

## IMPORTANT NEWS

### KCR unveils 125-ft tall bronze statue of Dr B R Ambedkar

#### Inside Story of the News:

- **On Dr B. R. Ambedkar's 132nd birthday**, Telangana Chief Minister, K. Chandrasekhar Rao **unveiled a 125-foot-tall bronze statue** of him **at Hussain Sagar lake**.
- The statue, which stands more than 360 tonnes of steel and 100 tonnes of bronze and cost close to Rs 145 crore, is the tallest statue of Ambedkar in the country.
- Amidst hymn singing by Buddhist monks, Prakash Ambedkar, Ambedkar's grandson, was welcomed as the chief guest and attended the unveiling.
- A helicopter showered flower petals on the statue from above.
- Dalits from all the 119 Assembly constituencies were invited and attended the event.
- The CM lauded Ambedkar as a bold and honourable individual for not letting his objectives be thwarted in the face of discrimination based on race, caste, and the societal ill of untouchability from his early years.
- He said that Ambedkar is a universal man who attained the pinnacles of accomplishment by his expansive thinking, avoiding becoming mired in self-pity and vulnerability.
- The CM remembered Ambedkar for his contributions to the nation and his role in altering the country's trajectory.
- He said that Ambedkar's writings, speeches, and criticisms on many topics, including democracy, abolition of caste, untouchability, religious conversions, women's rights, religion, economic reforms, history, and economy, have made the whole world ponder.
- Ambedkar is an inspiration because he gave his entire life to the cause of equal rights under all legal and political systems in order to build a modern India without inequalities.
- He drafted the largest written constitution in history, and it is thanks to his genius that the oppressed parts of society today are formulated with his intelligence.
- In keeping with the aspirations of the great leader, the new Telangana State Secretariat building is called the "Dr B.R. Ambedkar Telangana State Secretariat."

### Madhya Pradesh's Gond Painting gets GI Tag

#### Inside Story of the News:

- The renowned **Gond painting of Madhya Pradesh** has been awarded the prized **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**.
- **Dindori** has been the **primary source of Gond painting**, and it has been developed there from place to place.

### About Gond Art:

- The Gond art reflects the belief that "viewing a good image begets good luck". The Gonds adorned their homes and floors with traditional tattoos and motifs as a result of this inherent belief.
- Gond painting is a traditional art of Madhya Pradesh and belongs to the Gond tribe.
- Gond paintings are well-known in the Dindori district's Patangarh village.
- It is such a village where there is an artist in every house.
- These paintings have a distinctive style and original artwork that undoubtedly mesmerises for its distinctive theme, making their work famous not only in the state but also internationally.
- Every artist's home in Patangarh has walls decorated with Gond art, which has ruled for generations.
- The paintings tell us about nature, trees, plants, animals, moon, sun, river, drains, God and Goddesses.
- The drawings show how foods are fed, how a plough is made, how the king used to fight, and how tantra mantra (black magic) worked.

### 10 Products from UP get GI Tag:

- Earlier last month, **10 products from UP got GI Tag on March 31** (As per GI-Registry):
  - Aligarh Tala
  - Bakharia Brassware
  - Banda Shazar Patthar Craft
  - Pratapgarh Aonla
  - Ramnagar Bhanta
  - Muzaffarnagar Gur (jaggery)
  - Banarasi Paan
  - Nagina Wood Craft
  - Hathras Hing
  - Banaras Langda Aam

## Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative and Animal Health System Support for One Health launched

### Inside Story of the News:

- In an effort to improve India's preparedness and response to potential animal pandemics in line with the One Health approach, Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry, and Dairying, Shri Parshottam Rupala, launched the **Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative (APPI)** and **World Bank-funded Animal Health System Support for One Health (AHSSOH)** on April 14.
- With an emphasis on zoonotic illnesses that are dangerous to both animal and human health, this effort seeks to improve India's readiness for and response to animal pandemics.

