

1. Drosophila

Why in News?

- Pune is set to host the fifth edition of the Asia Pacific Drosophila Research Conference (APDRC5) is being organised in the country for the first time by the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER).

Drosophila:

- Drosophila is a genus of two-winged flies commonly known as fruit flies that are used in evolutionary and developmental studies.
- It is a genus of flies, belonging to the family Drosophilidae, whose members are often called “small fruit flies” or pomace flies, vinegar flies, or wine flies, a reference to the characteristic of many species to linger around overripe or rotting fruit.
- It is one of the most widely-used and preferred model organisms in biological research across the world for the last 100 years.
- Several discoveries in biology have been made using this. Its genome is entirely sequenced and there is enormous information available about its biochemistry, physiology and behaviour.

2. No Objection Certificate (NOC) web portal

Why in News?

- The Defence Minister launched the Ministry of Defence (MoD) No Objection Certificate (NOC) web portal for undertaking aerial survey with the final permission of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

Highlights:

- The portal will be used by various vendors engaged by State Governments/Public Sector Undertakings/Autonomous bodies in seeking an NOC from the MoD.
- The portal is hosted on the National Informatics Centre platform.
- Through this initiative, the Ministry will be able to considerably reduce the time usually taken in issuing NOC.
- Among other benefits, this initiative will help in speeding up developmental projects undertaken by various agencies.
- Further, this will also ensure expeditious disposal of applications for carrying out aerial survey, besides bringing in more transparency and accuracy.

- The DGCA has been requested to issue suitable notification to all concerned so that the applicants/vendors could submit their applications online on the newly developed web portal.
- To facilitate the applicants/vendors, an e-book has also been uploaded on the above web portal.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA):

- The DGCA is the governmental regulatory body for civil aviation under the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- Its vision is to promote safe and efficient air transportation through regulation and proactive safety oversight system.
- The body governs the safety aspects of civil aviation in the country.
- It is headed by the Director-General of Civil Aviation.
- Among other things, the DGCA is engaged in the registration of civil aircraft; licensing of pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers, air traffic controllers, etc.; certification of aerodromes; checking the proficiency of flight crew; granting air operator's certificates to Indian carriers; approving institutes engaged in flying training including simulator training, and any other related training; advising the government on matters pertaining to Air Transport.

3. Network for Scientific Co-operation for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (NetSCoFAN)

Why in News?

- Union Health Minister has launched NetSCoFAN, a network of research & academic institutions working in the area of food & nutrition.

NetSCoFAN:

- The NetSCoFAN would comprise of eight groups of institutions working in different areas viz. biological, chemical, nutrition & labelling, food of animal origin, food of plant origin, water & beverages, food testing, and safer & sustainable packaging.
- FSSAI has identified eight Nodal Institutions who would develop a 'Ready Reckoner' that will have inventory of all research work, experts and institutions and would carry out and facilitate research, survey and related activities.

- It would identify research gaps in respective areas and collect, collate and develop database on food safety issues for risk assessment activities.
- The need for identify research gaps in respective areas and collect, collate and develop database on food safety issues for risk assessment activities, will be addressed by NetSCoFAN. The NetSCoFAN directory would be covering detailed information of various heads/Directors and lead scientists of lead and associated Partnering Institutions.

4. DigiLocker

Why in News?

- Recently, the Delhi High Court has given its stand on a petition against the rules pertaining to the operation of DigiLocker.

About DigiLocker:

- It is a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) under 'Digital India' programme.
- This is government's effort to create an electronic version of documents, which can be easily verified and stored in printable format.
- It can be accessed by individuals, using their mobile number. The users can store their documents such as insurance, medical reports, PAN card, passport, marriage certificate, school certificate and other documents in the digital format.
- It can also store a Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) link of e-documents issued by Various Issuer Departments.

Some Important Initiatives under Digital India:

- **e-Hastakshar:** e-Sign service facilitates instant signing of documents online by citizens in a legally acceptable form.
- **GI Cloud (MeghRaj):** It is initiated to deliver ICT services over cloud to all the departments/Ministries at the Centre and States/UTs.
- **National Knowledge Network (NKN):** Its objective is to interconnect all institutions of higher learning and research with a high-speed data communication network to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaborative research.
- **Vikaspedia Project:** The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) has implemented Vikaspedia project for providing e-knowledge and using ICT-based applications for empowerment of poor (rural and urban).

- **Unified Mobile Application for New-Age Governance (UMANG):** It has been developed as a single mobile platform to deliver major Government services.
- **Electronic Transaction Aggregation and Analysis Layer (eTaal):** It acts as an electronic dashboard for providing a real time aggregated view of eservices being delivered across different States and levels of Government.
- **Jeevan Pramaan:** Using Jeevan Pramaan platform, a pensioner can now digitally provide proof of his existence to the authorities for continuity of pension every year instead of requiring to present himself physically or through a Life Certificate issued by specified authorities.
- **PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation):** It is a multipurpose and multi-modal platform that is aimed at addressing common man's grievances, and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.
- **DARPAN (Dashboard for Analytical Review of Projects across Nation):** It is an online tool that can be used to monitor and analyze the implementation of critical and high priority projects of the State.

5. Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

Context:

- A major conservation effort for saving the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) launched about four years ago is bringing a ray of Hope.

About Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

- Its Scientific Name is *Ardeotis nigriceps*.
- It is one of the heaviest flying birds.
- It is found mainly in the Indian subcontinent. It is the State bird of Rajasthan.
- It is Listed in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972, Appendix I of CITES, Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List. Barely 150 of these birds are estimated to be surviving now globally. Its population is confined mostly to Rajasthan and Gujarat. Small population also occur in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Its eggs collected from the Desert National Park in Jaisalmer where a conservation centre has been set up, have hatched, and the chicks are reported to be doing well. This is the largest number of hatchings reported within a six-month frame by any GIB conservation programme in the world.

6. GOCO (Government Owned Contractor Operated) Model

Context:

- Recently, the Indian Army began its work on the GOCO (Government Owned Contractor Operated) Model.

About GOCO:

- It helps in reducing government expenditure on armed forces and increase combat capability of the army, there are certain issues associated with the model.
- It was one of the recommendations of the Lt. Gen. DB Shekatkar (Retd.) committee to “enhance combat capability and re-balance defence expenditure.”
- Under it, the private companies need not make investments on land, machinery and other support systems. The missions are set by government and the private sectors are given full independence in implementing the missions using their best practices.
- The workshops play vital role as they ensure the Indian Army is operationally prepared all the time. The workshops are assigned the role of overhauling (testing and repairing) of weapons. They also manufacture spares.
- The advantage of the model is that the targets are achieved in lesser time frame. Also, it will boost competitiveness among the private entities paving way to Newer Technologies.

7. UAE'S New 5-Year Visa Scheme

Why in News?

- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has announced a five-year multiple-entry visa scheme for all nationalities, in a move that is geared towards promoting tourism in the country.

About:

- Prior to this, tourists could get single or multiple-entry visas for duration of 30 or 90 days.
- In the new five-year multiple-entry system, visa holders may be allowed to stay for six months at a stretch. The details of the scheme are yet to be announced.
- The country's Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship will be implementing the decision.
- Travellers from Africa, some South American countries, Arab states outside the Gulf, and European states from outside the European Union and the former Soviet Union previously needed visas.

