

# NEWS TODAY

## CABINET APPROVES VIBRANT VILLAGES PROGRAMME (VVP) SCHEME

- VVP, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, will **provide funds for development of essential infrastructure and creation of livelihood opportunities** along the northern land border.

- VVP (approved for 2022-23 to 2025-26 ) will cover **Himachal Pradesh (HP), Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Ladakh.**
- Scheme will help in **improving quality of life of people** and **reversing outmigration** adding to improved security of border.

- **Key Features of the Scheme**

- **Vibrant Village Action Plans** will be created by district administration with the help of Gram Panchayats.
- **Development of growth centres on Hub and Spoke Model** through promotion of social entrepreneurship, youth and women empowerment etc.
- Out of financial allocation of Rs. 4800 Crore, **2500 crore rupees will be used for roads.**
- **100 % saturation of Central and state schemes** will be ensured.
- **No overlap with Border Area Development Programme (BADP).**
  - BADP aims to **meet development needs of people living in remote and inaccessible areas** situated near international border.
- **Outcomes expected:** connectivity with all-weather road, drinking water, 24x7 electricity with focus on Solar and wind energy, mobile and internet connectivity, Tourist/multi-purpose/health and wellness Centers.

### OTHER DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PUSH ALONG BORDER

Approved 4.1-km **Shinku-La tunnel** to allow all-weather connectivity between HP and Ladakh.

Approved raising of **seven new battalions of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) force.**

ITBP is a **Central Armed Police Force** functioning under MHA.

## CABINET APPROVES STRENGTHENING COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN THE COUNTRY

- Centre **plans to set up 2 lakh Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), dairy, and fisheries cooperatives** in the next **five years.**

- PACS constitute **lowest tier of Short-Term Cooperative Credit structure** in the country, providing **short-term and medium-term credit and other input services**, like seed, fertilizer etc. to member farmers.

- **Key decisions taken**

- **Establish PACS** in each uncovered Panchayat, viable **dairy cooperatives in each uncovered Panchayat/village and fishery cooperatives in each coastal Panchayat/village** as well as Panchayat/village having large water bodies.
- Leveraging '**whole-of-Government**' approach by converging various schemes of Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.
- A high level **Inter-Ministerial Committee headed by Minister of Home and Cooperation** will be formed to oversee rollout of plan.
- **Action plan for implementation** will be prepared by **NABARD, National Dairy Development Board and National Fishery Development Board.**

- **Significance of the decision**

- **Would provide farmers with requisite forward and backward linkages** to market their produce, obtain credit facilities and other services at village level itself.
- **Would generate employment opportunities in rural areas** and enable farmers to realize better prices.
- Will enable **cooperative societies to modernize necessary infrastructure** to diversify their business activities.

### RECENT INITIATIVES TAKEN FOR PACS

Ministry of Cooperation writes up new bylaws for PACS for uniform adoption.

A national cooperative database is also being prepared by Ministry of Cooperation.

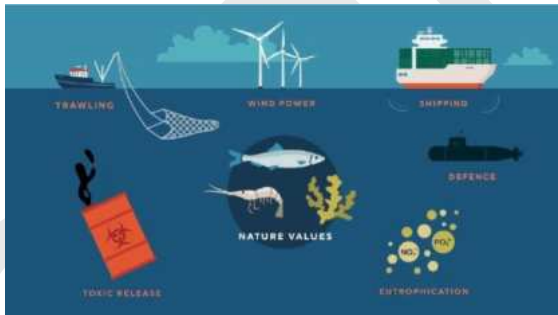
PACS / dairy / fishery cooperative societies would be linked with their respective District and State level Federations.

# TRIPARTITE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) SIGNED TO DEAL WITH PROBLEM OF DOPING IN SPORTS

- MoU was signed **between Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports**, Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (**FSSAI**) and **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education & Research**, Hyderabad.
  - It aims to create **nutritional supplement testing capacity** in India, **increase research opportunities** in anti-doping domain, provide dope-free nutritional supplements etc.
- Doping is the **consumption of certain prohibited substances** by athletes to enhance performance.
- **Types of substances used in doping:**
  - **Androgenic agents like anabolic steroid:** Allow athletes to train harder and build more muscle.
  - **Stimulants:** Make athletes hide fatigue by increasing heart rate and blood flow.
  - **Diuretics and masking agents:** To remove fluid from body, which can hide other drug use and can also help in faking weight.
  - **Gene doping:** Body cells or genes are manipulated by use of substances that improve performance.
  - **Blood doping:** where blood is removed from body and injected back in to boost oxygen levels.
- **Monitoring of Doping in sports**
  - **World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)** monitors doping in all kinds of competitive sports.
  - At national level, there is **National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)** that is provided **statutory backing by National Anti-Doping Act, 2022**.

