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Daily News Discussion (DND)

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1. Polity

1.1. Maths, physics not compulsory for engineering admissions

- In a major change, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has said that Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics (PCM) are no longer compulsory for students aspiring to pursue an engineering degree in certain courses

About

- It permitted higher education institutions to admit students who have not studied Physics and Mathematics in school to streams such as textile, agriculture engineering and biotechnology.
- However, the regulator noted that PCM remains mandatory for most engineering subjects like computer science.
- The above change is not binding on state governments and engineering schools.

Significance

- The flexibility in the eligibility criteria for admission to B.Tech and B.E. courses has been introduced to encourage students from diverse backgrounds to apply and reduce the pressure on students to study topics that are not crucial to their programme

Technical education

- 1943 -Constitution of the Technical Education Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE)
- 1944 -Preparation of the Sergeant Report
- 1945 -Formation of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)
- 1987-The All India Council For Technical Education Act 1987

The AICTE Act

- Constituted to provide for the establishment of an All India Council for Technical Education with a view to proper planning and co-ordinated development of a technical education system throughout the country.

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)

- Set up in November 1945 as a national-level apex advisory body to conduct a survey on the facilities available for technical education and to promote development in the country in a coordinated and integrated manner. And to ensure the same, as stipulated in the National Policy of Education (1986), AICTE was vested with:
 - ✓ Statutory authority for planning, formulation, and maintenance of norms & standards
 - ✓ Quality assurance through accreditation
 - ✓ Funding in priority areas, monitoring, and evaluation
 - ✓ Maintaining parity of certification & awards

✓ The management of technical education in the country

2. Economy

2.1. Mera Ration' mobile app

- The government of India has just launched the Mera Ration app that's going to help migrant workers.
- Mera Ration has been launched by the ministry of consumer affairs, food and public distribution and the app is a part of the government's One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) system.
- The system was initially started in four states in August 2019 and was then rolled out to 32 states and union territories by December last year
- Currently, 32 States and Union Territories are covered under One Nation One Ration Card (ONORC) and the remaining four States and UTs are expected to be integrated into the scheme in the next few months
- The only states not on the roster right now include Assam, Chhattisgarh, Delhi and West Bengal and these four are expected to be included over the next few months.
- Right now the system covers nearly 69 crore NFSA (National Food Security Act) beneficiaries which is about 86% of the NFSA population in India

About the Mera Ration app

- The Mera Ration mobile app is only on Android for now. All Indian citizens can register themselves on the app to get food grains at subsidised prices.
- It allows users to check what they are entitled to, locate nearby ration shops etc. It also supports biometric authentication.
- The app comes with Aadhar-based login and is available in both Hindi and English. Support for 14 regional languages is expected to come soon.
- You can download the app from the Google Play Store and once it's downloaded you need to register using your ration card details.

One nation one ration card

- Under the ONORC, the beneficiaries from one state can get their share of rations in other states where the ration card was originally issued.

Benefits

- It give the beneficiaries the opportunity to opt for the dealer of their choice.
- If any dealer misbehaves or misallocates, the beneficiary can switch to another FPS shop instantly
- SDG 2: Ending hunger by 2030.

2.2. Mines ministry issues framework for non-ferrous metal scrap recycling

- The Centre has issued a framework for scrap recycling of non-ferrous metals, including aluminium and copper, in a bid to cut down the scrap imports.

Reasons

- The non-ferrous metals industry is its heavy dependence on import of metal scrap and a major share of the demand is served by imports owing to the underdeveloped metal scrap collection, segregation and processing infrastructure in the domestic market.
- Aluminium is an energy intensive sector, the demand for fuel, i.e. coal, being the main energy source for aluminum extraction and processing, will also increase.
- Such dependence on non-renewable resources is not in line with global sustainable development goals and will lead to high carbon footprints.
- Meeting the growing demand by imports would lead to a trade imbalance.
- Thus, recycling becomes a good alternative as it requires 95 per cent less energy to recycle aluminium than to produce primary aluminium

Copper

- The projected demand for copper due to electric vehicles is expected to increase by 1.7 million tonnes by 2027
- The per capita copper consumption in India is expected to increase from the current level of 0.6 kg to 1 kg by 2025.
- If India's per capita copper consumption moves towards the world's per capita copper consumption of 2.7 kg, the country's copper market has the potential for significant growth
- As India is currently a net importer of copper, certain percentage of growing demand of copper can be met domestically through recycling

Guidelines

Central Metal Recycling Authority

- Facilitate recycling of metals
- Developing technical, safety and environmental norms and SOPs for handling and processing of scraps in consultation with MoEFCC, CPCB, etc

Government

- Work towards establishing standards for Quality of scrap used for recycling.
- MoEF&CC to streamline the regulatory requirements, eliminating multiple clearances wherever feasible, for the recycling units.

