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1. First FTO of North Eastern Region launched in Lilabari (April 13, 2022)

The Minister of Civil Aviation Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia and the Chief Minister of Assam Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma today inaugurated the first **Flying Training Organisation (FTO)** for the North Eastern Region in **Lilabari**, Assam.

- Lilabari is amongst nine FTOs to be established in five airports in India by June 2022 includes **Belagavi and Kalaburagi in Karnataka, Jalgaon in Maharashtra and Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh.**
- **M/s Redbird Aviation** has won the right to establish the FTO at Lilabari. Airports Authority of India has leased land for the FTO and facilitated statutory approvals from DGCA and BCAS.
- With the establishment of these FTOs, India will aim to become a global hub for pilot training.

2. Jyotiraditya Scindia flags off First Made in India Dornier Aircraft Flight (April 13, 2022)

The Minister of Civil Aviation Shri Jyotiraditya M. Scindia and the Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Shri Pema Khandu today flagged off the first flight of Made in India HAL Dornier Do-228 in a bid to connect airports and Advanced Landing Grounds (ALGs) of Northeast India. The flight will be operational from Dibrugarh in Assam to Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh and finally to Lilabari in Assam.

- This flight will operate from Dibrugarh in Assam to Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh and finally to Lilabari in Assam.
- Public sector airline Alliance Air has entered into an agreement with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), a central public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Defence, to operate Dornier aircraft manufactured in India.
- With its operation, the total number of airports in the country has gone up to 140. A total of 15 airports have been established in the Northeast.
- Within six months, a new greenfield airport at Hollongi will be opened in Arunachal Pradesh with a budgetary allocation of Rs 645.63 crore.

As per the Airports Authority of India, at present there are 39 (10+29) international airports in the country including 10 customs international airports. While 29 airports are under government control.

3. UGC allows students to pursue two full-time academic programmes simultaneously (April 13, 2022)

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has now allowed students to pursue two degree courses simultaneously.

- Now the UGC has decided to issue guidelines to the students to pursue two academic programs at the same time.
- The UGC said in this context that this decision is in line with the National Policy on Education (NEP) 2022, which emphasises the need to facilitate multiple pathways for learning.
- This will help develop various skills in the students. Online and offline mode will be used for this new provision.
- The UGC Chairman said that the UGC has come up with new guidelines for various physical university courses to help students identify their unique potential. He said that it would provide multidisciplinary and holistic education in all fields.

UGC Guidelines

- A student can pursue 2 full-time academic programs in physical mode, given that the class time of one program does not overlap with that of the other programme.
- Also, not only two courses in physical mode, students can do one course in full-time physical mode either online or in open, distance learning mode.
- In addition, students can pursue one online program with another online program.
- The guidelines will be implemented after an announcement on the UGC website on 13 April 2022.

Part of NEP vision

- The rationale behind the decision to allow students to pursue two academic degrees simultaneously is to help them gain diverse skills, according to the UGC.
- It is also aimed at translating the NEP's vision of breaking down interdisciplinary separations.
- It remains to be seen how the proposal is received by the academia and student community.

4. India-Australia Maritime Patrol Reconnaissance Aircraft (Mpra) Coordinated Operations (April 12, 2022)

A P8I Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft of the Indian Navy have arrived at Darwin, Australia. The aircraft and its crew would be undertaking an operational turnaround at Darwin.

- P8 aircraft from both the countries, would be conducting coordinated operations in Anti-Submarine Warfare and surface surveillance, to enhance maritime domain awareness.
- In recent times, increased interaction between the two maritime nations, through bilateral and multilateral exercises at sea, has enhanced inter-operability and fostered bridges of friendship.
- The P8 aircrafts, with their demonstrated long reach, have operated jointly during Malabar and AUSINDEX series of exercises, and have a common understanding of operating procedures and information sharing.
- The maritime waters between Indonesia and Northern Australia is an area of mutual interest to both countries, being a gateway into the Indian Ocean Region.
- Both India and Australia share strategic interests, promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific and rules based order in the region.

