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1. Former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, who was in power for 17 years, dies (June 13, 2023)

On 12 June 2023, former Prime Minister of Italy **Silvio Berlusconi** passed away at the age of 86.

An Overview of the News:

- Berlusconi previously served as Prime Minister of Italy four times, from 1994 to 1995, 2001 to 2006, and 2008 to 2011.
- Berlusconi was Italy's longest-serving prime minister despite allegations of corruption.
- Berlusconi was admitted to the hospital on 9 June for treatment of chronic leukemia. He was also suffering from heart disease, prostate cancer for a long time and was hospitalized in 2020 after getting infected with Kovid-19.

Italy:

- Capital: **Rome**
- President: **Sergio Mattarella**
- Prime Minister: **Georgia Meloni**
- Currency: **Euro**

2. Ex-Servicemen Welfare Department signed agreement with private sector to generate employment (June 13, 2023)

-private-sector-to-generate-employment

The **Directorate General of Rehabilitation (DGR), Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare** under the **Union Ministry of Defense** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with M/s Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company Limited on June 12, 2023 in New Delhi.

An Overview of the News:

- The objective of this MoU between DGR and the Company is to bring Corporate Companies and Ex-Servicemen on a common platform to generate employment opportunities for the respected Ex-Servicemen retired from Defense Services.
- This partnership will provide greater visibility for ex-servicemen to the industry and corporate world and help in achieving the objectives of providing skilled manpower and providing a dignified second career to ex-servicemen.

M/s Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Company Limited:

- Mahindra Kotak Life Insurance, a 100% subsidiary of Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited, was established in 2001.
- Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance is one of the fastest growing insurance companies in India with over 34.8 million life insurance covers across the country as of December 2021.

3. G20 Third Framework Working Group meeting held in Kochi (June 13, 2023)

G20-Third-Framework-Working-Group-meeting-held-in-Kochi

The G-20 Third Framework Working Group meeting is currently held in Kochi, Kerala under the G20 Presidency of India.

An Overview of the News

- More than 75 delegates from G-20 member states, invited countries and international/regional organisations participated.
- The meeting was jointly chaired by Dr V Ananth Nageswaran, Chief Economic Adviser, Union Ministry of Finance and Tom Hemingway, Deputy Director of the UK Treasury.
- The focus of the meeting includes discussions on the global economic outlook, the macroeconomic impact of food and energy insecurity, and the impact of climate change and transition pathways on the economy.
- The purpose of the meeting is to facilitate a shared understanding of member countries' policy experiences and to identify areas where global cooperation can support national efforts.
- A panel discussion on **“Financial Globalization - Opportunities and Risks”** was organised along with the working group meeting.

About the G20

- It is an international forum of the world's leading economies established in 1999.
- Its primary objective is to promote international financial stability and sustainable economic growth.
- The G20 serves as a forum to discuss and coordinate policies related to a wide range of economic and financial issues such as trade, investment, employment, energy and climate change.

About Kerala

Capital - **Thiruvananthapuram**

Official Bird - **Great Hornbill**

Governor - **Arif Mohammad Khan**

Chief Minister - **Pinarayi Vijayan**

Origin of rivers in Kerala

- Periyar River
- Bharathapuzha River
- Pamba River
- Chaliyar River
- Chalakudy River

India's longest lake - Vembanad, Kerala

4. Indian Navy commemorates 130th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's 'Satyagraha' in Durban (June 12, 2023)

INS Trishul, a flagship warship of the Indian Navy, celebrated the **130th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's 'Satyagraha'** at the **Durban port in South Africa**.

An Overview of the News

- The purpose of its visit was to commemorate the **130th anniversary** of an incident that took place on **7 June 1893 at Pietermaritzburg railway station**.
- The incident led to Mahatma Gandhi being **ejected from a train** and played an important role in his fight against discrimination.
- INS Trishul's visit to **Durban harbour** serves as a commemoration of Gandhi's '**Satyagraha**'.
- 'Satyagraha' refers to Gandhi's doctrine of nonviolent resistance.
- By celebrating 'Satyagraha' on board INS Trishul, the Indian Navy pays tribute to the principles of Gandhi and inspires generations to come.

About the visit of INS Trishul warship to Durban

- Its visit to Durban is part of the Navy's celebrations for **India's 75th Independence anniversary** and the resumption of diplomatic relations between India and South Africa 30 years ago.
- The visit included a commemorative meeting at Pietermaritzburg Railway Station, paying homage to the Gandhi Plinth and a performance by the **Indian Navy Band**.
- A '**Gandhi-Mandela-King Conference**' will be organised in association with the **Pietermaritzburg Gandhi Foundation** and the **University of KwaZulu-Natal**.

