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## 1 THE GANDHIAN CHALLENGE

### CONTEXT:

- On the 150<sup>th</sup> birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, AIM, NITI Aayog's Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) and UNICEF India, including Generation Unlimited, have launched 'The Gandhian Challenge'.

### ABOUT:

- This innovation challenge provides a platform for every child across India to ideate innovative solutions for a sustainable India of their dreams, using Gandhi's principles.
- The winners of The Gandhian Challenge will be awarded in New Delhi by NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission and UNICEF on the occasion of Children's Day in November.
- Through this partnership, AIM and UNICEF recognize every child's ability and right to voice their dreams for a world of their choice, following Gandhi's principles.
- The most innovative, sustainable solutions/ideas will be showcased as a symbol of a larger movement by children taking root in every district of India. Children across India can access to more than 8000 Atal Tinkering Labs across all districts to support their innovative ideas.
- In ATLs, students of class 6th to 12th acquire a problem-solving attitude, develop innovative solutions leveraging technologies like 3D printers, robotics, miniaturised electronics, IOT and programming and DIY kits, with support from teachers and mentors.

### Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):

- AIM is the Government of India's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.
- AIM's objective is to develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platform and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, create awareness and create an umbrella structure to oversee innovation ecosystem of the country.

#### **Six major initiatives of AIM:**

- Atal Tinkering Labs-Creating problem-solving mindset across schools in India.
- Atal Incubation Centers-Fostering world class start-ups and adding a new dimension to the incubator model.
- Atal New India Challenges-Fostering product innovations and aligning them to the needs of various sectors/ministries.
- Mentor India Campaign- A national Mentor network in collaboration with public sector, corporates and institutions, to support all the initiatives of the mission.
- Atal Community Innovation Center- To stimulate community centric innovation and ideas in the unserved /underserved regions of the country including Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
- ARISE-To stimulate innovation and research in the MSME industry.

### About UNICEF India and Generation Unlimited:

- UNICEF, an integral part of the United Nations, works with governments, communities, civil society organizations, the private sector, and other partners worldwide to advance children's rights, and is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Generation Unlimited is a new UNICEF-led global partnership that aims to ensure that every young person age 10-24 is in some form of school, learning, training, self-employment, or age-appropriate employment by 2030. It aims to co-create and scale up proven solutions related to secondary age-education, skills for learning, employability and decent work, and empowerment, with a focus on girls.

**2****EXERCISE KAZIND****CONTEXT:**

- The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of annual military exercise KAZIND 2019 between India and Kazakhstan army was commenced at Pithoragarh.

**ABOUT:**

- The aim of exercise is joint training of troops in Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorism operations in both Jungle and Mountainous terrain.
- Exercise KAZIND 2019 can be termed as a facade of long standing strategic ties between India and Kazakhstan.
- As part of exercise, important lectures, demonstrations and drills related to counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations has conducted. Both the Armies also shared their valuable experiences in countering such situations and also refined drills and procedures for joint operations whenever the need so arises.

**3****INDIA - BANGLADESH TRADE****ABOUT**

- Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia. Bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh has grown steadily over the last decade. India's exports to Bangladesh for the financial year 2018-19 (April-March) stood at USD 9.21 billion and imports from Bangladesh for the same period stood at USD 1.22 billion.
- India and Bangladesh have trade agreement which is facilitative in nature. India and Bangladesh are members of various regional trade agreements including the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), SAARC Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) and the Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) which govern the tariff regimes for trade.
- Under SAFTA, India has granted duty free quota free access to Bangladesh on all items except alcohol and tobacco.
- Various bilateral institutional mechanisms including Commerce Secretary Level Meeting, Shipping Secretary Level Talks, Joint Working Groups on Trade, Customs and Fisheries and Sub-groups on Banking and LCS/ICP Infrastructure meet regularly.
- Four Border Haats, two each in Tripura (Srinagar and Kamalasagar) and Meghalaya (Kalaichar and Balat), have been established for the benefit of communities living along the border areas of both countries. Ten additional Border Haats on the India-Bangladesh border are under implementation.
- Cumulative Foreign Direct Investment from India to Bangladesh has more than doubled from USD 243.91 million in 2014 to USD 570.11 million in December 2018.
- Indian companies have invested in various sectors including telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, FMCG and automobiles sectors in Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh is the biggest development partner of India today. India has extended 3 Lines of Credits (LOCs) to Bangladesh in the last 8 years amounting to USD 8 billion.
- In addition to LOCs, the Government of India has also been providing grant assistance to Bangladesh for various infrastructure projects such as the Agartala- Akhaura rail link, dredging of inland waterways, India Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, and High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) in the areas of education, health, water, culture, urban development, disaster management and community welfare.

