

## IMPORTANT NEWS

### MeitY Launches Pilot Project on ERSO

#### Inside Story of the News:

- In keeping with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's overarching goal of making India a global electronics powerhouse, the government recently launched the **ERSO Pilot initiative to validate certain transformational policy and process changes aimed at making India the Repair Capital of the World.**
- MeitY, CBIC, DGFT, and MoEF&CC came together with industry to implement revolutionary policy and procedural changes that would make India the most alluring repair destination for ICT products globally, demonstrating true commitment to the growth of industry.
- The ERSO industry in India is expected to bring in up to \$20 billion in revenue over the next five years and create millions of jobs.
- The policy and process modifications necessary for ERSO have been implemented over the past few months by different government departments following extensive discussions with the Repair industry. A limited pilot programme has been established to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of these changes.
- The pilot is being conducted in Bengaluru and will last three months.
- Five companies, namely Flex, Lenovo, CTDI, R-Logic & Aforeserve have volunteered for the pilot.
- Following the pilot, a thorough evaluation will be done, and changes to the process and policy will be made as needed.
- The ERSO programme will revolutionise global environmental sustainability and reaffirm India's commitment to the environment and our planet, in line with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's appeal to support Mission LiFE.
- By offering inexpensive and dependable ICT product maintenance for the entire world, it will enable the extension of device life.

### World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector

#### Inside Story of the News:

- The constitution and empowerment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) for facilitating the **"World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector"** by combining various schemes of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, and Ministry of Food Processing Industries was recently approved by the Union Cabinet, which is presided over by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
- The Ministry of Cooperation will carry out a pilot project in at least 10 chosen Districts of various States and UTs around the nation to guarantee the Plan is implemented uniformly and on schedule in a professional manner.
- The learnings from the Pilot will be appropriately incorporated for the country-wide execution of the Plan. The Pilot will provide significant insights into the diverse regional requirements of the project.
- Following schemes have been identified for convergence under the Plan:

- Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare:
  - i. Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF),
  - ii. Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure Scheme (AMI),
  - iii. Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH),
  - iv. Sub Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)
- Ministry of Food Processing Industries:
  - i. Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme (PMFME),
  - ii. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)
- Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution:
  - i. Allocation of food grains under the National Food Security Act,
  - ii. Procurement operations at Minimum Support Price
- The plan has several objectives; in addition to addressing the lack of agricultural storage infrastructure in the nation by allowing the development of godowns at the level of PACS, it would also give PACS the ability to carry out a number of other tasks, viz:
  - Functioning as Procurement centres for State Agencies / Food Corporation of India (FCI);
  - Serving as Fair Price Shops (FPS);
  - Setting up custom hiring centres;
  - Setting up common processing units, including assaying, sorting, grading units for agricultural produce, etc.
- Decentralised storage capacity development at the local level would improve the nation's food security by reducing grain loss.
- It would prevent agricultural sales in times of crisis by giving farmers a range of options, allowing them to sell their produce for better prices.
- The expense of delivering food grains to procurement centres and then returning stock from warehouses to FPS would be greatly reduced.
- The Plan would strengthen PACS by allowing them to diversify their business operations through a "whole-of-Government" approach, so raising the incomes of the farmer members as well.

## Ministry of Jal Shakti Launches Unified Registration Portal for GOBARdhan

### Inside Story of the News:

- The **Unified Registration Portal for GOBARdhan**, which will act as a one-stop repository for assessing investment and participation in the Biogas/CBG sector at the pan-India level and streamlining the process of establishing CBG/Biogas plants in India, was launched by Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Union Minister for Jal Shakti.
- Any government, cooperative, or private organisation running or preparing to open a biogas/CBG/bio CNG plant in India can obtain a registration number by signing up for this single registration system.
- An important GoI umbrella initiative called **Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBARdhan)** employs a whole-of-government strategy to turn waste into wealth and promote the circular economy.
- To support sustainable economic growth and advance a circular economy, the Indian government intends to create a healthy environment for the construction of biogas, compressed biogas (CBG), and bio-compressed natural gas (CNG) facilities.

