

12-03-2024

Mahtari Vandan Yojana

Why in News?

- In a major boost to women empowerment in Chhattisgarh, The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 10th March 2024, launched the Mahatari Vandan Yojana and disbursed the first instalment under this scheme.



More About the News

- The scheme has been launched in Chhattisgarh to provide financial assistance of Rs 1000 per month to eligible married women of the state as monthly Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).
- It has been envisioned to ensure economic empowerment of women, provide them financial security, promote gender equality and strengthen the decisive role of women in the family.
- The scheme will provide benefits to all eligible married women of the state who are above 21 years of age as of January 1, 2024.
- Widows, divorced, and deserted women will

also be eligible for this scheme. Around 70 lakh women will benefit from the scheme.

- PM distributed the first installment of Mahatari Vandan Yojana amounting to overall Rs 655 crore.

Jal Shakti Abhiyan : Catch the Rain 2024 Campaign

Why in the News?

- The Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launched the fifth edition of "Jal Shakti Abhiyan : Catch the Rain" campaign on 9th March, 2024, at the NDMC Convention Centre in New Delhi.

More About the News

- The campaign, themed "Nari Shakti se Jal Shakti," emphasises the integral role of women in water conservation and management.
- The campaign comes under the National Water Mission, Department of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation in collaboration with Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation.
- Inspired by the Prime Minister's mantra of Jal Sanchay, the Ministry of Jal Shakti launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) in 2019 as a "Jan Andolan" to initiate water conservation at the grass-root level through citizen participation to accelerate water conservation across the country.
- JSA could not be implemented in 2020 due to restrictions imposed by Covid 19 pandemic and Ministry of Jal Shakti implemented 'Catch the Rain' (CTR) campaign.
- Ever since it was launched as "Jal Shakti Abhiyan : Catch The Rain" Campaign in 2021, it has become an annual feature



covering all the blocks of all districts (rural as well as urban areas) across the country .

- "Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain-2024" is the fifth addition in the JSA : CTR series which will be implemented from 9th March, 2024 to 30th November, 2024.
- JSA:CTR – 2024 is a testament to the Government's unwavering commitment towards water conservation and sustainable development, with 'Nari Shakti' playing a leading role in these efforts.

The Exercise Cutlass Express - 24 (CE – 24)

Why in the News?

- INS Tir, the lead ship of First Training Squadron (1TS) participated in Exercise Cutlass Express - 24 (CE – 24) held at Port Victoria, Seychelles from 26 Feb – 08 Mar 24.

More About the News

- The exercise was inaugurated by the President of Seychelles in attendance of dignitaries from India, USA and African countries.
- As part of Cutlass Express, the Indian Navy actively engaged with participants from 16 friendly foreign countries.
- The exercise culminated at a closing ceremony held at Seychelles Defence Academy.
- The Indian Navy has been participating in the exercise since 2019.
- The extant deployment of INS Tir at Seychelles and participation in exercise Cutlass Express underscores close ties between Indian Navy and the regional

Navies towards joint training fostering interoperability and building bridges of friendship.

India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement

Why in the News?

- India-European Free Trade Association (EFTA) signed a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) today i.e. on 10th March 2024.

More About the News

- India has been working on a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) with EFTA countries comprising Switzerland, Iceland, Norway & Liechtenstein.
- EFTA is an inter-governmental organization set up in 1960 for the promotion of free trade and economic integration for the benefit of its four Member States.
- India is signing FTA with four developed nations - an important economic bloc in Europe.
- Among EFTA countries, Switzerland is the largest trading partner of India followed by Norway.



Highlights of the Agreement :-

- For the first ever time in the history of FTAs, a legal commitment is being made about promoting target-oriented investment and creation of jobs.
- EFTA is offering 92.2% of its tariff lines which covers 99.6% of India's exports. The EFTA's market access offer covers 100% of non-agri products and tariff concession on Processed Agricultural Products (PAP).

- TEPA would stimulate our services exports in sectors of our key strength / interest such as IT services, business services, personal, cultural, sporting and recreational services, other education services, audio-visual services etc.
- India is offering 82.7% of its tariff lines which covers 95.3% of EFTA exports of which more than 80% import is Gold.
- TEPA has provisions for Mutual Recognition Agreements in Professional Services like nursing, chartered accountants, architects etc.



- India's interests in generic medicines and concerns related to evergreening of patents have been fully addressed.
- India signals its commitment to Sustainable development, inclusive growth, social development and environmental protection.
- It will foster transparency, efficiency, simplification, harmonization and consistency of trade procedures.
- TEPA will empower our exporters access to specialized inputs and create conducive trade and investment environment. This would boost exports of Indian made goods as well as provide opportunities for services sector to access more markets.
- TEPA will give impetus to "Make in India" and Atmanirbhar Bharat by encouraging domestic manufacturing in sectors such as Infrastructure and Connectivity, Manufacturing, Machinery, Pharmaceuticals, Chemicals, Food Processing, Transport and

Logistics, Banking and Financial Services and Insurance.

Significance of the India-EFTA TEPA

- The India-EFTA TEPA (Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement) holds significant importance as it aims to:
- Foster economic growth : By enhancing trade and economic cooperation between India and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) member countries.
- Expand market access: By reducing tariffs, addressing non-tariff barriers, and facilitating trade in goods and services, it opens up new opportunities for businesses on both sides.
- Promote investment : The agreement provides a conducive framework for investment, encouraging businesses to explore and expand their operations in India and EFTA countries.
- Strengthen diplomatic ties : By deepening economic relations, the TEPA contributes to strengthening overall diplomatic relations between India and the EFTA nations.
- Enhance geopolitical relations : The agreement underscores the mutual interest in fostering closer ties between India and the EFTA countries, contributing to broader geopolitical stability and cooperation.

1st Edition of Naval Commanders' Conference

Why in the News?

- The first edition of the Biannual Naval Commanders' Conference 2024 was conducted from 05 to 08 March 2024.

More About the News

- The Conference is an institutional forum that enables deliberations on important maritime security issues at the Military-Strategic level.
- The inaugural session of the Conference was held onboard the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya.
- On the sidelines of the conference, Naval Commanders also interacted with various

'Think Tanks' during a 'Sagar Manthan' event on 08 March 2024.

- The proceedings at New Delhi on 07-08 March 2024 included review of major operational, materiel, infrastructure, Logistics and personnel related initiatives.
- The forum provided an opportunity to engage with MSMEs, innovators and Academia to deliberate ways, means and novel avenues to further Aatmanirbharta initiatives and enhance self-reliance in defence production.

UNNATI (Uttar Poorva transformative Industrialization) Scheme

Why in the News?

- Prime Minister launched a new Industrial Development Scheme for North East, UNNATI (Uttar Poorva Transformative Industrialization Scheme) in Arunachal Pradesh. The Unnati Scheme aims to foster industrial development in the North East.

More About the News

- The scheme will strengthen the industrial ecosystem in the North East, attract new investment, help set up new manufacturing and services units and give a boost to employment in the northeastern States.
- This scheme, worth Rs. 10,000 crore, is fully funded by the Government of India and covers all 8 North Eastern States.
- The scheme will provide incentives for capital investment, interest subvention and a manufacturing & services linked incentive to the approved units.
- A portal is also being started for easy and transparent registration of eligible units.
- UNNATI will help catalyze industrial development and aid economic growth and development of the North East region. UNNATI scheme will bring new possibilities of investment and jobs in the North Eastern States.

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