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1. Ministry of Corporate Affairs organises an Investor Education, Awareness and Protection Conference in Srinagar (Oct. 29, 2022)

Ministry of Corporate Affairs

The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs organised an **Investor Education, Awareness and Protection Conference in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir on 28 October 2022**. The Conference was inaugurated by Chief Guest, Union Minister of State for Ministry of Corporate Affairs Rao **Inderjit Singh**.

During the conference the minister launched various initiatives of the IEPFA.

- The IEPFA Mascot **“Fundoo”** was released.
- **“Niveshak Didi” or female dakiya**, is a joint venture of IEPF Authority with India Post Payment Bank wherein Investor Education will be promoted in “By the women, for the women” concept.
- **“Niveshak Sarathi”**, an investor awareness van was flagged by the minister. It is an initiative by IEPFA to promote financial literacy among people in far-flung areas by spreading knowledge through dedicated audio-visual and print material & a specially designed Van.
- **“Investors’ Handbook”** - a concise compilation of information on savings, budgeting, and investments which provides a vast knowledge of financial instruments.

The Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA)

It was set up by the Government of India on 7 September 2016 under the Companies Act 2013, to administer the Investor Education and Protection Fund.

Investor Education and Protection Fund

The fund was set up under the Companies act in 1999 under the Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs. The main aim of the Fund is to promote investors’ awareness and protection of the interests of investors. Here investor means those who have invested in companies shares, debentures, fixed deposits etc.

Source of Fund

The following amounts that remained unpaid and unclaimed by the investor for a period of seven years from the date they became due for payment are credited to the Fund:

- Amounts in the unpaid dividend accounts of the companies
- The application moneys received by companies for allotment of any securities and due for refund
- Matured deposits with companies
- Matured debentures with companies
- Grants and donations given to the fund by the Central Government, State Governments, companies or any other institutions for the purposes of the Fund;
- And, the interest or other income received out of the investments made from the fund.

2. Government of India extends license of Vedanta’s Barmer oil block by 10 years (Oct. 28, 2022)

Vedanta's Barmer oil block by 10 years

The government of India has extended the production sharing contract license of the Barmer oil block owned by Cairns Oil and Gas, a unit of Vedanta limited, till **14 May 2030**. This information was given by the Anil Agarwal owned company in a stock exchange filing on 27 October 2022. The initial licence to explore and produce oil and gas from the Barmer block expired on May 14, 2020.

Barmer oil field

The Barmer block, with 38 discoveries, till date, has a reserve of hydrocarbons of 5.9 billion barrels of oil equivalent. The block has cumulatively produced more than 700 million barrels of oil in the last decade.

The main oil producing wells have been named by Cairns as **Mangala, Bhagyam and Aishwarya**.

On 21 February 2022, Cairns announced the fresh discovery of oil in the Barmer oil block of Rajasthan the oil well was named as "**Durga**".

Government of India Company **ONGC holds a 30%** stake in the block while Cairn Oil & Gas, a unit of Vedanta Ltd., is the operator with a **70% stake**.

Fact files Oil

- Edwin L. Drake drilled the world's first oil well in 1859 at Titusville, Pennsylvania, USA, in 1866,
- The first oil well to be dug in India was at Digboi field in Assam in September 1889-1890 by Assam Railways and Trading Company Limited registered in London.
- In 1901, Asia's first oil refinery was set up at Digboi, Assam. It is still functional and the world's oldest operating refinery.
- The first oil discovery in independent India was made in 1953 in Naharkatia and then in Moran in 1956 both in Upper Assam.
- Within a year of being formed, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) discovered oil at Cambay (Gujarat), the giant Ankleshwar field in the state of Gujarat in 1960, Kalol (Gujarat) in 1961, Lakwa (Assam) in 1964, Geleki (Assam) in 1968.
- However, the biggest discovery of oil in India was made by ONGC in Mumbai High in 1974. It is an offshore oilfield 176 km off the west coast of Mumbai, in the Gulf of Cambay region of India, in about 75 m of water.

