

1. WTO Government Procurement Agreement

Topic: International Relations

In News: India informed that Indian Government has “no plans” to join the government procurement agreement grouping of the World Trade Organization (WTO).



Potential benefits of participating in the Agreement

- ❑ **A tool for achieving enhanced transparency and effective competition in national procurement markets: possibility of enhanced value for money**
- ❑ **International “stamp of approval” re: national procurement processes**
- ❑ **Possible significant export opportunities from access to markets that are currently foreclosed**

More on the Topic:

- The Agreement on Government Procurement (GPA) is a **plurilateral agreement under the auspices of the World Trade Organization (WTO)**

which regulates the procurement of goods and services by the public authorities of the parties to the agreement, based on the principles of openness, transparency and non-discrimination.

- The agreement was originally established in 1979 as the Tokyo Round Code on Government Procurement, which entered into force in 1981 under the auspices of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.
- The GPA's membership is limited to the WTO Members that specifically signed the GPA or that have subsequently acceded to the Agreement.

India and Government Procurement Agreement:

- Government is one of the important consumers in terms of procurement for its various ministries. **It contributes to 10 to 15% of the GDP of the country.**
- Earlier, India never took up government procurement for bilateral or multilateral trade agreements in order to protect domestic firms.
- This was one of the bottlenecks in several key FTA negotiations, including the one with the EU.
- The India-UAE agreement, which came into effect on 1 May excludes government procurement for several union ministries.
- While this was the first time India had included government procurement in a free-trade pact, it is only limited to a few central ministries and excludes key sectors such as construction, infrastructure projects and health care, including medical devices and pharmaceutical products.

Source: Indian Express

2. International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

Topic: Disaster Management

In News: The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has commenced the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure 2022.

More on the Topic:

- The ICDRI 2022 has brought together more than 20 member countries, international organisations, and institutions on a single platform.
- **CDRI is a multi-stakeholder global partnership of national governments, UN agencies and programmes, multilateral development banks, the private sector, academic and knowledge institutions.**
- CDRI is led and managed by national governments, where knowledge is generated and exchanged on different aspects of disaster resilience of infrastructure.
- The CDRI Secretariat is based in New Delhi, India.

About Disaster Resilient Infrastructure:

- As the name implies, disaster resilient infrastructure include vital buildings, public communal facilities, transit systems, telecommunications, and power systems that are strategically designed to withstand the impact of a natural disaster like a flood, earthquake, or wildfire.
- Disaster resilient architecture is one of the pivotal aspects of risk management and disaster preparedness.

Benefits of disaster resilience:

- Statistical evidence suggests **disaster prevention has helped limit loss of life** to disasters in a number of developed and developing countries
- The cost of property damage from all hazards between 1970 and 2008 totalled US\$2,300 billion, but that **effective disaster prevention had curtailed an upward trend.**
- community-based DRR had a **positive impact on social resilience** through altering attitudes and behaviours towards risk.
- Increased disaster resilience has in some cases been associated with behaviours that **preserve the natural environment.** At the borders between Kenya, Ethiopia and

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Somalia, collaborative local approaches to resilience have helped preserve pasture and water resources.

- It has also been argued that **addressing vulnerability by building resilience is more cost-effective than emergency relief.**

Source: Indian Express

3.Global Report on Food Crises

Topic: Reports and Indices

In News: The Global Report on Food Crises 2022 was released recently by the Global Network Against Food Crises (GNAFC). The GNAFC is an international alliance formed by the European Union, United Nations and other governmental and non-governmental agencies.

The 3 x 3 approach to addressing food crises



More on the Topic:

- At least 155 million people faced acute hunger in 2020, including 133,000 who needed urgent food to prevent widespread death from starvation.
- Two-thirds of the people in those crisis levels were in 10 countries -- **Congo, Yemen, Afghanistan, Syria, Sudan, northern Nigeria, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Zimbabwe and Haiti.**
- The 133,000 facing starvation, death and destitution were in **Burkina Faso, South Sudan and Yemen.**
- **The number of people facing acute food insecurity and requiring urgent food, nutrition and livelihoods assistance is on the rise.**
- 60% to 80% of the 155 million people facing acute food insecurity depend on agriculture, but last year FAO was able to assist only about 30%.

