Daily News Decode

24.02.21

PM KISAN

- The Scheme was formally launched on 24th February in the year 2019 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a function at Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh.

- PM KISAN was started with a view to augment the income of the farmers by providing income support to all landholding farmers' families across the country.

- Under the PM KISAN Scheme, an amount of 6000 rupees per year is transferred in three installments of 2000 rupees directly into the bank accounts of the farmers.

- The Scheme initially provided income support to all Small and Marginal Farmers' families across the country, holding cultivable land upto 2 hectares.

- Its ambition was later expanded to cover all farmer families in the country irrespective of the size of their land holdings. Affluent farmers have been excluded from the scheme.

- Since this scheme started, more than 1 lakh 10 thousand crore rupees have reached the account of farmers.

India only country on track among G20 to meet its climate change mitigation commitments

- Union Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Mr. Prakash Javadekar has said that climate change is the defining issue of our times.

- Speaking at the UN Security Council Yesterday on the theme of Climate and Security: Maintenance of international peace and security, Mr Javadekar said that India is the only country on track among G20 countries in meeting its climate change commitments.

- Quoting Mahatma Gandhi the Minister made an appeal to shift a climate friendly lifestyle.

The Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu today called for ending low representation to women in Parliament and legislatures and called upon all political parties to reach a consensus on providing reservation to them.

- Vice President calls for ending low representation to women in Parliament and legislatures

- Shri Naidu said that although the 17th Lok Sabha has the highest number of 78 women members, they account only for 14% of the total number.

- Pointing out that reservations for women in the local bodies have politically empowered lakhs of women in the country, he said introducing reservation for women in Parliament and legislatures needs urgent attention and consensus of all political parties.

- Expressing his anguish over the increasing disruptions instead of meaningful discussions and debates in legislatures and Parliament, Shri Naidu called

- Appealing to the people to elect their representatives on the basis of 4Cs—Character, Conduct, Calibre and Capacity, he said "unfortunately, another set of 4Cs—cash, caste, criminality and community—is trying to hold politics hostage to its vicious interests and needs to be completely eliminated for India's democracy to flourish and become a role model for other nations".

National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM)

- The National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM) has been launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs along with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, here today.

- The National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM) will create a shared digital infrastructure for urban India, working across the three pillars of people, process, and platform to provide holistic support to cities and towns

- It will institutionalise a citizen-centric and ecosystem-driven approach to urban governance and service delivery in 2022 cities by 2022, and across all cities and towns in India by 2024.

- NUDM will create a shared digital infrastructure that can consolidate and cross-leverage the various digital initiatives of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, enabling cities and towns across India to benefit from holistic and diverse forms of support, in keeping with their needs and local challenges.
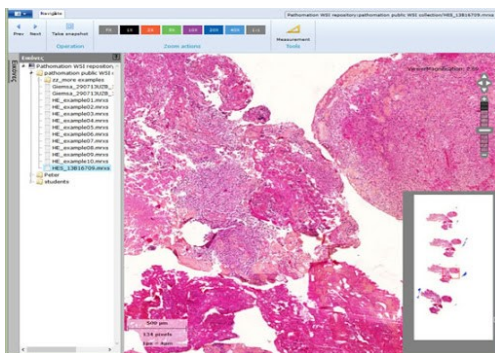
- NUDM is citizen-centric, ecosystem-driven, and principles-based in both design and implementation.
- NUDM has articulated a set of governing principles, and inherits the technology design principles of the National Urban Innovation Stack (NUIS), whose strategy and approach was released by MoHUA in February, 2019.
- The principles in turn give rise to standards, specifications, and certifications, across the three pillars of people, process, and platforms.

