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1. Iran starts transfer of Russian goods to India by using new trade corridor (June 15, 2022)

Iran started its first transfer of Russian goods to India, using a new trade corridor that transits the Islamic Republic.

- The cargo will pass through the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC).
- The cargo ship left St. Petersburg for the Caspian Sea port city of Astrakhan.
- It will reach the northern Iranian port of Anjali and then by road to the southern port of Bandar Abbas on the Persian Gulf.
- From Bandar Abbas it will reach India by ship at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT).
- **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**
 - It is a multi-modal transport established by Iran, Russia and India on 12 September 2000 in St Petersburg.
 - It is a 7,200 kilometre long multi-mode network of shipping, rail and road transport for freight.
 - India, Iran, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe are involved in the corridor.
 - Its main purpose is to promote transportation cooperation among the Member States.
 - It connects the Indian Ocean to the Caspian Sea via the Persian Gulf to Russia and northern Europe.
- **Significance of INSTC**
 - It aims to reduce the cost of movement of goods between India and Russia by about 30 percent and reduce transit time by more than half.
 - It will provide an alternative connectivity initiative to countries in the Eurasian region.
 - It has the potential to transform countries' economies into specialized manufacturing, logistics and transit hubs.
 - It opens a sustainable alternative route for India to trade with Afghanistan and Central Asia.

2. Four holy relics of Lord Buddha from Kapilvastu placed at Gandan Monastery in Mongolia (June 15, 2022)

Four sacred relics of Lord Buddha were kept at the Gandan Monastery in Mongolia from Kapilvastu, India, to mark the Mongolian Buddha Purnima celebrated on June 14.

- Four sacred Kapilavastu relics brought from India by a delegation led by Union Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijiju, and other relics from Mongolia will be displayed at Gandan for Buddhist devotees to visit till June 24.
- Four holy relics from India were brought to Mongolia on 13 June.
- A 25-member delegation led by Law and Justice Minister Kiren Rijiju has arrived in Mongolia with the holy relics.
- The main Buddha statue at Gandan Monastery was gifted to the people of Mongolia by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015 and was installed in 2018.
- The Kapilvastu relic is one of the 22 special relics housed in the National Museum of the Ministry of Culture.

- **What are the holy relics?**

- According to Buddhist belief, Buddha attained salvation at the age of 80 in Kushinagar (Uttar Pradesh).
- The Mallas of Kushinagar performed his last rites as a universal king.
- The relics from the funeral pyre were collected and divided into eight shares.
- It was distributed among the Licchavis of Vaishali, Sakyas of Kapilavastu, Ajathsatrus of Magadha, Mallas of Kushinagar, Mallas of Pava, Bullies of Allakappa, Koliyas of Ramagrama and a Brahmana of Vethadipa.
- Its purpose was to build stupas over the sacred relics.
- The stupas over the bodily remains of Buddha (Sarrika Stupa) are the oldest surviving sacred places of Buddhism.
- Ashoka (272-232 BCE), an ardent follower of Buddhism, is believed to have built seven stupas.

- **Kapilvastu Relics**

- The discovery of an inscribed coffin at the stupa site at Piprahwa (near Siddharthnagar in Uttar Pradesh) helped identify ancient Kapilavastu.
- The inscription on top of the coffin mentions the relics of the Buddha and his community, the Shakyas.
- Records from the Union Ministry of Culture show that this discovery was followed by several explorations.
- The excavation of the stupa by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1971-77 led to the discovery of two other relic coffins containing 22 sacred bone remains, which are now under the supervision of the National Museum.
- This was followed by the discovery of more than 40 terracotta ceilings which establish that Piprahwa was the ancient city of Kapilvastu.