Why the Food Insecurity has been aggravated?

- The magnitude and severity of food crises last year worsened as a result of protracted conflicts, the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, and weather extremes that exacerbated "pre-existing fragilities."

Way Forward suggested by the Report:

- Greater prioritisation of small hold agriculture and focussing on sustainability.
- Three dimensions to be implemented at global, regional and country level (3x3 approach) building on existing structures

Source: Indian Express

4. E band Allotment to Telecoms

Topic: Science and Technology

In News: The Digital Communications Commission's (DCC) recent decision backing allocation of premium 'E band' airwaves exclusively to mobile carriers via the administrative route was criticized by various stake holders.

More on the Topic:

- The tech companies and the broadband companies want the E-band spectrum to be opened up for everyone and not just be reserved exclusively for the telecom operators.
- The waveguide E band is the range of radio frequencies from 60 GHz to 90 GHz in the electromagnetic spectrum.
- These frequencies are equivalent to wave lengths between 5 mm and 3.333 mm. The E band is in the Extremely high frequency (EHF) range of the radio spectrum.
- **The E-band is a major solution of 5G's microwave transmission.**

Source: Business Standard



5. PM MITRA Parks Scheme

Topic: Government Schemes

In News: As many as 13 states, including Karnataka, gave presentations on setting up of the PM Mega Integrated Textile Region and Apparel (PM-MITRA) scheme.

More on the Topic:

- PM MITRA park will be developed by a **Special Purpose Vehicle** which will be owned by the **Central and State Government and in a Public Private Partnership (PPP) Mode.**
- Each MITRA Park will have an incubation centre, common processing house and a common effluent treatment plant and other textile related facilities such as design centres and testing centres.
- The Master Developer will not only develop the Industrial Park but also maintain it during the concession period.
- Under the scheme, the centre will provide development capital support for the development of common infrastructure of Rs 500 crore for each greenfield MITRA park and upto Rs 200 crore for each brownfield park.
- Greenfield describes a completely new project that has to be executed from scratch, while a brownfield project is one that has been worked on by others.

Significance:

- The park will be a **one-stop shop for all manufacturing activities** and reduce logistics cost.
- PM-MITRA Park will offer the opportunity **to create an Integrated textiles value chain** right from spinning, weaving, processing, dyeing and printing to garment manufacturing at one location and will reduce logistics cost of Industry,
- Textile parks are expected **to reduce fragmentation in its value chain** and increase exports.
- Each MITRA park **is expected to directly generate 1 lakh jobs** and indirectly generate a further 2 lakh jobs.
- The parks are crucial to attract **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).**

Source: Business Standard



The infographic is set against a light yellow background. It features three main points, each accompanied by a circular icon. The first point is '7 MITRA Parks with a total outlay of ₹4,445 Crores in a period of 5 years', with a pink icon of a money bag containing a rupee symbol. The second point is 'World-class Industrial infrastructure to attract investment', with a purple icon of a factory. The third point is 'Generation of 7 lakh direct and 14 lakh of indirect employment', with a pink icon of three people. Each point is separated by a horizontal line with a blue and red gradient.

6. Bioluminescent Fire Flies

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: The Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR) of Tamilnadu has witnessed bioluminescence event recently.

More on the Topic:

- A new species of synchronous fireflies has been identified in the Anamalai Tiger Reserve where several lakhs of fireflies have turned a large portion of the protected forest into an Avatar movie-like bioluminescent world.
- There are only 7 to 8 species of fireflies recorded in India.
- Firefly populations are on the decline across the world.

About Fire Flies:

- They are soft-bodied beetles commonly called fireflies, glowworms, or lightning bugs for their conspicuous production of light, mainly during twilight, to attract mates.
- Fireflies produce a chemical reaction inside their bodies that allows them to light up. This type of light production is called bioluminescence.
- Unlike a light bulb, which produces a lot of heat in addition to light, a firefly's light is "cold light" without a lot of energy being lost as heat.

Source: Hindu



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