

InTranSE-II Program

❖ Context

- Three products were launched by **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY)** under its **Intelligent Transportation System Endeavour for Indian Cities Phase-II** initiative.

❖ Key Highlights

❖ Background

- The program is aimed at developing **Intelligent Transport System products and solutions** through **collaboration** between **premier academic institutions**.
- **C-DAC** is identified as functioning as the **Nodal Centre** to coordinate.
- **Smart Cities** like **Bhubaneswar, Faridabad, Nagpur and Surat** have deployed products and solutions developed under the MeitY funded **InTranSE Phase-I program (2009-2012)**.
- The **InTranSE Phase-II program (2019-2021)** is aiming at undertaking R&D projects collaboratively with **IIT Bombay, IIT Madras, IISc Bangalore and C-DAC Thiruvananthapuram**.

❖ About the New Products

- The products have been developed jointly by CDAC and IIT-Madras, with Mahindra & Mahindra as industry collaborator.

❖ Onboard Driver Assistance and Warning System – ODAWS

- As per Ministry of Road Transport and Highways of India (MoRTH), in around **84 percent of cases**, "**driver error**" was cited as the **cause of the accident**.
- ODAWS incorporates **vehicle-borne sensors** for monitoring driver propensity and vehicle surroundings to deliver **acoustic and visual alerts** for driver assistance using algorithms.

❖ Bus Signal Priority System

- It aims to **improve the poor reliability of bus system** to discourage public from opting personal vehicles.
- One of the major causes of delays for public transport buses in urban arterials is the **delay at signalised intersections**.
- The system will provide **priority to public transport buses**, either through Green extension or Red truncation, considering all vehicles approaching a signalised intersection.

❖ Common SMART iot Connectiv (CoSMiC)

- It is a **middleware software** providing standard based deployment of IoT adhering to oneM2M based global standard.
- It **facilitates users and application service providers** to use open standards and open interfaces for **end to end communication** with well-defined common service functionalities complying with oneM2M standard.
- **oneM2M's global standard** defines a **common middleware technology** in a horizontal layer **between devices and communications networks and IoT applications**.

ADR Mechanisms

❖ Context

- Recently, Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana stressed the **need for increasing the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms**.

❖ Key Highlights

- He said that the concept of ADR, through **Lok Adalats, Gram Nyayalayas, mediation and arbitration centers**, has the **potential to transform the legal landscape of India**.
- He also spoke on '**FASTER digital platform** which was recently launched by the Supreme Court. It was launched for:
 - Fast and secured delivery of urgent court orders in encrypted electronic format to the stakeholders.
 - Live streaming of court proceedings.

❖ Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Mechanisms

- **About:**
 - (ADR) refers to **any means of settling disputes outside of the Court Room**.
 - It includes a variety of processes that help parties to resolve disputes without a trial.
- **Significance:**
 - It is **non adversarial**, i.e. **working together cooperatively** to reach the best resolution for everyone.

- ADR can be **instrumental in reducing the burden of litigation on courts**, while delivering a well-rounded and satisfying experience for the parties involved.
- It provides the opportunity to "expand the pie" through **creative, collaborative bargaining**, and fulfill the interests driving their demands.

❖ Types of ADR

- **Arbitration:**
 - The **dispute is submitted to an arbitral tribunal** which makes a decision on the dispute that is **mostly binding on the parties**.
 - **Less formal than a trial**, and rules of evidence are often relaxed.
 - Generally, there is **no right to appeal**.
 - **Very little scope for judicial intervention** in the arbitration process.

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- **Conciliation:**
 - A **non-binding procedure** in which an impartial **third party, the conciliator, assists the parties** to a dispute in reaching a mutually satisfactory agreed settlement of the dispute.
 - It is a **less formal form of arbitration.**
 - **Parties are free to accept or reject** the recommendations of the conciliator.
 - If accepted then it **shall be final and binding** on both.
- **Mediation:** An impartial person called a "**Mediator**" **helps the parties** try to reach a mutually acceptable resolution of the dispute.
- **Negotiation:** A **non-binding procedure** in which discussions between the parties are **initiated without the intervention of any third party** with the object of arriving at a negotiated settlement to the dispute. **Most common method** of Alternative Dispute Resolution.

News in Between the Lines

Eklavya Schools



❖ Context

- The Centre has recently mandated tribal schools, also known as, **Eklavya Model Residential Schools**, to switch from regional state school boards to the CBSE.