**4****YOUTH CO: LAB****CONTEXT:**

- In a latest initiative to recognize young people as critical drivers of sustainable development, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India have launched Youth Co: Lab.**

**ABOUT:**

- It aims at accelerating social entrepreneurship and innovation in young India.
- Through Youth Co:Lab, young entrepreneurs and innovators will get a chance to connect with governments, mentors, incubators and investors, who will help equip them with entrepreneurial skills.
- The initiative will also convene a series of youth dialogues across several cities such as New Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Mumbai to promote entrepreneurship across India.
- AIM and UNDP, as part of UNSDF signed between NITI Aayog and UN India, are collaborating to spread awareness about different issues pertaining to youth, the future of work and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through Youth Co:Lab.
- The first phase of Youth Co:Lab will focus on six SDGs: SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production) and SDG 13 (Climate Action).
- Targeted at supporting young people overcome challenges, UNDP and AIM, NITI Aayog will empower young people through innovative development ideas.
- In this regard, Youth Co:Lab will convene social innovation challenges at the national and sub-national level, which will invite young people in the age group of 18-29 years and start-ups to showcase their proposed ideas and solutions to tackle some of the region's biggest social challenges.
- They will also get the opportunity to pitch their ideas at UNDP's regional centre in 2020.
- Selected applicants will be invited for a national innovation challenge, where each winning start-up will get an opportunity to incubate and strengthen their ideas at the Atal Incubation Centres.

**About Youth Co:Lab**

- Co-created in 2017 by UNDP and the CITI Foundation, and operational in 25 countries across the Asia Pacific region, the Youth Co:Lab initiative aims to create an enabling ecosystem to promote youth leadership, innovation, and social entrepreneurship.

**About Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)**

- AIM including Self-Employment and Talent Utilisation (SETU) is Government of India's endeavour to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. Its objective is to serve as a platform for the promotion of world-class innovation hubs, grand challenges, start-up businesses and other self-employment activities, particularly in technology driven areas.

**5****EXERCISE NOMADIC ELEPHANT- XIV****CONTEXT:**

- 14<sup>th</sup> edition of Indo - Mongolian joint military training, Exercise Nomadic Elephant-XIV was conducted from 05 to 18 Oct 19 at Bakloh.**

**ABOUT:**

- Nomadic Elephant - XIV is the fourteenth edition between the two nations aimed at training troops in counter insurgency & counter terrorism operations under United Nations mandate.
- The joint exercise will enhance defence co-operation and military relations between the two nations.
- It is an ideal platform for the armies of both the nations to share their experiences & best practices and gain mutually during the joint training.
- The joint training aims at evolving various tactical drills in counter-terror environment like Convoy Protection Drill, Room Intervention Drills, Ambush/ Counter Ambush Drills, while jointly conducting counter terrorist operations under UN mandate.
- The joint training will also lay emphasis on conducting operations by a cohesive subunit, comprising of troops from both the armies, in an adverse operational conditions thus enhancing the interoperability between the two armies.
- The training planned by both the contingents will go a long way in capacity building for conducting joint operations by the two armies.
- As part of the exercise, important lectures, demonstrations and drills related to counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations will be conducted. Both the Armies will also share their valuable experiences in countering such situations as also refine drills and procedures for joint operations.

**6****e-DANTSEVA WEBSITE & MOBILE APPLICATION****CONTEXT:**

- **Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan, launched the eDantseva website and mobile application, the first ever national digital platform on oral health information and knowledge dissemination.**