3. First National Conference of Chief Secretaries begins in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh (June 15, 2022)

A three-day first National Conference of Chief Secretaries is being organized in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh from 15th June.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will preside over the first National Conference of Chief Secretaries.
- More than 200 participants representing the Central Government, all States/UTs and domain experts will participate in the conference.
- Conference will focus on the fast and sustained economic growth in partnership with the States.
- This conference will lay the foundation for collaborative action for sustainable agriculture, employment generation, education, ease of living and higher development with self-reliance.
- The conference will lay emphasis on the development agenda and implementation and will lay down a roadmap for cohesive action to achieve the aspirations of the people.
- The concept and agenda of the conference has been prepared after more than 100 rounds of talks in six months.
- The result of the conference will be discussed later in the Governing Council meeting of NITI Aayog, in which Chief Ministers and Administrators of all the States and Union Territories will be present.
- Thereafter an action plan will be finalized with broad consensus at the highest levels.
- **Three themes identified for detailed deliberations-**

1. Implementation of the National Education Policy
2. Urban governance
3. Crop diversification and achieving self-sufficiency in oilseeds, pulses and other agri-commodities.

4. 38th India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol in Andaman Sea and Straits of Malacca (June 14, 2022)

The 38th India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) is being conducted from June 13 to 24 2022 in the Andaman Sea and Straits of Malacca.

- **About India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol**
- It is the first post pandemic Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) between the two countries.
- The navies of both the countries have been operating CORPAT along their International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) since 2002.

- This has helped in building understanding and interoperability between the two navies.
- It has facilitated measures to prevent and suppress illegal fishing, drug trafficking, maritime terrorism, armed robbery and piracy etc.
- India and Indonesia have enjoyed particularly close ties, which include a broad spectrum of activities and interactions that have strengthened over the years.
- This CORPAT contributes to the strong ties between the two countries in the Andaman Sea and the Straits of Malacca.
- **Aim of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol**
- Keeping the Indian Ocean Region safe for commercial shipping, international trade and conduct of legitimate maritime activities.
- **Other Exercises between India and Indonesia**
- **Garuda Shakti** - A joint military exercise
- **Samudra Shakti** - A bilateral maritime exercise

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6. J&K at the Top of all Union Territories in the delivery of e-Governance services (June 14, 2022)

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh releases the e-governance service delivery assessment (NeSDA) 2021 Report.

- Jammu and Kashmir has topped among all the Union territories in e-Governance services delivery.
- J&K has managed to save around Rs 200 crore annually which was earlier spent on transportation of files.
- According to the report, Kerala had the highest overall compliance score amongst all the States and UTs.
- Meghalaya and Nagaland are the major state portals among the northeastern and hill states with an overall compliance of more than 90 per cent in all assessment parameters.
- Kerala, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh had nearly 90 per cent compliance.
- Among the central ministries, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Rural Development, Education, Environment, Forest and Climate Change are the major ministry portals with an overall compliance of over 80% in all assessment parameters.
- The Home Ministry portal had the highest overall compliance score.
- **About National e-Governance Service Delivery Assessment (NeSDA)**
 - It was constituted in 2019 by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG).
 - It is a biennial study.
 - It assesses effectiveness of e-Governance service delivery of states, union Territories (UTs) and Central Ministries.
- **Criteria of NeSDA**
 - Finance, Labour & Employment, Education, Local Governance & Utility Services, Social Welfare, Environment and Tourism sectors.
 - The evaluation covered 56 essential services for each of the states and union territories and 27 services for the central ministries.

7. Russia overtakes Saudi Arabia to become India's second largest oil supplier (June 14, 2022)

Russia has overtaken Saudi Arabia to become India's second largest oil supplier after Iraq.

- Indian refiners bought about 25 million barrels of Russian oil in May, which is more than 16% of all Russian oil imports.
- India is the world's third largest oil importer and consumer.
- Iraq remained India's top oil supplier in May and Saudi Arabia is now the third largest supplier.
- India has taken advantage of concessional prices to increase oil imports from Russia at a time when global energy prices are rising.
- After the US and China, India is the world's third largest oil consumer, importing more than 85% of its oil.

- **Largest Oil Producer countries in the world**

1. United States
2. Russia
3. Saudi Arabia
4. Canada
5. Iraq
6. China
7. United Arab Emirates
8. Brazil
9. Kuwait
10. Iran

8. PM will inaugurate the Sant Tukaram Shila Mandir at Dehu in Pune (June 13, 2022)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Sant Tukaram Shila Mandir in the temple town of Dehu in Pune district on 14 June.