- Through community outreach, this effort will work to increase farmer awareness while also enhancing veterinarian services and infrastructure, disease surveillance capabilities, early diagnosis and response, and the capacity of animal health experts.
- The "Animal Health System Support for One Health" project, funded by the World Bank, aims to develop an ecosystem for a better animal health management system utilising the One Health paradigm in five states of India.
- The Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative is a proactive measure to safeguard human health and safety as well as our animal resources.
- These two are the comprehensive efforts to address animal pandemics in a holistic manner.
- We can more effectively prevent and control zoonotic illnesses, which affect not only the health and welfare of our animals but also have serious economic consequences and present health risks for humans, by strengthening our animal health systems and putting the One Health concept into practise.
- It is necessary to coordinate a number of actions in order to move the system closer to being ready to handle any emergency similar to a pandemic. These actions include improving disease surveillance, developing models for disease warning, enhancing the R&D ecosystem and diagnostic capabilities, streamlining the regulatory ecosystem, improving field responses, and mobilising resources.
- Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) has initiated important changes for improving livestock systems and programs in the country.
- The Animal Pandemic Preparedness Initiative aims to holistically address all facets of disease prevention, control, and pandemic preparedness.
- The key elements include Integrated disease surveillance and monitoring, early warning and response, Vaccine/ diagnostics, R&D and production, and ecosystem coordination with funding and regulatory framework enablers.

## 'A-HELP' programme launched

### Inside Story of the News:

- The "**A-HELP**" (**Accredited Agent for Health and Extension of Livestock Production**) programme was launched in the State of Uttarakhand by Mr. Pushkar Singh Dhama, the Chief Minister.
- Women have been chosen to strengthen livestock related activities in remote rural areas, keeping in mind their important role for the same under A-HELP scheme, envisioned by Govt. of India.
- This programme will utilise trained A-HELPS to prevent numerous animal infectious diseases, perform artificial insemination for **Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM)**, tag animals, and provide animal insurance.
- A-HELP, a new group of community-based professionals, has been established to bridge the gap between local veterinary institutions and livestock owners and offer essential services.

- With the aid of a sizable group of A-HELP workers who have received further training and are interested in practising artificial insemination, the cattle breed development programme under RGM will be carried out.
- These A-HELP workers will also play a crucial role in the implementation of the Livestock Insurance Scheme as well as other interventions, for which they will get compensation in accordance with the terms of the scheme, so assisting in securing their financial future and providing them with an income.
- A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (DAHD) and the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), which is a division of the Department of Rural Development (DoRD), Government of India, to start the unique programme.
- An A-HELP worker's main duty is to take care of the village's livestock population's medical needs.
- The programme was successfully piloted in Madhya Pradesh and J&K.
- More than 500 people attended the event, including Progressive farmers and Pashu Sakhis.

## SECI gets 'Miniratna Category-I' status

### Inside Story of the News:

- On April 10th, 2023, **Solar Energy Corporation of India Limited (SECI)** received the designation of **Miniratna Category-I Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)**.
- The Government of India's Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has issued a communication to this effect.

### About SECI:

- Incorporated in 2011, SECI serves as the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy's main implementing body for renewable energy plans and projects in order to achieve India's obligations under international agreements.
- Over 56 GW worth of Renewable Energy (RE) project capabilities have been awarded by SECI thus far.
- In addition, SECI works as a project management consultant (PMC) for other public sector organisations as well as for its own investments in project establishment.
- SECI enjoys the highest credit rating of AAA by ICRA.
- The nation's obligations to the climate, initiatives for reducing carbon emissions, and the transition to sustainable energy have all benefited from the central role SECI has played in the country's rapid growth of RE generation capacity.
- In order to reach the 500 GW of non-fossil fuel based capacity by 2030, SECI is dedicated to accomplishing the Honourable Prime Minister's "Panchamrita" targets.

## MACS 2023 unanimously agree to launch a Millet Initiative - MAHARISHI

### Inside Story of the News:

- The **meeting of agricultural chief scientists (MACS) of G20 nations on 'Sustainable Agriculture and Food System for Healthy People and Planet'** concluded successfully at Varanasi.
- The discussions on the three days were centred on Innovations and Technological Interventions for Agri-Food Systems Transformation, Frontiers in Science and Technology for Achieving Food Security and Nutrition, Biofortification in Food Crops for Enhancing Nutritional Value, Tropical Seaweed Farming for Nutrition and Blue Growth MAHARISHI among other issues.
- About 80 delegates from G20 member states; invited guest countries, international organizations participated in the meeting.
- The **Millet Initiative - MAHARISHI (Millets And Other Ancient Grains International Research Initiative)**, presented by India for research on millets, was approved by MACS 2023 with unanimity.
- With technical assistance from ICRISAT, One CGIAR Centre, and other international institutions, its secretariat would be based at the Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR), Hyderabad.
- Bilateral discussions regarding future agricultural research collaborations were held with France, the United Kingdom, Argentina, and Germany on the side-lines of G20 MACS.
- The Food and Agriculture Organisation, Rome, Italy, also participated in the bilateral conference.