Manufacturer:

- Ensure that any Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) guidelines/Regulations be strictly adhered to.
- Designing products that are easier to recycle and reuse in an efficient and environmentally sound manner.

Guidelines

Public

- Responsibly dispose of scrap at designated scrap collection centers for their effective and environmentally sound processing.

Other

- An Online market platform/ exchange platform for recycled/secondary metal will be developed.
- Recyclers may explore the possibility of entering into collection contracts with industrial and commercial establishments
- Proposed to set up Urban Mines to collect and hold large quantities of similar materials.
- Mechanism for registration of segregators, dismantlers, recyclers, collection centers etc. will be developed to promote recycling to an organized sector

Difference between Ferrous & Non-Ferrous Metals

	<u>Ferrous Metals</u>	<u>Non-Ferrous Metals</u>
1.	Contains any amount of iron in its basic form.	Does not contains any amount of iron in its basic form.
2.	That's why they possesses magnetic property and makes them prone to corrosion.	They do not possess magnetic property, but resist corrosion much better than ferrous metals.
3.	They have a high tensile strength since they can carry a high amount of strain.	They have very low tensile strength.
4.	They have the ability for oxidation, known as corrosion. Oxidation of ferrous metals forms as a reddish-brown deposit on the surface & is oxide of iron.	They have typically lighter weights, higher melting points & are basically resistant to corrosion.
5.	Typically used when the magnetic attraction of iron may be a disadvantage. (used where strength is the primary focal point)	Ideal for electronic & electrical applications.
6.	Eg., pig iron, steel, cast iron, etc.	Eg., cobalt, aluminium, zinc, etc.

Past News

- National Steel Policy 2017: (Ferrous)
- Aims to develop a globally competitive steel industry by creating 300 Million TPA Steel production capacity by 2030

Reason

- The country's steel scrap imports were valued at Rs 24,500 crore in 2017-18, while the deficit was to the tune of 7 MT.
- The use of every tonne of scrap shall save 1.1 tonne of iron ore, 630 kg of coking coal and 55 kg of limestone. There shall be considerable saving in specific energy consumption also.

Steel Scrap Recycling Policy. (2019)-Min of Steel

- To reduce dependency on imports and decongest the Indian cities from End of Life Vehicles (ELVs)
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
- Hub and Spoke model-4 collection and dismantling centres will cater to 1 scrap processing centre.
- Principles of 6Rs: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover, Redesign and Remanufacture.
- In compliance to Hazardous & Other Wastes (Management & Trans boundary Movement) Rules, 2016 issued by the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

2.3.Rising retail loans help bank credit grow 6.6%; deposits surge 12%

- Bank credit rose by 6.63 per cent to Rs 107.75 lakh crore and deposits grew by 12.06 per cent to Rs 149.34 lakh crore in the fortnight ended February 26, as per Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data.
- According to analysts, the growth in bank credit is driven by an increase in retail loans.

Retail loans

- Retail loans in India fall under the larger umbrella of credit given by financial institutions to consumers for their financial needs such as buying a house, paying for college education, owning a vehicle and personal loans that are short-term in nature

Bank credit

- Bank credit consists of the total amount of combined funds that financial institutions advance to individuals or businesses

Types of Bank Credit

- Bank credit comes in two different forms—secured and unsecured.
 - ✓ Secured credit -is backed by a form of collateral
 - ✓ Unsecured credit-is not backed by collateral
- Bank Deposits
 - ✓ Bank deposits consist of money placed into banking institutions for safekeeping

Types of Bank Deposits

- Savings Account
 - ✓ The savings accounts can be opened by an individual or jointly by two people with an aim to save money.



✓ Bank pays you interest for opening this type of account with them.

- Current Account

✓ These accounts are not used for the purpose of savings.

✓ This type of bank account is mostly opened by businessmen. Associations, Institutions, Companies, Religious Institutions and other business-related works, the current account can be opened

✓ There is no interest that is paid on such accounts

- Recurring Deposit Account

✓ Wherein the account holder needs to deposit a fixed amount every month until it reaches the fixed maturity date.

