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1 Li increase in the Universe

CONTEXT:

- In a study recently published in Nature Astronomy scientists from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) along with their international collaborators have provided robust observational evidence for the first time that Li production is common among low mass Sun-like stars during their He-core burning phase.

ABOUT:

- Light inflammable, metal lithium (Li) has brought about a transformation in modern communication devices and transportation.
- A great deal of today's technology is powered by lithium in its various shades. But where does the element come from?
 - The origin of much of the Li can be traced to a single event, the **Big-Bang** that happened about 13.7 Billion years ago, from which the present-day Universe was also born.
- Over time, Li content in the physical Universe has increased by about a factor of four, which is meager compared to the rest of the elements carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, iron, nickel and so on which grew about a million times over the lifetime of the Universe.
- Stars are primary contributors to this significant enhancement of heavier elements through mass ejections and stellar explosions.
- As per the current understanding based on today's best models, lithium in stars like our Sun only gets destroyed over their lifetime.
- The composition of all the elements in the Sun and the Earth is similar. But, the measured content of Li in the Sun is a factor of 100 lower than that of the Earth, though both are known to have formed together.

2 Accelerate Vigyan

CONTEXT:

- To provide a single platform for research internships, capacity building programs and workshops across the country, the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) has launched a new scheme called 'Accelerate Vigyan' (AV).

ABOUT:

- The primary objective of this inter-ministerial scheme is to give more thrust on encouraging high-end scientific research and preparing scientific manpower, which can lead to research careers and knowledge-based economy.
- Recognizing that all research has its base as the development of quality and well-trained researchers, AV will initiate and strengthen mechanisms of identifying research potential, mentoring, training, and hands-on workshops on a national scale.
- The vision is to expand the research base, with three broad goals, namely, consolidation/aggregation of all scientific programs, initiating high-end orientation workshops, and creating opportunities for research internships for those who do not have access to such resources/facilities.
- The scheme is sub-divided into two components: 'ABHYAAS' and 'SAMMOHAN'.

- As for the 'ABHYAAS' programme, it is an attempt to boost research and development in the country by enabling and grooming potential PG/PhD students by means of developing their research skills in selected areas across different disciplines or fields.
 - It has two components: High-End Workshops ('KARYASHALA') and Research Internships ('VRITIKA').
- SAMMOHAN has been sub-divided into 'SAYONJIKA' and 'SANGOSHTI'.
 - SAYONJIKA is an open-ended program to catalogue the capacity building activities in science and technology supported by all government funding agencies in the country.
 - SANGOSHTI is a pre-existing program of SERB.

The Science & Engineering Research Board (SERB)

- ▶ SERB is a statutory body established through an Act of Parliament. Supporting basic research in emerging areas of Science & Engineering is the primary and distinctive mandate of the Board.
- ▶ The Board structure, with both financial and administrative powers vested in the Board, would enable quicker decisions on research issues, greatly improving thereby our responsiveness to the genuine needs of the research scientists and the S&T system.

3

Sankalp Parva

CONTEXT:

- To commemorate Sankalp Parva, Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism planted trees in Delhi.

ABOUT:

- The **Ministry of Culture** has decided to celebrate **Sankalp Parva** from **28th June to 12th July 2020**, where Ministry expects all its Subordinate Offices, Academies, Attached Institutions, and Affiliated Institutions to plant trees in its campus or at the surroundings wherever it is possible.
- The Ministry of Culture recommended to plants five trees which represents the herbal heritage of our country. These trees are (i) "Bargad" (ii) "Awla" (iii) "Pepal" (iv) "Ashok" (v) "Bel". It also said that if saplings of these trees are not available then people may do plantation of any other sapling of their choice.
- The organizations must ensure that each employee should plant at least one tree of his/her choice and over and above these five trees which should be planted.
- The Institutions must also ensure that the employee takes care of plant planted by them during the year so that it survives and flourish.

Other such initiatives:

- ▶ **Nagar van scheme:** On the occasion of World Environment Day, the government announced the implementation of the Nagar van scheme to develop 200 Urban Forests across the country in next five years with a renewed focus on people's participation and collaboration between Forest Department, Municipal bodies, NGOs, Corporates and local citizens.

