

1. Lokpal

Why in News?

- New logo and motto for Lokpal has been introduced recently.

About:

- A new motto, “Ma Gridhah Kasyasvidhanam (Do not be greedy for anyone’s wealth)”, was also adopted.
- The Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013 provides the establishment of Lokpal for the Union and Lokayukta for States.
- These institutions are statutory bodies without any constitutional status.
- They perform the function of an "ombudsman" and inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries and for related matters.
- Lokpal is a multi-member body that consists of one chairperson and a maximum of 8 members. Chairperson of the Lokpal should be either the former Chief Justice of India or the former Judge of Supreme Court or an eminent person with impeccable integrity and outstanding ability, having special knowledge and expertise of minimum 25 years in the matters relating to anti-corruption policy, public administration, vigilance, finance including insurance and banking, law and management.
- Out of the maximum eight members, half will be judicial members and minimum 50% of the Members will be from SC/ ST/ OBC/ Minorities and women.
- The judicial member of the Lokpal should be either a former Judge of the Supreme Court or a former Chief Justice of a High Court.
- The non-judicial member should be an eminent person with impeccable integrity and outstanding ability, having special knowledge and expertise of minimum 25 years in the matters relating to anti-corruption policy, public administration, vigilance, finance including insurance and banking, law and management. The term of office for Lokpal Chairman and Members is 5 years or till the age of 70 years.
- The members are appointed by the president on the recommendation of a Selection Committee. The selection committee is composed of the Prime Minister who is the Chairperson; Speaker of Lok Sabha, Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Chief Justice of India or a Judge nominated by him/her and One eminent jurist. For selecting the chairperson and the members, the selection committee constitutes a search panel of at least eight persons.

2. e-cigarettes

Why in News?

- The Lok Sabha recently took up a decision a bill that proposes a ban on e-cigarettes.

About:

- E-cigarettes are battery powered devices that work by heating a liquid into an aerosol that the user inhales and exhales.
- The e-cigarette liquid typically contains nicotine, propylene glycol, glycerine, flavourings, and other chemicals which makes product addictive.
- These products are not registered as nicotine replacement therapy products in India.
- E-cigarettes cause health hazards for youth, young adults, and pregnant women.
- A number of metals, including lead, chromium, and nickel, and chemicals like formaldehyde have been found in aerosols of some ENDS, with concentrations equal to or greater than traditional cigarettes, work as 'tumour promoters'.
- Traditional cigarette manufacturing companies are having parallel e-cigarette like device making industries. This growing hub in India is under-regulated.
- Lack of knowledge about negative effects of nicotine and easy accessibility of these products make the youth prone to addiction. Punjab, Karnataka, Kerala, Mizoram, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have already prohibited the use of e-cigarettes, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS). Thirty countries including Australia, Singapore and Sri Lanka have already brought in such bans.

3. Co2 Injection Technology

Context:

- State owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is planning to introduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) injection technology in its Gandhar oil field in Gujarat.

About:

- CO₂ injection technology is a proven concept in the West specially the US and Canada which increases oil extraction from ageing oil fields.
- Under it, CO₂ gas is injected with residual oil in the ageing field in which total oil production has been declining.
- It reduces its viscosity and makes it easier to displace oil from the rock pores.
- CO₂ gas also swells oil, thereby pushing it towards the producing well for extraction.

4. DEFCOM India 2019

Why in News?

- The Two-Day DEFCOM INDIA 2019 seminar commenced at New Delhi.

DEFCOM 2019:

- DEFCOM is India's international conference & exposition on military communication.
- It is the flagship event in the area of military communication.
- The event brings together major national and international IT and communication industry and the key stakeholders from the Indian Armed Forces.
- It is jointly being organized by Corps of Signals, Indian Army and Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM) /Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- DEFCOM provides an excellent opportunity for the industry to understand the requirements of the Armed Forces.
- The DEFCOM exhibition showcased cutting edge communication solutions from the industry and gave officers from the three services an opportunity to gain insights on technology and industry capabilities.

5. Automotive Mission Plan

- The Union Minister of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises provided information about the Automotive Mission Plan in the Rajya Sabha.

Automotive Mission Plan (AMP):

- The AMP is the collective vision of the Government of India and the Indian automotive industry on where the vehicles, auto-components, and tractor industries should reach over the next ten years in terms of size, contribution to India's development, global footprint, technological maturity, competitiveness, and institutional structure and capabilities.
- The AMP 2006 – 16 has been largely successful in its endeavor to lay down the roadmap for development of the industry, the Minister informed.
- India has attracted significant quantum of investments from global and local original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) as well as component manufacturers, exceeding the target of Rs. 1,57,500 crore.
- The industry has also achieved the target of incremental employment creation of 25 million jobs over the period.