- As the nodal department for GOBARDhan, the Ministry of Jal Shakti's Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) created this portal, which may be accessible at <https://gobardhan.co.in>.
- With more than 650 GOBARDhan plants and this portal, significant achievements have been made in our waste to wealth generation journey.
- Because the portal has collected data from numerous ministries and departments throughout the Centre and States, it will not only guarantee Ease of Doing Business (EODB), but it will also encourage higher investment from private enterprises.
- GOBARDhan's goal is to create money and energy by converting bovine dung, agricultural residue, and other organic waste into biogas, CBG, and biofertilizers.
- This project includes a wide range of plans, programmes, and policies aimed at encouraging the conversion of organic waste such as bovine dung, agri-residue, and so on to biogas/CBG/Bio CNG.

## Apollo Hospitals, Ahmedabad Unveils Da Vinci Xi Robotic Surgical System

### Inside Story of the News:

- **The Da Vinci Xi Robotic Surgical System**, a revolutionary development in surgical procedures, has been launched by **Apollo Hospitals, Ahmedabad**, a pioneer in healthcare innovation.
- It offers increased precision and superior patient care.
- The state-of-the-art technology is a significant milestone and will transform surgical healthcare and open up new possibilities for both patients and surgeons.
- The introduction of this cutting-edge robotic surgical system is a step in that direction and will allow complex surgical procedures to be performed with greater accuracy.
- Apollo Hospitals will be able to improve clinical results for patients who require complicated surgeries thanks to the Da Vinci Xi Robotic system.

## Indian Navy MARCOS in Maldives for Sixth Edition of Exercise 'Ekatha'

### Inside Story of the News:

- In order to participate in the **sixth edition of Exercise Ekatha** with the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF), the Indian Navy dispatched its Marine Commandos (MARCOS) and divers.
- The exercise will take place between June 4 and July 3, 2023.
- Exercise Ekatha, which is held annually, aims to improve interoperability between the two navies, particularly in the areas of diving and special operations.
- Exercise Ekatha also includes counterterrorism, maritime security, humanitarian aid, and disaster relief activities.
- The bilateral naval exercise's fifth edition took place in the Maldives from September 5 to October 3, 2022.

### What is special about the exercise?

- Joint drills, workshops, seminars, tabletop exercises, and specialised training in various combat-related activities are all part of the Exercise Ekatha training schedule.
- Marines from the MNDF and MARCOS from the Indian Navy practise combat shooting, demolition, close-quarter battle and diving operations such as divator and rebreather diving.

- Additionally, during the bilateral exercise, visit, board, search, and seizure (VBSS) is also practised during the bilateral exercise.
- Previously, 10 MARCOS from the Indian Navy and 30 marines from MNDF's Special Operations Group participated in the exercise.
- Exercise Ekatha is essential because it gives the participating forces a chance to simulate complicated scenarios and assess their soldiers' capacity for cooperation and decision-making.
- In order to counter potential security risks, these exercises entail the creation of operational plans, communication protocols, and coordination mechanisms.
- India is noteworthy for being one of the first countries to recognise the Maldives' independence and establish diplomatic ties with the country in 1965.
- Meanwhile, Maldives established a High Commission in New Delhi in November 2004.
- This was one of four diplomatic missions of Maldives at the time.
- Exercise Ekatha's training programme aims to foster mutual learning, improve operational capabilities, and fortify the relationship between the Indian Armed Forces and the Maldivian National Defence Force.
- In the Indian Ocean region, it promotes a culture of cooperation, interoperability, and security.

## Bhaderwah Emerges as Lavender Capital of India and Agri StartUp Destination

### Inside Story of the News:

- **Bhaderwah has emerged as the Lavender capital of India and Agri StartUp destination.** Inaugurating the **two-day Lavender Festival** at Bhaderwah in the Jammu area, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh recently made this statement.
- The event was arranged as part of the One Week One Lab Campaign by the CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, Jammu.
- Dr Jitendra Singh described Bhaderwah as the birthplace of India's Purple Revolution and the destination of Agri-StartUps.
- Bhaderwah is considered to be the best place for lavender cultivation in terms of land and climate.
- The valley of Bhaderwah is the best example of development of the present progressive government at the centre.
- Regarding the lavender cultivation in the region, Dr. Jitendra Singh stated that lavender is a source of employment and research that opens various avenues for growth.
- The lavender cultivation has changed the lives of many farmers. There are currently over 2,500 farmers growing lavender in this area. They were also handled by the Central Government's Aroma Mission.

