Prelim Bits 15-06-2022 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

The Agnipath scheme

- It is a scheme for recruiting soldiers across the three services for 4 years for personnel below officer ranks.
- Around 50,000 soldiers will be recruited annually. Recruitment will be done twice a year. Soldiers recruited under the scheme will be called Agniveers.
- **Post service Opportunities -** After 4 years they can apply for regular employment in the armed forces. They may be given priority over others for various jobs in other government departments.
- After 4 years 25% of Agniveers will be allowed to continue for another 15 years under permanent commission.
- For those who are re-selected, the initial 4 year period will not be considered for retirement benefits.
- The move is expected to decrease the average age profile of armed forces personnel from the current 32 to 24-26 years over a period of time
- **Eligibility criteria –** Age limit - 17.5 years to 21 years.
- **Salary -** The 'Agniveers' will receive an annual package of Rs. 4.76 lakh in the first year to Rs. 6.92 lakh in the fourth year.
- **Seva Nidhi programme -** 30% of their salary will be set aside for Seva Nidhi programme. Government will also contribute an equal amount every month, and it will also accrue interest.
- At the end of the four-year period, each soldier will get Rs 11.71 lakh as a lump sum amount, which will be tax-free.
- **Insurance cover -** 'Agniveers' will be provided a non-contributory life insurance cover of Rs. 48 lakh during their service.
- In case of death, the payout will be over Rs 1 crore, including pay for the unserved tenure.
- In case of disability attributable to service up to Rs. 44 lakh based on the percentage of disability, apart from full pay for the unserved period, including 'Seva Nidhi' with interest as applicable, has been made.

Reference

1. https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/agnipath-scheme-for-recruiting-soldiers-7969432/
2. https://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/centre-clears-agnipath-scheme/article65528 44ece

APEDA – Mango Festival

- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has launched an 8 day Mango Festival in the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- The festival has been organised in association with the Indian Embassy and Al Jazira Group supermarket.
- This is expected to give a major boost to the export of mangoes.
- Earlier mostly mango varieties from Southern and western regions like Alphonso, Kesar,

Banganpalli were showcased in most of the global shows.
- This year 34 varieties of Indian mangoes from eastern states of West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha have been displayed at eight different stores of Al Jazira.
- Some of the varieties include –
    - Bihar's Jardalu - a GI-tagged variety.
    - Jharkhand's Kamli and Biju
    - Odisha's Benganpalli
    - Langra, Himsagar and Dusseri varieties of Uttar Pradesh
    - Bhavani, Lakshman Bhog, Rasagolla, Amrapali, Golapkhas etc.. from West Bengal.

Reference

1. https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1833907

BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Centre

- The Union Cabinet has approved a Memorandum of Association (MoA) by India for establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility (TTF) at Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- It was signed by the BIMSTEC member countries at the 5th BIMSTEC Summit held at Colombo, Sri Lanka on 30th March, 2022.
- TTF shall have a Governing Board and the overall control of activities of the TTF shall be vested in the Governing Board.
- The Governing Board consists of one nominee from each Member State.
- Objective - Promoting of transfer of technologies, sharing of experiences and capacity building among the Member States.
- The TTF shall facilitate transfer of technologies in the priority areas like Biotechnology, Nanotechnology, Information and Communication Technology, Space technology applications, Agriculture, Food processing, Pharmacy, New and renewable energy, Oceanography, Nuclear Technology Applications, E-waste and solid waste management, Health, Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change Adaptation.
- The expected outcomes of the BIMSTEC TTF are:
    - Databank of technologies available in BIMSTEC Countries,
    - Repository of information on good practices in the areas of technology transfer management, standards, accreditation, metrology, testing and calibration facilities,
    - Capacity building, sharing of experiences and good practices in development, and
    - Transfer and use of technologies among BIMSTEC countries.

Reference

1. https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1833814

Twin cyclones

- The symmetric tropical cyclones on either side of the equator are known as Twin Cyclones.
- For example Cyclone Asani in the northern hemisphere and Cyclone Karim in southern hemisphere.
- Cyclone Fani over the Bay of Bengal and Cyclone Lorna over the southern Indian Ocean.
- Both the cyclones were formed at almost uniform longitude.



- **Causes -** Twin cyclones are not really rare. The interplay of the wind and the monsoon system

combined with the Earth system produces these synchronous cyclones.
- Rossby waves are huge waves in the ocean with wavelengths of around 4,000–5,000 kms.
- The vortex in the northern latitudes moves anticlockwise and has a positive turn, whereas the one in the southern hemisphere turns clockwise and it has a negative spin.
- This structure has a whirlpool in the northern latitudes and the other in the southern region which is mirror images of one another.
- Both have a positive vortex value (measure of spin). Twin cyclones are formed from these Rossby waves.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/explained-the-science-behind-twin-cyclones/article65402306.ece

Heterologous booster vaccine

- With the number of cases, raising by the thousands on a daily basis the debate about getting a booster or precaution dose has gotten shriller.
- The debate has also increasingly called to question of whether the booster dose should be homologous or heterologous.
- A homologous booster shot involves the administration of the same vaccine as previously administered, while a heterologous booster shot involves the administration of a different vaccine.
- There are growing scientific evidences that a booster dose with a COVID-19 vaccine different from the one used for the first immunisation raised antibody levels more than a booster with the same vaccine.
- Also use of heterologous booster vaccines could simplify the logistics as booster formulation could be administered regardless of the primary series.
- So it would be prudent for governments, including in India, to switch to a heterologous booster regimen to allow more persons eligible for the vaccine and able to pay for it access it in the market.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/explained-what-is-a-heterologous-booster-vaccine-and-what-are-its-advantages/article65517328.ece

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering