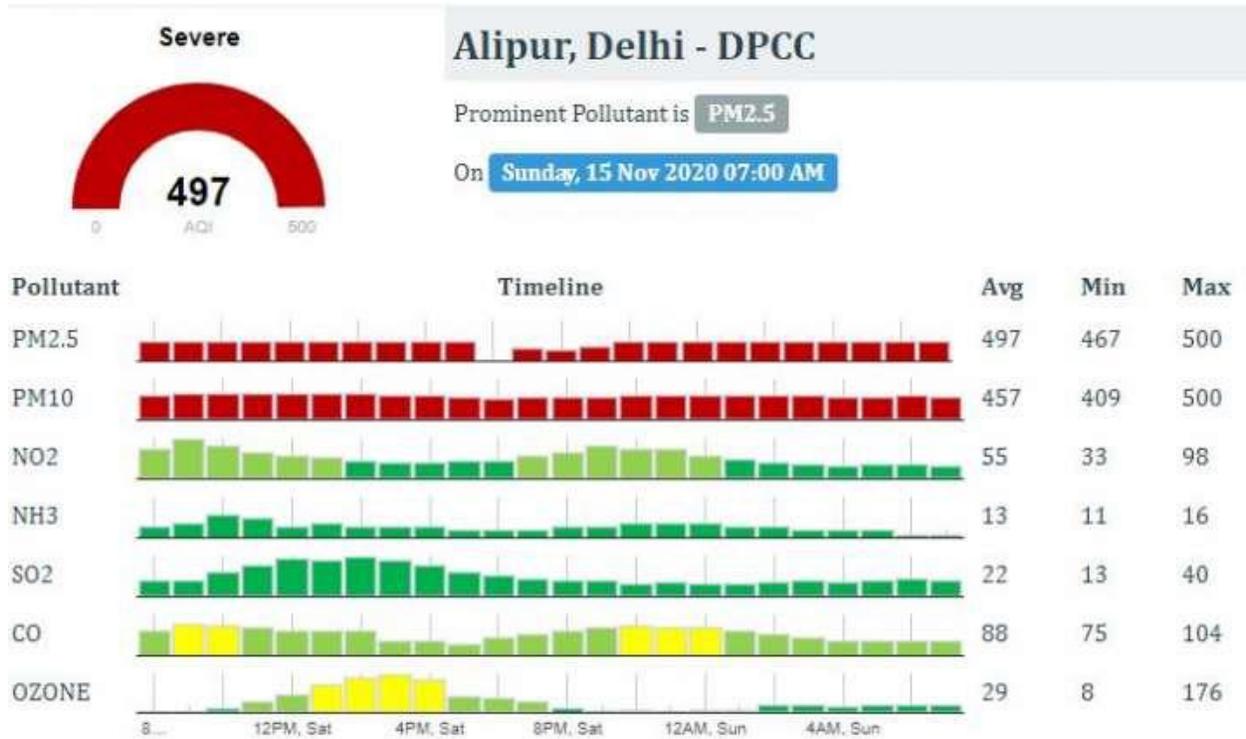


1. Delhi Air Pollution

Topic: Environment and Ecology



In News: Delhi pollution has reached to dangerous pollution levels.

More on the Topic

- **Reasons for the Elevated Pollution Levels:**
- **The burning of agricultural waste in Punjab and Haryana is indeed the dominant reason** for the smoke and haze over Delhi.
- The particulate matter from the burning contributes **30-40% of the PM2.5 concentrations** in Delhi’s air during this time. It is the single largest source of PM2.5 levels on most days during this period.
- **The weather plays a critical role as well** — a 30-40% rise in pollutants at any other time of the year would not cause the same impact.
- During October-November the air is not that hot. **The pollutants are trapped and tend to get concentrated at lower levels of the atmosphere**, instead of rising during summer. It results in in the smoke and haze situation.
- **Location of Delhi:** It lies to the northeast of the Thar Desert, to the northwest of the central plains and to the southwest of the Himalayas.
- **As winds arrive from the coasts, bringing with them pollutants picked up along the way, they get ‘trapped’ right before the Himalayas.**



Why the Stubble is Burnt in Haryana and Punjab:

- **The burning is necessitated by the need to prepare the fields for the next crop in a very short window of time.**
- Due to a slight shift in the cropping pattern in these states, there is now very little time between the harvesting of one crop and the planting of the next crop.
- **The traditional method of manually uprooting, or cutting, the stumps of the previous crop is time-consuming,** and can delay the sowing of the next crop. So farmers resort to the easier option of burning these remains

Alternatives to Stubble Burning:

- Several solutions have been suggested, and are being tried. These include **suggestions to change the crop cycle, deployment of mechanised equipment for harvesting** that would render burning unnecessary, and conversion of this waste into something more useful, like a source of energy, which can become an incentive for not burning.