### About CSIR-Aroma Mission:

- **The CSIR-Aroma Mission** is a flagship project of CSIR under which lavender cultivation is being promoted in the temperate parts of J&K.

- The project's objectives include creating agriculture-based startups and raising the income of small and marginal farmers.
- Dr. Jitendra Singh, Hon'ble Union Minister of State (IC) of the Ministry of Science & Technology, is directly in charge of overseeing the project.
- The CSIR-IIIM has created its elite variety (RRL-12) and agrotechnology of lavender during many years of scientific intervention.
- The lavender cultivar is ideally suited for growth in India's rainfed temperate zones.
- Lavender was introduced and more than 30 lakh free lavender plants were given to farmers in various districts of J&K as part of the CSIR-Aroma Mission.
- The farmers were also given the end-to-end technology package for the cultivation, processing, value addition, and marketing of the lavender harvest.
- In order to assist farmers in processing their crops, CSIR-IIIM installed fifty distillation units (45 fixed and five mobile) at various places throughout J&K.
- In 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022, consecutively, farmers in the Baderwah, Doda district produced 300, 500, 800, and 1500 litres of lavender oil.
- They earned > Rs. 5.0 Crore between 2018-2022 by selling dry flowers, lavender plants, and lavender oil.
- The media has recognised this initiative of CSIR-IIIM as the "Purple Revolution."
- CSIR-IIIM received the CSIR award for S&T innovations for rural development (CAIRD-2020) for Purple Revolution in Jammu & Kashmir: Rural Development Through Lavender Cultivation in J&K.

## Government Removes Ceiling for Procurement of Pulses under Price Support Scheme (PSS) for 2023-24

### Inside Story of the News:

- The government has **lifted the 40% procurement ceilings for tur, urad, and masur under Price Support Scheme (PSS)** operations for 2023–2024 in a significant step towards increasing domestic production of pulses.
- The ruling effectively guarantees that these pulses would be purchased from farmers at MSP without ceilings.
- In order to increase production during the upcoming Kharif and Rabi sowing seasons, farmers will be encouraged to increase their sowing areas for tur, urad, and masur due to the government's assurance that it will purchase these pulses at fair prices.
- It may be recalled that on June 2, 2023, the government restricted the amount of tur and urad that could be held by using the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. This was done to minimise hoarding and shady speculation as well as to make goods more affordable for consumers.
- Wholesalers, retailers, big chain retailers, millers, and importers are all subject to the stock limits.
- Additionally, it has become required for these businesses to disclose their stock holdings on the Department of Consumer Affairs' portal (<https://fcainfoweb.nic.in/psp>).
- The Department of Consumer Affairs has instructed the state governments to guarantee strict implementation of the limits in their respective states as a follow-up to the stock limits set on tur and urad.

- The states are also required to keep track of prices and stock levels by checking with different warehouse operators as part of enforcement.
- In addition, the Department has asked the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) and State Warehousing Corporations (SWCs) to give information about the tur and urad stored in their facilities.

## Jagdish Bakan wins UNESCO's Michel Batisse Award

### Inside Story of the News:

- For introducing 'green' jobs and microcredit to stimulate community-led efforts to conserve biodiversity in the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve in India, **Mr. Jagdish Bakan** has been awarded the biennial **Michel Batisse Award for Biosphere Reserve Management**.
- He received the US\$12,000 award on 14 June from the International Coordinating Council of UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, which met at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 12–15 June.

### About Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve:

- One of 12 Indian biosphere reserves, the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve was established in 2001.
- For marine biodiversity, it is regarded as one of the richest locations in the world.
- Mangroves round the shorelines of the majority of the islands, and the seafloor surrounding them is covered with seagrass beds, which are perfect feeding grounds for sea turtles and the endangered dugong, a herbivorous marine mammal.
- It's common to refer to the coral reefs that surround the islands as an underwater tropical rainforest.
- The degradation of coral reefs, seagrass beds, and mangroves, the overexploitation of marine resources, and pollution from plastics and other waste entering the ocean from the land present serious problems for this lovely environment.
- Marakeyars, the majority of the population of the biosphere reserve, reside in 47 coastal villages and are primarily engaged in fisheries.
- The biosphere reserve receives about 1.4 million pilgrims a year, who flock to the island of Pamban to visit the site of the Rāmāyaṇa, one of two important Sanskrit epics of Hinduism from ancient India which narrates the life of Rama, a legendary prince of Ayodhya in the kingdom of Kosala.