India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX)

- The India Urban Data Exchange has been developed in partnership between the Smart Cities Mission and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.
- IUDX serves as a seamless interface for data providers and data users, including ULBs, to share, request, and access datasets related to cities, urban governance, and urban service delivery
- IUDX is an open-source software platform which facilitates the secure, authenticated, and managed exchange of data amongst various data platforms, 3rd party authenticated and authorised applications, and other sources.
- As the number of cities on IUDX expands, this will scale up to uniform and seamless sharing between data producers and data consumers across urban India.
- IUDX is designed to address the problem of data silos, both within and across cities. Cities generate large volumes of data, which are recorded by a wide range of entities, both within government and across industry, academia, and civil society.
- The combination of these datasets can enable rapid innovation, as well as a better understanding of and planning for urban needs and challenges.
- IUDX creates a secure and reliable channel for data producers or owners to share their data, with complete control over what is shared and with whom, in order to enable sharing while addressing security and privacy protections by design.
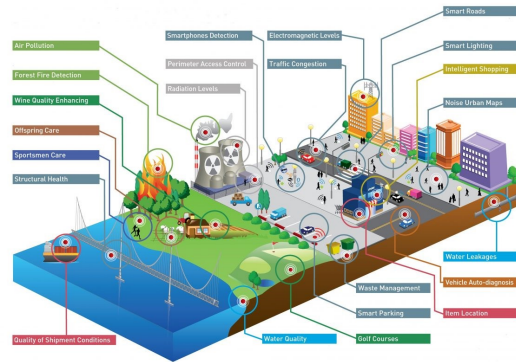
SmartCode Platform:

- SmartCode is a platform that enables all ecosystem stakeholders to contribute to a repository of open-source code for various solutions and applications for urban governance.
- It is designed to address the challenges that ULBs face in the development and deployment of digital applications to address urban challenges, by enabling cities to take advantage of existing codes and customising them to suit local needs, rather than having to develop new solutions from scratch.
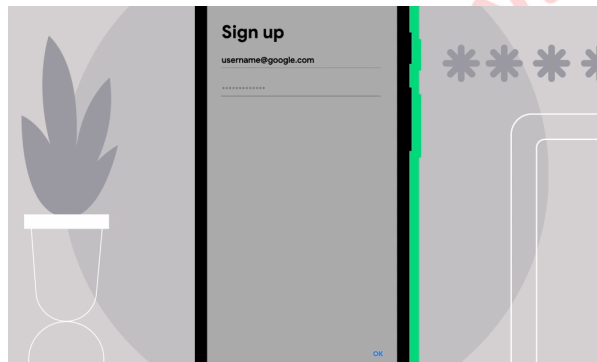
- As a repository of open-source software, the source code available on the platform will be free to use without any licensing or subscription fees, thus limiting costs to those involved with customising the code and developing a locally-relevant solution.

New Smart Cities Website ver. 2.0 and GMIS

- In order to better connect with people on the Smart Cities Missions efforts and achievements, and to make it easier for ULBs and citizens to access resources related to their work, the Smart Cities Mission website has been redesigned to serve as a single stop for all Smart Cities initiatives.

- The Geospatial Management Information System (GMIS) is integrated with this website.

- The website creates a single window hub for Smart Cities Mission.

- A portal that works as a gateway to all the platforms and initiatives launched under the Mission.

- The website, through a seamless and a unified interface, aggregates all mission related information/initiatives from the various platforms and show automated mission updates catering to the needs of a public user.

- The website has been developed to be used as a highly effective communication and outreach tool.

Android update to let users schedule messages

- Google on Tuesday announced a set of new updates to its operating system Android.

- With the update, users will be able to schedule messages to be sent at a certain time on phones running Android 7 and newer.

- Google also said it will be adding a dark mode to Google Maps and has introduced a Password Checkup tool.

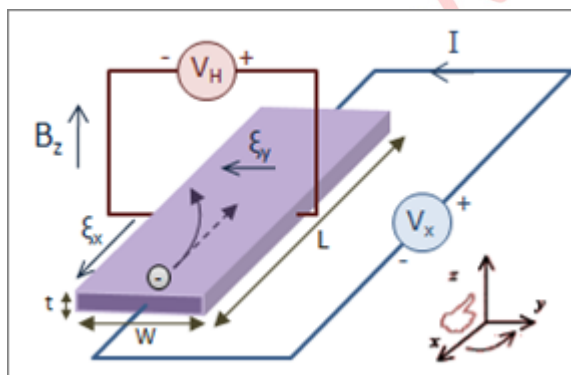# Algorithms are replacing humans: ILO calls for gig economy regulation

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) has called for the better regulation of workers in the gig economy. "Algorithms are increasingly replacing humans in allocating and evaluating work," the ILO said.

