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Unique Disability Identification Card

- The Union Ministry of Health has written to the States/UTs to include the Unique Disability Identification (UDID) Card as a Photo ID while registering on Co-WIN 2.0.
- The UDID project was initiated by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. It aims at,
    1. Building a holistic end-to-end integrated system for Issuance of Universal ID & Disability Certificates for Person with Disabilities with their identification and disability details, and
    2. Creating a National Database for PwDs.
- Once the project covers all persons with disabilities, UDID Card will be made mandatory for availing various government benefits.
- As per the Persons with Disabilities act 1995 only given disabilities type can apply for UDID Card.
- List of disabilities includes blindness, cerebral palsy, low vision, locomotor disability, leprosy-cured, mental retardation, mental illness, and hearing impairment.
- **Significance** - The project will not only encourage transparency, efficiency and ease of delivering the government benefits to the person with disabilities, but also ensure uniformity.
- It will also help in stream-lining the tracking of physical and financial progress of beneficiary at all levels of hierarchy of implementation - from village level, block level, District level , State level and National level.

Draft Model Rules for Live-Streaming and Recording of Court Proceedings

- The e-Committee, Supreme Court of India has released the Draft Model Rules for Live-Streaming and Recording of Court Proceedings.
- It has invited inputs and suggestions on it from all the stakeholders.
- The e-Committee of Supreme Court of India along with the Department of Justice, Government of India is working under the National Policy and Action Plan for implementation of ICT in the Indian Judiciary.
- [ICT - Information and Communication Technology]
- The right of access to justice, guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution encompasses the right to access live court proceedings.

- To imbue greater transparency, inclusivity and foster access to justice, the e-Committee has prioritised the project of live streaming of court proceedings.
- This will enable access to live court proceedings, including on matters of public interest to citizens, journalists, civil society, academicians and law students on a real time basis.
- These model rules were framed by a sub-committee consisting of judges of the Bombay, Delhi, Madras and Karnataka High Courts.
- They provide a balanced regulatory framework for live streaming and recording of court proceedings.

Big Cats at Coronavirus Risk

- Lions at Chennai's Vandalur Zoo and Ranchi's Bhagwan Birsa Biological Park have died of suspected coronavirus infection.
- **Vulnerability** - The defining feature of a coronavirus is the spike protein on its surface. The spike protein initiates infection by binding with a host protein, called ACE2 receptor.
- Different species express ACE2 to different extents, and this plays a key role in determining how much a species is susceptible to coronavirus infection.
- In various studies, domestic cats and their big cousins have been estimated to express ACE2 more significantly than many other species. Also, there are similarities in the ACE2 of cats and humans.
- One study found that the most vulnerable species to coronavirus infection, next to humans, are ferrets, followed by cats and civets.
- Another study found that the primates such as chimpanzee rhesus macaque are at very high risk.
- At high risk are species such as blue-eyed black lemur. Cats were found to have a medium risk, while dogs had a low risk.
- There are no studies on the genome of big felines, but it is assumed that since cats can be infected, there is a big chance that lions and tigers will as well, since they will be very close in sequence.

Sea Snot Outbreak

- Turkey's President has said considerable steps will be taken to solve the problem of accumulation of 'sea snot' and protect the country's seas.
- Turkey's Sea of Marmara, that connects the Black Sea to the Aegean Sea, has witnessed the largest outbreak of 'sea snot'. The sludge has also been spotted in the adjoining Black and Aegean seas.
- A 'sea snot' outbreak was first recorded in the country in 2007. It was also spotted in the Aegean Sea near Greece. But the current outbreak in the Sea of Marmara is by far the biggest in the country's history.
- **Sea snot** is a slimy layer of grey or green sludge that the floats up on the

surface of the seas, which can cause damage to the marine ecosystem.

- It is marine mucilage formed when algae are overloaded with nutrients due to water pollution combined with the effects of climate change.
- **Causes** - The nutrient overload occurs when algae feast on warm weather caused by global warming.
- Overproduction of phytoplankton caused by climate change and the uncontrolled dumping of waste into the seas has led to the present crisis.
- **Impact on Marine Ecosystem** - The growth of the mucilage is posing a severe threat to the marine ecosystem of the country.
- Over a period of time, it could end up poisoning all aquatic life, including fishes, crabs, oysters, mussels, corals, sponges and sea stars.
- If unchecked, this mucilage spread can collapse to the bottom and cover the sea floor, causing major damage to the marine ecosystem.
- Besides aquatic life, the 'sea snot' outbreak has also affected the livelihoods of fishermen.
- The 'sea snot' can also cause an outbreak of water-borne diseases such as cholera in cities like Istanbul.

Supersonic Flying

- United Airlines ordered 15 supersonic "Overture" planes with the ability to travel at Mach 1.7, faster than the speed of sound, from the Denver-based startup Boom.
- These supersonic aircrafts will become the world's fastest commercial airliner, reducing travel time by about half of today's planes.
- Boom's claims to produce an eco-friendly aircraft with "net-zero carbon emissions", set to fly with 100% sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).
- **Supersonic aircraft** - They are planes that can fly faster than the speed of sound. The technology for supersonic flights is actually over 70 years old, but only recently has been used for commercial flying.
- Before 1976, when the first commercial supersonic flight took off, the planes were used entirely for military purposes.
- Concorde, the British-French turbojet-powered commercial airliner, was the first aircraft to carry passengers at supersonic speed.
- Usually, supersonic planes can travel at the speed of around 900 kmph, twice the speed of normal aircraft.
- **Boom's Overture supersonic plane** - This would travel at the speed of Mach 1.7 (1,805 kmph) with a range of 4,250 nautical miles. It could carry 65 to 88 passengers and reach an altitude of 60,000 ft.
- The company has expressed confidence in getting an "experimental" jet ready by 2022, start rolling out aircraft by 2025 and eventually open them for passengers by 2029.

- This Overture will be “zero overland noise” and will not be noisy as supersonic planes in the past were.
- It will cruise at supersonic speeds only over water, ensuring that no sonic boom or excessive noise reaches the surfaces where people live.
- Coastal buffer zones will be created into route planning of the airline, enabling the Overture planes to travel over Mach 1 only after it reaches a “safe” distance from the shore.
- Overture planes would rely completely on sustainable aviation fuel, made from biodegradable material.
- **Challenges** - The costs of making “sustainable” supersonic planes are extremely high. The very nature of its flying - using excessive amounts of fuel and energy - is likely to have high environmental costs.
- These planes produce excessive noise pollution in the environment called the “Sonic Boom”. This feels like an explosion to the human ear.
- Thus, these supersonic planes can reach their actual speed until they are far enough from people and completely over the ocean.
- It would not be economically feasible for everyone.

Insider Trading

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) found two Infosys employees guilty of insider trading. It has banned all the parties involved in these trades from buying and selling any shares.
- **Insider trading** refers to trading of shares by an ‘insider’ based on Unpublished Price Sensitive Information (UPSI).
- It involves buying or selling shares of a listed company using information that can materially impact the stock price, but has not been made public yet.
- SEBI regulations define an ‘insider’ as someone who is a connected person or has access to UPSI.
- A connected person can be anyone who during the 6 months preceding the insider trade has been associated with the company in some way.
- UPSI includes but is not restricted to information relating to a company’s quarterly results, merger and acquisition deals, major capacity expansion or shutdown plans etc.,
- When insiders use the UPSI they possess to conduct trades, they can be taken to task by the regulator.
- While trading on UPSI in illegal, all insider trading is not barred. If such trades are disclosed to the stock exchanges as per SEBI rules, it isn’t illegal.
- But a company must notify the exchanges within a few days about the trading details of the promoter/member of the promoter group or a director if securities worth ₹10 lakh plus are traded.

Source: PIB, The Hindu, The Indian Express, Business Line

