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Knowledge Sharing Session on Millets

Context: KAMP, in collaboration with CSIR-NIScPR, organized a knowledge-sharing event for students as a way to honor the International Year of Millets.

- A special event was organized to celebrate India's successful proposal designating 2023 as the International Year of Millets.
- The session's goal was to educate students on the agricultural, nutritional, and sustainable importance of millets.
- Over 500 students from grades 5 to 12 from across India participated in the workshop.
- The workshop aimed to expand students' knowledge and encourage the adoption of millets in the food and agriculture landscape.

➤ Millets

- Millet is a broad term used to describe various small-seeded annual grasses cultivated as grain crops, particularly in regions with dry and marginal lands found in temperate, subtropical, and tropical areas.
- Some common millets available in India include **Ragi** (Finger millet), **Jowar** (Sorghum), **Sama** (Little millet), **Bajra** (Pearl millet), and **Variga** (Proso millet).
- The **earliest evidence** of these grains dates back to the **Indus civilization**, marking them as among the first plants domesticated for human consumption.
- Millet cultivation is widespread, spanning **approximately 131 countries**, and it serves as a **traditional staple for approximately 600 million** people across Asia and Africa.
- **India** holds the distinction of being the world's largest millet producer, contributing to **20% of global production and a staggering 80% of production in Asia**.
- On a global scale, the **primary millet-producing countries** include **India, Nigeria, and China**, collectively responsible for over 55% of the world's millet production.

➤ Millet Production in India

- India is the world's largest millet producer.
- **India's Pearl Millet (Bajra) and Sorghum (Jowar) varieties accounted for approximately 19% of global millet production.**
- **Pearl Millet** production in India **contributed 58%**, while Sorghum contributed 8.09% to the world's millet production.
- The **leading millet-producing states** in India include **Rajasthan, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttarakhand**.
- These ten states collectively accounted for around 98% of millet production in India during 2020-21.
- Rajasthan, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Gujarat alone represented over 83% of the total millet production.
- **Rajasthan was the largest contributor, accounting for 28.61%** of India's total millet production.
- India cultivates various millet varieties, including Pearl Millets, Sorghum, Finger Millet, Foxtail, Kodo, Barnyard, Proso, Little Millet, and Pseudo Millets like Buckwheat and Amaranths.
- **Pearl Millet (Bajra), Sorghum (Jowar), and Finger Millet (Ragi) are the most significant contributors to India's overall millet production.**

- The **CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Policy Research (CSIR-NIScPR)** is a laboratory that operates under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), a body within the Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India. CSIR-NIScPR specializes in the areas of science communication and research related to Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI), with a particular emphasis on **evidence-based policy research and studies**.



Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhuyday Yojana

Context: The scheme found a mention on PIB Website.

- Pradhan Mantri Anusuchit Jaati Abhuyday Yojana (PM-AJAY) is a **consolidated scheme that combines three centrally sponsored schemes:** Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (**PMAGY**), Special Central Assistance to Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (**SCA to SCSP**), and Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana (**BJRCY**). It has been in **operation since 2021-22**.
- The primary goal of PM-AJAY is to **alleviate poverty within Scheduled Caste (SC) communities** by creating additional employment opportunities through skill development, income-generating initiatives, and other measures. It also aims to enhance socio-economic development indicators by ensuring essential infrastructure and services in SC-dominant villages.
- PM-AJAY consists of **three key components:**
 - **Development of SC-dominant villages** into model villages (Adarsh Gram).

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- **Grants-in-aid for district and state-level projects aimed at improving the socio-economic conditions of SCs.** This includes infrastructure development in SC-dominant villages, construction of hostels and residential schools, comprehensive livelihood projects (with components like skill development and financial assistance for assets), and more.
 - **Construction of hostels in top-ranked higher educational institutions** and schools that receive funding from the government.
- The objectives of the Adarsh Gram component include providing adequate infrastructure and improving socio-economic indicators, such as education, maternal and infant health, and nutrition, for SC-dominant villages.
- Grants-in-aid for District/State-level Projects for Socio-Economic Betterment of SCs aims to support comprehensive livelihood projects, skill development, asset creation, infrastructure development, and other initiatives to promote the socio-economic development of SCs.
- Special provisions include dedicating funds for income-generating schemes for SC women, allocating a portion of funds for infrastructure development, and promoting SC women cooperatives involved in consumer goods and services production and marketing.
- Notable achievements in the current financial year 2022-23 include the declaration of 1,260 villages as model villages (Adarsh Gram), the sanctioning of nine new hostels under the hostel component, and the approval of perspective plans for seven states under the grant-in-aid component.
- **Who are Scheduled Castes?**
- Scheduled Castes (SC) are **specific castes or racial groups** in the country.
 - They experience **pronounced social, educational, and economic disadvantages.**
 - These disadvantages arise from historical practices like **untouchability.**
 - The classification of these communities as Scheduled Castes is based on the provisions in **Article 341, Clause 1** of the Constitution.

Constitutional Provisions for SCs in India

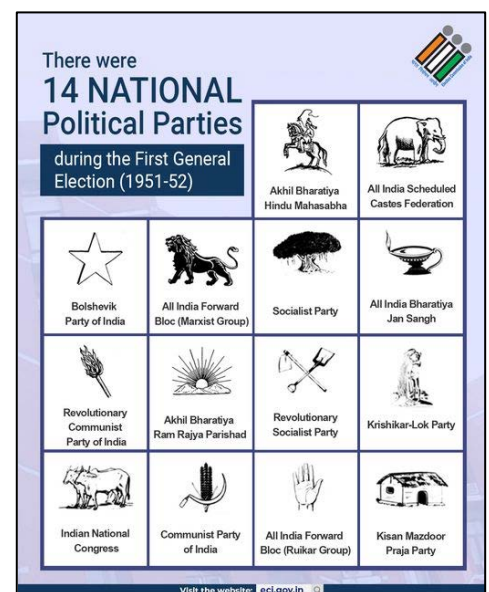
- **Article 15(4):** Special provisions for SC advancement.
- **Article 16(4A):** Reservation in promotions for underrepresented SCs/STs in government jobs.
- **Article 17:** Abolishes untouchability and prohibits its practice.
- **Article 46:** Directs the State to promote educational and economic interests of SCs.
- **Article 335:** Considers SC/ST claims in appointments, maintaining administrative efficiency.
- **Article 330 and Article 332:** Reserves seats for SCs/STs in Parliament and state legislative assemblies.
- **Article 243D(4) and Article 243T(4):** Mandate reservation of seats for SCs in Panchayats and Municipalities, respectively.

Allotment of Symbols to political Parties

Context: The Supreme Court rejected a petition from the ruling Bharat Rashtra Samiti (BRS) party in Telangana, challenging the allocation of election symbols to two other parties.

➤ Who allots symbols in India?

- The **Election Commission of India (ECI)** is responsible for symbol allotment, operating under **The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968**, which aims to regulate symbol allocation for elections in Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies and recognize political parties.
- Election symbols can be **categorized as "reserved" for exclusive use by recognized political parties** that meet specific electoral criteria or "free" for general use.
- **Unrecognized registered parties have the option to choose from non-exclusive**, free symbols, typically due to being newly registered or not meeting the vote percentage requirements for state party status.
- Recognized national and state parties are granted exclusive symbols based on their status.
- For example, in the 1993 Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav selected the bicycle symbol, representing farmers, the poor, laborers, and the middle class.
- The **Election Commission (EC) publishes lists that identify parties and their symbols.**
- These lists are made public through notifications in the Gazette of India.
- As per this year's notifications, there are a total of **six national parties.**
- Additionally, there are **26 state parties** listed in these notifications.
- The notifications also reveal the presence of **2,597 registered unrecognised parties.**



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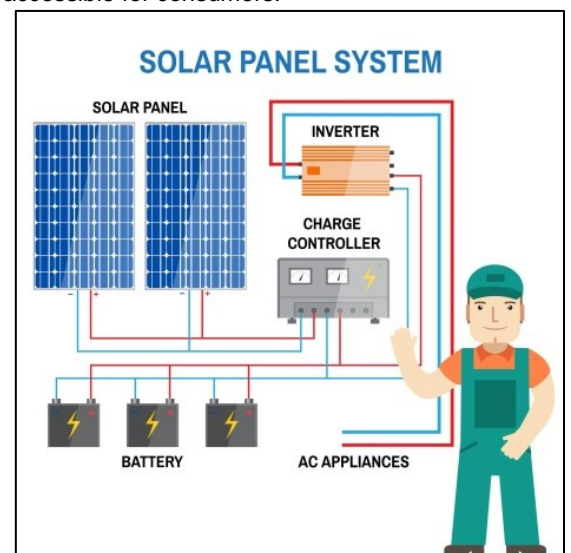
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- **How did the present election symbols come into being?**
 - The Election Commission of India (ECI) possesses records indicating that **late MS Sethi**, who retired from the ECI in September 1992, was responsible for sketching symbols.
 - **MS Sethi was the final draughtsman employed by the ECI for this purpose.**
 - In the past, Sethi and a team of ECI officials collaborated to brainstorm symbols that the common man could easily relate to. Many well-known political party symbols, like **bicycles, elephants, and brooms, were conceived during these sessions**, as per ECI records.
 - Some less common objects were also suggested by this group, including a pair of glasses, a nail cutter, and even a necktie, which gained popularity among the English-speaking crowd post-Independence.
 - In the **late 1990s**, the **ECI compiled a list of 100 sketches, which became the source of "free" symbols.**
 - As of **January 2023**, this list has expanded to include modern objects like a **bowl of noodles and a mobile charger**, among others.
- **Can political parties give preferences?**
 - The **1968 order** mandates the EC to regulate symbol allocation for political parties during parliamentary and assembly elections.
 - **Unregistered parties must submit ten preferred symbols** from the list of free symbols provided by the EC.
 - Parties can **propose three new symbols for allotment**, but these must not resemble existing symbols or have religious or communal associations.
 - **In case of a recognized political party split, the EC decides on symbol allocation.**
 - Recent examples include the **Shiv Sena factions** retaining their bow and arrow symbol and being assigned a flaming torch, with other symbol choices rejected due to religious or other connotations.

Solar Panel Standards & Labelling Programme

Context: The government has introduced a two-year voluntary program for star rating solar panels, aiming to assess quality and energy efficiency.

- The government has introduced a **voluntary two-year program** for star rating solar panels, effective from **January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2025.**
- The initiative **simplifies the process of choosing and purchasing solar photovoltaic modules** (solar panels).
- The program introduces a star labeling scheme prepared by the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE).**
- During the two-year period, there will be **no labelling fee**, making it more accessible for consumers.
- The scheme aims to **establish performance standards** for solar panels, providing valuable information on cost-effectiveness and energy savings.
- It aligns with the government's mission to increase renewable energy and reduce emission intensity by 45% by 2030.
- The program empowers consumers to choose efficient solar panels, eliminating reliance on vendors' claims.
- It aims to **reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 30 million tonnes annually by 2030**, contributing to environmental sustainability.
- The program is voluntary for the first two years but **may become compulsory afterward** to serve public interest.
- The government aims to add another 200 GW of solar panels between now and 2030, addressing climate change and reducing CO2 emissions.
- Solar panel efficiency is expected to increase by 2%, resulting in higher electricity generation and reduced CO2 emissions.
- The impact of star labeling includes increased electricity generation and energy efficiency.
- The program is part of the Standards & Labelling initiative, with mandatory and voluntary regimes for various appliances.
- **Star Rating**
 - Star ratings, provided in the form of labels, are used to inform consumers about the **energy efficiency** of various appliances.
 - These ratings are typically given on a **scale of 1 to 5**, with a higher rating indicating greater energy efficiency.
 - **Manufacturers are legally required to display these labels** under the Standards and Labelling Program introduced in 2006.
 - The primary purpose of these star ratings is to educate consumers about the energy efficiency of products and encourage manufacturers to produce more energy-efficient items.
 - The **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)** sets the standards and norms that must be followed when rating appliances.
 - While some appliances are required to have an energy rating label, it is optional for others.



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- Appliances with the **lowest energy consumption receive the highest star ratings**, while those with the highest energy consumption receive the lowest ratings.
- **Two variants of these labels exist: big labels and small labels.**
 - Big labels are used for appliances with constant usage and higher electricity consumption, providing additional information like yearly energy consumption, brand name, and product category.
 - √ Products with big labels include refrigerators, air-conditioners, geysers, and washing machines.
 - Small labels are employed for appliances with lower energy consumption, offering a visual representation of energy efficiency through star ratings.
 - √ Products with small labels include ceiling fans, tube lights, computers/laptops, and televisions.

NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

COTP Film Rules



Recently the central government has extended the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (COTP) Act rules to OTT (over-the-top) platforms.

About COTP (Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products) Film Rules:

- COTP Film Rules regulate and **prohibit the advertising of tobacco products**, striving to reduce their promotion and consumption.
- They also control the **trade, commerce, production**, supply and distribution of cigarettes and other tobacco items.

About OTT (Over-the-Top) Platforms:

- The OTT rules of **2023** became operational on **September 1, 2023**.
- OTT (Over-the-Top) platforms are **audio and video streaming** services.
- It hosts a wide range of content, including short movies, feature films, documentaries, web series and television shows.
- These rules require OTT platforms like **Netflix, Amazon Prime Video** and others to display **anti-tobacco health spots**, prominent **warnings** and **audio-visual disclaimers** on the effects of tobacco use.

India Meteorological Department



Recently, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) announced that coastal Odisha can expect light to moderate rainfall from October 23 to 25 due to the impact of a cyclonic storm.

About India Meteorological Department:

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) was established in **1875**.
- It serves as the **National Meteorological Service** of India and is the primary government agency responsible for meteorology and related subjects.
- The **Director General of Meteorology** heads the India Meteorological Department.

Regional Centers:

- IMD operates through **six Regional Meteorological Centers**, each led by a Deputy Director General.
- These centers are located in **Mumbai, Chennai, New Delhi, Calcutta, Nagpur** and **Guwahati**.
- **Headquarters:** IMD's headquarters is situated in **New Delhi**.
- **Ministry:** The IMD currently operates under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council

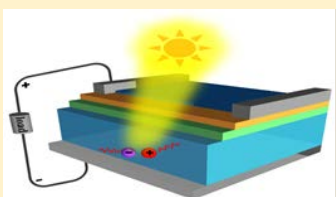


Recently, the Bihar government has taken action in response to the underperformance of the state's colleges in the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) grading process.

About:

- NAAC is an **autonomous body** operating under the University Grants Commission (UGC).
- It assesses and accredits **Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)** by assigning gradings as part of the accreditation process.
- Through a rigorous process, NAAC evaluates HEIs based on standards of quality in areas such as curriculum, faculty, infrastructure, research, and more.
- It provides ratings ranging from **A++ to C**. Institutions graded D are not accredited.

Optoelectronics



Recently, a new Laboratory of Advance Synthesis and Characterisation (LASC) at Gujarat is developing LASC probe stations for universities in India and abroad for investigation of opto-electronic properties.

About Optoelectronics:


- Optoelectronics involves the study and application of devices that **emit or detect light** and is a sub-discipline of **photonics**, which encompasses the physical science of light.
- Optoelectronics is a rapidly growing field that focuses on utilizing electronic devices for **generating, detecting and controlling light**.
- It primarily relies on semiconductor materials with suitable **bandgap energies** for absorbing near-infrared and visible light and sufficient electrical conductivity.

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	<p>Examples of Devices: Optoelectronic devices include telecommunications lasers, optical fibers, blue lasers, LED traffic lights, photodiodes and solar cells.</p> <p>Applications: These devices are used in different sectors, including military services, access control systems, telecommunications, medical equipment, etc.</p>
<p>Place in News</p> <p>Serbia</p>	<p>Recently, EU and U.S. envoys have stressed that Kosovo and Serbia must restart dialogue to de-escalate escalating tensions between the two nations.</p> <p>Serbia (Capital: Belgrade)</p> <p>Location:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serbia is a landlocked country situated in Southeast Europe in the central and western part of the Balkan Peninsula. <p>Political Boundaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serbia shares borders with several countries, including Hungary to the north, Romania to the northeast, Bulgaria to the southeast, North Macedonia to the south, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to the west and Montenegro to the southwest. <p>Geographical Features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major Rivers: The Danube and Sava rivers flow through Serbia. Mountains: Serbia features diverse topography, with mountainous areas in the south and east, including the Carpathian and Rhodope Mountain systems. Includes the Dinaric Alps along the western margins and the Carpathian and Rhodope Mountains in the east. Lakes: Serbia is home to several lakes, with the largest being Lake Palic in the north. Highest Peak: Midžor (2170 m) is the highest peak in the Serbian part of the Stara Planina Mountain range and the second highest peak in Serbia. 

POINTS TO PONDER

- ❖ What is the name of the programme launched to enhance connections among young individuals from diverse States of India? - **Yuva Sangam**
- ❖ Tropical Deep-sea Neutrino Telescope (Trident), which was seen in the news, is associated with which country? - **China**
- ❖ Which comet is also referred to as the 'Orionid meteor shower'? - **Halley's Comet**
- ❖ Which Asian country has recently eradicated lymphatic filariasis (LF)? - **Laos**
- ❖ 'Singing Plasma Waves' have been identified for the first time around which planet recently? - **Mercury**

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