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1. Odisha Government Signs Pact With National Institute of Ocean Technology For Protecting Coastline (Aug. 16, 2022)

The Odisha government has signed an MoU with the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) to protect its coasts.

Important facts

- As per the MoU, NIOT will provide technical guidance, design and outline of climate resilient coastal security measures to the state government.
- The agreement will benefit the residents of six coastal districts of the state namely Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Puri and Ganjam.
- This MoU will prove to be a milestone in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in the coastal areas of the state.
- The state government is taking all possible measures for disaster mitigation and is focusing on zero casualties.
- The MoU signed for the next 5 years will help in saving the life and property of the people of the coastal areas along with the protection of the beach embankments.
- Odisha has a vast coastline of about 480 km in length and the coastal region is prone to natural calamities.

About National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)

- The National Institute of Ocean Technology, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, is India's premier institute specialising in the field of ocean engineering and beach conservation.
- Director - GA Ramdas
- Established - November 1993
- Headquarters - Chennai, Tamil Nadu

2. UK becomes first nation to approve Omicron vaccine (Aug. 16, 2022)

The UK on 16 August approved a booster dose against COVID-19, which is claimed to be effective against both the original and variant Omicron forms of the coronavirus.

Important facts

- The agency's decision was based on clinical trial data showing that the booster dose triggered "a strong immune response" against both Omicron and the original 2020 coronavirus.
- With this, Britain has become the first country to have approved such a vaccine.

- The vaccine was found to meet the standards of safety, quality and effectiveness.
- The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency said that half of each dose of the booster vaccine Spike Vax Bivalent Original/Omicron, i.e. 25 micrograms, works against the original form, while the other half targets Omicron.

5 variants of coronavirus are cause of concern

- **Omicron** - Identified in southern Africa in November 2021
- **Delta** - emerged in India in late 2020 and spread around the world
- **Gamma** - Emerged in Brazil in late 2020
- **Beta** - Emerged in South Africa in early 2020
- **Alpha** - Emerged in Britain in late 2020

3. Scotland becomes first in the world to provide free period products (Aug. 16, 2022)

Scotland became the first country in the world from August 15 to ensure universal access to free period products.

Important facts

- The Scottish Parliament voted unanimously in favour of the Period Products Bill, which made the right to free access to sanitary products in public buildings a legal right in November 2020.
- After the enactment of this law, sanitary napkins will be available free of cost in many public places including community buildings, youth clubs and medical stores.
- Even before this, in the year 2018, Scotland has become the first country to provide free sanitary products in government schools.

What is included in the new law?

- Under the law, local authorities and education providers are legally required to provide period sanitary facilities free of charge to those who need them.
- In addition to the provision of free products, the government has funded an educational website for employers, improved menstrual health resources available to schools, and implemented a successful anti-stigma campaign.
- Product seekers can locate their nearest collection point using the PickupMyPeriod mobile app, which was launched by social enterprise “Hey Girls” with the support of the Scottish Government.

About Scotland

- Scotland is a country in the United Kingdom.

- Capital - Edinburgh
- Currency - Pound Sterling
- Prime Minister- Nicola Sturgeon

4. Global Employment Trends for Youth report - 2022 (Aug. 16, 2022)

The Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022 report has been released by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as part of the global call to action for a "human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic".

Key points of the report

- According to the "Global Employment Trends for Youth 2022" report, rare unemployment among youth aged 15-24 has reached 15.6% worldwide. This is three times the unemployment rate among adults.
- According to the report, the number of unemployed youth population has come down from 75 million in 2021 to 73 million in 2022. However, this number is still 6 million more than the number before the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The unemployment rate in Africa is 12.7%, lower than the global average of 14.9%. This figure highlights that young people have withdrawn from the labour markets.
- Schools were closed in India for 18 months. Of the 240 million school going children, only 8% in rural areas and 23% in urban areas had access to online education. As a result, 92% of children on average have lost a basic ability in language. 82% of children have lost at least one basic ability in maths.
- According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the labour force participation rate (LPR) in India fell to 38.8% in June 2022.
- The share of people in the age group of 18-21 in newly created EPF accounts has come down from 37.9% in 2018-19 to 24.1% in 2021-22.

