

Prelim Bits 25-08-2017

Regional Connectivity Scheme - UDAN

\n\n

\n

- Ministry of Civil Aviation launched the bidding process for the second round under Regional Connectivity Scheme UDAN.

\n

- The thrust in the second round will be on improving connectivity to **Priority Areas** by introducing more operational flexibility and promoting helicopter operations.

\n

- Priority areas include North East, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

\n

- The Ministry abolished the 150 km minimum distance required between two airports to be qualified for operations under the scheme.

\n

- It also announced increasing viability gap funding for helicopter operators for facilitating more participation.

\n

- The scheme provides concessions to the airlines to encourage them to fly on regional routes by providing viability gap funding.

\n

- The selected airlines will have to commit 50% of the seats on RCS flights and there will be cap on fares charged per seat up to Rs.2,500.

\n

\n\n

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

\n\n

\n

- India moved a proposal in SCO to organise a Joint urban earthquake search and rescue exercise to improve collective preparedness.

\n

- The proposal was moved in the recently held Heads of Government meeting of SCO dealing with the prevention and elimination of emergency situation in

Ata city of the Kyrgyz Republic.

\n

- SCO is a Eurasian political, economic, and military organisation formed in 2001 by member countries China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- \n
- Recently India and Pakistan was admitted as full members in Astana summit, 2017.
- \n
- Observer status is given to Iran, Mongolia, Belarus and Afghanistan.
- \n
- Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Turkey and Sri Lanka are dialogue partners.
- \n
- The Council of Heads of State is the top decision-making body in the SCO.
- \n
- The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), headquartered in Tashkent, is a permanent organ of the SCO which serves to promote cooperation of member states against terrorism, separatism and extremism.

\n

\n\n

Traditional Water Conservation Structure

\n\n

\n

- Dakshina Kannada (Coastal district in Karnataka) is planning to revive at least 500 traditional water conservation structures such as “**Kattas**”.
- \n
- It is a temporary structure built across the streams and rivulets to tap water for farming during summer months.
- \n
- It helps to improve water table in the vicinity.

\n

\n\n

Bhandhan Bank

\n\n

\n

- Bandhan Bank has initiated the process of an Initial Public Offering (IPO).
- \n
- An IPO is the first time that the stock of a private company is offered to the public.

\n

- Bandhan is the first microfinance institution to receive universal banking licence in 2015.

\n

- Universal banking combines the services of a commercial bank and an investment bank, providing all services within one entity.

\n

- The services can include deposit accounts, a variety of investment services and may even provide insurance services.

\n

- The RBI's guidelines mandate the bank to get listed within three years from commencement of banking operations.

\n

\n\n

FDI Proposals

\n\n

\n

- Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) under Ministry of Commerce is the nodal ministry for FDI.

\n

- Earlier, FIPB, an inter-ministerial body was responsible for clearing the proposals which are not under the direct approval route.

\n

- There is a new approval mechanism following the winding up of Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB).

\n

- Now individual departments have been empowered to clear FDI proposals in consultation with DIPP.

\n

- The concerned ministry has the right to reject FDI proposals but it has to compulsorily seek the concurrence of the DIPP within 6-8 weeks.

\n

- All FDI from Pakistan and Bangladesh and proposals requiring approval in private security agencies and manufacture of small arms have to be approved by the ministry of home affairs.

\n

\n\n

Mosses as Bio-indicators

\n\n

\n

- A Bio-indicator is a living organism that gives us an idea of the health of an ecosystem.
\n
- Some organisms are very sensitive to pollution in their environment, so if pollutants are present, the organism may change its morphology, physiology or behaviour, or it could even die.
\n
- Bryophyte is a collective term for mosses, hornworts and liverworts which can be used as Bio-indicators. It thrives well in humid cities.
\n
- Mosses found on rocks and trees in cities can be used to measure the impact of atmospheric change and could prove a low-cost way to monitor urban pollution.
\n
- Mosses generally absorb water and nutrients from their immediate environments.
\n
- Thus it responds to pollution or drought-stress by changing shape, density or disappearing, allowing scientists to calculate atmospheric alterations.
\n

\n