Mahatma Gandhi Satyagraha

- **Satyagraha was a nonviolent resistance movement** initiated by **Mahatma Gandhi** during the Indian independence struggle **against British rule**.
- Satyagraha was first employed in **South Africa in 1915** when Gandhi led a successful resistance against discriminatory racial laws.
- The movement gained momentum in India during the **1920s and 30s**, leading to important civil disobedience campaigns such as the **Salt March and the Quit India Movement**.
- The principles of satyagraha were also applied to other struggles around the world, including the **fight against colonialism in Africa and Latin America**.
- Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha is considered one of the most powerful and successful tools for social and political change, adopted by people across the world.

5. CACP recommends Centre to bring urea under NBS regime (June 12, 2023)

urea-under-NBS-regime

The **Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)** has recently **recommended the Centre to bring urea under the nutrient-based subsidy (NBS) regime** to address the problem of imbalanced use of nutrients.

An overview of the news

- The purpose of this recommendation is to address the problem of **nutrient imbalance in agriculture**.
- **Nutrient-based subsidy (NBS)** scheme was introduced in **2010** for non-urea fertilisers.
- Presently urea has been kept out of NBS scheme which has led to **inequitable use and deterioration in soil health**.
- The CACP believes that this would help address the problem of imbalanced use of nutrients, which has adversely affected **soil health and crop productivity**.
- According to CACP fertiliser subsidy has been rising over the years, while fertiliser response and efficiency have been declining.
- **In December 2022**, the government informed Parliament that there was no proposal to shift urea to NBS.

Imbalanced use of fertilisers

- Urea, containing nitrogen, is the only fertiliser whose price is **regulated directly by the government**.
- Other fertilisers like **DAP and NPK**, containing **phosphorus and potassium**, have prices determined by market forces.
- The government provides a **fixed subsidy per tonne of fertilisers** based on their nutrient content.
- Due to the price difference, urea is significantly cheaper compared to other fertilisers, incentivizing farmers to use more urea than necessary.
- Excessive use of urea and lower application of other essential nutrients create an **imbalance in soil fertility, leading to soil degradation**.

Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)

- It was **formed in January 1965**.
- It is an expert body that recommends **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** to the government after taking into account the cost of production, trends in domestic and international prices.
- It is a **statutory body** of the **Ministry of Farmers Welfare**.
- It recommends MSP for **22 Kharif and Rabi crops**.
- Its recommendations are **not binding on the government**.

6. Second summit of Supreme Audit Institutions of G20 countries began in Goa (June 12, 2023)

G20-countries-began-in-Goa

The **second summit of the Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs)** of the G20 countries began on 12 June in **Panaji, the capital of Goa.**

An overview of the news

- The inaugural address at the summit was delivered by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) **Girish Chandra Murmu.**
- Goa Governor **PS Sreedharan Pillai** and India's G20 Sherpa **Amitabh Kant** also attended the meeting.
- SAIs from **Australia, Brazil, Indonesia, South Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, Nigeria, Oman, Spain, UAE, Morocco and Poland** participated in the summit.
- Apart from the proceedings of the summit, the CAG is expected to sign MoUs with SAIs of **Indonesia and Turkey** to strengthen cooperation and knowledge sharing.
- Apart from SAI, over 80 national and international delegates as well as representatives from Think20 and Youth20 Engagement Groups are participating in the three-day summit.

Summit Focus Areas

- The two primary areas of focus at the summit will be **Blue Economy and Responsible Artificial Intelligence**, with Girish Chandra Murmu discussing these topics.
- The concept of blue economy revolves around the **conservation and utilization of oceans, seas and marine resources** for sustainable development.
- Responsive Artificial Intelligence (AI) enables **fraud detection, automates redundant auditing processes and identifies high-risk transactions.**

7. UN suspends food aid to Ethiopia over diversion of supplies (June 12, 2023)

United Nations World Food Program

The **United Nations World Food Program** has temporarily **suspended food aid to Ethiopia** on June 9 because it is not reaching those in need in the African country.

An overview of the news

- America had also made a similar announcement a day earlier. WFP executive director **Cindy McCain** said the transfer of food aid is completely unacceptable.
- About **20 million Ethiopians** out of the country's population of about 120 million are dependent on food aid due to drought and conflict.

Much of this aid comes from the **United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Food Program.**

- Ethiopia has a population of about **120 million**. This move by the United Nations agency is expected to increase malnutrition in Africa's second most populous country.

United Nations World Food Program

- It is an **international organization** within the **United Nations**.
- It provides **food assistance** worldwide.
- It is the world's largest **humanitarian organization** and the leading provider of school meals.
- It was **founded in 1961**.
- Its Headquarter is in **Rome, Italy**.
- **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)** are the founders of WFP.

8. Sarbananda Sonowal lays Foundation Stone of Cochin Fisheries Harbour (June 11, 2023)

The foundation stone for the **modernization and upgradation works** of the **Cochin Fishing Harbour** was laid at **Willingdon Island in Kochi** on 11 June.

An overview of the news

- Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying, **Parshottam Rupala**, and Union Minister of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, **Sarbananda Sonowal**, jointly laid the foundation stone for the project.
- **The modernization project is expected to be completed next year**, enhancing the infrastructure and capabilities of the Cochin Fishing Harbour.
- The project aims to modernize and upgrade the Cochin Fishing Harbour at a **cost of 169 crore rupees**.
- Rupala mentioned the **Sagar Parikrama program** which aims to identify ground-level gaps and make necessary policy changes.

Significance of Cochin Fisheries Harbour

- The modernization of the Cochin Fishing Harbour will **boost fish and fish product exports**, estimated to reach **1500 crore rupees per annum**.
- Coastal economic development is a key aspect of the **Sagar Mala Project**.
- Government initiatives will **empower fishermen** to contribute further to the country's economy.

- The upgraded harbour will enable increased **trade and export opportunities** for fish and fish products, benefiting the local economy and the livelihoods of fishermen.

9. PM Modi inaugurated first-ever National Training Conclave in New Delhi (June 11, 2023)

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **first-ever National Training Conclave** at the **International Exhibition and Convention Centre at Pragati Maidan** in New Delhi on 11 June.

An overview of the news

- The Conclave is aimed **to enhance capacity building in the civil services** and is organised under the auspices of the National Programme for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB) - '**Mission Karmayogi.**'
- The Conclave is being hosted by the **Capacity Building Commission.**
- More than **1500 representatives** from various training institutes, including Central Training Institutes, State Administrative Training Institutes, Regional and Zonal Training Institutes, and Research institutes are participating in the conclave.
- Civil servants from central government departments, state governments and local governments as well as experts from the private sector are participating in the deliberations.
- During the conclave, **eight-panel discussions** will take place, each focusing on key concerns pertinent to civil services training institutes.

Topics of discussion

- It includes faculty development, training impact assessment, content digitisation, and other significant areas that contribute to the enhancement of civil services training.

About Mission Karmayogi Scheme

- Mission Karmayogi Yojana was launched on **2nd September 2020.**
- This scheme is operated under the leadership of Prime Minister **Narendra Modi.**
- The main objective of the Mission Karmayogi scheme is **to develop the capabilities of government employees.**
- Under the Mission Karmayogi scheme, a budget of **Rs 510.86 crore** has been set by the government for a **period of 5 years** for about 46 lakh central employees.
- For the successful operation of the scheme **iGOT Karmayogi platform** has also been formed through which online contact is made available.

10. Centre announces four important initiatives to strengthen Urban Co-operative Banks in country (June 10, 2023)

-Urban-Co-operative-Banks-in-country

To realise Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of '**Sahakar se Samridhi**', four important initiatives have been taken to strengthen **1,514 Urban Co-operative Banks** (UCBs) in the country.

An overview of the news

- After detailed discussions with Union Home and Cooperation Minister **Amit Shah**, Finance Minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** and Governor, Reserve Bank of India, RBI has notified these important measures to strengthen Urban Cooperative Banks.

Four initiative

1. In order to expand their business, Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) can now open new branches

- UCBs can now open new branches up to **10%** (maximum 5 branches) of the number of branches in the previous financial year without prior approval of RBI in their approved area of operation.
- In order to avail this facility, UCBs have to get the policy approved by their board and comply with the Financially Sound and Well Managed (FSWM) Norms.

1. UCBs can also do One Time Settlement at par with Commercial Banks

- RBI has notified a framework governing this aspect for all regulated entities including Urban Co-operative Banks.
- Now co-operative banks through board-approved policies may provide a process for technical write-off as well as settlement with borrowers.
- This has brought cooperative banks at par with other commercial banks now.

1. Revised timelines for PSL targets given to UCBs

- The Reserve Bank of India has decided to extend the timeline for UCBs to achieve Priority Sector Lending (PSL) targets by two years i.e. up to March 31,2026.

1. Designating a Nodal Officer in RBI

- In order to meet the long pending demand of the cooperative sector for closer coordination and focused interaction, RBI has recently notified a nodal officer as well.

What are Urban Cooperative banks (UCB)?

- It refers to **primary cooperative banks** located in **urban and semi-urban areas**.

- These are registered as cooperative societies under the provisions of, either the **State Cooperative Societies Act** of the State concerned under the provisions of the or the **Multi State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002**.
- It is regulated by the **Registrar of Cooperatives** and also by the RBI.
 - The Reserve Bank regulates and supervises the banking functions of UCBs under the provisions of **Banking Regulation Act, 1949**.