Prelim Bits 07-05-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

System for Pension Administration (Raksha)

Recently, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) introduced a portal, System for Pension Administration (Raksha) (SPARSH), to directly transfer pension to the pensioners.

- SPARSH is implemented for meeting the pension sanction and disbursement requirements for Armed Forces viz. Army, Navy, Air Force and Defence Civilians.
- This web-based system processes pension claims and credits pension directly into bank accounts of defence pensioners without relying on any external intermediary.
- The receipt of pension to the pensioners is usually done by all banks acting as Pension Disbursing Agencies.
- The system would cater to all activities of the pension cycle namely, Initiation and Sanction; Disbursement; Revision; and Service and Grievance Request Management.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/identification-delay-stalls-pension-payment-to-some-veterans-one-time-waiver-given-mod/article65381102.ece
2. https://vikaspedia.in/e-governance/online-citizen-services/government-to-citizen-services-g2c/employment-related-services/sparsh-portal-for-pension-services

PM MITRA Parks Scheme

A National Conference on PM MITRA Parks Scheme was organized by Ministry of Textiles.

- The PM Mega Integrated Textile Regions and Apparel Park (PM MITRA) Parks Scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Textiles.
- The PM MITRA Parks are aimed at helping India to achieve the UN **Sustainable Development Goal 9**: "Build resilient infrastructure, promote sustainable industrialization and foster innovation".
- These Parks will have **world-class industrial infrastructure** which would attract cutting age technology and boost FDI and local investment in the textiles sector.
- The PM MITRA scheme is Inspired by the **5F vision** of Prime Minister - Farm to Fibre to Factory to Fashion to Foreign.
- PM MITRA Parks will offer an opportunity to create an **integrated textiles value chain** right from spinning, weaving, processing/dyeing and printing to garment manufacturing at 1 location
- It is intended to generate ~1 lakh direct employment and 2 lakh indirect employment per park.
- Sites for PM MITRA Parks will be selected by a **Challenge Method** based on objective criteria.

Reference

1. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1823246
2. https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/pm-mega-integrated-textile-region-and-apparel-pm-mitra#:~:text=It%20is%20hoped%20that%20the,investment%20in%20the%20textiles%20sector.&text=The%20PM%20MITRA%20scheme%20is,Factory%20to%20Fashion%20to%20Foreign.
3. https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1765737

Hathi Mitras

- Hathi Mitras or 'friends of elephants' are the village residents of Chattisgarh dedicatedly **track pachyderm movements** to help prevent casualties and crop loss.
- These are the residents of villages affected by human-elephant conflict engaged by the state forest department to track elephants, warn people about their movement, etc.
- Their services are important as Chhattisgarh has emerged as a new battleground for human-elephant conflict.
- Today, elephants enter Chhattisgarh from Odisha and Jharkhand in search of suitable habitats.
- Hence, the central and northern parts of the state witness an escalation of casualties and crop damages.

Reference

https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/wildlife-biodiversity/hathi-mitras-chhattisgarh-s-solution-to-tackling-human-elephant-conflict-82728

National Anti-Profiteering Authority

- The National Anti-Profiteering Authority (NAA) is India's anti-profiteering watchdog.
- The NAA is the statutory mechanism under GST law to check the unfair profiteering activities by the registered suppliers under GST law.
- The Authority's core function is to ensure that the commensurate benefits of the reduction in GST rates on goods and services done by the GST Council and of the Input tax credit are passed on to the recipients by way of commensurate reduction in the prices by the suppliers.
- The formation of NAA comes in the background of rate-reduction of large number of items by the GST Council.
- At the meeting, the Council reduced rates of more than 200 items including goods and services.
- The Authority's main function is to ensure that the registered suppliers under GST law are not profiteering by charging higher prices from recipients in the name of GST.
- The legal mandate of NAA is to examine and check such profiteering activities and recommend punitive actions including cancellation of Registration.

Reference

1. https://www.livemint.com/companies/news/antiprofiteering-body-gets-2-members-steps-up-hearings-11651517742196.html
2. https://www.naa.gov.in/page.php?id=about-naa

SOFIA Telescope

The NASA has decided to pull the plug on the SOFIA Telescope - by September 30, 2022.

- The telescope of the Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (SOFIA) mission is the

world's largest flying telescope.
- The SOFIA mission is the collaboration between National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the German Space Agency (DLR).
- SOFIA is a 2.7-meter **infrared telescope** sitting inside a Boeing 747SP airplane, flying at an altitude of 38,000-45,000 feet above the surface.
- Since its inception in **2014**, SOFIA has been collecting data to understand star birth and death and the formation of new solar systems.
- It has also been keeping a close eye on planets, comets and asteroids in our solar system, nebulas and galaxies, celestial magnetic fields and black holes at the centre of galaxies.
- The SOFIA is the only instrument after Herschel that has the capability of observing singly ionized carbon, which is now understood to be an important tracer of the molecular gas in the local universe.

Important discoveries

- In 2020, NASA announced that SOFIA discovered water molecules (H2O) on the sun-facing side of the Moon.
- The site is the Clavius Crater, located in the Moon's southern hemisphere.
- India's Chandrayaan-1 mission and NASA's ground-based Infrared Telescope Facility found evidence of hydration in the sunnier regions, they couldn't confirm whether hydrogen was in the form of H2O or OH.
- In 2019, SOFIA also discovered helium hydride - the first molecule formed in the Universe almost 14 billion years ago.
- Many crucial processes in the history of the universe leave their signatures in the far-infrared and SOFIA is the only observatory that can probe this important wavelength range for the next decade.
- They can guide the flow of gas and affect the quantity and size of the densest pockets of gas that will eventually collapse to form stars.

Reference

https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/science-technology/nasa-to-shut-down-sofia-telescope-that-found-water-on-moon-82663

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