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1. Cabinet approves Introduction of National Research Foundation Bill, 2023 (June 29, 2023)

Cabinet-approves-ratification-of-HQA-between-India-and-CDRI

The **Union Cabinet** on 28th June under the leadership of Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**, has granted approval for the introduction of the **National Research Foundation (NRF) Bill, 2023** in the Parliament.

An overview of the news

- This bill will facilitate the **establishment of NRF**, which will play a pivotal role in nurturing and advancing **Research and Development (R&D)** efforts and fostering a culture of research and innovation across universities, colleges, research institutions, and R&D laboratories in India.
- The key objective of NRF is to **create a policy framework and regulatory processes** that stimulate collaboration and increased investment by industries in R&D endeavors.
- Once the bill is approved by Parliament, NRF will be established as an **apex body**, aligning with the recommendations outlined in the **National Education Policy (NEP)**.
- The estimated total cost for NRF's operations over a span of **five years (2023-28)** is projected to be **Rs 50,000 crore**.

Administrative responsibilities of NRF

- The administrative responsibilities of NRF will be overseen by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**.
- A distinguished Governing Board, comprising renowned researchers and professionals from various disciplines, will govern the NRF.
- The **Prime Minister will serve as the ex-officio President of the Board**, while the **Union Minister of Science & Technology and Union Minister of Education** will act as the **ex-officio Vice-Presidents**.
- Additionally, an Executive Council, chaired by the **Principal Scientific Adviser** to the Government of India, will govern NRF's day-to-day operations.

Functions of NRF

- NRF will focus on fostering collaborations among **academia, industry, government departments, and research institutions**.
- It will establish an interface mechanism to encourage active participation and contribution from industries and state governments, in addition to scientific and line ministries.

- Moreover, the bill will entail the **repeal of the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), established in 2008** through an act of Parliament.
- This legislative move highlights the government's commitment to **promoting research, development, and innovation in India.**

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3. Cabinet approves ratification of HQA between India and CDRI (June 29, 2023)

Cabinet approves ratification of HQA between India and CDRI

Cabinet approves ratification of the Headquarters Agreement (HQA) between India and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

An Overview of the News

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi approved the ratification of the **Headquarters Agreement (HQA)** between the **Government of India (GoI)** and the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) signed on August 22, 2022.**
- Headquarters grants **exemptions, immunities and privileges to CDRI.**
- This gives CDRI an **independent and international legal personality.**

Launch and Objectives of CDRI

- The CDRI was launched by the Prime Minister of India during the **United Nations Climate Action Summit on September 23, 2019.**
- CDRI is a major **global initiative aimed at climate change and disaster resilience.**

CDRI setup and support

- The cabinet approved the setting up of **CDRI on August 28, 2019.**
- The Subsidiary Secretariat of CDRI is located in **New Delhi.**
- Government of India provides financial assistance of **Rs 480 crore to CDRI over a period of 5 years (2019-20 to 2023-24).**

Recognition of CDRI as an International Organization

- On **June 29, 2022, the cabinet approved** the recognition of CDRI as an **international organization.**

- The Headquarters Agreement (HQA) facilitates these benefits under the **United Nations (P&I) Act, 1947**.

CDRI's Global Partnership and Objectives

- CDRI is a global partnership that includes **national governments, United Nations agencies, multilateral development banks, private sector organizations, academic institutions, and knowledge centers**.
- CDRI aims **to promote the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks**.
- Its objective is **to ensure sustainable development**.

Membership and expansion of CDRI

- CDRI has attracted **31 countries, 6 international organizations and 2 private sector organizations as members**.
- Membership includes economically advanced countries, developing countries and countries vulnerable to climate change and disasters.
- CDRI is continuously expanding its membership to include various countries.

4. 17th Indian Cooperative Congress (June 29, 2023)

17th-Indian-Cooperative-Congress

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** will inaugurate the **17th Indian Cooperative Congress (ICC)** on the 1st July at **Pragati Maidan in New Delhi**.

An overview of the news

- The **National Cooperative Union of India (NCUI)** is organizing the **two-day event** with the theme "**Amrit Kaal: Prosperity through Cooperation for a Vibrant India**."
- The Union Home and Cooperation Minister, **Amit Shah**, will chair the congress.
- The Indian Cooperative Congress aims to discuss various trends in the cooperative movement, showcase best practices adopted by successful cooperatives, and deliberate on the challenges faced by the cooperative world.
- An exhibition will also be held during the congress, showcasing various products of **Self-Help Groups and NCUI Cooperative Education Field Projects under the banner of NCUI HAAT**.
- The event is expected to connect approximately five crore members live during the congress.

About National Cooperative Union of India

- It is the apex organization representing the entire **cooperative movement in India**.

- It was **established in 1929** as the **All India Cooperative Institutes Association**.
- Through the merger of the **Indian Provincial Cooperative Banks' Association** with the All India Cooperative Institutes Association, it was reorganized as the **Indian Cooperative Union**.
- In 1961**, it took on its current name as the National Cooperative Union of India.
- Since its inception, the NCUI has been at the **forefront of the cooperative movement** in India, acting as a torchbearer.
- The NCUI plays a vital role in promoting and supporting cooperative initiatives throughout the country.

5. Union Cabinet approves highest ever Fair and Remunerative Price for Sugarcane Farmers (June 29, 2023)

Price-for-Sugarcane-Farmers

The **Union Cabinet** on 28th June has **approved a fair and remunerative price of 315 rupees per quintal** for **sugarcane farmers for the season 2023-24**.

An overview of the news

- This decision is aimed at benefiting **five crore sugarcane farmers and their dependents**, as well as five lakh workers employed in the sugar mills and related ancillary activities.
- It is important to note that this price is the highest ever offered to sugarcane farmers, demonstrating the government's commitment to supporting the agricultural sector.

National Research Foundation (NRF) Bill, 2023

- The government has decided to introduce the **NRF Bill, 2023**, which aims to **strengthen the research ecosystem in the country**.
- The Union Cabinet has approved this bill, which will establish the NRF as an **apex body responsible for seeding, growing, and promoting research and development**.
- The bill intends to foster a culture of research and innovation throughout **India's universities, colleges, and research institutions**.

Objectives of NRF

- The NRF will provide **high-level strategic direction for scientific research in India**.
- Over the next five years, the NRF is expected to receive a total estimated cost of 50 thousand crore rupees.

- By repealing the **Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) established in 2008**, the NRF will take on an expanded mandate, covering activities beyond those of SERB.
- This will enable the NRF to forge collaborations among **industry, academia, government departments, and research institutions.**

Collaboration and Participation

- The NRF will create an interface mechanism to facilitate the participation and contribution of industries, state governments, scientific ministries, and line ministries in research activities.
- By encouraging collaboration between different stakeholders, such as **industry, academia, and government, the NRF** aims to enhance the impact of scientific research and promote innovation.

6. US decision to introduce in-country renewable of H-1B visas (June 28, 2023)

The **Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC)** has welcomed the **US announcement to start in-country renewal of H-1B visas**, saying it will facilitate the movement of **Indian IT professionals and boost services exports.**

An overview of the news

- The decision will make on-site customer engagement easier for **in-house IT professionals.**
- Quick travel to client locations abroad allows them to better understand client requirements, establish strong relationships, and provide tailored solutions.
- The US is a major market for India's IT exports, and this decision will have a significant positive impact on **IT services exports from India.**
- This will contribute to the timely completion of visa renewal projects in the country, **ensuring high quality outcomes and meeting customer expectations.**
- It also enhances India's reputation as a reliable **IT service provider**, thereby creating more export opportunities.

About H-1B Visa

- The **H-1B visa** is a **non-immigrant visa** that allows **US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations.**
- It is designed to allow skilled foreign workers to come to the United States and **work for American companies.**
- This requires **theoretical or technical expertise.**

Other Visa Categories

- **L-1B** - For Specialized Employees
- **L-1A** - For Managers and Executives
- **E-2** - Treaty Investor Visa
- **E-1** - Treaty Trader Visa
- **E-3** - for Australians etc.

7. Center extends financial incentives to 12 states to accelerate power sector reforms (June 28, 2023)**12-states-to-accelerate-power-sector-reforms**

Centre has provided **financial incentives to 12 states** to accelerate **power sector reforms**. These states will receive over **66 thousand crore rupees** incentives for reforms in the power sector.

