



# WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

**JUNE, 2023**

**Week-1**

**1-7 June, 2023**

★★ Useful for ★★

**CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Services Exams,  
SSC and Banking Exams**

1<sup>st</sup> JUNE, 2023

## GOBARdhan

- **Context:** The Union Ministry of Jal Shakti recently unveiled the unified registration portal for 'GOBARdhan,' a pioneering initiative aimed at promoting the biogas sector in India.

### Key highlights

- The portal will serve as a centralized platform to evaluate investment opportunities and participation in the biogas or compressed biogas (CBG) sector.
- The unified registration portal allows any government, cooperative, or private entity operating or intending to establish a biogas, CBG, or Bio CNG plant in India to obtain a unique registration number.
- This registration number will serve as a key identifier for entities involved in the biogas sector, facilitating their engagement and access to various benefits and support from the ministries and departments of the Government of India.

### About GOBARdhan Initiative

- GOBARdhan initiative has the objective to convert waste into wealth and energy. It encompasses a wide range of schemes and programs under different ministries and departments.
- GOBARdhan initiative plays a pivotal role in promoting a circular economy, where waste materials are transformed into valuable resources.

## Centralised Laboratory Network (CLN)

- **Context:** India has recently become a member of the Centralized Laboratory Network (CLN), a global collaboration aimed at testing vaccines during pandemic and epidemic disease outbreaks.

### Key facts

The Indian Council of Medical Research-National Institute of Virology (ICMR-NIV) is among the new members contributing to the global efforts in testing vaccines for emerging infectious diseases.

## About CLN

- CLN, which is part of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), consists of 15 partner facilities from 13 countries.
- It plays a crucial role in supporting CEPI's mission to accelerate the development of vaccines against emerging infectious diseases.
- CLN aims to identify vaccine candidates with the highest potential for combating emerging infectious diseases and supports the development of sustainable regional outbreak preparedness infrastructure.

## National Mission for Mentoring

- **Context:** Recently, a capacity building workshop was organized by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE), under National Mission for Mentoring (NMM).

### About National Mission for Mentoring (NMM)

- National Mission for Mentoring (NMM) was launched in pilot mode on 29th July 2022. As part of this initial phase, a select number of central schools were chosen to implement the program and provide valuable insights for its future expansion and refinement.
- The primary purpose of the NMM is to facilitate the continuous professional development of school teachers through mentoring.
- It aims to create a robust system of mentorship that empowers teachers to enhance their teaching practices and overall effectiveness in the classroom.
- To ensure the effectiveness of the NMM, 60 outstanding professionals with expertise in various domains were onboarded as mentors.
- These mentors possess specialized knowledge and skills in areas such as instructional leadership, digital education, socio-emotional learning, inclusive education, professionalism and ethics, classroom management, and more.

2<sup>nd</sup> JUNE, 2023

## PM SVANidhi Mobile App

- **Context:** Recently, the government unveiled PM SVANidhi mobile app specifically designed for street vendors to ease their loan application process.

### Key highlights

- It provides vendors with a user-friendly platform to apply for loans conveniently.
- By streamlining the loan application process, the app eliminates unnecessary paperwork and administrative complexities, ensuring a smooth and efficient experience for street vendors seeking financial assistance.

### About PM SVANidhi

- PM SVANidhi scheme provides crucial support to street vendors in India during the challenging times brought on by the pandemic.
- The primary objective of the PM SVANidhi scheme is to provide handholding support to street vendors during pandemic-induced economic stress.
- This scheme offers a working capital collateral-free loan of 10,000. This financial lifeline enables vendors to meet their immediate business needs and sustain their livelihoods during uncertain times.
- With subsequent loans of 20,000 and 50,000 also available, street vendors have access to increased financial resources that can help them expand and stabilize their businesses.

## Phukot Karnali Hydro Electric Project

- **Context:** National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) and Vidhyut Utpadan Company (VUCL) have signed an initial pact for the development of the Phukot Karnali hydroelectric project.

### Key highlights

- The Phukot Karnali Hydro Electric Project is expected to have an installed capacity of 480 MW. It is located in Kalikot district, Karnali Province of Nepal.

- This substantial capacity will enable the generation of approximately 2,448 GWh of electricity annually.
- The project aims to leverage the flow of the Karnali River to harness hydroelectric power and contribute to the energy needs of the region.
- The Phukot Karnali project is designed as a Peaking Run-of-River (PRoR) type scheme. This scheme allows for the optimal utilization of river flow variations by storing water during high-flow periods and releasing it during peak demand periods. This ensures a stable and reliable power supply while minimizing the impact on the river's ecosystem.
- NHPC and VUCL aim to drive the development of the Phukot Karnali hydroelectric project and strengthen the power sector cooperation between India and Nepal.

3<sup>rd</sup> JUNE, 2023

## Helmand River Dispute

- **Context:** Iran and Afghanistan have been involved in a longstanding conflict concerning the distribution of water resources from the Helmand River.

### Key highlights

- Recently, clashes between Iranian and Taliban troops along the border, have further escalated tensions between the two countries.
- The Helmand River serves as a crucial water source for both Afghanistan and Iran, supporting agriculture, livelihoods, and ecosystems in the region.
- Originating near Kabul in the Hindu Kush Mountain range, the river flows for approximately 1,150 kilometers (715 miles) before emptying into Lake Hamun, which straddles the Afghanistan-Iran border. Unfortunately, Lake Hamun, once the largest freshwater lake in Iran, has suffered immensely over time.

### About Helmand River Treaty

To regulate the allocation of river water, Iran and Afghanistan signed the Helmand River Treaty in 1973. However, the accord was not fully implemented, leading to ongoing disagreements and tensions.

## Agni-I Ballistic Missile

- **Context:** The Strategic Forces Command recently launched Agni-I missile from the APJ Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha.

### Key highlights

- The launch verified and confirmed the operational and technical aspects of the missile.
- With the ability to strike targets with a remarkable degree of precision, the Agni-I missile showcased its effectiveness and showcased India's dedication to enhancing its strategic deterrent capability.

### About Agni-I Missile:

- The medium-range Agni-I ballistic missile has a strike range from 700-1200 kilometres and weighs around 12,000 kilograms.
- It is also capable of carrying a payload of up to 1,000 kg.
- Agni-I was first tested in 1989 at the Interim Test Range in Chandipur, but they were Short-range ballistic missiles (SRBM).
- Agni-I is used by the Strategic Force Command (SFC) of the Indian Army.

4<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2023

## Countervailing Duty

- **Context:** In order to safeguard the interests of local manufacturers and counter the influx of cheap imports, India is considering the imposition of a countervailing duty (CVD) on stainless steel imports.

### Key highlights

- The surge in cheap imports has had a detrimental effect on domestic steelmakers in India. These imports have distorted the steel market by flooding it with subsidized products. As a result, local companies, especially smaller ones, have been compelled to put their hiring and expansion plans on hold.

- The proposal, which has gained support from the steel ministry, has received a recommendation of a 19% duty from the Directorate General of Trade Remedies, a body operating under the commerce ministry.

### About Countervailing Duty (CVD)

- The CVD is a measure typically employed to shield local companies from the adverse effects of cheap imports that benefit from subsidies provided by exporting nations.
- By levying a duty on such imports, the aim is to restore a level playing field and prevent unfair competition that could harm domestic manufacturers.
- The decision to reintroduce the CVD comes after its removal in the Union Budget for the fiscal year 2021-22.

## GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation (GAGAN)

- **Context:** Using GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation (GAGAN) satellite technology, India successfully carried out the first-ever performance-based navigation demonstration for helicopters in Asia, with a flight from Juhu in Mumbai to Pune.

### About GAGAN

- GAGAN, an acronym for GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation, is an Indian Satellite-Based Augmentation System (SBAS).
- Developed jointly by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Airports Authority of India (AAI), GAGAN has transformed the way aircraft navigate the skies.
- It was certified by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in 2015, marking a significant milestone for the Indian aviation sector.
- Notably, only four space-based augmentation systems exist worldwide, with GAGAN being the first developed for India and neighboring countries in the equatorial region.

## UGC (Institutions Deemed to be Universities) Regulations, 2023

- **Context:** The Union Government has recently released the UGC (Institutions deemed to be Universities) Regulations, 2023, bringing about significant changes in the eligibility criteria for institutions aspiring to be deemed universities.

### Key highlights

- These revised guidelines aim to establish more quality-focused deemed universities in the country.
- The new guidelines replace the previous 2019 guidelines and align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- One of the major changes is the simplification of eligibility criteria, which now emphasizes multi-disciplinarity, NAAC grading, NIRF ranking, and NBA grading. Institutions that meet specific requirements in these areas can apply for deemed university status.
- As per the updated guidelines, a multi-disciplinary institution is eligible to seek deemed status when it possesses valid NAAC accreditation with a cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of no less than 3.01 for three consecutive cycles.
- The guidelines also allow a cluster of institutions managed by multiple sponsoring bodies or societies to apply for deemed university status. This provision enables collaboration and collective efforts in establishing quality-focused institutions.
- The revised guidelines raise the faculty strength requirement from 100 to 150, ensuring a strong academic base for deemed universities.
- In the case of private institutions, the corpus fund requirement has been increased from 10 crore to 25 crore, promoting financial stability and sustainability.
- To promote academic flexibility and student mobility, the revised guidelines make it mandatory for deemed universities to register on the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC).