- The distinction between employees and the self-employed is being blurred by digital platforms as working conditions are regulated by their terms of service agreements, the ILO further said.

17,300-year-old kangaroo painting recognised as oldest rock artwork in Australia

- Australian scientists have discovered the country's oldest known rock art, a 17,300-year-old painting of a kangaroo.

- The artwork measuring 2 metres was painted in red ochre on the ceiling of a rock shelter.

- It was found in Western Australia's Kimberley region, which is known for its Aboriginal rock paintings.

- Its age was determined by radiocarbon-dating ancient mud wasp nests.

Hall effect

- The Hall effect is the production of a voltage difference (the Hall voltage) across an electrical conductor, transverse to an electric current in the conductor and to an applied magnetic field perpendicular to the current.

- It was discovered by Edwin Hall in 1879.

- A Hall effect can also occur across a void or hole in a semiconductor or metal plate, when current is injected via contacts that lie on the boundary or edge of the void or hole, and the charge flows outside the void or hole, in the metal or semiconductor.

- This Hall effect becomes observable in a perpendicular applied magnetic field across voltage contacts that lie on the boundary of the void on either side of a line connecting the current contacts, it exhibits apparent sign reversal in comparison to the standard ordinary Hall effect in the simply connected specimen, and this Hall effect depends only on the current injected from within the void

- In 1879 Edwin Hall was exploring this interaction, and discovered the Hall effect while he was working on his doctoral degree at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Maryland.

2nd Maritime India Summit-2021

- Prime Minister will inaugurate the 2nd Maritime India Summit which will be held in a virtual mode on March 2, 2021.

- The event will be organized by the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and waterways jointly with EY as the knowledge partner and FICCI as the Industrial Partner.

- The Maritime India Summit-2021 will provide a unique platform that will have the virtual and physical presence of prominent shipping and transport dignitaries/ ministers from all over the world.

- The maritime states of India will also be participating in the summit through the dedicated sessions. The summit will include an exclusive CEOs forum and various breakout/thematic sessions.

SFURTI

- SFURTI is Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries.

- Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Govt. of India has launched this scheme in the year 2005 with the view to promote Cluster development.

As per the revised guidelines, the following schemes are being merged into SFURTI:

- The Scheme for r Enhancing Productivity and Competitiveness of Khadi Industry and Artisans

- The Scheme for Product Development, Design Intervention and Packaging (PRODIP)

- The Scheme for Rural Industries Service Center (RISC) and

- Other small interventions like Ready Warp Units, Ready to Wear Mission, etc.

The target sectors and potential beneficiaries will include:

- Artisans, workers, machinery makers, raw material providers, entrepreneurs, institutional and private business development service (BDS) providers.

- Artisan guilds, cooperatives, consortiums, networks of enterprises, self-help groups (SHGs), enterprise associations, etc.

- Implementing agencies, field functionaries of Government institutions/organisations and policy makers, directly engaged in traditional industries.

The following agencies shall be designated as the Nodal Agencies for the Scheme:

- Khadi and Village Industries Commission - for Khadi and Village Industry clusters Coir Board - Coir based clusters

- mplementing Agencies (IAs) would be non-Government organizations (NGOs), institutions of the Central and State Governments and semi - Government institutions, field functionaries of State and Central Govt., Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs), etc. with suitable expertise to undertake cluster development.

- One IA will be assigned for only one cluster (unless it is an agency with State - wide coverage).

- The selection of IAs, based on their regional reputation and experience of working at the grass - roots level, will be done by the Nodal Agencies (NAs), on the basis of transparent criteria.

Types of clusters

- SFURTI clusters are of two types i.e., Regular Cluster (500 artisans) with Government assistance of up to Rs.2.5 crore and Major Cluster (more than 500 artisans) with Government assistance up to Rs.5 crore.

- The scheme focuses on strengthening the cluster governance systems with the active participation of the stakeholders so that they are able to gauge the emerging challenges and opportunities and respond to them.

The National Technology Award

- A total of 12 companies have been selected for the National Technology Awards 2020 for successful commercialization of innovative indigenous technologies.

- The awards are conferred by the Technology Development Board (TDB).

- Every year TDB seeks applications for prestigious National awards for commercialization of technologies under three categories - Indigenous technologies, MSME, and Startups.

Category 1: National Award For Successful Commercialization of Indigenous Technology:

- This award is given to an industrial concern which has successfully developed & commercialized an indigenous technology.

- In case, the technology developer / provider and the company commercializing the technology are two different organizations, each is eligible for award of Rs. 25 Lakh and a trophy.
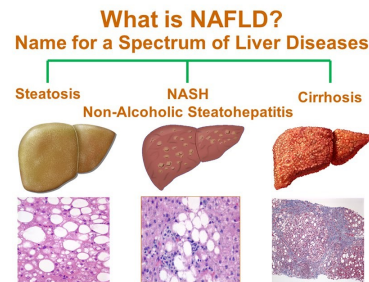
Category 2: National Award For MSMEs:

- The award of Rs. 15 lakhs each in this category is given to selected MSMEs that have successfully commercialized the product based on indigenous technology.

Category 3: National Award For Technology Start-ups:

- This award is given to a technology start-up for promising new technology with potential for commercialization.

- The award in addition to the trophy includes a cash award of Rs. 15 Lakh.

- These awards conferred to various industries provide a platform of recognition to Indian industries and their technology provider, who have worked as a team, to bring innovation to the market and contributed to the vision of "Atmanirbhar Bharat".

NAFLD (Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease)

- The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has launched the operational guidelines for integration of NAFLD (Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease) with NPCDCS (National Programme for Prevention & Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke).

- The NPCDCS is being implemented under the National Health Mission (NHM).

- It was launched in 2010 to prevent and control Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

- It is the abnormal accumulation of fat in the liver in the absence of secondary causes of fatty liver, such as harmful alcohol use, viral hepatitis.

- Fatty liver occurs when too much fat builds up in liver cells.

- It is a serious health concern as it encompasses a spectrum of liver abnormalities, from a simple non-alcoholic fatty liver (NAFL, simple fatty liver disease) to more advanced ones like non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH), cirrhosis and even liver cancer.

- Steatohepatitis is characterized by inflammation of the liver with concurrent fat accumulation in the liver. Mere deposition of fat in the liver is termed steatosis.

- Cirrhosis is a complication of liver disease that involves loss of liver cells and irreversible scarring of the liver.

- NAFLD acts as an independent predictor of future risk of cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes and other metabolic syndromes like hypertension, abdominal obesity, dyslipidaemia, glucose intolerance

- NAFLD is emerging as an important cause of liver disease in India.

- Epidemiological studies suggest the prevalence of NAFLD is around 9% to 32% of the general population in India with a higher prevalence in those with overweight or obesity and those with diabetes or prediabetes.

- Researchers have found NAFLD in 40% to 80 % of people who have type 2 diabetes and in 30% to 90% of people who are obese.

- Studies also suggest that people with NAFLD have a greater chance of developing cardiovascular disease.

- Cardiovascular disease is the most common cause of death in NAFLD.

Uthuru Thilafalhu

- Eight years after the project was first broached, India and Maldives have signed an agreement to develop and maintain a coastguard harbour and dockyard at Uthuru Thilafalhu – a strategically located atoll near the Maldivian capital of Male
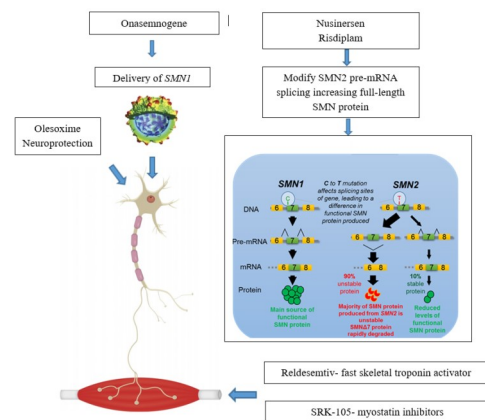
Defence Line of Credit:

- It was signed pursuant to the request by the Government of Maldives in April 2013 for India's support and cooperation in enhancing the capability of the Maldives Defence Forces in maritime surveillance, and subsequent requests in October 2015 and March 2016.

