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1. Avian Influenza (H5N1) detected in Government Poultry Farm at Bokaro, Jharkhand (Feb. 23, 2023)

National Institute of High Security Animal Disease (ICAR), Bhopal has confirmed **Avian Influenza (H5N1)** in samples received from **Government Poultry Farm in Bokaro, Jharkhand** on 7 February 2022.

An overview of the news

- The presence of the **H5N1 variant** was confirmed in a protein-rich breed of chicken known as '**Kadaknath**' at a farm in **Lohanchal**.
- The last incident of Avian Influenza was reported in Godda district of Jharkhand during **January 2019**.
- Areas falling within **one km radius have been declared as affected zones** and areas within **10 km radius have been declared as surveillance zones**.
- The health ministry has sent its central team to observe the surveillance in the human area.

About Avian Influenza (H5N1)

- **Bird flu**, also known as avian influenza (AI), is a highly contagious viral disease that affects species of food-producing birds (chickens, turkeys, quail, guinea fowl, etc.), as well as domesticated birds and wild animals.
- Avian influenza virus subtypes are **A(H5N1), A(H7N9), A(H9N2) and A(H10N3)**.
- **Types B and C** mostly infect humans and usually cause mild illness.

2. Northern India's first nuclear plant to come up in Haryana's Gorakhpur (Feb. 21, 2023)

Union Minister **Jitendra Singh** on 19 February said that **North India's first nuclear power plant** is being set up in **Gorakhpur, Haryana**, about 150 km north of the national capital.

An overview of the news

- The Center has approved the setting up of **10 nuclear reactors** to increase India's nuclear capacity.
- The **Department of Atomic Energy** has also been permitted to form joint ventures with **Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)** for resources to set up nuclear power plants.

- Nuclear power plants were earlier mostly confined to southern states such as **Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh and western Maharashtra** but will now be developed across the country.

About first nuclear plant in Haryana's Gorakhpur

- **Gorakhpur Haryana Anu Vidyut Project (GHAVP)** consists of two units of **700 MW** each.
- Each of these has indigenously designed **Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWR)**.
- It is under implementation near **Gorakhpur village of Fatehabad district in Haryana**.
- So far, an amount of **₹4,906 crore** has been spent out of the total allocated amount of **₹20,594 crore**.

3. Khajuraho Dance Festival begin in Madhya Pradesh (Feb. 20, 2023)

The **49th Khajuraho Dance Festival** began on February 20 in **Khajuraho**.

An overview of the news

- Madhya Pradesh Governor **Mangubhai Patel** inaugurated '**Khajuraho Dance Festival-2023**'. The festival will end on February 26.
- Madhya Pradesh State **Rupankar Art Award** will be given at the function and an exhibition of artefacts has also been organised at the venue.
- Under the Department of Culture, this festival is being organised with the joint efforts of **Ustad Alladin Khan Academy of Music and Arts, Department of Tourism, Archaeological Survey of India, World Dance Alliance and Chhatarpur District Administration**.
- The first meeting of the Culture Working Group under the chairmanship of India in G-20 is also being held in Khajuraho from 23 to 25 February.

Other festivals of Madhya Pradesh

- Lokrang Festival, Bhopal
- Akhil Bhartiya Kalidas Samaroh, Ujjain
- Bhagoria Haat Festival, West Nimar (Khargon) and Jhabua
- Ujjain Kumbh Mela, Ujjain
- Malwa Utsav, Indore & Ujjain
- Chethiyagiri Vihara Festival, Sanchi

Tansen Sangeet Samaroh, Gwalior

4. Arunachal Pradesh Statehood Day (Feb. 20, 2023)

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has greeted the people of **Arunachal Pradesh** on the state's **37th statehood day** on February 20.

An overview of the news

- Every year **20 February** is celebrated as the foundation day of Arunachal Pradesh.
- Through the **55th Amendment of the Indian Constitution in 1986**, Arunachal Pradesh became the **24th state** of the India on February 20, 1987.

Historical Background

- During British colonial rule, until 1972, the state was known as the **North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA)**.
- It became a **Union Territory on January 20, 1972** and was named **Arunachal Pradesh**.
- It was given full statehood by the **Arunachal Pradesh State Act, 1986**.
- It was formed in the year 1987 by separating from **Assam**.

Geographical Situation

- Arunachal Pradesh is bounded by **Bhutan in the west and the Tibetan region of China in the north**.
- It is bounded by **Nagaland and Myanmar** in the South-Eastern region and Assam in the South-Western region.
- Capital - **Itanagar**

Demography

- **Literacy rate of the state (as per Census 2011) 65.38%** with male literacy rate **72.55%** and females **57.70%**.
- **Sex Ratio** - 938 female per 1000 male (National- 943)
- **State Animal** - Mithun (also known as Gayal)
- **State Bird** - Hornbill

Protected Areas

- Talle Wildlife Sanctuary (Protected area)

- Dihang Dibang Biosphere Reserve
- Namdapha Tiger Reserve
- Sessa Orchid Sanctuary
- Pakke Wildlife Sanctuary

Important Festivals

- Tawang Festival
- Solung, Losar
- Torgya
- Dree
- Murung
- Chalo Loku

5. Mizoram Statehood Day (Feb. 20, 2023)

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has greeted the people of **Mizoram** on the state's foundation day on **February 20**.

An overview of the news

- Every year 20 February is celebrated as the Statehood Day of Mizoram.
- The state of Mizoram was formed on **20 February 1987** following the **53rd Amendment to the Constitution** of India, 1986.
- At the time of independence, the **Mizo Hills region** became the Lushai Hills district within Assam.
- In 1954 it was renamed **Mizo Hills District of Assam**.
- Mizoram was granted **union territory status in 1972** following the signing of an important accord with the moderates of the **Mizo National Front (MNF)**.
- It became the **23rd full state of India on 20 February 1987**.

Geographical Situation

- International Border - **Myanmar and Bangladesh**
- State boundary - **Tripura (North-West), Assam (North) and Manipur (North-East)**.

Demography

- It is the **second least populous state** in India after **Sikkim**.
- **Sex ratio** - 975 females per 1000 males (at national level it is 943).
- **The literacy rate** of the state is 91.58%. (National rate - 74.04%).

Protected Areas

- Murlen National Park
- Phawngpui National Park
- Dampa Tiger Reserve
- Ngengpui Wildlife Sanctuary
- Tawi Wildlife Sanctuary

Important Festivals

- Chapchar Kut
- Christmas Festival
- Anthurium Festival
- Lyuva Khutla Festival

6. First state-level 'shrimp mela' in Punjab (Feb. 18, 2023)

Punjab's first state level 'Prawn Fair' began on February 17 at **Enakheda village in Muktsar district**.

An overview of the news

- This mela is an effort of the state government to create more **awareness about shrimp farming**.
- This fair is being organised to make farmers aware of various schemes for fish farming and to encourage more and more people to participate in it.
- In this, experts will help farmers understand about aquaculture.
- Shrimp farming began in the state in **2016-17**.

What is shrimp farming?

- It is an aquaculture-based activity in **marine or freshwater** to produce shrimp for human consumption.
- Five south-western districts of Punjab, **Muktsar, Fazilka, Ferozepur, Bathinda and Faridkot** are known for shrimp farming.

Why was shrimp farming introduced in Punjab?

- South-west Punjab has **saline groundwater** which is not suitable for agriculture. Waterlogging is a perennial problem in this belt.
- Therefore, shrimp farming was proposed as a solution for farmers whose land was lying unutilized.
- Shrimp cultivation was started in 2016-17 on a one acre plot in **Ratta Kheda village of Muktsar district**.
- The project was a success, with a one-acre pond producing four tons of shrimp.
- The project was funded jointly by the **central and state government**.
- By **2022-23**, a total of **1,212 acres of land** has been taken up for shrimp farming in southwest Punjab, with a total production of **2,413 tonnes of shrimp**.

7. Uttarakhand's New Anti-Copying Law (Feb. 17, 2023)

The **Governor of Uttarakhand** recently gave his assent to an **ordinance** brought by the **Pushkar Singh Dhami-led government** to prevent the use of **unfair means in examinations**.

An overview of the news

- The name of the ordinance is **Uttarakhand Competitive Examinations (Measures for Control and Prevention of Unfair Means in Recruitment) Ordinance, 2023**.
- It provides for a fine of up to **Rs 10 crore and life imprisonment** for the guilty.
- The ordinance aims to reduce cheating during examinations and promote fairness in the educational system.
- The ordinance comes after the **UKPSC paper leak** due to which the exam of around 1.4 lakh government job aspirants was cancelled.

Key provisions

- Candidates involved in cheating will be penalised and **`10 years ban`** will be imposed on them.
- In this, there is a provision to impose **a fine of 10 crores** along with life imprisonment or **10 years** in jail to the **copycat mafia**.
- Apart from this, there is also a provision to **attach the property** of the copycat mafia.

8. India International Seafood Show concludes in Kolkata (Feb. 17, 2023)

Asia's biggest seafood show, India International Seafood concluded in **Kolkata** on 17 February.

An overview of the news

- The three-day event, organised by the **Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA)** in association with the **Seafood Exporters Association of India**, began on February 15.
- It held a buyer-seller meet with special focus on G20 countries.
- The program was inaugurated by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry **Anupriya Patel**.
- India has set a **target of \$14 billion** in marine products exports by **2025** and efforts are on to achieve the target.
- About five thousand delegates from India and other countries participated in this event.
- The government announced a new sub-scheme named **Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhhi Saha-Yojana** in the Union Budget 2023 and allocated **six thousand crore rupees**.

Importance of fisheries sector of India

- Fishing is one of the fastest growing primary producing sectors.
- India is the **second major producer of fish** through aquaculture in the world.
- India is the **fourth largest exporter of fish** in the world as it contributes to 7.7% of the global fish production.
- Presently this sector provides livelihood to more than 28 crore people within the country.

Blue revolution

- The Centrally Sponsored Scheme "**Blue Revolution**" was launched in the year 2016 for the integrated development and management of fisheries.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana

- Sanctioned in **2020**, it is a flagship scheme for the focused and sustainable development of the fisheries sector in the country.
- It seeks to provide direct employment to **15 lakh fishermen etc.** which is almost three times this number in the form of indirect employment opportunities.
- It aims to **double the income of fishermen** and fish workers by the **year 2024**.
- Under this scheme, it has been envisaged to create **68 lakh jobs** by the end of the year 2024-25.

9. UN recognised World Interfaith Harmony Week concludes in Ludhiana (Feb. 17, 2023)

The “**World Interfaith Harmony Week 2023**”, an event recognised by the **United Nations (UN)** , concluded at **SCD Government College, Ludhiana** on 16 February.

An overview of the news

- The World Interfaith Harmony Week 2023 was organised by **Team 1699 in association with NGO Cityneeds.**
- Punjab Education Minister **Harjot Singh Bains** called upon the youth to spread the message of peace, love and harmony and stand up for the welfare of the society.
- More than **65 percent** of the population in India is below 35 years of age. No other country in the world has such a large population of young adults.
- This generation has immense potential to spread love and unity which can bring revolutionary change in the society.
- Religious leaders and followers of Buddhism, Valmiki Samaj, Jainism, Christianity, Muslim, Hindu and Sikhism participated in the activities during the World Interfaith Harmony Week.

About World Interfaith Harmony Week

- World Interfaith Harmony Week is an **annual event** recognized by the **United Nations General Assembly in 2010.**
- It is organised every year in the first week of **February.**
- The week, initiated to promote culture, peace and non-violence, was first proposed by **King Abdullah II of Jordan** at the United Nations in 2010.

10. India’s first electric AC double-decker bus inaugurated in Mumbai (Feb. 14, 2023)

The **Brihanmumbai Electric Supply and Transport Undertaking (BEST)** inaugurated the **country’s first electric air-conditioned (AC) double-decker bus** on 13 February in Mumbai.

An overview of the news

- According to BEST, the regional transport agency in **Mumbai** is yet to complete the registration process for the electric bus.
- After the approval of this bus, this bus will ply between **Kurla Bus Depot and Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC).**

- The ticket price has been kept at a minimum of **Rs 6 for a distance of 5 km.**
- The seating capacity of the Electric Double Decker Bus is **73.**
- It is equipped with CCTV cameras and automatic doors and can be charged in 80 minutes.
- At present, the transport department has **45 electric AC buses** of various sizes, and 100 more will be inducted this year.
- **The Electric Buses or SWITCH EIV boasts** of latest technology, state-of-the-art design, highest safety and best-in-class comfort features for 22 passengers.