**ABOUT:**

- E-DantSeva will reach out to more than one billion people with one click in the form of a dedicated website and mobile application.
- E-DantSeva is the first ever national digital platform that provides oral health information both in the form of a website and mobile application.
- Oral health is indispensable for the wellbeing and good quality of life. Poor oral health affects growth negatively in all aspects of human development.
- Dental caries/cavities and periodontal disease remain the two most prevalent dental diseases of the Indian population and dental infections have a potential for serious diseases/infections.
- This initiative of the Ministry with AIIMS and other stakeholders aims to sensitize the public about the significance of maintaining optimum oral health and equips them with the tools and knowledge to do so, including awareness on the nearest oral health service facility.
- The website and mobile application provide oral health information gathered from authentic scientific resources and connects the public to timely advice for managing any dental emergency or oral health problem.
- e-DantSeva contains information about the National Oral Health Program, detailed list of all the dental facility and colleges, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material and a unique feature called the 'Symptom Checker', which provides information on symptoms of dental/oral health problems, ways to prevent these, the treatment modes, and also directs the user to find their nearest available dental facility (public and private sectors both).
- The website also provides GPRS route/images/satellite images of the facility for easier access to the general population.

- In 2014, National Oral Health Programme in its current form was introduced. The Center for Dental Education and Research (CDER), AIIMS, New Delhi functions as the National Center of Excellence for Implementation of NOHP. The Centre has been instrumental in providing consultation and support for the research and other activities for the National Oral Health Program.

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## GANGA AAMANTRAN

### **CONTEXT:**

- Namami Gange launches Ganga Aamantran – a unique social awareness initiative to connect with the people.**

### **ABOUT:**

- The 'Ganga Aamantran Abhiyan' is a pioneering and historic exploratory open-water rafting and kayaking expedition on the Ganga River .
- Starting at Devprayag and culminating at Ganga Sagar, the expedition covers the entire stretch of over 2500 kms of the Ganga River.
- This is the first ever effort by National Mission for Clean Ganga to raft across the entire stretch of the river and also the longest ever social campaign undertaken through an adventure sporting activity to spread the message of River Rejuvenation and Water Conservation on a massive scale. The expedition will draw attention to the ecological challenges being faced by Ganga.
- The expedition will encompass the five Ganga basin states including Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal with stops at Rishikesh, Haridwar, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, Sonepur and Kolkata.
- Apart from the awareness campaign, the team from CSIR-Indian Institute of Toxicology Research will collect water samples from across diverse ranges of the river for the purpose of water testing, while members of the Wildlife Institute of India will undertake flora and fauna census for the year 2019.
- The Expedition would comprise of members primarily from the Indian Armed Forces. The Armed Forces is supporting this expedition extensively by way of involving all the Commands & Units on the Ganga stretch and also the members from the Armed Forces Wives Welfare Association all along the Ganga Basin.
- The expedition will be supported by all the stakeholders of Namami Gange including the MPs of the constituency along Ganga, members of Ganga Praharis, Ganga Vichar Manch among others. The expedition is aimed to reach millions of people on Ganga Basin and would be the largest social outreach through an adventure sporting event ever.

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## MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

### **CONTEXT:**

- To boost skill development at the district level, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) signed a contract with the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore for introducing a two-year fellowship programme Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF) programme.**

### **ABOUT:**

- Programme aims to provide academic inputs and field experience to understand and contribute to the creation of a district level skill development ecosystem.

- Programme is launched in 75 districts across Gujarat, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
- Designed under Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) the fellowship aims to address the challenge of non-availability of personnel for implementation of various programmes at national, state and district levels.
- Eligible fellows for the programme have to be in 21-30 years age-group, have a graduation degree from a recognized university and be citizens of India. Proficiency in official language of state of fieldwork will be mandatory.
- MGNF seeks to create a cadre of young individuals and train them in a blended academic programme that provides both academic inputs and a component of field immersion at the district level.
- Besides allowing for an immersive experience to fellows under the programme, MGNF will also be an attractive proposition for those who wish to eke a career in public policy.
- This ensures participation of a larger community for local merit good.
- In the course of their training, fellows will work under the close supervision of state skill development missions (SSDM) and will spend time and effort in understanding skilling challenges and gaps in the district.
- They are expected to enrich skilling programmes by bringing in fresh thinking to local planning, execution, community interaction and outcome management.
- Fellows will receive a stipend of Rs. 50,000 in the first year and Rs. 60,000 in the second year. On completion of their engagement, they will be awarded a Certificate in Public Policy and Management from IIM Bangalore.
- The Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship programme is aimed to identify and train a group of young, committed and dynamic individuals, who will leverage the IIMB ecosystem in management, entrepreneurship and public policy and work with the district administration in strengthening the process of skilling to create a vibrant local district economy.