- It is seen as key to India's and Maldives' strategic interests, particularly given China's increasing footprint in the Indian Ocean Region.

Assistance to Build Dockyards:

- A dockyard will be developed at the Uthuru Thila Falhu (UTF) Naval Base with Indian assistance, a few miles northwest of Male, which will strengthen the Maldivian defence capabilities.

- The agreement is part of the defence action plan signed in 2016 by then Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom during a visit to India.

- Indicating deepening security cooperation, an agreement to develop, support and maintain a Maldives National Defence Force Coast Guard Harbour at Sifavaru was also signed.

- India will also support development of other infrastructure needed for the harbour, support the development of communications resources and radar services, and provide training.

Zolgensma Gene therapy for "Spinal Muscular Atrophy disease"

- The Government of India has decided to waive off some GST amount against the import of gene therapy — Zolgensma.

- This therapy is required to treat a child who is suffering from Spinal Muscular Atrophy.

- Zolgensma Gene therapy which replaces the faulty gene. US regulators approved this therapy in May 2019.

- Zolgensma works by supplying a healthy copy of the faulty gene. It allows nerve cells to then start producing the needed protein.

- This halts the deterioration of the nerve cells and allows the baby to grow more normally.

Sher Shah Gate

- Damaged nine years ago, Sher Shah Gate set to be restored this year

- Sher Shah gate located to the south of Khairu'l-Manazil-Masjid is said to be an entrance to the large city of Delhi that Sher Shah built in front of his fortress of Purana Qila.

- The gate, mostly built with red sandstone but with use of local grey quartzite in its upper storey, is thus called the Lal Darwaza (red gate).

- Arcades were built from this gate into the city, which were provided with series of dwellings with frontage of a verandah, which may have been used for commercial establishments.

- Kabuli or Khuni–Darwaza (explained in the following section) is another gate on the fringes of Sher Shah's city. ASI has undertaken extensive conservation works of the gate and its surroundings at a cost of Rs7.5 million

Indradhanush 3.0 to fill gap in immunisation due to COVID

- The States and Union Territories (UTs) have rolled out the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 3.0 scheme to cover children and pregnant women who missed routine immunisation during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Health Ministry said

- Indradhanush 3.0, a campaign aimed to reach those children and pregnant women who have been missed out or been left out of the Routine Immunisation Programme.
- This is aimed to accelerate the full immunisation of children and pregnant women through a mission mode intervention.
- The first phase has been rolled out from February 22 for 15 days,
- The campaign is scheduled to have two rounds of immunisation lasting 15 days (excluding routine immunisation and holidays).
- It is being conducted in 250 pre-identified districts/urban areas across 29 States/UTs

A proper transfer policy needed (Written by Zubair Nazeer)

- Civil servants, no matter how dedicated, innovative and efficient they may be, need a stability of tenure to govern well.
- The analysis of the SUPREMO (Single User Platform Related to Employees Online) database of the Department of Personnel and Training, Government of India, shows that the average posting spell of civil servants in India is only about 15 months.
- This is despite an increase in the median tenure since 2014 at the national level.
- Ashok Khemka and Pradeep Kasni are two Haryana-based IAS officers whose cases symbolise this issue.
- Mr. Khemka has been transferred more than 50 times in his career and Mr. Kasni 65 times.
- The Union Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Jitendra Singh, publicly accepted his helplessness in 2016 about the frequent transfer of officers in States.
- The undermining of transfer guidelines has been a major shortcoming of personnel administration in India.
- The Second Administrative Reforms Commission has highlighted it.
- The Fifth Pay Commission had recommended that no premature transfer should be allowed and that there should be fixation of a minimum tenure for each post.
- The Hota Committee, which argued against frequent transfers, noted that "absence of a fixed tenure of officials is one of the most important reasons for tardy implementation of government policies, for lack of accountability of officers, for waste of public money because of inadequate supervision of programmes under implementation and for large-scale corruption."
- An oft-repeated argument used for transfers is that they are "in the interest of administration." However, they essentially weaken administration.
- Transfers often reflect administrative favouritism and create divisions among civil servants
- If they are done on a political basis, this impacts the neutrality of the civil services. The core values of the civil services — neutrality, impartiality and anonymity — cannot be maintained without an efficient transfer policy.