## Peruvian archaeologists unearth 500-year-old Inca ceremonial bath

### Inside Story of the News:

- A **bathing complex** thought to have been used by the elite of the expansive empire that once ruled vast swaths of South America has been **found by archaeologists in the Peruvian Andes**.
- Local archaeologists believe the bath may have **had a religious purpose for high-ranking Inca members**.
- **The Inca empire**, which once stretched from southern Ecuador to the centre of Chile, is thought to have existed 500 years ago.
- It was discovered near the **"House of the Inca"** in the Huanuco Pampa archaeological zone in central Peru.
- The "finely carved" bath has two separate pools, spillways, and a central passageway that directs water into a drainage duct that splits the space into two small platforms, or "benches" for the Inca.
- It is typically about two metres deep.
- The 25,000-kilometer-long Qhapaq Nan project, which connected Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina, included the Huanuco Pampa archaeological site.
- The road system was declared a World Heritage Site in 2014.
- Numerous ancient sites may be found all over Peru, notably the citadel of Machu Picchu in the Inca capital of Cusco and the enormous Nasca lines, which were drawn in the coastal desert region of Ica more than 1,500 years ago.

## Russia's Pacific Fleet conducts anti-submarine exercises in Sea of Japan

### Inside Story of the News:

- During a sudden readiness check, **combat ships of the Russian Pacific Fleet engaged in anti-submarine drills in the Sea of Japan as well as artillery shooting at sea and air targets.**
- The ships arrived in the designated practise locations in the Sea of Japan after leaving their home bases early in the morning.
- During the sea voyage, they practised various forms of defence for a sea force and engaged in tactical manoeuvring.
- The Admiral Panteleev large antisubmarine ship and the Marshal Shaposhnikov frigate completed firing from 100 mm and 30 mm artillery pieces against sea and air targets.
- Following that, ship personnel practised searching for and destroying a mock enemy submarine. From ships, Ka-27PL helicopters equipped with dip sonars took off.
- Additionally, the long-range ASW Tu-142M3 aircraft arrived at the exercise area.
- A salvo of depth charge rockets was fired by the big anti-submarine ship against the pilots' reported coordinates.
- Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, ordered the drills, which included military and support units, naval and air forces, to begin on April 14.

## Electromagnetic Ion Cyclotron (EMIC) waves identified in the Indian Antarctic station, Maitri

### Inside Story of the News:

- In the Indian Antarctic outpost Maitri, scientists have found and researched **Electromagnetic Ion Cyclotron (EMIC) waves**, a type of plasma waves.
- These waves play an important role in precipitation of killer electrons (electrons having speed close to speed of light, which form the radiation belt of planet Earth), which are hazardous to our space-borne technology/instruments.
- The study can aid in understanding how energetic particles in the radiation belts affect low-orbit satellites.
- **Plasma** makes up more than 99% of the visible universe's matter.
- Plasma, the fourth state of matter, is present in our Sun, solar wind, the interplanetary medium, the near-Earth region, the magnetosphere (the space in which the Earth is contained and shielded from the Sun's fury), and the upper part of our atmosphere.
- We can learn about regions that are inaccessible to us by studying plasma waves, which also carry mass and energy between different areas, interact with charged particles, and regulate the magnetosphere's overall dynamics.
- The EMIC, which traverses plasma waves seen in the Earth's magnetosphere, is one such wave.
- They can resonate with electrons with a wide energy range --- from 500 keV to hundreds of MeV and make them precipitate to high-latitude atmosphere.

