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National Technical Textiles Mission

Why in News

The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** has approved the setting up of a **National Technical Textiles Mission** at a total outlay of ₹1,480 crores.

Key Points

- It aims to position the country as a **global leader in technical textiles** and **increase the use** of technical textiles **in the domestic market**.
The Mission will aim at taking **domestic market size to \$40 billion to \$50 billion by 2024**.
- A **Mission Directorate** will be operational in the **Ministry of Textiles**.

- It will be implemented for **four years starting from 2020-2021** and will have **four components**-
 - **First component:** It will focus on **research, development and innovation** with an outlay of ₹1,000 crores.
 - The **research** will be at both **fibre level and application-based** in geo, agro, medical, sports and mobile textiles and development of bio-degradable technical textiles.
 - Research activities will also focus on the **development of indigenous machinery and process equipment.**
 - **Second component:** It will be for the **promotion and development of the market** for technical textiles.
 - **Third component:** It will focus on **export promotion** so that technical textile exports from the country reach from the ₹14,000 crores to ₹20,000 crores by 2021-2022 and **ensure 10% average growth every year** till the Mission ends. An **export promotion** council for technical textiles will be set up.
 - **Fourth component:** It will focus on **education, training and skill development.**

The Mission will **promote technical education at higher engineering** and technology levels related to technical textiles and its application areas.
- **Data on the Indian Technical Textiles Segment:**
 - It is estimated at \$16 billion which is approximately 6% of the \$250 billion global technical textiles market.
 - The penetration level of technical textiles in India varies between 5% and 10% against the level of 30% to 70% in developed countries.

Technical Textiles

- Technical textiles are **functional fabrics** that have applications across various industries including automobiles, civil engineering and construction, agriculture, healthcare, industrial safety, personal protection etc.
- Based on usage, there are **12 technical textile segments**; Agrotech, Meditech, Buildtech, Mobiltech, Clothtech, Oekotech, Geotech, Packtech, Hometech, Protech, Indutech and Sportech.
- **For example**, 'mobiltech' refers to products in vehicles such as seat belts and airbags, airplane seats; geotech, which is incidentally the fastest growing sub-segment, used to hold back soil, etc.

Source: TH

Cabinet Approves Bill to Regulate Surrogacy

Why in News

The Union Cabinet has approved the **Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2020**.

- The Cabinet **incorporated all the recommendations of the Rajya Sabha Select Committee** before approving the Bill.
- The latest Bill is a **reformed version** of the draft legislation, which was passed by the Lok Sabha in August 2019. The **2019 Bill was referred to the Select Committee**.

Key Points

- The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2020 aims at **banning commercial surrogacy and allowing altruistic surrogacy**.
While commercial surrogacy will be prohibited including sale and purchase of human embryo and gametes, ethical surrogacy to Indian married couples, Indian-origin married couples and Indian single woman will be allowed on fulfillment of certain conditions.
- The Bill **allows a willing woman to be a surrogate mother** and would benefit widows and divorced women besides infertile Indian couples.

Recommendations of the Committee

- **Definition of “infertility”** as the inability to conceive after five years of unprotected intercourse **should be deleted**. It is too long a period for a couple to wait for a child.
- It was recommended that a **surrogate mother need not be a “close relative”**.
Requiring the surrogate mother to be a “close relative” potentially restricts the availability of surrogate mothers, affecting people in genuine need.
- **Single women (widow or a divorcee) should be allowed** to avail of surrogacy.
- The **insurance cover** for a surrogate mother **should be increased to 36 months from 16 months**.

Features of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2020

- It provides for the constitution **of surrogacy boards** at the national as well as state levels to ensure effective regulation.
- It seeks to **allow ethical altruistic surrogacy** to the intending infertile Indian married couple between the age of 23-50 years for females and 26-55 years for males.
- **Only Indian couples** can opt for surrogacy in the country.
- It makes it mandatory for the couple to **obtain a certificate of essentiality** and also a **certificate of eligibility** before going ahead with surrogacy.
- It also provides that intending couples should not abandon the child born out of surrogacy under any condition. The newborn child shall be entitled to all rights and privileges that are available to a natural child.

- The Bill also **seeks to regulate the functioning of surrogacy clinics**. All surrogacy clinics in the country need to be registered by the appropriate authority in order to undertake surrogacy or its related procedures.
- The Bill provides for various safeguards for surrogate mothers. One of them is **insurance coverage**.
- It also specifies that **no sex selection can be done** when it comes to surrogacy.

Source: TH

Kerala High Court Bans Agitations on Campus

Why in News

The **Kerala High Court** has **banned all forms of agitations by student groups on school and college campuses**.