5. Filing of patents increases by more than 50% in the last 7 years (April 12, 2022)

India achieved a milestone in context of IP innovation ecosystem, wherein for the first time in the last 11 years, the number of domestic patent filing has surpassed the number of international patent filing at Indian patent office in the Quarter Jan-Mar 2022 i.e. of the total 19796 patent applications filed, 10706 were filed by Indian applicants against 9090 by non-Indian applicants.

- The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Public Distribution and Textiles, Shri Piyush Goyal appreciated the consistent efforts made by DPIIT on strengthening the IPR regime in India by fostering innovation, and reducing compliance burden.
- The coordinated effort by DPIIT and IP office has led to increased IP awareness among all strata of society.
- These efforts have on one hand led to increase in the number of IPR filings, on the other hand has reduced the pendency of patent application at IP offices. He also mentioned that this will take India a step closer to India's ambitious target of being in the top 25 nations of Global Innovation Index.
- Some of the key initiatives taken by the Government over the years that has bolstered India's IP regime includes fee concessions like 10% rebate on online filing, 80% fee concession for Start-ups, Small Entities and educational institutions, and provisions on expedited examination for Startups and MSMEs along with other categories.

The cornerstone laid down by National IPR policy and the efforts made by the Government has transpired into the following achievements for India:

- Filing of patents have increased from 42763 in 2014-15 to 66440 in 2021-22, more than 50% increase in a span of 7 years
- Nearly five times increase in grant of patents in 2021-22 (30,074) as compared to 2014-15 (5978)
- Reduction in Time of patent examination from 72 months in Dec 2016 to 5-23 months at present, for different technological areas
- India's ranking in Global Innovation Index has increased to 46th in 2021 (+35 ranks) as compared to 81st in 2015-16.

6. 8th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (India Region) (CPA) Conference at Assam Legislative Assembly (April 12, 2022)

The two-day (11 and 12 April) Regional Conference of the 8th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association was inaugurated on 11 April 2022 in the Assam Legislative Assembly. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla addressed the conference.

- On this occasion, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has called for increasing the participation of youth and women to strengthen democracy and democratic system.

- Addressing the convention in the Assam Legislative Assembly, Birla said that the basic
- responsibility of the legislatures is to ensure the socio-economic development of the deprived and aspirational sections of the society.
 - Shri Birla emphasised that with the efforts of PM Modi, special efforts are being made for the betterment of the aspirant in India.
 - Schemes have been made for the all-round development of the deprived sections by identifying the aspirational districts.

7. Helina Missile's Testing Successful! Now It can hit the enemy tank accurately even in the dark (April 12, 2022)

India successfully test-fired the anti-tank guided missile HELINA on 11 April. This missile was tested by Advanced Light Helicopter in the high altitude area of Ladakh, which has been a complete success.

- This missile works on the principle of fire and forget. This means forget it after launch, as they are able to reach their target.
- This missile works on Infrared Imaging System.
- During the test, this missile accurately hit a simulated tank. The missile was launched from an Advanced Light Helicopter.
- Its testing has been done in Pokhran.
- Earlier, this missile was also successfully tested at Pokhran firing range in Rajasthan. India has another anti-tank missile named Nag. Both the missiles can be fired from helicopters and both have a range of 7 km.
- According to the Ministry of Defence, DRDO, Indian Air Force and Army have jointly carried out this test.

Features of the missile:

- It can be fired in any season.
- This missile is capable of hitting the target accurately even in the dark night and can destroy enemy tanks.
- They are capable of targeting enemy tanks in two ways. One it can hit the target straight and the other can target the tank in top attack mode.

India has recently released a list of 101 such weapons and systems which have been banned from importing from other countries. This ban is for the next five years. India's objective behind doing this is to make itself self-reliant in the field of defence.

8. NITI Aayog's Energy Climate Index (April 12, 2022)

NITI Aayog has released the State Energy and Climate Index - Cycle 1 (SECI) in which Gujarat has topped the list of large states while Goa has topped the list of smaller states.

