

Current Affairs search results for tag: national

1. India's first indigenously built Hydrogen Fuel Cell bus launched in Pune (Aug. 22, 2022)

Union Minister of State, Science and Technology Jitendra Singh on 21 August launched "India's first indigenously developed hydrogen fuel cell bus" in Pune.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The bus is developed by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and private firm KPIT Limited.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Hydrogen Vision' is crucial for India to ensure self-reliance.
- PM's 'Hydrogen Vision' means affordable and accessible clean energy, meeting climate change goals, and creating new entrepreneurs and jobs.
- The central government is going to start operating hydrogen-powered buses on a pilot basis in the Leh region of Ladakh.

What is a hydrogen fuel cell ?

- The hydrogen fuel cell uses hydrogen and atmospheric air to generate electricity, producing only heat and water in the process.
- The hydrogen fuel cells on the bus combine hydrogen and oxygen atoms to generate electricity.
- The two gases i.e. hydrogen and oxygen react in an electrochemical cell, similar to a conventional battery cell, to produce electricity, water, and a small amount of heat.
- This electricity is used by electric motors to propel the vehicle.
- Hydrogen fuel cells continue to produce electricity as long as there is a supply of hydrogen.
- Like a conventional cell, a fuel cell consists of an anode (negative electrode) and a cathode (positive electrode) around an electrolyte.

Advantages of Hydrogen Fuel Cell :

- They produce no tailpipe emissions. They emit only water vapour and warm air.
- 'Tailpipe' emission standards specify the maximum amount of pollutants allowed in the exhaust gases from an internal combustion engine.
- They are more efficient than internal combustion engine vehicles.
- It is more practical than battery-powered electric vehicles.

- Hydrogen can be refilled in a fuel cell vehicle within minutes.
- Hydrogen-powered vehicles provide an excellent means to eliminate road emissions.

2. US announces 775 million dollars additional military assistance for Ukraine (Aug. 20, 2022)

On August 19, the United States government announced additional military aid of up to \$775 million for Ukraine.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- This is the 19th Presidential Drawdown Authority (PDA) package that the US Department of Defence has provided to Ukraine since August 2021.
- The USA will provide Ukraine with ScanEagle surveillance drones, mine-resistant vehicles, anti-armor rounds and howitzers to help the Ukrainian military retaliate against Russian invaders.
- The US sent eight HIMARS to Ukraine - which significantly strengthened Ukraine's defence against Russian weapons depots.
- The US has promised to send four more HIMARS.
- In the context of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the US is helping Ukraine's military by providing them with weapons to strengthen it.
- The latest aid comes as Russia's attack on Ukraine turns six months old.

HIMARS — a key weapon against Russia :

- The US-made High Mobility Artillery Rocket System is known as HIMARS.
- The M142 HIMARS system (High Mobility Artillery Rocket System) is a modernized, lighter and more agile wheel-mounted missile for US and allied forces.
- The use of HIMARS has been effective in deterring Russian military positions.
- It can hit targets up to 70 kilometres away.
- Ukrainian troops can deploy this wheeled, high-tech lightweight rocket launcher outside the range of most Russian artillery.

US' military aid to Ukraine :

- This military assistance forms part of a long history of US support to Ukraine.
- On 24 February this year, Moscow launched an invasion of Ukraine.
- The United States has committed about \$9.8 billion in security assistance to Ukraine.

Since 2014, the United States has given Ukraine more than \$11.8 billion in security aid.

