# UPSC Daily Current Affairs | Prelim Bits 17-06-2021

## Hallmarking of Gold

- The government announced the phased implementation of mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery with effect from June 16, 2021.
- In the first phase, gold hallmarking will be available in only in 256 districts and jewellers having annual turnover above Rs 40 lakh will come under its purview.
- **Hallmarking** - The Bureau of Indian Standard (BIS) defines hallmarking as the accurate determination and official recording of the proportionate content of precious metal in precious metal articles.
- So, it is a "guarantee of purity or fineness" of precious metal articles. The BIS operates gold and silver hallmarking scheme in India.
- **Metals covered** - A government notification issued in 2018 notified two categories under the purview of hallmarking,
    1. Gold jewellery and gold artefacts; and
    2. Silver jewellery and silver artefacts.
- **Exemption** - Department of Consumer Affairs says that the following will be exempted from mandatory Hallmarking,
    1. Export and re-import of jewellery as per Trade Policy of Government of India,
    2. Jewellery for international exhibitions,
    3. Jewellery for government-approved B2B domestic exhibitions.
- The Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution said that watches, fountain pens and special types of jewellery such as Kundan, Polki and Jadau will be exempted from hallmarking.
- The jewellers can continue to buy back old gold jewellery without a hallmark from consumers.
- **Purity standards** - As per BIS standards, there are three categories of hallmarking based on purity of gold -22 carat, 18 carat and 14 carat.
- However, the ministry announced that the gold of Additional carats 20, 23 and 24 will also be allowed for Hallmarking.
- **Penalty** - For non-compliance with the hallmarking norm, there will be no penalty imposed on jewellers till August 2021.

## Divine Vessel

- China’s spacecraft Shenzhou-12 ("Divine Vessel") will blast off from the Gobi Desert on a Long March rocket soon, ferrying three men to China's Tiangong space station for a three-month stay.
- It will be the third of 11 missions needed to complete the space station by 2022. Among them, four missions will have people on board, potentially propelling up to 12 Chinese astronauts into space.
- **Tianhe** - In April 2021, China launched the core module of the space station - "Tianhe" or "Harmony of the Heavens" - on the Long March 5B.
- Tianhe will act as the management and control hub of the space station. It is a cylinder, which is China’s largest spacecraft.

### Tiangong Space Station

- Tiangong ('Heavenly Palace') is China’s permanent space station that will operate in low-Earth orbit at an altitude from 340 km to 450 km.
- This space station is built because China is excluded from the only space station currently in orbit is the International Space Station (ISS).
- The station has a designed life span of 10 years.
- Five missions have already been launched in 2021. In order to complete the construction of the space station in 2022, China plans to launch 6 missions which will include the launch of,
    1. Mengtian and Wentian lab modules,
    2. Two manned spaceships (Shenzhou)
    3. Two cargo spacecraft (Tianzhou)
- Another three astronauts will later begin their six-month stay in orbit.

## New Shephard

- The winner of the online auction conducted for the first seat on Blue Origin’s New Shephard will be a part of New Shephard’s first human flight on July 20 - 52nd anniversary of Neil Armstrong’s moon landing.
- **Purpose** - Named after astronaut Alan Shephard (the first American to go to space), New Shephard is meant to take tourists to space to experience microgravity that takes them 100 km above the Earth.
- This rocket system offers flights to space over 100 km above the Earth and accommodation for payloads.
- The idea is to provide easier and more cost-effective access to space meant for purposes such as academic research, corporate technology development and entrepreneurial ventures among others.
- **Working** - New Shephard is a rocket system that has been designed to take astronauts and research payloads past the Karman line (the internationally recognized boundary of space).
- It consists of two parts - Cabin or capsule and Rocket or booster.

- The fully autonomous cabin can accommodate experiments from small Mini Payloads up to 100 kg and, it is designed for six people.
- The cabin sits atop a 60 feet tall rocket and separates from it before crossing the Karman line, after which both vehicles fall back to the Earth.
- **Reusable** - The system is a fully reusable, vertical takeoff and vertical landing space vehicle that accelerates for 2.5 minutes before the engine cuts off.
- After separating from the booster, the capsule free falls in space and the booster performs an autonomously controlled vertical landing back to Earth. The capsule lands back with the help of parachutes.

## Dagmara Hydro Electric Project

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between NHPC Limited and Bihar State Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (BSHPC) for Implementation of 130.1 MW Dagmara HE Project.
- [National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Ltd is a Category-A Miniratna Company under Ministry of Power.
- Now, NHPC is the largest organisation in the Hydropower field has 24 operational power stations with a total installed capacity of 7071 MW.]
- The Dagmara HE Project, the largest hydropower project of Bihar is to be implemented by NHPC on ownership basis.
- This Run-of-the-River hydro project is located near village Dagmara on the right bank and Simri on the left bank, about 22.5 km downstream of Bhimnagar barrage on Kosi river.
- [Run-of-river hydro projects use the natural downward flow of rivers and micro turbine generators to capture the kinetic energy carried by water.
- Typically water is taken from the river at a high point and diverted to a channel, pipeline, or pressurised pipeline (or penstock). ]

## Twitter - Not a Social Media Intermediary

- The government withdraws the protection given to Twitter, which is given to it for being a social media intermediary under Section 79 of the Information Technology (IT) Act.
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) says that Twitter has not adhered to norms while appointing executives as Resident Grievance Officer, Nodal Officer and Chief Compliance Officer.
- **Protection** - Section 79 of IT Act says that any intermediary shall not be held legally or otherwise liable for any third party information, data, or communication link made available or hosted on its platform.
- This protection shall be applicable if the said intermediary,
    1. Doesn’t initiate the transmission of the message in question,

2. Doesn’t select the receiver of the transmitted message, and
3. Doesn’t modify any information contained in the transmission.

- So, if a platform acts as the messenger carrying a message from point A to B, without interfering with its content in any manner, it will be safe from any legal prosecution due to the message being transmitted.
- **Impact** - As the protection accorded to Twitter under Section 79 of the IT Act is gone, it opens up the platform to the possibility of any and all penal action that is likely to be taken against it as a publisher of content.
- This means that if someone puts out any content on Twitter that leads to some form of violence, or violates any Indian law with respect to content, the person along with Twitter will be legally liable for the content.

## Bharitalasuchus tapani

- In the mid 20th century, researchers from the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, carried out extensive studies on rocks of the Yerrapalli Formation in what is now Telangana.
- By studying some of these specimens now, a team has found a 240 million year old carnivorous reptile called Bharitalasuchus tapani.
- In the Telugu language, Bhari means huge, Tala means head, and Suchus is the name of the Egyptian crocodile-headed deity.
- Bharitalasuchus tapani were robust animals with big heads and large teeth, and these probably predated other smaller reptiles.
- They might have been the largest predators in their ecosystems as they were the size of an adult male lion.
- The reptile belonged to Erythrosuchidae, a family of extinct reptiles.

### Yerrapalli Formation

- It is a Triassic rock formation consisting primarily of mudstones that outcrops in the Pranhita-Godavari Basin in south-eastern India.
- It preserves fossils of freshwater and terrestrial vertebrates as well as trace fossils of invertebrates.
- Apart from this Bharitalasuchus tapani, the fossil assemblage of the Yerrapalli Formation includes many other extinct creatures such as ceratodontid lungfish, rhynchosaur and allokotosaurian.
- Yerrapalli Formation (fossiliferous locality) is gradually being destroyed by deforestation, mining, agricultural expansion, urbanisation, etc.,

**Source: PIB, The Hindu, The Indian Express**



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