✓ The interest rate varies depending upon the bank you choose to open an account with

✓ Premature withdrawal of the amount is permitted, provided a sum of amount is deducted as penalty

- Fixed Deposit Account

✓ It is a one time deposit and one time take away account. Under this type of account, the account holder needs to deposit a fixed amount of sum (as per their wish) for a fixed time period

✓ The amount deposited in FD account can only be withdrawn all at once and not in instalments

✓ Banks pay interest on the fixed deposit account

3. Environment

3.1.SC bats for Great Indian Bustard

- The Supreme Court on Monday intervened on behalf of the critically endangered Great Indian Bustards over the birds falling dead after colliding with power lines running through their dwindling natural habitats in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

About

- The court found further that an alternative mechanism – to install flight bird divertors – to guide the birds away from the power lines would be expensive.
- The divertors, with their recurring costs, would end costing more than installing and maintaining underground lines. But the court suggested treading the middle path

Middle path (Court)

- Wherever there is high voltage power lines, they can use flight bird divertors even if the recurring costs are high.
- Wherever there are overhead low voltage lines, these lines can be placed underground

Past News

- The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) along with the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) India has come up with a “firefly bird diverter” to protect the endangered Great Indian Bustards from power lines (2020)
- Bird flight diverter is a device with reflectors which moves with wind pressure. It is mounted on the conductor using a strong snap clamp. They are designed in a way such that they reflect light while rotating.
- Device glows in the dark, spins, reflects light to get birds’ attention from a greater distance, and guides them to veer away from the power lines.
- The Great Indian Bustard is one of the heaviest flying birds in the world.

✓ Scientific Name: *Ardeotis nigriceps*

✓ Habitat: Dry grasslands and scrublands on the Indian subcontinent; its largest populations are found in the Indian state of Rajasthan.

- Protection Status

✓ Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List

✓ In Appendix I of CITES,

✓ In Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

- Population

✓ The largest population of around 169 GIB occur in Thar landscape of Rajasthan (Desert National Park in Jaisalmer alongside Jodhpur)

- Around 15 GIB each, occurring in Gujarat (Lala-Naliya Sanctuary and its neighbourhood in Kachchh), Maharashtra (Bustard Sanctuary and its neighbourhood in Kurnool) and Karnataka (Bellary).
- Threat
 - ✓ The greater threat to the birds was from their diminishing habitat, flattened for agriculture

3.2. 'Bee fences' to ward off elephant attacks

- A pilot project launched in Kodagu entails installing bee boxes along the periphery of the forest and the villages with the belief that the elephants will not venture anywhere close to the bees and thus avoid transgressing into human landscape. This idea stems from the elephants' proven fear of the bees.

About Initiative

- An initiative of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), Project RE-HAB (Reducing Elephant-Human Attacks using Bees) intends to create "bee fences" to thwart elephant attacks in human habitations using honeybees.
- Spots are located on the periphery of the Nagarhole National Park and Tiger Reserve, known conflict zone. The total cost of the project is ₹15 lakh and Project RE-HAB is a sub-mission of the KVIC's National Honey Mission.

Significance

- The biggest advantage of Project RE-HAB is that it dissuades elephants without causing any harm to them.
- It is extremely cost-effective as compared to various other measures such as digging trenches or erecting fences
- Between 2015 and 2020, nearly 2,500 people have lost their lives in elephant attacks across India, of which 170 human fatalities have been reported in Karnataka alone, says the KVIC.

About Nagarhole National Park (Rajiv Gandhi National Park)

- Established as a wildlife sanctuary in 1955
- Upgraded as national park in 1988.
- Declared as tiger reserve in 1999.
- Part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.

River

- Nagarhole River flows through the park, which joins the Kabini River which also is a boundary between Nagarhole and Bandipur National Park.

Flora

- Mainly of moist deciduous forests with predominating trees of teak and rosewood.

Fauna

- Asian elephants, chital (spotted deer), Indian mouse deer, gaur, stripe-necked and ruddy mongooses, grey langur, bonnet macaque, Asian wild dog, leopard, tiger, sloth bear among others

- National Beekeeping and Honey Mission
 - ✓ Announced as part of the AtmaNirbhar Bharat scheme.
 - ✓ NBHM aims for the overall promotion & development of scientific beekeeping in the country to achieve the goal of 'Sweet Revolution' which is being implemented through National Bee Board (NBB).

