the launching of the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS).
- It will be implemented by the Department of Science and Technology at a total outlay of Rs. 3660 crore for a period of five years.

Details:

The mission implementation would develop and bring:

1. Cyber-Physical Systems (CPS) and associated technologies within reach in the country,
2. Adoption of CPS technologies to address India specific National / Regional issues,
3. Produce Next Generation skilled manpower in CPS,
4. Catalyze Translational Research,
5. Accelerate entrepreneurship and start-up ecosystem development in CPS,
6. Give impetus to advanced research in CPS, Technology development and higher education in Science, Technology and Engineering disciplines, and
7. Place India at par with other advanced countries and derive several direct and indirect benefits.

Implementation strategy:

- The NM-ICPS is a comprehensive Mission which would address technology development, application development, human resource development and skill enhancement, entrepreneurship and start-up development in CPS and associated technologies.
- The Mission aims at the establishment of 15 numbers of Technology Innovation Hubs (TIH), six numbers of Application Innovation Hubs (AIH) and four numbers of Technology Translation Research Parks (TTRP).
- These Hubs and TTRPs will connect to Academics, Industry, Central Ministries and State Government in developing solutions at reputed academic, R&D and other organizations across the country in a hub and spoke model.
- A strategic approach involving a suitable mix of Academic, Industry and Government is proposed to be adopted. Strong Steering and Monitoring Mechanisms in the form of Mission Governing Board (MGB), Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee (IMCC), Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) and other Sub-Committees will guide and monitor the Mission implementation.
- The Hubs & TTRPs have four focused areas along which the Mission implementation would proceed, namely (i) Technology Development; (ii) HRD & Skill Development; (iii) Innovation, Entrepreneurship & Start-ups Ecosystem Development; (iv) International Collaborations.

Impact and need for such a mission :

- CPS technologies provide a cutting edge to a Nation's scientific, engineering, and technological innovative capabilities; support other missions of the government, provide industrial and economic competitiveness and have truly become a Strategic Resource.
- Volume, scale and complexity of emerging applications demand the continued evolution of new technologies for the foreseeable future. The proposed Mission would act as an engine of growth that would benefit national initiatives in health, education, energy, environment, agriculture, strategic cum security, and industrial sectors, Industry 4.0, SMART Cities, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) etc.

- CPS is an integrated system of upcoming technology, which in turn is being taken up on a priority basis by countries in the race for development.
- CPS will indeed bring a paradigm shift in entire skill sets required. The job opportunities will be enhanced through the Mission by imparting advanced skills and generating skilled manpower as per the requirement of the industry/ society.
- As Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Start-up Ecosystem is an integral part of the proposed NM-ICPS, the start-ups will also create a number of technology-driven job opportunities in CPS and allied areas. Accordingly, it is estimated that, about 40,000 jobs will be created in the short term and about 2,00,000 in long term.

Benefits:

- The Mission will feed the Central Ministries/ Departments and State Govts and also the Industry to effectively use the CPS technologies in their projects and schemes for the benefit of the society.

States/districts covered:

- NM-ICPS is a Pan India Mission and covers the entire gamut of India that includes Central Ministries, State Governments, Industry and Academia.

Background:

- CPS and its associated technologies, like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Machine Learning (ML), Deep Learning (DP), Big Data Analytics, Robotics, Quantum Computing, Quantum Communication, Quantum encryption (Quantum Key Distribution), Data Science & Predictive Analytics, Cyber Security for physical infrastructure and other infrastructure, have pervaded and is playing a transformative role in almost every field of human endeavour all most in all sectors.
- It has become imperative for government and industries to be prepared to adopt these emerging and disruptive technologies in order to remain competitive, drive societal progress, generate employment, foster economic growth and to improve the overall quality of life and sustainability of the environment.

Cabinet approves Agriculture Export Policy, 2018

What is the issue ?

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Agriculture Export Policy, 2018.
- The Cabinet has also approved the proposal for the establishment of Monitoring Framework at Centre with Commerce as the nodal Department with representation from various line Ministries/Departments and Agencies and representatives of concerned State Governments, to oversee the implementation of Agriculture Export Policy.

More on the issue :

- The Government has come out with a policy to double farmers' income by 2022. Exports of agricultural products would play a pivotal role in achieving this goal.
- In order to provide an impetus to agricultural exports, the Government has come out with a comprehensive "Agriculture Export Policy" aimed at doubling the agricultural exports and integrating Indian farmers and agricultural products with the global value chains.

The Agriculture Export Policy has the following vision:

- "Harness the export potential of Indian agriculture, through suitable policy instruments, to make India global power in agriculture and raise farmers income."

Objectives:

Objectives of the Agriculture Export Policy are as under:

- To double agricultural exports from present ~US\$ 30+ Billion to ~US\$ 60+ Billion by 2022 and reach US\$ 100 Billion in the next few years thereafter, with a stable trade policy regime.
- To diversify our export basket, destinations and boost high value and value-added agricultural exports including a focus on perishables.
- To promote novel, indigenous, organic, ethnic, traditional and non-traditional Agri products exports.