E-DAAKHIL PORTAL

The Department of Consumer Affairs recently announced the successful nationwide implementation of the E-Daakhil portal, now operational in every State and Union Territory of India.

- It was introduced as an inexpensive, speedy and **hassle-free mechanism** for **filing consumer complaints.**
- It was first launched in 2020 by the **National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission.**

Features

- It is an innovative online platform designed to **streamline the consumer grievance redressal process**, providing an efficient and convenient way for consumers to approach the relevant consumer forum, dispensing the need to travel and be physically present to file their grievances.
- The portal offers an **intuitive and easy-to-navigate interface**, allowing consumers to file complaints with minimal effort.
- From filing complaints to tracking their status, E-Daakhil **ensures a paperless and transparent process** with respect to filing of cases.
- **Any consumer or Advocate can sign up** on the e-Daakhil platforms with the required authentication by receiving an OTP on their registered cell phone or an activation link on their registered email address. They can then move on with filing a complaint.
- The portal has facilitated **all aggrieved consumers** to submit complaints to consumer commissions online in the comfort of their own homes, to pay the appropriate fees, and track the progress of the case online.
- It is **accessible to consumers across all regions of India**, from metropolitan cities to remote areas.

WHAT IS PRESIDENT'S COLOURS?

- It is the **highest honour** that can be **awarded to any military unit, military training establishments,** or **State/Union Territory Police Forces** of India.

- It is bestowed upon a military unit in recognition of exceptional service rendered to the nation, both in **peace and in war**.

- It is also known as **"Rashtrapati ka Nishaan" in Hindi.**

History:

- The President's Colour award has its history way back to ancient Indian traditions.

- In **ancient times**, whenever any **military unit** marched, they **carried 'dhwajas' or 'patakas' or simply a flag** of their respective kings to demonstrate their king's supremacy. The flag had emblems or messages of their kings to other rulers.

- **During British rule** in India, the **tradition continued**. The military unit of the British Armed Forces **carried the king's/queen's version of the flag** whenever they went for a military march.

- On **November 23, 1950, the 'king's colour'** of the erstwhile British Indian regiments was laid to rest in Chetwode Hall, Dehradun, to make way for the **'colours' of the President of the Republic of India.**

- The **Indian Navy was the first** Indian Armed Forces to be awarded the President Colour by Dr. Rajendra Prasad on May 27, 1951.

Award:

- It is a type of **special flag**, also **known as 'Nishaan'**, which is awarded to a military unit in an organised ceremony.

- Colours are **generally presented personally by the President**, who is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, and in case of the President's non-availability, by the **Service Chief.**

- The flag consists of a **golden border in the middle and** the **insignia of a respective military unit**, training establishments, and police forces in the centre.

- **During any ceremonial parade**, the President's Colour, i.e., the special flag of a military unit, is **kept in a special position** and soldiers often march with the President's Colour on important dates, like their establishment anniversary.

NETWORK READINESS INDEX

- It maps the network-based readiness **landscape of 133 economies** based on their performances in **four different pillars:** Technology, People, Governance and Impact, covering a total of 54 variables.

- The report has been **published by the Portulans Institute,** an independent non-profit research and educational institute based in Washington DC.

Highlights of the report

- India has not only improved its ranking, but also improved its score from 49.93 in 2023 to 53.63 in 2024. It is noteworthy that India leads in several indicators.

- The report states that India secured 1st rank in **'AI scientific publications'**, 'AI talent concentration' and **'ICT services exports'**, 2nd rank in **'FTTH/Building Internet subscriptions',** 'Mobile broadband internet traffic within the country' and 'International Internet bandwidth', 3rd rank in **'Domestic market scale'** and 4th rank in 'annual investment in telecommunication services'.

- India has ranked **2nd in the group of lower-middle-income countries** after Vietnam.

- As per the report, India has **demonstrated significant digital progress**, with notable strengths in technological innovation and digital transformation.

'BAL VIVAH MUKT BHARAT' CAMPAIGN

- It was launched by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development,** Government of India.

- It seeks to engage multiple stakeholders in a **collective effort to eliminate child marriage in India.**

- It will **focus on the seven high-burden states**: **West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Tripura, Assam and Andhra Pradesh** and nearly **300 high-burden districts** where child marriage rates are **high as compared to the national average**.

- The campaign will call on every **State and Union Territory to devise an action plan** aimed at **reducing the child marriage rates below 5% by 2029.**

- Child marriage **rates dropped** from 47.4% in 2006 to 23.3% in 2019-21, according to government data.

- A **key feature** of the initiative is the launch of the **Child Marriage Free Bharat portal**, a platform to **raise awareness, report cases,** and **monitor progress**.

The portal is designed to **facilitate effective monitoring of Child Marriage Prohibition Officers (CMPOs)** by strengthening supervision and evaluation mechanisms to ensure their active role in preventing child marriages and supporting affected individuals.

- People will be able to **register their complaints** pertaining to child marriage, and these will be directed straight to the concerned CMPOs anywhere in the country.

- All States have been directed to log on to the portal and register the CMPOs so that there is **real-time monitoring of cases.**

- **Nodal officers** will be assigned at the Centre for monitoring the portal.

- It seeks to **enhance public access to information**, making it easily available to enable better communication and support.

SCHOOLING IN INDIA IN TIMES OF POOR AIR QUALITY

- **In November 2024, the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) mandated a shift from physical to online learning in Delhi schools** due to severe air pollution.