The main objective of NBHM

- To promote holistic growth of beekeeping industry for income & employment generation for farm and non-farm households.
- Aims to create awareness about scientific bee keeping under Mini Mission-I
- Post-harvest management of beekeeping, beehive products, including collection, processing, storage, marketing, value addition, etc. under Mini Mission-II
- Research & Technology generation in beekeeping under Mini Mission-III.
- Rs 150.00 Crores has been allotted to NBHM for 2020-21.
- It is a Central Sector component under the existing vertical "Mission on Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH)"

National Bee Board

- Registered Society under Societies Registration Act 1860 on 19th July, 2000 & promoted by the Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC).
- In May 2005, Beekeeping has been included as a supplemental activity under National Horticulture Mission (NHM) for promoting cross pollination of Horticultural Crops.

Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC)

- Established in 1994 under Societies Registration Act, 1860 as an autonomous body promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare.

Objectives

- Promoting agribusiness by encouraging institutional and private sector investments and linkages to ensure the empowerment of all farmers in the country
- Organising FPOs, FIG etc

About Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC)

- Statutory body established by an Act of Parliament (Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956).
- In April 1957, it took over the work of former All India Khadi and Village Industries Board.

Functions

- An apex organization under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, with regard to khadi and village industries within India, which seeks to –



- Plan, promote, facilitate, organise and assist in the establishment and development of khadi and village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary.

Past News

- Plan Bee
 - ✓ By Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR)
 - ✓ It involves setting up of devices (an amplifying system imitating the buzz of a swarm of honey bees) near tracks, which emit the 'buzzing' sound of swarming bees, considered as a natural repellent of elephants
 - ✓ First one was installed near the Guwahati railway station.

4. Security

4.1. India's arms imports down by 33%

- Arms imports decreased by 33% between 2011–15 and 2016–20 while India continues to remain the second largest arms importer after Saudi Arabia, according to a report from Swedish think tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

Reasons

- The overall drop in arms imports between 2011–15 and 2016–20 seems to be mainly due to its complex and lengthy procurement processes
- India's attempts to reduce its dependence on Russian arms by diversifying its network of arms suppliers

Largest supplier

- Russia was the largest arms supplier in both years. However, Russia's deliveries dropped by 53% between the two periods and its share of Indian arms imports fell from 70 to 49%.
- France and Israel were the second and third largest arms suppliers in 2016–20. "India's arms imports from France increased by 709% while those from Israel rose by 82%," the report said adding that combat aircraft and associated missiles made up more than 50% of arms imports
- The U.S. was the second largest arms supplier to India in 2011–15 but in 2016–20 India's arms imports from the U.S. were 46% lower than in the previous five-year period, making the U.S. the fourth largest supplier in 2016–20.

Reason for largescale import

- India perceives increasing threats from Pakistan and China and as its ambitious plans to produce its own major arms have been significantly delayed, it is planning large-scale programmes for arms imports

Pak. imports

- Arms imports by Pakistan between 2011–15 and 2016–20 decreased by 23%. China accounted for 61% of its imports in 2011–15 and for 74% in 2016–20.

Past News

- SIPRI Report on Nuclear Stockpiles (2020)
 - ✓ The nine nuclear-armed states — the U.S., Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea — possessed an estimated 13,400 nuclear weapons at the start of 2020.
 - ✓ This marked a decrease from an estimated 13,865 nuclear weapons at the beginning of 2019

Reason

- Dismantlement of old nuclear weapons by Russia and the U.S., which together possess over 90% of the global nuclear weapons.
- Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)



- ✓ Independent international institute established in 1966 at Stockholm (Sweden).
- ✓ It is dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- ✓ It also provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media etc

Current affairs Worksheet (16 March 2021)

Factual sheet for Quick revision

Topic	Description	Update
Env	Great Indian bustard	
	Bird flight divertor	
	RE-HAB	
	Nagarhole NP	
	National bee keeping & honey mission	
	National bee board	
	SFAC	
	KVIC	
	Plan Bee	
Security	SIPRI report on arms & Nuclear stockpile	
Economy	Mera ration app	
	ONORC	
	non-ferrous metal scrap recycling	
	Ferrous vs Non ferrous	
	Steel Scrap Recycling Policy. (2019)	
	Bank credit & deposit	
Polity	AICTE (History)	