About the Solutions?

- The Indian Agricultural Research Institute has proposed a **low-cost way to deal with the problem of stubble burning by spraying a chemical solution** to decompose the crop residue and turn it into manure. Better coordination is needed.
- Monitor local sources year-round. **Having dedicated teams to keep track of local dispersed sources all year** will help avoid the last-moment fire-fighting that happens during winter.
- **Focus on solutions that cut emissions from sources.** Rather than relying on smog guns and smog towers to reduce air pollution, the focus should be on reducing emissions from known sources such as vehicles, industries and diesel generator sets.
- **Fix accountability across departments.** We keep comparing Delhi's response to China's on air pollution. In 2014, China issued rules to evaluate the performance of government officials carrying out local-level air pollution control plans. **Environmental targets were incorporated in the annual performance review of officials.** Similar accountability regime can be incorporated in Delhi NCR.
- There are lack of ex-situ implements for stubble removal like balers to storage infrastructure, the high delivery cost of biomass and lack of adequate biomass end-user base.
- These should be addressed by **crowding in private investments through the PPP model to augment the biomass supply chain and end-use infrastructure.**
- Air pollution cannot be isolated from urban service and livability indicators. Having a clear set of multi-sectoral indicators to track action across sectors is necessary.

Source: Indian Express

2. India Infrastructure Project Development Fund Scheme

Topic: Economy



In News: The Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance has notified Scheme for Financial Support for Project Development Expenses of PPP Projects – India Infrastructure Project Development Fund Scheme (IIPDF Scheme).

More on the Topic:

- As a Central Sector Scheme, the India Infrastructure Project Development Fund Scheme (IIPDF Scheme) will **aid development of quality PPP projects by providing necessary funding support to the project sponsoring authorities**, both in the Central and State Governments.
- It is intended for creating a **shelf of bankable viable PPP projects for achieving the vision of modern infrastructure for the country.**
- Funding under IIPDF Scheme is in addition to the already operational Scheme for Financial Support to PPPs in Infrastructure (VGF Scheme)
- **VGF scheme supports infrastructure projects undertaken through PPP mode** that are economically justified but commercially unviable.

Significance of the Scheme:

- As a result of the increased crop output brought about by this, the **farmers would earn more money. This would improve the soil's health.**

- The MRP of phosphoric and potassium (P&K) fertilizers can be fixed at appropriate levels by manufacturers, marketers, and importers thanks to the Nutrient Based Subsidy Scheme (NBS).

Source: PIB

3. "Deemed to be university" Draft Regulations



Topic: Governance

In News: Forest UGC has issued "Deemed to be university" Draft Regulations.

More on the Topic:

- **Eligibility:** Multi-disciplinary institutions with minimum five departments (either UG/ PG/ integrated/ research or a combination of these) or a cluster of institutions offering a minimum of five departments located in the same city/town will be eligible to apply for Deemed University status.
- Additionally, the eligibility criteria will be **NAAC 'A' grade with at least a 3.01 CGPA for three consecutive cycles or NBA accreditation for two-third of eligible programmes for three consecutive cycles or in top 50 of any specific category of NIRF for the last three years continuously or in top 100 of overall NIRF ranking for last three years continuously**
- In the **'distinct institution' category**, in which any of the institutes that are eligible as 'distinct' will not have to meet the NAAC criteria.

New Provisions:

