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Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme



Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme

- Ministry of Women and Child Development has approved a new scheme namely Mahila Shakti Kendra for implementation during 2017-18 up to 2019-20 to empower rural women through community participation.
- It aims to provide an interface for rural women to approach the government for availing their entitlements and for empowering them through training and capacity building.

- The scheme has been approved for implementation in 23 States /UTs.
- PMMSK Block level initiatives: Under it, community engagement is envisioned in 117 most backward districts through Student Volunteers.

Provisions under Scheme

- Community engagement through College Student Volunteers is envisioned in 115 aspirational districts as part of the Block Level initiatives.
- Student volunteers are to play an instrumental role in awareness generation regarding various important government schemes/ programmes as well as social issues.
- District Level Centre for Women (DLCW) has also been envisaged for 640 districts to be covered in phased manner.
- These centres serve as a link between village, block and state level in facilitating women centric schemes and also give a foothold for Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme at the district level.
- It is implemented with a cost sharing ratio of 60:40 between centre and states except for North East and Special Category States where the ratio is 90:10.

Padhna Likhna Abhiyan



- The government's new literacy scheme, 'Padhna Likhna Abhiyan', will be a leap forward for achieving the goal of total literacy by 2030, Union Education Minister.
- It comes under the Ministry of Education (Earlier MHRD).

- The programme imparts functional literacy and numeracy to 57 lakh non-literate and non-numerate adults in both rural and urban areas across the country in the age group of 15 years and above.
- This target mostly comprises Women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Minorities and other Disadvantaged Groups. In the scheme, among others, priority will be given to Districts with female literacy rates less than 60%, as per the latest Census.

Features of the scheme

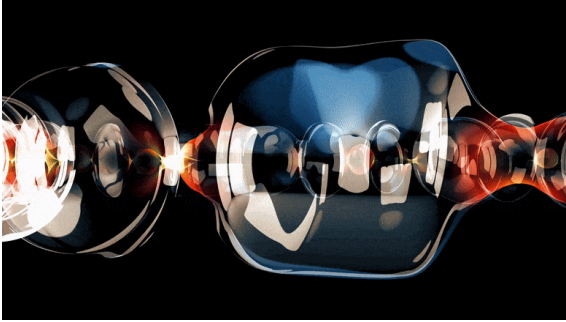
- The focus of the programme shall be on the Basic Literacy component in a four months cycle; priority will be given to aspirational districts.
- The programme will cover both rural and urban areas, target and budget of States/UTs is indicated in Annexure with details in the enclosed Operational Guidelines. States/UTs will distribute targets to Districts.
- The scheme shall have a flexible approach and innovative methodologies such as involving school and college students and other volunteers of NCC, NSS and NYKS, for imparting Basic Literacy.
- There will be a Project Approval Board (PAB) at the national level to approve the Annual Plans of States/UTs.
- Secretaries of Education will present their Annual Plans, based on district plans, on the portal being developed by NIC, in the PAB meetings.
- Convergence with projects of M/o Rural Development (MGNREGA), Skill Development, Culture, Information Technology, Finance, Sports and Youth Welfare (NYK), schemes of NCC and NSS, NGOs/Civil Society & CSR sector may be taken up.
- Formation and involvement of SHGs, Voluntary & User Groups and other community based organizations may be encouraged.
- Basic Literacy Assessment under the scheme will be conducted by National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) for adult learners, thrice a year.

National Youth Parliament Festival



- Youth in the age bracket of 18-25 years are invited to participate in the District Youth Parliaments
- The National Youth Parliament Festival will encourage the youth to engage with public issues, understand the common man's point of view, form their opinion and express these in an articulate manner.
- Relevant and effective voices on the vision of New India would be captured and documented to make these available to policy makers and implementers to take it forward.
- The National Service Scheme and Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan organizations will remain involved at different levels in its conduct and management.

New State of Matter Discovered by Scientists: Liquid Glass



- Now scientists at the University of Konstanz have identified a new state of matter called liquid glass, which has some unusual properties.
- The research team used a model system consisting of tailor-made colloids—solid particles at a micrometer scale that makes them excellently suited to investigation with optical microscopes—with an ellipsoid shape, to study the effect of shape on the glass transition in 3D suspensions.
- The result was a new liquid glass that, in addition to being a new state of matter, could grant materials scientists an insight into both glass transition and liquid crystal formation.
- The researchers uncovered a new state of matter, liquid glass, where individual particles are able to move yet unable to rotate – complex behavior that has not previously been observed in bulk glasses.
- The results are published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America (PNAS).