❖ Key Highlights

- The idea is to help them to **adhere to common norms and academic standards.** As a result, most eklavya schools also have to change their medium of instruction as **CBSE allows its affiliated schools to use only Hindi or English** as medium of instruction. Centre had set up an autonomous body, **National Educational Society for Tribal Students (NESTS)** in 2019, to facilitate more centralised system of administration for the Eklavya schools.

❖ About the Schools

- There are **375** eklavya schools in the country.
- EMRS started in the year **1997-98** to impart quality education to **ST children**, catering to students from **Class VI to XII**, in remote areas.
- Eklavya schools are funded by the **Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs.**
- They are, however, **administered by state governments** and are **affiliated to the state school boards**, with regional language as medium of instruction.
- It had been decided by the Centre that by the year 2022, every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons, will have an EMRS.

Border Tourism Project



❖ Context

- **Nadabet Indo-Pak Border Darshan Project** has recently been inaugurated in Banaskantha in Gujarat.

❖ Key Highlights

- The project has been started **jointly by Gujarat state government and BSF.**
- The **Rs 125 crore tourism project** aims to offer citizens an opportunity to **see first hand the lifestyle of BSF personnel** deployed at the Indo-Pak border to protect the country. The people would get to observe their living conditions, their duties and patriotism.
- The project has several attractions, including the '**Beating Retreat**' ceremony, on the lines of the exercise held on the Wagah-Attari border in Punjab.
- The project is estimated to give **employment to 5 lakh youths in ten years.**
- The tourists can also engage in a number of **sports & recreational activities.**

Microplastic and Deformities of Fish



❖ Context

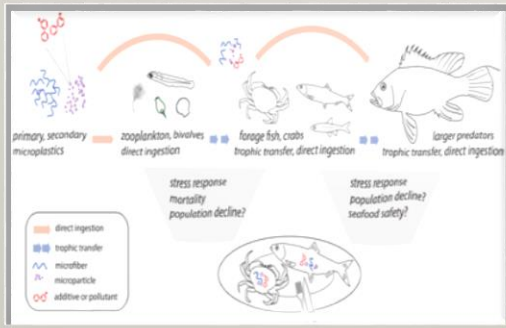
- A new **study** by the **Indian Institute of Science (IISc)** has revealed that pollutants like microplastics may be causing growth defects in fish, including skeletal deformities.

❖ Key Highlights

- Microplastics are **minute pieces of plastic often invisible to the naked eye.**
- Using a technique called **Raman spectroscopy**, researchers **detected microplastics & toxic chemicals containing the cyclohexyl functional group**

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- Chemicals containing the **cyclohexyl group**, such as cyclohexyl isocyanate, are commonly used in **agriculture and the pharmaceutical industry**.
- The embryos of the well-known model organism, zebrafish, when exposed to water samples, experienced **skeletal deformities, DNA damage, early cell death, heart damage, and increased mortality**.
- In these cells of fish that developed abnormally, the researchers also found unstable molecules called **ROS (Reactive Oxygen Species)** caused by decrease in Dissolved Oxygen in the water due to microplastics and cyclohexyl group chemicals.

Concessional Tax Rate Regime



❖ Context

- Only two out of every five new domestic manufacturing companies incorporated in 2019-20 (April-March) opted for the concessional tax rate.

❖ Key Highlights

- These companies, numbering 1,244 in 2019-20, cumulatively accounted for just Rs 35.13 crore in total income. However, 62% of the total income reported by all corporates for 2019-20, was reported under concessional tax regime.
- The regime for corporates was **introduced by the Centre in Sep-2019** when at the same time, normal **corporate tax rate was also slashed from 30% to 22%**.
- Under the new regime, a **tax rate of 15 %** was applicable under **Section 115BAB of IT Act for newly incorporated domestic companies**, which make **fresh investment by March 31, 2023**, for manufacturing, production, research or distribution of such articles or things manufactured.
- This was **extended by one year** in this year's Budget to **March 31, 2024**.
- Companies choosing the concessional tax rate means **companies cannot avail exemptions, deductions or incentives** provided under the old tax regime.
- A similar regime has also been introduced by the government for personal income tax effective 2020-21.

State Energy and Climate Index



❖ Context

- Recently, NITI Aayog released its first **State Energy & Climate Index (SECI)**.

