

Current Affairs search results for tag: national-news

1. Central African Republic adopted the cryptocurrency as legal currency (April 29, 2022)

The Central African Republic has recognized the world's largest and most popular cryptocurrency, bitcoin as its legal currency.

- It became the second country in the world and the first country in the continent of Africa to legalise bitcoin.
- In 2021, El Salvador became the first country in the world to legalise bitcoin.
- Now people there can pay tax in crypto currency through government recognized platforms.
- The Central African Republic is one of six countries in Africa that use the Central African CFA franc.
- The Central African CFA franc is a regional currency issued by the Bank of Central African States (BEAC).
- **About Central African Republic -**
- The Central African Republic is a landlocked country located in Central Africa.
- Despite being rich in diamonds, gold, oil, uranium, the Central African Republic is today counted among the poorest countries.
- It became independent from France in 1960.
- Capital- Bangui
- President- François Bozize
- Prime Minister- Faustin-Archange Touadera

2. Russia Withdraws From UN World Tourism Organisation (April 29, 2022)

The Secretary-General of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation Zurab Pololikashvili announced that Russia has decided to withdraw from the UNWTO.

- The UNWTO announced earlier in March that it wanted to suspend Russia over the Russia-Ukraine conflict.
- The UNWTO had previously described the Russian invasion of Ukraine as inconsistent with the United Nations Charter and against the fundamental purpose of the UNWTO.
- Russia has decided to withdraw from the organisation even before the United Nations World Tourism Organisation's vote in the UN on 27 April 2022.
- This is the first time the UNWTO has met to discuss the suspension of one of its member states.
- **About United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) -**

- Formation- 1 November 1975
- Headquarters- Madrid, Spain
- Secretary General- Zurab Pololikashvili
- Member Countries- 160
- So far, 17 member states have withdrawn from the organisation at various times.
- UNWTO is a United Nations organisation that promotes tourism to promote economic growth, environmental sustainability and inclusive growth.

3. Centre keen on lifting AFSPA from northeast (April 29, 2022)

PM Narendra Modi said that AFSPA may be partially withdrawn from Assam, Manipur and Nagaland (from 1st April) due to peaceful conditions since 2014.

- AFSPA will now be applicable only in 31 districts and partially in 12 districts in four states of Northeast Assam, Nagaland, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.
- These four states together have 90 districts.
- AFSPA was withdrawn completely in Meghalaya in 2018, Tripura in 2015 and Mizoram in the 1980s.

• What is AFSPA?

- Armed Forces Special Powers Act, (AFSPA), gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in "disturbed areas."
- It came into force decades ago in the context of insurgency in the northeastern states.
- It provides "special powers" to the army, air force and central paramilitary forces.
- The Act provides that if "reasonable suspicion exists", the armed forces may also arrest any person without warrant; May enter or search premises without warrant and prohibit possession of firearms.
- AFSPA is presently in force in areas falling under the jurisdiction of 3 districts of Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and 8 police stations of Arunachal Pradesh bordering Assam.

• What are the Disturbed Areas?

- A disturbed area means which is declared by notification under Section 3 of the AFSPA.
- A region may be disturbed because of differences or disputes between members of different, racial, religious, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- The Central Government or the Governor of the State or administrator of the Union Territory have power to declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.

4. MSME Ministry launches MSME Sustainable Certification Scheme (ZED) (April 29, 2022)

Union Minister for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Narayan Rane launched the MSME Sustainable (ZED) Certification Scheme.