- Deemed universities meeting specific criteria, such as minimum 'A' grade or being ranked from 1 to 100 in the "Universities" category of NIRF rankings, are eligible to establish off-campus centers.

5<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2023

## Lavender Festival

- **Context:** Recently, Union Minister Jitendra Singh inaugurated the two-day "Lavender Festival" in Jammu and Kashmir, celebrating the region's success in promoting lavender cultivation and nurturing agri-startups.

### Key highlights

- The Baderwah Valley in Jammu and Kashmir has become a hub of lavender cultivation, earning it the prestigious title of the lavender capital of India.
- The festival, organized by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM), is part of their 'One Week One Lab Campaign'.
- The Lavender Festival exhibits the impressive advancements achieved in cultivating lavender and the beneficial influence it has had on the nearby community.
- Lavender cultivation has thrived in Baderwah due to its ideal conditions, including favorable land and climate.
- This region has witnessed the birth of India's purple revolution, where lavender crops have transformed the lives of farmers and opened up new avenues for development.

## Derailment in Indian Railways

- **Context:** A report titled "Derailment in Indian Railways" was released in 2022 by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG). This report is in the news due to recent derailment of three trains in Balasore, Odisha, killing over 250 passengers.

## Key highlights of report

- This report flagged several shortcomings and provided multiple recommendations to improve the safety of the railways.
- One of the significant shortcomings highlighted in the CAG report was the failure in conducting proper inspections. The report revealed that inspections by Track Recording Cars, which are crucial in assessing the geometrical and structural conditions of railway tracks, experienced shortfalls ranging from 30-100%.
- The report also flagged failures in submitting and accepting inquiry reports after accidents. This lack of proper documentation and analysis hindered the ability to learn from past incidents and implement necessary preventive measures.
- Another concerning aspect was the inadequate utilization of the dedicated railway fund. The report pointed out that the fund, meant for priority tasks related to safety, was not fully utilized.
- The report also highlighted a decline in funding for track renewal, which was linked to a significant number of derailments.
- Approximately 289 derailments, accounting for 26% of the total incidents from 2017 to 2021, were attributed to track renewals.
- Among the factors contributing to derailments, the report emphasized the role of bad driving and overspeeding. It stated that 154 accidents, out of a total of 1129 derailments, were attributed to the loco pilots.
- CAG report presented several recommendations to improve the safety of India's train system. It stressed the importance of strict adherence to scheduled timelines for accident inquiries to ensure timely resolution and implementation of preventive measures.

6<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2023

## Nand Baba Milk Mission Scheme

- **Context:** In an effort to enhance milk production in Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has launched the Nand Baba Milk Mission.

## Key highlights

- With a budget of Rs 1,000 crore, this initiative aims to empower milk producers and provide them with opportunities to sell their milk at reasonable prices through dairy co-operative societies.
- The primary objective of the Nand Baba Milk Mission is to empower milk producers in Uttar Pradesh.
- By establishing dairy co-operative societies, the mission aims to provide producers with a fair and reasonable price for their milk, thereby ensuring their economic well-being.
- As part of the Nand Baba Milk Mission, there is a proposed plan to set up Dairy Farmer Producer Organizations (Dairy FPOs) in 5 districts of the state. These organizations will play a crucial role in facilitating the sale of milk directly in producers' villages.

## MV Empress: India's First International Cruise Vessel

- **Context:** India's first international cruise vessel, MV Empress, embarked on its maiden voyage from Chennai.

## Key highlights

- Alongside the launch of this significant cruise service, another landmark event took place at the Chennai Port – the inauguration of an international cruise tourism terminal.
- The newly inaugurated international cruise tourism terminal at the Chennai Port is a remarkable addition to India's maritime infrastructure.
- Developed at a cost of Rs 17.21 crore, this state-of-the-art facility spans across a sprawling 2,880 square meters.
- It has been designed to cater to the needs of cruise passengers, offering a host of modern amenities and conveniences.
- MV Empress cruise will make three exciting ports of call in Sri Lanka, including Hambantota, Trincomalee, and Kankasanturai.