- The index compares states and union territories based on several indicators and will encourage them to transition to energy.
- This index by NITI Aayog aims to rank the states and union territories on the basis of performance on six parameters, which include the performance of power distribution companies, energy efficiency and access to energy.
- According to the commission report, Gujarat is followed by Kerala and Punjab respectively. In this list, states like Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand have been placed at the last position.
- Goa tops the index among smaller states. It is followed by Tripura and Manipur respectively.
- The objective of SECI Round-I is to rank the states and union territories on six parameters. These six parameters can be seen in the following points:
 - Performance of Electricity Distribution Companies (Discoms),
 - access, affordability and reliability of energy,
 - clean energy initiative
 - energy efficiency,
 - sustainable environment and
 - New initiatives are included.
- A total of 27 indicators are included in these standards.
- States and Union Territories will be able to compare their benchmarks using the index and will be able to develop better policy regimes.
- Chandigarh tops the Union Territories (UTs). This is followed by Delhi and Daman and Diu/ Dadra and Nagar Haveli respectively.
- Punjab has been ranked first among large states as per DISCOM performance, while Kerala topped in energy access, affordability and reliability categories.
- Similarly, Haryana in the Clean Energy Initiative category and Tamil Nadu in the Energy Efficiency category has been the best among large states. This index is based on the figures of 2019-20.

Administrative Structure of NITI Aayog

Chairman: Prime Minister

Vice President: Rajiv Kumar at present appointed by the Prime Minister

Governing Council: Chief Ministers of all States and Lieutenant Governors of Union Territories.

Regional Council: The Prime Minister or a person nominated by him presides over the meeting of Chief Ministers and Lieutenant Governors to address specific regional issues.

Ad-hoc Membership: 2 ex-officio members on rotation from leading research institutes.

Ex-officio Membership: A maximum of four members of the Union Council of Ministers nominated by the Prime Minister.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO): Secretary to the Government of India who is appointed by the Prime Minister for a fixed term.

Special Invitees: Experts from various fields nominated by the Prime Minister.

9. India US 2+2 ministerial dialogue (April 12, 2022)

India and the United States of America will hold the 4th 2+2 ministerial dialogue in the United States on 11 April 2022.

- The dialogue will be held between **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** and **External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar** with **US Secretary of State Antony Blinken** and **Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin** respectively.
- India and the United States decided to start 2+2 dialogue during Prime Minister Narendra Modi Visit to the U.S in June 2017.
- The first meeting was held in September 2018.
- India holds 2+2 meeting with Australia and Japan also

In the United States Foreign Minister is called the Secretary of State and the Defence Minister is called the Secretary of Defence.

10. Prime Minister Modi and President Biden hold Virtual Summit (April 12, 2022)

The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a virtual summit meeting on 11 April 2022, with American President Joe Biden ahead of the 2+2 dialogue between India and the United States of America.

The situation in Ukraine and Russia was the main agenda of their discussion. Amongst the QUAD group of countries only India has not condemned and imposed any sanction on Russia. The other QUAD members like the US, Australia and Japan have imposed sanctions on Russia for its attack on Ukraine.

- The United States wants India to condemn Russia for its attack on Ukraine, not to buy any oil from Russian companies, and put pressure on Russian President Putin to stop the war against Ukraine.
- India has very close ties with Russia with around 60 to 70 % of its defence equipment are of Russian origin. Russia has also supported India in the past on crucial issues like Kashmir and against Pakistan.
- India has so far abstained on every anti-Russian resolution in the United Nations and has remained neutral on the issue.
- President Biden welcomed India's humanitarian support for the people of Ukraine and called the Russian invasion a "horrific assault". He said that the US and India are going to

continue “close consultation on how to manage the destabilising effects of this Russian war”.

- Prime Minister Modi highlighted India’s humanitarian aid to Ukraine and condemned the killing of civilians allegedly by the Russian troops in the Ukrainian city of Bucha.