- The scheme is a comprehensive campaign to motivate and encourage MSMEs for ZED certification by adopting Zero Defect Zero Impact (ZED) practices and encouraging them to become MSME champions.
- ZED has the potential to become a national movement and aims to provide a roadmap for global competitiveness for India's MSMEs.
- Not only will ZED strive to improve productivity and performance, but it has the potential to change the mindset of manufacturers and make them more environmentally conscious.
- Through this scheme MSMEs can reduce wastage to a great extent, increase productivity, environmental awareness, save energy, make optimum use of natural resources and expand their markets.
- **Subsidy Under the Scheme**
- Under the Scheme, MSMEs will get subsidy as per the following structure, on the cost of ZED certification:

1. Micro Enterprises: 80%
2. Small Enterprises: 60%
3. Medium Enterprises: 50%

- **Additional subsidy**

- There will be an additional 10% subsidy for MSMEs owned by women/SC/ST entrepreneurs in NER/Himalayan/LWE/Island areas/Aspirational Districts.
- In addition to above, there will be an additional subsidy of 5% for MSMEs which are also a part of the SFURTI OR Micro & Small Enterprises - Cluster Development Programme (MSE-CDP) of the Ministry.
- Further, a limited purpose joining reward of Rs 10,000/- will be offered to each MSME once they take the ZED Pledge

- **Role of Ministry of MSME**

- It works to promote, develop and support MSMEs in all regions and states.
- The Ministry runs more than 20 different schemes such as PMEGP, SFUTI, MSE-CDP, RAMP Scheme, ATI, Udyam Registration, etc.
- These schemes offer support and strength in the areas of access to finance, market linkages, technology upgradation, capacity building, innovation/ideation and industrial infrastructure development etc.

5. Atal Tunnel receives IBC Best Infrastructure Project award (April 29, 2022)

The Atal Tunnel, built by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO), received the 'Best Infrastructure Project' award from the Indian Building Congress (IBC).

- Director General BRO, Lt Gen Rajeev Choudhary received the award during the 25th Annual Conference of IBC for the outstanding achievement of BRO in the construction of this tunnel connecting Manali to Lahaul-Spiti Valley.

• About Atal Tunnel

- The 9.02 km long Atal Tunnel is the longest highway tunnel globally and connects Manali with Lahaul-Spiti Valley throughout the year.
- It provides a strategic advantage to the armed forces by providing an alternate link to the crucial Ladakh region.
- It has also been a boon to the residents of Lahaul and Spiti district in Himachal Pradesh.
- This tunnel, built using the New Austrian Tunnelling Method (NATM), was dedicated to the nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on October 03, 2020.
- It is equipped with a semi-transverse ventilation system, where large fans circulate air separately throughout the tunnel.
- An emergency tunnel has been integrated into the tunnel cross-section under the main carriageway for evacuation during emergencies.
- Fire inside the tunnel will be controlled within an area of 200 metres and fire hydrants will be provided at specific locations throughout the tunnel.
- Pollution sensors continuously monitor the air quality in the tunnel and if the air quality in the tunnel is below the desired level, fresh air is injected into the tunnel through two heavy fans on each side of the tunnel.

6. Labour and Employment Ministry's 2021 third-quarter survey finds increase of 4 lakh jobs (April 28, 2022)

According to the Ministry of Labour and Employment's Third Quarter Employment Survey (QES) report, over four lakh jobs were created in nine selected sectors in October-December 2021 in firms with 10 or more workers.

- The Ministry's survey, which covered 10,834 units in the third round, found employment had increased from 3.10 crore in July-September 2021 to 3.145 crore in the next quarter.
- The survey covered construction, manufacturing, trade, transportation, education, health, housing and restaurants, IT/BPO and financial services.
- It creates 85% jobs in units with 10 or more workers.
- The survey does not cover units established after 2013-2014.

- The manufacturing sector accounted for 39% of the units, followed by education (22%).
- Overall, 23.55% units provided on-the-job training to workers, while the number was higher in health sector units (34.87%).
- At the same time, the nine sectors reported 1.85 lakh vacancies, with 81,846 in manufacturing, 47,076 in health and 39,014 in education.
- The report said that 86.5% of the vacancies were "in the process of filling".
- Around 4% of the vacancies could not be filled due to "non-availability of requisite skilled workers".

7. SC fixes final hearing on Sedition Law (April 28, 2022)

Supreme Court to give final hearing on May 5 on petitions challenging the constitutional validity of the offence of sedition under Section 124A of IPC.