### **About SANKALP:**

- Launched by the Government in January 2018, SANKALP is a World Bank loan assisted project that aims to strengthen institutional mechanisms for skill development and increase access to quality and market-relevant training for youth across the country.
- Four key result areas have been identified under SANKALP:
  - Institutional Strengthening.
  - Quality Assurance.
  - Inclusion.
  - Expanding Skills through PPPs.

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## **SECOND INDIA-CHINA INFORMAL SUMMIT**

### **CONTEXT:**

- **The Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and the President of the People's Republic of China Mr Xi Jinping held their Second Informal Summit in Chennai.**

### **ABOUT:**

- The two Leaders had an in-depth exchange of views in a friendly atmosphere on overarching, long-term and strategic issues of global and regional importance.
- They also shared their respective approaches towards national development.

- They evaluated the direction of bilateral relations in a positive light and discussed how India-China bilateral interaction can be deepened to reflect the growing role of both countries on the global stage.
- Both Leaders shared the view that the international situation is witnessing significant readjustment. They were of the view that India and China share the common objective of working for a peaceful, secure and prosperous world in which all countries can pursue their development within a rules-based international order.
- They reiterated the consensus reached during the first Informal Summit in Wuhan, China in April 2018, that India and China are factors for stability in the current international landscape and that both sides will prudently manage their differences and not allow differences on any issue to become dispute.
- The Leaders recognized that India and China have a common interest in preserving and advancing a rules-based and inclusive international order, including through reforms that reflect the new realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Both agreed that it is important to support and strengthen the rules-based multilateral trading system at a time when globally agreed trade practices and norms are being selectively questioned. India and China will continue to work together for open and inclusive trade arrangements that will benefit all countries.
- Both Leaders also underscored the important efforts being made in their respective countries to address global developmental challenges, including climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals. They emphasized that their individual efforts in this regard would help the international community achieve the targets.
- Both Leaders are concerned that terrorism continues to pose a common threat. As countries that are large and diverse, they recognized the importance of continuing to make joint efforts to ensure that the international community strengthens the framework against training, financing and supporting terrorist groups throughout the world and on a non-discriminatory basis.
- As important contemporary civilizations with great traditions, both Leaders deemed it important to enhance dialogue in order to foster cultural understanding between the two peoples. Both Leaders also agreed that, as major civilizations in history, they can work together to enhance greater dialogue and understanding between cultures and civilizations in other parts of the world.
- They shared the view that an open, inclusive, prosperous and stable environment in the region is important to ensure the prosperity and stability of the region. They also agreed on the importance of concluding negotiations for a mutually-beneficial and balanced Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.
- The two Leaders exchanged views on the age-old commercial linkages and people-to-people contacts between India and China in the past two millennia, including significant maritime contacts. In this regard the two leaders agreed on establishment of sister-state relations between Tamil Nadu and Fujian Province, exploring the possibility of establishing an academy to study links between Mahabalipuram and Fujian province on the lines of the experience between Ajanta and Dunhuang and conducting research on maritime links between China and India in view of our extensive contacts over the centuries.
- The two Leaders shared their mutual vision on goals for development of their respective economies. They agreed that the simultaneous development of India and China presents mutually-beneficial opportunities. The two sides will continue to adopt a positive, pragmatic and open attitude and to enhance appreciation of each other's policies and actions in line with the general direction of their friendship and cooperation. In this regard, they also agreed to continue to enhance strategic communication on all matters of mutual interest, and to continue the momentum of high-level exchanges by making full use of dialogue mechanisms.
- The leaders were of the view that the positive direction of ties had opened up possibilities for taking bilateral relations to greater heights. They agreed that this endeavor also required strong public support in both countries. In this context the two Leaders have decided to designate 2020 as Year of India-China Cultural and People to People Exchanges and agreed that the 70th anniversary of the

establishment of India-China relations in 2020 will be fully utilized to deepen exchanges at all levels including between their respective legislatures, political parties, cultural and youth organizations and militaries. To celebrate the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations the two countries will organize 70 activities including a conference on a ship voyage that will trace the historical connect between the two civilizations.