An overview of the news

- This initiative aims to support and motivate states in implementing reforms that enhance the efficiency and performance of the power sector.
- The announcement regarding this initiative was made in the **Union Budget 2021-22** by the Union Finance Minister.
- As part of the initiative, states are granted an additional borrowing space of up to **0.5 percent of their Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)** annually for a period of four years, from **2021-22 to 2024-25**.
- Based on the recommendations of the **Ministry of Power, the Ministry of Finance** has granted permission for the reforms undertaken by **12 state governments** in the years **2021-22 and 2022-23**.
- As a result, these states have been allowed to raise financial resources of **Rs 66,413 crore** through the additional borrowing permissions over the past two financial years.

Each State as an incentive to embark on the reform process is as follows:

SL No.	State	Cumulative amount (Rs in crore)
1.	Andhra Pradesh	9,574
2.	Assam	4,359

3.	Himachal Pradesh	251
4.	Kerala	8,323
5.	Manipur	180
6.	Meghalaya	192
7.	Odisha	2,725
8.	Rajasthan	11,308
9.	Sikkim	361
10.	Tamil Nadu	7,054
11.	Uttar Pradesh	6,823
12.	West Bengal	15,263
	Total	66,413

8. International Conference on Green Hydrogen to be held in New Delhi (June 28, 2023)

International-Conference-on-Green-Hydrogen-to-be-held-in-New-Delhi

The Government of India is hosting the **International Conference on Green Hydrogen (ICGH-2023)** from **5th to 7th July 2023 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.**

An overview of the news

- The conference provides a platform for stakeholders in the sector to explore the **evolving landscape of green hydrogen and innovative solutions.**
- Specific discussions on **hydrogen production, storage, distribution, and applications, the conference** will address topics such as green financing, upskilling of human resources, and startup initiatives in the sector.
- The conference will facilitate the sharing of international best practices and provide opportunities for learning from global experiences in the field of **Green Hydrogen.**

Objective of the Conference

- The primary objective of the conference is to **examine the establishment of a Green Hydrogen ecosystem** and promote a systemic approach to achieve global decarbonization goals through the **utilization of Green Hydrogen.**

- The conference aims to bring together global experts from the scientific and industrial communities to discuss the **latest advancements and emerging technologies in the field of green hydrogen.**

Organiser of the Conference

- It is organized by the **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy** in collaboration with the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research**, and the **Office of Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India.**

National Green Hydrogen Mission

- The aim of the National Green Hydrogen Mission is to enable India to meet its climate change target of **net zero carbon emission by 2070** and make India a **production and export hub of hydrogen fuel.**

Aims of National Green Hydrogen Mission

- Achieve the capacity to produce **5 million tonnes of green hydrogen per year by 2030** ,
- Capacity addition of **125 GW of renewable energy by 2030.**
- Reduction in carbon dioxide emission of nearly **50 Million Metric Tonne per annum by 2030.**
- Reduction in fossil fuel imports worth **Rs 1 lakh crore by 2030.**
- To attract investment over **Rs.8 lakh crore in the sector.**
- Target of creation of over **6 lakh jobs in the sector by 2030.**

9. Parshottam Rupala launched the 'Report Fish Disease' App (June 28, 2023)

Parshottam-Rupala-launched-the-'Report-Fish-Disease'-App

Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying **Parshottam Rupala** launched the '**Report Fish Disease' (RFD) app** at **Krishi Bhavan** on 28 June to enhance the farmer-based disease reporting system and improve the reporting of aquatic animal diseases in India.

An overview of the news

- The RFD app has been developed by **ICAR-NBFGR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research - National Bureau of Fish Genetic Resources)** under the **National Surveillance Program for Aquatic Animal Diseases (NSPAAD).**
- NSPAAD is funded by the **Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Government of India**, under the **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana.**

- The primary objective of the RFD app is to assist farmers in improving their reporting methods, obtaining scientific guidance, and minimizing losses caused by diseases.
- This, in turn, helps increase farmers' income and overall profitability.

Benefits of RFD App

- The RFD app enables farmers to report disease incidents in **finfish, shrimps, and mollusks on their farms**, allowing them to connect with field-level officers and fish health experts.
- This facilitates the exchange of information and provides farmers with **scientific advice** for effective disease management.
- The app stores data related to diseases on a temporal and spatial scale, enabling the **mapping of disease cases**.
- The implementation of the Fish Disease Reporting App has a significant impact on **fish disease management**.
- It promotes **early detection of diseases, facilitates rapid response measures, fosters** collaboration among stakeholders, and facilitates knowledge sharing.
- By mitigating the negative impacts of fish diseases on **fish populations, the industry, and ecosystems**, the app contributes to the sustainability and resilience of aquaculture systems.

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