



WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

JUNE, 2023

Week-4

22-30 June, 2023

★★ Useful for ★★

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

22nd JUNE, 2023

Gender Gap Report, 2023

- **Context:** The Gender Gap Report 2023, released by the World Economic Forum (WEF), provides valuable insights into India's progress in achieving gender parity.

Key highlights

- According to the Gender Gap Report 2023, India is ranked 127 out of 146 countries in terms of gender parity.
- India has made significant strides in closing the overall gender gap, with 64.3% of the gap successfully closed. However, in economic participation and opportunity, India's rank stands at 36.7%, indicating the need for further improvements in empowering women in the workforce.
- Iceland, for the 14th consecutive year, has secured the top spot as the most gender-equal country globally.
- India has achieved a 25.3% parity in political empowerment, with women representing 15.1% of parliamentarians. This marks the highest representation of women in parliament since the inaugural report in 2006, showcasing notable advancements in women's participation in political decision-making.
- India's sex ratio at birth has shown improvement, with a 1.9 percentage point increase. This development signifies progress after years of efforts to address the issue and promote gender equality from birth.

Cloud Kitchen Policy

- **Context:** The Delhi government is taking a significant step towards supporting independent food outlets by introducing the Cloud Kitchen Policy.

Key highlights

- The objective of this policy is to streamline licensing processes and generate a multitude of job prospects in the industry.

- Cloud Kitchen Policy will provide legal recognition and convenience to entrepreneurs running cloud kitchens and independent food outlets.
- Currently, the licensing process involves obtaining permits from multiple government departments, leading to complexities and time-consuming procedures.
- By implementing a user-friendly single-window system through a digital platform, the policy seeks to streamline the licensing process and reduce regulatory hurdles.
- As part of the Cloud Kitchen Policy, two iconic locations, Chandni Chowk and Majnu Ka Tila, will be transformed into Food Hubs. The government aims to revitalize these hubs, making them popular destinations for locals and visitors alike. This initiative will not only boost tourism but also preserve and celebrate Delhi's rich culinary heritage.

ABADHA Scheme

- **Context:** The Odisha Cabinet recently approved a remarkable 1,000 crore increase in the total cost outlay for the Augmentation Basic Amenities and Development of Heritage and Architecture (ABADHA) scheme.

Key highlights

- The primary focus of ABADHA scheme is on Puri, a town renowned for its illustrious Lord Jagannath Temple. With a current total cost outlay of 4,224.22 crore, the ABADHA scheme stands as one of the largest state-sponsored projects for the development of a religious place in India.
- Some of the initiatives encompassed by the ABADHA scheme consist of the creation of a heritage security zone, implementation of the Shree Setu project, revival plan for the Musa River, establishment of the Jagannath Ballav pilgrim centre, housing projects, enhancement of the Puri Lake, and the modernization of the Raghunandan Library.
- These initiatives focus on preserving the cultural heritage, enhancing the tourist experience, and providing better amenities for residents and pilgrims.

- The ABADHA scheme spans from 2017-18 to 2024-25, with a comprehensive implementation plan. The extended duration allows for the proper execution of projects and ensures that Puri's infrastructure undergoes a significant transformation.

23rd JUNE, 2023

IS 18267: 2023

- **Context:** The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has introduced a significant standard, IS 18267: 2023, for food serving utensils made from agri by-products.

Key highlights

- This standard aims to reduce plastic pollution, promote sustainability, and bring numerous benefits to various stakeholders.
- **IS 18267:** 2023 sets out to tackle the pressing issue of plastic pollution by encouraging the use of biodegradable agricultural by-product utensils. These utensils offer multiple advantages, including environmental safety, conservation of natural resources, and the promotion of a circular economy.
- One of the key benefits of this standard is the creation of economic opportunities for farmers. By utilizing agricultural by-products, such as leaves and sheaths, as preferred materials for utensil production, farmers can generate additional income.
- **IS 18267:** 2023 standard also emphasizes the prohibition of harmful chemicals, resins, and adhesives, ensuring consumer safety and well-being.
- **IS 18267:** 2023 ensures that manufacturers and consumers adhere to consistent standards. This promotes consumer confidence, enhances the reputation of biodegradable utensils, and fosters a competitive and responsible market.

Estonia legalizes Same-Sex Marriage

- **Context:** In a significant stride towards inclusivity and equality, Estonia's parliament has passed a

groundbreaking law legalizing same-sex marriage, making it the first ex-Soviet country to do so.

Key highlights

- This progressive step reflects the country's commitment to recognizing and protecting the rights of its citizens.
- Parliament approved amendments to the Family Law Act, allowing two adults to marry "regardless of their gender." This milestone paves the way for same-sex couples to enjoy the same legal recognition and benefits as opposite-sex couples in terms of marriage.
- The amended act is scheduled to go into effect on January 1, 2024, marking an important date for the LGBTQ+ community in Estonia.

Dhruv: Integrated Simulator Complex (ISC)

- **Context:** The Indian Navy's training capabilities received a significant boost as Integrated Simulator Complex 'Dhruv' was inaugurated recently.

Key highlights

- This state-of-the-art complex aims to enhance practical training in the Indian Navy, providing real-time experience in navigation, fleet operations, and naval tactics.
- With indigenously developed simulators, the complex showcases the 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' initiative and holds immense potential for defence exports.
- The Integrated Simulator Complex 'Dhruv' caters to the training needs of the Indian Navy in critical areas such as navigation, fleet operations, and naval tactics. By providing real-time experience and practical simulations, the complex enables trainees to develop skills and competencies crucial for their roles in the Navy. This cutting-edge facility focuses on honing the expertise of naval personnel through immersive training scenarios.

24th JUNE, 2023

Summit on New Global Financial Pact

- **Context:** The Summit for a New Global Financing Pact was recently hosted by France.

Key highlights

- This summit aims to collectively address crucial challenges such as fighting inequalities, climate change, and protecting biodiversity.
- The primary purpose of the Summit for a New Global Financing Pact is to initiate a collective effort to reconsider the global financial architecture. The goal is to propose concrete solutions that foster a fairer and more responsive global financial system.
- By gathering diverse stakeholders, the summit aims to establish a platform for fruitful discussions and collaboration.
- The Summit for a New Global Financing Pact aligns with broader development and climate change objectives. Participants to work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), financing the energy transition, adapting to climate change, and preserving biodiversity.
- These goals emphasize the importance of sustainable practices and the urgent need to address environmental concerns.

Test Flight for Cloud Seeding

- **Context:** The Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur (IIT-K) has recently undertaken a significant test flight with the aim of cloud seeding.

Key highlights

- Cloud seeding is a process that involves the introduction of various chemical agents into clouds to enhance the chances of precipitation.
- The primary purpose of the test flight conducted by IIT Kanpur was to explore cloud seeding as a potential solution to combat dry conditions and air pollution.

- The technique involves modifying atmospheric conditions to encourage rainfall and improve air quality.
- Cloud seeding entails the application of various chemical agents like silver iodide, dry ice, common salt, and other substances. These agents are introduced into clouds to facilitate the formation of raindrops and increase the probability of precipitation.
- The modifications made to the aircraft for cloud seeding received approval from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). This regulatory approval ensures the safety and compliance of the aircraft during the test flight and potential future operations.

25th JUNE, 2023

World's Largest Temple

- **Context:** World's largest temple is being constructed in East Champaran district of Bihar.

Key highlights

- This temple be taller than the renowned Angkor Wat temple complex in Cambodia.
- The Ramayan temple, a testament to devotion and craftsmanship, will be constructed on a vast land spanning 3.76 lakh sq. ft.
- The towering Ramayan temple is set to surpass the height of the 12th-century Angkor Wat temple complex in Cambodia, renowned for its architectural splendor and cultural significance. This ambitious undertaking aims to create an iconic symbol of faith and reverence.
- The architectural design of the Ramayan temple draws inspiration from three iconic temples. The majestic Angkor Wat complex in Cambodia, the revered Ramanathaswami temple in Rameshwaram, and the enchanting Meenakshi Sundareshwarar temple in Madurai have influenced the temple's design, reflecting their distinctive features and spiritual significance.

Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) System Modules

- **Context:** Larsen & Toubro (L&T) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) recently signed a significant contract for the realization of two Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) System Modules.

Key highlights

- This submarine technology aims to extend the endurance of conventional submarines, enhancing their operational capabilities.
- The contract for the realization of two AIP System Modules was signed by L&T and DRDO, marking a significant milestone in the development of submarine technology.
- By leveraging their expertise and resources, the collaboration aims to enhance the performance and endurance of the Kalvari Class submarines.
- The fuel cell-based AIP system, a core component of the modules, was developed by the Naval Materials Research Laboratory (NMRL) of DRDO.
- This indigenous technology represents a remarkable achievement in the field of submarine propulsion. It is a testament to the scientific prowess and innovative spirit of the research team.

26th JUNE, 2023

Order of the Nile

- **Context:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi was recently bestowed with the highest state honor of Egypt, the Order of the Nile. It was conferred on him during his state visit to Egypt.

Key highlights

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was honored with the Order of the Nile by Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi during his visit.
- This makes him the recipient of the highest state honor of Egypt and marks his 13th international award.

- The conferment acknowledges the valuable contributions and positive impact that Prime Minister Modi has made both within his own country and on the global stage.

