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1. Andhra Pradesh government decides to re-join Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (July 14, 2022)

The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to re-join the ambitious Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.

Important facts

- The Andhra Pradesh government has taken this decision after talks between Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan.
- Andhra Pradesh has decided to implement PMFBY from the Kharif-2022 season.
- With this decision, crops of more than 40 lakh farmers of the state will get insurance cover in case of natural calamity.
- Andhra Pradesh had opted out of PMFBY in 2020 citing high premium prices.
- Gujarat, Bihar, West Bengal, Telangana and Jharkhand are still out of the scheme due to low claim ratio and financial constraints.

About 'Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana' (PMFBY)

- The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) was launched on 13 January 2016.
- The scheme provides a comprehensive insurance cover to the farmers in the event of crop failure, which helps in stabilising the income of the farmers.
- This includes all food and oilseed crops and annual commercial/horticultural crops for which past yield data is available.
- Central and state governments pay more than 95% of the premium amount, while farmers bear 1.5-5% of the premium amount.
- A 2% premium will be paid for Kharif crops (Paddy or Rice, Maize, Jowar, Bajra, Sugarcane etc.).
- For Rabi crops (wheat, barley, gram, lentil, mustard etc.) 1.5% premium will be paid.
- A 5% premium will be paid for annual commercial and horticultural crops insurance.
- This scheme was mandatory for farmers who received institutional finance before the year 2020, but by changing it, it has been made voluntary for all farmers.
- In order to ensure more efficient and effective implementation of the scheme, necessary reforms in PMFBY were made by the Central Government in the Kharif season of the year 2020.

2. Uttarakhand first state to implement NEP at pre-primary level (July 13, 2022)

For the first time in the state of Uttarakhand, the new National Education Policy-2020 has been implemented in primary education under school education.

Important facts

- In the Directorate General of Education, the new education policy has been formally launched in the state by the Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami by inaugurating the Balvatikas.
- With this, Uttarakhand has become the first state in the country to implement NEP.
- In the first phase, operation of Balvatikas classes under NEP will be started in five thousand Anganwadi centres operating in government primary schools under the education department.
- At the pre-primary level in the state, children will be educated in Balwatikas under the provisions of NEP.

New Education Policy, 2020

- The new education policy was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 29 July 2020, which has been prepared in consultation with everyone.
- Current Policy Space scientist K. Based on the report of the committee headed by Kasturirangan.
- Under the new National Education Policy, 2020, a target has been set to bring the Gross Enrollment Ratio to 100% by the year 2030.
- Under the new education policy, a target of 6% of GDP has been set for public expenditure on the education sector in collaboration with the central and state governments.
- With the announcement of the new education policy, the name of the Ministry of Human Resource Management has been changed to Ministry of Education.
- In education up to class V, emphasis has been laid on adopting mother tongue/local or regional language as the medium of instruction.
- Along with this, it has been suggested to give priority to mother tongue for class 8 and further education.
- The 'National Curriculum Framework for School Education' will be prepared by the 'National Council of Educational Research and Training' (NCERT).

School Education Provisions

- The new education policy proposes a 5+3+3+4 design educational structure that covers children in the age group of 3 to 18 years.
- Five Years Foundational Stage - 3 Years of Pre-Primary School and Grades 1, 2
- three year preparatory stage
- Middle (or upper primary) stage of three years - grades 6, 7, 8 and

- 4 year higher (or secondary) stage - grades 9, 10, 11, 12
- The last National Education Policy was formulated in 1986 which was amended in the year 1992.

3. Natural farming conference held in Surat (July 12, 2022)

Natural Farming Conference was organised on July 10, 2022 in Surat, Gujarat.

- **Important facts**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the conference in virtual mode and said that 'Sabka Prayas' is the basis for promoting India's development.
- It saw the participation of thousands of farmers and other stakeholders who have successfully adopted natural farming in Surat.
- On the occasion, the Prime Minister highlighted the importance of the "Natural Farming Model".
- Natural farming helps in providing food to millions of people.
- It also protects people from deadly diseases, which are caused by pesticides and chemicals.

