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1. MoU signed between CCI and TEXPROCIL on Branding and Certification of “Kasturi Cotton India” (Dec. 16, 2022)

Kasturi Cotton India

A **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** was signed between the **Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) Limited and TEXPROCIL** on Branding, Traceability and Certification of “**Kasturi Cotton India**” in Varanasi on 15th December.

Important facts

- The Cotton Corporation of India, along with the textile industry and exporters, is striving to ensure that India's cotton farmers get their due in the world markets.
- This collaboration will benefit cotton farmers who will get the actual value of their produce due to brand building and quality assurance.
- Union Minister of Textiles, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Commerce & Industry, **Piyush Goyal** announced the creation of an advisory group on ‘**Man-Made Fibre**’ on the lines of Cotton Group.
- The MoU will encourage the Industry to work on the principle of self-regulation by owning complete responsibility of Traceability, Certification and Branding of Indian cotton, Ministry of Textiles.
- The Government of India will contribute an equal share of **Rs 15 crore** over a period of three cotton seasons starting from 2022-23 to 2024-25.

What is Kasturi Cotton?

- India’s premium Cotton is known as ‘Kasturi Cotton’ in the **world cotton Trade**.
- The Kasturi Cotton brand represents whiteness, brightness, softness, purity, uniqueness and Indianness.
- **World Cotton Day** is observed on 7th October every year.
- Cotton is a **Kharif Crop** which requires 6 to 8 months to mature.
- Top Cotton Producing States in India - **Gujarat > Maharashtra > Telangana > Andhra Pradesh > Rajasthan**.

Cotton Corporation of India (CCI)

- It was established in **1970** under the administrative control of the Ministry of Textiles as a Public Sector Undertaking under the Companies Act 1956.
- It undertake price support operations, whenever the market prices of cotton fall below the **Minimum Support Prices (MSP)** announced by Govt of India, without any quantitative limit.
- Headquarters: **Belapur, Navi Mumbai**

2. Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK) (Dec. 16, 2022)

Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram

Minority Affairs Minister **Smriti Zubin Irani** in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha on 15 December said that the **Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK)** is being implemented by the **Ministry of Minority Affairs** with the objective of infrastructure development.

About Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK)

- It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)**.
- It aims to develop infrastructure projects in identified areas for **socio-economic development**.
- Under this the priority areas are **education, health, skill development, women centric projects etc.**
- It has been implemented in **1300 identified Minority Concentration Areas (MCAs)** of the country.
- Projects under PMJVK are implemented and managed by the **concerned State/ UT Government**.
- In the **North Eastern Region (NER)**, the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura come under PMJVK.
- The scheme is now implemented in all Districts of the country including all the Aspirational Districts.

Beneficiaries under PMJVK

- Communities notified as minority communities under the **National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992** will be taken as minority communities.
- Currently, **6 Minorities communities** have been notified as Minority Communities. These are - Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains.

3. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kaam Karyakram (PMKKK) renamed as Promotion of Prime Minister's Heritage (PM Vikas) Scheme (Dec. 16, 2022)

Prime Minister's Heritage (PM Vikas) Scheme

The Minister of Minority Affairs, **Smriti Zubin Irani** in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha on 15 December informed that the **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Ko Kaam Karyakram (PMKKK)** has now been named as **Pradhan Mantri Virasat Ka Samvardhan (PM VIKAS) Scheme**.

Important facts

- This integrated scheme amalgamates the five earlier schemes of the Ministry - **Seekho aur Kamao, Ustad, Hamari Dharohar, Nai Roshni and Nai Manzil**.
- The scheme has been approved by the cabinet for the period of **15th Finance Commission**.
- PM VIKAS aims to improve the livelihood of minorities, especially artisan communities, by using components of skill development, education, women leadership and entrepreneurship.
- These components complement each other in the ultimate objective of the scheme to enhance the income of the beneficiaries and provide assistance by facilitating credit and market linkages.

4. India successfully carries out trials of nuclear-capable "Agni-5 missile" (Dec. 16, 2022)

"Agni-5 missile"

India on 15 December successfully carried out the **night trials** of the **Agni-5 nuclear-capable ballistic missile**. The test comes days after a clash between Indian and Chinese troops in Arunachal Pradesh's **Tawang district**.