About Order of the Nile

- The Order of the Nile was established in the year 1915 by Sultan Hussein Kamel of Egypt.
- Originally intended to recognize individuals who had rendered valuable service to the country, the Order of the Nile became Egypt's highest state honor after the monarchy was abolished in 1953.
- The Order of the Nile has been conferred upon various esteemed individuals, including King Hussein of Jordan, President Jimmy Carter of the United States, and Queen Elizabeth II.

Minerals Security Partnership (MSP)

- **Context:** The global initiative known as the Minerals Security Partnership (MSP), was in the news recently.

Key highlights

- Also referred to as the critical minerals alliance, Minerals Security Partnership (MSP) was announced in June 2022.
- The primary goal of this partnership is to ensure the availability of stable supplies of critical minerals for participating countries' economies while reducing China's dominance in the global critical mineral market.
- The MSP places a strong emphasis on the supply chains of critical minerals, including cobalt, nickel, lithium, and the 17 rare earth minerals.
- Currently, India is not a part of the Minerals Security Partnership.

About Minerals Security Partnership

The Minerals Security Partnership consists of several key countries, including Japan, Australia, Finland, the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Canada, the Republic of Korea, France, Sweden, and the European Union. Together, these nations aim to strengthen critical mineral supply chains and reduce reliance on a single dominant player.

27th JUNE, 2023

Kyriakos Mitsotaki

- **Context:** Kyriakos Mitsotakis of the New Democracy party emerges victorious in Greece's national elections, securing a clear majority. He sworn in as the Prime Minister of Greece for the second term.

Key highlights

- Kyriakos Mitsotakis assumed the role of prime minister in 2019.
- His leadership and determination have steered Greece towards economic recovery, marked by consecutive years of strong growth.
- Under his governance, tax burdens were eased, and despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Greece experienced impressive growth rates of 8.3% in 2021 and 5.9% in the previous year.
- With this renewed mandate, Mitsotakis aims to proceed rapidly with major reforms, transforming Greece and continuing its path towards economic prosperity. The coming years will showcase the impact of the government's initiatives and policies on Greece's future.

Udyami Bharat-MSME Day

- **Context:** Udyami Bharat-MSME Day is an important occasion that highlights the achievements and potential of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in India. This year, the event was celebrated on June 27, bringing together key stakeholders from the government and the MSME sector.

Key highlights

- Udyami Bharat-MSME Day witnessed the launch of several noteworthy initiatives aimed at empowering and uplifting MSMEs. These include the unveiling of the Champions 2.0 portal, a platform that will provide valuable support and resources to MSMEs.

- Additionally, a mobile app for geo-tagging of cluster projects and technology centres was also introduced, facilitating effective management and monitoring of these initiatives.
- The event marked the launch of the MSME Idea Hackathon 3.0, a platform that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship among women entrepreneurs.
- The government's initiatives for MSMEs are centered around creating an enabling environment for their success. These initiatives aim to improve the overall business ecosystem, foster innovation, promote regional development, and reduce regional disparities.

World Competitiveness Ranking, 2023

- **Context:** The latest World Competitiveness Ranking has brought forth interesting insights into the competitive landscape of nations.

Key highlights

- The rankings which are compiled by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD), provide valuable information on economic performance, government efficiency, infrastructure, and more.
- The IMD's competitiveness ranking evaluates countries based on four key factors: economic performance, government efficiency, infrastructure, and business efficiency.
- These factors provide a comprehensive assessment of a country's overall competitiveness, taking into account various aspects that shape its economic landscape.
- In the rankings, Denmark emerged as the top-ranked country for competitiveness. This achievement reflects the country's consistent excellence across all four measured factors: economic performance, government efficiency, infrastructure, and business efficiency.

28th JUNE, 2023

H-1B Visas

- **Context:** The United States authorities have recently announced a significant development in the H-1B visa renewal process.

Key highlights

- The introduction of 'in-country' renewable H-1B visas aims to streamline the renewal procedure for Indian professionals working in the US.
- H-1B visas are highly sought-after non-immigrant visas that allow US companies to employ foreign workers in specialized occupations requiring theoretical or technical expertise. These visas play a crucial role in facilitating the recruitment of talent, particularly in the technology sector, with many employees coming from countries like India.
- Until 2004, certain non-immigrant visas, including H-1B visas, could be renewed or stamped within the US. However, subsequent changes necessitated foreign tech workers to leave the country, often returning to their home countries, for H-1B visa extension stamps on their passports.
- To address the difficulties faced by Indian professionals, the US visa office has introduced 'in-country' renewable H-1B visas. This initiative eliminates the need for individuals to travel overseas for visa renewal.

ASEAN's First-Ever Joint Military Exercise

- **Context:** The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Group is set to make history by conducting its inaugural joint military exercise in the highly contested South China Sea.

Key highlights

- The decision was made during a meeting of military commanders from the 10-member ASEAN in Indonesia.

