

30 September, 2023

## Sankalp Saptah

**Context:** Recently, the Prime Minister is set to inaugurate 'Sankalp Saptah,' a week-long initiative at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi.

### About 'Sankalp Saptah':

- Sankalp Saptah is closely linked to the effective implementation of the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP). D:\Daily Current Affairs - 2023\30-9-2023\Today News
- **ABP Implementation:** It is designed to facilitate the implementation of the Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP).
- **Culmination of Brainstorming Sessions:** Chintan shivirs (brainstorming sessions) were conducted at village and block levels across India as a part of ABP preparation. Sankalp Saptah is the culmination of these sessions.
- **Scope:** Sankalp Saptah will be observed in all 500 aspirational blocks.
- **Development Themes:** Each day of Sankalp Saptah focuses on a specific development theme. The themes for the first six days include "Sampoorna Swasthya," "Suposhit Parivar," "Swachhta," "Krishi," "Shiksha," and "Samridhi Diwas."
- **Closing Celebration:** The last day of the week is dedicated to celebrating the work accomplished during the entire week, known as "Sankalp Saptah – Samavesh Samaroh."
- **Participants:** The inaugural program includes approximately 3,000 panchayat and block-level people's representatives and functionaries from across the country at Bharat Mandapam.



### About Aspirational Blocks Programme (ABP):

- **Launch Date:** It was launched on January 7, 2023, modeled after the Aspirational District Programme initiated in 2018, covering 112 districts across India.
- **Objective:** The primary aim of ABP is to enhance governance and improve the quality of life in 500 Aspirational Blocks spanning 329 districts across India.
- **Concentration in States:** Over half of these blocks are located in six states: Uttar Pradesh (68 blocks), Bihar (61), Madhya Pradesh (42), Jharkhand (34), Odisha (29), and West Bengal (29).
- **Approach:** It achieves its objectives by converging existing schemes, defining outcomes, and maintaining continuous monitoring, thereby enabling holistic development in areas requiring additional assistance.

## Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)

Recently, the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) has revealed that India is soon set to issue 1,00,000 patents annually, a significant increase from the previous 9,000 per year.

### About Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister:

- The EAC-PM is an independent advisory body established to provide economic counsel to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister.
- It was first constituted in September 2017, initially with a term of two years.



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- It advises the Prime Minister on economic and related issues, whether referred by the Prime Minister or taken up suo-motu.
- It addresses macroeconomic concerns and offers views to the Prime Minister.
- It undertakes additional tasks as requested by the Prime Minister.

#### Composition:

- EAC-PM is headed by a chairperson.
- It comprised of eminent economists as members.
- It is supported by a team of officials and administrators.
- The council's size and structure can change over time.

#### Administrative Nodal Agency:

- The NITI Aayog serves as the nodal agency for administrative, logistic, planning and budgeting purposes for the EAC-PM.

**Patents in India:** India is expected to have the capability to issue 1,00,000 patents annually.

#### What is a Patent?

- A patent grants exclusive rights for an invention, be it a product or process, providing a new technical solution or method.
- To obtain a patent, technical information about the invention must be disclosed publicly in a patent application.
- Patent owners have the sole right to prevent others from commercially using the patented invention without consent.
- Patents are territorial, offering protection only in the country or region where they are filed and granted.
- Protection typically lasts for 20 years from the application filing date.

## Social Audit in MGNREGA

**Context:** Recently, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) Scheme's social audit units are facing challenges and issues in various Indian states.

#### About Social Audit:

- Social audit is a process of reviewing official records to verify if reported expenditures align with actual on-ground spending.
- It assesses the social impact of government programs, promotes community participation, and ensures government accountability.
- It is different from financial audits, which focus on financial transactions and stability.

#### Section 17 of MGNREGA:

- It mandates social audit of all works executed under the MGNREGA.
- It empowers gram sabha to monitor work execution.
- Each state has independent social audit units.

#### Features of Social Audit:

- Social Audit emphasises on fact-finding, not fault-finding.
- It raises awareness about entitlements and processes.
- It fosters dialogue among stakeholders.
- It facilitates timely grievance redressal.
- It strengthens democratic institutions.

#### Benefits of Social Audit:

- It informs and educates citizens about their rights.
- It provides a platform for expressing needs and grievances.



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- It encourages citizen participation.
- It enhances transparency and government accountability.
- It bolsters decentralized governance.

**Issues with Social Audit Units:**

- **Malpractice and Recovery:** Social audit units flag malpractice, but recovery and punitive actions rest with state governments, often lacking effectiveness.
- **Training and Personnel:** Many units lack proper training and adequate staff.
- **Low Recovery Rates:** Recovery rates have been dismal, undermining the credibility of audits.
- **Poor Monitoring:** Some states consistently report "zero cases" and make "zero recoveries," indicating inadequate monitoring.

## NEWS IN BETWEEN THE LINES

### POCSO Act



Recently, the Law panel advised keeping the age of consent at 18 in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act) but suggested a more lenient approach for cases involving adolescents aged 16 to 18.

**About:**

- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act) is a crucial legal framework in India addressing child sexual abuse.
- It was enacted in 2012.
- It is administered by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD).
- It is designed to protect children under 18 from sexual assault, harassment, and pornography.
- It establishes Special Courts for trial of such offences and related matters.
- It covers various forms of sexual abuse, including penetrative and non-penetrative assault, sexual harassment, and pornography.

**Amendment to the Act (2019):**

- It enhanced punishments to deter abusers and protect childhood.
- It introduced the death penalty for aggravated penetrative sexual assault of a child.
- It imposes fines and imprisonment up to 20 years to combat child pornography.

