Modernization of Head Post Office in Madhya Pradesh | Madhya Pradesh | 04 Dec 2024

Why in News?

- Recently, the **Union Minister of Communications** laid the **foundation stone** for the **Head Post Office** at **Ashoknagar** district of Madhya Pradesh.

Key Points

- **About the Head Post Office:**
  - The Head Post Office will be **constructed at a cost of Rs 2.1 crore**. It is scheduled for **completion within one year.**
  - The facility will **feature state-of-the-art, [technology-enabled infrastructure](#) with modern amenities** to enhance the customer experience.
  - The head post office will function as the **administrative center for 10 sub-post offices in Ashoknagar** district.
    - It **aims to improve service delivery and provide greater convenience** to the local population.
- **Legacy of India Post:**
  - With over 150 years of service, India Post remains one of the largest postal networks globally.
  - [**The Post Office Act of 2023**](#) came into force repealing the [**Indian Post Office Act, 1898.**](#)
  - The Department continues to bridge gaps and deliver excellence in both urban and rural areas, with a strong focus on modernization and grassroots outreach.

Indian Post Office Act, 1898

- It came into force on **1st July 1898** with the objective to **consolidate and amend** the law relating to the Post Offices in India.
- It provides for the **regulation of the postal services** offered by the central government.
- It grants the Central government **exclusive privilege over conveying letters** and establishes a monopoly of the Central government over conveying letters.

World AIDS Day 2024 Event in Indore | Madhya Pradesh | 04 Dec 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the **Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare** inaugurated the **World AIDS Day, 2024** commemoration in the presence of the Chief Minister at the **Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya Auditorium, in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.**

- The event emphasized the **theme "Take the Rights Path,"** highlighting equal rights, dignity, and access to healthcare for individuals affected by **HIV/AIDS**.

Key Points

- **Government's Commitment:**
    - The Union Minister reiterated the government's dedication to **safeguarding the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, focusing on legal protections, healthcare access, and societal transformation.**
    - He emphasized raising awareness, combating stereotypes, and ensuring effective AIDS control through community initiatives and campaigns.
    - The program aligns with the global **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** to end AIDS by 2030.
    - Activities emphasized collective action, **empathy,** and resilience, promoting a world free from discrimination and fear.
- **Achievements in AIDS Control:**
    - India has seen a **44% reduction in new HIV cases since 2010**, compared to the global reduction rate of **39%.**
        - **AIDS-related deaths** in the country **declined by 79%** during the same period.
    - India is now a global leader in producing affordable, effective HIV medicines and supplies free **antiretroviral therapy (ART)** to AIDS patients.
- **Strategic Targets:**
    - India adopted the **90-90-90 target** to detect 90% of AIDS cases, treat 90% with ART, and suppress viral load in 90% of treated individuals.
    - The revised 95-95-95 targets are nearing achievement, with 81% identified, 88% treated, and 97% achieving viral suppression.
- **Role of Madhya Pradesh:**
    - The Chief Minister commended the state's strides in healthcare, including plans to eradicate AIDS as a public health threat by 2028, two years ahead of the global 2030 target.
    - He noted the significant expansion in medical colleges in Madhya Pradesh, from 5 to 31, with plans for 50 by 2026.
- **Key Initiatives and Releases:**
    - **SANKALAK 6th Edition:** Detailing India's AIDS control progress.
    - **India HIV Estimates 2023:** Providing updated data on HIV prevalence, incidence, and mortality.
    - **Coffee Table Book:** Highlighting the Intensified Information, Education & Communication (IEC) Campaign's achievements.
    - **Prevention Progress Update 2023-2024:** Reporting on prevention activities for high-risk groups.
    - **Research Compendium Volume II:** Sharing insights from state-specific studies on AIDS.
- **Community Engagement:**
    - The event featured exhibitions by **National AIDS Control Organization (NACO)**, live performances of a newly launched theme song, and narratives from beneficiaries of the **National AIDS Control Programme**.
    - Diverse stakeholders, including policymakers, health workers, civil society, and development partners, attended the event, fostering collaboration.

HIV/AIDS Disease

- **About:**
    - Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is an infection that attacks the body's immune system.
        - AIDS is the late stage of HIV infection that occurs when the body's immune system is badly damaged because of the virus.

- HIV attacks **CD4,** **a type of White Blood Cell** **(T cells)** in the body's immune system.
  - T cells are those cells that move around the body detecting anomalies and infections in cells.
- After entering the body, **HIV multiplies itself and destroys CD4 cells**, thus severely damaging the human immune system. Once this virus enters the body, it can never be removed.
- The CD4 count of a person infected with HIV reduces significantly. In a healthy body, CD4 count is between 500- 1600, but in an infected body, it can go as low as 200.
- **Transmission:**
  - HIV can spread through multiple sources, by coming in direct contact with certain body fluids from a person infected with HIV, who has a detectable viral load. It can be blood, semen, rectal fluid, vaginal fluid or breast milk.
- **Symptoms:**
  - Once HIV converts into AIDS then it may present in initial symptoms like **unexplained fatigue, fever, sores around genitals or neck, pneumonia etc**.

Digital India State Consultation Workshop Organized in UP | Uttar Pradesh | 04 Dec 2024

Why in News?

The **National e-Governance Division (NeGD)** of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, in partnership with **Uttar Pradesh Development Systems Corporation Ltd. (UPDESCO)**, organized a **Digital India State Consultation Workshop** in Lucknow.

Key Points

- **Aim of the Workshop:**
  - Raising awareness about **Digital India initiatives**.
  - Identifying opportunities for state IT projects to leverage Digital India platforms.
  - Showcasing successful projects for potential replication.
  - Facilitating knowledge sharing, exchange of ideas, and industry partnerships.
- **Focus Areas:**
  - The event highlighted the **importance of data and digital infrastructure** and urged the state to enhance connectivity for last-mile digital penetration.
  - The workshop's uniqueness in bringing together state officials and e-District Managers to collaboratively work towards **good governance** was emphasised.
  - Discussions centered on national initiatives under the **Digital India Programme** including:
    - **Digilocker: DigiLocker** allows **access to digital versions of various documents** including driver's licenses, vehicle registration certificates and academic mark sheets.
    - **Entity Locker:** EntityLocker is a flagship initiative designed to **empower organizations by providing a secure, cloud-based platform** for storing, sharing, and verifying digital documents and certificates.
    - **API Setu: API Setu** addresses the fear/risk of **Covid-19** infections and will help the people, businesses and the economy to return to normalcy.
    - **OpenForge:** It is Government of India's platform for open collaborative development of e-governance applications. Its objective is to **promote sharing and reuse of e-governance application** source code.

- **myScheme:** It is a National Platform that aims to offer **one-stop search and discovery of the Government schemes**.
        - **UMANG:** The **UMANG** mobile app is an **all-in-one single, unified, secure, multi-channel, multi-lingual, multi-service mobile app.** It provides access to high-impact services of various organizations of the Union and States.
        - **UX4G:** It aims to **make digital services user-friendly** by providing personalized, visually appealing, efficient, and accessible interfaces.
    - Key topics like **Cyber Security** and Capacity Building were also addressed.
    - State-led discussions featured CM Helpline (1076), **Inspector General of Registration and Stamps (IGRS)**, **UIDAI Ecosystem**, and **Aadhaar Authentication Services.**
  - **Open Discussions:**
    - A collaborative session was held between MeitY and Uttar Pradesh government officials.
    - During the session **key challenges and implementation issues in e-Governance projects** were discussed.
    - Feedback and suggestions were sought for resolving obstacles and improving project execution.

National e-Governance Division (NeGD)

  - **About:**
    - The NeGD was **established in 2009 by the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY)** as an Independent Business Division under the **Digital India Corporation.**
  - **Role and Responsibilities:**
    - NeGD supports MeitY in **managing and implementing e-Governance projects** across the country.
    - It **provides technical and advisory assistance** to Central and State Ministries, Departments, and other government organizations.
  - **Key Operational Areas:**
    - **Programme Management:** Ensures smooth execution of e-Governance projects.
    - **Project Development:** Develops initiatives to enhance digital governance.
    - **Technology Management:** Oversees technological aspects of e-Governance projects.
    - **Capacity Building:** Strengthens skills and capabilities within government organizations.
    - **Awareness and Communication:** Promotes e-Governance initiatives under the Digital India Programme.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage of Mahabharata Age | Uttar Pradesh | 04 Dec 2024

Why in News?

Recently, an update is seen on the conservation and development of the **protected site in Hastinapur, Meerut,** which was designated as **one of the five 'Iconic Sites'** by the Union Government in 2021-22, under the management of the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**.

Key Points

  - **History:**
    - Hastinapur was the **capital of the Pandavas and Kauravas** during the **time of the Mahabharata**.

- The site is associated with many places from the Mahabharata, including **Vidurr Tila, Pandaveshwar Temple, Baradri, Draunadeshwar Temple, Karna Temple, Draupadi Ghat, and Kama Ghat.**
  - **Excavations:**
    - **B. B. Lal**, the Director General of the ASI, **conducted excavations** at Hastinapur **in the early 1950s**.
    - He **found correlations between the Mahabharata and the material remains** he unearthed, which led him to historicize some of the traditions in the epic.
  - **Iron objects:**
    - The site has many **iron objects** that date **from the 6th century BCE to the 16th century CE.**
    - The excavated slag samples indicate that the site was involved in **crucible carburization activities.**
      - Crucible carburization is a **process that uses a crucible to heat wrought iron with carbon-rich materials to create steel.**
  - **Recent work:**
    - The ASI has **conducted excavations** at the site **in 2021-22 and 2022-23.**
    - The site has also undergone **conservation and development work,** including the **construction of pathways, parking, and gardens.**

Five Iconic Sites

- **Dholavira:**
  - An archaeological site with a water system that was **used for rainwater harvesting.** The people who lived there during the Harappan civilization are known for their water conservation techniques.
- **Hastinapur:**
  - A historical and cultural site in the **Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh**. It was the **capital of the Kuru dynasty** emperors in the Mahabharata.
- **Sivasagar:**
  - A town in **Upper Assam known for its Ahom palaces and monuments**. It was the capital of the **Ahom Kingdom** from 1699 to 1788.
- **Adichanallur:**
  - An archaeological site from south India with a history dating back to 2500 BC–2200 BC. In 2004, **human skeletons of varying ethnicities were unearthed** here.
- **Rakhigarhi:**
  - Rakhigarhi in Haryana's **Hissar district** is one of the **most prominent and largest sites of the Harappan civilisation**. It is one among the five known townships of the Harappan civilisation in the Indian subcontinent.

Meeting to Review Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) Performance | Bihar | 04 Dec 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the **Union Minister for Finance** reviewed the performance of eight **Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)** from the Eastern Region, covering **Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal**, during a meeting held in Patna.

Key Points

- **Focus Areas of the Meeting:**
    - Business performance, digital technology upgrades, and fostering growth in agriculture and micro-industry-related activities were the primary focus.
    - The Union Finance Minister emphasized increasing credit disbursement under flagship schemes like **MUDRA** and **PM Vishwakarma** with sponsor banks' support.
- **Directives for Agriculture and Allied Activities:**
    - RRBs were directed to boost ground-level agricultural credit, especially for allied activities such as dairy, animal husbandry, and fisheries.
    - **Uttar Bihar Gramin Bank** was tasked to enhance credit for fisheries and **foxnut (makhana)** to realize their regional potential.
- **Emphasis on Technology Upgradation:**
    - The Union Finance Minister stressed accelerating technology enhancements to improve RRB efficiency and service delivery.
    - Financial parameters showed improvement, with **Capital Adequacy Ratio** rising from 7.8% (FY 2022) to 9.4% (FY 2024) and **Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA)** decreasing from 25% to 15% during the same period.
    - RRBs in the Eastern Region recorded a profit of Rs 625 crore in FY 2024 compared to a net loss of Rs 690 crore in FY 2023.
- **Financial Inclusion Initiatives:**
    - The Union Finance Minister emphasized saturating beneficiaries under Financial Inclusion schemes like **Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY)**, **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY)**, **Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY)**, and **Atal Pension Yojana (APY)**.
    - Sponsor banks were urged to work with RRBs to ensure the success of these initiatives.
- **Digital Services and Deadlines:**
    - RRBs were directed to offer **Internet Banking**, **Mobile Banking**, and **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** services to all customers by December 2024.
    - Sponsor banks were tasked with promoting these services to increase customer adoption.
- **Promoting Self-Employment and SHGs:**
    - The **One District One Product (ODOP) program** was highlighted as a tool to boost self-employment in the region.
    - State governments were urged to collaborate with **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** and **SIDBI** to provide support for women SHGs, including training and marketing assistance.

Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)

- RRBs were **established in 1975** under the provisions of the Ordinance promulgated on 26th September 1975 and **Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976.**
- These are **financial institutions** which ensure adequate credit for agriculture and other rural sectors.
- They **combine the characteristics of a cooperative in terms of the familiarity of the rural problems** and a commercial bank in terms of its professionalism and ability to mobilise financial resources.
- After the reforms in the 1990s, the government in 2005-06 **initiated a consolidation** program that resulted in the number of RRBs declining from 196 in 2005 to 43 in FY21.

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)

- PMMY was **launched by the Government of India in 2015.**
- The PMMY **provides collateral-free institutional loans up to Rs. 10 lakhs for small business enterprises**.
- It is provided by **Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) i.e. Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs),** Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and **Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs).**
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