❖ Key Highlights

- **Performers Among Larger States:**
 - It placed **Gujarat, Kerala and Punjab** among the top performing states.
 - **Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh** have been placed at the bottom of the list.
- **Performers Among Smaller States:**
 - **Goa** topped the index, followed by **Tripura and Manipur**.
 - **Meghalaya, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh** were the bottom three.
- **Performers among UTs:**
 - **Chandigarh, Delhi and Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli** emerged as the top three performers. **Andaman & Nicobar, J&K and Lakshadweep** were the bottom three performers.
- This index aims to rank states and union territories on **six parameters:**
 - Discoms performance.
 - Access affordability and reliability of energy.
 - Clean energy initiatives.
 - Energy efficiency.
 - Environmental sustainability.
 - New initiatives.
- These **parameters include a total of 27 indicators**.
- **Significance:** State Energy and Climate Index **can be used by the States and Union Territories to:**
 - Benchmark their performance against their peers.
 - Efficiently manage their energy resources and Analyze the potential challenges for developing better policy mechanisms.

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Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM)- Helina



❖ Context

- Recently, India successfully flight-tested Helina, an anti-tank guided missile (ATGM), in Pokhran.

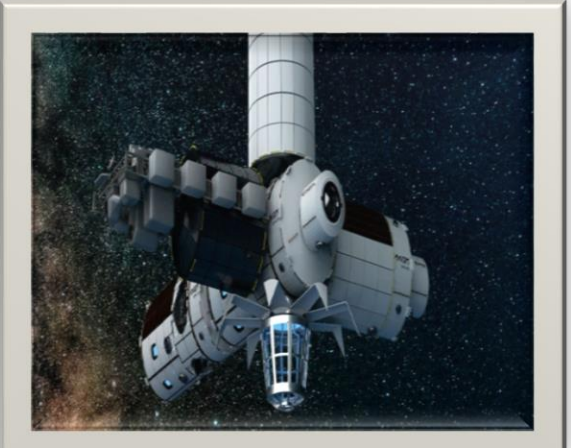
❖ Key Highlights

- The flight test was conducted by teams from DRDO, the Army and the Air Force.
- The test was part of user validation trials of the third generation 'fire and forget' class missiles developed by DRDO.

❖ About Helina

- The Helina is a **third generation fire and forget class** anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system mounted on the **Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH)**.
- **Developed by:**
 - Defense Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad under the **Missiles and Strategic Systems (MSS)** cluster of the DRDO.
- **Range:** 500 meter to 7 Km.
- **Features:**
 - Helina missile system has **all-weather, day and night capability**.
 - It can **defeat battle tanks** with conventional armor as well as explosive reactive armor.
 - It has been **developed for integration with choppers** in both the Army and the Air Force.
 - It can **engage targets both in direct hit mode as well as top attack mode**.
 - The missile is guided by an **Infrared Imaging Seeker (IIR)**.
 - Helina is being inducted into the Indian Army, its variant, called **Dhruvastra**, is being inducted into the Air Force.

Axiom Mission 1



❖ Context

- A **SpaceX capsule** carrying three paying customers and a former NASA astronaut has arrived at the International Space Station, **finishing the first leg of this first-of-its-kind mission** that will last about 10 days.

❖ Key Highlights

- It is **planned by NASA** to **expand the ISS for commercial use** as part of what's being called the **low-Earth orbit economy**.
- The trip was **brokered by the Houston, Texas-based startup Axiom Space**, which seeks to book rocket rides, provide all the necessary training, and coordinate flights to the ISS.
- Earlier, **Russia had sold seats on its Soyuz spacecraft** for various wealthy thrill seekers in years past.
- This is the first mission that **includes a crew entirely composed of private citizens** with no active members of a government astronaut corps.

Palm Sunday



❖ Context

- Recently, **believers across Kerala** celebrated Palm Sunday, marking the beginning of the holy week ahead of Easter Sunday.

❖ Key Highlights

- Palm Sunday is a **Christian moveable feast** that falls on the **Sunday before Easter**.
- The feast commemorates **Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem**, an event mentioned in each of the four canonical Gospels.
- Palm Sunday **marks the first day of Holy Week**.
- For adherents of mainstream Christianity, it is the **last week of the Christian solemn season of Lent** that precedes the arrival of Eastertide.

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