



CURRENT AFFAIRS

≡ 18 DECEMBER, 2021 ≡

1. Ganga Expressway

Why in news ?

Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone of Ganga Expressway in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh. He will also address a rally at Railway Ground, Rouza on the occasion.

About :

- The 594 Km long six-lane Expressway will be built at a cost of over Rs 36,200 crore.
- Starting near the Bijauli village in Meerut, the Expressway will extend till near the Judapur Dandu village in Prayagraj.
- It will pass through Meerut, Hapur, Bulandshahr, Amroha, Sambhal, Budaun, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Unnao, Rae Bareli, Pratapgarh and Prayagraj districts.
- A 3.5 Km long airstrip for assisting emergency take-off and landing of Air Force planes will also be constructed on the Expressway in Shahjahanpur.
- An industrial corridor is also proposed to be built along the

Expressway.

- Upon completion, it will become the longest expressway of Uttar Pradesh, connecting the western and eastern regions of the state.

Significance :

- Uttar Pradesh government is working on this ambitious project in a swift manner.
- 94 percent of the land required for the expressway has been acquired by the state government despite the Covid in the record four months period.
- It will give a fillip to multiple sectors including industrial development, trade, agriculture and tourism.
- It will provide a big boost to the socio-economic development of the region.

2. Multi-Modal Logistics Parks

Why in news ?

The government plans to set up 35 Multi-Modal Logistics Parks in the country at a total cost of 50,000 crore rupees.

About :

- These parks have been conceptualized to enable seamless intermodal freight movement and offer multiple functionalities such as freight aggregation and distribution, storage and warehousing solutions and value-added services such as custom clearances and IT services.
- They will be developed as part of the Design, Build Finance, Operate and Transfer model.
- Moreover, the ministry will execute infrastructure projects worth 7 lakh crore rupees in the next 2-3 years.

3. **Covovax**

Why in news?

- World Health Organisation (WHO) has issued an emergency use listing for Serum Institute of India's manufactured Covovax.
- The move will help expand the basket of WHO-validated vaccines against the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
- The Serum Institute of India (SII) is producing Covovax under licence from Novavax and is part of the COVAX facility portfolio.
- The decision will give a much-needed boost to ongoing efforts to vaccinate more people in lower-income countries.

4. **FICCI**

Why in news?

Defence Minister will address the

94th Annual Convention of FICCI in New Delhi.

This will be done to share about the growing potential in Defence sector and the opportunities present for the Indian industry.

About :

- The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry is a non-governmental trade association and advocacy group based in India.
- It was established in 1927, on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi by Indian businessman Mr. G.D. Birla and Purshottamdas Thakurdas.
- **Headquarters** : New Delhi
- FICCI is the voice of India's business and industry.
- It provides a **platform for networking and consensus building within and across sectors** and is the first port of call for Indian industry, policy makers and the international business community.
- The theme of the Convention this year is "**India Beyond 75**".

5. **India and US announce new program**

News :

- India and the US have announced a new program supporting innovations to tackle climate and clean energy challenges.
- The program titled 'Technology-

based Energy Solutions: Innovations for Net Zero' constitutes a call for Ignition Grants by the United States-India Science and Technology Endowment Fund.

- It will identify and support 'technology showstoppers' or promising joint India-US Science and Tech-based *entrepreneurial initiatives* in this area.

Significance :

The launch of the US-India Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 partnership in April this year reiterated the commitment of both nations to work together to achieve their ambitious climate and clean energy targets and to strengthen bilateral collaborations.

The new program aligns with the goals of the US-India strategic Clean Energy Partnership and will be administered by the bi-national Indo-US Science and Technology Forum.

6. **Bio-toilet technology**

Why in news?

Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO, has transferred bio-toilet technology to nearly 60 industries in the country.

What is bio-toilet?

Bio-toilet is a decomposition mechanized toilet system which decomposes human excretory waste

in the digester tank using specific high graded bacteria (aerobic or anaerobic) further converting it into methane gas, Carbon dioxide gas and water.

