UPSC Daily Current Affairs | 15-08-2020 Prelim Bits

Empowering Tribal, Transforming India

- "Empowering Tribal, Transforming India" is an online performance Dashboard launched by M/o Tribal Affairs.
- It has been developed by Centre of Excellence of Data Analytics (CEDA), organization under National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- Performance Dashboard is an interactive and dynamic online platform that showcases updated & real-time details of 11 schemes / initiatives of the Ministry for achieving Sustainable Developmental Goals.
- Highlights of the dash board are

1. It captures performance of 5 Scholarship Schemes of Ministry wherein every year about 30 lakh underprivileged ST beneficiaries reap benefit to the tune of INR 2500 crores.
2. It also displays the details of functional schools under Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) scheme.
3. It maps district wise NGO details, funds given to NGO and beneficiaries' details.

- Ministry of Tribal Affairs has recently got 66th SKOCH Gold Award for "Empowerment of Tribal through IT enabled Scholarship Schemes" under the guidance of DBT Mission.

Dekho Apna Desh Webinar

- Ministry of Tourism conducted a webinar series titled "Dekho Apna Desh".
- It is an effort to showcase India's rich diversity under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.
- The webinar series were presented in technical partnership with National e-Governance Department, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- As a part of 74th Independence Day celebrations a webinar "Lesser known stories of India's struggle against the British" was conducted.
- The webinar as highlighted the known sides of historic events, places and personalities such as

1. **Velu Nachiar -** Queen of Sivaganga

2. **Benjamin Horniman -** British Editor
3. **Royapuram Railway station -** Oldest existing railway station in the whole of India.
4. **Madras regiment -** Oldest regiment of the Indian Army, formed by Major Stringer Laurence.

Queen Velu Nachiar

- She was the princess of Ramanathapuram and the only child of Raja Vijaya ragunatha Sethupathy of the Ramnad kingdom.
- Velu Nachiar was married to Muthu Vaduganatha Peria Odaya Thevar a native ruler of Sivaganga.
- In 1772, there was a conflict with king Muthu and Arcot rulers who were the allies of British.
- British forces swept in Muthu's kingdom and massacred all of his forces including King Muthu.
- Velu Nachiar determined to avenge her husband's death waged a heroic war against the British.
- She had the support of the Marudu Brothers, fierce warlords who stood by her, along with a band of loyalists.
- Velu Nachiar was protected by Udaiyal, the leader of her bodyguards.
- The British captured her and tortured her to get her to reveal the whereabouts of Velu Nachiar.
- Udaiyal did not give in, and was killed.
- The brave Velu raised one more battalion of women and named it Udaiyal Regiment.
- It was commanded by the fiercely loyal Kuyili.
- Velu Nachiar met Haidar Ali, the king of Mysore, and convinced him to help her.
- Haider Ali sent 5,000 men to help Velu Nachiar to get back Sivaganga.
- But, by now, Sivaganga had been handed over to the British, and they had fortified the place.
- Kuyili smuggled some female guerillas in, and while they held the British at bay, she entered the ammunition store, and set it on fire. She died in the process.
- Velu Nachiar became Queen of Sivaganga and ruled for ten years.
- The Government of India has released a stamp in her honour in 2008.

Benjamin Guy Horniman

- Benjamin Horniman was a British editor of a newspaper called "The

Bombay Chronicle".

- The Bombay Chronicle was begun by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta.
- As its editor, Horniman spoke up against colonialism and about Indian nationalist causes.
- He defied the censorship of British after the Jallianwala Bagh incident in 1919.
- He smuggled a first-hand report of the massacre out of Punjab and published it, following the incident he was deported.
- He continued to protest against the cruelties of the British rule in India in all his writings from England.
- In 1926, he exploited a loophole in his deportation order and returned to India to continue his work.
- The Horniman Circle Gardens is a large park in South Mumbai, got its name in honor of an Englishman who showed Indians the power of a free press.

Collaring of Fishing Cats

- Fishing Cats (Prionailurus viverrinus) are nocturnal (active at night).
- Apart from fish, it also preys on frogs, crustaceans, snakes, birds, and scavenges on carcasses of larger animals.
- In India, fishing cats are mainly found in the mangrove forests of the Sundarbans, on the foothills of the Himalayas along the Ganga and Brahmaputra river valleys and in the Western Ghats.
- Despite multiple threats, the Fishing Cat was recently down listed to "Vulnerable" from "***Endangered***" in the IUCN Red List species assessment.
- Fishing cats are listed under CITES: Appendix II and Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule I
- Shrimp farming is a growing threat to mangrove habitats of the Fishing Cats.
- Wildlife Institute of India (WII-Dehradun) and the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department are has planned for a maiden exercise of collaring 10 fishing cats in the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary.
- The sanctuary is located in the Godavari estuary to study the species' ecology, home range, and behavior in different seasons, feeding habits, threats, movements and use of space.
- The project aims to capture the fishing cats and collaring them with light weight equipment containing the Geographical Information System.

RBI Surplus Transfer

- Central Board of the RBI on decided to transfer a sum of Rs 57,128 crore of its surplus to the Union government for the fiscal 2019-20, against Rs 1.76 trillion it did last FY.
- The Surplus Distribution Policy of RBI that was finalized is in line with the recommendations of the Bimal Jalan committee that was formed by the RBI.
- Surplus transfer is in consultation with the Government, to review the extant Economic Capital Framework of the RBI.
- In view of the RBI's function as a lender of last resort, it needs to maintain some Contingent Risk Buffer (CRB) to insure the economy against any tail risk of financial stability crisis.
- The Jalan Committee recommended that the CRB needs to be maintained at a range of 5.5% to 6.5% of the RBI's balance sheet.
- The surplus transfer policy is now formula based and thus transparent, which is an important departure from the past.
- The formula-based CRB will take care of the risk provisioning and the central board of RBI will decide on the level of risk provisioning.
- RBI can transfer its surplus that is the excess of income over expenditure to the government, in accordance with Section 47 (Allocation of Surplus Profits) of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.
- By and large, with a few exceptions, the quantum of surplus transfer averages around 0.5% of the GDP.

Israel – UAE Deal

- Israel-UAE have arrived at an important peace agreement that has the potential to change the geopolitics of West Asia and beyond.
- Under the deal the UAE will establish diplomatic relations with Israel in return for President Binyamin Netanyahu committing to give up a stated plan to annex the West Bank.
- West bank is the main territory of a state that the Palestinians want.
- The UAE becomes the first Gulf Arab country and third Arab nation to recognize Israel after Egypt (in 1979) and Jordan (1994).
- This deal would dramatically bring all Sunni nations in the region in an anti-Iran alliance with Israel.

Source: PIB, the Hindu



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