- A three-member bench of CJI NV Ramana has fixed May 5 for hearing all the petitions related to this case together.
- Attorney General K.K. Venugopal is assisting the court in the case in the capacity of his constitutional office.
- The CJI had said sedition or Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code was prone to misuse by the government.

• Sedition Law

- Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code provides for the punishment of sedition.
- The Indian Penal Code (IPC) was enacted in 1860 during the British Raj.
- The then British government in India feared that religious preachers from the Indian subcontinent would wage war against the government.
- Throughout the British Raj, this section was used to suppress activists in favour of national independence, including Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi, both found guilty and imprisoned.
- In 1973, sedition was made a cognizable offence for the first time in India during the tenure of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
- A cognizable offence means arrest without a warrant.

• Constitutional validity

- After independence, it was found unconstitutional by two high courts, as it violates freedom of expression.
- The Supreme Court upheld its validity in Kedar Nath Singh v State of Bihar (1962).

8. Govt approves Rs 60,939 crore subsidy for phosphate-based fertilisers (April 28, 2022)

The Union Cabinet has approved nutrient based subsidy rates for Phosphatic and Potash, P&K fertilisers for Kharif season-2022.

- The subsidy will cover the period to September 2022.
- India provided a subsidy of 571.5 billion rupees for the previous 12 month period ending March 31.
- A subsidy of Rs 2,501 will continue to be available at Rs 1,350 for every 50 kg bag of crop nutrient diammonium phosphate in local markets.
- The decision to increase fertiliser subsidies was taken after rising crop nutrient prices in global markets, mainly due to supply chain disruptions after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, increased freight traffic and rising energy costs.
- **Background**
 - Government is providing Urea and 25 grade P&K fertilisers at subsidised prices to the farmers through fertiliser manufacturers/importers.
 - The subsidy on P&K fertilisers is being governed by the NBS Scheme.
 - In line with its farmer friendly approach, the Government is committed to ensure the availability of P&K fertilisers to the farmers at affordable prices.

9. Digital India RISC-V Microprocessor (DIR-V) Program launched (April 28, 2022)

The Electronics and Information Technology ministry has launched the Digital India RISC-V Microprocessor (DIR-V) programme.

- It aims to enable manufacturing of microprocessors for the world in India and achieve industry-grade silicon and design by December 2023.
- IIT Madras Director Professor V Kamakoti will be the Chief Architect of DIRV-programme while S Krishnakumar Rao of C-DAC will be the Program Manager.
- DIR-V program will see partnerships between Startups, Academia and Multinationals, to make India not only a RISC-V Talent Hub for the World but also supplier of RISC-V System on Chips for Servers, Mobile devices, Automotive and Microcontrollers across the globe.
- The Ministry unveiled India's Strategic Roadmap for Semiconductor Design and Innovation to catalyse the semiconductor ecosystem along with the blueprint of the roadmap for the design and implementation of the DIR-V programme.

10. India Tops The World In Real-Time Payment Volumes In 2021 (April 28, 2022)

According to the ACI Worldwide Report on Real-time Transactions, India's real-time transactions are ranked first in the world.

- In the year 2021, India's real-time transactions have grown to 48.6 billion.
- China ranks second after India with 18 billion real time transactions.
- India's transaction volume is more than seven times that of the US, UK, Canada, Germany and France combined (7.5 billion).
- Brazil, Thailand and South Korea lag behind India and China in terms of real-time transactions of 8.7 billion, 9.7 billion and 7.4 billion respectively.
- This research has found that more than half (52.71 percent) of consumers worldwide use mobile wallets.
- Real-time payment transactions worldwide crossed 118.3 billion in the year 2021, a growth of 64.5% on a year-on-year basis.
- **Reason to increase in real-time transactions**
- The rise in the use of digital payments during the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the growth of QR code payments and UPI-based mobile payment apps among merchants, propelled real-time payments into 2021.
- Consumers are moving from cash to digital real-time payment methods, which means that the share of real-time payments in total payment volume will exceed 70% in 2026.