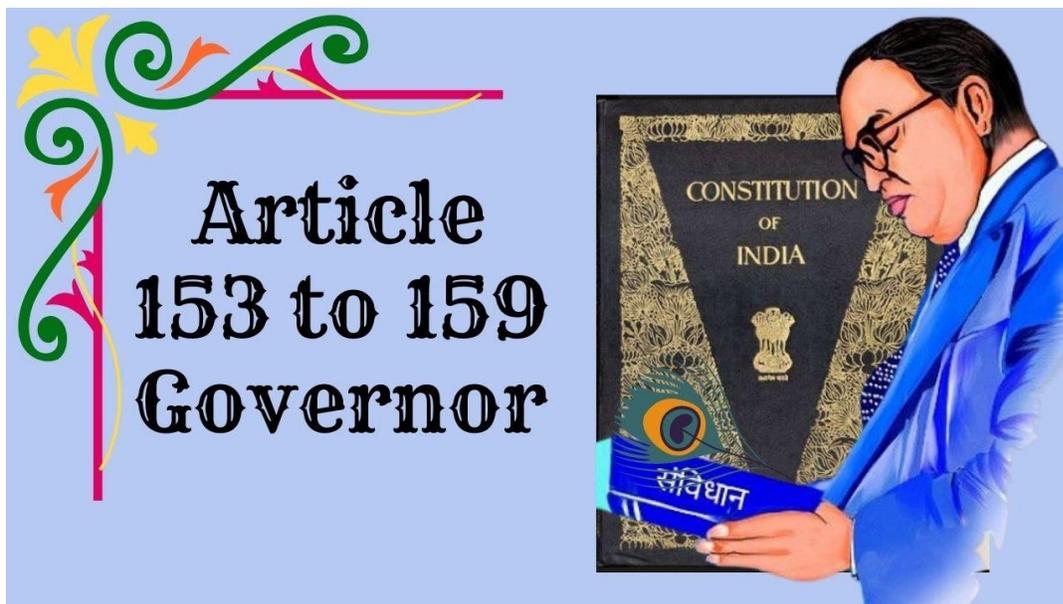
- Deemed to be universities will be **now eligible to establish their own off-shore campus centre(s)**, provided they meet the UGC regulations.
- Draft regulations proposed to do away with the condition that an institute needs to be in existence for at least 20 years before it can apply for tag.
- **A system of graded penalty** has been introduced for any violations. These include a warning through public notice, barring from any expansion, closure of programmes/ departments/ off-campus(es).
- In case of repeated violations, the deemed university status will be withdrawn.

About Deemed to be University:

- Deemed University is a type of higher education institute, it has been recognized by the status of “deemed to be university” under **Section 3 of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956.**
- In broad terms, it means that **the institution has been granted permission to offer its own degree programs**, which are equivalent to those provided by regular universities.

Source: Hindu

4. Removal of Governor



Topic: Polity and Governance

In News: Tamil Nadu MLA has called for “all like-minded MPs” to support a proposal to remove Tamil Nadu Governor.

More on the Topic:



Governor's appointment and removal:

- Under Article 155 and 156 of the Constitution, a Governor is appointed by the President and holds office “during the pleasure of the President”.
- If this pleasure is withdrawn before completion of the five-year term, the Governor has to step down.
- As the President works on the aid and advice of the Prime Minister and the council of ministers, in effect, the Governor can be appointed and removed by the central government.
- Thus, a Governor is a representative of the Union government in states.
- Article 163 of the Constitution says the Governor will normally be aided and advised by the Council of Ministers except in those functions which require his discretion.
- While the Governor's duties and responsibilities lie in a particular state, there is no provision for impeaching the Governor.

What happens in case of disagreements?

- There are no provisions laid down in the Constitution for the manner in which the Governor and the state must engage publicly when there is a difference of opinion.
- The management of differences has **traditionally been guided by respect for each other's boundaries.**

Court judgements and Commission Recommendations About Governors Position:

- In **Surya Narain Choudhary vs Union of India (1981)**, the Rajasthan High Court held that the pleasure of the President was not justiciable, the Governor had no security of tenure and can be removed at any time by the President withdrawing pleasure.
- In **BP Singhal vs Union of India (2010)**, the Supreme Court elaborated on the pleasure doctrine. It upheld that “no limitations or restrictions are placed on the ‘at pleasure’ doctrine”, but that “does not dispense with the need for a cause for withdrawal of the pleasure”.
- **Sarkaria Commission, 1988 recommended that** Governors are not sacked before completing their five-year tenure, except in rare and compelling circumstances, and made provision to impeach Governor by Assembly.
- **Punchhi Commission, 2010 has recommended that the** Phrase “during pleasure of President” should be deleted from Constitution because Governor should be removed only by a resolution of state legislature.

Source: Indian Express



5. National SC-ST Hub Scheme

Topic: Government Scheme



In News: The Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India organized National SC-ST Hub (NSSH) Conclave recently.

More on the Topic:

- Ministry of MSME implements the National SC-ST Hub Scheme with an objective of **creating an ecosystem for SC/ST entrepreneurs and handholding them to participate in the public procurement to reach 4% mandate** as per the public procurement policy.
- It is being implemented by National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), a public sector undertaking under the administrative control of Ministry of MSME.

