1. PERFORMANCE GRADING INDEX FOR DISTRICTS

Topic: Reports and Indices

In News: The Department of School Education and Literacy, Ministry of Education (MoE) has released the Performance Grading Index for Districts (PGI-D) for 2018-19 and 2019-20.

More on the Topic:

- GI-D assesses the performance of school education system at the district level by creating an index for comprehensive analysis.
- Based on the success of State PGI, 83-indicator based PGI for District (PGI-D) has been designed to grade the performance of all districts in school education. The data is filled by districts through online portal.
- PGI-D grades the districts into ten grades; highest achievable grade is Daksh, which is for districts scoring more than 90% of the total points in that category or overall.
- The lowest grade in PGI-D is called Akanshi-3 which is for scores upto10% of the total points.

Objective of the PGI-D:

- **Ultimate objective of PGI-D is to help the districts to priorities areas for intervention** in school education and thus improve to reach the highest grade.
- The PGI-D is expected to help the state education departments to identify gaps at the district level and improve their performance in a decentralised manner.
- The indicator-wise PGI score **shows the areas where a district needs to improve.**
- The PGI-D will reflect the relative performance of all the districts in a uniform scale which encourages them to perform better.

Indicators Used in the Ranking:

- The structure comprises of total weightage of 600 points across 83 indicators, which are grouped under six categories which includes outcomes, effective classroom transaction, infrastructure facilities and student's entitlements, school safety and child protection, digital learning and governance process.
- These categories are further divided into 12 domains.

State's Performance in the Ranking:

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- Three districts from Rajasthan performed the best in the assessment.
- The three districts Sikar, Jhunjhunu, and Jaipur figured in 'Utkarsh' grade in 2019-20 in contrast to a year before when no district featured in that category.
- **Rajasthan has the highest 24 districts in this grade, followed by Punjab (14), Gujarat (13), and Kerala (13).**
- The districts with the lowest scores (1 out of 50) in this category were:
- South Salmara-Mankachar (Assam), Alirajpur (Madhya Pradesh), North Garo Hills and South Garo Hills in Meghalaya, and Khowai (Tripura) in 2019-20.
Source: Indian Express

2. GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

Topic: Environment and Ecology

In News: The six-day meeting of the open-ended working group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework failed to achieve as much as was expected.

More on the Topic:

- The objective of the meeting was to reach a consensus on the text of the framework, which is to be finalised at the 15th Conference of the Parties (CoP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework:

- The framework must aim to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and achieve recovery by 2050, which requires additional investment in nature equivalent to between 0.7 and 1% of annual global GDP.

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- Targets in the framework should be measurable, underpinned by science, and have explicit outcomes.

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD):

- The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the international legal instrument for "the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources."
- At the Earth Summit that was held in **Rio De Janeiro in 1992, the CBD was opened for signature.**
- In the year 1993, the CBD came into force.
- The only UN member state that has not ratified this convention is the United States.
- The CBD has two supplementary agreements, **the Nagoya Protocol and the Cartagena Protocol**.
- Its overall objective is **to encourage actions, which will lead to a sustainable future.**
- **The CBD's governing body is the Conference of the Parties (COP).** This ultimate authority of all governments (or Parties) that have ratified the treaty meets every two years to review progress, set priorities and commit to work plans.
- The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) is based in Montreal, Canada.

Source: The Hindu

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3.NITI AAYOG LAUNCHES REPORT ON GIG ECONOMY IN INDIA

Topic: Economy

In News: The report, titled 'India's Booming Gig and Platform Economy' was published by the NITI Ayog.

More on the Topic:

- The report defines a gig worker as **"someone who engages in income-earning activities outside of a traditional employer-employee relationship, as well as in the informal sector".**
- Additionally, it defines those working with platforms such as Ola, Uber, Dunzo, Swiggy, Zomato and Urban Company as platform workers.
- It also termed platform labour as the **"Fourth Industrial Revolution".**
- The recommendations in the report are **not binding on platform companies.**

Major findings of the Report:

- An estimated 77 lakh gig workers were there in 2020-21, forming 2.6 percent of the non-farm workforce or 1.5 percent of the total workers in India.
- By 2029-30, it is expected to go up to 2.35 crore, or 6.7 percent of the non-agricultural workforce and 4.1 percent of total workers.
- Drivers and sales persons accounted for more than 52 percent of the gig workers in 2019-20.