- In order to highlight various facets of the ground observation of the EMIC waves, a team of researchers from the Indian Institute of Geomagnetism (IIG), an independent DST institute, examined data gathered between 2011 and 2017 by the Induction Coil Magnetometer installed at the **Indian Antarctic station Maitri**.
- Additionally, they proposed that the lower-frequency waves regulate the higher-frequency waves after locating the place of wave creation in space.
- This initial study, which was published in the journal JGR Space Physics, examined the modulation characteristics using a large data set to present a statistical scenario of modulation of EMIC waves at ground station Maitri. It revealed that short-period modulation of such wave events is typical and dependent on EMIC wave frequency.
- Additionally, a stronger EMIC wave event was expected to have a greater peak frequency since the short period reduces as the EMIC wave's peak frequency rises.
- Such research is crucial to advancing our knowledge of EMIC wave modulation and how energetic particles interact with them to affect satellites and their communication.

## Implantable device shrinks pancreatic tumours

### Inside Story of the News:

- **Pancreatic cancer** is one of the most aggressive and challenging diseases to cure.
- Houston Methodist nanomedicine experts have discovered **a way to control it by injecting immunotherapy directly into the tumour with a device that is tiny than a grain of rice**.
- The researchers delivered CD40 monoclonal antibodies (mAb), a promising immunotherapeutic agent, at a sustained low-dose via the nanofluidic drug-eluting seed (NDES) using an implanted nanofluidic device they developed.
- Tumours were reduced in murine models with a fourfold lower dosage than with conventional systemic immunotherapy.
- One of the most exciting findings was that even though the NDES device was only inserted in one of two tumours in the same animal model, there was shrinkage noted in the tumour without the device.
- This indicates that local immunotherapy was successful in triggering the immune system to attack further tumours. In fact, during the subsequent 100 days of observation, one animal model remained tumour-free.
- Advanced stages of pancreatic ductal adenocarcinoma are typically when it is discovered. Actually, when a patient is diagnosed, roughly 85% of them already have metastatic disease.
- On the International Space Station, the Houston Methodist researchers are studying a similar nanofluidic delivery system.
- Grattoni's nanomedicine lab at Houston Methodist focuses on implantable nanofluidic-based platforms for controlled and long-term drug delivery and cell transplantation to treat chronic illnesses.
- Immunotherapy has the potential to treat cancers for which there were no effective treatments available in the past. However, because immunotherapy is administered all over the body, it

frequently results in side effects that are permanent. By concentrating the delivery precisely into the tumour, the body is shielded from hazardous medications and experiences fewer side effects, essentially improving the quality of life for patients receiving treatment.

- The NDES device consists of a stainless-steel drug reservoir with nanochannels that, when the drug is released, create a membrane that permits sustained diffusion.
- Intratumorally drug-eluting implants for cancer therapy are available from other medical technology companies, however they are only meant to be used temporarily. In order to avoid repeated systemic treatment, which frequently results in negative side effects, the Houston Methodist nanofluidic device is designed for long-term controlled and sustained release.
- To ascertain the efficacy and safety of this delivery technique, more laboratory study is being conducted.

## Members keen to revitalize IBSA forum

### Inside Story of the News:

- The **trilateral India-Brazil-South Africa forum** is expected to receive more diplomatic attention.
- The IBSA forum, which was created in the early 2000s to improve collaboration among three significant rising economies, is said to have become dormant in recent years.
- The forum only had four trilateral ministerial commission meetings between 2011 and 2022.
- The latest took place in September 2022, when senior ministers of the three countries met in New York. India was represented by External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar.
- But since 2011, there hasn't been a meeting of their heads of state or government.
- After a gap of more than four years, the IBSAMAR military exercise, which unites the navies of the three nations, was held in October 2022.
- A novel format, bringing together the national security advisers of the three countries, has only seen one meeting, in 2021.
- The association, which will mark its 20th anniversary this year, is now chaired by Brazil.
- Through the IBSA Fund, the Brazilian presidency will work to expand IBSA's three pillars of political coordination, trilateral cooperation, and cooperation with other developing nations.
- The issue was brought up during Mauro Vieira's bilateral meeting with Jaishankar at the G20 foreign ministers conference in March.
- Brazil's efforts drew a favourable response from New Delhi.
- IBSA, which is effectively BRICS without Russia and China, has distributed \$44 million in development funding for 34 countries and assisted in amplifying the opinions of developing countries on climate change, global health, and international reforms.

## Central Sector Scheme “Marketing and Logistics Development for Promotion of Tribal Products from North Eastern Region (PTP-NER)” launched

### Inside Story of the News:



- Recently, at the MSFDS Auditorium, Konung Mamang, Imphal, Manipur, Shri Arjun Munda, Union Minister of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, launched the Ministry of Tribal Affairs' new Central Sector Scheme, "**Marketing and Logistics Development for Promotion of Tribal Products from North-Eastern Region (PTP-NER)**" for the benefit of Scheduled Tribes of North-eastern Region.
- In the northeast region, through TRIFED, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs seeks to enable citizens to become self-employed and self-sufficient under the inspirational leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
- The objective of the Honourable Prime Minister is to look eastward, concentrate on development, and market indigenous goods in order to improve the standard of living for indigenous entrepreneurs and generate limitless economic prospects.
- Understanding the tribal groups is crucial because this area is a tribal region according to the constitution.
- The Hon'ble PM has time and again stressed on a national programme for '**One District, One Product**' for the promotion of unique tribal products.
- Through teamwork, delivering solutions and value addition for these items, TRIFED will engage with the State Governments and Agencies to ensure the full promotion of these products.
- On this occasion, three new items from VDVKs all over Manipur were also launched, including Cinnamon Rolls (Dalchini) from Kamjong District, Black Rice (Chakhao) from Ukhrul District and Dried Bamboo Shoot.
- A sizeable budget of approximately Rs. 143 Cr. has been allocated for the implementation of this scheme.
- The plan has been created to increase the chances for tribal craftspeople to sustain their livelihoods by increasing the procurement, logistical, and marketing efficiency of tribal goods from North Eastern States.
- Among the states the programme will cover are Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, and Sikkim.
- The PTP-NER scheme will help tribal craftsmen take advantage of opportunities to increase revenue by providing backward and forward linkages through incubation support, aggregation, skill and entrepreneurial development, sourcing and procurement, marketing, transportation and publicity.
- In order to start the appointment of tribal artisans from that region, this plan calls for the formation of 68 Tribal Artisan Melas (TAMs) in the several districts of the North Eastern Region, beginning on April 18, 2023.
- The North Eastern Handicrafts and Handlooms Development Corporation (NEHDC), a corporation under the administrative control of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER), the Government of India, India Post under the Department of Posts, the Government of India, and North Eastern State Government Departments/ Agencies, are also being engaged as partners under the scheme due to their extensive experience and presence in the region.
- **Tribal Artisan Melas (TAMs)** would be organised in order to directly appoint tribal artisans and producers under this programme.

- The District Administration and other relevant organizations/departments working in the field, etc., shall be consulted and supported in the organisation of the TAMs.
- Individual Tribal artisans, Tribal SHGs and Government Organizations/Agencies/ VDKs formed under the PMJVM scheme/FPOs/ tribal societies/ Tribal Producer Organizations can be empanelled.
- Under this scheme, the tribal products of NER would receive national and international marketing links through various online & offline modes.
- Regular Design and Skill Development training sessions that are targeted to the demands of the market for tribal recipients are also included in the programme.
- In order to achieve the objectives of the scheme, India Post will offer logistical support.
- All empanelled tribal artisans will receive direct exposure to tribal craftspeople through the program's various exhibitions, such as Purvotar Aadi Mahotsav, Purvotar Aadi Bazaar, Exclusive North East Craft Mela, etc.
- Shri Arjun Munda went to the 50 Van Dhan Vikas Kendra Stalls that had been set up at the location. Market connections must be made available to all the North Eastern States' VDKs in order to integrate them into the PTP-NER supply chain.

## New 'pristine' coral reef discovered in Galapagos Islands

### Inside Story of the News:

- Off the **Galapagos Islands in Ecuador**, a scientific expedition has **discovered a hitherto unidentified coral reef with an abundance of marine life**.
- A 400-meter-deep coral reef, measuring around two kilometres (1.2 miles) in length, has been discovered by a deepwater research expedition on the summit of a submarine mountain.
- The Wellington reef, which is located along Darwin Island's shore, was previously thought to be the sole Galapagos reef to survive El Nino weather in 1982 and 1983, but the latest finding demonstrates that additional coral has endured.
- The reef has more than 50% living coral.
- "This is very important at a global level because many deepwater systems are degraded," said Stuart Banks, senior marine researcher at the Charles Darwin Foundation and participant in the mission. He stated that the coral is at least several thousand years old.
- To preserve endangered migratory animals between the Galapagos and the Cocos Island in Costa Rica, the South American nation last year increased the Galapagos marine reserve by 60,000 square kilometres (23,166 square miles), adding to the 138,000 square kilometres already in place.
- Giant tortoises, albatrosses, cormorants, and other species, some of which are endangered, can be found in the Galapagos, which served as the model for Charles Darwin's theory of evolution.

