

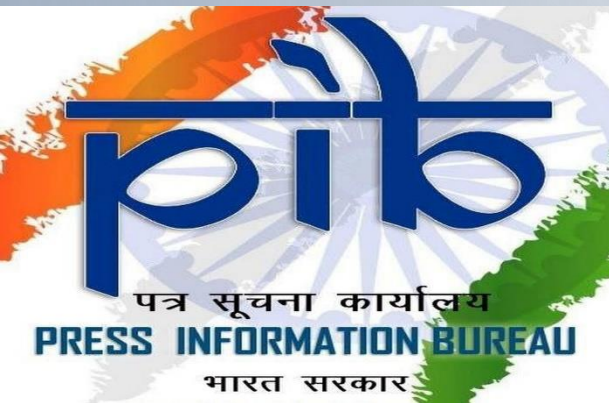


CURRENT AFFAIRS



WEEKLY ROUND-UP

- ✓ **PIB IN DETAIL**
- ✓ **AIR/RS/LSTV SUMMARIES**
- ✓ **NEWSPAPERS DAILY**



06th August 2018 TO 12th August, 2018

Global Innovation Index - 2018

- The 2018 edition of the index was recently launched in New Delhi.
- The event was organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) along with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).
- The index developed jointly by Cornell University, the Paris-based business school Insead and WIPO in Geneva.
- The top rankers of 2018 are Switzerland, Netherlands and Sweden.
- India's rank has been improved from 60 in 2017 to 57 in 2018.
- India also ranked 1st in ICT service exports category and 4th in labour productivity growth.
- The GII indicators are grouped into innovation inputs and outputs.
- Innovation inputs capture the efforts made by the country to boost innovation.
- Innovation outputs measure the results of these efforts in terms of scientific publications, patents, trademarks, production, exports and other outputs.
- India is 2nd among middle-income economies (after China) in the indicators that capture the quality of the innovation inputs and outputs.
- NITI Aayog has decided to join hands with CII to develop a Roadmap for Top 10 Rank in GII.

Startup Academia Alliance Programme

- Startup India under Ministry of Commerce and Industry has recently launched the Startup Academia Alliance programme.
- It is a unique mentorship opportunity between academic scholars and startups working in similar domains.
- It aims to reduce the gap between scientific research and its industrial applications in order to increase the efficacy and impact of these technologies.
- The first phase of the programme was launched in partnership with Regional Centre for Biotechnology and TERI.

PARIVESH

- Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous and Environmental Single-window Hub was recently launched by the Prime Minister of India.
- It is a Single-Window Integrated Environmental Management System, launched on the occasion of World Biofuel Day.
- It has been designed, developed and hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC), with technical support from National Informatics Centre, (NIC).
- It has been rolled out for online submission, monitoring and management of proposals seeking various types of environment clearances from Central, State and district-level authorities.
- It enables project proponents, citizens to view, track and interact with scrutiny officers, generates online mail alerts to state functionaries in case of delays beyond stipulated time for processing of applications.

Radio Galaxy Spotted

- Radio galaxy are colossal galaxies with a super massive black hole in their centre that actively accretes gas and dust from its surroundings.
- They are very rare objects in the universe.
- Most distant radio galaxy ever known, located at a distance of 12 billion light-years was discovered by Indian Telescope.
- It was found using the Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT) in Pune, operated by the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics.
- The distance to this galaxy was determined using the Gemini North telescope in Hawaii and the Large Binocular Telescope in Arizona.
- This discovery is important for understanding of the formation and evolution of galaxies.

RUCO' initiative

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has launched RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil), an initiative that will enable collection and conversion of used cooking oil to bio-diesel.
- The initiative has been launched nearly a month after the food safety regulator notified standards for used cooking oil.
- FSSAI may also look at introducing regulations to ensure that companies that use large quantities of cooking oil hand it over to registered collecting agencies to convert it into biofuel.
- Under this initiative, 64 companies at 101 locations have been identified to enable collection of used cooking oil.
- The regulator believes India has the potential to recover 220 crore litres of used cooking oil for the production of biodiesel by 2022 through a co-ordinated action.

Green Propellants

- ISRO is developing green propellants for use in future rocket & satellite propulsion systems.
- It has made a beginning by developing an eco-friendly solid propellant to eliminate the emission of chlorinated exhaust products from rocket.
- The propellants are based on Glycidyl Azide Polymer (GAP) as fuel and Ammonium Di-Nitramide (ADN) as an oxidizer.
- ISRO is also carrying out various technology demonstration projects involving green propellant combinations such as Hydrogen Peroxide (H₂O₂), Kerosene, Liquid Oxygen (LOX), Liquid Methane etc.
- It has successfully developed ISROSENE, which is a rocket grade version of kerosene as an alternative to conventional hydrazine rocket fuel.
- It has already used Liquid oxygen and liquid hydrogen combination in cryogenic upper stage of GSLV MK-III.