- The Kerala High Court has issued this order while hearing a petition filed by 20 educational institutions against campus politics.
- The High Court had prohibited campus politics in 2017 also but the decision was not implemented in the State.

Highlights of the Judgement

- The Court has **imposed a ban on strikes in schools and colleges** that impact the functioning of the campuses.
- Educational institutions are meant for academic- related activities and not protests. However, these institutions can be made a venue for peaceful discussions.
- There should not be any form of agitation that affects the academic atmosphere on campuses. **Right to education is a fundamental right (Article 21-A of the Constitution)** and nobody has the right to violate that right.

Arguments Against the Judgement

- Student wings of political parties consider that the verdict infringes upon fundamental rights (including **Article 19(1)(a)** - Right to Freedom of speech and expression). Campus politics has a larger role in socialising students and instilling in them the values of democracy and secularism.

- A student group is also a type of a **Pressure Group**.
 - A pressure group is a group of people who are organised actively for promoting and defending their common interest.
 - It is called so, as it attempts to bring a change in public policy by exerting pressure on the government.

Source: IE

Analysis of Water in Ulsoor lake

Why in news?

The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** has directed the **constitution of a joint committee** to take **samples of water from Bengaluru's Ulsoor lake** and neighbouring areas.

- It has been reported that the water quality has come down due to illegal activities being carried out while discharging untreated sewage, effluents and the dumping of garbage into the water body.
- Such activities affect the quality of the water and the ecology and aquatic life, much required for ecological sustenance.

Components of Water Analysis

- **Biochemical Oxygen Demand**
 - BOD is the amount of dissolved oxygen used by microorganisms in the biological process of metabolizing organic matter in water.
 - The more organic matter there is (e.g., in sewage and polluted bodies of water), the greater the BOD; and the greater the BOD, the lower the amount of dissolved oxygen available for higher animals such as fishes.
 - The BOD is therefore a reliable gauge of the organic pollution of a body of water.
 - One of the main reasons for treating wastewater prior to its discharge into a water resource is to lower its BOD—i.e., reduce its need of oxygen and thereby lessen its demand from the streams, lakes, rivers, or estuaries into which it is released.
- **Chemical Oxygen Demand**

COD is a method of estimating how much oxygen would be depleted from a body of receiving water as a result of bacterial action.

- **Coliforms**
 - Water pollution caused by fecal contamination is a serious problem due to the potential for contracting diseases from pathogens (disease causing organisms).
 - The presence of pathogens in the water is determined with indirect evidence by testing for an "indicator" organism such as coliform bacteria.
 - Coliforms are bacteria that are always present in the digestive tracts of animals, including humans, and are found in their wastes. They are also found in plant and soil material.
- **Presence of any heavy metals like Arsenic, Phosphorus, etc.**
 - Heavy metals are known to induce cardiovascular diseases, developmental abnormalities, neurologic and neurobehavioral disorders, diabetes, hearing loss, hematologic and immunologic disorders.
 - Studies have shown that toxic heavy metals can interfere with absorption and use of nutritionally essential metals such as iron, calcium, copper, and zinc.

The National Green Tribunal

- **NGT** was established in the year **2010** under the **National Green Tribunal Act 2010**.
- It was **established for**
 - Effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.
 - Enforcement of any legal right relating to environment.
 - Giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- It is a specialized body equipped with the necessary expertise to handle environmental disputes involving multi-disciplinary issues.
- The Tribunal is guided by **principles of natural justice**.

Source: TH

International Conference on Standardisation of AYUSH Terminologies

Why in News

Two day International Conference on Standardisation of **AYUSH** Terminologies (**ICoSDiTAUS-2020**) was held in **New Delhi**.

- It adopted the '**New Delhi Declaration** on Collection and Classification of Traditional Medicine (TM) Diagnostic Data'.

- **AYUSH** is an abbreviation of **Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy**.

Key Points

- ICoSDiTAUS-2020 is the **biggest** ever **international event dedicated to standardisation of Diagnosis and Terminologies of Traditional Medicine** in terms of the broad level of participation covering virtually **all the continents**.
- **16 countries** which came together for the cause of Traditional Medicine at this conference are Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Serbia, Curacao, Cuba, Myanmar, Equatorial Guinea, Qatar, Ghana, Bhutan, Uzbekistan, India, Switzerland, Iran, Jamaica and Japan.
- **Issues Discussed**
 - Challenges in counting and classification of TM.
 - Potential of strategic use of data and evidence to advance TM systems into public health.
 - Adapting **World Health Organization's (WHO) International Classification of Diseases (ICD)** to TM Systems and their implementation.

