

## Current Affairs: 16/17.06.2021

### 42nd Session of FAO Conference

Recently, the Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare addressed the 42nd session of Food and Agriculture Organization's (FAO) Conference. The Conference takes place every two years. India is a founder member of the FAO

#### *Key notes from the address*

- The Country Program Framework prepared by FAO India in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India has multi sectoral approach.
- India has been extending technical expertise and assistance in incidences of trans-boundary pests mainly Fall Army Worm and Desert Locust.
- FAO also endorsed the Indian proposal for an International Year of Pulses (2016) and International Year of Millets (2023) .
- India has launched various projects under the National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture to make agriculture resilient to adverse impacts of climate change.
- India is promoting Organic farming at a large scale.

#### **Initiatives during COVID-19 by India**

- Indian Agriculture sector registered an all time high production of 305 million tons of food grains during COVID-19.
- **KISAN RAIL**: Special parcel trains with refrigeration facilities were introduced to transport the essential commodities
- **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package** was launched under which free food grains were provided to 810 million beneficiaries and the scheme has been further extended till November.
- **PM Kisan Scheme**: More than Rupees 1,37,000 Crore have been sent to the bank accounts of over 100 million farmers.

### Global Expansion of Nuclear Arsenal: SIPRI Report

According to a recent report published in the SIPRI Yearbook 2021, the number of nuclear warheads which are ready and deployed have increased globally. The SIPRI Yearbook is released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) which researches international armament and conflict.

#### *Key highlights of the report*

- The overall number of warheads in global military stockpiles now appears to be increasing.
- China is in the middle of a significant modernisation and expansion of its nuclear weapon inventory.

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- India and Pakistan also appear to be expanding their nuclear arsenals.

According to the year book, India possessed an estimated 156 nuclear warheads at the start of 2021 compared to 150 at the start of last year

**The nine nuclear armed states** – the U.S., Russia, the U.K., France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea.

These countries together possessed an estimated 13,080 nuclear weapons at the start of 2021. Russia and the U.S. together possessed over 90% of global nuclear weapons

**The five largest arms importers were:** Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and China. They together accounted for 36% of total arms imports.

## *MoU for Seaplane Services in India*

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) and Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Development of Sea Plane Services in India.

### *Key highlights of the MoU*

**Objective:** Development of Non Scheduled/Scheduled operation of seaplane services within territorial jurisdiction of India under RCS-UDAN scheme .A Co-ordination Committee is to be set up for timely completion of operationalisation of Seaplane services at various locations. The members shall include officials of MoCA, MOPSW and Ministry of Tourism (MoT).

### *Benefits:*

- Enhanced smooth connectivity by promoting eco-friendly transportation through Seaplanes.
- Boost to the tourism industry.
- Help in expediting the development of new water aerodromes and operationalization of new seaplane routes in India.

### *Designated functions:*

- MoPSW would identify and develop water front infrastructure of Aerodromes.
- MoCA would carry out bidding and select potential airlines operators.
- MoCA shall provide funds/financial support.

## *Tulu Language speakers demand official language status*

The Tulu speakers have been requesting the governments to give it official language status and include it in the eighth schedule to the Constitution. Tulu is a

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Dravidian language spoken mainly in the coastal districts Dakshina Kannada and Udupi of Karnataka and Kasaragod of Kerala.

## ***Official language of the Union***

Article 343 (1) state that Hindi written in the Devanagari Script is to be the official language of the Union. Official language Act, 1963 provides for use of English in addition to Hindi for all official purposes of Union and business transactions in Parliament.

Constitution **does not specify** the official language of different states. Legislature of each state may adopt any one or more languages used in the state or Hindi as official language of the state. Until that is done, English will be used as official language of the state. Most States have adopted major regional language as the official language.

## ***Inclusion in the 8th Schedule***

- At present, there is no such Criterion for languages to be included in 8th Schedule.
- Pahwa (1996) and Sitakant Mohapatra (2003) committees also failed to evolve any criteria.

## ***List of 22 languages in 8th schedule***

Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santhali, Maithili and Dogri

## **Indo-Thai CORPAT**

Recently, the 31st edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) between the Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy was conducted in the Andaman sea close to the Strait of Malacca.

### **Aims:**

- To keep part of the Indian Ocean safe and secure for commercial shipping and international trade.
- To ensure effective implementation of the United Nations Conventions on Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Other Military Exercises between India and Thailand:

- Exercise MAITREE (Army).
- Exercise SIAM BHARAT (Air Force)

## **Misuse of UAPA: Delhi HC bail to student activists**

The recent Delhi High Court orders granting bail to three student activists – Asif Iqbal Tanha, Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita – jailed for over a year for their alleged role in the February 2020 riots in Delhi

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## Do You Know?

- According to data provided by the Ministry of Home Affairs in Parliament, a total of 1126 cases were registered under UAPA in 2019, a sharp rise from 897 in 2015.

UAPA, in relaxing timelines for the state to file chargesheets and its stringent conditions for bail, gives the state more powers compared to the Indian Penal Code.

## Why were student activists arrested & jailed for over a year?

- The three students had protested against the enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).
- Delhi Police alleged that they had also fomented the riots and invoked Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act(UAPA)
- Under Section 43D(5) of the act, there is a legal bar on granting bail if the court is of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the accusation against those held is *prima facie* true.
- They also didn't get bail as the provision of law are titled against accused. The accused have to demonstrate to the court that the accusation is untrue. A 2019 Supreme Court judgment bars a detailed analysis of the evidence at the bail stage and rules that bail can be denied on "the broad probabilities" of the case. These further added the burden on jailed student activists.

## Judiciary & AI

SUPACE- Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court's Efficiency- was inaugurated recently by former CJI SA Bobde. The SUPACE follows the launch of the Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software (SUVAS), an Machine Learning(ML) tool for translating Supreme Court judgments into vernacular languages.

## What is SUPACE?

- It is an **Artificial Intelligence(AI)** based tool that collects relevant facts and laws and makes them available to a judge.
- It will produce results customized to the need of the case and the way the judge thinks.
- It is not designed to take decisions, but only to process facts and to make them available to judges looking for an input for a decision.
- Initially, it will be used on an experimental basis by the judges of Bombay and Delhi High Courts who deal with criminal matters.

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AI tools can aid in augmenting of decision-making processes where computational tools can be used to expedite justice delivery such as those for traffic challans and motor vehicle compensation claims.

## High-level Dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought

Recently, the Indian Prime Minister delivered a keynote address at the **United Nations (UN) “High-Level Dialogue on Desertification, Land Degradation and Drought”** via video conference.

### *Steps Taken by India to deal land degradation*

- India is **on track** to achieve its **national commitment on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)** (Sustainable Development Goal target 15.3).
- It is **working to restore** 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030.
- Over the last 10 years, around 3 million hectares of forest cover has been added.
- India is **assisting** fellow developing countries to develop land restoration strategies.

## Southern Ocean recognised as fifth ocean by National Geographic magazine

Recently, on the occasion of World Ocean Day (8th June), the National Geographic magazine has recognised the ‘Southern Ocean’ as the world’s fifth ocean. **Other four Oceans are:** Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, and Arctic Oceans.

### *About Southern Ocean*

- The Southern Ocean is the only ocean ‘to touch three other oceans (Pacific, Atlantic and Indian Ocean).
- It is the only Ocean to completely embrace a continent rather than being embraced by them.
- It is also defined by its Antarctic Circumpolar Current that was formed 34 million years ago.
  - The current flows from west to east around Antarctica

### *Significance of Recognition*

It is a step towards conservation of World’s Oceans, redirecting public awareness onto a region which needs a conservation spotlight. Southern Ocean is getting rapidly warmed due to global warming, industrial fishing on species like krill and Patagonian tooth fish.

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## Dagmara Hydro-Electric Project: Bihar

Recently, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC) Limited and Bihar State Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (BSHPC) for Implementation of Dagmara Hydro-Electric Project, Supaul, Bihar. The project is located on Kosi river.

### *About the Project*

- It is a Run-of-the-River scheme.
  - Run-of-river hydro projects use the natural downward flow of rivers and micro turbine generators to capture the kinetic energy carried by water.
- The project will have the total capacity of generating 130 MW energy,

### *Significance*

- It will be a landmark project in the power sector scenario of Bihar as far as green power is concerned.
- It will enhance the socio-economic and infrastructure development and create employment opportunities.

### *About Kosi River*

- The Kosi is a trans-boundary river which flows through Tibet, Nepal and India.
- It has its source in Tibet
- **Major tributaries:** Sun Kosi, Arun and Tamur

## All-India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) 2019-20

The ministry of education released the findings of the All-India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) for 2019-20 on June 10.

### **Key Highlights of the report**

<b>Total Enrolment In Higher Education</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3.42 crore in 2014-15.</li><li>• 3.74 crore in 2018-19.</li><li>• 3.85 crore in 2019-20: Growth of 11.36 lakh (3.04 per cent)</li></ul> Out of these, nearly 85% of the students (2.85 crore) were enrolled in the six major disciplines such as Humanities, Science, Commerce, Engineering & Technology, Medical Science and IT & Computer.
<b>Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 24.3% in 2014-15</li><li>• 26.3% in 2018-19</li><li>• 27.1% in 2019-20</li></ul> GER in higher education is calculated for the 18-23 age group. It is the ratio of enrolment in higher education to the population in the eligible age group.

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<b>Gender Parity Index (GPI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>GPI in Higher Education in 2019-20 is 1.01 against 1.00 in 2018-19 indicating an improvement in the relative access to higher education for females of eligible age group compared to males.</li></ul>
<b>Students Pursuing PhD</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.17 lakh in 2014-15.</li><li>2.03 lakh in 2019-20</li></ul>
<b>Total Number of Teachers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>15,03,156 comprising 57.5% male and 42.5% female</li><li><b>Pupil Teacher Ratio</b> in Higher Education in 2019-20 is <b>26</b>.</li></ul>

However, the report also contains enough evidence to suggest that India's higher education sector confronts serious issues of inequality across the gender, caste, and regional axis.