Working of bio toilet :

- Bio toilet is completely different toilet as compare to the traditional restrooms.
- It saves a lot of water and helps in keeping the environment clean. Bio-digester technology treats human waste at the source.
- A collection of anaerobic bacteria that has been adapted to work at temperatures as low as -5°C and as high as 50°C act as inocula (seed material) to the bio-digesters
- The anaerobic process inactivates the pathogens responsible for water-borne diseases and treats the waste without the use of an external energy source.

Significance:

These industries have installed over 16 thousand bio-digesters in 20 states across the country.

Apart from these, 2.5 lakh bio-digesters have been installed in Indian Railways coaches, catering to more than One crore passengers daily.

7. **Bhutan civilian award to Indian PM**

News ?

Bhutan has decided to confer its

highest civilian award **Ngadag Pelgi Khorlo** or **The Order of The Druk Gyaplo** to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Prime Minister Office of Bhutan highlighted all the unconditional friendship and support Narendra Modi has extended over the years and particularly during Covid-19 pandemic.

Awards by other countries:

- In 2016, he received the highest civilian awards from Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan.
- In 2018, he was conferred the highest honour of Palestine.
- In 2019, the United Arab Emirates honoured the Indian Prime Minister with the Order of Zayed Award.
- In the same year, Russia, Bahrain and the Maldives also conferred Mr Modi with their respective highest civilian awards.

8. Sainik Schools

Why in news?

The Government has approved a scheme to set up 100 Sainik Schools in partnership with NGOs, Private Schools and the State governments.

The aims and objectives of the Scheme is to provide an educational and training environment on the pattern of training provided in existing Sainik Schools.

It aims to extend the benefits of a

system that combines academic rigour with a degree of discipline and regimentation.

About :

- The Sainik Schools are a system of schools in India established and managed by the Sainik Schools Society under Ministry of Defence (MoD).
- They were conceived in 1961 by V. K. Krishna Menon, the then Defence Minister of India, to rectify the regional and class imbalance amongst the Officer cadre of the Indian Military.
- And also to prepare students mentally and physically for entry into the National Defence Academy (NDA) and Indian Naval Academy (INA).
- Sainik Schools, along with 1 RIMC and 5 RMS (Rashtriya Military Schools), contribute 25% to 30% officer cadets to NDA and INA.
- As of 2021, there were 33 Sainik Schools.
- MoD run Sainik Schools as joint venture with the respective state governments.
- MoD provides annual funding, and serving officers in the key roles such as Principal.
- State governments provide the land, infrastructure, and other teaching and administrative employees.

9. Mission Poshan 2.0

Why in news?

With an aim to reduce malnutrition in the country an integrated nutrition support program Mission Poshan 2.0 has been started.

About :

- The Mission Poshan 2.0 was launched after merging the Supplementary Nutrition Programme and the Poshan Abhiyaan.
- It seeks to strengthen nutritional content, delivery, outreach and outcomes with focus on developing practices related to health, wellness and immunity to disease and malnutrition.
- Steps have been taken to improve nutritional quality and testing in accredited labs, strengthen delivery and leverage technology under Poshan Tracker to improve governance.
- Poshan 2.0 scheme in an umbrella scheme covers the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Anganwadi Services, Poshan Abhiyaan, Scheme For Adolescent Girls, National Creche Scheme).

10. Plastic parks

Why in news?

The Government has given in-principle approval for 10 plastic parks in the country with an aim to consolidate and synergize the capacities of the domestic plastic processing industry.

About :

- Plastic Park is an industrial zone, developed in cluster approach for establishing units for plastic enterprises and its allied industries to consolidate and synergize the capacities of the domestic downstream plastic processing industry.
- It has state-of-the art infrastructure with common facilities including plastic waste management system.
- It plays key role in growth of the plastic processing community material and machinery suppliers, plastic processing companies, plastic recycling companies.
- They are being developed by State Governments with the grant-in-aid funding support upto 50% from Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals, Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers.
- These parks have great potential for attracting investments and generating more employment opportunities for the local population.

