Prelim Bits 11-12-2018

UN Migration Compact

\n\n

\n
- The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration has been formally adopted by UN member states at a conference in Marrakesh, Morocco.
\n
- It is the first intergovernmental negotiated agreement under the auspices of UN to cover all dimensions of migration.
\n
- It aims to protect the human rights of migrants, help them resettle and ensure they have access to education.
\n
- The agreement was signed in the UNGA by adopting a political declaration “New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants” in 2016.
\n
- It is a non-binding political accord on member countries.
\n
- Under the agenda, member States committed to cooperate internationally to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration.
\n
- Few countries have refused to sign or withdrawn from the agreement – USA, Australia, Hungary, Australia, Israel, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland, Bulgaria, Latvia, Italy, Switzerland and Chile.
\n

\n\n

Vaccine for Multiple Pathogens

\n\n

\n
- A global coalition set up to develop a synthetic vaccine system that could be tailor-made to fight multiple pathogens such as flu, Ebola, Marburg and Rabies.
\n
- Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and Britain

scientists is developing a “vaccine platform” to fight disease epidemics.
\n
- Vaccine platform is using synthetic self-amplifying RNA (saRNA) approach.
\n
- SaRNA aims to harness the body’s own cell machinery to make an antigen rather than injecting the antigen itself directly into the body.
\n
- It can be adapted to immunize against different diseases by inserting new genetic sequences.
\n
- The other advantage of this approach is that it’s very rapid to manufacture.
\n
- **Antigen** – A foreign substance which induces an immune response in the body.
\n
- **Antibodies** - also called immunoglobulins, are proteins manufactured by the body that help fight against foreign substances called antigens.
\n
- **CEPI,** set up in 2017, aims to dramatically speed up the development of vaccines against new and unknown diseases, collectively known as “Disease X”.
\n

\n\n

National Pension Scheme

\n\n

\n
- It is a pension cum investment scheme launched to provide old age security.
\n
- The scheme was introduced for central government employees who joined service on or after January 1, 2004 and later extended to all citizens (18-65 years) in 2009.
\n
- The minimum employee contribution in NPS is 10 per cent of basic pay. An equal contribution is made by the government.
\n
- It offers two kinds of accounts – Tier 1 and Tier 2.
\n
- Tier 1 account is non-withdrawable till the person reaches the age of 60.
\n
- The Tier II NPS account works like a savings account from where the subscriber is free to withdraw money as and when required.
\n

- The subscribers could withdraw 60% of the corpus, with 40% of mandatory being deposited in annuity schemes.
\n
- Of the 60%, one-third was taxable and two-third was tax exempt. 40% of the fund deposited in annuities is totally tax exempted.
\n
- **Recent developments** – The government has recently announced few changes in the scheme.
\n
- The government increased its share of contribution from the current 10% to 14%.
\n
- The tax exemption limit when withdrawing funds from corpus has also been increased.
\n
- Following the changes, the entire 60% of the fund withdrawn from the corpus is tax-exempted.
\n
- Taken in combination with 40% deposited in annuities, the change means that the entire withdrawal from NPS will now be tax free.
\n
- Contribution by the Government employees under Tier-II of NPS will now be covered for tax exemption up to Rs. 1.5 lakh.
\n

\n\n

Kaiga Nuclear Power Plant

\n\n

\n
- Kaiga plant in Karnataka has recently created a world record for the longest uninterrupted operation for 941 days.
\n
- It breaks the earlier record of 940 days by the Heysham – 2 reactor of United Kingdom.
\n
- Kaiga is an indigenously built Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR) run by domestic fuel (Uranium).
\n
- It began commercial operation in 2016.
\n
- While Kaiga is a PHWR and Heysham-2 Unit-8 is an Advanced Gas Cooled Reactor (AGR).
\n

\n\n

Agni – V

\n\n

\n
- Agni – V was successfully test fired from a canister on a road mobile launcher from Dr. Abdul Kalam Island, off the coast of Odisha.
\n
- It is India’s longest-range ballistic missile which will be inducted into the nuclear arsenal soon.
\n
- It is an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) with a range of over 5,000 km and can reach most parts of China.
\n
- It is powered by three stage solid fuelled missiles.
\n
- It can carry a payload of 1.5 tonnes.
\n
- It is a part of Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP).
\n
- Earlier variants of the Agni family of long-range missiles have already been deployed.
\n

\n\n

International Conference on Sustainable Water Management

\n\n

\n
- The first International conference on sustainable water management was recently organized in India.
\n
- It was organized under the aegis of national hydrology project, Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.
\n
- National hydrology project is a central sector scheme, helps in gathering hydro-meteorological data which will be stored and analysed on a real time basis.
\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: PIB, The Hindu

\n\n

\n\n

\n