- **Natural farming**

- Natural farming is a traditional indigenous farming method based on livestock.
- It does not use any chemical fertilisers or pesticides or organic manures, vermicompost, biofertilizers, bio-pesticides.
- This farming is done with the aim of reducing the cost of cultivation and thus provides benefits mostly to the small and marginal farmers.
- Natural farming in India is being promoted under Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) in the form of Indian Natural Farming System Program (BPKP).
- The Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana has received 4.2 times (as compared to the previous year) allocation of Rs 10,433 crore in the budget for the year 2022-23, which will earmark funds for on-the-ground implementation of chemical-free farming.
- Sikkim is the first organic state in India.

4. Smriti Irani inaugurates Sealdah metro station of East-West corridor (July 12, 2022)

Union Minister for Women and Child Welfare and Minority Affairs Smriti Irani on 12 July inaugurated the Sealdah Metro Station of the East-West corridor.

- **Important facts**

- It will help people living in Kolkata's suburbs to reach the IT hub of Sector-5 without hassle.
- He inaugurated the station literally from Howrah Maidan, which is the terminal station of the 16.6 km long corridor on the other side of the Hooghly river.
- Till now trains were running between Sector-5 and Phulbagan.
- Commercial services till Sealdah will begin on 14 July, taking the total operational length of the corridor to nine kilometres.
- The 2.33 km extension up to Sealdah will help about 35,000 commuters in their daily commute.
- The metro station will connect suburban train services at Sealdah, one of the busiest terminal railway stations in the country.
- The entire length of the East West Metro corridor will be completed by the year 2023.
- **East-West Corridor**
 - It connects Assam's Silchar to Gujarat's Porbandar.
 - The 3,300-km-long corridor is part of the Golden Quadrilateral, a dream project of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
 - The East-West Corridor is related to National Highways 27.
- **North - South Corridor**
 - It connects Srinagar to Kanyakumari (about 4000 km)
 - National Highways 44 is related to the North-South Corridor.

5. Kharchi Puja Festival 2022 (July 11, 2022)

Kharchi Puja or Kharchi Puja is a Hindu festival of Tripura. In this festival, 14 Hindu deities are worshipped, who are considered to be the deities of the Tripuri people.

- **Important facts**
 - The festival includes 14 deities- Shiva, Durga, Vishnu, Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartik, Ganesha, Brahma, Abadhi (god of water), Chandra, Ganga, Agni, Kamadeva and Himadri (Himalaya).
 - Kharchi Puja is mainly a tribal festival but its origin is from Hinduism.
 - The annual 'Kharchi Puja' and festival is meant to cleanse the sins of mortal souls.
 - Kharchi Puja is the biggest festival for the Hindu tribals in the Northeast region.
 - Thousands gather from all over the country and neighbouring Bangladesh to attend the 'Kharchi Puja'.
 - The temple of 14 deities was built during the reign of Maharaja Krishna Manikya.

This is an age-old tradition that has been celebrated since around 1760 AD.

- **Major Festivals of North Eastern States**

- Sikkim - Losar, Saga Dawa, Losang
- Nagaland - Hornbill Festival, Motsu Festival
- Assam - Bihu, Ambubachi Fair
- Manipur - Yaoshang, Porag
- Mizoram - Chapcharkut Festival
- Meghalaya - Pomblang Nongkrem, Cherry Blossom Festival

6. Gujarat will host the 36th National Games in September, 2022 (July 11, 2022)

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel announced that the 36th National Games will be held in Gujarat for the first time from 27 September to 10 October.

- **Important facts**

- The prestigious event is being organised after a gap of seven years, last held in Kerala in 2015.
- Competitions will be held in six cities of the state namely Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Surat, Vadodara, Rajkot and Bhavnagar.
- Around 7000 players from across the country will participate in 36 sports.
- Indoor and outdoor events like Athletics, Hockey, Football, Volleyball, Lawn Tennis, Table Tennis, Judo, Kushmi, Kabaddi and Kho-Kho etc. will be organised.
- The 36th National Games were to be held in Goa in May 2020 but were postponed indefinitely due to the spread of COVID-19.