- **About the Shila Mandir**

- The shila refers to a rock that is currently in the Dehu Sanatan temple complex, and has been the starting point of Wari, the annual pilgrimage to Pandharpur for centuries.
- Bhakti saint Tukaram sat on this rock for 13 consecutive days when challenged about the authenticity of the abhyangas he had written.

- **About Sant Tukaram**

- Tukaram was born in Maharashtra. His full name was Tukaram Bolhoba Ambile.

- He was a 17th-century poet-saint who lived with Maratha ruler Shivaji Maharaj.
- His poetry was dedicated to Vithoba or Vitthala, an avatar of Vishnu (Hindu God).
- He is best known for his Marathi Abangas (dohas), a rich legacy of gathas (devotional poetry).
- He was also instrumental in laying the foundation of Maratha nationalism.
- He emphasised community based worship through spiritual melodies called Kirtans.
- **The Warkari sect**
- Sant Tukaram and his works are at the heart of the Varkari sect spread across Maharashtra.
- His message about a casteless society and his denial of customs had given rise to a social movement.
- Sant Tukaram has credit for starting the Wari pilgrimage.

9. e-Vidhan system in Uttar Pradesh (June 13, 2022)

A delegation of MLAs from Gujarat visited the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly on 9th June to learn about the e-Vidhan system for paperless proceedings which has been recently adopted by the UP State Legislative Assembly.

- Uttar Pradesh is one of the few state legislatures in India to have implemented the digital assembly system, and its last session was fully digitised.
- Earlier in May, a training program was organized to familiarize the delegates with the technology.

• What is the E-Vidhan System?

- The E-Vidhan System is also called The National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA).
- It is a system to digitize the legislative bodies of all the Indian states and Parliament through a single platform.
- It consists of a website and a mobile app.
- House proceedings, starred/unstarred questions and answers, committee reports etc. will be available on the portal.
- By 2023, the proceedings of all the Legislative Assemblies, both the Houses of Parliament and the State Assemblies and Legislative Councils will be available on a single platform.

• Other states that implemented this system

- Nagaland became the first state to implement NeVA, in March 2022.
- The Legislative Assembly of Himachal Pradesh implemented the pilot project of NeVA in 2014.

- Although both the houses of Parliament are not fully digital yet, governments across the world are moving towards adopting digital mode.
- In December 2021, the Government of Dubai became the world's first government to go 100 percent paperless.

- **Significance**

- There has been a significant shift towards digitization by the government in recent years.
- NeVA aims to streamline the information related to various state legislatures and eliminate the use of paper in day to day functioning.
- The idea of "one nation one legislative platform" was mentioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2021.
- A digital platform provides the necessary technological boost to our parliamentary system and at the same time connects all the democratic units of the country.

10. QS World University Rankings 2023 (June 11, 2022)

In the 2023 University Rankings released by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in the United States (US) has been ranked first, followed by the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom (UK) and Stanford University (US).

- **Indian Institute**

- Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (IISc) was ranked highest (155th), followed by IIT Bombay(172nd) and IIT Delhi(174th) respectively. Globally, the total number of Indian institutions in the top 1,000 has increased from 22 to 27.
- IISc Bangalore is the top research university in the world with a score of 100/100 for this metric.
- In addition, IISc Bangalore is the fastest growing South Asian University in the QS World University Rankings Top-200.
- Apart from IISc, eight IITs (Delhi, Bombay, Madras, Kanpur, Kharagpur, Roorkee, Guwahati, Indore) have been ranked in the top 500 globally.
- The report shows that India's presence in the top 500 category proves that India's IITs are run like other IITs across the world.

- **QS World University Rankings 2023: List of Top Universities in India**

National Rank	Name of the University	Global Rank
1	IISc Bangalore	155
2	IIT Bombay	172

3	IIT Delhi	174
4	IIT Madras	250
5	IIT Kanpur	264
6	IIT Kharagpur	270
7	IIT Roorkee	369
8	IIT Guwahati	384
9	IIT Indore	396
10	Delhi University	521-30