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1. UK launches new landmark trading scheme for developing countries (June 20, 2023)

UK-launches-new-landmark-trading

The UK launched the Developing Countries Trade Scheme (DCTS) on 19 June.

An overview of the news

- This trade scheme provides a significant opportunity for India and 65 other poor and developing countries.
- The scheme simplifies trading rules and cuts tariffs on products entering the UK from 65 developing countries, including Bangladesh.

About Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS)

- This is a preferential trading program that has been introduced by the United Kingdom.
- The DCTS replaces similar arrangements that were previously in place during the UK's membership in the European Union.
- The primary objective of the scheme is to support trade and promote economic growth for 65 poor and developing countries.
- Through the DCTS, these countries are granted preferential treatment in terms of trade, with reduced or eliminated tariffs on certain products imported into the United Kingdom.
- By providing favorable trading conditions, the DCTS aims to enhance market access for these countries, stimulate economic activity, and foster mutually beneficial trade relationships.

Benefits of the scheme

- It creates opportunities for businesses and supports **livelihoods** by facilitating trade between participating countries and the United Kingdom.
- By lowering trade barriers and providing preferential treatment, the scheme aims to **create employment opportunities** for individuals in participating countries.
- It plays a role in diversifying **local and international supply chains**, which contributes to **job creation and economic growth** in these countries.
- Through increased market access and favorable trading conditions, the scheme helps participating countries to access the UK market and expand their export capabilities.
- By increasing exports, countries can diversify their economies and reduce their dependence on limited products or markets.

2. Bureau of Indian Standards makes license mandatory for 24 footwear products (June 20, 2023)

Bureau-of-Indian-Standards-makes-license-mandatory

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) license will be mandatory for 24 footwear products from July 1, 2023.

An overview of the news

- Small-scale footwear manufacturers will have to comply by January 1, 2024, while micro-footwear industries will be subject to mandatory quality standards from July 1, 2024.
- It aims to reduce sub-standard imports, especially from countries like China.
- According to the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), this Quality Control Order (QCO) will ensure production of high quality footwear domestically and curb substandard imports.

QCO for footwear and related products

- The QCO for **24 footwear** and related products was initially notified in **October 2020**.
- The 24 footwear products covered by the quality standards include **rubber gum boots, PVC sandals, rubber thongs, chappals, molded plastic footwear, footwear** used for municipal cleaning work, sports footwear, derby shoes, riot-proof shoes and molded Includes solid rubber sole.
- At present, **27 out of 54 footwear products** are covered by QCO, and the **remaining 27** more footwear products will be covered within the next six months.
- BIS has revised five footwear specification standards, giving the industry an additional time of **six months till January 1, 2024**, to comply with the QCOs.
- To support the implementation and testing of footwear products, testing facilities have been set up at two BIS laboratories, two **Footwear Design and Development Institute (FDDI)** laboratories, Central Leather Research Institute and eleven private laboratories.
- In addition, mandatory compliance of quality standards for "protective clothing for fire fighting" and "19 products related to geotextiles" will come into effect from October this year.
- At present, **470 products** are covered under mandatory quality standards, and BIS has shared additional 600 products with ministries to bring them under QCO.

'Manak Rath' Online Exchange Forum

- Additionally, BIS has launched an online exchange forum called '**Manak Rath**' on its website, which provides a platform for users to connect and share their views.
- Student members of Standard Clubs can participate in various activities and competitions, with the opportunity to win exciting prizes.

About Bureau of Indian Standards

- Bureau of Indian Standards is the national standards body of India under the Department of Consumer Affairs, **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution**, Government of India.

- Headquarter- **Manak Bhawan, Old Delhi**
- Director General- **Pramod Kumar Tiwari**
- Established- **23 December 1986**

3. Centre discontinues sale of rice, wheat under OMSS Scheme (June 19, 2023)

Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS)

The **central government has discontinued the sale of rice and wheat** from the central pool under the **Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS)** to state governments.