- The AMP 2016 – 26 has also been finalised by the government and industry.
- AMP 2016 seeks to define the trajectory of evolution of the automotive ecosystem in India including the glide path of specific regulations and policies that govern research, design, technology, testing, manufacturing, import/export, sale, use, repair, and recycling of automotive vehicles, components and services.

Objectives of AMP 2016 – 26:

- To propel the Indian automotive industry to be the engine of the ‘Make in India’
- To make the Indian automotive industry a significant contributor to the ‘Skill India’ programme.
- To enhance universal mobility (safe and comfortable for every person keeping in mind environmental protection).
- To increase the net exports of the Indian automotive industry several-fold.
- To enable a comprehensive and stable policy dispensation.

6. National Milk Day

Why in News?

- The Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying addressed entrepreneurs, milk producer farmers, academia and media on the occasion of National Milk Day-2019.

India’s Milk Production:

- Milk production has increased significantly from 137.7 million tonnes in 2013-14 to 187.75 million tonnes in 2018-19, thereby indicating an increase by 36.35%.
- The per capita availability of milk increased from 307 grams in 2013-14 to 394 grams in 2018-19.
- The annual growth rate of milk production during the period 2009-14 was 4.2%, which has increased to 6.4% during 2014-19.
- Since the last 20 years, India continues to be the largest producer of milk in the world.
- About 70 million rural households are engaged in dairying in India with 80% of total cow population.

National Milk Day:

- 26th November is celebrated as the National Milk Day in India.
- It is the birth anniversary of Dr. Verghese Kurien, the father of the White Revolution in India.

- India was transformed from a milk-deficient country to a self-sufficient milk-producing country, chiefly due to his efforts and initiatives. He institutionalised a cooperative model of farming and dairying where the farmers were cooperative owners of the organisation while being led and managed by professionals. Kurien also pioneered the use of buffalo milk to produce skim milk powder which was considered impossible by dairy experts around the globe. In India, buffalo milk was available aplenty compared to cow milk. He successfully implemented ‘Operation Flood’ which led to India becoming the leading milk producer of the world surpassing the USA in 1998. India is a leading name worldwide in cooperative dairying because of Amul’s stupendous success.

7. Smart Accreditation

Why in News?

- The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) organised a one-day national workshop on accreditation of training centres on Skill Management & Accreditation of Training Centre (SMART) portal.

Highlights:

- Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) is one of the flagship schemes of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs that works towards alleviating urban poverty through strong community institutions, skill training, access to affordable credit for self-employment, support for street vendors and provision of shelters for the urban homeless.
- It was stressed in the workshop that from the next financial year, allocation of targets to training partners would be subject to their SMART accreditation.
- The states were advised to start the process of accreditation immediately, if not already done so. The workshop was aimed at providing handholding support to the states for streamlining the accreditation process on SMART and addressing any other specific query, especially in respect to Employment through Skill Training & Placement (EST&P) component of DAY-NULM.

What is SMART?

- Skill Management & Accreditation of Training Centre (SMART) provides a single-window IT application that focuses on accreditation, grading, affiliation and continuous monitoring of the training centres in the skill ecosystem.

- It intends to address the issues like quality benchmarks, fostering excellence in training centres, enabling trainees to make informed choices with regard to centres, etc.
- SMART aims at convergence of all stakeholders in the skill ecosystem in providing standardised infrastructure, accreditation and affiliation.
- SMART covers various central and state government schemes, private initiatives, CSR, etc. thus making it a scheme agnostic platform. The training provider can register on the SMART website and follow the prescribed process to get an accreditation. The centres will be graded on a rating scale of 1 star to 5 star depending on their scores.

8. Global Exhibition on Services 2019

Why in News?

- Global Exhibition on Services (GES) 2019 is being held in Bengaluru.

Highlights:

- In GES 2019, the Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC) is also looking to promote eSports. The eSports industry is expected to grow rapidly and in 2017 worldwide revenue generated in eSports market amounted to USD 655 million. The market is expected to generate close to USD 1.8 billion in revenue by 2022.
- SEPC is organizing Nations Cup (International eSports Championship) in association with Electronic Sports Federation of India (ESFI) during GES 2019.
- The Nations Cup will be one of the key highlights during GES and will open up multiple avenues for the services industry particularly in eSports, gaming and animation.
- An International Moot Court competition is also being organized during GES 2019 for young lawyers, who along with their seniors, will argue cases related to intellectual property rights.
- India is also aspiring to promote niche tourism like the Buddhist circuit, adventure and camping tourism. Uttar Pradesh is the partnering state mainly to promote the tourism sector and will have a separate state pavilion in GES 2019.

GES 2019:

- The GES is an exhibition every year to engage industry and governments across the world and to promote greater exchange of trade in services between India and the rest of the world.