Source : Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India)

3. Gujarat achieves 100 percent household tap connections under Jal Jeevan Mission (Oct. 28, 2022)

Gujarat achieves 100 percent Jal Jeevan

Gujarat has been declared as a 100 percent '**Har Ghar Jal**' state. This means that all households in rural areas in the state have access to safe drinking water through taps.

Important facts

- According to government data, all 91,73,378 households in the state now have water connections.
- Gujarat is now the **third largest state after Haryana and Telangana**, which has now announced the completion of Jal Jeevan Mission.

Jal Jeevan Mission

- Jal Jeevan Mission was launched in **2019**.
- Under the mission, it is envisaged to supply 55 liters of water per person per day to each rural household through functional household tap connections by 2024.
- Jal Jeevan Mission comes under Jal Shakti Ministry.
- This mission ensures the functionality of existing water supply systems and water connections, monitoring and testing of water quality as well as sustainable agriculture.

4. Gujarati new year 'Bestu Varsh' (Oct. 27, 2022)

Gujarati new year 'Bestu Varsh'

Gujarati New Year or **Bestu Varsh** was celebrated on **26 October, 2022**.

Important facts

- In Gujarat, the new year known as Bestu Varsh is celebrated as part of the five-day Diwali celebrations.
- According to the Hindu calendar, it falls on the **Pratipada of Shukla Paksha in the month of Kartik**.
- People start their new year by visiting temples in the morning.
- To welcome the guests on the new year, houses are decorated with Asopalava Torans and marigold flowers and attractive rangolis are made at the entrance.
- Relatives and friends visit each other's house to congratulate the new year. People enjoy traditional feasts.
- This day also marks the beginning of the new financial year. New Year is considered an auspicious day in Gujarat.
- The Gujarati New Year coincides with the Hindu festival Govardhan Puja or **Annakoot Puja** which is celebrated in other parts of India.

5. Odisha Government has started working on Sukapaika River revival plan (Oct. 27, 2022)

Odisha Government

The Odisha Government has started working on the **Sukapaika River revival plan** following a direction from the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)**.

Important facts

- The Sukapaika river which stopped flowing **70 years ago** is set to be rejuvenated as the Odisha government starts working on its revival plan.

About Sukapaika River

- It is one of the several distributaries of the mighty **Mahanadi river** in Odisha.
- The problem began in 1952, when the state government blocked the starting point of Sukapaika with an embankment to protect the surrounding villages from flooding.
- Subsequently, in 1957, two major projects to control floods – **Hirakud Dam** in Sambalpur district and **Naraj Barrage** in Cuttack – were constructed upstream on the Mahanadi.
- The river dried up due to the development of the **Taldanda Canal System**, a major canal in the state.
- It rises from the Mahanadi at Ayatpur village in Cuttack district and flows for about **40 kilometers (km)** before joining its parent river at Tarapur.
- The Sukapaika River is an important system of the Mahanadi river for controlling flood waters and maintaining the flow along the river into the Bay of Bengal.

About Mahanadi River

- It is the **third largest of peninsular India** after **Godavari and Krishna**, and the **largest river of Odisha state**.
- The catchment area of the river extends to **Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Jharkhand and Maharashtra**.
- It originates near Sihawa in Dhamtari district of **Chhattisgarh**.

6. Union Ministry of Home Affairs will organize a Chintan shivir of Home Ministers in Haryana (Oct. 26, 2022)

Chintan shivir of Home Ministers in Haryana

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs will organise a two day (27-28 October 2022) Chintan Shivir at **Surajkund**, Haryana. The Chintan shivir will be presided by the Union Minister for Home and Cooperation, **Amit Shah**. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, will address the Chintan Shivir through video conferencing on October 28, 2022.

Who will participate in the Chintan Shivir

Home Ministers of all States and Lieutenant Governors and Administrators of Union Territories have been invited to participate in the two-day Chintan Shivir.

State Home Secretaries, Director Generals of Police and Director Generals of Central Armed Police Forces and Central Police Organizations will also participate in the Chintan Shivir.

Objective of the Chintan Shivir

- The objective of the two-day Chintan Shivir is to prepare an Action Plan for the implementation of "Vision 2047" and '**Panch Pran**' announced in the Independence Day speech of Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi.
- In the conference of Home Ministers, development of eco-system for cybercrime management, modernization of police forces, increase in usage of IT in criminal justice system, land border management and coastal security and other internal security issues will be discussed.
- The role of 'Nari Shakti' is important to achieve the goal of 'Developed India by 2047' and special emphasis will be given to the safety of women and creating a safe environment for them.
- The aim of the Conference is also to facilitate national policy making and better planning and coordination in the above mentioned areas.

7. Thundi and Kadmat beaches receives Blue Beaches certification (Oct. 26, 2022)

Blue Beaches

In a tweet on 26 October 2022, the Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said that **Thundi** and **Kadmat** beaches in Lakshadweep have received the prestigious Blue Flag certification. Now there are **12 Blue beaches** in India.

What is Blue Beach?

The Blue Beach certificate is given by Copenhagen, Denmark based organisation Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). It is an eco-label given to the cleanest beaches in the world.

The beaches have to meet the about 33 stringent requirements or criteria which includes environmental, educational, access and safety-related criteria.

Indian beaches which has been given the certification

Puri's Golden Beach in Odisha is the first Indian as well as Asia's first Blue Flag certified beach.

Other Beaches are **Shivrajpur Beach** (Gujarat), **Kappad Beach** (Kerala), **Ghoghla Beach** (Diu), **Radhanagar Beach** (Andaman and Nicobar), **Kasarkod Beach** (Karnataka), **Padubidri Beach** (Karnataka), **Rushikonda Beach** (Andhra Pradesh), **Kovalam Beach** (Tamil Nadu) and **Eden Beach** (Puducherry).

Last year, the certification was given to **Kovalam** beach in Tamil Nadu and **Eden beach** in Puducherry.

8. PM Modi hands over houses built under PM Awas Yojana (Gramin) in Madhya Pradesh to over 4.51 lakh families virtually (Oct. 22, 2022)

PM Awas Yojana (Gramin) in Madhya Pradesh

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 22 October 2022 handed over houses to 4 lakh 51 thousand families of Madhya Pradesh under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana- Gramin virtually.

Virtually addressing the state-level program organized in **Satna**, the Prime Minister said that home brings progress for all as the village also progresses due to construction of houses along with the owner of the house. The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh **Shivraj Singh Chouhan** was also present in the programme..

Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, about 38 Lakh houses have been sanctioned so far in Madhya Pradesh and construction of about 29 Lakh houses has been completed at a cost of more than Rs. 35,000 crores.

Housing for All

Government of India has launched **Housing for All** scheme to provide pucca houses to the eligible person by **2022**.

The Housing for All target goal is to be achieved by two central government scheme ; **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana -Gramin (PMAY-U)** and **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban(PMAY-U)**

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana -Gramin (PMAY-U)

It was earlier known as **Indira Awas Yojana** . It was revamped and relaunched as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana -Gramin (PMAY-U) on 20th November, 2016 with effect from 1st April 2016.

The program envisages the completion of **2.95 crore** PMAY-G houses with all basic amenities for the identified beneficiaries by the year 2022.

It is being implemented by the **Union Ministry of Rural Development**.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban(PMAY-U)

It was launched on **25 June 2015** by the Government of India and it is being implemented by the Union **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs**.

The scheme aims to provide pucca houses to all the eligible beneficiaries by 2022.

Around **1.12 crore houses** are to be constructed under the scheme .