An overview of the news

- This decision will affect some states, including **Karnataka**, that provide free grains to the poor through their own schemes.
- The **Food Corporation of India (FCI)** has issued an order stating that the sale of **wheat and rice** under the OMSS for state governments is discontinued.
- However, the sale of rice under the OMSS will continue for **northeastern states, hilly states, and states facing law and order** situations or natural calamities at the existing rate of **Rs 3,400 per quintal**.
- FCI may sell rice under the OMSS to private parties from the **central pool stock to moderate market prices**.
- The central government had previously allowed states to buy rice and wheat from the FCI for their own schemes without participating in e-auctions as part of the **OMSS policy for 2023**.

Rice prices

- Rice prices have been increasing due to the slow progress of the monsoon and have risen by up to **10% in the last year** at the mandi level.
- The monsoon rains are crucial for rice production as about **80% of the country's total rice production** is grown during the kharif season.

Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS)

- **Nodal Agency**- Food Corporation of India (FCI)
- **Purpose**- To sell foodgrains, especially wheat and rice, at predetermined prices in the open market.
- **Mode of Selling**- Weekly auctions by FCI on the platform of the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Limited.
- **Quantity allowed in a bidding** - A bidder can purchase in a single bid range from 10-100 tonne.

- OMSS comprises **2 schemes**
- -Sale of wheat to bulk consumers/private traders through e-auction.
- -Sale of Raw Rice Grade 'A' to bulk consumers/private traders through e-auction.

About Open Market Sale Scheme (OMSS)

- It is a government initiative launched with the aim of **reducing the excess stock of food grains.**
- **Nodal Agency-** Food Corporation of India (FCI)
- Its objective is to sell food grains, especially **wheat and rice**, in the open market at pre-determined prices.
- The sales are carried out through weekly auctions by FCI on the platform of **National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Limited.**
- Under this a bidder can buy in a single bid range of **10-100 tonnes.**
- Schemes for sale of wheat to bulk consumers/private traders through e-auction and sale of grade 'A' raw rice to bulk consumers/private traders through e-auction are included under OMSS.

About Food Corporation of India (FCI)

- It is a prominent **Public Sector Undertaking (PSU)** under the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution in India.**
- It was **established in 1965** to ensure food security and support the **nation's public distribution system.**
- FCI's primary mandate is to **procure, store, and distribute food grains** across the country.
- It aims to maintain an adequate buffer stock of essential commodities and provide timely and affordable food grains to the vulnerable sections of society.
- FCI undertakes the procurement of food grains from farmers at **Minimum Support Prices (MSPs)** declared by the government.
- It procures crops such as wheat, rice, and coarse grains directly from farmers through designated procurement centers.

4. RBI chief Shaktikanta Das named 'Governor of the Year' at Central Banking Awards in London (June 15, 2023)

Governor-of-the-Year

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor **Shaktikanta Das** was named '**Governor of the Year**' at the **Central Banking Awards in London.**

An Overview of the News

- The award is presented by Central Banking, a leading organisation that covers matters related to central banks and financial regulators globally.
- The Central Banking Awards 2023 announced the winners at the end of March, the National Bank of Ukraine received the title of **Central Bank of the Year**.
- Shaktikanta Das, representing the Reserve Bank of India, was honoured with the Governor of the Year award at the event.

About Reserve Bank of India

- The RBI was established on **April 1, 1935**, as per the provisions of the **Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934**.
- The central office of the Reserve Bank was established in **Kolkata** which was permanently shifted to **Mumbai in the year 1937**.
- It was **nationalised in 1949** and now the Government of India owns the RBI.
- It has the power to regulate banks under the **Banking Regulation Act 1949**.
- It has the power to regulate Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) under the RBI Act 1934.
- RBI is also the regulator of digital payment systems under the **Payment and Settlement Act 2007**.

Headquarters of RBI: **Mumbai**

RBI Governor: **Shaktikanta Das**

5. SIDBI launches EVOLVE mission with NITI Aayog (June 14, 2023)

SIDBI-launches-EVOLVE-mission-with-NITI-Aayog
Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) launched the **Electric Vehicle Operations and Lending for Vibrant Ecosystem (EVOLVE) mission**.

An Overview of the News

- The mission has been launched in **collaboration with NITI Aayog, World Bank, Korean-World Bank and Korean Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF)**.
- Its main objective is to provide financial assistance to **micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)** in the electric vehicle sector.
- The collaboration between **SIDBI, NITI Aayog, World Bank, Korea-World Bank and Korean Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF)** highlights the importance of public-private partnership.
- The EVOLVE mission contributes to the promotion of sustainable transportation solutions in India.