- The first edition was held in 2015 in New Delhi and this is the fifth edition being held in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- The exhibition is emerging as a regular global platform for the promotion of services cooperation in the world.
- It plays an important role in increasing trade in services, enhancing strategic cooperation and strengthening multilateral relationships between stakeholders from India and overseas.
- As a dynamic player in the global services sector, India has the potential to build its own brand for services exports where it can be a dominant player.
- GES helps in this direction in the following ways:
 - ✓ Showcases India's prowess across services sectors before a global audience.
 - ✓ Positions India globally in more services sub-sectors.
 - ✓ Generates concrete business outcomes.
 - ✓ Creates employment through leveraging services exports.

9. National Institute of Design (Amendment) Bill

Why in News?

- Parliament has passed National Institute of Design (Amendment) Bill, it seeks to amend the existing National Institute of Design Act, 2014.

About:

- National Institute of Design Act, 2014- declared the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad as an institution of national importance.
- The new bill seeks to declare four other National Institutes of Design located at Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh, Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, Jorhat in Assam and Kurukshetra in Haryana as institutions of national importance.

Institutes of National Importance:

- 'Institute of National Importance' is an institute 'which serves as a pivotal player in developing highly skilled personnel within the specified region or state'
- These institutes of national importance are often supported by the government and provide high quality of education.
- It is different from the Institutes of Eminence Tag Announced Recently.

Institute of Eminence:

- Institutes of Eminence is a recognition scheme for higher education institutes in India, set by the University Grants Commission in 2017.
- It aims to empower the Higher Educational Institutions to achieve their place among the hundred top-rated Institution in the world over time.
- It also helps them become as a world class teaching and research institution.
- The Institution of Eminence are also expected to provide student amenities comparable with that of globally reputed institutions.
- They can hire highly qualified faculty, with freedom to hire from across the World.

10. Smog Tower

Why in News?

- The Supreme Court has asked the Centre to take a concrete decision on having smog towers in Delhi-NCR to combat pollution.

Air Pollution in Delhi

- The pollution in the NCR Region have become a public health emergency as pollutants in the air have spiked to extremely toxic levels. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), India is home to six of the top 10 polluted cities in the world with Delhi sitting on the top of the list.

The pollution is caused due to several factors:

- **Geographical factors** - North westerly winds bring high quantities of smoke from Punjab and Haryana to Delhi-NCR.
- **Local factors** - pollution produced by vehicular and industrial pollution. It got further spiked by bursting of crackers on Deepavali.
- **External Factors** - Stubble burning in states of Punjab and Haryana, CPCB held that stubble burning contribution to pollution has gone up to 45%, resulting in the high particulate matter concentration.

Smog Tower:

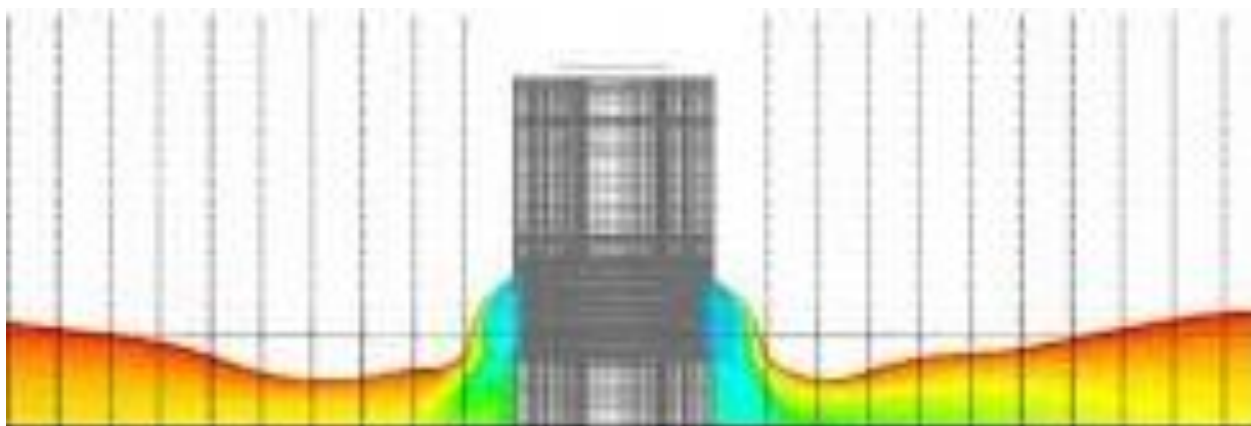
- Smog towers are structures that are designed as large-scale air purifiers to combat air pollution by reducing the particles causing pollution. The tower is said to reduce the airborne PM 2.5 and PM 10 particles and release clean air around the tower.

Advantages of the Smog Towers:

- It can be very useful in the areas where air pollution is very high.
- It can be a localized solution to combat air pollution
- The carbon which is absorbed by the tower can be used to make other products.

Limitations of Smog Towers

- The initial cost for building the infrastructure is high.
- The tower can reduce the smog only in a small area surrounding it.
- The cost of maintenance is also high.
- It is not a permanent and a sustainable solution.



GATEWAY