- **About Gujarat State**

- Formation - 1 May 1960
- Gujarat is also known as 'The Land of Legends'.
- The Gir Forest National Park in Gujarat is home to the only wild population of Asiatic Lions in the world.
- Gujarat is the main producer of cotton, tobacco and groundnut in the country.
- Garba is the main traditional dance of Gujarat.
- Lothal was the ancient city of Gujarat where India's first port was established.
- Capital- Gandhinagar

- Governor- Acharya Devvrat
- Chief Minister- Bhupendrabhai Patel
- Assembly seats-182
- Rajya Sabha seats- 11

7. Delhi Government launched Mission Kushal Karmi (July 9, 2022)

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia has launched Mission Kushal Karmi to help construction workers improve their abilities.

• Important facts

- The program has been developed by the Delhi Government in association with Delhi University of Skills and Entrepreneurship (DSEU) and Delhi Construction Board.
- This program started by Skill University along with Simplex, NAREDCO and India Vision Foundation to make construction workers and masons etc., is very special.
- In this, the skill of the workers will be enhanced through a special training program of 15 days each.
- Two lakh workers will be given skill training in various fields in a year.
- With this effort, along with increasing the skill, the income of the workers will also increase by up to eight thousand rupees. Also, construction companies will get better and smarter workers by getting them to work in a better way, less wastage and there will be huge savings.
- 4200 will also be given to all the workers after completing the training.

• About Delhi

- Delhi was accepted as the capital of the Union of India after independence in 1947.
- In 1956 it was given the status of a Union Territory.
- Under the 69th Constitutional Amendment, 1991, the Union Territory of Delhi was made 'National Capital Territory of Delhi', giving special status to it.
- A 70-member assembly and a 7-member council of ministers were also arranged for Delhi.
- NCR includes the districts of Uttar Pradesh (8), Haryana (14) and Rajasthan (2) adjoining Delhi.
- Lt. Governor- Vinai Kumar Saxena
- Chief Minister- Shri Arvind Kejriwal

8. Chhattisgarh govt approves electric vehicle policy to create employment (July 9, 2022)

Chhattisgarh has become the 21st state in India to ratify its Electric Vehicle Policy.

• Important facts

- Chhattisgarh EV Policy 2022 was approved during the cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.
- The objective of the policy is not only to increase the number of electric vehicles on the roads, but also to develop the state as an EV manufacturing hub in the coming days.
- “Under the policy, the government has set a target of 15 percent new registrations of vehicles for personal use or commercial use as EVs by 2027.”
- Chhattisgarh EV policy will be applicable for commercial and non-commercial vehicles.
- Full rebate in road tax will be given on all electric vehicles purchased during the first two years from the date of official implementation of this policy.

• About Chhattisgarh State

- Chhattisgarh is a densely forested state in central India known for its temples and waterfalls.
- It is also known as the rice bowl due to its abundant production of paddy.
- Chhattisgarh has the world's largest area of kimberlite deposits.
- Chhattisgarh accounts for 16 percent of the total mineral production of the country.
- It is the second largest state in the country in terms of mineral revenue.
- The state of Chhattisgarh was formed on 1 November 2000.
- Capital- Raipur
- Governor- Anusuiya Uike Baghel
- Chief Minister- Bhupesh Baghel

9. 16 killed in cloudburst during Amarnath Yatra (July 9, 2022)

16 pilgrims lost their lives in flash floods triggered by cloudburst near the holy cave of Amarnath in Ganderbal district of Jammu and Kashmir.

• Important facts

- The flash flood washed away a part of the camp.
- About 50 people are missing at the site of the flood.

- The injured were shifted to temporary medical camps set up in Baltal.
- The exact location of the cloudburst and flash floods is the Kali Mata Y Junction, which is located in the lower Amarnath cave towards the Baltal base camp.
- **What is a Cloudburst?**
 - It is a sudden, very heavy rainfall that is usually local in nature and of short duration.
 - Most cloudbursts occur in connection with thunderstorms.
 - According to the IMD it is a weather phenomenon with "unexpected rainfall" in excess of 100 mm/h over a geographical area of about 20-30 sq km.
 - In a cloudburst event, a large amount of water can accumulate at high levels, and if the upward currents weaken, all this water falls to the ground at once.
 - Cloudburst is a common phenomenon especially in mountainous areas.
- **About Amarnath Yatra**
 - Amarnath Yatra is an annual pilgrimage to the Amarnath cave temple of Lord Shiva located in the Himalayas.
 - The cave is located at an altitude of 3,888 meters, about 141 km (88 mi) from Srinagar.
 - According to religious beliefs, when Lord Shiva decided to tell Parvati the secret of his immortality (Amar Katha), he chose the Amarnath cave deep in the Himalayas in South Kashmir.
 - The ice lingam, representing Lord Shiva is formed by a trickle of water from a cleft in the roof of the cave.
 - Shiva Lingam takes its full shape every year in May after which it starts melting.
- **Other pilgrimage sites in Jammu and Kashmir**
 - **Vaishno Devi Mandir**
 - It is a very popular Hindu temple dedicated to the Hindu Goddess.
 - It is located in the Trikuta Mountains of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - It is situated at an altitude of 5200 feet above sea level.
 - **Shankracharya Temple**
 - It is situated on the Zabarwan Mountain in Srinagar.
 - The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva.
 - It is located about 1100 feet above the plains.
 - It is said that the great saint Shankaracharya stayed there during his visit to Kashmir.
 - **Raghunath Temple**
 - It is one of the largest temples in North India and is located in Jammu.

- It was built by Maharaja Gulab Singh (founder of the state of Jammu and Kashmir) and his son Ranbir Singh.
- The temple has many idols of Hindu gods and goddesses, but its main deity is Lord Rama.

10. Home Minister Amit Shah chair Northern Zonal Council meeting in Jaipur (July 9, 2022)

Union Home Minister Amit Shah chaired the 30th meeting of the Northern Zonal Council held in Jaipur on July 9, where security, road, transport, industry, water, electricity and other issues of common interest were discussed.

• Important facts

- Chief Ministers, Governors and Lieutenant Governors of 8 states/union territories including Rajasthan attended the meeting.
- Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot delivered the welcome address.
- The meeting was held in Jaipur after 25 years.
- The Modi government has been holding regular meetings of regional councils as part of its overall strategy to strengthen and promote cooperative and competitive federalism in the country.
- In the last eight years, the number of meetings of the Regional Councils and its Standing Committees has tripled.

• About Zonal Councils

- In 1956 first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru give the idea of creation of Zonal Councils.
- There are five Zonal Councils in India which were established in 1957 under Section 15-22 of the States Reorganization Act, 1956.
- A Standing Committee is constituted by each Zonal Council consisting of the Chief Secretaries of their respective Zonal Councils of the Member States.
- These Standing Committees meet from time to time to resolve the issues.
- Chairman - The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils
- Vice-chairman - Chief Minister of the host state

• Five Zonal Councils

1. **The Northern Zonal Council** - States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, National Capital Territory of Delhi and Union Territory of Chandigarh are included.
2. **The Central Zonal Council** - States of Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh are included.

- The Eastern Zonal Council** - States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Sikkim and West Bengal are included.
3. **The Western Zonal Council** - States of Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and the Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli are included.
4. **The Southern Zonal Council** - States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Puducherry are included.
- 5.

• Objectives of the Zonal Councils

- National integration
- Enabling Centre and States to collaborate and exchange ideas and experiences
- Stopping the growth of regionalism, linguism and specific tendencies
- To establish an environment of cooperation among the states for successful and speedy execution of development projects

• Significance of Zonal Councils

- Zonal councils provide a forum for discussion on issues affecting one or more states or issues between the Centre and the states.
- It helps in developing a coordinated approach through deliberation and exchange of views among the states on important issues of social and economic development.
- They provide a forum for resolving disputes between the Centre and the states.

Kindly also see 11 June 2022 post