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- 47 percent of gig work currently is in medium skilled jobs, 22 percent in high-skilled, and about 31 percent in low-skilled jobs.
- NITI report is based on an estimation, and there is no official data to authoritatively estimate the extent of gig work in the country "thereby rendering the gig workforce invisible."
- Challenges for Gig Workers:
- **Restrictive Accessibility** makes gig work a largely urban phenomenon, as access to the internet and digital technology can be a restrictive factor.
- **Job and income insecurity:** which is among the primary issues raised by gig workers, has been cited as a challenge.
- **Social Protection:** as workers are not employees and hence do not receive income security and social protection.
- **Occupational safety and health risks** includes road safety, theft and physical assault, discrimination or harassment. This is amplified for women in app-based taxi work and delivery.
- **Algorithmic management practices and performance evaluation:** workers may be under pressure due to algorithmic management practices and performance evaluation on the basis of ratings.

Recommendations by The Report:

- India requires a framework that balances the flexibility offered by platforms while also ensuring social security of worker. Currently, they work in a regulatory gray area.
- **Paid sick leave, health access and insurance year-round, occupational disease and work accident insurance, retirement/pension plans and other contingency benefits** should be provided to gig workers.
- **Skill gaps should be bridged** by carrying out assessments periodically and partnering with platform businesses for on boarding skilled women and persons with disabilities.
- Making aggregate data of gig and platform workers public to enable decision-making is important.
- Companies should carry out **gender sensitisation and accessibility awareness programmes** for workers and their families, particularly to promote the rights of women and persons with disabilities.
- It also suggests partnering with various stakeholders to **upskill women and disabled persons**.
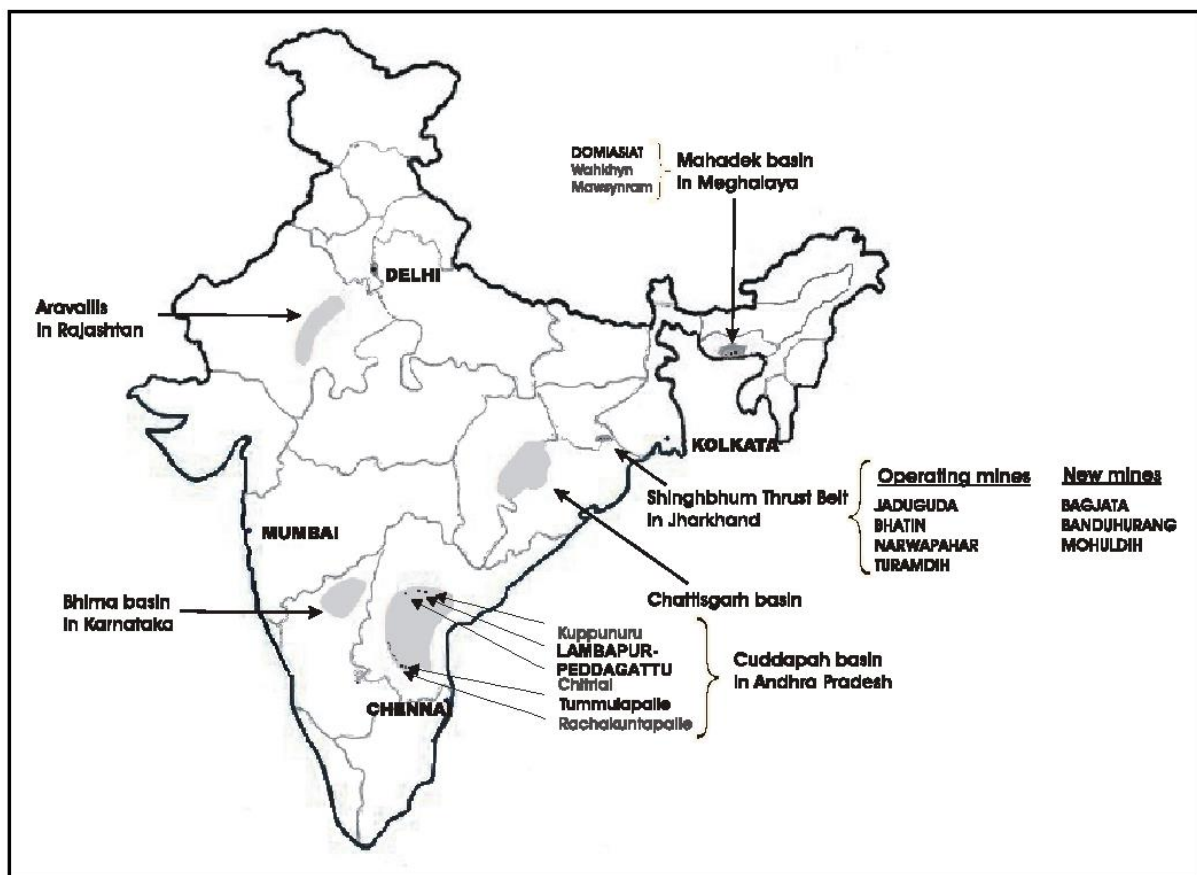

Industrial Revolution 4.0:

- Industrial Revolution 4.0 refers to the fourth industrial revolution related to manufacturing and chain production.
- Industry 4.0 is a complex Cyber-Physical Systems which synergizes production with digital technologies, the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data & Analytics, Machine Learning and Cloud Computing.