- By supporting MSMEs in the electric vehicle industry, the initiative aims to foster a
- vibrant ecosystem for electric vehicles.

EVOLVE Mission Aim:

- Its primary objective is to provide funds for the purchase of **50,000 Electric Vehicles (EVs)**.
- Sanction letters have been sent to companies such as **Aristo Securities and Muffin Green Finance** to achieve this goal.
- These companies have been tasked with facilitating the introduction of around 5,000 two-wheeler and three-wheeler electric vehicles on the roads in the near future.

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI):

- Apex regulatory body for micro, small and medium enterprise finance companies in India.
- Responsible for licensing and regulation in this sector.

Jurisdiction:

- Under the **Ministry of Finance**, Government of India.
- The headquarters is located in **Lucknow**.

Establishment:

- Established on **2nd April, 1990** by the Government of India.
- Initially a wholly owned **subsidiary of IDBI Bank**.
- Delinked from IDBI Bank on **March 27, 2000**.

6. 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**.

7. Federal Bank launches 'I am Adyar, Adyar is me' campaign (June 9, 2023)

Federal-Bank-launches-'I-am-Adyar,-Adyar-is-me'-campaign

The campaign '**I am Adyar, Adyar is me**' was launched by the **Federal Bank in Chennai** on 6th June.

An Overview of the News

- The campaign aims to honour and celebrate the local **community of Adyar**.
- The Adyar branch of Federal Bank has been converted into a living museum for the campaign.
- Vibrant paintings depicting the vibrant spirit of Adyar now adorn the walls of the branch.
- The campaign features a special exhibition showcasing 40 compelling stories of the individuals who made Adyar special.
- The campaign aims to capture the essence of Adyar and promote its rich culture and heritage.
- It fosters a sense of pride and belonging among local residents.
- The 'I am Adyar, Adyar is me' campaign is an innovative initiative by Federal Bank to honour and recognize the Adyar community.

Federal Bank Limited:

- It is an **Indian private sector bank** headquartered in **Aluva, Kochi, Kerala**.
- The bank operates **1,370 branches** in various states of India.
- Federal Bank has representative offices in **Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman and Dubai**.
- The bank provides a wide range of financial services to its customers including retail banking, corporate banking, treasury operations and wealth management.
- It emphasises a customer-centric approach and strives to provide efficient and convenient banking solutions.

Founder - **K.P Hormis**

Establishment - **23 April 1931, Nedumpuram**

CEO - **Shyam Srinivasan**

About Tamil Nadu

- The state was formed on **26 January 1950** but its boundaries were redrawn on **14 January 1969**.
- It is situated at the mouth of the **Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal** and the **Indian Ocean**.

Capital - **Chennai**

Governor - **Ravindra Narayan Ravi**

Chief Minister - **MK Stalin**

Assembly seats - **235 seats**

Rajya Sabha seats - **18**

Lok Sabha seats - **39**

8. The Union Cabinet approved the third revival package for BSNL (June 8, 2023)

On June 8, the government **approved a revival package** of over **Rs 89,000 crore for BSNL.**

An Overview of the News

Revival Package:

- The total outlay of the revival package is **Rs 89,047 crore.**
- The package includes **allocation of 4G and 5G** spectrum for BSNL through equity infusion.
- The authorised capital of BSNL will be increased from **Rs 1,50,000 crore to Rs 2,10,000 crore.**

Revival Package Objectives

- BSNL will emerge as a stable telecom service provider focused on providing connectivity to remote parts of India.
- The spectrum allocation will enable BSNL to provide pan India **4G and 5G services.**
- BSNL will provide 4G coverage in rural and unserved villages under various connectivity projects.
- **Fixed Wireless Access (FWA)** services for high-speed internet will be offered by BSNL.
- BSNL will provide services and spectrum for the **Captive Non-Public Network (CNPN).**

Previous Revival Package

- The first revival package for **BSNL and MTNL** was approved in 2019, amounting to **Rs 69,000 crore.**
- The **second revival package** for BSNL and MTNL was approved in **2022 amounting to Rs 1.64 lakh crore.**

About BSNL

- BSNL was incorporated on **15 September 2000**.
- It is a **100% Government of India owned public sector undertaking**
- It is a technology oriented integrated telecom service provider company.
- It provides wire line services, **2G, 3G, 4G and GSM** mobile services including Value Added Services (VAS), Internet and Broadband services, Wi-Fi services, Data Center services etc.