- **This decision**, rooted in concerns over health risks associated with the poor Air Quality Index (AQI), **raises critical questions about its scientific validity, practicality, and consequences.**

- While addressing pollution is imperative, **linking school closures to air quality highlights deeper issues regarding the treatment of education, children's rights, and public health.**

Effectiveness of Online Learning and Masks for Children

- **Shifting Schools to Online: A Flawed Substitute**
  - Schools are more than academic institutions; **they create holistic development through social interaction, extracurricular activities, and life skills.**
  - **Online education, while a necessary alternative during emergencies, is an inadequate substitute** for in-person learning, especially for younger children.
  - **Prolonged screen time can harm children's cognitive and physical development,** while the absence of mid-day meals affects their nutrition.

- **Questions on the Role of Masks**
  - The **recommendation for children to wear face masks during periods of high pollution also warrants scrutiny.**
  - **Scientific evidence during the COVID-19 pandemic showed that masks were not universally necessary for children under five** and were only recommended, not mandated, for those aged six to eleven.
  - For classrooms with functional air purifiers, masks add little benefit; **Instead, schools should adopt a more personalised approach, considering factors like pre-existing health conditions.**

Way Forward: A Science-Based and People-Centric Approach

- To address the issue holistically, **schools must remain open with necessary mitigations.**
- **Outdoor activities can be suspended**, and classrooms equipped with air purifiers should maintain sealed environments to ensure clean air.
- **Mask policies should be individualised rather than universal**, prioritising children with respiratory conditions or other vulnerabilities.
- **Hybrid models, often misinterpreted as a license for convenience, must not replace the emphasis on physical schooling.**
- **Innovative solutions are needed to ensure that learning remains active,** interactive, and inclusive.

Conclusion

- **Shifting schools to online learning as a response to poor air quality is a reactive and ineffective measure** that overlooks scientific evidence and socio-economic realities.
- **A more nuanced, science-based approach is essential, one that safeguards children's education and well-being** without compounding the inequities already exacerbated by pollution.
- **Only by valuing schools as indispensable spaces** for development can **society truly fulfil its responsibility to its youngest and most vulnerable members.**

FIRST PHASE OF ONE NATION ONE SUBSCRIPTION APPROVED

- o The establishment of the **Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)** underscores the government's commitment to fostering a strong research culture.

Building on these initiatives, the Union Cabinet has approved the ONOS scheme, granting nationwide access to international research articles and scholarly journals.

- o The ONOS scheme aims to streamline and centralize journal access for all state and central government HEIs, replacing the fragmented system currently in place.

- **Implementation Timeline**
  - The platform will go live on **January 1, 2025**, consolidating access to thousands of journals under a single system.

- **Key Features:**
  - **Access to 13,000 Journals**: Journals from 30 international publishers, including Elsevier Science Direct, Springer Nature, Wiley, Taylor & Francis, IEEE, and more, will be available.
  - **Unified Registration**: HEIs will need to register on the platform to access the journals.
  - **Implementing Agency**: Information and Library Network Centre (INFLIBNET) Centre has been designated as the implementing authority.
  - **Funding and Pricing:** The central government has allocated **₹6,000 crore** for the initiative covering three years (2025–2027).
  - **Additional Subscriptions:** HEIs seeking access to journals beyond the 13,000 available can continue subscribing to them individually.
  - **Dedicated portal**: A dedicated portal, "One Nation One Subscription," will serve as the gateway for institutions to access these resources.

- **Role of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF)**
  - The access and usage of subscription will be regularly monitored by the ANRF.
  - It will also contribute to the expansion of publications by Indian authors in participating.

- **Plans for future expansion**
  - The first phase included all 6,300 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and research institutes under both central and state governments.
  - In the second phase, the government plans to expand this to the remaining higher education institutions in the country, both public and private.
  - Phase 3 will expand the access of ONOS to the entire country.

Benefits of the ONOS Scheme

- **Broader Access to Scholarly Resources**
  - Expands access to top-tier scholarly journals for **1.8 crore students, faculty, and researchers** across approximately **6,300 government HEIs**, including those in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

- **Elimination of Resource Duplication**
  - Avoids overlapping subscriptions across various library consortia and institutions, reducing **excess expenditure** on duplicate resources.

- **Enhanced Bargaining Power**
  - Consolidates subscription under one platform, allowing the government to **negotiate better deals** with publishers.

- **Data-Driven Utilization and Planning**
  - Enables the Centre to monitor journal usage across HEIs, aiding **long-term planning** and promoting better utilization of resources in inactive institutions.

- **Alignment with national goals**
  - The scheme aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), and the government's Viksit Bharat@2047 vision.

WHAT IS SABAL-20 LOGISTICS DRONE?

In a significant move to bolster the Indian Army's logistical capabilities, the private drone manufacturer EndureAir has delivered its innovative Sabal 20 logistics drone to the Eastern theatre of operations.

- It is an **electric-unmanned helicopter** based on **variable pitch technology,** designed specifically **for aerial logistics.**

- It was manufactured by the private drone manufacturer
- It is designed to fulfill demanding operational requirements, assisting with tasks including precise logistics, high-altitude operations and long-distance deliveries.

Features:

- The drone features tandem rotor configuration and the design "ensures remarkable stability, superior high-altitude performance, minimised turbulence risk and outstanding lifting capacity across diverse terrains".
- It is capable of carrying **payloads of up to 20 kg**, which is equivalent to 50 percent of its own weight, with scalable options for future requirements.
- It can operate in **confined and rugged terrain,** while its low RPM (Revolutions Per Minute) design minimises noise, enhancing stealth in sensitive missions.
- One of the standout features of the Sabal 20 is its **Vertical Take-Off and Landing (VTOL) technology,** which allows the drone to operate in confined spaces and difficult environments.
- It also has cutting-edge autonomous flight capabilities and user-friendly controls that simplify complex tasks, ensuring reliable performance even when it is beyond the line of sight of the operator.