### Noor-3 Satellite



**Origin:** Noor-3 is an imaging satellite developed by Iran.

**Purpose:** It possesses potential spying capabilities, enhancing Iran's space capabilities.

**Orbital Position:** Noor-3 is placed in an orbit located 450 kilometers (280 miles) above the Earth's surface.

**Launch Vehicle:** The satellite was launched using the three-stage Qased (messenger) carrier rocket.

**Predecessors:**

- Two previous satellites, Noor-1 and Noor-2, were launched in April 2020 and March 2022, respectively.
- Noor-1 re-entered Earth's atmosphere in April 2022, while Noor-2 remains operational.

**Iran's Space Program:**

- Iran's space program includes both regular armed forces and the Revolutionary Guard, with the latter having its own space program.
- The first satellite, Noor-1, was launched into space by Iran in April 2020.

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## Kamlang Tiger Reserve



### About Kamlang Tiger Reserve:

- Kamlang Tiger Reserve is situated in the south-eastern part of the Lohit District of Arunachal Pradesh, India.
- Kamlang Tiger Reserve is India's 50th Tiger Reserve, contributing to tiger conservation and the preservation of Eastern Himalayan ecosystems.
- It is surrounded by tribal communities like Mishmi, Digaro Mishmi, and Miju Mishmi with deep ties to the region.

### History:

- **Originally established as Kamlang Wildlife Sanctuary in 1989.**
- **Upgraded to Kamlang Tiger Reserve in 2016 under India's Project Tiger initiative.**

**Flora:** Diverse flora including tropical evergreen forests, subtropical broadleaf forests, alpine vegetation, bamboo groves and medicinal plants.

**Fauna:** Rich wildlife diversity including Royal Bengal Tiger, Common Leopard, Asian Elephant, and critically endangered White-bellied Heron.

## Pink Bollworm



"Recently, cotton fields in regions stretching from Rajasthan to Haryana have been facing a significant challenge posed by the Pink Bollworm."

### Pink Bollworm (*Pectinophora Gossypiella*):

- Pink Bollworm is one of the most destructive pests of cotton, causing significant damage to cotton crops.
- Originally native to India, it is now found in nearly all cotton-growing countries worldwide.

### Physical Description:

- Adults are small moths, measuring about 3/8 inch in length.
- They have dark brown coloring with distinctive markings on their forewings.
- The larval stage is the most destructive and recognizable phase.

### Distinctive Larvae:

- Larvae of Pink Bollworm are identifiable by their pink bands.
- They can grow up to 1/2 inch in length just before pupation.

### Ecological Impact:

- Pink Bollworms pose a significant ecological threat, particularly to cotton crops.
- Adult moths have a short lifespan of approximately 2 weeks but can lay over 200 eggs during this period.

## Armageddon Reedtail



Recently a new damselfly species found in the Western Ghats is named "Armageddon Reedtail". The discovery was made by researchers from MIT-World Peace University in Pune, India.

### Armageddon Reedtail (*Protosticta Armageddonia*):

- The Armageddon reedtail damselfly has a dark brown to black body with striking greenish-blue eyes.
- Half of its eight abdominal segments are adorned with delicate pale blue markings.
- It exclusively inhabits primary montane streams under dense canopy cover.

**Threats:** It faces extinction due to habitat loss and environmental changes.

## e-Cabinet



### What is e-Cabinet?

- e-Cabinet is a software portal for State Governments to conduct Cabinet meetings electronically, reducing paper use and streamlining processes.
- It has developed by the National Information Centre (NIC), under the Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY).

### Adoption in Tripura:

- Tripura joins Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh as the fourth state (second in the Northeast) to implement the e-Cabinet system.


### Features:

- It maximizes technology usage in meetings.
- It automates workflow for pre, during, and post-meeting activities.

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	<p><b>Benefits/Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ It saves resources (paper, fuel, manpower).</li> <li>➤ It facilitates online data updates.</li> <li>➤ It supports quick retrieval of meeting outcomes.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Place in News</b> <b>Hadrian's Wall</b></p>	<p>Recently a world-famous Sycamore Gap tree, located near Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland, was cut down overnight.</p> <p><b>Geographical Location:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hadrian's Wall, also known as the Roman Wall, is located in northern England, running from Wallsend on the River Tyne in the east to Bowness-on-Solway in the west.</li> </ul> <p><b>Length:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The wall was approximately 73 miles (117.5 kilometers) long, stretching across the width of the island of Britain.</li> </ul> <p><b>Purpose:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hadrian's Wall was constructed as a defensive fortification by the Romans in AD 122 during the reign of Emperor Hadrian.</li> <li>➤ It marked the boundary between Roman Britannia and the unconquered territory of Caledonia (now Scotland).</li> </ul> <p><b>Cultural Significance:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Hadrian's Wall is considered a British cultural icon and one of the major ancient tourist attractions in Britain.</li> <li>➤ It was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987.</li> </ul> <p><b>Sycamore Gap Tree:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Sycamore Gap tree was about 300 years old and featured in the 1991 film "Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves," starring Kevin Costner.</li> <li>➤ It was considered a local treasure and part of England's identity, inspiring artists, writers and photographers.</li> </ul> 

## POINTS TO PONDER

1. Who has been recently elected as the Chairman of the Press Trust of India's Board of Directors? - K.N. Shanth Kumar
2. Who will be awarded by the 2023 SASTRA Ramanujan Prize? - Ruixiang Zhang
3. Which international organization collaborated recently with India on the FOWIND (Facilitating Offshore Wind Energy in India) project? - European Union
4. Which prestigious award did Dhaniram receive recently for creating the Toto language script and alphabet? - 'Padma Shri'
5. Which river is located on the western bank of Toto Para? - Torsa River

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