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National Common Mobility Card (NCMC)

- The idea of NCMC was floated by Nandan Nilekani Committee set up by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- NCMC falls under the umbrella of the 'One Nation One Card' initiative.
- It can be used at all transit locations making all new metro and transit payments interoperable via one card.
- It will turn smart phones into an inter-operable transport card that commuters can use to pay for metro, bus and suburban railways services.
- It will allow entry and exit from Metro stations with the help of a smartphone, known as the automatic fare collection (AFC) system.
- NCMC would contain two instruments –
    1. Regular debit card which can be used at an ATM and
    2. Local wallet, which can be used for contactless payments, without the need to go back to the server or additional authentication.

Blue Flag Certification

- International blue flags have been hoisted on country's eight beaches that have the Blue Flag certification.
- This certification is an eco-label accorded by the "Foundation for Environment Education in Denmark" based on 33 criteria.
- India started its journey of sustainable development of coastal regions in 2018 by launching its beach cleaning campaign 'I-AM-SAVING-MY-BEACH' simultaneously at 13 coastal states.
- It has also implemented the BEAMS (Beach Environment and Aesthetics Management Services) programme.
- To know more about Blue Flag Certification, click here.

R P Tiwari Committee

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has set up a seven-member committee headed by R P Tiwari.
- This committee will consider the issue of holding common entrance test at undergraduate (UG) level only from the next academic year in central universities to provide a single platform for admission.
- The new National Education Policy (NEP) advocates reducing the number of

entrance tests to eliminate the need for taking coaching for these exams.
- If the NEP suggestion is implemented, the National Testing Agency will be established.
- This Agency will be tasked to conduct a common aptitude test as well as specialised common exams for different disciplines at least twice a year, for admission to bachelor degrees in central universities.

Ramgopal Rao Committee

- Ministry of Education had appointed a committee, headed by IIT-Delhi V Ramgopal Rao, to suggest measures for implementing reservation in student admissions and faculty recruitment in IITs.
- The committee has suggested that the 23 IITs should be exempted from reservations altogether under the CEI Act, 2019.
- [CEI Act, 2019 - The Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Act, 2019]
- It suggests that IITs should be added to the list of "Institutions of Excellence" mentioned in the Schedule to the CEI Act, 2019.
- Section 4 of the Act exempts "Institutions of excellence, research institutions, and Institutions of national and strategic importance" found in the Schedule and minority institutions from providing reservation.

Radio Signal from Exo-planet

- The first possible radio signal emanating from an exoplanet in the Tau Bootes exoplanet system (51 light-years away) has been collected.
- Tau Bootes exoplanet system contains a binary star system and an exoplanet, which is a Jupiter-like planet so near its own sun.
- Low Frequency Array (LOFAR), a radio telescope in the Netherlands, was used to uncover emission bursts from the star-system.
- Till now, only Tau Bootes system exhibited a significant radio signature, a unique potential window on the planet's magnetic field.
- Observing an exoplanet's magnetic field helps astronomers decipher a planet's interior and atmospheric properties, as well as the physics of star-planet interactions.

Source: The Indian Express, Hindustan Times, Business World

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