International Classification of Diseases

- The ICD provides **a method of classifying diseases, injuries, and causes of death**.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has published the ICDs to standardize the methods of recording and tracking instances of diagnosed disease all over the world, making it possible to conduct research on diseases, their causes, and their treatments.
- The ICD is currently in its 10th revision (**ICD-10**). However, the WHO also publishes annual minor updates and triennial major updates.
- The **11th revision** of the ICD (**ICD-11**) was accepted by WHO's World Health Assembly (WHA) on 25 May 2019 and will come into **effect on 1 January 2022**.

This new version is **fully electronic, allows more details to be recorded and is significantly easier to use and to implement**, which will lead to fewer mistakes and lower costs, and make it more accessible, particularly for low-resource settings.
- More than 100 countries use the system to report mortality data, a primary indicator of health status.

Source: PIB

NASA's InSight Mars Mission

- NASA's Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport (InSight) lander touched down on Mars at the end of 2018.

- It is a two year mission that will study the deep interior of Mars to learn how all celestial bodies with rocky surfaces, including Earth and the Moon, formed.

The InSight mission is part of NASA's Discovery Program (1992).

- InSight is the **first mission** dedicated to looking deep beneath the **Martian surface**.
- Among its science tools are a seismometer for detecting quakes, sensors for gauging wind and air pressure, a magnetometer, and a heat flow probe designed to take the planet's temperature.
- It is being supported by a number of European partners, which include France's Centre National d'Études Spatiales (CNES), the German Aerospace Center (DLR) and the United Kingdom Space Agency (UKSA).

- **Latest Finding**

Mars trembles more often than expected, but also more mildly. Mars doesn't have tectonic plates like Earth, but it does have volcanically active regions that can cause rumbles.

Source- IE

UKIERI- UGC Higher Education Leadership Development Programme

Why in News

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (**MHRD**) has **launched** 'Higher Education Leadership Development Programme for Administrators' in New Delhi.

Key Points

- The programme is a **joint initiative** of **University Grants Commission (UGC)** and **the British Council** under the auspices of UK India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI).
- **Objective: To train the senior and middle level academic administrators** to enable them to bring about **systemic changes** with renewed approaches, capacity, tools and skill in Universities in India.
- The programme is a step towards institutional development in line with Governments' commitment **to improve the quality of education being imparted in Universities.**

UK-India Education and Research Initiative

- UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) was started in April, 2006 with the aim of enhancing educational linkages between India and the UK.

- UKIERI has been recognized as a key **multi stakeholder programme** that has **strengthened the research, leadership, education and now skill sector relations** between the two countries.
- **UKIERI Phase 3 (2016-2021)** aims to promote **institutional and individual excellence in educational practices, research, and employability.**

University Grants Commission

- It came into existence on 28th December, **1953** and became a **statutory** body by an **Act of Parliament in 1956**, for the **coordination, determination and maintenance of standards** of teaching, examination and research in university education.
- The head office of the UGC is located in **New Delhi.**

Source: PIB

Exercise Indradhanush

Why in News



The 5th edition of **India-UK joint Air Force Exercise 'Indradhanush'** began at Air Force Station, Hindan (Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh) on 24th February, 2020.

Key Points

- The theme of this edition of the exercise is '**Base Defence and Force Protection**'. This theme is of significance considering the recent threats to military establishments from terror elements.
- Ex Indradhanush provides a platform for the air forces of both the countries to share and jointly validate strategies and tactics to **counter terror threats to their installations.**
- **Other joint exercises between India and UK:**
 - Navy: Konkan
 - Army: **Ajeya Warrior**

Henneguya Salminicola

- Scientists have discovered an animal **Henneguya Salminicola** which **does not need oxygen** to produce the energy needed for its survival.



- It is a **tiny, less than 10-celled parasite** which **lives in the muscles of salmon fish**.
- It does not have a **mitochondrial genome**.
 - Mitochondria is the **“powerhouse”** of the cell, which captures oxygen to make energy.
 - Its absence indicates that the parasite does not breathe oxygen.
- It is a **relative of jellyfish and corals** and as it evolved, it gave up breathing and consuming oxygen or **became anaerobic** to produce energy.
- However, it is **not yet clear how the parasite generates energy**. It may be drawing it from the surrounding fish cells or it may have a different type of respiration such as oxygen-free breathing, which typically characterises **anaerobic non-animal organisms** like **fungi, amoebas or ciliate lineages**.
- The discovery bears enormous **significance for evolutionary research**.
Aerobic respiration was thought to be prevalent in animals but now it is confirmed that animals can survive with anaerobic respiration.