



37th Surajkund International Crafts Mela | Haryana | 09 Feb 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the President of India, Droupadi Murmu **inaugurated the 37th Surajkund International Crafts Mela at Surajkund, Haryana.**

Key Points

- It is an effective **platform to connect our craftsmen with art lovers**. This fair is both an **art exhibition and a business centre**.
- The fair showcases the richness and diversity of the **handicrafts, handlooms and the cultural heritage of India**.
- Around **50 countries** will participate in the Mela. **These countries include** Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Nigeria, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, Myanmar, Nepal, Russia, Sri Lanka, among others.
 - **Tanzania** will participate as the **Partner Nation** in the craft mela.
- **Gujarat** is the **theme state**, which is showcasing its unique culture and rich heritage through various art forms and handicrafts from the region.

Projects to Increase the Network of Indian Railways | Rajasthan | 09 Feb 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister **approved 6 projects of the Ministry of Railways with 100% funding from the Central Government.**

- The **projects covering 18 Districts in 6 States** i.e., Rajasthan, Assam, Telangana, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Nagaland will increase the existing network of Indian Railways and **will provide employment to the people of the States.**

Key Points

- The multi-tracking proposals **will ease operations and reduce congestion, providing the much-required infrastructural development** on the busiest sections across Indian Railways.
- The **projects are in line with PM's Vision of a New India** which will make people of the region "Atmanirbhar" by way of comprehensive development in the area which will **enhance their employment/ self-employment opportunities.**
- The projects are **result of [PM-Gati Shakti National Master Plan](#)** for multi-modal connectivity which have been possible through integrated planning and will provide seamless connectivity for movement of people, goods and services.

- The routes **included in the approved projects will be used for transportation of commodities** such as food grains, food commodities, fertilizers, [coal](#), cement, iron, [steel](#), [fly-ash](#), clinker, limestone, Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants (POL), containers etc.
- The Railways being environment friendly and energy efficient mode of transportation, will **help both in achieving climate goals** and minimizing logistics cost of the country, **reduce oil import and lower [CO₂ emissions](#)**.

PM GatiShakti National Master Plan for Multi-Modal Connectivity

- PM GatiShakti National Master Plan for Multi-Modal Connectivity, **launched in October 2021**, is an initiative aimed at coordinated planning and execution of infrastructure projects.
 - The objective is to bring down logistics costs.
- GatiShakti is a **digital platform bringing development projects of 16 ministries**, including railways and roadways, together for integrated planning and implementation.
- When launched, the **GatiShakti scheme subsumed the Rs 110 lakh crore National Infrastructure Pipeline announced in 2019**.

UP to have 21 Airports | Uttar Pradesh | 09 Feb 2024

Why in News?

Emphasizing the rapid pace of the [aviation sector](#), the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister informed that the state is **all set to become the first state in India to have 21 airports**.

- The UP government allocated Rs 1,150 crore for the upcoming Noida International Airport at Jewar **under Budget 2024-25**.

Key Points

- The state has seen rapid growth of aviation infrastructure in the past 9 years.
 - **UP had only 6 airports in 2014, and now the state has 10 airports** including the newly inaugurated [Maharishi Valmiki International Airport](#) in Ayodhya.
- By March 2024, UP **will have 5 more airports, one airport each in Azamgarh, Aligarh, Moradabad, Shravasti, and Chitrakoot**.

Note

Noida International Airport is scheduled to open for commercial operations by the end of 2024, making UP the only state in India to have five international airports (other four are Maharishi Valmiki International Airport, Ayodhya, Kushinagar International Airport, Kushinagar, Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport, Lucknow and Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Varanasi).

Revenue Receipts of Panchayats Highest in UP | Uttar Pradesh | 09 Feb 2024

Why in News?

The recently released report titled '**Finances of Panchayati Raj Institutions**' by the [Reserve Bank of India \(RBI\)](#) for the fiscal year 2022-23 sheds light on the financial dynamics of [Panchayati Raj Institutions \(PRIs\)](#) in India.

Key Points

- **State Revenue Share and Inter-State Disparities:**
 - Panchayats' share in their respective State's own revenue remains minimal.
 - For example, in **Andhra Pradesh, revenue receipts of panchayats form just 0.1%** of the State's own revenue, while in **Uttar Pradesh, it forms 2.5%, the highest among states.**
 - There are wide variations among states regarding average revenue earned per panchayat.
 - **Kerala and West Bengal lead with average revenues** of over Rs 60 lakh and Rs 57 lakh per panchayat, respectively.
 - The revenue was over Rs 30 lakh per panchayat in Assam, Bihar, Karnataka, Odisha, Sikkim, and Tamil Nadu.
 - States like Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Mizoram, Punjab, and Uttarakhand have significantly **lower average revenues**, less than Rs 6 lakh per panchayat.
- **Recommendations of RBI:**
 - The RBI suggests promoting **greater decentralization and empowering local leaders and officials.** It advocates for measures to enhance financial autonomy and sustainability of Panchayati Raj.

Panchayati Raj Institution

- The [73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992](#) gave **constitutional status** to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and established a system of uniform structure (three tiers of PRIs), [elections](#), reservation of seats for [Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes](#) and women and **devolution of fund, functions and functionaries to PRIs.**
 - **Panchayats act on three levels:** gram sabhas (village or group of small villages), panchayat samithis (block council), and zila parishads (district).
- The **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** looks into all matters relating to the Panchayati Raj and Panchayati Raj Institutions. It was created in May 2004.
- **Number of Panchayats in UP:** 59, 062
- **Number of Blocks in UP:** 826
- **Number of Districts in UP:** 75