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- ▶ **CAMPA Act or Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act:** It is Indian legislation that seeks to provide an appropriate institutional mechanism, both at the Centre and in each State and Union Territory, to ensure expeditious utilization efficiently and transparently of amounts released in place of forest land diverted for the non-forest purpose which would mitigate the impact of diversion of such forest land.
- ▶ **The National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB):** It has been established by the Government of India to coordinate with all matters relating to Medicinal Plants and Support Policies and Programs for growth of trade, export, conservation, and cultivation.

4

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana**CONTEXT:**

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi announced the extension of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana till the end of November 2020.

ABOUT:

- During these five months, more than 80 crore people will be benefitted.
- The beneficiary would be provided 5 kg free wheat/rice per month along with 1 kg free whole chana to each family per month.
- Under the **National Food Security Act, (NFSA) 2013**, the expenditure towards intra-state transportation and handling charges for movement from FCI depots to Fair Price Shops (FPSs) as also dealer's margin, etc. are shared between Govt. of India and States/UTs as per the sharing pattern and norms for expenditure on this account as per rules framed under NFSA.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana

- Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana, 2016 (PMGKY) is a scheme launched by the Government of India on the lines of the Income declaration scheme, 2016 (IDS) launched earlier in the year.
- As a part of the **Taxation Laws (Second Amendment) Act, 2016**, the PMGKY scheme provides an opportunity to declare unaccounted wealth and black money confidentially and avoid prosecution after paying a fine of 50% on the undisclosed income.
- An additional 25% of the undisclosed income is invested in the scheme which can be refunded after four years, without any interest.
- To overcome the economic impact of coronavirus-induced lockdown on the poor, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, soon after the imposition of lockdown on March 24, announced a relief of Rs 1.70 lakh crore under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana.

National Food Security Act, (NFSA) 2013

- ▶ The enactment of the National Food Security Act, (NFSA) 2013, marks a paradigm shift in the approach to food security from welfare to a rights-based approach.
- ▶ The Act legally entitles up to 75% of the rural population and 50% of the urban population to receive subsidized food-grains under the Targeted Public Distribution System.

- About two-thirds of the population, therefore, is covered under the Act to receive highly subsidized food grains.
- It is being implemented in all the States/UTs, on an all India basis.

5 Operation Samudra Setu

CONTEXT:

- Navy ships to bring back Indian nationals from Iran

ABOUT:

- INS Jalashwa, deployed by the Indian Navy for "Operation Samudra Setu", entered Tuticorin harbour with 687 Indian nationals embarked from Bandar Abbas, Iran. Thus, so far Indian Navy ships have brought back 920 Indian citizens from Iran.
- The embarkation of Indian nationals was facilitated by the Indian Mission in Iran. Personnel were embarked onboard after carrying out requisite medical screening. COVID related safety protocols were also strictly adhered to during the sea-passage.
- The evacuees were received by local authorities at Tuticorin and arrangements were in place for speedy disembarkation, health screening, immigration, and transportation of the evacuees.
- Operation Samudra Setu is part of the Centre's initiative to repatriate Indians stranded in foreign countries due to the coronavirus pandemic.
- With this evacuation, the Indian Navy has now repatriated 3992 Indian nationals from Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Iran during the ongoing pandemic.

Other operations by India:

- **Vande Bharat Mission:** It is the biggest evacuation plan to bring back Indian citizens stranded abroad amidst the coronavirus-induced travel restrictions.
- **Operation Sanjeevani:** IAF airlifted medical and hospital consumables for the Maldives. Medicines including influenza vaccines, anti-viral drugs such as Lopinavir and Ritonavir (these two medicines are being used in other countries to treat COVID-19) have gone to the Maldives.

6 Dhamma Chakra Day celebrations

CONTEXT:

- President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated Dhamma Chakra Day celebrations on Asadha Purnima.

ABOUT:

- The Dhamma Chakra Day celebration is being organized by the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

- This follows a very successful hosting of Virtual Vesak and Global Prayer Week from May 7- 16, 2020 by IBC and Ministry of Culture.
- Royalties, Supreme heads of the Buddhist Sanghas and Eminent Masters and Scholars from around the world and IBC chapters, member organizations are participating.

