

# NEWS TODAY

## SIX CATEGORIES OF RARE DISEASES ADDED UNDER NATIONAL POLICY FOR RARE DISEASES (NPRD), 2021

- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare included **rare diseases such as Laron's syndrome, Wilson's disease and Hypophosphatic Rickets** under NPRD, 2021.
  - > **WHO defines rare disease** as often debilitating lifelong disease or disorder **with a prevalence of 1 or less, per 1000 population.**
  - > There are **between 7000 - 8000 rare diseases** and about **95% have no approved treatment.**
- NPRD **aims at lowering incidence and prevalence of rare diseases** through a comprehensive preventive strategy.
- Key features of NPRD**
  - > **Classification of diseases**
    - **Group 1:** Disorders amenable to one-time curative treatment.
    - **Group 2:** Diseases requiring long term / lifelong treatment having relatively lower cost of treatment.
    - **Group 3:** Diseases for which definitive treatment is available but challenges are to make optimal patient selection.
  - > **Government's support in treatment**
    - **Financial support** under Umbrella Scheme of **Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi by Central Government for treatment of Group 1 diseases.**
    - **State Governments** can support patients listed under **Group 2.**
  - > **Prevention at different levels**
    - **Primary prevention:** preventing birth of an affected child.
    - **Secondary prevention:** avoiding birth of affected foetus.
    - **Tertiary prevention:** medical rehabilitation to rare disease patients.

### OTHER INITIATIVES TAKEN FOR RARE DISEASES

**Centres of Excellence (CoEs) under NPRD** for diagnosis, prevention and treatment of rare diseases

**PLI Scheme for Pharmaceuticals for domestic manufacturing** of various products **including Orphan drugs**

**Full waiver of Basic Customs Duty and IGST to drugs imported** (personal use only) for treatment of several rare diseases

## NEW DATA ON GLOBAL ARMS TRANSFERS PUBLISHED BY STOCKHOLM INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SIPRI)

- SIPRI is a **Sweden-based independent international institute** dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- Key Highlights of the Data**
  - > **US, was world's topmost military exporter** in past five years, **followed by Russia and France.**
  - > **India's share of global arms imports was highest** in past five years, followed by **Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Australia.**
  - > **Russia was the largest supplier of arms to India,** but its share of total Indian arms imports fell.
    - **Other top suppliers** to India were **France, US and Israel.**
  - > **India's arms imports fell 11% between 2013-17 and 2018-22** because of reasons like a **complex procurement process, efforts to diversify arms suppliers** and attempts to **replace imports with local design.**
- Initiatives taken for Defence Indigenisation**
  - > **Priority to procurement from domestic sources** under Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP)-2020.
  - > **Notification of Positive Indigenisation Lists** for which there would be an embargo on import beyond indicated timelines.
  - > **Allowing 74% FDI** under automatic route.
  - > **SRIJAN portal** to facilitate indigenisation by Indian Industry.
  - > **Establishment of two Defence Industrial Corridors** (one each in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu).
  - > **Launch of Mission DefSpace; Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX)** scheme etc.

# MANIPUR GOVERNMENT WITHDRAW FROM SUSPENSION OF OPERATIONS (SoO) AGREEMENT WITH INSURGENT GROUPS

- SoO is a **tripartite agreement signed in 2008**, by Centre, state and two umbrella insurgent groups, to **initiate a political dialogue**.
  - **Kuki National Organisation and United People's Front** are the umbrella groups.
- **Reasons behind insurgency in North East (NE)**
  - **Threats to local identities due to large scale migration** or ethnic rivalries.
  - **Poor connectivity and limited infrastructure** causing lack of opportunities.
  - **Porous international borders** and difficult topography.
  - **Sense of alienation from mainstream** due to overwhelming presence of security forces and associated human rights issues.
- As per a recent report by Ministry of Home Affairs, **NE region has witnessed an 80% decline in insurgency-related incidents since 2014**.
- **Initiatives taken**
  - **Development of NE as economic hub** by initiatives like Swadesh Darshan scheme, Agri Exports zone, National Bamboo Mission.
  - **Launch of district level SDG Index** for NE States.
  - **Local and Regional connectivity initiatives** such as Priority to NE routes under UDAN 4.0 scheme, Maitri Setu bridge etc.
  - **Prime Minister's Development Initiative for North East (PM-DevINE)** for rapid and holistic development of Region.
  - **Gradual removal of Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)** from NE states.

## MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (MEITY) FORMS TASK FORCE TO DRAFT INDIAai ROADMAP

- **INDIAai** (The National AI Portal of India) platform will **focus on boosting research and facilitating tools** required for **growth of start-up community**.
  - INDIAai (a joint venture by MEITY, NEGD and NASSCOM) is being set up as a **single central knowledge hub on artificial intelligence (AI) and allied fields**.
- AI is a field which **combines computer science and robust datasets** to enable problem-solving. It also **encompasses sub-fields of machine learning and deep learning**.
  - According to estimates, **AI is expected to add USD 967 billion** to Indian economy by 2035.
- **Potential Benefits and applications of AI**
  - **Healthcare:** AI driven diagnostic, early detection, drug research and recovery etc.
  - **Education:** Automation of repetitive tasks, practical using AR/VR, Automation of counselling, evaluation etc.
  - **Agriculture:** AI enabled agricultural robotics, Predictive analysis, AI for intelligent spraying etc.
  - **Energy:** AI enabled smart grids, anti-theft technologies, energy efficient systems, fault prediction etc.
  - **Law enforcement:** Facial recognition, speech recognition etc.
  - **Financial services:** Personalised banking, fraud detection, process automation etc.
  - **Manufacturing:** Quality checks, inventory management, real time supply chain management, prediction of equipment failures etc.

### INITIATIVES TAKEN

- Meity's FutureSkills PRIME initiative for re-skilling/ up-skilling of IT professionals in 10 Emerging technologies
- National AI Portal as a repository of AI based initiatives in the country
- National Programme on Responsible Use of AI for Youth
- National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence
- India is founding member of Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)

## 486 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA (ASI) ANTIQUITIES MISSING SINCE 1947

- Antiquities are **defined under Antiquities and Art Treasures Act, 1972 (AATA)** and **include items such as any**
  - Coin, sculpture, painting, epigraph or other work of art or craftsmanship.
  - Article, object or thing detached from a building or cave.
- **National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA)**, launched in 2007, has the mandate of preparing a database of antiquities as defined in AATA.
  - NMMA has **so far registered 3.52 lakh antiquities**.
- **UNESCO 1970 Convention** (ratified by India) on Means of Prohibiting and Preventing Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property calls for measures **to prohibit illicit trafficking of cultural property**.
  - In India, **AATA makes export of such items without a license (from ASI) a criminal offence**.
- **Categories of missing antiquities include:**
  - Those taken out of India **pre-independence**;
  - Those which were taken out **since independence and before implementation of AATA** (March 1976);
  - Those taken out **since April 1976**.
- Antiquities **can be retrieved by raising requests** bilaterally or on international fora **with proof of ownership** and with the **help of UNESCO convention**.

# SMART METERING INFRA ON UNLICENSED SPECTRUM NOT SECURE: CELLULAR OPERATORS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA (COAI)

- COAI has recommended that **Ministry of Power** use **licensed spectrum bands** for **smart grid meters**.

- **Unlicensed spectrum** is considered as an **inexpensive and barrier-free option** for meeting communication requirements.
- Currently, **use of 865-868 MHz band** for "Tracking, Tracing and Data Acquisition Devices" and "Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Applications" is **permitted without acquiring a license**.

- COAI has argued that **allowing unlicensed frequency bands**

- **May compromise security of critical infrastructure** because of lack of stringent compliance or monitoring requirements.
- **Will make these systems much more prone to vulnerabilities**, threats and cyber-intrusions.

- Smart meters are **part of Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) solution** that records consumers' **electricity usage at different times of the day** and sends it to energy supplier.

- **Technology used for this is radio frequency mesh technology** which is an over-the-air communication technology and **works like Wi-Fi**.

- Benefits of smart metering**

- **To customers:** Greater control over their electricity use; enhanced consumer satisfaction through better complaint management, system stability, transparency etc.
- **To Discoms:** reduce AT&C losses, improve financial health, incentivise energy conservation, enhance ease of bill payments, ensure billing accuracy etc.

## INITIATIVES TAKEN

**Funding support** by Central government **under Integrated Power Development Scheme and National Smart Grid Mission**.

**Smart Meter National Programme** to replace conventional meters with smart meters.

**Prepaid Smart metering** is the critical intervention envisaged **under Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS)**.

## ALSO IN NEWS



### Doha Programme of Action (DPoA)

- Fifth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDC5) concluded with **adoption of Doha Political Declaration that focuses on DPoA**.
- DPoA is a **10-year plan (2022-2031)** to put the **world's 46 most vulnerable countries** back on track to **achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**.
- DPoA consists of **six key focus areas** including **eradicating poverty, addressing climate change, mobilising international partnerships** etc.



### Infrastructure Finance Company (IFC)

- RBI has **granted IFC status to Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA)**.
- IFC is a **non-deposit accepting loan company** that have a **minimum of 75% of total assets** of company deployed **as infrastructure loans**.
  - **Exposure to sub-sectors** like Transport, Energy, Water and Sanitation, Communication, Social and commercial etc is **considered as Infrastructure loan**.
- Also, **IFC should have minimum net-worth of Rs 300 crore and minimum credit rating of the company should be at 'A' or equivalent** of CRISIL, FITCH, CARE etc.