Headquarters - **New Delhi, India**

9. RBI Monetary Policy Announcement (June 8, 2023)

RBI Governor **Shaktikanta Das** announced the **second monetary policy** of this financial year on 8 June. There has been **no change** in the **repo rate for the second time in a row**.

An overview of the news

- After the meeting of the **Monetary Policy Committee**, the RBI announced the monetary policy, saying that the **repo rate would remain unchanged at 6.5%**.
- **Consumer Price Inflation** eased but remains above the target.
- Continued efforts to manage liquidity and currency circulation.
- The current account deficit is expected to narrow further in the fourth quarter.
- **Net inflows into non-resident deposits** increased to **US\$ 8 billion** in FY23 from **US\$ 3.2 billion** in the previous year.
- The Indian Rupee has remained stable since January this year. Conditions are favorable to accelerate capital expenditure.

Monetary Policy Committee's Decision

- Policy **repo rate** remains unchanged at **6.5%**.
- **Standing Deposit Facility** (SDF rate) remains at **6.25%**.
- **Marginal Standing Facility** and bank rates stand at **6.75%**.

Inflation Trends in India

- **Consumer Price Inflation** eased during March-April 2023.
- Inflation moved into the tolerance band, declining from **6.7% in 2022-23**.
- **Headline inflation** remains above the target and is expected to continue in 2023-24.

- **Projected CPI headline inflation** for 2023-24 is **5.1%**, assuming a normal monsoon.

Withdrawal of Rs 2000 Note

- Decline in currency circulation and increased government spending.
- System liquidity expansion due to RBI's market operations.
- Deposit of **Rs 2000 banknotes** in banks further **augmented liquidity**.
- **So far ₹1.8 lakh crore worth ₹2,000 banknotes** have come back after the central bank announced to take these out of circulation.
- This is 50% of the total ₹3.62 lakh crore-worth notes in circulation as of March 31.

What is the repo rate?

- Repo rate is the rate at which the central bank of a country (RBI in India's case) lends money to commercial banks when they are short of funds. Here the central bank buys securities.

What is the Monetary Policy Committee?

- **Under Section 45ZB of the amended RBI Act 1934**, the Central government is empowered to constitute a six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to determine the policy interest rate required to achieve the inflation target.
- The first such MPC was constituted on **September 29, 2016**.
- As per the RBI Act, the MPC must meet a minimum of four times in a year.
- The meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee was held from **6 to 8 June 2023**.

10. NHPC inks MoU with Maharashtra Government (June 7, 2023)

NHPC-inks-MoU-with-Maharashtra-Government

State-owned **NHPC Limited** has announced its **collaboration with the Department of Energy, Maharashtra government** through a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** on 7 June.

An overview of the news

- The primary objective of this partnership is to establish **Energy Storage Systems**, specifically **Pumped Storage Systems**, alongside other Renewable Energy Sources like Solar, Wind, and Hybrid, with **a total combined capacity of 7,350 MW**.
- The introduction of energy storage systems, such as **Pumped Storage Systems**, is crucial for storing excess energy during periods of low demand and utilizing it during peak hours.

- These systems play a vital role in ensuring a **reliable and uninterrupted power supply**.
- They contribute to grid stability, enable efficient energy management, and facilitate the **integration of intermittent renewable energy sources into the power grid**.
- By combining pumped storage systems with **solar, wind, and hybrid power generation**, this collaboration aims to optimize the utilization of renewable energy resources.

NHPC Limited

- NHPC Limited, formerly known as the **National Hydroelectric Power Corporation**, is a state-owned company in India.
- It was **incorporated in 1975**.
- Its objective is **developing, operating, and maintaining hydroelectric power projects in India**.
- It is a government-owned company, with the **majority of shares held by the Government of India**.
- It operates under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Power**.
- Some of its major projects include the **Indira Sagar Project** in Madhya Pradesh, the **Teesta Low Dam Project** in West Bengal, and the **Parbati Hydroelectric Project** in Himachal Pradesh.