- The launch of India's first international cruise vessel and the opening of the international cruise tourism terminal mark a significant milestone in the development of the country's cruise tourism sector.

## The Grand Order of the Chain of Yellow Star

- **Context:** President Droupadi Murmu became the first Indian to receive the Grand Order of the Chain of Yellow Star, the most prestigious state decoration in the Republic of Suriname.

### Key highlights

- The award holds great significance and is awarded to individuals who have made meritorious contributions to the Surinamese people or nation. In a historic moment,
- The Order was established in 1975, coinciding with Suriname's independence, and replaced the Dutch Order of the Netherlands Lion.
- The Order recognizes both Surinamese citizens and foreigners who have demonstrated exceptional service and dedication. It serves as a symbol of honor and appreciation for their contributions to the welfare and progress of Suriname.

7<sup>th</sup> JUNE, 2023

## National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) Rankings 2023

- **Context:** The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) Rankings 2023 were recently released.

### Key highlights

- NIRF rankings serve as a significant benchmark to assess the quality and performance of educational institutions across the country.
- The NIRF rankings encompass four major categories: Overall, Colleges, Universities, and Research Institutions.
- In the overall category, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras secured the top position, maintaining its success from the previous year.

- The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru emerged as the leading university, reaffirming its commitment to academic excellence. Additionally, IISc Bangalore was recognized as the second-best institution in the overall category. Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) secured the second and third spots, respectively.
- IIT Madras emerged as the top performer in the Engineering categories for the second consecutive year.
- In the field of management, the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad secured the top spot.
- The NIRF rankings also acknowledge the top performers in other domains such as Pharmacy, Colleges, Medical, Research Institutions, Innovation, Law, Architecture, Dental, and Agriculture and Allied Sectors.

### Importance of NIRF Rankings

- The NIRF rankings play a crucial role in evaluating and improving the quality of higher education in India.
- By providing a comprehensive assessment and comparison of institutions, the rankings help students make informed decisions about their academic pursuits.

## Antardrishti Dashboard

- **Context:** RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das recently launched a financial inclusion dashboard called 'Antardrishti', marking a significant step towards promoting financial inclusion in India.

### Key highlights

- The primary objective of the Antardrishti dashboard is to evaluate and track the advancements made in financial inclusion across the country.
- By analyzing key metrics and indicators, it enables policymakers and stakeholders to gain a comprehensive understanding of the current state of financial inclusion.
- This real-time monitoring allows for targeted interventions and initiatives to address areas with limited access to financial services.

- One of the key advantages of the Antardrishti dashboard is its ability to facilitate greater financial inclusion through a multi-stakeholder approach.
- By involving various entities, such as financial institutions, regulators, and policymakers, in the decision-making process, the dashboard promotes collective efforts to enhance financial inclusion.

### About Financial Inclusion Index

- In 2021, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) devised the Financial Inclusion (FI) Index as a reliable means to accurately gauge the level of financial inclusion.
- The FI Index encompasses multiple sectors, including banking, investments, insurance, postal services, and pensions.
- The index lists various aspects of financial inclusion into a single numerical value that ranges from 0 to 100. The score of zero signifies total exclusion from financial services, whereas a score of 100 signifies comprehensive inclusion in the financial system.

### NHAI's First 'Sustainability Report'

- **Context:** The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) recently released its inaugural 'Sustainability Report for FY 2021-22'.

### Key Highlights

- The Sustainability Report provides insights into NHAI's governance structure, emphasizing transparency and accountability in its operations. It also highlights the involvement of various stakeholders in NHAI's sustainability initiatives.
- NHAI's report showcases significant progress in reducing direct emissions. From FY 2019-20 to 2021-22, direct emissions decreased by 18.44% primarily due to reduced fuel consumption.
- The report highlights a commendable decline in Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions. In FY 2020-21, GHG emissions from energy consumption, operations, transport, and travel saw a reduction of 9.7%, followed by a 2% decline in FY 2021-22.
- NHAI has made remarkable strides in improving energy efficiency during its operations. In FY 2020-21, energy intensity measured in Giga Joules per kilometer reduced by 37%.
- To mitigate man-animal conflicts and protect wildlife, NHAI has created more than 100 Wildlife Crossings across 20 states in the last three years. These crossings serve as crucial measures for safeguarding wildlife habitats and promoting sustainable development.
- Through a performance-based management system, NHAI has achieved a 7.4% increase in female hiring and an overall 3% increase in its workforce over the past three financial years.