### Stricter ad rules for Educational Institutes

- Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) introduced **new draft norms for advertising by educational institutes**.
  - Indian **edtech market is expected to rise to \$10.27 billion in 2025** (was \$2.76 billion in 2020).
- Key Highlights**
  - **Institutions can't make unsubstantiated claims about job placements** or guarantees of academic success on enrolment.
  - **Prohibit ads from guaranteeing a student a rank, high marks, a job, admission to institutions** etc., **unless it can substantiate this**.
  - **Font size of disclaimers** in advertisements must now **match the size of claims made**.



### Exercise La Perouse

- It is a **multilateral exercise conducted by French Navy** and is aimed at enhancing coordination amongst the participating **navies in Indo-Pacific Region**.
- Participating countries** include **India, USA, Japan, Australia, UK** etc.

 <p><b>National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&amp;PR)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>NIRD&amp;PR and International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)</b> signed MoU to <b>strengthen evidence-based research and capacity building</b> on critical development issues.</li> <li>● <b>NIRD&amp;PR</b> is an <b>autonomous and a premier national centre of excellence (CoE)</b> in rural development and Panchayati Raj, under <b>Ministry of Rural Development</b>.</li> <li>● <b>Recognized as one of UN- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) CoE</b>, it builds <b>capacities of rural development functionaries</b>, elected representatives of PRIs etc.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Gramin Krishi Mausam Sewa project (GKMS)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● GKMS scheme is a <b>step towards contribution to weather information based crop/livestock management strategies</b> and operations.</li> <li>● Under the scheme, <b>medium range weather forecast at district and block level is generated</b> and based on the forecast, <b>Agromet Advisories are prepared and communicated</b>.</li> <li>● GKMS is <b>rendered by India Meteorological Department (IMD)</b> jointly with Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and State Agricultural Universities.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Waste management technologies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Atal Incubation Centre (AIC) – Bhabha Atomic Research centre (BARC)</b> demonstrated following technologies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>SHESHA</b>: A compact helical shaped waste converter aimed to manage biodegradable waste generated in small housing societies, restaurants, etc. in-situ.</li> <li>➤ <b>Rapid composting technology</b>: Based on cellulolytic fungi <i>Trichoderma koningiopsis</i> (isolated from tree bark) for composting kitchen waste, agricultural waste, garden waste and temple waste.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● AIC-BARC is <b>established under Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)</b>, NITI Aayog <b>to create a start-up eco-system</b> based on spin-off technologies of Department of Atomic Energy.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Wagner Group</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are reports of <b>systematic recruitment of prisoners across Russia by Wagner Group</b>.</li> <li>● Wagner Group is a <b>private Russian military organisation</b>, which has been used in military operations in many countries.</li> <li>● It is <b>owned and financed by Yevgeny Prigozhin</b>, a businessman with ties to Vladimir Putin and <b>is playing a major role in the fighting in Ukraine</b>.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Swami Sahajanand Saraswati (1889-1950)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A <b>sanyasi</b> as well as a <b>revolutionary</b>, who dedicated his life to <b>political and economic independence of Indian people</b>.</li> <li>● Played a prominent role in <b>organizing non-cooperation movement in Shahabad district of Bihar and Ghazipur district</b> in Uttar Pradesh.</li> <li>● From 1924 to 1928 his activities <b>centered on the propagation of Khadi and prohibition</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Established a <b>Khadi weaving center at Simri</b> and an <b>Ashram for political and Sanskrit teaching at Bihata</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Also spearheaded the <b>formation of the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) in 1936</b>.</li> <li>● <b>Addressed as 'Kisan Pran'</b> (life of Kisans).</li> <li>● <b>Books/publication</b>: Hindi weekly Hunkar from Patna, The Other Side of the Shield, Rent Reduction in Bihar: How it Works, Gaya Ke Kisano Ki Karun Kahani etc.</li> <li>● <b>Personality Traits</b>: Gandhian, Powerful agitator, propagandist, leader.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>Places in News</b></p>	<p><b>Cambodia (Capital: Phnom Penh)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The coming election to focus on democracy and inclusive development in Cambodia.</li> <li>● Cambodia is a <b>Southeast Asian country</b> surrounded by <b>Thailand, Laos and Vietnam</b>. <b>Gulf of Thailand</b> gives it maritime access. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Angkor Wat</b>, an ancient temple complex built by <b>Suryavarman II in 12th Century</b>, is located in Cambodia.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Geographical Features</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Its landscape is marked by a low-lying central alluvial plain that is surrounded by uplands and low mountains.</li> <li>➤ <b>Major Rivers</b>- Mekong River.</li> <li>➤ <b>Largest Lake</b>: Tonlé Sap Lake, largest freshwater lake of Southeast Asia.</li> <li>➤ <b>Highest Peak</b>: Phnom Aural in Cardamom Mountains.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 

**Clarification:** In News Today Dated 12th and 13th March, 2023 It was mentioned that Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) is between Indian and French navies. MPX is conducted with multiple friendly countries like Japan, France etc.