Indian star tortoise



- 2 held for illegally transporting 5 Indian star tortoises in Mumbai
- The Indian star tortoise (*Geochelone elegans*) is a threatened species of tortoise found in dry areas and scrub forest in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- This species is quite popular in the exotic pet trade, which is the main reason it is (threatened with extinction) by full consensus among all member states (of CoP18 with 183 countries), giving it the highest level of international protection from commercial trade.
- Conservation group TRAFFIC found 6,040 were seized globally that were intended to be sold in the pet trade

2020 was faster than usual, broke record for shortest day 28 times: Scientists



- The 28 fastest days on record all occurred in 2020, with Earth completing its rotations around its axis milliseconds quicker than average, scientists said. The shortest day was July 19, when Earth completed one spin 1.4602 milliseconds faster than 86,400 seconds. Before 2020, the shortest day was noted on July 5, 2005, when the Earth's rotation was 1.0516 milliseconds faster.

Scientists discover 2 dwarf giraffes in Namibia and Uganda



- Scientists have found two dwarf giraffes in Namibia and Uganda. The Namibian giraffe is eight and a half feet tall, while the one in Uganda is nine feet and three inches tall. Both have standard long necks but short, stumpy legs.
- The medical condition that affects them is Skeletal Dysplasia, which the researchers say is rarely seen in wild animals.

Buxa Tiger Reserve



- Eight vultures have been released in Rajabhatkha-wa at the Buxa Tiger Reserve in north Bengal
- Buxa Tiger Reserve is a tiger reserve in northern West Bengal, India, covering an area of 760 km² (290 sq mi).
- In altitude, it ranges from 60 m (200 ft) in the Gangetic Plains to 1,750 m (5,740 ft) bordering the Himalayas in the north.
- At least 284 bird species inhabit the reserve.
- Mammals present include Asian elephant, gaur, Sambar deer, clouded leopard, Indian leopard
- The Phibsoo Wildlife Sanctuary of Bhutan is contiguous to the north of BTR. Manas National Park lies on east of BTR. BTR, thus, serves as international corridor for Asian elephant migration between India and Bhutan.
- Rajabhatkha-wa Vulture Breeding Centre at Buxa Tiger Reserve for the breeding and conservation of endangered Indian vultures was established as the second such centre with the help of Bombay Natural History Society and British charity Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. It emulates the success of first ever such centre at Jatayu Conservation Breeding Centre, Pinjore

Indonesia is the largest archipelago in the world



- It consists of five major islands and about 30 smaller groups.
- The archipelago is on a crossroad between two oceans, the Pacific and the Indian, and bridges two continents, Asia and Australia/Oceania.
- This strategic position has always influenced the cultural, social, political, and economic life of the country which has achieved independence from the Netherlands in 1949.

- Main ethnic groups: Javanese, Sundanese, Indonesian (Malay), Madura
- Official Language; Bahasa Indonesia
- Currency : Rupiah (1 rupiah (Rp) is divided into 100 sen)
- Indonesia, the world's fourth most populous nation, is 86 percent Muslim—and the largest Islamic country, though it is a secular state.
- Indonesians are separated by seas and clustered on islands.
- Its islands can be grouped into the Greater Sunda Islands of Sumatra (Sumatera), Java (Jawa), the southern extent of Borneo (Kalimantan), and Celebes (Sulawesi); the Lesser Sunda Islands (Nusa Tenggara) of Bali and a chain of islands that runs eastward through Timor; the Moluccas (Maluku) between Celebes and the island of New Guinea; and the western extent of New Guinea (generally known as Papua). The capital, Jakarta, is located near the northwestern coast of Java.

Golden Quadrilateral - Golden Diagonal route



- This covers the entire GQ-GD route over South Central Railway, except Vijayawada - Duvvada section, where signaling upgradation work is in progress.
- According to the approved plan of increasing the speed of trains to 130 km per hour, the South Central Railway zone will boost the maximum speed limits along the following routes:
 1. Golden Diagonal (Grand Trunk) Route - 744 route km:
Ballarshah to Kazipet - 234 route km
Kazipet-Vijayawada-Gudur - 510 route km
 2. Golden Quadrilateral Route (Chennai-Mumbai section) - 536 route km:
Renigunta to Gooty - 281 route km
Gooty to Wadi- 255 route km
- The Golden Quadrilateral connects the four major metro cities namely Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai.