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1. Over 38 crore loans provided since launch of Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (March 14, 2023)

In a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha on March 14, Minister of State for Finance **Dr. Bhagwat Kisanrao Karad** said that since the launch of the **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana in April 2015**, more than **38 crore loans** have been disbursed so far.

An overview of the news

- He informed that out of this, more than **26 crore loans** have been given to **women entrepreneurs**.
- About **20 crore loans** have been disbursed to **SC, ST and OBC borrowers**.
- The Ministry of Labor and Employment had conducted a **large sample survey** at the national level to assess the employment generation under the **Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana**.
- According to the results of the survey, **1 crore 12 lakh net additional employment** has been generated in the country from **2015 to 2018** by this scheme.

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana

- It was launched on **8 April 2015**.
- Under the scheme, the people of the country are given loans up to a **maximum of 10 lakhs** to start their own small business.
- Any person who wants to further his business can take a loan under this scheme.
- People are issued a **Mudra card** to avail loans under this scheme.
- The loans are provided through Banks, **Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs)**, **Micro Financial Institutions (MFIs)**, and other financial intermediaries.
- More than **64 per cent of the loan accounts** opened under the scheme are **of women**.

Three types of loans under Mudra Yojana

1. **Shishu**- Loans up to Rs.50,000.
2. **Kishor** - Loans above Rs.50,000 and less than Rs.5 lakh.
3. **Tarun** - Loans above Rs.5 lakh and up to Rs.10 lakh.

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3. Centre signs Rs 934 crore deal with HSL to Refit INS Sindhukirti Submarine in Visakhapatnam (March 13, 2023)

In a further boost to achieve '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**', the **Ministry of Defense** on March 13, 2023 signed a contract for **General Refit of Sindhukirti Submarine at Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL), Visakhapatnam** at a total cost of **Rs 934 crore** .

Overview of the News

- Sindhukirti is the **third Kilo class Diesel Electric Submarine**.
- The project involves over 20 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and will generate employment of 1,000 man-days per day for the project duration.

INS Sindhukirti Submarine

- It is a **diesel-electric submarine**.
- It was commissioned on **June 7, 1990** and since then has been serving the nation in various capacities.
- It has a displacement of **1860 tonnes** when submerged and is **67.5 metres in length**.
- The submarine has a **maximum speed of 20 knots** (about 37 km per hour) when submerged and can dive to a **depth of 300 metres**.
- It is armed with **six 533 mm torpedo tubes** and can carry up to 18 torpedoes or missiles.

About Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL)

- The shipyard '**Hindustan Shipyard Limited**' is located in Visakhapatnam.
- It is the country's **first shipbuilding yard**.
- Establishment - **21 June 1941**
- Construction - **Walchand Hirachand**

4. First meeting of Supreme Audit Institution (SAI20) begins (March 13, 2023)

The **1st Supreme Audit Institution 20 (SAI20) Senior Officers' Meeting (SOM)** began on 13 March 2023 in **Guwahati, Assam**.

Overview of the News

- The themes of this meeting are '**Blue Economy**' and '**Responsible Artificial Intelligence**'.
- SAI20 aims to bring together an ecosystem wherein SAIs are active participants in governance, promoting transparency and accountability.
- The SAI-20 meeting will be chaired by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, **Girish Chandra Murmu** and also attended by senior representatives of equivalent institutions from G-20 countries.
- Around 44 delegates from G-20 member countries, guest countries and other international organisations participated in the SAI-20 event.

- Countries like **Australia, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Oman, Republic of Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and UAE** participated individually.
- The SAI-20 meeting will conclude on March 15.

5. International conference on “Shared Buddhist Heritage” (March 13, 2023)

An international conference on "**Shared Buddhist Heritage**" will be held on March 14-15 at **Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi**.

An overview of the news

- The conference will focus on **India's civilizational connection with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) nations 2023**.
- It is the first of its kind event under **India's leadership of SCO** (for a period of one year - from September 17, 2022 to September 2023).
- It will bring **Central Asian, East Asian, South Asian and Arab countries** on a common platform to discuss the "**Common Buddhist Heritage**".

Conference organiser

- The two-day event is being organized by the **Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of External Affairs and the International Buddhist Confederation** (IBC-as a grantee body of the Ministry of Culture).
- Many Indian scholars of Buddhism will also participate in this program.

Aim of the Conference

- To re-establish the **trans-cultural link** between Buddhist art, art styles, archaeological sites and antiquity of Central Asia in the collections of various museums in SCO countries.

6. Chinese parliament appoints Li Qiang as the country's new prime minister (March 13, 2023)

Li Qiang was appointed as the **new Premier or Prime Minister of China** by the **Chinese Parliament** on March 11, 2023.

Overview of the News

- **Li Keqiang**, who had held the position for the past **ten years**, was replaced by **Li Qiang**.
- Li Qiang's nomination was approved at the annual meeting of the **National People's Congress (NPC)**, the official body that adopts the resolutions of the **Communist Party of China (CPC)**.

About China

- it is an **east asian country**
- It is the **third largest country in the world in terms of total land area.**
- President - **Xi Jinping**
- Capital - **Beijing**
- National language - **Mandarin**
- Currency - **Renminbi**

7. ISRO drops 12-year-old satellite Megha Tropiques into Pacific Ocean (March 13, 2023)

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** recently successfully carried out a controlled descent of its **12-year-old low earth orbit satellite Megha Tropiques-1 (MT-1)** into the **Pacific Ocean.**

An overview of the news

- ISRO has informed that it is planning to bring this **satellite back to Earth.**
- Dropping this satellite on the earth was a very challenging task for ISRO, which ISRO successfully carried out.
- ISRO has been steadily reducing the distance of the satellite from Earth **since August, 2022.**
- For this, he was spending about **120 kg of fuel present in the satellite.**
- The booster of the satellite was turned on twice before reaching the earth.
- This process is called de-boost. The satellite started burning rapidly as soon as it entered the Earth's atmosphere and was completely destroyed by the time it reached the sea.

About Megha Tropiques Satellite

- This satellite was launched in **October 2011 by ISRO** in collaboration with the **French space agency CNES.**
- The satellite was designed to provide **weather information** for three years, but it served for **more than 10 years.**

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

- It was established on **15 August 1969.**

- It is the **national space agency of India**. It launches its space rocket from **Satish Dhawan Space Center in Sriharikota**, Andhra Pradesh.
- Headquarters: **Bengaluru**
- Chairman: **S Somnath**

8. Saudi Space Commission discussed with ISRO (March 13, 2023)

From March 6 to 10, a **high-level delegation from the Saudi Space Commission**, led by **Dr. Mohammad Saud Al-Tamimi**, CEO, visited India to discuss space cooperation.

News Overview

- The delegation interacted extensively with various entities in India, including the **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** and Indian space companies such as New Space India Limited and Centum Electronics.
- ISRO Chairman Dr. Al-Tamimi has been invited to attend the **G20 Space Economy Leaders' Meeting in Bengaluru** in July 2023.
- **Dr. Al-Tamimi** invited ISRO Chairman to attend the **Space Economy Forum** later this year in Saudi Arabia.
- The visit is viewed as a positive step towards strengthening the two countries' space partnership.

About Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)

- Establishment - **1969 (by Vikram Sarabhai)**
- Headquarters - **Bengaluru**
- Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space (DOS) - **S. Somnath**

About Saudi Arabian Space Commission (SSC)

- Established - **27 December 2018**
- Space Agency President - **Abdullah Alswaha**
- CEO - **Mohammed bin Saud Al-Tamimi**

About Saudi Arabia

- It is a country located in **West Asia**.
- It is the largest country in Asia and the **second largest country in the Arab world**.
- The Gulf of Aqaba separates Saudi Arabia from Egypt and Israel to the northwest.
- King - **Salman**

- Crown Prince and Prime Minister - **Mohammed Salman bin**
- Capital - **Riyadh**
- Currency - **Saudi Riyal**
- National language - **Arabic**

9. Defence forces halt ALH Dhruv fleet operations in wake of Navy accident (March 13, 2023)

Due to the **crash of the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) Dhruv fleet** of the Indian Navy, the defense forces have halted the operation of ALH Dhruv helicopters till the investigation report comes.

An overview of the news

- The **Army, Navy and Air Force along with the Indian Coast Guard** operate the ALH helicopter.
- ALH Dhruv helicopters are used by the **Indian Defense Forces** in a number of roles including transport of men and material.
- ALH Dhruv is one of the vital parts of the helicopter missions used by the three forces, which are deployed in different terrains.

About Dhruv

- Advanced Light Helicopter or **ALH-DHRUV** is an **indigenously developed aircraft by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** with a twin-engine.
- This helicopter was **first flown in 1992**, but was put into service in **2002 after certification**.
- The aircraft is certified for military operations by the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation**.
- The major variants of Dhruv are classified as **Dhruv Mk-I, Mk-II, Mk-III and Mk-IV**.

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