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1. India-Israel Centre of Excellence for Vegetables inaugurated in Chandauli, UP (Aug. 9, 2022)

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar on August 8 laid the foundation stone of an Indo-Israel 'Centre of Excellence' for vegetables in Chandauli district, known as the 'rice bowl' of Uttar Pradesh.

Important facts

- vegetables in Chandauli will now be cultivated in a modern way with the help of Israel.
- This centre will benefit not only Chandauli but also many adjoining districts including Mirzapur, Ghazipur and Banaras.
- Through this center, farmers will get a lot of benefit in increasing the production of vegetables.
- Through this, farmers will be able to get better yields by using the latest methods of farming.
- Here a nursery of other agricultural products including vegetables will be prepared to promote the agriculture sector globally.
- It is the intention of the government that this district, which is leading in the production of paddy and wheat, should be made better in vegetable production as well.

Farmers will get improved seeds

- These centres of excellence act as demonstration and training centres for the latest technologies in the field of horticulture.
- These centres also serve as a source of planting material for planting fruits and vegetables for protected cultivation.
- Here seeds and plants of improved vegetables will be prepared and distributed to the farmers.

Focus on Micro Irrigation

- Cultivation of tomato, pepper, brinjal, chilli, cucumber, baby corn, sweet corn and exotic vegetables is also proposed in the open field.
- Seepage and sprinkler irrigation will also be on display here.

2. Manipur Assembly adopts resolutions to set up population commission (Aug. 8, 2022)

The Manipur Assembly on August 5 passed a resolution to implement the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and set up a State Population Commission (SPC).

Important facts

- The resolutions were moved by JD(U) MLA Jaikishan on the last day of the budget session of the state assembly.
- He claimed that the population in the hilly areas of the state increased by 153.3 per cent between 1971 and 2001, and rose to 250.9 per cent between 2002 and 2011.
- He said that the areas of the Valley also recorded a population growth of 94.8 percent from 1971 to 2001 and about 125 percent from 2001 to 2011.

What is the National Register of Citizens (NRC)?

- NRC is the register which contains the details of all Indian citizens. It was prepared after the census of 1951.
- The register contained the details of all the persons enumerated during that census.
- Till now in India, NRC has been implemented only in Assam, which includes the names of only those Indians who have been living in Assam before March 25, 1971.
- NRC is implemented in only those states from where citizens of other countries enter India.
- The NRC report tells who is an Indian citizen and who is not.
- Some people migrated from Assam to East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) during the partition of India-Pakistan in 1947, but their land was in Assam and people's movement from both sides continued even after partition.
- Due to which the National Register of Citizens (NRC) was prepared in the year 1951.
- The Indian government had announced plans to implement the NRC in the rest of the country in 2021, but it has not been implemented yet.

3. Uttarakhand tourism department to develop 'Modi circuit' at Corbett reserve (Aug. 6, 2022)

The Uttarakhand Tourism Department is working on a plan to develop a 'Modi Circuit' in the Corbett Tiger Reserve.

Important facts

- During the shooting of a television program in the year 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to Corbett Tiger Reserve.
- While shooting for an episode of 'Man Vs Wild' hosted by Bear Grylls on Discovery Channel, Modi did many adventurous activities here.
- During the shooting, PM Modi and Bear Grylls crossed the Kosi river by making a makeshift raft.
- After this PM Modi also passed through the path of a tiger, during which the Prime Minister was carrying a spear in his hand.

- The "Modi Circuit" will boost tourism in the Corbett Tiger Reserve, which is already a popular tourist destination.
- The spots inside the reserve will be the first to be identified by Modi and Grylls during the shoot.
- The idea of developing a "Modi Circuit" in the Tiger Reserve first came up with Uttarakhand Tourism Minister Satpal Maharaj during his visit to Croatia, where a "Game of Thrones Tour Circuit" has been developed for tourists.

Corbett Tiger reserve

- It is situated in Nainital district of Uttarakhand.
- It is the oldest national park in India, home to more than 400 different species of flora and more than 550 different species of fauna.
- It is best known as a protected area for the critically endangered Bengal tiger of India.
- Project Tiger was launched in 1973 in Corbett National Park (India's first national park), which is part of Corbett Tiger Reserve.
- It was established in 1936 as Hailey National Park to protect the endangered Bengal tiger.
- It is named after Jim Corbett who was instrumental in its establishment.