Being petroleum-independent (Anup Bandivadekar)

- Expanding and diversifying energy supply is good, but if India is to reduce its energy import dependence, it must look towards first managing the demand for petroleum products.

- The Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles (FAME-II) scheme now focuses largely on electric vehicles.

- There are many things that the government can and should do to reduce dependence on petroleum. First, the government should formulate a zero-emissions vehicle (ZEV) programme that would require vehicle manufacturers to produce a certain number of electric vehicles.

- At present, the electric mobility initiative in India is driven largely by new entrants in the two- and three-wheeler space.

- A ZEV programme would require all manufacturers to start producing electric vehicles across all market segments.

- The government should also strengthen fuel efficiency requirements for new passenger cars and commercial vehicles.

- Two-wheelers, which consume nearly two-third of the petrol used in India, are not subject to any fuel efficiency standards.

- A recent analysis by the International Council on Clean Transportation (ICCT) suggests that a standard requiring 50% reduction in fuel consumption by new two-wheelers by 2030 will not only lead to internal combustion engine (ICE) efficiency improvements, but also ensure that nearly 60% of all new two-wheelers sold in India are electric driven.

- The FAME scheme focuses on two- and three-wheelers, taxis, and buses. It should be extended not only to all passenger cars and commercial vehicles but also to agricultural tractors.

- Extending fiscal incentives to all kinds of vehicles and stepping up investments in charging infrastructure are essential complementary policies.

- By next year, the GST rates for all passenger vehicles could be made proportional to their fuel efficiency level, instead of the present system that relies on vehicle length and engine size.

The excise duty-fiscal policy contradiction (Dipankar Dasgupta)

- The revised Budget shows a rise of ₹94,000 crore on account of excise duties alone. Presumably, the increase comes from the much-debated excise duty increases on petroleum and diesel.

- As far as the Budget documents go, the excise duty rise will hardly compensate for the huge falls in other tax revenues.

- It is not surprising, therefore, that despite the excise rise, the fiscal deficit continues to be higher than the Budget estimate.

- In fact, the larger excise duty collection is not large enough to have significantly reduced the inflated fiscal deficit figure.

- Given the nature of the products on which the excise duty has gone up, prices of commodities will rise in general, directly or indirectly.

- This is because all these commodities fall either in the category of final goods, which individuals purchase for personal consumption, or in the category of intermediate goods, which are used to produce a variety of essential services such as public transport, agricultural water supply, hotels and restaurants

- The idea underlying the prescription was that a fiscal deficit automatically transformed to government debt.

- Such debts along with their servicing liabilities have a tendency to magnify over the years, thereby imprisoning governments in debt traps, where present borrowings keep increasing to repay past borrowings and service charges.

- This leaves little room for growth enhancing expenditure and reduces a government's credit worthiness in the eyes of lenders.

Human rights are everyone's business

- The principle document signed in the last century, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights laid down the terms for the post-war world, it enshrined the rights and the freedoms of all people, living everywhere.

- It was not something that was forced down India's throat by its colonial rulers. India was a member of the first Human Rights Commission, which was to draft the 'international bill of rights'.

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was drafted from January 1947 till December 10, 1948, when it was eventually adopted by the General Assembly.

- "Without equality, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many. Equality without liberty would kill individual initiative.

- Without fraternity, liberty would produce the supremacy of the few over the many.

- Without fraternity, liberty and equality could not become a natural course of things.

- It would require a constable to enforce them.