## COUNTRY'S FIRST MARINE SPATIAL PLANNING (MSP) FRAMEWORK LAUNCHED IN PUDUCHERRY

- MSP Framework, **part of a pact under Indo-Norway Integrated Ocean Initiative**, was launched to **balance growth** alongside **sustainable management of ocean resources** and coastal environment preservation.
  - Framework is a collaboration **between Norwegian Environment Agency, Ministry of Earth Sciences, National Centre for Coastal Research and UT of Puducherry**.
- MSP is a process of analysing and **allocating spatial and temporal distribution of human activities in marine areas** to achieve ecological, economic, and social objectives.
  - **Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission** of UNESCO help countries by providing a **step-by-step guide for ecosystem-based MSP**.
- **Benefits of MSP**
  - **Ecological/ Environmental Benefits:** Identification of biological and ecological important areas, reduction of cumulative effects of human activities on marine ecosystems etc.
  - **Economics Benefits:** Certainty of access to desirable areas for new private sector investments, transparency in permit and licensing procedures etc.
  - **Social Benefits:** Improved opportunities for community participation, improved protection of cultural heritage etc.
  - **Increasing cross-border cooperation** to develop renewable energy, allocate shipping lanes, lay submarine cables etc.
  - **Reducing conflicts** and creating synergies between different activities.



## ALL GOVERNMENT MENTAL HEALTHCARE INSTITUTIONS ARE IN DEPLORABLE CONDITIONS: NHRC

- **Observations were made** by National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) **after visits to** all operational government facilities to **assess implementation of the Mental Healthcare Act, 2017 (MHA)**.
- MHA (replaced Mental Healthcare Act, 1987) aims to provide for **mental healthcare and services for persons with mental illness** and ensure these persons have **right to live a life with dignity**.
- **Key features of MHA**
  - **Specify process and procedure to be followed** for admission, treatment and discharge of mentally-ill individuals.
  - **Acknowledged their right to live as part of a community** and focuses on rehabilitation.
  - **Discourages using physical restraints** (such as chaining), unmodified electro-convulsive therapy (ECT), and **pushes for right to hygiene, sanitation, food, recreation, privacy, and infrastructure**.
  - Provides for **establishment of Central and State Mental Health Authority (SMHA)**.
  - **Decriminalized attempt to suicide**.
- **Challenges in implementation of MHA**
  - **SMHA and Mental Health Review Boards are yet to be established** in many states.
  - There is **no routine assessment of condition of patients** to ascertain if they can be discharged.
  - **Poor budgetary allocation and utilization of funds** to shelter homes and mental healthcare institution.
  - **Lack of alternative community-based services** like homes for assisted or independent living.

## RBI GRANTS PAYMENT AGGREGATOR (PA) LICENCE TO 32 ENTITIES

- RBI introduced a PA framework in 2020, for regulating PA and Payment Gateways (PGs), under which eligible entities were required to apply for seeking authorisation under Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

➤ PAs and PGs are intermediaries facilitating payments in the online space.

Payment Aggregator	Payment Gateways
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entities that <b>facilitate e-commerce sites and merchants to accept various payment instruments</b> (cash/cheque, online payments) from customers for completion of their payment obligations.</li> <li>• PA <b>receive payments</b> from customers, pool and <b>transfer them on to the merchants</b> after a time period.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entities that <b>provide technology infrastructure</b> to route and facilitate processing of an online payment transaction.</li> <li>• PGs <b>do not have any involvement in handling of funds.</b></li> </ul>

- Key requirements by RBI for establishing PA







➤ Entity shall be a **company incorporated under the Companies Act, 2013.**

➤ They should have a **net worth of Rs 15 crore by March, 2021**, and a **net worth of Rs 25 crore by March 2023.**

➤ A **formal publicly disclosed customer grievance redressal** and dispute management framework **be established with a Nodal officer.**

## ALSO IN NEWS

<p><b>Marginal Cost of fund-based Lending Rates (MCLR)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Various <b>Scheduled Commercial Banks</b> have revised their MCLR rates recently.</li> <li>• MCLR is <b>the basic minimum rate below which banks can't lend.</b></li> <li>• RBI has <b>established MCLR in 2016</b> as a <b>tool for efficient Monetary policy transmission.</b></li> <li>• Increase in MCLR rates <b>will make loan more expensive for consumers.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>REITs and InvITs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>SEBI notified governance norms</b> for Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs).</li> <li>• <b>REITs are listed entities which own, operate and manage buildings/properties</b> for generating income.</li> <li>• <b>InvITs are investment scheme like mutual funds that allow investment from individuals and institutional investors in infrastructure projects</b> to earn a portion of the income as return.</li> <li>• <b>Benefits of REITs and InvITs</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Enable developers to monetise</b> their revenue-generating <b>real estate/infrastructure assets</b> and release capital for funding new projects.</li> <li>➤ <b>Allow investors to invest in these assets without owning them.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Rooftop Solar (RTS) Programme</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ministry of New &amp; Renewable Energy</b> stated that there will be a <b>uniform rate of central financial assistance (CFA)</b> for installation of residential <b>RTS projects under second phase of programme.</b></li> <li>• Government, <b>in 2015, approved Grid Connected Rooftop and Small Solar Power Plants Programme</b> for installation of 4,200 MW RTS plants in the country by year 2019-20. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>In 2019, Phase-II was approved</b> for achieving cumulative <b>capacity of 40 GW RTS plants by 2022</b> (extended till 2026).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Presently, <b>different CFA/Subsidy rate is provided</b> (based on kilowatt requirements) <b>to the residential electricity consumers under RTS programme.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Conformity Assessment Scheme on IS 19000:2022</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution</b> is deliberating ways for <b>easier adoption of Standard IS 19000:2022 by MSMEs and startups</b> to check publication of fake or misleading reviews.</li> <li>• <b>Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)</b> had published <b>IS 19000:2022</b> last year which are <b>applicable to businesses that publish consumer reviews online.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It lays down <b>criteria and responsibilities of organization</b> and ancillary requirements <b>for grant and operation of certification requirements.</b></li> <li>➤ It provides for <b>methods for verification of customer posting reviews.</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

 <b>NASSCOM report on Startups</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Key Highlights</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ India continues to be the <b>third largest tech startup ecosystem globally</b> (after US and China).</li> <li>➤ <b>India added over 1,300 active tech startups last year</b>, taking the total tally of active tech startups to 25-27,000.</li> <li>➤ <b>India also added the second highest number of unicorns</b> in the world.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
 <b>G20 Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>First meeting of G20 DEWG</b> was held recently.</li> <li>● DEWG was <b>formed in 2017 as part of German G20 presidency</b> with the <b>aim of promoting</b> the implementation of a <b>secure, interconnected, and inclusive digital economy</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Global digital economy</b> estimated to be worth USD 11 trillion and <b>expected to reach USD 23 trillion by 2025</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Focus of the discussions</b> was on <b>two key priority areas</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Digital Public Infrastructure</li> <li>➤ Cyber Security in the Digital Economy</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
 <b>Thwaites Glacier</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Scientists have found that <b>warm water is seeping into weak spots of Thwaites glacier</b>, thereby inducing the melting at a faster pace.</li> <li>● Thwaites Glacier - <b>nicknamed the Doomsday Glacier</b>- is <b>widest glacier</b> on earth and a <b>part of West Antarctic ice sheet</b>.</li> <li>● <b>Ice loss</b> in the glacier currently <b>contributes to 4% of the global sea-level rise</b>.</li> <li>● <b>If it collapses</b>, it would lead to an increase in <b>global sea level of at least 65 cms</b>.</li> </ul>
 <b>Aerosols</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A recent study has shown <b>higher abundance of sulphate aerosols in the preindustrial atmosphere</b>.</li> <li>● Aerosols are <b>minute particles suspended in the atmosphere</b>. When these particles are sufficiently large, they <b>scatter and absorb sunlight</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Their scattering of sunlight <b>can reduce visibility</b> (haze) and <b>redde n sunrises and sunsets</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Aerosols interact <b>both directly and indirectly with Earth's radiation budget and climate</b>.  <b>Three types of aerosols significantly affect the Earth's climate</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Volcanic aerosol</b> (forms in stratosphere after major volcanic eruptions).</li> <li>➤ <b>Desert Dust</b></li> <li>➤ <b>Human-made aerosols</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>
 <b>Roche limit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Astronomers <b>have found a ring around a dwarf planet</b> (Quaoar), located in the Kuiper Belt, outside its Roche limit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Kuiper Belt</b> is a donut-shaped region of <b>icy bodies beyond the orbit of Neptune</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Roche limit is <b>minimum distance to which a large satellite can approach its primary body</b> (like Moon and Earth) <b>without being torn apart</b> by tidal forces.</li> <li>● <b>Inside the Roche limit</b>, orbiting material will tend to disperse and <b>form rings</b>, while <b>outside the limit</b>, material will tend to <b>form a satellite</b> around the orbit.</li> </ul>
 <b>Places in news</b>	<p><b>Libya (Capital: Tripoli)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● U.N stated that 73 migrants presumed dead in shipwreck off Libya.</li> <li>● <b>Political boundaries</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It is located in <b>North Africa</b>.</li> <li>➤ It is <b>bounded by Mediterranean Sea</b> on north, <b>Egypt</b> on east, <b>Sudan</b> on southeast, <b>Niger and Chad</b> on south, and <b>Tunisia and Algeria</b> on west.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Geographical Features</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Major physical features are</b>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>Nafūsah Plateau and the Al-Jifārah (Gefara) Plain</b> in northwest,</li> <li>■ <b>Akhḍar Mountains</b> (Green Mountains) in northeast,</li> <li>■ <b>Saharan plateau</b>, which occupies much of rest of the country.</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ There are <b>no permanent rivers in Libya</b>. Numerous wadis that drain uplands are filled by flash floods during the rains.</li> <li>➤ <b>Highest Point</b>: Bikkū Bitti</li> </ul> </li> </ul> 