About International Labour Organisation

- It was established in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles as an affiliated agency of the League of Nations.
- In 1946, it became the first specialised agency affiliated with the United Nations.
- Objective of Establishment: Social justice is essential for global and lasting peace.
- India is a founding member of the ILO and has been a permanent member of the governing body of the ILO since the year 1922.
- The first office of ILO in India was established in 1928.
- Headquarters- Geneva, Switzerland
- Director General – Gilbert Hongbo

5. William Ruto declared winner of Kenya presidential election (Aug. 16, 2022)

In Kenya, Deputy President William Ruto has been declared the winner of Kenya's presidential election on 16 August.

Important facts

- He defeated his rival Raila Odinga by a very small margin, securing 50.5 percent of the vote.
- The worst drought in 40 years has ravaged the northern part of the country, leaving 4.1 million people dependent on food aid, while the country's debt levels have risen.
- Ruto was the Vice President of Kenya for the last 9 years.
- Significantly, President Uhuru Kenyatta remained in power for a decade.

History of violence

- In 2017, over 100 people were killed after the Supreme Court quashed preliminary results over irregularities in the electoral process.
- Amid fears that allegations of vote rigging had led to bloody conflicts after the presidential elections in 2007 and 2017, the courts were urged to control any disputes.
- The US Embassy in Kenya urged all parties to work together to peacefully resolve concerns about the election.
- Economic issues such as rising food and fuel prices, government debt, unemployment and widespread corruption were central to the election in the country.
- People here were more worried about fuel prices after the Russia-Ukraine war.

About Kenya

- Capital - Nairobi
- Official Languages - Swahili, English
- Currency - Kenyan Shilling

6. India gift Dornier Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft to Sri Lanka (Aug. 16, 2022)

India on August 15 gifted Sri Lanka a Dornier maritime reconnaissance aircraft that will enable the island nation to tackle a range of challenges such as human and drug trafficking and other organized crimes in its waters.

Important facts

- It was gifted at a special event at the Sri Lanka Air Force Base in Katunayake.
- Sri Lankan Navy and Air Force personnel who have undergone training in India for nearly four months will operate the aircraft.
- Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe and Indian High Commissioner Gopal Baglay were also present on the occasion.
- The celebrations took place as India celebrates its 76th Independence Day and a day later China's high-tech missile and satellite surveillance vessel will anchor at Sri Lanka's Hambantota port.
- The aircraft has been delivered to Sri Lanka by the Indian Navy to help meet the immediate security needs of Sri Lanka.
- The Indian Navy has also given intensive training in maritime reconnaissance aircraft to a team of the Sri Lankan Navy and Air Force.
- During the 2018 Defence Dialogue between India and Sri Lanka in New Delhi, Sri Lanka had discussed the possibility of acquiring two Dornier reconnaissance aircraft from India to enhance its maritime surveillance capabilities.

Dornier Aircrafts

- In March 2022, India and the Government of Sri Lanka signed a Memorandum of Understanding to provide two Dornier 228 aircraft to the Sri Lankan Navy.

Dornier 228 Aircraft

- It is a 17-seater non-pressurised aircraft that has a turboprop engine.
- It is capable of day and night operations, short take-off and landing, and can take off from semi-prepared runways.
- Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) started manufacturing Dornier-228 in India.
- The Dornier-228 aircraft have been used by the armed forces so far.
- Alliance Air had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with HAL to operate Dornier aircraft.

7. NMDC and FICCI to organise Conference on Indian Minerals & Metal Industry (Aug. 13, 2022)

National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd. (NMDC) and FICCI will be organizing a conference on the Indian minerals and metals industry on 23rd and 24th August at New Delhi.

Important facts

- The two-day event is being organized to commemorate the 75 glorious years of India's independence and the ongoing "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" in association with the Union Ministry of Steel and Mines.

