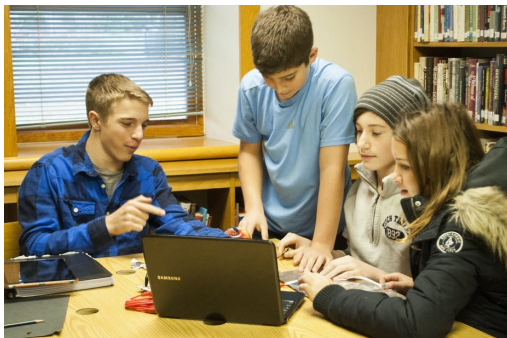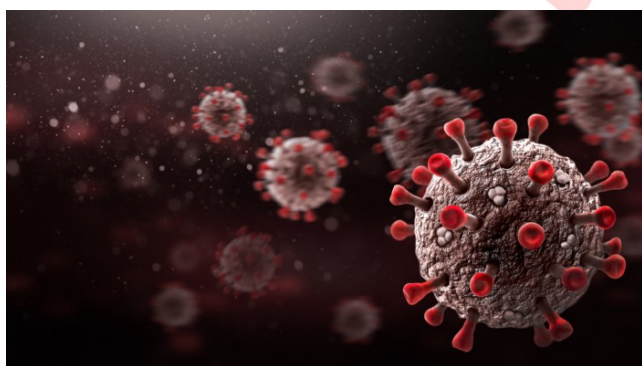# Daily News Decode

06.06.21

CODING IN SCHOOLS

- CBSE has collaborated with Microsoft to introduce Coding for classes 6-8 and Data Science curriculum for classes 8-12 as new skilling subjects in the 2021-2022 academic session.

- Coding and data science Curriculum are focused on building critical thinking, computational skills, problem solving skills, creativity and hands-on exposure to new technologies.

- In keeping with the New Education Policy 2020, the introduction of these courses is aimed at building next generation skills in students to succeed in this digital world.

- Microsoft has designed supplementary handbooks in both coding and data science, aligned with NCERT patterns and structures and covered real-life examples aimed at building exposure to the ethical dimensions exposure to Microsoft MakeCode.

- Microsoft MakeCode is an open-source platform that will enable students to learn better in a gamified manner across all disciplines including mathematics, languages, and social sciences while it builds the foundation for AI based applications of data science.

VARIANT DELTA (B.1.617.2)

- Variant Delta (B.1.617.2), the most pervasive variant of the coronavirus in India, constituted nearly three in four breakthrough infections in Delhi, according to a research.

- Breakthrough infections are instances of people testing positive for the virus after getting vaccinated

- The study also reports a new mutation in Delta called T478K that the scientists believe has a role to play in allowing the coronavirus to better infiltrate human cells.

Alpha variant

- However international variant Alpha, that in previous studies has been associated with a spike in cases in Delhi in February and March was absent in vaccination breakthrough-cases analysed.

- Previous studies had shown that the farmer protests and religious gatherings had contributed to amplifying the Alpha variant in North India.

- The latter variant has now been outcompeted by the Delta.

PROJECT P 75 (I)

- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) under the Chairmanship of Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh on June 04, 2021, has approved the issuance of a Request For Proposal (RFP) for construction of six Conventional Submarines under Project P 75 (I) under the Strategic Partnership (SP) Model.

- This project envisages indigenous construction of six conventional submarines equipped with the state-of-the-art Air Independent Propulsion system at an estimated cost of Rs 43,000 crore.

- This is the first case processed under the Strategic Partnership model. The SP model of the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) aims to promote the role of Indian industry in manufacturing and build a domestic defence industrial ecosystem.

- This would be one of the largest 'Make in India' projects.

- With this approval, India would be enabled to achieve its 30-year submarine construction programme envisioned by the government to acquire national competence in their building and for Indian industry to independently design and construct them.

YOUNTAB SCHEME

- Ladakh Lt Governor has launched the YounTab scheme for students in the Union Territory to encourage digital learning.

- YounTab scheme formulated to encourage digital learning, bridge the digital divide between connected and unconnected and mitigate the Covid pandemic disruptions.

- He distributed tablets to the students of 9 to 12 class as part of the first phase of the YounTab Scheme.

- A total of 12 thousand 300 students of 6th to 12th class from government schools will benefit from the scheme.

Performance Grading Index (PGI)

- Union Education Minister approves the release of Performance Grading Index (PGI) 2019-20 for States and Union Territories

- The Government has introduced the Performance Grading Index with a set of 70 parameters to catalyse transformational change in the field of school education.

- The PGI for States and Union Territories was first published in 2019 with reference year 2017-18. The PGI : States/UTs for 2019-20 is the third publication in this series.

- The PGI exercise envisages that the index would propel States and UTs towards undertaking multi-pronged interventions that will that will bring about the much-desired optimal education outcomes.

