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1. Odisha CM expands 'Special Development Councils' in 14 Districts (May 17, 2023)

Special Development Councils

The Odisha government has expanded the **jurisdiction of Special Development Councils (SDCs)** from **nine to 23 districts** to improve the lives of **84 lakh tribal people**.

An overview of the news

- This extension signifies the government's commitment to ensuring the comprehensive development of indigenous communities residing in these districts.
- SDC is targeted intervention aims to uplift and improve the lives of the tribal communities residing in the state.
- The primary objective of extending the jurisdiction of the SDC is **to bring positive changes to the lives of the indigenous people in Odisha**.
- By implementing targeted interventions, the government aims to address issues related to **education, healthcare, infrastructure, livelihood, and overall socio-economic development** in these tribal areas.

Significance of Tribal Community in Odisha

- The tribal community holds great significance in Odisha, accounting for **22.8% of the state's population**.
- These indigenous populations have unique **cultural identities, traditional knowledge, and a deep connection** with their ancestral lands.
- Recognizing their contributions and ensuring their well-being is crucial for the overall progress and inclusivity of the state.

About Odisha

- Capital- **Bhubaneswar**
- Governor- **Ganeshi Lal**
- Chief Minister- **Naveen Patnaik**

2. Flood Relief Exercise 'Jal Rahat' in Assam (May 17, 2023)

Jal-Rahat

Indian Army's **Gajraj Corps**, along with other disaster management groups, conducted a joint flood relief drill, '**Exercise Jal Rahat**', at **Hagrama Bridge on Manas River in Assam** on 16th May.

An overview of the news

- Apart from Indian Army- **SSB, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA)** and Police representatives participated in the exercise.
- The event included coordination and rehearsal for rescue missions of people from inundated areas by joint efforts of expert teams of Army, NDRF and SDRF.

Purpose of "Jal Rahat" Exercise:

- To showcase the Indian Army's preparedness and capabilities in responding to **natural disasters, particularly floods**.
- To effectively coordinate relief efforts, rescue operations, and provide essential supplies and medical aid to the affected people in a timely manner.

Response to flood situation

- Assam is prone to annual floods due to **heavy rainfall and overflowing rivers**.
- The "Jal Rahat" exercise of the Indian Army demonstrated its **quick response to the flood situation**.
- It demonstrated the Army's expertise in conducting **rescue operations, evacuating stranded people and setting up temporary relief camps**.

Distribution of Essential Supplies

- As part of the exercise, the Indian Army ensured the distribution of essential supplies to the **flood-affected areas**.
- These supplies included **food, clean drinking water, medical aid**, and other necessary items to meet the immediate needs of the affected population.
- The army's efforts aimed to mitigate the hardships faced by the flood-affected communities.

About Assam State

- Chief Minister - **Himanta Biswa Sarma**
- Governor - **Jagdish Mukhi**
- Number of Districts - **33**
- Lok Sabha seats - **14**
- Rajya Sabha seats - **7**
- State Animal - **Indian Rhinoceros**
- State Bird - **White Winged Duck**

- National Parks – **Dibru-Saikhowa National Park, Kaziranga National Park, Manas National Park, Nameri National Park, Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park**

3. Inauguration of online education program 'Pahal' for rural children (May 16, 2023)

Pahal-for-rural-children

Chief secretary **Durga Shankar Mishra** inaugurated an **online rural education programme 'Pahal'** at **Government UP Sainik Inter College, Sarojini Nagar, Lucknow** on 15th May.

An overview of the news

- This programme has been **prepared by the department of secondary education in collaboration with IIT Kanpur.**
- The initiative aims **to provide educational opportunities to rural children** who have limited access to quality education.
- 'Pahal' is designed **to bridge the education gap between rural and urban areas.**
- Under this program, in the initial phase, **free online education will be provided in 10 government secondary schools** of the state.
- Through these classes, students of rural areas will be able to get the latest information related to science and mathematics.
- The Chief Secretary said that the online rural education initiative is a new and good beginning.

About Uttar Pradesh

- Uttar Pradesh is a state located in the **northern part of India.**
- It is the **most populous state** in India as well as the most populous subdivision in the world.
- The state was officially **established in 1950.**
- Chief Minister - **Yogi Adityanath**
- Capital - **Lucknow**
- Governor - **Anandiben Patel**
- Rajya Sabha - **31 seats**
- Lok Sabha - **80 seats**

4. Around 2,500 kg of methamphetamine worth around Rs 12,000 cr in Indian waters seized by NCB, Navy (May 15, 2023)

methamphetamine

A total of **2,500 kg of methamphetamine** worth about **Rs 12,000 crore** was **seized** from a **vessel by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)** and the **Indian Navy** in a joint operation in Indian waters off the **coast of Kerala**.

An Overview of the News

- The seized **methamphetamine** is believed to be the **biggest ever of its kind in India**.
- In this, maritime drug smuggling originating from **Afghanistan was targeted**.
- This is the third major seizure of NCB in drug smuggling through the southern route in the last year and a half.
- Recent shipments of methamphetamine from Afghanistan were to **India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives**.
- The drugs were transported on a "**mother ship**" that distributes narcotics to various boats along the **Makran coast**.

'Operation Samudragupt'

- A total of **3,200 kg of methamphetamine, 500 kg of heroin and 529 kg of hashish** have been seized so far as part of **Operation Samudragupt**.
- Previous seizures as part of Operation Samudragupt include the seizure of 529 kg of hashish, 221 kg of methamphetamine and 13 kg of heroin off the coast of Gujarat in February 2022.
- In October 2022, an Iranian boat was intercepted off the coast of Kerala, resulting in the seizure of 200 kg of high-grade heroin and the arrest of six Iranian drug smugglers.

Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB):

- It is a respected **central law enforcement and intelligence agency** operating in India.
- It functions under the **Ministry of Home Affairs**, which is a part of the Government of India, and is responsible for maintaining law and order in the country.
- One of the primary objectives of the NCB is to combat drug trafficking and use of illegal substances within Indian territory.
- The agency functions in accordance with the provisions laid down in the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, which is an important legislation to regulate and control drug-related offences.

Formation - **17 March 1986**

Headquarters - **New Delhi**

5. Coastal Road in Mumbai renamed after Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj (May 15, 2023)

Chief Minister **Eknath Shinde** recently **renamed the Coastal Road in Mumbai** to the new name **Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj**.

An Overview of the News

- In the memory of **Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj**, on his **366th birth anniversary**, a grand ceremony was organised for the first time at the **Gateway of India**.
- As an additional tribute, **Chief Minister Eknath Shinde** announced plans to install a grand statue of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj along the Coastal Highway.

About Maharashtra

- It is a state located in the **western part of India** and covers a significant part of the **Deccan Plateau**.
- Chief Minister - **Eknath Shinde**
- Governor - **Ramesh Bais**
- Official Animal - **Indian giant squirrel**
- Official Bird - **Yellow-footed Green Pigeon**
- Official Dance - **Lavani**

6. Allahabad High Court orders carbon dating of 'Shivling' at Gyanvapi (May 14, 2023)

The **Allahabad High Court** has recently ordered the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** to conduct a **carbon dating test** of a '**Shivling**' located inside the **Gyanvapi Mosque in Varanasi, India**.

An overview of the news

- The court order came in response to a petition filed by a group of Hindu activists, which claimed that the mosque was built on the **site of a Hindu temple**.
- Activists argued that the '**Shivling**' inside the mosque was proof of the presence of a **pre-existing Hindu temple at the site**.
- The carbon dating test will be carried out by a team of experts from the **Physical Research Laboratory in Ahmedabad, Gujarat**.
- The court has given this order so that it can be determined whether there is any evidence of a pre-existing temple at the site.

- Gyanvapi Mosque is a **17th-century mosque** located in **Varanasi, one of the holiest cities in India.**

What is Carbon dating?

- Carbon dating is a **scientific technique** used to determine the age of organic materials by measuring the amount of **carbon-14 present in a sample.**
- Carbon-14 is a radioactive isotope of carbon that is produced in the **upper atmosphere** when cosmic rays interact with nitrogen atoms.
- Carbon-14 is absorbed by plants and animals through **photosynthesis and consumption**, and its concentration in living organisms is nearly constant.
- When an organism dies, it stops **absorbing carbon-14**, and the carbon-14 in its body begins to **decay at a predictable rate.**
- By measuring the amount of carbon-14 remaining in a sample, **scientists can calculate how long the organism has been dead.**
- Carbon dating can be used to determine the age of material approximately **50,000 years old.**
- Carbon dating is a widely used technique in **archaeology, geology and other fields.**
- Carbon dating is an important tool for understanding the history of life on Earth and the development of human civilizations, and has contributed to important discoveries in fields such as **evolutionary biology, paleontology, and anthropology.**

7. Bhopal joins global movement on SDGs (May 13, 2023)

Bhopal becomes the first city in India to adopt the localisation of the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDG).

An overview of the news

- India's Bhopal city has conducted **India's first city-level Voluntary Local Review (VLR)** of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).**
- Bhopal has launched '**Agenda for Action: Sustainable Urban Transformation in Bhopal**', which was unveiled by Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister **Shivraj Singh Chouhan.**
- In 2015, all **193 UN member states** adopted "**Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**", which included **17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets**, as a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.
- Member countries report on their progress towards achieving the goals through **Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs)** to the **United Nations High-Level Political Forum (HLPF).**

What is VLR?

- A Voluntary Local Review (VLR) is a powerful tool that enables cities and regions to localize the SDGs and report their progress towards achieving them.

Bhopal's VLR

- VLR enables cities and regions to localize the Sustainable Development Goals and report on their progress.
- Bhopal's VLR is the result of a collective collaboration of Bhopal Municipal Corporation, **UN-Habitat and over 23 local stakeholders** to demonstrate the city's aspirations for a sustainable and inclusive urban transformation.
- Bhopal's VLR incorporated a mix of quantitative and qualitative approaches to the SDG review, including a qualitative mapping of 56 developmental projects across the three pillars of People, Planet and Prosperity, and an in-depth quantitative review of SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).
- VLRs have emerged as a powerful tool at the forefront of local action.
- New York City became the first city in 2018 to submit its voluntary local review to the HLPF of the United Nations.
- By 2021, some **33 countries had publicly available 114 VLRs or similar review documents**.

United Nations sustainable development goals (SDG)

- The United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs) were adopted by all 193 member states **in 2015** as a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity.
- There are 17 SDGs and 169 targets, which aim to eradicate poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all.
- The SDGs cover a range of areas such as health, education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, sustainable cities and communities, climate action, and more.
- The member states report their progress towards the achievement of the SDGs through a Voluntary National Review (VNR) to UN's High Level Political Forum (HLPF).
- Cities and regions have a pivotal role to play in the achievement of Agenda 2030, as at least 60% of the 169 targets could not possibly be achieved without their involvement.

8. Thiruvananthapuram to host fifth Global Ayurveda Festival in December (May 13, 2023)

The **fifth edition** of the **Global Ayurveda Festival (GAF 2023)** will take place in **Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala** from **December 1 to December 5, 2023**.

An overview of the news

- The event is being organized by the **Center for Innovation in Science and Social Action (CISSA)** in collaboration with the **Ministry of AYUSH, Government of Kerala and several Ayurveda associations.**
- Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs, **V Muraleedharan** is the **chairman of the organizing committee** of the event.
- The event will focus on showcasing the potential of Ayurveda in addressing the health challenges of the present day world and setting up a platform for **global networking of Ayurveda practitioners and stakeholders.**
- The theme of GAF 2023 is "**Emerging Challenges in Healthcare and a Resurgent Ayurveda**".
- Top scientists including Nobel laureates and **7,500 delegates from 75 countries** are expected to participate in the event.
- The event will also explore how to effectively present Ayurveda in the tourism sector, which can contribute immensely to the development of Kerala.

About Global Ayurveda Festival

- The Global Ayurveda Festival (GAF) is a **biennial event** that aims to showcase the **potential of Ayurveda as a holistic system of medicine.**
- The festival provides a **platform for global networking of Ayurveda practitioners and stakeholders.**
- The festival includes **presentations of research papers, poster sessions, and exhibitions of Ayurvedic medicines, herbal products,** and wellness services.

9. Millet Festival in Dehradun (May 13, 2023)

In **Uttarakhand**, a four-day **millet festival (Shri Anna Mahotsav)** began on May 13 in **Dehradun** to create public awareness about the health benefits of millets and deliberate on the state's potential to grow crops in this category.

An overview of the news

- Agriculture ministers, scientists and farmers of other states including Union Agriculture Minister **Narendra Tomar** participated in the Anna Mahotsav.
- The four-day deliberations aimed at attracting more and more people **towards millet production**, which has been set to double by 2025.
- The produce of millet will be discussed in the festival and through this festival the farmers of the state will be encouraged to cultivate millet.
- The Uttarakhand state government has made a provision of **Rs 73 crore for the promotion of millets in this financial year.**

- The aim of the government is that farmers produce more coarse grains so that their economy can be strengthened.
- On this occasion, 134 stalls will be set up under the Mahotsav by the Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Universities and other institutions related to agricultural research.

International Year of Millet (IYOM)-2023

- The **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** adopted India's resolution and declared 2023 as the **International Year of millets** in **March 2021**.
- India's proposal received the **support of 72 countries**.
- In 2021, NITI Aayog signed a letter of intent with the **United Nations World Food Program (WFP)**.
- The partnership focuses on mainstreaming millets and helping India take a global lead in **promoting its health benefits**.
- The objective of this partnership is to build resilient livelihoods for smallholder farmers and to build adaptability to climate change and changing food systems.

10. Supreme Court rules in favour of Delhi Govt in tussle with Centre (May 12, 2023)

The **Supreme Court** on May 11 **ruled unanimously in favour of the Delhi government** on the issue of who controls the **bureaucracy in the national capital**.

An overview of the news

- **A 5-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice DY Chandrachud** held that in Delhi (National Capital Territory), all powers relating to services and administration, except in areas outside the legislative powers, would **rest with the elected government**.
- However, the authority of **police, public order and land will remain with the Centre**.
- The court said that this decision would uphold the **basic structure of federalism and democracy**.

Background of the case

- A five-judge constitution bench of the Supreme Court was hearing the dispute between the **Delhi government and the central government**.
- The dispute was over matters relating to **transfer and control over the overall functioning of administrative services in the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi**.

- Administrative services include **appointments and transfers in the national capital.**
- In 2018, a five-judge constitution bench headed by then **Chief Justice Dipak Misra** laid down broad principles governing relations between Delhi and the Center and ruled in favor of the Delhi government on most issues.
 - However, the important issue of service was left unresolved after two judges gave a split verdict in 2019.
 - After this the issue was referred to a three-judge constitution bench and then to a five-judge constitution bench, which has now settled it.

Highlights of the court verdict

- A five-judge Supreme Court bench unanimously **ruled in favor of the Delhi government** on the issue of who has control over the bureaucracy in the national capital.
- Earlier, the bureaucracy was controlled by the **Lieutenant Governor, the Chief Secretary and the Secretary of the Services Department.**
- The Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the **LG cannot have comprehensive administrative powers on all issues related to Delhi.**
- The LG's powers do not give him the right to interfere with the legislative powers of the Delhi Assembly and the elected government.
- The **posting and transfer of officers will be with the Delhi government.**
- The **elected government should have the right to administrative service.**
- The **Lieutenant Governor will have to follow the advice of the government.**
- The authority of **police, public order and land will remain with the center.**