4. Haryana government started the Haryana Chirag Yojana (Aug. 5, 2022)

The Haryana government has recently started the Haryana Chirag Yojana. Under this scheme, the government will provide free education to the economically weaker section (EWS) students of government schools in private schools.

Important facts

- Chirag Yojana means "Chief Minister Equal Education Relief, Assistance and Grant" (Cheerag).
- Under Chirag Yojana, government school students can enrol in private school from class 2nd to 12th. However, for this, the annual verified income of the parents should be less than Rs 1.8 lakh.
- Around 533 budget private schools in villages and small towns had applied under the Chirag scheme. However, due to various technical reasons only 381 schools were found eligible.
- The eligible schools provided 24,987 seats to the EWS students of government schools. But only 1665 students have opted for this scheme, which is 6.66% of the total seats provided.

Haryana Government will make the payment as follows:

- 700 per student from class II to V

- 900 rupees per student in class 6th to 8th
- Rs 1,100 per student in class 9th to 12th

About Haryana State

- Formation - 1 November 1966
- Capital Chandigarh
- Governor Bandaru Dattatreya
- Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar (BJP)
- Legislative Assembly - 90 seats
- Rajya Sabha - 5 seats
- Lok Sabha - 10 seats

5. Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion Plant Being Set Up in Lakshadweep (Aug. 5, 2022)

National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), an autonomous institute under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), is setting up an ocean thermal energy conversion (OTEC) plant with a capacity of 65 kW at Kavaratti Lakshadweep.

What is an Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) Plant?

- OTEC is a process or technology for energy production using the temperature difference (thermal gradient) between sea surface water and deep ocean water.
- The energy of the sun heats the surface water of the ocean.
- In tropical regions, surface waters can be warmer than deeper waters.
- This temperature difference can be used to generate electricity and to desalinate sea water.
- In recent times, high electricity costs, growing concerns for global warming, and a political commitment to energy security have made OTEC commercialization economically attractive in tropical island communities where a high percentage of electricity generation is oil-based.

6. Bihar college astronomy lab on Unesco heritage list (Aug. 4, 2022)

UNESCO has included the 106-year-old astronomical observatory at Langat Singh College in Muzaffarpur, Bihar, in the list of important endangered heritage observatories of the world.

Important facts

- The observatory was built in 1916 in the 123-year-old college, which is now affiliated to the Bhim Rao Ambedkar Bihar University.
- Probably the first planetarium in India was also established in the college in 1946.
- The observatory and planetarium were functioning satisfactorily until the early 1970s. But gradually their use started decreasing over time.
- At present, it is lying completely idle and most of the expensive machines in the observatory have either disappeared or become junk.

What is the List of World Heritage in Danger?

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) compiles the List of World Heritage in Danger.
- The list includes world heritage sites that are under threat from various conditions such as natural disasters, armed conflicts, wars, pollution, uncontrolled urbanization, poaching and uninterrupted tourist development.

7. African swine fever confirmed in Kannur, Kerala (Aug. 3, 2022)

Recently, African Swine Fever has been confirmed for the first time in a private pig farm in Kerala, in the last ten days more than 15 pigs died on the farm due to the disease.

About African Swine Fever

- African swine fever is a highly contagious hemorrhagic viral disease of domestic and wild boars.
- It was first found in Africa in the 1920s.
- Historically, infections have been reported in Africa and parts of Europe, South America, and the Caribbean.
- However, since the year 2007, the disease has been reported in domestic and wild pigs in several countries in Africa, Asia and Europe.
- It has a mortality rate of around 95-100% and there is no cure for this fever, so the only way to stop its spread is to kill animals.
- African swine fever does not pose a threat to humans, as it only spreads from animal to animal.
- African swine fever is a disease listed in the Animal Health Code of the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE).

World animal health organisation

- It is an intergovernmental organisation responsible for improving the health of animals around the world.

- It currently has a total of 182 countries as its members. India is one of its member countries.
- It develops standard documents relating to the rules by which member states can protect themselves from diseases and pathogens. One of these is the Regional Animal Health Code.
- Its standards are recognized by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) as reference to the organisation's International Sanitation Rules.
- Its headquarter is located in Paris (France).

8. 7 new districts in West Bengal (Aug. 3, 2022)

The West Bengal government led by Mamata Banerjee decided to create seven new districts in the state to ease the administrative work.