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- The term 'Industry 4.0' was coined by the German government in 2011.

Source: Hindu

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4. URANIUM MINING RAJASTHAN

Topic: Economy

deposits. (Fig.1).

Major uranium provinces of India

Fig. 1.

In News: The Rajasthan government has entered into the field of uranium mining by issuing a letter of intent (LoI) to Uranium Corporation of India.

More on the Topic:

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- Rajasthan has come on the world map with huge reserves of uranium, found at Rohil (Khandela Tehsil) in Sikar district.
- After Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh, **Rajasthan is the third state where uranium** which is considered one of the rare minerals in the world has been found.
- Currently, excavation of uranium is going on at Jadugoda in Jharkhand as well as Andhra Pradesh.
- In India, Uranium deposits occur in the **Dharwar rocks.**

Largest Producers of Uranium in the World:

- The largest producers of uranium in the world are **Kazakhstan, Canada and Australia,** while this mineral has also been found in Niger, Russia, Namibia, Uzbekistan, the US and Ukraine.

Significance of Uranium:

- Uranium is mainly used for **generating electricity and also for nuclear energy, medicines, defence equipment and photography,** among others.

Laws Associated With Uranium Excavation:

- **Uranium is a major mineral,** it is managed by the Union Government under provisions of Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.
- The policy and legislation relating to **Major minerals are managed by the Ministry of Mines But Uranium being an atomic mineral is managed by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).**
- Many of these mineral deposits are found in rich forest reserves and thus approval of Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change becomes necessary.

Source: Indian Express

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5. KAPILAVASTU RELICS - BUDHISM

Topic: Art and Culture

In News: Four holy relics of Lord Buddha arrived in Mongolia for an 11-day exposition to coincide with Budhha Purnima celebrations in the country.
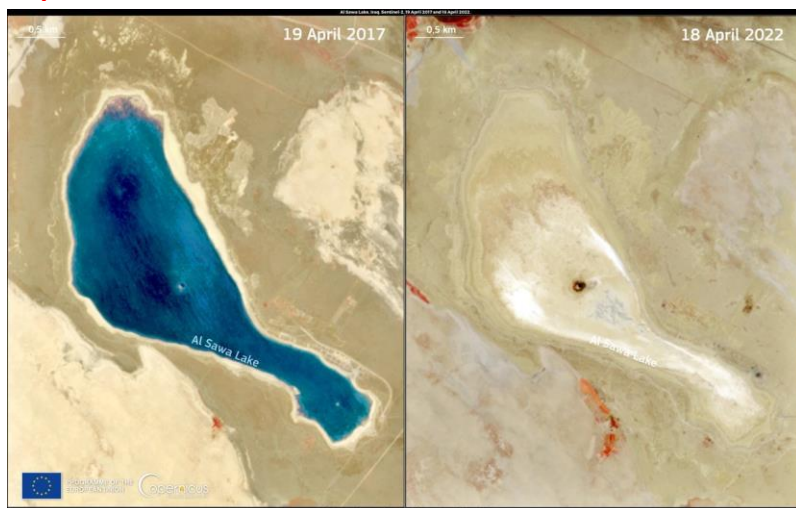
More on the Topic:

- The four relics come from among 22 Buddha relics, known as the Kapilavastu relics since they were recovered from a site in Bihar believed to be the ancient city of Kapilavastu. The site was discovered in 1898. The relics are currently housed at Delhi's National Museum.
- According to Buddhist belief, **Buddha attained salvation in Kushinagar** (Uttar Pradesh) at the age of 80.
- The Mallas of Kushinagar cremated him with ceremonies befitting a universal king.
- The relics from the funeral pyre were then collected and divided into eight shares to be distributed among **the Licchavis of Vaishali, Sakyas of Kapilavastu, Ajathsatrus of Magadha, Mallas of Kushinagar, Mallas of Pava, Bullies of Allakappa, Koliyas of Ramagrama and a Brahmana of Vethadipa.**
- The purpose was to erect stupas over the sacred relics.
- Two more stupas also came up — one over the embers and the other over the urn in which the relics were collected.

Source: Business Standard

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6. LAKE SAWA

Topic: Places in News

In News: Iraq's 'pearl of the south' Lake Sawa dry amid water crisis.

More on the Topic:

- Lake Sawa is only the latest casualty in this broad country-wide struggle with water shortages.
- The reasons for the dry up include human activity and climate change.
- It is formed over limestone rock and studded with gypsum formations; the lake has no inlet or outlet.
- It was declared a Ramsar site in 2014.

Source: Hindu

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