Important facts

- Agni 5 missile capable of striking targets at ranges up to **5,000 kilometres** with a very high degree of accuracy.
- The test was conducted to validate new technologies and equipment on the missile, which is now lighter than before.
- Defense sources said the test proved the capability of extending the range of the Agni 5 missile if required.
- The trial was aimed at enhancing the range of the Agni-5 missile if required.

About Agni 5 Missile

- Agni-5 is an ingeniously built advanced surface-to-surface ballistic missile developed under the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)**.
- It is a **fire-and-forget missile**, which cannot be stopped without an interceptor missile.
- The Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) is the brain-child of **Dr A P J Abdul Kalam**, who aimed at making the country self-sufficient in the field of missile technology.
- The program had five missiles **P-A-T-N-A, Prithvi, Agni, Trishul, Nag, and Akash**.

- It was aimed at boosting India's nuclear deterrence against China, which has missiles such as the **Dongfeng-41**, which have a range between **12,000-15,000 km**.
- The Agni 1 to 4 missiles have ranges from **700 km to 3,500 km** and they have already been deployed.

Agni Class of Missiles

- **Agni 1** : Range of 700-800 km.
- **Agni 2**: Range more than 2000 km.
- **Agni 3**: Range of more than 2,500 Km
- **Agni 4**: Range is more than 3,500 km.
- **Agni-5**: The longest of the Agni series, an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) with a range of over 5,000 km.
- **Agni-P (Prime)**: It is a canisterised missile with a range capability between 1,000 and 2,000 km. It will replace the Agni I missile.

5. US President Joe Biden signed gay marriage legislation (Dec. 15, 2022)

Joe Biden signed gay marriage legislation

United States (US) President **Joe Biden** signed **gay marriage law**. On the occasion, the President said that "the law that protects love strikes a chord against hate in all its forms".

Important facts

- This law establishes statutory authority for **same-sex and interracial marriages**.
- The House of Representatives passed the law on December 8 by a vote of 258-169-1.
- The new law officially repeals the **Marriage Act of 1996**, which defined marriage as between a man and a woman.
- In 2015, the **U.S. Supreme Court** in its decision legalized same-sex unions nationwide.
- States would not be required to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples if the court overturns its 2015 ruling. But they will be required to recognize marriages conducted elsewhere in the country.

Status of Same-Sex marriage around the world

- Same-sex marriage is the marriage of two people of the same gender.
- As of 2022, marriage between same-sex couples is legally recognized in **33 countries**, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the United States, etc.

- This does not usually include adoption rights, although most countries with same-sex marriage allow those couples to adopt jointly, as can other married couples.
- The first law providing for marriage equality between same-sex and opposite-sex couples was passed by the **Netherlands in 2000**.
- The right to marry is a fundamental right under **article 21**. However, same-sex marriage is not legalized in India.

6. Lok Sabha passes Constitution (ST) Order (Second Amendment) Bill, 2022 (Dec. 15, 2022)

Lok Sabha passes Constitution

The Lok Sabha on 15th December passed the **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Second Amendment) Bill, 2022**.

Important facts

- The Bill will amend the **Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order, 1950**, with respect to its application to **Tamil Nadu**.
- The Order lists the tribal communities deemed to be Scheduled Tribes in states and union territories.
- The bill includes **Narikoravan and Kurivikkaran communities** in the list of **Scheduled Tribes in Tamil Nadu**.
- The Bill includes the **Hattee community of Trans Giri area of Sirmour district** in the list of Scheduled Tribes in **Himachal Pradesh**.
- It also aims to amend the Scheduled Tribe order to recognize the **Gond community in Chandauli, Kushinagar, Sant Kabir Nagar and Sant Ravidas Nagar** districts of Uttar Pradesh from Scheduled Caste to **Scheduled Tribe**.

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8. UN ranks 'Namami Gange' project among world's top 10 initiatives (Dec. 15, 2022)

UN ranks 'Namami Gange' project among world's top 10

India's 'Namami Gange'- river Ganga rejuvenation project- has been recognised as one among **world's 10 most "ground-breaking" initiatives** for restoration of natural ecosystems, according to a report released during the **UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15).**

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has won the "**Public Water Agency of the Year**" award at the Global Water Awards, 2019 by Global Water Intelligence.

Important facts

- The award was received by **G Ashok Kumar**, Director General, Namami Gange, at the **15th Conference of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) in Montreal, Canada** on 14 December 2022.
- Namami Gange was selected from over 150 such initiatives from 70 countries across the globe.
- They were selected under the banner of the **United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**, a global movement coordinated by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- Recognized initiatives, including Namami Gange, will now be eligible to receive UN support, funding or technical expertise.

Other initiatives included in the World Restoration Flagship

- **Trinational Atlantic Forest Pact**, which aims to protect and restore the forest in Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina.
- **Abu Dhabi Marine Restoration project** that targets safeguarding the world's second-largest dugong population in Abu Dhabi.

- **Great Green Wall** for restoration to restore savannahs, grasslands and farms across Africa.
- **Multi-Country Mountain Initiative** based in Serbia, Kyrgyzstan, Uganda and Rwanda.
- **The Altyn Dala Conservation Initiative** in Kazakhstan to restore the steppe, semi-desert and desert ecosystems.
- **The Central American Dry Corridor**
- **Shan-Shui Initiative in China**

About Namami Gange

- It was approved as a '**Flagship Programme**' by the Central Government in **June 2014**.
- It was launched to serve the twin objectives of effective abatement of pollution and conservation and **rejuvenation of the national river Ganga**.
- It is being operated under the **Ministry of Water Resources**, Department of River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- The program is being implemented by the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** and its State Program Management Groups (SPMGs).

9. India gets Rafale's 36th and last aircraft from France (Dec. 15, 2022)

India gets Rafale's 36th and last aircraft from France

Rafale, the last of the **36 IAF Rafale aircraft**, has landed in New Delhi after refuelling by a UAE Air Force tanker aircraft after taking off from **France**.

Important facts

- With the landing of the last Rafale aircraft, the delivery of **36 Rafale fighter jets** to the country has been completed.
- The **first batch of five state-of-the-art Rafale fighter jets** arrived in India on **July 29, 2021**, nearly four years after India signed an inter-governmental agreement with France to procure 36 aircraft at a cost of around **Rs 60,000 crore**.
- Earlier, according to the deal, France had handed over 35 Rafale fighter jets to India.
- These jets are stationed at **Ambala, Haryana and Hashimara in West Bengal**.
- The 36th aircraft with **RB tail number** has been handed over to India by France and all its parts and other components have been replaced as it was being used for upgrading.

About Rafale aircraft

- It is a **French twin-engine multirole fighter aircraft** designed by **Dassault Aviation Company of France**.
- It was introduced in the **year 2001**.
- State-of-the-art technology has been used in it and it is a **4.5 generation fighter aircraft**.
- The Meteor missile, SCALP cruise missile and MICA missile system present in it make it very important from the point of view of security.
- It can fly at a speed of **2,222 kilometres per hour** and a **height of 50,000 feet**.
- Its length is about **15.27 meters** and it can carry **9,500 kg** of bombs and ammunition at a time.

10. Peru govt announces nationwide emergency amid fiery protests (Dec. 15, 2022)

Peru govt announces nationwide emergency amid fiery protests

The **Peruvian government** declared a nationwide state of **emergency** on 14 December amid raging protests.

Important facts

- Peru's Defense Minister removed **President Pedro Castillo** from office on 7 December by impeaching him. Due to which protests are going on in the country.
- Amid political turmoil, protests are taking place in the country demanding general elections. Meanwhile, **8 people have died** during the violent protests.
- Peru has gone through years of political turmoil that have seen corruption, repeated impeachment attempts on several leaders, and curtailment of presidential terms.

About Peru

- Peru is the **third largest country in South America**, after Brazil and Argentina.
- President: **Dina Boluarte**
- Capital: **Lima**
- Currency : **Nuevo Sol**
- Major Mountain Ranges: **Andes**
- Major Rivers: **Amazon, Ucayali, Madre de Dios**