Important facts

- Earlier there were 23 districts in Bengal which has now increased to 30.
- The names of the seven new districts are Sunderban, Ichmeti, Ranaghat, Bishnupur, Jangipur, Behrampur, Basirhat.
- One new Sunderbans district will be created from South 24-Parganas district and two new districts will be created from North 24-Parganas district.
- Ichhamati district in Bongaon subdivision and another district (whose name is yet to be decided) in Basirhat will be created.
- Ranaghat, a town and municipality in Nadia district, will become the fourth new district.
- A new district named Bishnupur will be created from the existing Bankura district and two new districts Baharampur and Jangipur will be created from Murshidabad district.

How and why are districts created or abolished in India?

- The state governments have the right to create districts or change their borders.
- The government can pass a law in the Legislative Assembly or simply issue an order and notify it in the Official Gazette.
- There is no interference of the Centre in this matter.
- According to a website run by the Government of India, there are currently 718 districts in the country.

About West Bengal

- Neighbouring Countries - It is bordered by Bangladesh in the east, Nepal and Bhutan in the north.

- Neighbouring States - Assam, Jharkhand, Bihar, Sikkim and Odisha are joined by its border.
- Capital- Kolkata
- Governor- Jagdeep Dhangarh
- Chief Minister- Mamata Banerjee
- Number of Assembly seats - 294
- Lok Sabha seats- 42
- Rajya Sabha seats- 16

9. Chamba's Minjar fair got international status, notification issued (Aug. 2, 2022)

After the Governor's approval to the 'Minjar Mela' to be celebrated in Chamba Valley of Himachal Pradesh, the Secretary, Department of Language and Culture, Rajesh Kanwar has issued its notification.

Important facts

- This year it has been celebrated from 24 July to 31 July 2022.
- Actually, the inflorescence of the maize plant is called Minjar.
- When the flowers bloom on the maize, Minjar Mela is celebrated and tourists from all over the country come to participate in this fair.
- Minjar Mela is celebrated to commemorate the victory of the king of Chamba over the ruler of Trigarta (now known as Kangra) in 935 AD.
- It is said that on the return of their victorious king, people greeted him with garlands of paddy and maize, which are symbols of prosperity and happiness.
- This fair is organised on the second Sunday of the month of Shravan.
- Minjar, a silk pendant worn by men and women alike on parts of the dress, is distributed at the time of the announcement of the fair.
- The week-long fair begins when the Minjar flag is hoisted at the historic Chaugan.

Other world famous fairs of India

Fair	State
Gangasagar Fair	West Bengal
Kumbh Mela (in 12 years)	Nashik, Haridwar, Prayagraj, Ujjain

Pushkar (Camel) Fair	Rajasthan
Sonepur Cattle Fair	Bihar
Hemis Gompa Fair	Ladakh
Ambubasi Fair	Assam
Chandrabhaga Fair	Jhalawar (Rajasthan)
Nauchandi Fair	Meerut (Uttar Pradesh)
Surajkund Handicraft Fair	Haryana
Magh Mela	Prayagraj (Uttar Pradesh)
Medaram Jatara	Telangana
Surajkund Fair	Haryana
Onam fair	Kerala
Elephant Festival	Jaipur (Rajasthan)
Sonpur fair	Bihar
Rath Yatra	Odisha
Kans Mela	Mathura (Uttar Pradesh)

10. Assam CM launches digital process of issuance of caste certificate for students (Aug. 2, 2022)

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on August 1 launched 'Mission Bhumiputra', a digital way to issue digital caste certificates to students.

Important facts

- The Chief Minister inaugurated the Bhumiputra Portal in a program organized at Shrimant Sankardev Kalakshetra.
- This mission is being implemented by the Department of Tribal Affairs and Social Justice and Empowerment.
- Now the manual system of issuing caste certificates will be abolished.
- The Deputy Commissioner will give the format of applications for caste certificates to the headmasters of educational institutions from August 8.

- The Headmaster will fill the application forms and send it to the Deputy Commissioners,
- after which the application will be forwarded to the respective caste or tribe boards.
 - Thereafter, the Deputy Commissioner will hold a meeting with the boards to decide on the protocol for issuance of caste certificates to the students.
 - If any doubts arise in the process, the application may be sent for further verification.
 - The certificates will be available in Digi Locker under the IT Act, digitally signed by the respective Deputy Commissioners.
 - With the launch of Mission Bhumi Putra, the problems people faced earlier regarding securing documents will be solved.