### About Jagdish Bakan:

- The 2017-batch IFS officer Jagdish S. Bakan is the Wildlife Warden and Director of the Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve in Tamil Nadu.
- He has put into action a number of initiatives meant to inspire the community to care for the environment more. For instance, locals established plastic-free zones in the Dhanushkodi and Ervadi regions and erected checkpoints to collect plastics from passing cars.
- 252 ecodevelopment committees and self-help groups have been established by Mr. Bakan.
- Six new community-based projects are administered by these groups, four of which concentrate on ecotourism and two of which staff the checkpoints for plastics.

- A total of 89 new "green" jobs have been directly added, while hundreds more have been indirectly added.
- Each of the five ecotourism locations has a canteen run by women's self-help groups.
- The restoration of coral and seagrass, the planning of mangroves, and the removal of invasive seaweed are all tasks in which the community is involved.
- To date, 39 fishermen have received financial compensation for rescuing wildlife.
- Kadal Osai FM, a local community radio station, is also utilised to promote environmental awareness.
- In order to assist the locals in diversifying their sources of income and moving towards more environmentally friendly ones, Mr. Bakan has also introduced a microcredit scheme.
- Between 2021 and 2022, the amount of these loans increased by 35%.
- Between April 2022 and January 2023, the biosphere reserve provided microcredit equivalent to about 2.3 million euros (Rs. 20.58n Cr), the largest amount of any Indian biosphere reserve.
- The scheme has increased public trust in the biosphere's authority and management.
- Additionally, the scheme is sustainable because all prior debts have been repaid.

## Centre Launches Mission on Advanced and High-Impact Research (MAHIR)

### Inside Story of the News:

- To take advantage of new technologies and spur innovation in the power sector, the Ministry of Power and the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has jointly **launched Mission on Advanced and High-Impact Research (MAHIR)**.
- The mission, according to the power ministry, intends to identify and create cutting-edge technologies in the power industry in order to establish India as a hub for global manufacturing and support future economic growth.
- MAHIR will facilitate indigenous research, development, and demonstration of the latest and emerging technologies in the power sector.
- The mission aims to identify and implement these technologies in order to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations as well as national priorities such achieving net zero emissions.
- The ministry of power, the ministry of new and renewable energy, and the central public sector enterprises will all contribute to the mission's finance, and extra funds will be sourced from the government's budgetary allocation.
- The mission, which is slated for a five-year first run from 2023–2024 to 2027–2028, will adhere to the idea-to-product technology life cycle approach.
- In order to build an environment for innovation and research translation in the power sector, it intends to promote collaboration between industry, academia, and the government.
- In order to create an innovation ecosystem, MAHIR will collaborate with prestigious institutions like IITs, IIMs, NITs, IISERs, and Universities on the one hand, and start-up companies in the public and private power sectors as well as well-established industries on the other.



## RBI Launches Financial Inclusion Dashboard 'Antardrishti'

### Inside Story of the News:

- Recently, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) **unveiled Antardrishti, a Financial Inclusion Dashboard.**
- By capturing pertinent parameters, this will give the central bank the necessary expertise to assess and monitor the development of financial inclusion.
- The RBI stated in a statement that this facility, which was introduced by Governor Shaktikanta Das, will also allow it to assess the degree of financial exclusion at granular levels across the nation so that such regions may be addressed.
- Through a multi-stakeholder approach, the dashboard, which is currently designed for internal use within the RBI, would further encourage broader financial inclusion.
- The RBI created the Financial Inclusion (FI) Index in 2021 based on the three financial inclusion dimensions of "access," "usage," and "quality" to gauge the extent of financial inclusion.

## Pune Astronomers Detect Two New MSPs

### Inside Story of the News:

- Using a newly developed indigenous method, **Pune-based astronomers have found two new rotating neutron stars known as Millisecond Pulsars (MSP).**
- This technique was used during an ongoing sky survey conducted by the **Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT).**
- When a big star, like the Sun, collapses, MSPs, which are dense, tiny neutron stars, are created.
- Because they emit radiation pulses at regular intervals, they are called pulsars. Millisecond pulsars emit radiations every few milliseconds.
- The neutron stars, which are the densest objects in the universe excluding blackholes, can be better understood by studying the properties of these radiations.
- Additionally, when a region has a sizable population of MSPs, the likelihood of gravitational wave detection is enhanced.
- One of the areas of astronomy that is currently being closely watched is the study of gravitational waves.
- The GMRT, the largest radio telescope working in low radio frequency and located around 80 km from Pune city, has been in operation since early 2000. The TIFR-National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA), Pune, is the owner of it.



## Sonowal Launches 'Sagar Samridhhi'

### Inside Story of the News:

- In order to accelerate the Ministry's "Waste to Wealth" initiative, the Union Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) and Ayush Shri Sarbananda Sonowal **recently launched "SAGAR SAMRIDHDI," an online dredging monitoring system.**
- The MoPSW's technological division, the National Technology Centre for Ports, Waterways and Coasts (NTCPWC), developed this system.
- Comparing the new technology to the outdated Draft and Loading Monitor (DLM) system reveals a significant improvement.
- Before processing and producing a real-time dredging report, the system will create synergy between various input reports such as daily dredging reports and pre- and post-dredging survey data.
- The 'Sagar Samridhhi' monitoring system will also provide daily and monthly progress visualisation, monitoring of dredger performance and downtime, and easy location trace data with snapshots of loading, unloading, and idle time.
- Capabilities of 'Sagar Samridhhi' include:
  - Real time dredging progress report
  - Daily and monthly progress Visualisation
  - Dredger performance and downtime monitoring
  - Easy location track data with snapshot of loading, unloading and idle time
- Currently, Cochin Port and Mumbai Port have implemented the system, and it is currently being tested at New Mangalore Port and Deendayal Port.
- Now, with customisation from NTCPWC, MoPSW has ordered that all Major Ports and IWAI monitor the dredging operations through this system.
- As a result, both new and old dredgers—which will be upgraded and outfitted with the new technology—will use this system.

## Ishad Mango from Ankola Gets GI Tag

### Inside Story of the News:

- The delicious **Uttara Kannada Ishad mango** has obtained its long-awaited **geographical indication (GI) tag**, and it is now being considered as the start of its road towards international recognition similar to that of Alphonso mangoes.
- Ishad mango, which is **mostly grown in the Ankola region**, is tasty and has a lot of pulp.
- The application for GI tag was made through Ankola-based Matha Totagars Farmers Producer Company (MTFPC) Ltd in March 2022.
- According to MTFPC Director Madhav Indra Gouda, the mango variety has been grown for the past 400 years. Following this tag, the MTFPC, an organisation of 300 farmers, decided to propagate seedlings and promote the production of this unique mango. Two products, pulp and squash, are ready for consumers.

## Exercise 'Ekuverin' Commences at Chaubatia

### Inside Story of the News:

- **The 12th edition of joint military exercise "Ex Ekuverin" between the Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Force** has commenced at Chaubatia, Uttarakhand from 11 to 24 June 2023.
- An annual bilateral exercise called Ekuverin, which means "Friends," alternatively takes place in India and Maldives.
- Both the Maldives National Defence Force and the Indian Army are taking part in the 14-day drill with a platoon-sized presence each.
- The exercise aims to improve interoperability in counterinsurgency/counterterrorism operations carried out in accordance with UN mandate and conduct coordinated operations for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- The goal is to improve tactical coordination and collaboration between the two armies by exchanging best practises.
- The 11th edition of the exercise was held in Maldives in December 2021.
- The two nations' defence cooperation goes beyond just participating in joint exercises to include helping the Maldives with its equipment and training needs.
- In terms of economic, cultural, and military cooperation, both countries have very strong and cordial ties. Ex Ekuverin will help to strengthen these ties between the two countries even more.