- The PGI helps the States/UTs to pinpoint the gaps and accordingly prioritise areas for intervention to ensure that the school education system is robust at every level.

- Punjab, Chandigarh, Tamil Nadu, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Kerala occupy the highest grade (Grade A++) for 2019-20.

- Most of the States/UTs have improved their grade in PGI 2019-20 compared to the earlier years.

- Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Puducherry, Punjab and Tamil Nadu have improved overall PGI score by 10%, i.e., 100 or more points.

- Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep and Punjab have shown improvement by 10% (8 points) or more in the PGI domain: Access.

- As many as thirteen States and UTs have shown improvement by 10% (15 points) or more in the PGI domain: Infrastructure and Facilities. Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Odisha have shown improvement by 20% or more.

- Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Odisha have shown more than 10% improvement in the PGI domain: Equity.

- Nineteen States and UTs have shown improvement by 10% (36 points) or more in the PGI domain: Governance Process.

- Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal have shown improvement by at least 20% (72 points or more).

What are the features of new tax return filing portal to be launched tomorrow?

- The Income Tax Department is launching its new e-filing portal 'www.incometax.gov.in' on June 7, 2021, integrated with the immediate processing of Income Tax Returns to issue quick refunds.

- All interactions and uploads or pending actions will be displayed on a single dashboard for follow-up actions.

- A free-of-cost ITR preparation software will also be available with interactive questions.

Global terror funding watchdog retains Pakistan on 'Enhanced Follow-Up' list
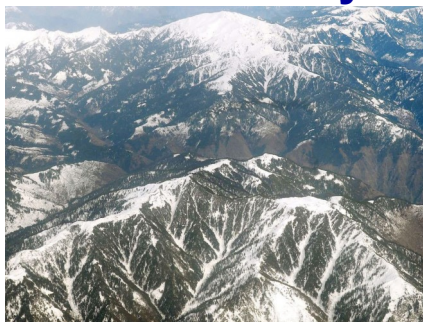
- The Asia Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering has retained Pakistan on "Enhanced Follow-Up" status for sufficient outstanding requirements.

- Of the 40 parameters, Pakistan improved in about 21 and was downgraded on one, the APG said.

- The APG is a regional affiliate of Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global watchdog against money laundering and terror financing.

World Food Safety Day - June 7

- World Food Safety Day (WFSD) celebrated on 7 June 2021 aims to draw attention and inspire action to help prevent, detect and manage foodborne risks, contributing to food security, human health, economic prosperity, agriculture, market access, tourism and sustainable development.

- This year's theme, 'Safe food today for a healthy tomorrow', stresses that production and consumption of safe food has immediate and long-term benefits for people, the planet and the economy.

- Recognizing the systemic connections between the health of people, animals, plants, the environment and the economy will help us meet the needs of the future.

Black carbon deposits are accelerating glaciers and snow melt in Himalayan ranges says World Bank

- Recent evidence suggests that in addition to changing temperatures and precipitation patterns, anthropogenic black carbon (BC) deposits — soot — are further accelerating glacier and snow melt in these mountain ranges.

- It is generated by human activity both inside and outside South Asia. It is part of a larger basket of aerosols that impact climate change directly and indirectly, according to Hartwig Schafer, vice president, South Asia Region, the World Bank.

- The study Glaciers of the Himalayas provides new evidence on the extent to which black carbon reduction policies by South Asian countries have an impact on glacier formation and melt in the Himalaya, Karakoram, and Hindu Kush mountain ranges within the context of the changing global climate.

- Countries in South Asia must work together to manage hydropower resources, an important source for the region's clean energy needs and a generator of energy trade and security.

- Unstable water flow from glacier melt and more variable precipitation underscore the need to stabilise availability over the longer term to make hydropower more viable, it said.

1,049 new species of flowering plants added to Tamil Nadu's flora

- Flowering Plants of Tamil Nadu, A Compendium, a book published by the Care Earth Trust, a Chennai-based biodiversity research organisation, has comprehensive details of flowering plants distributed across Tamil Nadu.

- At present, there are nearly 6,723 species of flowering plants, including wild and cultivated or invasive species, found in the State.

- Funded by the National Biodiversity Authority of India and the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Board, the book has exhaustive details, including nomenclature, flowering seasons, plants' life forms and other information on medicinal and horticultural significance.

- One of the worrisome trends is that 36% of the flowering plants in the State were cultivated or invasive species introduced, which may prove detrimental to the native varieties.

- Ipomoea Nil, a species of morning glory that was dense in the Nilgiris is becoming common in plains too

- Invasive alien species of flora, wattle trees introduced from Australia and lantana have covered hilly regions like Kodaikanal and Nilgiris, choking native species.

- Tamil Nadu is home to 292 endemic plant species, such as Impatiens Tamilnadensis at Theni Hills and Sonerila Kanniakumariana endemic to the Kanniyakumari Wildlife sanctuary.

- These species need conservation efforts.