Operation 'Madad'

- The operation 'Madad' has been launched by the Southern naval command at Kochi.
- It is for assisting the state administration of Kerala and undertaking disaster relief operations due to the unprecedented flooding experienced in many parts.
- Flooding in many parts is due to incessant rainfall and release of excess water from Idukki and other dams.
- INHS Sanjivani has been deployed for rendering medical assistance.

Deputy Chairman - Rajya Sabha

- Harivansh Narayan Singh was elected as the Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha recently.
- Article 89 of the constitution has the provision about the method of the election of Deputy chairman of Rajya Sabha.
- The Deputy Chairman is elected from amongst the Rajya Sabha members.
- The chairman of Rajya Sabha (Vice President of India) presides over the session of election of Dy. Chairman.
- He/She presides over the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha in the absence of the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.
- He/She will perform the functions of Rajya Sabha Chairman in case of a vacancy or when the Vice-President is discharging the functions of the President.
- There is also a panel of six Vice-Chairmen, which is constituted every year.
- A Vice-Chairman presides over the meeting of the Rajya Sabha in the absence of the Chairman or the Deputy Chairman.

Draft on the 'National Health Stack' (NHS)

- The draft suggests that health data would be used for marketing.
- It defines the NHS as a national electronic registry usable by both the Centre and the States across public and private sectors.
- One of the components of the proposed project is to store every Indian's Personal Health Records (PHRs). This will involve medical history, medication and allergies, immunisation status, laboratory test results, radiology images, vital signs, personal stats such as age and weight, demographics, and billing information, and use of multiple health applications.
- Various layers of the National Health Stack will seamlessly link to support national health electronic registries, coverage and claims platform, a federated personal health records framework, a national health analytics platform, as well as other horizontal components.
- The stack will embrace health management systems of public health programmes and socio-demographic data systems.
- The population level base of such an IT system would be individual health records logged through the Health and Wellness Centres in rural areas, and corresponding primary health care in urban areas.

Ease of Living Index

- It is an initiative of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) to help cities assess their liveability vis-à-vis global and national benchmarks.
- It ranks 111 cities based on four pillars namely Institutional, Social, Economic and Physical.
- It is based on Ease of Living assessment standards which are closely linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- It encourage cities to move towards an 'outcome-based' approach to urban planning and management.
- It is going to be launched as part of Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) and Swachh Survekshan 2019.

Maize Pest

- An invasive agricultural pest Fall Armyworm (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) was discovered in Karnataka by the Indian Council for Agricultural Research.
- It is a major maize pest in North America and it arrived in Africa in 2016.
- It has spread to Central and Western Africa in 2016 and has proved very hard to control.
- It prefers Maize, but can feed on 80 species of plants, including rice, sorghum, millet, sugarcane and cotton.
- The recent attack in Karnataka is the first report of the pest in Asia. Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are at immediate risk.
- India's tropical climate could allow the pest to thrive.
- It can be controlled with insecticides, through natural enemies or by inter-cropping.

Relaxation in Cabotage Law

- Cabotage in shipping refers to the transport of goods or passengers between two ports within the same country by a foreign shipping operator.
- The shipping ministry has recently lifted the restrictions on foreign registered vessels on transportation of loaded or empty containers between Indian ports.
- Earlier, it was the prerogative of Indian registered shipping lines that paid taxes and were governed by Indian laws.
- It is expected that this move will lead to cargo growth in India.
- It will also improve the competitiveness of the Indian traders by reducing trans-shipment cost at a foreign port.
- For instance, Colombo port thrives on Indian cargo containers that passes through it and it is one of the major container trans-shipment hubs in the region.
- After the relaxation of rules, Colombo has cut the transshipment rates by 9.5 per cent, allowing foreign ships to operate on local routes.

World Breastfeeding Week

- August 1-7 is celebrated every year as World Breastfeeding week to encourage breastfeeding and improve the health of babies around the world.
- It commemorates the Innocenti Declaration signed in August 1990 by government policymakers, WHO, UNICEF and other organisations.
- This year, WHO is working with UNICEF and partners to promote the importance of helping mothers breastfeed their babies within that crucial first hour of life.
- As per UNICEF, Ireland, France and USA ranked lowest among all countries in the breastfeeding rates.
- Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Madagascar and Peru have the highest breastfeeding rates.

Visvesvaraya PhD Scheme

- The scheme is initiated by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- It is launched with an intent to enhance India's competitiveness in knowledge intensive sectors.
- Its objective is to enhance the number of PhDs in Electronics System Design & Manufacturing (ESDM) and IT/IT Enabled Services (IT/ITES) sectors in the country.

The salient features of the scheme are -

- It provides 25% more fellowship amount than most of the other PhD Schemes.
- Part-time PhD candidates get one time incentive on completion of the PhD.
- Scheme also supports 200 Young Faculty Research Fellowships in the areas of ESDM and IT/ITES with the objective to retain and attract bright young faculty members in these sectors.

Hypersonic Aircraft

- China has successfully tested its first wave rider hypersonic aircraft "Xingkong-2 or Stary Sky-2" that can carry nuclear warheads.
- It has the capability to penetrate any current generation anti-missile defence systems.
- Its range is 30 kms in altitude and it travels at Mach 5-5.6.