9. PM Modi visits last Indian village along Indo -Tibetan border Mana to participate in the 'Saras Mela' (Oct. 21, 2022)

'Saras Mela'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi who is visiting Uttarakhand attended the '**Saras Mela**' in Mana village of Chamoli district, on 21 October, 2022.

Mana Village on the banks of river **Saraswati** is also known as the **last Indian village** along the India-Tibetan border in Uttarakhand is just 3 kms from Badrinath town.

The Saras Mela is normally organized by the Union Ministry of Rural Development all over India with a focus on a particular state. In the mela products made by the women Self Help Groups (SHG) are displayed and cultural activities are also held.

However this Saras Mela was organised at the local level with the participation of the local women SHGs. PM Modi also interacted with the local artisans and visited the stalls in the Mela.

He laid the foundation stone for **road widening projects** worth around Rs 1,000 crore.

The two road widening projects - from **Mana to Mana Pass** (NH07) and from **Joshimath to Malari** (NH107B), will not only provide last-mile all-weather road connectivity to the border areas but are also of strategic significance for the defence forces.

The Prime Minister also visited Badrinath Temple accompanied by the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, **Pushkar Singh Dhami** and the Governor of Uttarakhand, **Retd. Gen Gurmit Singh**.

Kedarnath

Before visiting the Badrinath temple PM Modi visited Kedarnath temple in **Rudraprayag** which is dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Ropeway Projects

The Prime Minister laid the foundation of two ropeway projects in the state to be built at the cost of Rs. 2430 crore.

In Kedarnath he laid the foundation stone of the **Kedarnath Ropeway Project**. The ropeway in Kedarnath will be around 9.7 Km long and will connect Gaurikund to Kedarnath.

The **Hemkund ropeway** project in Chamoli district will connect **Govindghat to Hemkund Sahib**. It will be around 12.4 Km long and will reduce the travel time from more than a day to only about 45 minutes. This ropeway will also connect Ghangaria, which is the gateway to **Valley of Flowers National Park** in Chamoli.

Uttarakhand

Uttarakhand was formed on 9th November 2000 as the 27th State of India. It was formed by carving out the hilly areas of Uttar Pradesh.

It shares international boundaries with China (Tibet) in the north and Nepal in the east. On its north-west lies Himachal Pradesh, while on the south is Uttar Pradesh.

The state is also famous as **God's Land or Dev Bhoomi**.

It has a total of 13 districts.

Official state symbols

- State animal - Musk Deer
- State flower - Brahma Kamal
- State tree - Buransh (Rhododendron)
- State Bird - Monal
- State Instrument - Dhol

10. Tamil Nadu forms panel for vulture conservation (Oct. 21, 2022)

vulture conservation

The **Tamil Nadu** government has set up a state-level committee for conservation vultures on 19 October, 2022.

Important facts

- The 10-member committee will be headed by the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests and Chief Wildlife Warden.
- The members include representatives of NGOs.
- The committee's tenure is two years, and it will take steps to create safe zones for conservation, monitoring and mapping of vulture populations across the state, and existing vulture sites.
- This committee will work to eliminate the use of toxic veterinary drugs, the main cause of death of vultures.

Four species of vultures in Tamil Nadu

- Four species of vultures are found in Tamil Nadu -

1. White-tailed Vulture (*Gyps bengalensis*),
2. Long-billed Vulture (*Gyps indicus*),
3. Asian king vulture (*Sarcogyps calvus*) and
4. Egyptian Vulture (*Neophron perknopterus*)

About Vultures

- Vultures are carcass eaters and play an important role in natural mechanisms of infection control.
- It keeps the ecosystem clean and healthy.
- There are **9 species** of vultures found in India.
- Most of these 9 species are in danger of extinction.
- Bearded, long-billed, slender-billed, white-backed vultures are protected in Schedule-I of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.
- The rest are protected under '**Schedule IV**'.
- According to the **IUCN Red List**, out of 9 species of vultures in India, 4 species are critically endangered, 1 species is endangered, 3 are threatened and 1 is least threatened.