Prelim Bits 27-07-2021 | UPSC Daily Current Affairs

Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme-III

- The World Bank-supported Technical Education Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP) Phase-III - started by the Ministry of Education in 2017 - is going to conclude on 30th September 2021.
- [The Ministry of Education was formerly the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).]
- TEQIP Phase-III aims to improve the quality of engineering education.
- Rs 10 crore has been provided for Multidisciplinary Education Research Improvement in Technical Education (MERITE) in the budget 2021-22 to start preparatory works.
- The measures under TEQIPPhase-III include,
    1. **Institution-based** - Accreditation of the courses through NBA, governance reforms, improving the processes, digital initiatives, securing autonomy for the colleges.
    2. **Student-based** - Improving the quality of teaching, teacher training, equipping the class rooms, revision of syllabus, etc.,
- The focus is on the most backward states like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, North-East, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, etc.
- The Government of India has been making continuous efforts to ensure that the focus State Governments prepare a sustainability plan for the TEQIP-III to avoid any academic standstill beyond the project period.

Defence Industrial Corridors

- The Central Government established two Defence Industrial Corridors (DICs), one each in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu respectively.
    1. Uttar Pradesh DIC (UPDIC) has six identified nodes viz. Agra, Aligarh, Chitrakoot, Jhansi, Kanpur and Lucknow.
    2. Tamil Nadu DIC (TNDIC) has five identified nodes viz. Chennai, Coimbatore, Hosur, Salem and Tiruchirappalli.
- To facilitate public/private sector for investment in the two DICs, both State Governments have acquired lands at the identified nodes.
- The nodal agencies of the UPDIC and TNDIC are UP Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) and TN Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO), the nodal agency respectively.

- The production of armament/ammunition; components of aerospace industries; missile systems; and establishment of research & development facilities has been envisaged in the two DICs.
- **Significance** - The establishment of the DICs may provide a fillip to the defence manufacturing ecosystem through synergistic development of technologies, promote growth of private domestic manufacturers.

National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers' Holistic Advancement

- Ministry of Education launched National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) for continuous professional development of the teachers during Covid-19.
- [Ministry of Education, formerly the Ministry of Human Resource Development, is a Ministry of Government of India responsible for the implementation of the National Policy on Education.]
- NISHTHA was launched online in 2020 using DIKSHA platform to improve learning outcomes at the elementary level through an Integrated Teacher Training Programme.
- It is the world's largest teachers' training programme of its kind with an objective to motivate and equip teachers to encourage and foster critical thinking in students.
- **Training** will be conducted directly by Key Resource Persons (KRPs) and State Resource Persons (SRP) identified by the State and UTs.
- They will in turn be trained by 120 National Resource Persons identified from NCERT, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), etc.

Secrecy of Vote

- The Supreme Court held that in any election, be it to Parliament or State legislature, the maintenance of secrecy of voting is "a must". It reiterated judgement in People's Union for Civil Liberties case (2013).
- It stated that Secrecy is a **part of the fundamental right** of freedom of expression. The confidentiality of choice strengthened democracy.
- In direct elections to Lok Sabha or State legislature, the secrecy of vote would ensure that a voter casts his vote without any fear or being victimised if his vote is disclosed.
- It also stated that Democracy and free elections were a **part of the Basic Structure** of the Constitution.
- [The 'basic structure' doctrine was framed in the judgment in Kesavananda Bharati vs State of Kerala case (1973).]
- The Court also said that any attempt at **booth-capturing or bogus voting** were crimes against democracy and should be dealt with iron hands, because

it ultimately affects the rule of law and democracy.

National Security Council

- The Budget allocation for the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) increased 10 times from Rs. 33.17 crore in 2016-17 to Rs. 333.58 crore in 2017-18.
- Formed in 1999, NSC is a three-tiered organization that oversees political, economic, energy and security issues of strategic concern.
- NSC comprises the three tier structure –
    1. Strategic Policy Group (SPG),
    2. National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) presides over the NSC, and is also the primary advisor to the Prime Minister and
    3. National Security Council Secretariat.
- To know more about the National Security Council (NSC), click here.

Gross Environment Product

- The Uttarkhand government announced that it will initiate valuation of its natural resources in the form of 'Gross Environment Product' (GEP), said to be along the lines of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- Gross Environment Product (GEP) is an assessment system to measure the ecosystem services of any area.
- It reflects the aggregated annual value of goods and services provided by ecosystems (forests, water bodies, oceans, etc.) to people in a given region, such as at district levels, state, and country.
- It entails the establishment of a natural capital accounting framework by integrating ecological benefits into common measures of economic growth such as GDP.
- It summarizes the value of ecosystem services in a single monetary metric.

Ecosystem Services

- The term "ecosystem services" (ES) was coined in 1981 to attract academics to address environmental issues.
- ES are the benefits human populations derive, directly or indirectly, from ecosystem functions.
- In 1997, a group of economists and ecologists led by ecological economist Robert Costanza showed that at global level the value of "Ecosystem Services" is about twice as much as the global GDP.

Source: PIB, The Hindu, The Indian Express, Down To Earth



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering