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Current Affairs (Jul, 2021)

State News

1. Andhra Pradesh introduces SALT programme

- Andhra Pradesh has started a Supporting Andhra's Learning Transformation (SALT) programme to transform foundational learning in government schools for which the World Bank has approved a loan of 250 million dollars.
- The main objectives of the programme are strengthening foundation schools and providing training and skill development to teachers. Andhra Pradesh's public school education system has more than 40 lakh children and nearly 2 lakh teachers.

2. Kerala govt. to have its own OTT platform

- Kerala government has proposed to have its own over-the-top (OTT) platform. The state government has planned to launch it by November 1.
- The State government's proposed foray into the online content streaming space with the launch of an over-the-top (OTT) platform is a cultural intervention, rather than something prompted by the market or revenues.

3. Karnataka to develop 46 Kempegowda heritage sites in Bengaluru

- The Karnataka state government has decided to develop 46 Kempegowda heritage sites located in Bengaluru Urban, Bengaluru Rural, Ramanagara, Chikballapura, and Tumakuru districts, in a bid to promote tourism.
- According to Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, the sites identified to be in three circuits would be developed at a cost of Rs 223 crore for promoting tourism.
- According to the Authority, these sites are developed to help people acknowledge the contribution of Kempegowda or Nada Prabhu Kempegowda, the founding father of Bengaluru.

4. Manipur enters India's railway map as first passenger train reaches the state

- A passenger train Rajdhani Express from Assam's Silchar railway station has reached the Vaingaichunpao railway station in Manipur for a trial run, putting the state on the Indian Railways map. The train covered the distance of 11 km between the two northeastern stations, with railway officials onboard.
- The train halted briefly at Manipur's Jiribam railway station, where railway officials were greeted by local citizens before the national flag was hoisted accompanied by the national anthem.
- Notably, the Vaingaichunpao-Imphal (capital of Manipur) railway line is also under construction. Once completed, it will be the longest railway tunnel near Imphal.

5. 2022 Khelo India Youth Games to be held in Haryana

- The state government of Haryana will organise the Khelo India Youth Games 2021 in February 2022.
- Earlier the sports show was scheduled to be held from November 21 to December 5, 2021, but has been shifted due to the possible third wave of Covid-19 pandemic and keeping in mind that Khelo India Youth Games 2021 are to be held in the Under-18 category.
- Around 8,500 players will participate in the event of which 5,072 will be athletes, including 2,400 females and 2,672 males.

6. Assam to create new department for indigenous faith and culture

- The Assam Cabinet has announced the creation of an independent department to protect and preserve the "faith, culture and traditions of tribes and indigenous communities" of the state.
- The new department would ensure that the state's indigenous population gets to preserve their faith and traditions, while also providing requisite support to them.
- Indigenous tribes such as the Bodos, Rabhas, Mishings, along with others have their own religious beliefs and unique traditions, which so far have not received the support necessary for their preservation.
- The cabinet, during the meeting, agreed that financial and administrative reforms were necessary to ensure speedy implementation of various schemes floated by the government. It decided that departmental committees, headed by commissioners, will be entitled to give its nod for projects worth ₹ 2 crores and below.

7. UP population draft bill proposes two-child policy

- Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath has launched a population policy that aims to incentivise couples who do not have more than two babies.
- Stating that population control is related to awareness among masses and poverty, Adityanath said every community has been taken care of in Population Policy 2021-2030.
- The health minister Jai Pratap Singh said Uttar Pradesh is aiming for stability by 2050 and the government is trying to reduce the population growth rate to 2.1 per cent.

8. In a first, Himalayan yaks to be insured

- National Research Centre on Yak (NRCY) in West Kameng district, Arunachal Pradesh has tied up with the National Insurance Company Ltd. for insuring Himalayan Yak.
- The insurance policy would shield the yak owners against the risks posed by weather calamities, diseases, in-transit mishaps, surgical operations and strikes or riots.
- The owners of the Yaks would have to get their yaks ear-tagged and provide a proper description in order to get their animals insured.

9. Manduadih railway station renamed as Banaras

- The Manduadih railway station has been finally renamed as Banaras by the Northeastern railways (NER). The NER replaced the old signboard with the new one which read 'Banaras' after the Railway Board gave its nod for the new name.
- The newly painted signboards were put up with Banaras written in Hindi, Sanskrit, English, and Urdu.
- The process to change the station's name started in 2019 when the former railway minister and the present governor of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Singh, put forth the request. In the same year, the Uttar Pradesh government accepted the proposal and forwarded it to the ministry of home affairs.

10. Andhra govt announces 10% reservation for EWS

- The Andhra Pradesh government announced a 10% reservation for the Kapu community and other Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) for appointments in the initial posts and services in State government in accordance with the Constitution (103rd Amendment) Act, 2019.
- The 10% reservation in employment will benefit Kapus who are neither benefited under BC quota nor under EWS quota and other Open Competition (OC) sections who are deprived of the benefits of reservation thus far due to non-implementation of the EWS quota.

11. Maharashtra govt launches new EV Policy 2021

- The Maharashtra state government has launched the new Electric Vehicle Policy-2021. The policy announced by the State Environment Minister, Aaditya Thackeray aims to accelerate the adoption of Battery Electric Vehicles in the country. The new EV policy introduced in Maharashtra is a revision of the 2018 policy.
- It is introduced with an aim to make Maharashtra the “topmost producer of battery-powered electric vehicles in India.”
- The policy also aims for electric vehicles (EVs) to make up 10 per cent of all new vehicle registrations, by 2025. For this ambitious mission, the state government has rolled out an Rs. 930 crore policy, valid up to 31st March 2025. To make this successful, EVs will be exempted from road tax and registration charges.

12. Balika Panchayat successfully held at Kunariya village in Gujarat

- The Kunariya village of Kutch district in Gujarat has come out with a unique idea of holding Balika Panchayat. The first-ever elections of this Balika Panchayat were successfully.
- Inspired by the TV series, Balika Vadhu, the Kunariya village in Kutch district today held elections for the unique Balika Panchayat, which aims to develop leadership qualities in the girls for Future Panchayat polls.

13. Assam CM Himanta Biswa assures govt jobs for National Games Medalists

- The Assam State Chief Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma has assured jobs for all National Games medalists of Assam from now on. He also mentioned that all those who won medals in National Games so far for Assam would be given Sports Pension by the State Government. He hoped that this decision would help the sportspersons of the state.

- The Chief Minister also announced that the house would send a goodwill message to boxer Lovlina Borgohain who will be vying for a medal in Tokyo Olympics.
- The Chief Minister stated about the increase of sports pension on the sixth day of the Assam Assembly cabinet meeting. Further, the minister also said that the government is planning to increase the pension of sportsperson from Rs. 8000 to Rs. 10,000.

14. Kerala police launched Pink Protection project for women safety

- The Kerala Police launched a new initiative called the Pink Protection project for the protection of women in public, private and digital spaces.
- The Pink Protection project aims to prevent dowry-related issues, cyber-bullying & humiliation in public places. It has 10 components, one of which is activating the existing Pink Police Patrol system, named Pink Janamaithri Beat.

National News

15. FM Sitharaman's announces relief package worth Rs 6,28,993 crore against COVID-19

- Union Finance & Corporate Affairs Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman has announced a slew of measures, to provide relief to people and businesses affected by the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Minister announced a total of 17 measures worth Rs. 6,28,993 crore.

16. PM Modi Launches Japanese-style Zen Garden and Kaizen Academy

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated a Zen Garden and Kaizen Academy at Ahmedabad Management Association (AMA) premises in Ahmedabad.
- These two new initiatives are part of PM's vision of creating a 'Mini-Japan' in Gujarat. The newly launched Zen Garden in Ahmedabad will showcase several elements of Japanese art, culture, landscape and architecture.
- The Zen garden features a statue of Lord Buddha. The garden is built in partnership with the Japan Information and Study Centre at AMA and Indo-Japan Friendship Association (IJFA), Gujarat, supported by the Hyogo International Association (HIA), Japan.

17. Centre inaugurates Asia's longest and world's fifth-longest High Speed Track

- Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, Prakash Javadekar has inaugurated NATRAX- the High-Speed Track(HST) in Indore which is the longest such track in Asia.
- NATRAX, developed in an area of 1000 acres of land, is a one-stop solution for all sorts of high-speed performance tests for the widest categories of vehicles from 2 wheelers to heavy tractor-trailers.
- Launching the world-class 11.3 km High-Speed Track, Javadekar stated that India is destined to become a hub of automobiles, manufacturing, and spare parts.
- The NATRAX centre has multiple test capabilities like measurements of maximum speed, acceleration, constant speed fuel consumption, emission tests through real road driving simulation, high-speed handling and stability evaluation during manoeuvres such as lane change, high-speed durability testing, etc. and is a Centre of excellence for Vehicle Dynamics.

18. Lt Governor launches HAUSLA- Inspiring her growth in J&K

- Lieutenant Governor J&K, Manoj Sinha has launched the “HAUSLA- inspiring her growth”, a comprehensive programme for Catalysing Women Entrepreneurship in UT.
- The priority of the government is to reduce the gap between women and men entrepreneurs, in a systematic manner and to encourage women who are currently engaged in various professions so that they too can become a part of the ‘Hausla’ program.
- The intent of the innovative initiative is to empower Women as vital drivers of the overall development process in the UT by identifying & empowering Women Entrepreneurs as role models, providing them with markets, networks, training & continuous support and subsequently building an ecosystem to inspire other local women entrepreneurs.

19. J&K Chief Secretary inaugurates helpline Sukoon

- J&K Chief Secretary, Arun Kumar Mehta, inaugurated SDRF first Battalion's 24×7 mental health helpline ‘SUKOON’ at its headquarters.
- This initiative, launched by SDRF First Battalion Kashmir in collaboration with Mission Youth J&K and Tourism department, will guide the caller to avail services of clinical psychologists, therapists, counsellors and psychiatrists.

20. India's oldest running newspaper, Mumbai Samachar, turns 200

- On July 1, India's oldest running newspaper, Mumbai Samachar, will enter its 200th year. The Gujarati newspaper, with its office located in an iconic red building at Horniman Circle in Mumbai's Fort area, was first published in 1822.
- It was founded by a Parsi scholar Fardoonji Murazban, who had experimented with various other publishing options before landing on this successful print run.
- Formerly called Bombay Samachar, in Gujarati, the paper has always run as Mumbai na Samachar. It started as a weekly edition, primarily covering the movement of goods across the sea and other business news, such as the sale of property, and passed through several hands until bankruptcy turned it over to the Cama family in 1933.

21. Air Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari to be new IAF Vice Chief

- Air Marshal Vivek Ram Chaudhari will be the new Vice Chief of Indian Air Force succeeding Air Marshal Harjit Singh Arora. Air Marshal Chaudhari is currently serving as commander-in-chief of the IAF's Western Air Command (WAC) that looks after the security of the country's air space in the sensitive Ladakh sector as well as various other parts of north India.
- Air Marshal Arora retired from service and Air Marshal Chaudhari is likely to take charge of the new assignment.

22. India's 1 indigenous drone defence dome Indrajaal developed by Grene Robotics

- India's 1st indigenous drone defence dome 'Indrajaal' has been developed by Hyderabad-based Grene Robotics. As per the company, the drone defence dome - 'Indrajaal' is capable of autonomously protecting an area of 1000-2000 sq km against aerial threats.
- It protects the area by assessing and acting on aerial threats such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), and Low- Radar Cross Section (RCS) targets.
- The company said that cutting-edge technologies such as UAVs, Smart Swarms, etc. have been for the first time used in India to drop explosives next to the Mi-17 hangar at Jammu Air Base.

23. Researchers discovered Black-bellied Coral snake in forests of Uttarakhand