

NEWS TODAY

MINISTRY OF NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY (MNRE) SOUGHT BIDS TO SURVEY SITES IDENTIFIED FOR OFFSHORE WIND POWER PROJECTS IN TAMIL NADU

- Government will bid out sites through two models.
 - In one model, **government will provide viability gap funding**, and in the other, identified sites will be leased out without any central financial assistance.
- Presently, bids have been called for the second model.
- India with a coastline of about 7600 km has **good prospects of harnessing offshore wind energy**.
 - **MNRE will act as nodal ministry** and **National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) as Nodal Agency** for development of offshore wind energy in the country.
 - **MNRE has set a target of installing 30 GW of offshore capacity by 2030.**
- **Benefits of offshore wind energy:** No land constraint issue for projects, winds free from obstructions, Offshore wind turbines are much larger in size, higher operating hours etc.
- **Challenges:** cost per MW for offshore turbines are higher because of stronger structures and foundations needed in marine environment, grid interconnection and operation, socio-environmental constraints etc.
- **Initiatives taken**
 - **National offshore wind energy policy.**
 - Ministry of Power announced a **waiver of Inter-State Transmission System (ISTS) charges** on transmission of electricity generated via offshore wind sources.
 - EU supported **Facilitating Offshore Wind Energy in India (FOWIND)** project from 2013-2018.

HIGH-LEVEL PANEL HEADED BY PRIME MINISTER TO OVERSEE CELEBRATIONS OF 200TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF MAHARISHI DAYANAND SARASWATI

- Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati (1824- 1883) was **born in Tankara, Gujarat** as '**Mool Shankar**' to a brahman family.
 - American Spiritualist **Andrew Jackson Davis** called him "**Son of God**".
- **Key contribution**

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Socio-Religious reforms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rejected man- made ritualism and worship of idols. • Gave a call of 'Back to Vedas' and established Arya Samaj in 1875. • Started Shuddhi Movement to impart purification to those who sought their way back to Hinduism. |
| Educational Reforms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a number of Gurukuls to teach knowledge of Vedas. • Dayanand Anglo Vedic (DAV) College Trust and Management Society was established by his disciples. • First DAV High School was established at Lahore in 1886 with Lala Hans Raj as its headmaster. |
| Freedom movement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credited as the first to call for Swaraj as "India for Indian" in 1876. • His teaching influenced personalities like Lala Lajpat Rai, MG Ranade, Ram Prasad Bismil, etc. |
| Publications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satyarth Prakash, Sanskarvidhi, Yajurved Bhashyam |

- **About Arya Samaj**
 - Its first unit was set up at **Mumbai** and **Lahore** was headquarter.
 - **Infallible authority of Vedas and Monotheism** were its **basic tenets**
 - Worked towards **abolishing caste system, women's subjugation**, and promoted **widow remarriage.**

MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS NOTIFIES SCHEME FOR PROMOTION OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN PHARMA MEDTECH SECTOR (PRIP)

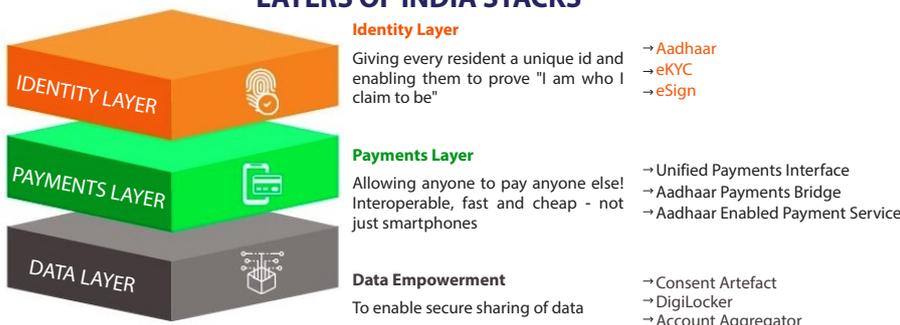
• Key highlights

- **Aim:** To promote industry-academia linkage for R&D in priority areas and to inculcate culture of quality research.
 - **Duration:** 5 years (2023-24 to 2027-28)
 - **Two components**
 - **Strengthening research infrastructure:** By setting up Centres of Excellence at the **National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education & Research (NIPERs)**.
 - **7 NIPERs** have been set up as **institutes of national importance** for higher education and highend research in pharmaceuticals.
 - **Promotion of research in pharma med-tech sector in six priority areas:** These include- New chemical/ biological entities and Phyto-pharmaceuticals; complex generics and biosimilars; precision medicine; medical devices; orphan drugs; drug development for AMR.
 - **Eligibility:** Any company registered in India
 - **Project Appraisal and Approval:** A Committee under the chairpersonship of Secretary, Pharmaceuticals
 - **Monitoring and Evaluation:** An Empowered Committee under the chairmanship of CEO NITI Aayog.
 - **Implementation:** Through a Project Management Agency
- ## • Need for promoting research in pharma industry
- Indians constitute only 3.4% market share of **global pharma industry** and around **1.5% market share in global medical devices**.
 - Despite **global leadership in generic drugs, India is largely dependent on import for patented drugs**.
 - New drug discovery will **reduce global burden of diseases**.

INDIA SIGNS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) WITH TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO ON SHARING INDIA STACK

- MoU aims to **facilitate adoption of customized India Stack solutions** - identity, data, and payment services - **for mutual digital advancement**.
 - India has also signed **MoUs with several other nations** including Papua New Guinea, Armenia, Sierra Leone, Suriname etc. **to share India Stack**.
- India Stack is **a set of open APIs** (Application Program Interface) and **digital public goods** that aim **to unlock economic primitives of identity, data, and payments** at a population scale.
 - **API is a set of defined rules** that **enable different applications to communicate with each other**
- **Components of India Stack** are owned and maintained **by different agencies**.
 - **For ex:** Aadhaar products are owned by UIDAI; Digilocker by MeitY; UPI by National Payments Corporation of India; Account Aggregator framework by RBI etc.
- **Significance of India Stack**
 - **It allows governments, businesses, startups etc.** to move towards **presence-less, paperless, and cashless service delivery**.
 - Allows significant **synergies across digital economy** and **expands access to digital services** to all citizens.
 - Boost **innovation and entrepreneurship**, particularly in emerging techs like AI and Machine Learning by providing **equitable access to data**.

LAYERS OF INDIA STACKS



MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES INDIAN TELEGRAPH RIGHT OF WAY (AMENDMENT) RULES, 2023

- These amendments **build upon earlier changes made to Indian Telegraph Right of Way Rules, 2016** to facilitate **rollout of robust telecom infrastructure** in the country.
- **Right of Way (RoW) is a legal right**, established by usage or grant, **to pass along a specific route** through grounds or property belonging to another.
 - Getting **timely approvals for RoW permissions** helps to **accelerate infrastructure rollout**.
 - However, **industry faces challenges** such as **RoW approval timelines, denial of access** (in commercial/residential areas), **non-uniformity** in RoW approach by states, **lack of centre-state coordination** etc.
- **Key amendments**
 - Licensees can submit a **single application for multiple small cell sites**.
 - **Allows licensees to temporarily set up telegraph infrastructure above ground** when their existing underground infrastructure is damaged.
 - **Defines Street Furniture** to aid in faster rollouts and efficient network deployments.
 - **Central authorities can now deploy small cells on their buildings** without administrative fees, except for power and fixture charges.
- **Other initiatives taken**
 - **GatiShakti Sanchar portal** launched for Centralised RoW approvals.
 - **Indian Telegraph RoW Rules 2016** and their **adoption by several states**.

RAJASTHAN GOVERNMENT TO FORM A COMMITTEE TO PROVIDE SUGGESTIONS TO PREVENT SUICIDE CASES AMONG STUDENTS

- The directives came amidst the **rising number of suicides** being committed by students preparing for competitive exams in Kota district.
- Moreover, according to NCRB **number of deaths by suicide by students** have been **steadily rising in the last five years and increased 4.5% to reach over 13,000 in 2021.**
- **Reasons for Students Suicide:**
 - **Academic pressure:** Higher expectations by parents and society may lead to Isolation.
 - **New way of life in hostels:** Life away from home, cultural shock, dietary adjustments, and imposter syndrome (doubting one's ability).
 - **Ragging:** Over the last 5.5 years, at least 25 students committed suicide due to ragging (UGC data).
 - **Other issues:** Like difficulties of **adolescence phase, mental health issues, Substance abuse, etc.**
- **Key initiatives to prevent student suicide**
 - **Manodarpan** by Ministry of Education to provide **psychosocial support to students.**
 - Proposal of **Face recognition attendance management system** in IIT-Madras to identify students missing classes for a prolonged period.
 - Directions by Rajasthan Government to **mandatorily install Anti Suicide fan** in students' hostels.
 - **National Suicide Prevention Strategy** aims to reduce suicide mortality by 10% by 2030 compared with 2020.

ALSO IN NEWS



The Spirit of Camp David

- Leaders of **United States, Japan, and South Korea** issued a joint statement titled 'The Spirit of Camp David'.
 - Summit was held to project unity in the face of **China's growing power** and nuclear **threats from North Korea.**
- **Key highlights of the joint statement**
 - **Consult promptly** with each other during crises.
 - **Hold annual multi-domain trilateral exercise**
 - Develop the Partnership for Resilient and Inclusive Supply-chain Enhancement (RISE)
 - Hold trilateral summits annually



Infrastructure Debt Fund - Non-Banking Financial Company (IDF - NBFC)

- **RBI revised regulatory framework** for IDF-NBFCs.
- **Key highlights**
 - **IDF-NBFCs will not need sponsors** but will be required to **have**
 - **net-owned funds of at least ₹300 crore;**
 - **capital-to-risk weighted assets ratio (CRAR) of 15% .**
 - They will be allowed to **raise funds through rupee or dollar-denominated bonds** with at least a **five-year maturity**
- **IDF-NBFC** is a non-deposit taking NBFC permitted to:
 - **Refinance infrastructure projects** that have completed **at least one year of commercial operations**
 - **Finance Toll-Operate-Transfer (TOT)** projects as direct lender.



Debt-for-nature swap

- **Gabon** has recently **announced a \$500 million debt-for-nature swap** deal for marine conservation.
- **About Debt-for-nature swap**
 - It is an **agreement where a creditor forgoes** a portion of **debtor's foreign debt or provides debt relief** in exchange for **debtor's commitment to invest** in a **specific environmental project.**
 - It can be **bilateral or multi-party.**
- **Significance:** Mainstreaming the **environment in government policies**, better **adaptation** and **mitigation** to climate change, Free up fiscal resources for government.



Deboosting

- **Lander module of Chandrayaan 3** has **successfully conducted** its first **deboost manoeuvre.**
- Deboosting lander module means the **process of slowing down of lander** to an orbit **where Perilune** (orbit's closest point to the Moon) **and Apolune** (farthest point from the Moon) are **only a few kilometres away from the spacecraft.**
 - It involves **reducing the spacecraft's thrust** in order to achieve a stable orbit.
- Deboosting **will help in the soft landing** on the Moon.

| | |
|---|--|
|  <p>Agnibaan SubOrbital Technological Demonstrator (SOrTeD)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agnikul Cosmos, an Indian space-tech startup, to carry out a sub-orbital test flight of its launch vehicle called Agnibaan SOrTeD. • About Agnibaan SOrTeD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is a single-stage launch vehicle powered by Agnilet engine, which is an entirely 3D-printed, single-piece, semi-cryogenic engine. ➤ Agnibaan can carry payloads of up to 100 kg to a low Earth orbit (LEO) of up to 700 km. ➤ Unlike traditional sounding rockets that launch from guide rails, Agnibaan SOrTeD will lift off vertically and follow a predetermined trajectory. |
|  <p>NTPC starts a trial run of hydrogen in leh</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NTPC starts deploying India's first-ever hydrogen buses in Leh on trial basis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These buses are designed for operation in sub-zero temperatures in a rarefied atmosphere (typical for high altitude locations). • Hydrogen buses utilise Fuel cells that use Hydrogen and Air to generate electricity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The only effluent from the bus is water (environment friendly). ➤ The high energy density of hydrogen ensures that the operational costs in rupees per kilometer are lower. |
|  <p>Sulina Channel</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sulina Channel – a tributary of Danube river, connects major Ukrainian ports on the river to Black Sea. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Chilia, Sulina and St George are major channels in Danube delta. ➤ Of these three, Sulina Channel is the only one deep and wide enough for freight transport. ➤ It lies completely within Romania, a NATO member. • Danube Delta has provided Ukraine with an alternative passage after Russia withdrew from Black Sea grain deal. |
|  <p>Matti Banana</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matti Banana of Kanyakumari (Tamil Nadu) was granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ GI Tag is issued by the GI Registry in Chennai under Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999. • Matti Banana is commonly known as 'Baby Banana' and is known for its distinct fragrance and honey-like taste • Its low total soluble solids content (TSSC) recommends it as a baby food. • Unlike typical banana bunches that grow straight, the Matti's fingers exhibit a distinct wind-blown appearance. |
|  <p>Places in News</p> | <p>Hawaii (Capital Honolulu)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maui wildfires is considered one of the worst natural disasters in Hawaii's history. • Hawaii is a group of volcanic islands (an example of Shield volcanoes- made up of basalt, a type of lava that is very fluid). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lavas, particularly basaltic ones, come in two primary types: pahoehoe and aa. ➤ A third type, pillow lava, forms during submarine eruptions. • Location: Central Pacific Ocean and lies southwest of the continental United States. • World Heritage Sites: Hawaii volcanoes national park and Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument • Geographical Features <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It consists of emerged volcanic mountains. ➤ Highest point: Mauna Kea. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ It is 10,203 m high from its base, making it the highest mountain on Earth measured from the base. ➤ Rivers: Wailuku, Hanalei, Wailua, Kolekole etc.  |