UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 05-03-2021

Ease of Living Index 2020

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs released the final rankings of Ease of Living Index (EoLI) 2020. The Index categorises the cities into,
    1. Million+ populated cities (Population of more than a million) - **Bengaluru** (Top), Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai, etc.,
    2. Less than Million populated cites (Population of less than a million) - **Shimla** (Top), Bhubaneshwar, Silvassa, etc.,
    3. All the cities under the Smart Cities Program.
- EoLI is an assessment tool that evaluates the quality of life and the impact of various initiatives for urban development.
- The framework for this assessment was prepared by MoHUA with the Institute for Competitiveness as the knowledge partner.
- It measures the Indians' well-being in 111 cities based on Quality of Life, Economic-ability, and Sustainability - 49 indicators under 13 categories.
- It incorporates the residents' view on the city administration's services through a Citizen Perception Survey (CPS) - 30% weightage.
- It seeks to accelerate India's urban development outcomes, including the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Municipal Performance Index 2020

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs released the final rankings of the Municipal Performance Index (MPI) 2020.
- The framework for this assessment was prepared by MoHUA with the Institute for Competitiveness as the knowledge partner.
- The MPI has classified municipalities based on their population as-
    1. Million+ category (Municipalities having over a million population) - **Indore** (Top), Surat, Bhopal.
    2. Less than Million Population category (Municipalities with a population of less than a million) - New Delhi Municipal Council (**NDMC**) (Top), Tirupati and Gandhinagar.
- It examined the sectoral performance of 111 municipalities (with Delhi assessed separately, and the three Municipal Corporations) across 5 verticals which comprise of 20 sectors and 100 indicators in totality.
- Five verticals - Services, Finance, Policy, Technology and Governance.

- The MPI is an effort to assess and analyse the performance of Indian municipalities based on their defined set of functions.
- The EoLI measures an outcome of the indicator, while the MPI focuses on the factors that produce those outcomes.

Draft UGC Regulations

- Draft UGC (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Education Institutions to offer Joint Degree, Dual Degree and Twinning Programmes) Regulations, 2021 was put for public review.
- It may effectively implement the Higher Education Institutions (HEI) aspect of National Education Policy, 2020.
- **Joint Degree programme** - The curriculum shall be designed jointly by the collaborating Indian and foreign HEIs.
- The degree shall be awarded by both the institutions with a single Certificate bearing the crests and logo of both collaborating institutions, upon completion of the programme.
- **Dual Degree Programme** shall be conferred by the Indian and foreign HEIs, separately and simultaneously, upon completion of degree requirements of both the institutions.
- **Twinning Arrangement** - Students enrolled with an Indian HEI shall undertake their study program partly in India, complying with relevant UGC regulations, and partly in the foreign HEI.
- Moreover, credits earned by the students at a foreign HEI shall be counted towards the degree/diploma awarded by the Indian HEI.

Red Rice

- In a major boost to India's rice exports potential, the first consignment of 'red rice' was flagged off to the USA.
- This rice variety is called '**Bao-dhaan**' - Integral part of Assamese food.
- 'Red rice' is grown in **Brahmaputra valley** of Assam, without the use of any chemical fertilizer. It is rich in **iron**.
- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has promoting rice exports through the Rice Export Promotion Forum (REPF).
- REPF has representations from rice industry, exporters, officials from APEDA, Ministry of Commerce.
- It has directors of Agriculture from major rice producing states - West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.

CSIR Floriculture Mission

- Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Floriculture Mission will be implemented in 21 States and Union Territories of India.
- CSIR labs across the country to develop the land available at each lab to be set up as a model under the "CSIR Floriculture Mission".
- Efforts are being made to take the agro-technologies, new varieties and value addition technologies with the CSIR institutions to the farmers and entrepreneurs.
- It is being implemented in collaboration with Directorate of Floriculture (ICAR); KVIC; APEDA; TRIFED; Fragrance and Flavour Development Centre (FFDC), and Universities.
- The convergence of Floriculture with Apiculture has been envisaged.
- **Mission's focus** - Commercial floral crops, seasonal/annual crops, wild ornaments and cultivation of flower crops for honey bee rearing.
- The CSIR's Societal Portal and an android app have been developed by CSIR Team with the help of MyGov Team.
- It is to facilitate the public to submit the societal problems that can be resolved using S&T interventions.

EPFO Act to Jammu & Kashmir

- The 228th meeting of Central Board of Trustees, EPF was held in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir.
- Employees' Provident Funds & Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 was implemented in the J&K and Ladakh UTs w.e.f. 31st October, 2019.
- EPFO has set up Regional Offices at Srinagar, Jammu and facilitation Center, Leh.
- EPFO has extended its provident fund, pension and insurance benefits to all employees of existing establishments under the erstwhile J&K PF Act as well as the employees of newly covered establishments.
- Now, employers can avail EPFO services online viz. submission of e-Challan-cum-Return (ECR), payments through internet banking, Online Registration of Establishments (OLRE), etc.
- Under EPFO, the EDLI benefit has been enhanced upto Rs. 6.00 lakh for family members of the deceased employees (Earlier, it was Rs. 70,000).
- Further, the subscribers of these UTs will also get the additional social security cover in the form of pension by EPFO.
- For speedy redressal of grievances, EPFO's in-house online grievance redressal portal EPFiGMS has been extended to J&K and Ladakh.
- Benefits of the schemes like Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojna (PMGKY), Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojna (ABRY), etc., have been extended to the

stakeholder of these UTs.

Source: PIB