Dhammachakra Pravartan Day

- Dhammachakra Pravartan Day (DhammaChakra Anupravartan Din) is a day to celebrate the Buddhist conversion of B. R. Ambedkar and approximately 600,000 followers on 14 October 1956 at Deekshabhoomi.
- Dhammachakra Pravartan day is a day when Architect of Indian Constitution Dr. Baba Saheb Ambedkar converted himself as Buddhist. It is celebrated at Deeksha Bhoomi every year.
- Every year on Ashoka Vijayadashami, millions of Buddhists gather at Deekshabhoomi to celebrate the mass conversion.

International Buddhist Confederation

- It is the biggest religious Buddhist confederation, based in Delhi, India.
- The architect of this Confederation is Lama Lobzang. This confederation is named as the first organization which unites Buddhists from the whole world.

7

Agreement for Emergency Response Programme

CONTEXT:

- The World Bank and the Government of India signed the \$750 million agreement for the MSME Emergency Response Programme to support the increased flow of finance into the hands of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), severely impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

ABOUT:

- The World Bank's MSME Emergency Response Programme will address the immediate liquidity and credit needs of some 1.5 million viable MSMEs to help them withstand the impact of the current shock and protect millions of jobs.
- This is the first step among a broader set of reforms that are needed to propel the MSME sector over time.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the MSME sector leading to loss of livelihoods and jobs. The Government of India is focused on ensuring that the abundant financial sector liquidity available flow to NBFCs, and that banks which have turned extremely risk-averse, continue taking exposures in the economy by lending to NBFCs.
- This project will support the Government in providing targeted guarantees to incentivize NBFCs and banks to continue lending to viable MSMEs to help sustain them through the crisis.

The World Bank Group, including its private sector arm – the International Finance Corporation (IFC), will support the government's initiatives to protect the MSME sector by:

- **Unlocking liquidity:** This program will support the government's efforts to channel that liquidity to the MSME sector by de-risking lending from banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) to MSMEs through a range of instruments, including credit guarantees.
- **Strengthening NBFCs and SFBs:** This will include supporting the government's refinance facility for NBFCs. In parallel, the IFC is also providing direct support to SFBs through loans and equity.



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- **Enabling financial innovations:** Today, only about 8 percent of MSMEs are served by formal credit channels. The program will incentivize and mainstream the use of fintech and digital financial services in MSME lending and payments.

8 Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

CONTEXT:

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister has given its approval to a new pan India Central Sector Scheme-Agriculture Infrastructure Fund.

ABOUT:

- The scheme shall provide a medium - long term debt financing facility for investment in viable projects for post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets through interest subvention and financial support.
- Under the scheme, Rs. One Lakh Crore will be provided by banks and financial institutions as loans to agricultural institutions.
- The Project by way of facilitating formal credit to farm and farm processing-based activities is expected to create numerous job opportunities in rural areas.
- All loans under this financing facility will have interest subvention of 3% per annum up to a limit of Rs. 2 crore. This subvention will be available for a maximum period of seven years.
- Moratorium for repayment under this financing facility may vary subject to minimum of 6 months and maximum of 2 years.
 - Further, credit guarantee coverage will be available for eligible borrowers from this financing facility under Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) scheme for a loan up to Rs. 2 crore. The fee for this coverage will be paid by the Government.
 - In case of FPOs the credit guarantee may be availed from the facility created under FPO promotion scheme of Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare (DACFW).
- Agri Infra fund will be managed and monitored through an online Management Information System (MIS) platform. It will enable all the qualified entities to apply for a loan under the fund.
- The National, State, and District level Monitoring Committees will be set up to ensure real-time monitoring and effective feedback.
- The duration of the Scheme shall be from FY-2020 to FY-2029 (10 years).

9 Case Study Based on Community Health Workers

CONTEXT:

- About 42,000 Jharkhand's Sahiyas took part in the Intensive Public Health Survey to identify the COVID-19 high-risk population.

Case Study:

- On 13th March 2020, Kamarunisha and her husband Noor Mohammad, of Telo village in Bokaro district, Jharkhand returned home after participating in the Jamaat. They were tested for COVID-19 at the airport and advised home quarantine in their village. The village **Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), known as Sahiya**, Reena Devi, obtained this information during the household survey.