- In pursuit of their efforts to further deepen economic cooperation and to enhance their closer development partnership, the two Leaders have decided to establish a High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue mechanism with the objective of achieving enhanced trade and commercial relations, as well as to better balance the trade between the two countries. They have also agreed to encourage mutual investments in identified sectors through the development of a Manufacturing Partnership and tasked their officials to develop this idea at the first meeting of the High-Level Economic and Trade Dialogue.
- The two Leaders have exchanged views on outstanding issues, including on the boundary question. They have welcomed the work of the Special Representatives and urged them to continue their efforts to arrive at a mutually-agreed framework for a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement based on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles that were agreed by the two sides in 2005. They reiterated their understanding that efforts will continue to be made to ensure peace and tranquility in the border areas, and that both sides will continue to work on additional Confidence Building Measures in pursuit of this objective.
- Prime Minister Modi and President Xi also appraised the practice of Informal Summits in a positive light as providing an important opportunity to deepen dialogue and to promote mutual understanding at the Leaders' level in line with the 'Wuhan Spirit' and the 'Chennai Connect'. They agreed to continue this practice in the future. President Xi invited Prime Minister Modi to visit China for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Informal Summit. Prime Minister Modi has accepted the invitation.

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## **L2PRO INDIA IP E-LEARNING PLATFORM AND THE L2PRO INDIA MOBILE APP**

### **CONTEXT:**

- **Secretary Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Guruprasad Mohapatra launched the website and mobile application [Learn to Protect, Secure and Maximize Your Innovation] on Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in New Delhi**

### **ABOUT:**

- The website and app has been developed by Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM)- DPIIT in collaboration with Qualcomm and National Law University (NLU), Delhi.
- The modules of this e-learning platform [L2Pro India IP e-learning Platform and the L2Pro India Mobile App] will aid and enable youth, innovators, entrepreneurs and small and medium industries (SMEs) in understanding IPRs for their ownership and protection, integrate IP into business models and obtain value for their R&D efforts.
- The L2Pro has been successfully implemented in Germany, United Kingdom, Italy and France, benefiting immensely from close collaboration with respective IP organizations and public research institutions. The learning app has been customized for India in order to ensure that innovation which is fundamental to startups are protected, managed and commercialised.
- The L2Pro India IP e-learning platform will have 11 modules for three different levels: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced. Each module comprises of e-text for understanding concepts, short animated videos of the concepts, links to additional resources on the subject and quizzes for assessment and grading the learner's knowledge and understanding of the subject. Learners will access the L2Pro IP e-learning platform through their desktop, laptop, mobile browser and mobile

application (available on Android & iOS), and will be provided e-certificates by CIPAM-DPIIT and NLU Delhi and Qualcomm on successful completion of the e-learning modules.

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## **LOTUS-HR**

### **CONTEXT:**

- **India and Netherlands launched the second phase of the LOTUS-HR (Local Treatment of Urban Sewage streams for Healthy Reuseplant ) as a part of joint collaboration.**

### **ABOUT:**

- The project was initiated in July 2017 and aims to demonstrate a novel holistic (waste) water management approach that will produce clean water which can be reused for various purposes.
- The innovative pilot scale modular plant upon commissioning will treat 10,000 L sewage water per day and will showcase a self-sustaining model for the end user.
- This pilot scale facility will employ multiple technologies so that the data generated at the pilot scale becomes a tool-box of treatment technologies for replication at other sites in Delhi as well as other parts of India where similar drains exist. The rationale is that the mixing and matching of technologies from this tool-box will depend on the quantity (flow rate) and quality (pollutant load) of drain water, land availability, site accessibility as well as topography.
- The LOTUS-HR project is jointly supported by Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India and Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research /STW, Government of Netherlands.

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## **'SEWA SERVICE' TRAINS**

### **CONTEXT:**

- **Indian Railways launched 09 Sewa Service trains.**

### **ABOUT:**

- These Sewa trains will provide connectivity to the far-flung areas where stoppages of premiere trains were not possible.
- These trains will act as link trains to serve the common man of the country.
- It is a unique concept to start these Sewa trains with layover/ spare rakes as a part of 'sweating of assets' initiative by the Indian Railways. This was part of strategies of Indian Railways to have better utilization of the rolling stock without any requisition for new rolling stock.
- These trains will be highly beneficial to the common people especially those who come to metro cities for jobs and education.
- These trains will run on the "Hub and Spoke" Model, thereby facilitating passengers to use these trains to reach the "Hub" for availing onward journey to other major stations.
- Indian Railways plans to run more trains on similar model to serve the passengers of smaller towns and cities. These measures are also expected to boost the earnings of the Indian Railways to help in strengthening the economy.

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