- The exercise, scheduled for September, will specifically take place in the North Natuna Sea, which is located in the southernmost region of the South China Sea.
- The purpose of the joint military exercise is to reinforce ASEAN centrality. It aims to promote unity and cooperation among ASEAN member states, highlighting their collective strength and presence in the region.
- The exercise is expected to enhance coordination and preparedness among the participating countries.

Significance of South China Sea

- The South China Sea holds immense economic importance as an essential conduit for approximately \$3.5 trillion of annual ship-borne trade.
- China, based on historic maps, claims sovereignty over the region through an expansive "nine-dash line." However, an international arbitration court in 2016 ruled that this claim lacked a legal basis.
- The competing territorial claims and China's assertiveness in the South China Sea have raised concerns among neighboring countries and sparked ongoing disputes.
- Several countries, including Vietnam, the Philippines, India, and other ASEAN nations, have had confrontations with China in the South China Sea. These incidents range from territorial disputes to allegations of aggressive tactics by China's coast guard.
- In response, countries like the Philippines have sought joint patrols with the United States to assert their claims and ensure the protection of their interests in the region.

29th JUNE, 2023

National Research Foundation Bill, 2023

- **Context:** The Union Cabinet has recently approved the National Research Foundation (NRF) Bill, 2023 marks a significant step towards fostering research and development and promoting a culture of innovation across India.

Key highlights

- National Research Foundation aims to seed, grow, and promote R&D activities in universities, colleges, research institutions, and R&D laboratories throughout the country.
- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) will serve as the administrative department, overseeing the operations and strategic direction of the NRF.
- The governing board of the NRF will consist of distinguished experts and professionals from various fields of study.
- The ex-officio president of the board will be none other than the Prime Minister of India. Additionally, the Ministers of Science & Technology and Education will serve as ex-officio vice-presidents.
- The executive council, responsible for governing the NRF's functioning, will be chaired by the principal scientific adviser to the government.
- The establishment of the NRF comes with an estimated cost of 50,000 crore over the period of 2023-2028. This substantial investment underscores the government's commitment to advancing research and innovation in the country.

Odisha Gunvatta Sankalp

- **Context:** The Odisha Gunvatta Sankalp is a collaborative initiative launched by the Government of Odisha, Quality Council of India (QCI), and various industry associations.

Key highlights

- This mission aims to prioritize and promote quality in different sectors within the state of Odisha.
- The collaboration between the Government of Odisha, QCI, and industry associations has paved the way for the Odisha Gunvatta Sankalp.

- The primary objective of the Odisha Gunvatta Sankalp is to promote and prioritize quality in various sectors. This includes areas such as public service delivery, heritage tourism, healthcare, education, skilling, and infrastructure development.
- The National Board for Quality Promotion, operated by QCI, plays a vital role in running the national quality campaign. This board focuses on creating awareness, driving innovation, and establishing benchmarks for quality across different domains.

30th JUNE, 2023

Exercise Tarang Shakti

- **Context:** The Indian Air Force (IAF) to organize a significant multilateral exercise called Tarang Shakti.

Key highlights

- This exercise aims to enhance military cooperation and collaboration with air forces from 12 nations.
- It is projected to be the largest air exercise ever conducted in India, involving the participation of various countries and their military assets.
- The Air Forces from countries like France, Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom are expected to join Tarang Shakti.
- The exercise is scheduled to take place in October-November of this year.
- The IAF has been actively engaging in joint exercises with several countries earlier this year. Notable exercises include Exercise Orion held at the Mont-de-Marsan airbase in France and the INIOCHOS exercise at Andravida base in Greece. Additionally, the IAF and the United States Air Force (USAF) participated in a joint exercise called Cope India-2023 across multiple bases in India.

Michael Rosen

- **Context:** Michael Rosen, the renowned British children's writer and performance poet, has recently been awarded the prestigious PEN Pinter Prize 2023.

Key highlights

- PEN Pinter Prize is granted to a writer from the UK, Ireland, and the Commonwealth whose work fearlessly exposes the truth about contemporary life.
- Among Michael Rosen's noteworthy works is "On the Move: Poems about Migration" (2020), a collection of poems that explores contemporary and historical migrations from both personal and global perspectives.
- Rosen's empathetic writing extends to sensitive topics such as loss and bereavement. His book "Sad Book" (2004), illustrated by Quentin Blake, offers a poignant portrayal of a father grieving for his deceased son. It has received critical acclaim for its compassionate approach to these difficult emotions.
- Additionally, his memoir "Carrying the Elephant: A Memoir of Love and Loss" (2002) delves into his personal experience of losing his teenage son to meningitis.
- The PEN Pinter Prize celebrates writers who fearlessly express truths and defend freedom of expression.