- She immediately informed the medical officer-in-charge of the block, counseled the couple to follow home quarantine as per norms, and followed up regularly regarding their health status and healthcare needs. Kamarunisha tested positive and was immediately quarantined at Bokaro General Hospital.
- The Sahiya, Reena Devi, coordinated for a medical team to be sent to the couple's house the next day and helped in-home quarantine for the family members. She continued to actively follow-up with the couple and played a crucial role in creating awareness in the family as well as in the community for the prevention of COVID-19.
- Timely action and persistent efforts by Reena Devi helped in preventing the spread of infection to other members of the family and her community.

Sahiya:

- ▶ The ASHAs in Jharkhand, known as "Sahiyas", has been supporting the delivery of health care services to the last mile, especially in the tribal areas.
- ▶ Since the launch of the programme, the Sahiyas have been widely acknowledged for their commitment and agency in enabling access to health care, even in the hard to reach and remote tribal areas.
- ▶ Sahiyas have been actively engaged in various activities related to COVID-19 since March 2020, such as creating awareness about preventive measures of COVID-19 like frequent hand-washing with soap and water, use of masks/face covers when stepping out in public spaces, following proper etiquette while coughing and sneezing, etc. They are also involved in contact tracing, line listing, and follow up of the COVID-19 cases.

Manju Jeena of Odisha:

- ▶ Manju Jeena, an ASHA from village Kandalei of Khurda district, Odisha, has been working tirelessly to support COVID-19 related activities and ensure that her community has access to essential and other health services.
- ▶ In her years of committed community service, Manju has built up significant social capital, enabling her to effectively negotiate in addressing COVID related stigma and resultant discrimination.
- ▶ When a young returnee migrant was denied entry into the village and his home, Manju took it upon herself to single-handedly address the stigmatizing behavior of the community.
- ▶ She combined community awareness on COVID-19 with relentless advocacy to ensure that the returnee was able to stay in home quarantine.
- ▶ She rigorously undertook regular follow up on his health status and healthcare needs during the quarantine period.

10 Hydrogen Propelled Vehicles

CONTEXT

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has notified a draft notification, proposing amendment to the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989 for the inclusion of the standards for the safety evaluation of the vehicles being propelled through hydrogen fuel cells.

ABOUT

- It is proposed to include motor vehicles of categories M and N, running on compressed gaseous hydrogen fuel cell, to be in accordance with AIS 157:2020, as amended from time to time, till the corresponding BIS specification is notified under the Bureau of Indian Standard Act, 2016 (11 of 2016).
- Further, the hydrogen fuel specifications for fuel cell vehicles shall be in accordance with ISO 14687 till the corresponding BIS specification is notified under the Bureau of Indian Standard Act, 2016 (11 of 1986).
- Ministry has invited suggestions and comments from all stakeholders including the general public on the proposed amendment.

Hydrogen Vehicles

- ▶ A hydrogen vehicle is a vehicle that uses hydrogen fuel for motive power. Hydrogen vehicles include hydrogen-fueled space rockets, as well as automobiles and other vehicles.
- ▶ The power plants of such vehicles convert the **chemical energy of hydrogen to mechanical energy** either by burning hydrogen in an internal combustion engine, or, more commonly, by reacting hydrogen with oxygen in a fuel cell to run electric motors. Widespread use of hydrogen for fueling transportation is a key element of a proposed hydrogen economy.
- ▶ As of 2019, 98% of hydrogen is produced by steam methane reforming, which emits carbon dioxide.
- ▶ It can be produced by thermochemical or pyrolytic means using renewable feedstocks, but the processes are currently expensive.
- ▶ Various technologies are being developed that aim to deliver costs low enough, and quantities great enough, to compete with hydrogen production using natural gas.
- ▶ The drawbacks of hydrogen use are high carbon emissions intensity when produced from natural gas, capital cost burden, low energy content per unit volume at ambient conditions, production and compression of hydrogen, the investment required in filling stations to dispense hydrogen, transportation of hydrogen to filling stations and lack of ability to produce or dispense hydrogen at home.

11**Magnetic Mineralogy****CONTEXT**

- Information frozen in magnetic minerals can forecast climatic changes faster & more accurately.

ABOUT

- Clues to climate change in the past are found in fossils, micro-organisms, gases trapped in ice and isotopes, but the laboratory techniques are cumbersome, costly, and time-consuming. Indian scientists have now unraveled a technique using magnetic minerals that is rapid and efficient.
- Scientists from the Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG), an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India, have tracked climate change by following the Paleomonsoonal pattern of the subcontinent by harnessing magnetic mineralogy, a technique that is faster and more accurate than existing methods.

- The magnetic minerals are sensitive to the physical and chemical environment that they are embedded in. These external changes bring about modifications in the innate structure of these magnetic minerals, transitioning them from one magnetic phase to another.
- In this process, the magnetic mineralogy also changes, for example, from magnetite to hematite and vice versa. Some intermediate phases draw the attention of the researchers to complex climatic conditions prevalent over a period of time strictly from these magnetic phases.
- The study of these changes unravels physicochemical regime operative in the past, helping to gauge the then prevalent climate pattern.

The Indian Institute of Geomagnetism

- ▶ It is an autonomous research institution established by the Government of India's Department of Science and Technology.
- ▶ The facility is engaged in basic and applied research in geomagnetism, as well as allied areas of geophysics, atmospheric physics, and space physics, as well as plasma physics.
- ▶ The Institute currently operates 12 magnetic observatories and actively participates in the Indian Antarctic Program.

12 Rewa Solar Project

CONTEXT

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation the 750 MW Solar Project set up at Rewa, Madhya Pradesh.

ABOUT

- The project comprises of three solar generating units of 250 MW each located on a 500-hectare plot of land situated inside a Solar Park (total area 1500 hectare).
- The Solar Park was developed by the Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL), a Joint Venture Company of Madhya Pradesh Urja Vikas Nigam Limited (MPUVN), and Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI).
- The Rewa Solar Project was the first solar project in the country to break the grid parity barrier. Compared to prevailing solar project tariffs of approx. Rs. 4.50/unit in early 2017, the Rewa project achieved historic results: the first-year tariff of Rs. 2.97/unit with a tariff escalation of Rs. 0.05/unit over 15 years and a levelized rate of Rs. 3.30/unit over the term of 25 years.
- This project will reduce carbon emission equivalent to approx. 15 lakh ton of CO₂ per year.
- The Rewa project has been acknowledged in India and abroad for its robust project structuring and innovations.
- Its payment security mechanism for reducing risks to power developers has been recommended as a model to other States by MNRE.
- It has also received World Bank Group President's Award for innovation and excellence and was included in the book "A Book of Innovation: New Beginnings" released by Prime Minister.
- The project is also the first renewable energy project to supply to an institutional customer outside the State, i.e. Delhi Metro, which will get 24% of energy from the project with the remaining 76% being supplied to the State DISCOMs of Madhya Pradesh.

- The Rewa Project also exemplifies India's commitment to attaining the target of 175 GW of installed renewable energy capacity by the year 2022, including 100 GW of solar installed capacity.

The National Solar Mission

- ▶ It is an initiative of the Government of India and State Governments to promote solar power. The mission is one of the several policies of the National Action Plan on Climate Change.
- ▶ The program was inaugurated as the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on 11 January 2010 with a target of 20 GW by 2022. This was later increased to 100 GW by the Narendra Modi government in the 2015 Union budget of India.
- ▶ The country added 9,362.65 MW in 2017–18, the highest of any year. The original target of 20 GW was surpassed in 2018, four years ahead of the 2022 deadline.

13

Aatamanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM)

CONTEXT

- In an endeavour to improve the information flow and bridge the demand-supply gap in the skilled workforce market, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched 'Aatamanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM)' portal to help skilled people find sustainable livelihood opportunities.

ABOUT

- ASEEM also available as an APP, is developed and managed by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in collaboration with Bengaluru-based company Betterplace, specialising in blue collar employee management.
- The portal will map details of workers based on regions and local industry demands.
- Database of labour migrants in Indian states and overseas citizens, who returned to India under the Vande Bharat Mission and filled SWADES Skill Card, has been integrated with the ASEEM portal.
- Candidate data coming to Skill India Portal from various state and central skilling schemes will be integrated including PMKVY, Fee-based Programs, National Urban Livelihoods Mission, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana, and Seekho aur Kamao.
- Apart from recruiting a skilled workforce that spurs business competitiveness and economic growth, the Artificial Intelligence-based platform has been envisioned to strengthen their career pathways by handholding them through their journeys to attain industry-relevant skills and explore emerging job opportunities especially in the post COVID era.

