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Russia to leave International Space Station

- Russia announced that it would be withdrawing from the International Space Station in 2025, and build and manage its own floating laboratory that will be launched into orbit by 2030.
- The decision to leave also comes at a time when relations between Russia and the US have been steadily deteriorating on multiple fronts.

- **International Space Station** is the only active modular space station (habitable artificial satellite) in the Low-Earth Orbit (LEO).
- It is the largest artificial object in space and the largest satellite in low Earth orbit, visible to the naked eye from Earth's surface.
- It is like a large laboratory in space that has been there since 1998. It allows astronauts to come aboard and stay for weeks or months to carry out experiments in microgravity.
- It is a joint project between five participating space agencies - NASA (USA), Roscosmos, Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), European Space Agency, and Canadian Space Agency.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana

- Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) is announced by the Union Government for the month of May and June 2021.
- PMGKAY is a part of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP) to ameliorate the hardships faced by the poor due to Covid-19 situation.
- Under this scheme, it has been decided to allocate an additional quota of free-of-cost food grains at 5 Kg per person per month to nearly 80 Crore beneficiaries covered under National Food Security Act, 2013 (NFSA).
- The additional quota to the already subsidised 5 kg of food grains that is provided through the Public Distribution System (PDS) will be provided to beneficiaries covered under both categories of NFSA,
    1. Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and
    2. Priority Householders (PHH).
- The Food Corporation of India will provide additional 80 LMT food grains in May and June 2021, under the scheme to respective State/UT Governments, in addition to their regular NFSA allocation.
- This allocation for May and June 2021 would be on the same pattern as the

earlier PM-GKAY. The government had announced PMGKAY-I (April-June 2020) and PMGKAY-II (July-November 2020).

Reduced Cropping Intensity in Winter

- A new paper noted that with severe groundwater depletion, the cropping intensity or the amount of land planted in the winter season may decrease by up to 20% by 2025.
- Some of the important winter crops are wheat, barley, mustard and peas.
- The team studied India's three main irrigation types on winter cropped areas: dug wells, tube wells, canals, and also analysed the groundwater data from the Central Ground Water Board.
- They found that 13% of the villages in which farmers plant a winter crop are located in critically water-depleted regions.
- These villages may lose 68% of their cropped area in future if access to all groundwater irrigation is lost. The results suggest that these losses will largely occur in northwest and central India.
- **Problems** wheat farmers in our country face are first-generation (productivity) and second-generation (sustainability) problems.
- In green revolution era, policy-supported intensive agriculture led to an increase in rice cultivation in northwestern India mainly in Punjab and Haryana which are ecologically less suitable for rice cultivation.
- This led to unsustainable groundwater use for irrigation and in turn groundwater scarcity.
- There was also post-harvest residue burning to make way for the timely sowing of wheat.
- Due to lack of enough irrigation infrastructure in eastern states like Bihar, farmers are not able to make use of the enough groundwater resources that are available there supported with monsoon rainfall.
- **Solutions** - Alternative irrigation sources like Canal irrigation, adoption of water-saving technologies like drip irrigation and, switching to less water-intensive crops could be solutions to falling groundwater tables.
- To release some pressure from north-western states, better policies in eastern India are needed to expand the irrigation and thus increase agriculture productivity.

Sero Survey

- The third sero survey conducted within Mumbai has shown the presence of antibodies in 36.30% samples out of the total 10,197.
- The survey included blood samples of only those who had not been vaccinated were collected.

- The sero positivity rate has increased in non-slum areas compared with slum areas.
- [**Sero Positivity** means positive result of a blood test for a particular antibody (a substance in the blood that fights a disease).]
- The health department of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has recommended intensifying vaccinations among the general public as the best way to control the spread of the coronavirus.

RTI on Cyber Crime Volunteers

- A Right to Information Act (RTI) application was filed on the total number of volunteers who have applied under the Cyber Crime Volunteers Program of the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal.
- In the RTI reply, the Ministry of Home Affairs said that it does not maintain a centralised list of volunteers enrolled under the program.
- It said that the "police" and "public order" were State subjects as per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. So, the information could be sought directly from the respective States and Union Territories.
- It said that the States were primarily responsible for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of crimes through their law enforcement agencies (LEAs).

Cyber Crime Volunteers Program

- The Ministry of Home Affairs, through its National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal aims to raise a group of "cybercrime volunteers" to flag unlawful content on the Internet.
- The Cyber Crime Volunteers Program is a constituent of the National Cyber Crime Ecosystem Management Unit, which is part of the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) scheme launched in 2020.
- The Volunteers Program brings together citizens with passion to fight against cybercrime in the country on a single platform and assist State/UT LEAs in their endeavour to curb cybercrimes.
- The volunteers are registered under one of three categories:
    1. Cyber Volunteer Unlawful Content Flagger,
    2. Cyber Awareness Promoter, and
    3. Cyber Expert.
- According to the Ministry's Output Outcome Monitoring Framework budget of 2021-22, the programme was expected to include 500 volunteers, 200 cyber awareness promoters and 50 cyber experts.
- The Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF) has said the programme enables a culture of surveillance and could create potential social distrust by encouraging civilians to report the online activities of other citizens.

Unlawful Content

- In general, content that violates any law in force in India. Such content may fall under following broad categories:
    1. Against sovereignty and integrity of India.
    2. Against defence of India.
    3. Against Security of the State.
    4. Against friendly relations with foreign States.
    5. Content aimed at disturbing Public Order.
    6. Disturbing communal harmony.
    7. Child Sex Abuse material.

Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve

- A forest fire was started at Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve (NNTR) by some miscreants from neighbouring villages as they were prevented from entering the forest.
- Almost all forest fires in central India are manmade. Generally, they are caused by those collecting mahua flowers and tendu leaves.
- Navegaon-Nagzira Tiger Reserve is situated in Gondia and Bhandara districts of Maharashtra.
- [Gondia District shares common boundaries with the state of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in the north and eastern side respectively.]
- Notified as the 46^{th} tiger reserve of India in 2013, NNTR comprised of the notified area of Navegaon National Park, Navegaon Wildlife Sanctuary, New Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary and Koka Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Strategically, the Tiger Reserve is located in the heart of central Indian Tiger landscape which contributes almost one sixth of the total tiger population of the country.
- NNTR has connectivity with the major tiger reserves in Central India,
    1. Kanha and Pench tiger reserve (Madhya Pradesh),
    2. Tadoba-Andhari Tiger reserve (Maharashtra),
    3. Indravati Tiger Reserve (Chhattisgarh),
- It is indirectly connected to the Kawal and Nagarjuna Sagar in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh and, Achanakmar Tiger reserve in Chhattisgarh.
- It is also connected to important tiger bearing areas like Umred-Karhandla sanctuary and Brahampuri Division (Maharashtra).

Source: PIB, The Hindu, The Indian Express



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