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WHAT IS ASIA-PACIFIC TELE COMMUNITY (APT)?



The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has hosted the South Asian Telecommunication Regulators' Council (SATRC), organised by the Asia Pacific Tele community (APT), in Delhi recently.

- APT is an **intergovernmental organization** established in February **1979** to promote **Information and Communication Technology (ICT) development in the Asia-Pacific region**.
- APT was founded on the joint initiatives of the **United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)** and the **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**.
- Currently, the APT has a strength of 38 Members, 4 Associate Members and more than 140 Affiliate Members (private companies and academia whose works are relevant to the ICT field).

Functions:

- It plays a crucial role in coordinating and harmonizing policies, regulations, and technical standards related to ICT.
- APT **conducts various preparatory activities for international conferences**, including the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference (PP), World Radiocommunication Conferences (WRCs), World Telecommunication Standardization Assemblies (WTSAs), World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), and World Telecommunication Development Conferences (WTDCs).
- The organization also hosts working groups and forums to address specific issues such as spectrum management, policy, and standardization.
- APT organizes **capacity-building programs** related to ICT and **implements several pilot projects** to promote ICT development in the region.



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Current Affairs - 12 November 2024

- SATRC is composed of the heads of the regulatory bodies of **nine South Asian countries**, namely, **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka**.
- Affiliate members from these countries are also taking active participation in SATRC activities.

EXERCISE ANTARIKSHA ABHYAS



The first ever-space exercise 'Antariksha Abhyas – 2024' hosted by the Defence Space Agency begins in New Delhi.

- It is an exercise to war-game the growing threats from and to **Space-Based Assets and Services**
- It is being conducted by the **Defence Space Agency** of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff.
- It is a first of its kind exercise being conducted and is expected to help **secure national strategic objectives in space** and integrate India's space capability in military operations.
- It aims to provide enhanced understanding of **space based assets and services** and to gain understanding of operational dependency on space segment between stakeholders.
- In addition, it intends to identify vulnerabilities in conduct of operations in the event of denial or disruptions of space based services.
- It will have **participants from the Defence Space Agency** and its allied units along with personnel from the Army, Navy and the Air Force. Specialist branches under Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff viz Defence Cyber Agency, Defence Intelligence Agency and Strategic Forces Command would also be active participants in conduct of the exercise.
- Representatives from Indian Space Research Organisation and the Defence Research & Development Organisation will also take part in it.

Current Affairs - 12 November 2024

NGOS TO LOSE FCRA LICENSE OVER CONVERSIONS, ANTI-DEVELOPMENT ACTS: MHA

Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) was first enacted in 1976 in order to maintain strict control over voluntary organisations and political associations that received foreign fundings. In 2010, the Act was repealed and a new Act with strict provisions was enacted.

- **Objective:** To regulate foreign donations and ensure that such contributions do not adversely affect internal security of India.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Home Affairs
- It is applicable to all associations, groups and NGOs which intend to receive foreign donations.

Major Provisions Under the FCRA, 2010:

- It is **mandatory for all such NGOs to register themselves under the FCRA.**
- The registration is initially valid for five years and it can be renewed subsequently if they comply with all norms.
- For such NGOs, **filing of annual returns**, on the lines of Income Tax, is compulsory.
- In 2015, the MHA notified new rules, which required NGOs to give an undertaking that the acceptance of foreign funds:
 - Does not affect the sovereignty and integrity of India
 - Does not impact the friendly relations with any foreign state
 - Does not disrupt communal harmony

For What Purpose a Registered NGO can Receive Foreign Contributions?

- A registered NGO can receive foreign contributions for the following five purposes:
 - Social
 - Educational
 - Religious
 - Economic
 - Cultural

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Who Cannot Receive Foreign Funding?

- Following individuals/organizations cannot receive foreign funding:
 - A candidate contesting elections
 - Media persons
 - Judges
 - Government employees
 - Political parties
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WHAT IS GLUTEN?

Gluten is infamous for the allergic reaction it induces in some people.

- It is a **protein found** in the wheat plant and some other grains.
- Many cereal grains — but in particular **barley, wheat, and rye** — contain specific proteins that, when mixed with water and kneaded, create an elastic mass.
- Two important types of these proteins are **gliadins and glutenins**. At the microscopic level, gluten is an elastic mesh of the protein molecules.
- It is **naturally occurring, but it can be extracted**, concentrated and added to food and other products to add protein, texture and flavor.
- It also works as a binding agent to hold processed foods together and give them shape.
- It allows the dough to rise and gives it its chewy character.

Issues of Gluten

- An **enzyme called protease** helps digest proteins but it cannot break down gluten. When such gluten reaches the small intestine, the body can develop gastrointestinal problems.
 - **Coeliac disease:** It's characterised by a severe allergic reaction in the small intestine, prompting the immune system to produce a large number of antibodies that attack the body's own proteins. The disease is present in around 2% of the general population.
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Current Affairs - 12 November 2024

WHAT IS TOXIC EPIDERMAL NECROLYSIS (TEN)?



Researchers from Australia and Germany have for the first time cured patients suffering from Toxic Epidermal Necrolysis (TEN), a deadly skin disease.