NOTE:

- ▶ **Vande Bharat Mission:** The Centre started the 'Vande Bharat Mission' to help those stranded due to the novel coronavirus pandemic reach their destinations via international repatriation flights.
- ▶ **Swades Skill Card:** This initiative will create a database of qualified citizens as per their skill-sets and experience to tap into and fulfill the demand of Indian and foreign companies.

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- **Seekho Aur Kamao:** The Central government's 'Seekho Aur Kamao' scheme was initiated in 2013-14 by the Ministry of Minority Affairs for skill development of the minority communities, including Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis, and Jains.

14 Mongolian Kanjur Manuscripts

CONTEXT

- The Ministry of Culture has taken up the project of reprinting of 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur under the National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM).

ABOUT

- Mongolian Kanjur, the Buddhist canonical text in 108 volumes is considered to be the most important religious text in Mongolia.
- In the Mongolian language 'Kanjur' means 'Concise Orders'- the words of Lord Buddha in particular.
- It is held in high esteem by the Mongolian Buddhists and they worship the Kanjur at temples and recite the lines of Kanjur in daily life as a sacred ritual.
- The Kanjur is kept almost in every monastery in Mongolia. Mongolian Kanjur has been translated from Tibetan. The language of the Kanjur is Classical Mongolian.
- The Mongolian Kanjur is a source of providing a cultural identity to Mongolia.
- During the socialist period, xylographs were consigned to flames and monasteries were bereft of their sacred scriptures.
- During 1956-58, Professor Raghu Vira obtained a microfilm copy of the rare Kanjur manuscripts and brought them to India. And, the Mongolian Kanjur in 108 volumes was published in India in the 1970s by Prof. Lokesh Chandra, former Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha).

The National Mission for Manuscripts

- It was launched in February 2003 by the Government of India, under the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, with the mandate of documenting, conserving and disseminating the knowledge preserved in the manuscripts.
- One of the objectives of the mission is to publish rare and unpublished manuscripts so that the knowledge enshrined in them is spread to researchers, scholars, and the general public at large.
- Under this scheme, reprinting of 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur has been taken up by the Mission.
- It is expected that all the volumes will be published by March 2022.

15 Going Online As Leaders (GOAL) Project

CONTEXT

- Ministry of Tribal Affairs hosted a Webinar along with Facebook India for sensitization of Members of Parliament (MPs) from Scheduled Tribe (ST) Constituencies of India on "**Going Online As Leaders** (GOAL) Project".

ABOUT

- GOAL is an initiative launched by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) in partnership with Facebook India to digitally skill and empower 5000 youth from tribal communities to become leaders of tomorrow by leveraging the power of digital technology.
- GOAL Project is aimed at identifying and mobilizing 2500 renowned people from industry (policymakers and influencers), teachers, artists, entrepreneurs, social workers, etc., known for their achievements in their domain areas, to personally mentor tribal youths across India.
- The initiative has been designed to allocate two mentees to a mentor.
- The program targets to work in structured phases including preparatory and design phase; selection of mentors and mentees; execution that includes mentoring, training, internships; and follow-up youth economic and leadership activities.
- The program also seeks to provide handholding support to the youth even after they graduate out for upcoming jobs or self-employment / entrepreneurial initiatives through government schemes.
- The program seeks to have a strong component of quality assurance, monitoring, concurrent evaluation protocols and uses analytics and technology for continuous improvement, decision making, and sustainability.

16 Aids to Navigation Bill 2020

CONTEXT

- Shipping Ministry has issued draft "Aids to Navigation Bill 2020" for public consultation.

ABOUT

- The draft bill is proposed to replace the almost nine decades old Lighthouse Act, 1927, to incorporate the global best practices, technological developments, and India's International obligations in the field of Aids to Marine Navigation.
- The draft bill provides for empowering Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL) with additional power and functions such as Vessel Traffic Service, Wreck flagging, training and certification, implementation of other obligations under International Conventions, where India is a signatory. It also provides for the identification and development of heritage lighthouses.
- The draft bill comprises a new schedule of offenses, along with commensurate penalties for obstructing and damaging the aids to navigation, and non-compliance with directives issued by the Central Government and other bodies under the draft bill.
- With the advent of modern technologically improved aids to maritime navigation, the role of authorities regulating and operating maritime navigation has changed drastically. Therefore the new law encompasses a major shift from lighthouses to modern aids of navigation.