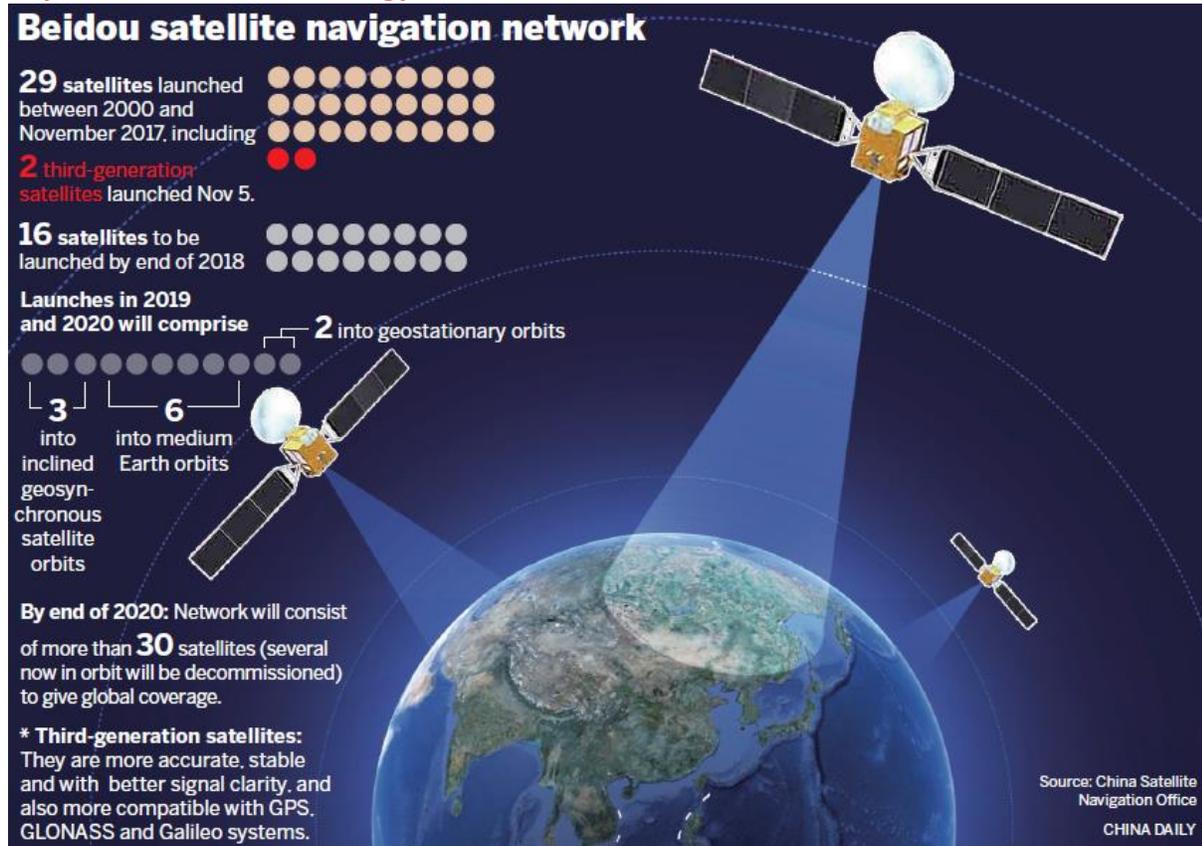
Various components/interventions introduced like:

- Special Credit Linked Capital Subsidy for technology enablement,
- Capacity building of SC/ST entrepreneurs,
- Special Marketing Assistance Scheme (SMAS) etc.

Source: Business Standard

6. BeiDou Satellite Navigation System (BDS)

Topic: Science and Technology



In News: China will expand global reach of its home-grown BeiDou satellite navigation system (BDS).

More on the Topic:

- BeiDou or BDS is a global navigation network alongside the US' GPS, (Global Positioning System) Russia's GLONASS and the European Union's Galileo.
- **BeiDou is a global GNSS owned and operated by the People's Republic of China.**
- BDS was formally commissioned in 2020.
- Beijing has, since 2020, also made an outreach to South Asia and is already working, or in discussion with, a number of countries in the region, including Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, over adopting the BeiDou satellite (BDS) navigation system.
- **The operational system of BeiDou consists of 35 satellites.**
- It is in use in more than half of the countries in the world.

Source: Business Standard



7. Doctors Without Borders

Topic: International Relations



In News: Doctors Without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières or MSF) has warned that the proposals on intellectual property (IP) rights in the draft India-United Kingdom Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will hurt the global supply of generic medicines.

More on the Topic:

- A generic drug is a medication created to be the same as an already marketed brand-name drug in dosage form, safety, strength, route of administration, quality, performance characteristics, and intended use.
- A generic drug that contains the same chemical substance as a drug that was originally protected by patents.

Doctors Without Borders:

- Doctors Without Borders also known as Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) in French.
- It is an international humanitarian medical non-governmental organisation (NGO) of French origin best known for its projects in conflict zones and in countries affected by endemic diseases.
- Private donors provide about 90% of the organisation's funding, while corporate donations provide the rest.



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- It deliver emergency medical assistance to people affected by armed conflict, epidemic, malnutrition, natural disaster or exclusion from health care.
- It received the 1999 Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of its members' continued efforts to provide medical care in acute crises, as well as raising international awareness of potential humanitarian disasters.

Source: Business Standard

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