- TEN, also known as **Lyell's syndrome**, is a rare, **life-threatening skin condition**.
- TEN is the most **severe form of Stevens-Johnson syndrome (SJS)**.
- Both conditions are caused by a reaction to medications-often **antibiotics or anticonvulsives**.
- People with weakened immune systems are more likely to develop SJS or TEN.
- Symptoms may include:
 - A **painful, red area** that spreads quickly
 - The **skin may peel without blistering**
 - **Raw areas of skin** Discomfort **Fever**
 - Condition **spread to eyes, mouth/throat, and genitals/urethra/anus**
- TEN causes **large areas of blistering and peeling skin on at least 30% of your body**, including mucous membranes like the mouth, eyes and genitals.
- Because the skin normally acts as a protective barrier, extensive skin damage can lead to a dangerous loss of fluids and allow infections to develop.
- **Serious complications** can include **pneumonia**, overwhelming **bacterial infections** (sepsis), shock, **multiple organ failure**, and **death**.
- It has a **mortality rate** of approximately **30 percent**.

Treatment:

- TEN requires **emergency medical treatment at a hospital**.
- If a **medicine** is causing the skin reaction, it is **discontinued**.
- While the skin heals, supportive care includes controlling pain, caring for wounds and making sure you're getting enough fluids.

Current Affairs - 12 November 2024

PINAKA MULTI-BARREL ROCKET LAUNCHER



France is considering India's Pinaka Multi-Barrel Rocket Launch (MBRL) system for its requirements and is soon going to carry out a detailed evaluation of the system.

- It is designed by the **Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE)**, a laboratory of the DRDO.
- It was first used during the Kargil War, where it successfully neutralised Pakistan Army positions on the mountain tops.
- It delivers lethal and responsive fire against a variety of area targets, such as exposed enemy troops, armoured and soft-skin vehicles, communication centres, air terminal complexes, and fuel and ammunition dumps.

Features:

- It consists of a **multi-tube launcher vehicle**, a replenishment-cum-loader vehicle, a replenishment vehicle, and a command post vehicle.
- The rocket launcher has two pods containing six rockets each and can neutralise an area of 700×500 square metres within 48 seconds.
- The launcher system is supported on four hydraulically-actuated outriggers at the time of firing.
- **Range:** It has a range of **60 to 75 kilometers**.
- The system is mounted on a Tatra truck for mobility.

Its success has already extended beyond India's borders, with countries like Armenia placing orders, and many others expressing interest in acquiring the system.

- It is suitable for different types of military engagements, such as counter-terrorism, border defence and conventional warfare.



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Current Affairs - 12 November 2024

'EV AS A SERVICE' PROGRAMME



- It aims to **boost e-mobility in government offices**; to deploy 5,000 E-Cars in government departments over the next two years.
- It is an **initiative of Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL)**, a subsidiary of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL).
- By leveraging a flexible procurement model, the programme allows for the deployment of a variety of E-Car makes/models, enabling Govt. offices to choose E-Cars that best align with their operational requirements.
- It may be noted that CESL has already deployed nearly 2000 nos. of E-Cars across India and is also facilitating the deployment of approx. 17,000 E-Buses.
- It not only supports the government's environmental sustainability vision but also aligns with India's ambitious goal of **achieving net zero emissions by 2070**.

What is CESL?

It is a newly established subsidiary of **state-owned Energy Efficiency Services Limited**, itself a joint venture of public sector companies under **the Ministry of Power, Government of India**.

It builds upon the **decentralized solar development experience** in under-served rural communities in India, and over time, using battery energy storage, will deliver renewable energy solutions to power agricultural pumps, street lighting, domestic lighting and cooking appliances in villages.

CESL will also work to enable battery-powered electric mobility and its infrastructure and design business models to increase the uptake of electric vehicles in India.

Current Affairs - 12 November 2024

GIVING SHAPE TO INDIA'S CARBON CREDIT MECHANISM

- The focus on climate finance at COP29 is intensifying and a central issue under discussion is the carbon credits framework, especially as it relates to the tensions between developed and developing countries.
- As India strengthens its climate strategies, it has placed a major emphasis on establishing a domestic carbon market, updated in its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in 2023.
- However, to genuinely align this market with its climate and economic goals, India must draw from global lessons to ensure the carbon market's integrity, efficiency, and fairness.

Carbon Credit Mechanism and India's Initiatives

- **Carbon Credit Mechanism**
 - Carbon credits represent a quantifiable reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, which can then be bought, sold, or traded.
 - For a carbon market to function effectively and genuinely contribute to emissions reductions, the **credibility of its carbon credits is paramount**.
 - However, **if these credits lack integrity**, meaning they do not accurately reflect real, additional emissions reductions, **the carbon market risks becoming a tool for greenwashing**.

India's Initiatives

- India updated its NDCs in 2023 to underline, among other things, the establishment of a domestic carbon market as a part of its climate strategy.
- The Energy Conservation (Amendment) Act of 2022 provided a statutory **mandate** for such a Carbon Credit Trading Scheme (CCTS).

Current Affairs - 12 November 2024

- Through this, **India aims to align its climate commitments under the Paris Agreement** with broader economic goals.
- Yet, **for the market to truly support these objectives, it must be meticulously designed** to ensure credibility, efficiency, and fairness.
- From global experiences, **India must incorporate pivotal lessons in its carbon market framework for long-term success.**

Learning from International Best Practices

- To further enhance the integrity of its carbon market, **India can look to international standards set by organisations such as the International Emissions Trading Association (IETA) and the Gold Standard.**
- The **Gold Standard, for example, has stringent requirements for additionality, permanence, and sustainability**, aiming to ensure that all credits generated are credible and contribute to real climate benefits.
- **Emulating such best practices would help India align its market with global expectations**, which is crucial for integrating its carbon credits into the broader international trading framework.

Conclusion

- **India's carbon credit market is in its initial stage, and its success depends on stringent enforcement** and alignment with both international and domestic realities.
 - **By prioritising transparency and maintaining rigorous standards of integrity, India can lay the foundation for a robust carbon market.**
 - **Such a market would not only advance India's climate finance goals but also support its broader sustainable development objectives.**
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