3. India's first electric double-decker bus unveiled in Mumbai (Aug. 20, 2022)

Union minister for road transport and highways Nitin Gadkari on 18 August unveiled India's first electric double-decker air-conditioned bus in Mumbai.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport (BEST) introduced the first of its newly acquired electric double-decker air-conditioned bus.
- This electric double-decker bus will be the world's first - semi-low floor, air-conditioned, electric double-decker with wide doors on the rear overhang and a ladder at the rear.
- The double-decker electric bus is manufactured by Switch Mobility, the electric vehicle arm of Ashok Leyland.
- The company has signed a contract with BEST for the supply of 900 electric buses in various phases.
- Of these, 50% buses are expected to arrive by March 2023 and the remaining 50 per cent after that.
- This initiative upholds the vision of a self-reliant India and provides sustainable and cost-effective solutions.
- Compared to a single-decker bus, the number of passengers sitting in it can be almost double.

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5. 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Canada (Aug. 20, 2022)

An Indian parliamentary delegation led by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla is participating in the 65th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPA) in Halifax, Canada.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- The conference is being held in Halifax, Canada from **20-26 August**.
- The delegation included Anurag Sharma, MP (Lok Sabha) and CPA executive committee member, Sunita Duggal, MP (Lok Sabha) and member of CWP steering committee, Neeraj Shekhar, MP (Rajya Sabha), Santosh Kumar, MP (Lok Sabha), Anubhav Mohanty, MP (Lok Sabha), Dr. Kanimozhi NVN Somu, MP (Rajya Sabha) and Utpal Kumar Singh, General Secretary, Lok Sabha.
- The conference will also be attended by 23 Presiding Officers of India and 16 Secretaries of State Legislatures who are also members of the CPA.
- Eight workshops on various topics will be organized during the conference.
- The Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla will participate as a panellist in the Workshop 'C' titled **"A People's Parliament : Accessibility through Innovation"**.
- The Speaker will also interact with his counterparts from other Commonwealth countries to discuss matters of mutual interest and parliamentary cooperation.

About Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) :

- The conference is the largest gathering of Commonwealth Parliamentarians who come together to discuss and debate major global political issues and developments.
- Between 1948 and 1959, this conference was held biennially, since 1961 it has been held annually.
- Due to COVID-19 global pandemic, the Conference has not been held since 2019.
- The 64th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) was held in Uganda (2019).

Members of the Commonwealth of Nations :

- The head of the Commonwealth is the Queen of Great Britain Elizabeth II.

- He received this title as a result of elections following the resignation of his father.
- The title of head cannot be inherited, so the new head of the Commonwealth of Nations is elected by voting at each meeting.
- The Commonwealth comprises 54 countries of the world in all 6 continents.
- The members have a total population of 2.1 billion, which is about a third of the world's population.
- Of its total population, 1.17 billion live in India.
- After India, the next largest Commonwealth countries by population are Pakistan (176 million), Bangladesh (156 million), Nigeria (149 million).
- The land area of the Commonwealth of Nations accounts for about 21% of the total world land area.
- The largest Commonwealth nations by area are Canada, Australia and India.

6. Centre bars 13 states from power exchange over dues (Aug. 20, 2022)

Power System Operation Corporation (POSOCO), the national grid operator under the Ministry of Power, has barred 12 states and one Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir from buying/selling electricity due to non-payment of dues.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- These states include Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, Manipur and Mizoram.
- This is the first time that the grid operator has invoked the Electricity (Delay Payment Surcharge and Related Matters) Rules, 2022, to not allow discoms to buy power from alternative short-term sources.
- The total outstanding dues of non-payment discoms is Rs 5,000 crore, of which Telangana has the highest dues of Rs 1,380 crore.
- Under the new Late Payment Surcharge (LPS) rules, it will be implemented from August 19.
- As per the LPS rule, if the discoms do not clear the pending dues to Genco within seven months, their power exchange is suspended.

Power System Operation Corporation (POSOCO) :

- It is a wholly owned Government of India Enterprise under the Ministry of Power, Gov of India.

- Earlier it was a wholly owned subsidiary of Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID).
- It was set up in March 2009 to handle the power management functions of PGCIL.
- It is responsible for ensuring the integrated operation of the grid in a reliable, efficient and safe manner.
- It consists of 5 Regional Load Despatch Centers and one National Load Despatch Center (NLDC).

7. India's first portal on arrested narco offenders (Aug. 19, 2022)

India's first portal named 'NIDAAN', a first-of-its kind database on arrested narco offenders ' gets operational.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

About NIDAAN Portal :

- **NIDAAN or the National Integrated Database on Arrested Narco-offenders** - has been developed by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).
- It is part of the Narcotics Coordination Mechanism (NCORD) portal which was launched by Union Home Minister Amit Shah during the National Conference on 'Drug Trafficking and National Security' in Chandigarh on July 30.
- The platform gets its data from ICJS (Inter-operable Criminal Justice System) and e-Jail (a cloud-based application) repositories.
- It is planned to be integrated with the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS) in future.
- ICJS, an initiative of the Supreme Court's e-committee, was created to enable seamless transfer of data and information between various pillars of the criminal justice system such as courts, police, prisons and forensic science laboratories.

Significance of the Portal :

- It is a one stop solution for all drug related data of offenders.
- It will help the investigating agencies as an effective tool for linking together various aspects during investigation of drug cases.
- This will enhance the capacity of all law enforcement agencies working against drug offences.
- It hosts data about the accused who have been arrested for drug offences.

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9. Over one lakh villages across the country turned ODF plus (Aug. 19, 2022)

According to Jal Shakti Ministry Over one lakh villages have declared themselves as open defecation-free (ODF) Plus.

IMPORTANT FACTS -

- These villages maintain their ODF status and have systems in place for solid and liquid waste management.
- They are also working towards making their villages clean, green and healthy.

- The Swachh Bharat Mission reinforces the government's commitment to promoting rural sanitation and improving the quality of life of its citizens.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi started the Swachh Bharat Mission with the aim of making the country open defecation free.
- Rural India has become open defecation free 11 years ahead of the SDG-6 target set by the United Nations.

The top five performing states :

- These states are Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh.
- In these states the maximum number of villages have been declared as ODF Plus.

What are ODF Plus Villages ?

- **'Open Defecation Free' (ODF)** is a term used to describe communities that are using toilets instead of open defecation.
- A village that maintains Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, ensures solid and liquid waste management and is visually clean is called **"ODF Plus Village"**.
- Toilet facilities should be ensured in all households, primary schools, panchayat houses and Anganwadi centers in these villages.
- At least 80% of households should manage their solid and liquid waste effectively and have minimum litter and minimum stagnant water.
- ODF Plus villages have been divided into three categories -Aspiring, Rising and Model.

About the Swachh Bharat Mission :

- Launched - on 2nd October 2014
- Launched by - Prime Minister Narendra Modi
- Aims - to achieve the vision of a 'Clean India' by 2nd October 2019.
- Slogan - One step towards cleanliness
- It is a restructured version of the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan launched in 2009.
- The first phase of the Swachh Bharat Mission lasted till October 2019.
- Phase 2 is being implemented between 2020-21 and 2024-25.

10. Government launches Online Marketplace feature "Aqua Bazar" in "Matsya Setu" app (Aug. 19, 2022)

Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Parshottam Rupala launched the Online Market Place feature "Aqua Bazar" in the "Matsya

Setu” mobile app on 19 August 22 during the 9th general body meeting of the National Fisheries Development Board, Hyderabad.

IMPORTANT FACTS -***What is Aqua Bazar App ?***

- The app is developed by the ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (ICAR-CIFA), Bhubaneswar.
- It has been developed with funding from National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad through Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMSY).
- It will assist fish farmers and stakeholders in locating fish seeds, feed and medicines as well as essential services for the fisheries sector.
- Farmers will also be able to list table-sized fish for sale.
- It aims to connect all the stakeholders in the aquaculture sector.

National Fisheries Development Board :

- It was established in 2006 as an autonomous body.
- It works under the Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
- It aims to increase fish production and productivity in the country and coordinate fisheries development in an integrated and holistic manner.