- Speakers from industry, policy and academia will participate in the conference.
- Global and domestic producers, mineral associations, policy makers, mine equipment manufacturers, global corporates, central and state government officials, among others, will be present and address the conference.
- The event will also witness a panel discussion on the future of minerals and metals around the world.

Theme of the conference - 'Transition Towards 2030 & Vision 2047'

Objective of the conference

- The objective of the event is to deliberate on the roadmap for the minerals and metals sector to achieve 'Vision 2047'.

About Minerals

- A mineral is a natural substance of organic or inorganic origin with definite chemical and physical properties.
- Minerals are of two types - Metallic minerals and Nonmetallic minerals
- Examples of metallic minerals are iron ore, copper, gold, etc.
- Non-metallic minerals are basically inorganic such as mica, limestone and graphite, etc.
- Metallic minerals are sub-divided as ferrous and non-ferrous metallic.

National Mineral Development Corporation Ltd. (NMDC)

- It was established in 1958 as a wholly owned public enterprise of the Government of India.
- It is under the administrative control of the Ministry of Steel, Government of India.
- It is India's largest Iron Ore producer.
- The company was classified as a "Navratna" Public Sector Enterprise in 2008 by the Department of Public Enterprises.

8. India adds 11 more wetlands to the list of Ramsar sites, a total of 75 (Aug. 13, 2022)

India on August 13 added 11 more wetlands to the list of Ramsar sites in the 75th year of independence making it a total of 75 Ramsar sites covering an area of 13,26,677 hectares in the country.

Important facts

- The 11 new sites are - Four in Tamil Nadu, Three in Odisha, Two in Jammu & Kashmir and One each in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

- A total of 28 sites have been declared as Ramsar sites during the year 2022.
- Tamil Nadu has the highest number of Ramsar sites (14), followed by Uttar Pradesh (10).

11 wetlands designated as Ramsar sites

S.No	Name of wetland	Area in Ha	State
1.	Tampara Lake	300	Odisha
2.	Hirakud Reservoir	65400	
3.	Ansupa Lake	231	
4.	Yashwant Sagar	822.90	Madhya Pradesh
5.	Chitragudi Bird Sanctuary	260.47	Tamil Nadu
6.	Suchindram Theroor Wetland Complex	94.23	
7.	Vaduvur Bird Sanctuary	112.64	
8.	Kanjirankulam Bird Sanctuary	96.89	
9.	Thane Creek	6521.08	Maharashtra
10.	Hygam Wetland Conservation Reserve	801.82	Jammu and Kashmir
11.	Shallbugh Wetland Conservation Reserve	1675	
	Total area of 11 sites	76316	

Year wise designation of 75 Ramsar sites

S. No.	Year of Designation	No of site designated (As per date of designation)	Sites designated upto 2013 and after 2014 to till date	Area covered in Ha
1	1981	2	26 (1981 to 2013)	633871
2	1990	4		

3	2002	13		
4	2005	6		
5	2012	1		
6	2019	11	49 (2014 to 2022)	692807
7	2020	5		
8	2021	14		
9	2022	19		
	Total	75	75	1326678

Summary of 11 new Ramsar sites

1. **Tampara Lake** = It is among the most prominent freshwater lakes in the State of Odisha situated in Ganjam district. There are at least 60 species of birds, 46 species of fish, at least 48 species of phytoplankton and more than seven species of terrestrial plants and macrophytes.
2. **Hirakud Reservoir** - It is the largest earthen dam in Odisha started operating in 1957. Of the 54 fish species found in the reservoir, one is classified as endangered, six near threatened and 21 fish species of economic importance. At present, about 480 metric tonnes of fish are caught annually from fisheries and it is the mainstay of livelihood for 7,000 fisher families.
3. **Ansupa Lake** - It is the largest freshwater lake of Odisha situated in Cuttack district and has its fame from time immemorial for its scenic beauty, biodiversity, and natural resources. It is home to at least 194 species of birds, 61 species of fishes and 26 species of mammals in addition to 244 species of macrophytes.
4. **Yashwant Sagar** - It is one of the two Important Bird Areas (IBA) in the Indore region as well as one of the most important birding sites in Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh. It is mainly used for water supply in Indore city and is also being used for fish farming on a commercial scale.
5. **Chitrangudi Bird Sanctuary** - It is located in Ramanathapuram district in Tamil Nadu. The wetland has been a protected area since 1989 and declared as Bird Sanctuary.
6. **Suchindram Theroor Wetland Complex** - It is part of the Suchindrum-Theroor Manakudi Conservation Reserve. It is declared an Important Bird Area and lies at the southern tip of the Central Asian flyway of migratory birds.
7. **Vaduvur Bird Sanctuary** - It is a large human-made irrigation tank and shelter for migratory birds as it provides a suitable environment for food, shelter, and breeding ground.