## National Panchayat Awards and National Conference on Incentivization of Panchayats

### Inside Story of the News:

- On April 17, 2023, Smt. Droupadi Murmu, the President of India, inaugurated the **National Conference on Incentivization of Panchayats** in New Delhi and presented the **National Panchayat Awards**.
- The progress of villages can influence the country's progress in general.
- Panchayats are a location to foster new leaders, planners, policymakers, and innovators as well as a way for the government to carry out its programmes and projects.
- We can quickly develop and thrive villages if other Panchayats embrace the best practises of one Panchayat.
- Women's participation is crucial for the overall development of any society. 46 percent of the more than 31.5 lakh elected members of local rural bodies are female.
- Women should actively participate in the activities of the Gramme Panchayats, the President advised. She also requested assistance from the family in these endeavours.
- According to Shri Giriraj Singh, the Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, 21 States have implemented a 50% female reservation policy in the three-tier Panchayats. He urged the remaining States to extend the 33% Constitutional provision for women's reservation to Panchayats.
- Shri Giriraj Singh called for the panchayats to be developed holistically and suggested that we design a model to lead the panchayats to saturation with schemes based on the nine topics listed under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations.
- He said the Modi Government firmly believes the Panchayats have to be the focal point of development.
- Under the Finance Commission, the Government only allotted Rs. 54 per person for development earlier; presently, it allots Rs. 700.
- 31 lakh elected representatives have been imparted training towards sustainable village under the Gram Swaraj Abhiyaan.
- In order to determine the most thriving Panchayats, other criteria have been included, such as carbon neutrality, water sufficiency, literacy, and job creation.
- More than 90% of Panchayats have competed for the Awards today, compared to just 10–20% who participated earlier.
- In Jammu & Kashmir UT, the youngest Panchayats have made admirable efforts towards the target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030.
- More than 2.5 lakh villages have had drone flights completed, more than 64,000 villages have received property cards, and more than 57,000 rural residents have received a property card.
- More than 2.35 lakh villages have had drone surveys done under the SVAMITVA Scheme, while 6.57 lakh villages, or 95% of the 6.62 lakh villages, have received Bhu-Aadhaar under the Unique Land Parcel Identification Number (ULPIN) project.

- Shri Giriraj Singh later introduced the **GS NIRNAY, National Initiative for Rural India to Navigate, Innovate and Resolve Panchayat** decisions, a mobile application of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj aimed at empowering rural communities during the National Conference. This was in keeping with the Prime Minister's vision of maximising digital technology for social benefit.
- The GS NIRNAY mobile app will revolutionise rural communities in India by giving them quick access to crucial information discussed during a Gram Sabha and serving as a tool for fact-checking when necessary or in the event that questions about the resolutions adopted during the Gram Sabha arise. The functioning of Panchayats, which are crucial to decentralised participatory democracy, would become more transparent and efficient as a result.
- The introduction of GS NIRNAY is a crucial step towards implementing the slogan "**Minimum Government, Maximum Governance**" at the local level, and it is anticipated to quicken the pace of rural development in order to realise Mahatma Gandhi's goal of Gram Swaraj.
- The Awardee Panchayats under various categories of National Panchayat Awards 2023, namely,
  - (i) **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (DDUPSVP)** for the performance under individual LSDG themes,
  - (ii) **Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (NDSPSVP)** for the aggregate performance under all 9 LSDG themes and green initiative related Special Categories,
  - (iii) **Gram Urja Swaraj Vishesh Panchayat Puraskar** and
  - (iv) **Carbon Neutral Vishesh Panchayat Puraskar**were felicitated by the dignitaries and the award money was transferred digitally to the Awardee Panchayats on this occasion.

## A dispute resolution mechanism for LPCC announced

### Inside Story of the News:

- Market regulator Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) released a circular announcing a **dispute resolution mechanism for Limited Purpose Clearing Corporation (LPCC)**.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and SEBI will collaborate to establish the framework for the resolution of disputes or claims arising out of transactions cleared and settled by the regulator.
- The circular is intended to protect the interests of investors in securities and further the growth and regulation of the securities market. It was issued in the exercise of the authority granted under Section 11 (1) of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.
- To resolve disagreements between clearing members, those between clearing members and their clients, those between the LPCC and its vendors, and those between clearing members or its clients and the LPCC, the dispute resolution process will be used.
- The clearing and settlement of repo transactions are managed by the LPCC, an organisation.
- By enhancing the liquidity of the underlying debt securities, an effective repo market accelerates the expansion of the debt securities market.
- Market participants can also have access to cash momentarily by monetizing their debt holdings without selling the underlying assets.

- The circular states that an LPCC must use the market regulator's recommended dispute settlement process.
- A mediation process or an arbitration panel made up of three clearing members who are not engaged in the dispute will be used to settle any disputes that might emerge between LPCC's clearing members. The arbitration panel's decision would be considered final and enforceable against the parties.
- In addition, SEBI has said that any disagreements between a clearing member and the LPCC shall be resolved in accordance with the established dispute resolution process.
- Any disagreements between the LPCC and a clearing member will be settled in accordance with the process outlined in the Payment and Settlement Systems Act of 2007 and the corresponding rules and instructions that have been notified if neither party is satisfied with the decision reached through SEBI's mechanism.

## Mission 50K-EV4ECO of SIDBI

### Inside Story of the News:

- **Mission 50K-EV4ECO** was recently unveiled by the **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI)** in an effort to **boost the nation's electric vehicle (EV) ecosystem**.
- The 'Mission 50K-EV4ECO' trial phase intends to improve the EV ecosystem, including the adoption of two, three, and four-wheelers through direct and indirect lending.
- The pilot scheme, which serves as the forerunner to the SIDBI-World Bank EVOLVE scheme, consists of two parts: direct lending to MSME and indirect lending to NBFCs.
- Following this pilot scheme, multilateral assistance for the ecosystem will be scaled up.
- Through direct and indirect lending support to vehicle aggregators, fleet operators, and leasing firms, it focuses on boosting the adoption of electric two-wheelers, three-wheelers, and four-wheelers.
- SIDBI will directly offer loans to qualified small and medium-sized businesses (SME) under Mission 50K-EV4ECO for the acquisition of EVs and the development of charging infrastructure, including battery swapping.

## Centre appoints former SPG chief as NTRO chairman

### Inside Story of the News:

- After much anticipation, the government has appointed Former Special Protection Group (SPG) chief **Arun Sinha** as the **appointed Chairman of the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO)**.
- For two years, Arun Sinha has served as an advisor for NTRO.
- He is a Kerala cadre class of 1984.
- The government is now likely to make selections for the heads of the border security agency and the Indian Coast Guard too, as the position had been vacant for more than three to four months.

- The CRPF chief Thaosan is currently in charge of the BSF.
- In addition to leading the Border Security Force (BSF), he is the director general (DG) of the CRPF, the government's largest paramilitary force.
- Additionally, the position of Coast Guard Chief has been vacant since January 31.

## SATHI Portal and Mobile App launched

### Inside Story of the News:

- The **SATHI (Seed Traceability, Authentication and Holistic Inventory) Portal and Mobile App**, a Centralised Online System for seed traceability, authentication, and inventory created to address the challenges of seed production, quality seed identification, and seed certification, was recently launched by Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar.
- On the basis of the theme "**Uttam Beej - Samridh Kisan**," it has been developed by the NIC in collaboration with the Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- Agriculture is of great importance to India. Through a variety of programmes and initiatives, the Indian government is continually attempting to address the issues and challenges that the agriculture sector is facing. A significant step in this direction is the SATHI portal. It will prove to be a revolutionary advance in the world of agriculture when its use begins at the ground level.
- In agriculture, the use of seeds, insecticides, fertilisers, and irrigation is crucial. The expansion of agriculture is hampered by seeds of inferior quality or spurious seeds. This results in losses for the farmers and has an impact on the nation's agricultural output.
- The SATHI portal has been established in response to the repeated calls for a method to be developed to monitor the market for spurious seeds and ensure that farmers are provided with quality seeds.
- New insect species are damaging crops in this period of climate change, and agricultural scientists should concentrate their study on these pests to eliminate the threat. We can save 20% of the total agricultural output if we are able to prevent this loss.
- This approach will include a QR code that can be used to track the seeds.
- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Krishi Vigyan Kendras, and State Governments should provide training.
- In the seed production chain, the SATHI portal will guarantee a quality assurance system and identify the seed source.
- The system will consist of integrated 7 verticals of the seed chain - Research Organisation, Seed Certification, Seed Licensing, Seed Catalogue, Dealer to Farmer Sales, Farmer Registration and Seed DBT.
- Only legitimately licenced dealers may sell certified seeds to centrally registered farmers who would then get subsidies through DBT directly into their pre-approved bank accounts.

## Four new biodiversity heritage sites (BHS) in West Bengal

### Inside Story of the News:

- The number of **biodiversity heritage sites (BHS) in West Bengal** has increased by four according to the state government, taking the total tally to eight.
- The four new sites are Char Balidanga and the state Horticulture Research and Development Station campus in Deypara — both in Nadia, Namthing Pokhar in Darjeeling and the Amkhoi Fossil Park in Birbhum.
- On the Hooghly, **Char Balidanga** consists of two islands covered in tall grasses typical of tropical riverine vegetation and swampy flatlands that are occasionally swamped by tidal ebbs. It is home to several species of endangered animals and approximately 100 bird species that are included on the International Union of Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) List of Threatened Species.
- The two islands that make up Char Balidanga total about 115.8 acres and are covered in algal mats, a form of microbial mat that is home to several species.
- Another recent BHS in the state is **Namthing Pokhari**, an 11.91-acre Himalayan natural wetland in the Kurseong block.
- In Namthing Pokhari, the Himalayan salamander can be found. Additionally, it has a unique set of traditional beliefs that must be honoured when carrying out conservation initiatives.
- With a 10 acre size, the **Amkhoi Fossil Park** near Ilambazar in Birbhum district possesses distinctive geological and palaeobotanical features. It is West Bengal's first park dedicated to wood fossils.
- The **state Horticulture Research and Development Station's campus** at Deypara panchayat of Krishnagar block has also been listed by the Board as another BHS. Its 97.88 acres are home to the indigenous germplasm for 50 different mango types, seven different guava kinds, and a number of other varieties.
- The existing four BHS in Bengal include Chilkigarh Kanak Durga in Jhargram, Baneswar Shiv Dighi in Cooch Behar, Tonglu and Dhotrey in Darjeeling.

## Audit Quality Maturity Model (AQMM) launched

### Inside Story of the News:

- The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) launched the **Audit Quality Maturity Model (AQMM)** from April 1 with the intention of raising audit quality and increasing transparency. The second phase of peer review is scheduled to begin on July 1.
- The firms falling under the specified criteria are required to compulsorily self-evaluate their audit quality maturity using the AQMM and get it reviewed by the peer reviewer alongside the peer review. The ICAI website will host the firm level that the peer reviewer determined.
- Firms that audit banks, insurance firms, or listed businesses are required to have their audit quality maturity evaluated using the AQMM version v1.0, which assesses both audit engagements and firm-level audit practise.

- Peer review began on April 1, 2022, for companies that audit publicly traded corporations. The ICAI decided to postpone it by three months to July 1, 2023, because some of the auditors required to get themselves peer-reviewed under the second phase are not ready.
- The second phase will encompass practise units with five or more partners as well as businesses that intend to conduct statutory audits of unlisted public corporations with paid-up capital of at least 500 crore or with an annual revenue of at least 1,000 crore.
- Aniket Talati, president of the ICAI, stated that the inclusion of non-chartered accountants is a "fait accompli" as it is a part of the amendments to the Chartered Accountants, Cost and Works Accountants, and the Company Secretaries (Amendment) Bill, 2021. The ICAI is collaborating with the ministry of corporate affairs on the regulations for the new disciplinary mechanism, he added. In this scenario, there would be two CAs and three non-CAs on the ICAI disciplinary committee.
- Since 2007 through March 31, 2023, 6,766 cases have been filed under the new disciplinary committee mechanism, of which 4,249 cases have been resolved. A total of 112 meetings of the board of discipline and disciplinary committee have been held; hearings have been concluded in 132 cases, and penalties have been handed down in 91 cases.