17 Tiger Census

CONTEXT

- India's Tiger Census sets a **New Guinness Record** for being the world's largest camera trap wildlife survey.

ABOUT

- The fourth cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation 2018, results of which were declared to the nation on Global Tiger Day in 2019 by Prime Minister has entered the Guinness World Record for being the **world's largest camera trap wildlife survey**.
- The survey was the most comprehensive to date, in terms of both resource and data amassed. Camera traps (outdoor photographic devices fitted with motion sensors that start recording when an animal passes by) were placed in 26,838 locations across 141 different sites and surveyed an effective area of 121,337 square kilometres (46,848 square miles).
- In total, the camera traps captured 34,858,623 photographs of wildlife (76,651 of which were tigers and 51,777 were leopards; the remainder were other native fauna). From these photographs, 2,461 individual tigers (excluding cubs) were identified using stripe-pattern-recognition software.
- As well as unprecedented camera trap usage, the 2018 "Status of Tigers in India" assessment also conducted extensive foot surveys that covered 522,996 km (324,975 mi) of trails and sampled 317,958 habitat plots for vegetation and prey dung.
- It's estimated that the total area of forest studied was 381,200 km² (147,181 sq mi) and cumulatively the collection and review of data equated to some 620,795 labour-days.
- The All India Tiger Estimation done quadrennially is steered by the National Tiger Conservation Authority with technical backstopping from the Wildlife Institute of India and implemented by State Forest Departments and partners.
- The latest results of 2018 had shown that India now has an estimated 2967 tigers out of which 2461 individual tigers have been photo captured a whopping 83% of the tiger population, highlighting the comprehensive nature of the survey.
- There is hardly any parallel of such a focused species oriented program like Project Tiger across the world, which started with 9 Tiger Reserves, with 50 tiger reserves currently.
- India has now firmly established a leadership role in tiger conservation, with its benchmarking practices being looked at as a gold standard across the world.

Project Tiger

- ▶ It is a tiger conservation programme launched in April 1973 by the Government of India.
- ▶ As the Bengal Tiger is the national animal of India, this project aims to stem the dwindling population of the big cats and work to increase their numbers.
- ▶ The project aims at ensuring a viable population of Bengal tigers in their natural habitats, protecting them from extinction, and preserving areas of biological importance as a natural heritage forever represented as close as possible the diversity of ecosystems across the distribution of tigers in the country.

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA):

- ▶ It was established in December 2005 following a recommendation of the Tiger Task Force, constituted by the Prime Minister of India for reorganized management of Project Tiger and the many Tiger Reserves in India.

18

Green Railway

CONTEXT

- Indian Railways on MISSION MODE of becoming a "Green Railway" by 2030 (Net Zero Carbon Emission).

ABOUT

- Ministry of Railways, to transform Indian Railways into Green Railways by 2030 has taken several major initiatives towards mitigation of global warming and combating climate change.
- Railway Electrification, improving the energy efficiency of locomotives & trains and fixed installations, green certification for installations/stations, fitting bio-toilets in coaches, and switching to renewable sources of energy are parts of its strategy of achieving net-zero carbon emission.
- Indian Railways has completed electrification of more than 40,000 Route km (RKM) (63% of BG routes) in which 18,605 km electrification work has been done during 2014-20.
- Indian Railways has fixed a target of electrification of 7000 RKM for the year 2020-21.
- All routes on the BG network have been planned to be electrified by December 2023. Indian Railways is focusing on the electrification of last-mile connectivity & missing links.
- Indian Railways has also taken several initiatives to promote solar energy. Indian Railways is working to harness the potential of 500 Mega Watt (MW) energy through rooftop Solar panels (Developer model).



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IAS
2021

PRELIMS 2021 PRACTICE PROGRAMME

BATCH-1 Starts

Test Timings:
9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

2
AUGUST
2020

TOTAL 65 TESTS

33 SUB SECTIONAL	6 SECTIONAL	7 CURRENT AFFAIRS
16 MOCK TESTS	3 CSAT	

4000⁺ Topics Covered through
Smart Solution

PROGRAMME FEE: ₹ 8,500 + GST

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