- Kanjirankulam Bird Sanctuary** - It is a Protected area near Mudukulathur Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu, declared in 1989. It is notable as a nest for several migratory heron species that settle in the acacia groves there.
8. **Thane Creek** - It is located in Maharashtra. There are several sources of fresh water to the creek, of which Ulhas River is the largest, followed by many drainage channels from various suburban areas of Mumbai, Navi Mumbai & Thane. It has been declared as Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary.
9. **Hygam Wetland Conservation Reserve** - It falls within the River Jhelum basin and plays a significant role as a flood absorption basin, biodiversity conservation site, eco-tourism site, and livelihood security for the local communities. It is located in the Baramulla district.
10. **Shallbugh Wetland Conservation Reserve** - It is located in the District Srinagar, UT of J&K. Large areas of the wetland dry up between September and March. The area has extensive reedbeds of Phragmites communis and Typha angustata, and rich growth of Nymphaea candida and N stellata on open water.
- 11.

9. Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh unveils India's first Saline Water Lantern (Aug. 13, 2022)

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology, Dr Jitendra Singh on 13 August launched India's first Saline Water Lantern.

About Saline Water Lantern

- It uses the sea water as the electrolyte between specially designed electrodes to power the LED lamps.
- It is the first-of-its kind lantern named "**Roshni**".
- The Roshni Lamp has been invented by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Chennai.
- This technique can also be used in areas where sea water is not available, as any saltwater or normal water mixed with common salt can be used to power lanterns.

Significance

- It will bring "ease of living" to the poor and needy, especially the fishing community living along India's 7500 km long coastline.
- It will also give a boost to and complement Prime Minister Narendra Modi's UJALA scheme launched in 2015 for the distribution of LED bulbs across the country.
- It is not only cost-effective, but very easy to operate.

10. Govt to bring model by-laws to govern all Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (Aug. 13, 2022)

Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah has said that the government will bring a model bye-law to govern all Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS) in the country.

Important facts

- He was addressing a national conference on rural cooperative banks organised by the Ministry of Cooperation and the National Federation of State Cooperative Banks (NAFSCOB) at Vignan Bhavan in New Delhi on 12 August.
- He said that sick and discontinued packs should be revived or taken for liquidation.
- PACS will not be viable just by giving agriculture loans, they should diversify their business.
- He stressed the need to set up more than 2 lakh new PACS across the country to achieve the target of providing agri-finance of Rs 10 lakh crore through cooperatives.
- Presently there are more than 95,000 packs, of which only 63,000 packs are operational.
- The implementation of these model bye-laws will depend on the states as cooperatives are a subject in the State List (Schedule VII).

What are Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS)?

- These are grassroots level cooperative credit institutions that provide short-term and medium-term agricultural loans to farmers for various agricultural and agricultural activities.
- It works at the gram Panchayat and village level.
- The first Primary Agricultural Credit Society (PACS) was set up in 1904.
- PACS are registered under the Co-operative Societies Act and regulated by RBI.

Objectives of PACS

- Raise capital for the purpose of making loans
- Supporting members' essential activities
- Collect deposits from members with the goal of improving their savings habit
- Arrange for the supply and development of improved breeds of livestock to the members
- Supply agricultural inputs and services to members at reasonable prices