Prelim Bits 21-09-2021 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Plant Discoveries 2020

The Botanical Survey of India (BSI) has published its new Plant Discoveries 2020.

- It has added has added 267 new taxa/ species to the country's flora.
- Of the 267 new taxa/ species, 202 new plant species were discovered across the country and 65 new records were added.
- It a document on new species and new records of flora that has been prepared by the BSI and released by the Environment Ministry since 2007.
- Related Link - Animal Discovery 2020

Global Innovation Index 2021

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in partnership with the Portulans Institute has released the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2021.

- India has climbed 2 spots and has been ranked 46th. India's rank has been consistently rising in the last few years from 81 (2015) to 46 (2021).

- The GII ranks 131 countries and economies based on their innovation capabilities, including roughly 80 indicators, grouped into innovation inputs and outputs.
- The GII is the fulcrum for the governments - across the world - to assess the social and the economic changes in their respective countries.
- Over the years, the GII has established itself as a policy tool for various governments and helped them to reflect upon the existing status quo.
- Related Link - India Innovation Index Report 2020

3rd State Food Safety Index

Recently, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)'s 3rd State Food Safety Index (SFSI) was released.

- This Index measures the performance of States across 5 parameters of food safety, which include,
    1. Human Resources and Institutional Arrangements,
    2. Compliance,
    3. Food Testing - Infrastructure and Surveillance,
    4. Training and Capacity Building and
    5. Consumer Empowerment.
- It is a dynamic quantitative and qualitative benchmarking model that provides an objective framework for evaluating food safety across all States/UTs.
- Among the larger states, this year, Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu secured top ranks.

- Among the smaller states, Goa, Meghalaya and Manipur secured top ranks.
- Among UTs, Jammu & Kashmir, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and New Delhi secured top ranks.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

- It is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.
- It is a statutory body established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

  Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 is a consolidated statute related to food safety and regulation in India.

  It established the FSSAI and the State Food Safety Authorities for each State.

  It aims to establish a single reference point for all matters relating to food safety and standards, by moving from multi- level, multi-departmental control to a single line of command.

- FSSAI monitors and governs the food business in India.
- FSSAI License is responsible for protecting and promoting public health through the regulation and supervision of food safety.

Planetarium Innovation Challenge

MyGov India has launched the Planetarium Innovation Challenge for tech start-ups and entrepreneurs (based out of India).

- The challenge aims to bring together the Start-ups with the potential to build indigenous planetariums system software using technologies like
  - Augmented Reality (A.R.),
  - Virtual Reality (V.R.) and
  - Merged Reality (M.R.).

Augmented Reality (AR)

- Augmented reality is an enhanced version of the real physical world that is achieved through the use of digital visual elements, sound, or other sensory stimuli delivered via technology.
- Almost any person with a **smart phone** can get access to AR, making it more efficient than VR as a branding and gaming tool.

Virtual Reality (VR)

- Virtual Reality produces an entirely computer-generated simulation of an alternate world.
- These immersive simulations can create almost any visual or place imaginable for the player using **special equipment** such as computers, sensors, headsets, and gloves.

Augmented Reality (AR)	**Virtual Reality (VR)**
AR uses a real-world setting.	VR is completely virtual.
AR users can control their presence in the real world.	VR users are controlled by the system.
Accessed with a smartphone.	Requires a headset device.
Enhances both the virtual and real world	Only enhances a fictional reality

Merged Reality

- Merged Reality or Mixed Reality is when the real and virtual world are merged and objects from both can interact.
- For example, Intel's Project Alloy uses mixed reality to allow people to use their real hands in the virtual world.
- Before this point, users had to hold controllers that represented their hands.

Easing Tax Deducted at Source

The Central Government relaxes provisions of Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) for a member of a Scheduled Tribe (ST) under the Income-tax Act, 1961.

> TDS requires the income earners to pay the tax at the spot of income received. It is especially applicable on direct tax.
>
> It is the responsibility of the entity that make the payment to a particular individual or firm to deduct the tax at the source.
>
> The taxable amount is charged and paid on behalf of the income earner.
>
> When the income is taxed at the source or at the site of its creation, it is ensured that those incomes which conventionally skips or escapes the tax base get reported and pay the tax

- No TDS shall be made under Section-194A of I-T Act, 1961 on payment of interest, other than interest on securities, made by a Scheduled Bank to a member of ST as referred to in Section 10(26) of the Act.
- This relaxation is subject to the following conditions:
    1. Bank satisfies itself that the receiver is a member of ST of an area;
    2. Bank satisfies itself that the payment as referred above is accruing or arising to the receiver as referred to the Act, during the previous year relevant for assessment year in which the payment is made;
    3. Payer reports the above payment in the statements of deduction of tax as referred to in sub-section (3) of section 200 of the Act;
    4. Payment made or aggregate of payments made during the previous year does not exceed Rs. 20 lakh rupees.
- For the purposes of the said notification, 'Scheduled Bank' means a bank included in the Second Schedule of the Reserve Bank of India Act,1934.

Source: PIB, The Hindu, Business Standard

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