



INNOVATIVE IAS

Daily News Analysis

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General studies-3

Indian Pharmacopoeia

Why in news?

- The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has formally recognised the Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP).
- It is a reputable book of standards for drugs. Now it will be used in Afghanistan to ensure quality of health products.

Indian Pharmacopoeia

- It is an officially recognized book of standards as per the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules 1945 thereunder.
- As per the Second Schedule of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, IP is designated as the official book of standards for drugs imported and/or manufactured for sale, stock or exhibition for sale or distribution in India.
- It specifies the standards of drugs manufactured and marketed in India in terms of their identity, purity and strength.
- Standards prescribed in the IP are authoritative in nature and are enforced by the regulatory authorities for quality control of medicines in India.
- It is being published as an official document for improving quality of medicines by way of adding new and updating existing monographs by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission.

European Green Deal

Why in news?

- In the background of the failure of the global community to reach any agreement in the recently concluded COP 25 the European Union (EU) has come up with a climate action plan known as the European Green Deal.

Key points:

- The European Union is the third-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the world after China and the United States.
- To become “climate neutral” by 2050 and to achieve this, a law will be brought which will be binding on all member countries. A law will turn the political commitment into a legal obligation and will trigger the investments as well.
- The EU is now the first major emitter to agree to the 2050 climate neutrality target laid down in the Paris Agreement.
- Climate neutrality is achieved when a country's emissions are balanced by absorptions and removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. It is also expressed as a state of net-zero emissions.



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- Absorption can be increased by creating more carbon sinks like forests, while removal involves technologies like carbon capture and storage.
- Increase the reduction in its emissions to at least 50% and work towards 55% in the near future.
- Earlier, the EU had committed to reduce its emissions by 40% by 2030 from 1990 levels under the Paris Agreement. This was already the most ambitious emission reduction targets among developed countries.
- The EU is one of the major emitters to retain the 1990 baseline for emission cuts which were originally mandated under the Kyoto Protocol for all developed countries. Most other countries have shifted their baselines to 2005 or even later under the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Echo Network:

Why in news?

- Government of India launched EChO Network, a national program to provide a template for cross-disciplinary leadership in India.

Key points:

- The network specifically focuses on increasing research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment.
- It was launched in New Delhi by Prof. K Vijay Raghavan, Principal Scientific Adviser to Centre. Currently, no such network is present anywhere in world, thereby, EChO Network establishes a new platform to change how science is embedded in our modern society.
- Founding Partners of EChO Network: Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Centre for Cellular and Molecular Platforms (C-CAMP), Hindustan Unilever Limited (HUL), India Climate Collaborative (ICC), RoundGlass and Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (ATREE).
- Objective: To bring together leaders and individuals working hard to make a positive difference for Indian ecosystem and to share knowledge and synergize their efforts under umbrella of science.
- India has recently undertaken many national-level efforts for promoting ecological and environmental research on subcontinent, however, there still remains a lacuna of trained scientists with interdisciplinary skills and collaborative mindset. Therefore, this network will inspire an entirely new approach to Indian education and exploration necessary for the post-technological world.
- EChO Network would develop a national network to catalyse a new generation of Indians who can synthesize interdisciplinary concepts with strong technological expertise and knowledge as well as tackle real-world problems in agriculture, medicine, technology and ecology.
- The Network will identify gaps in knowledge regarding selected topics in human and environmental ecosystems, with help of regular interactive sessions with citizens, industry,



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academia, and the government.

- The program will also train postdoctoral leaders in research and outreach on selected topics, while also incorporating current public and private efforts into a national network.
- Eventually, EChO Network intends to create an international distributed institute comprising of individuals housed within government, academic sectors, private, and, industry, thus combining their expertise and resources collectively to tackle large scale problems.

AH-64E Apache attack helicopters

Why in news?

- The deal for six AH-64E Apache attack helicopters for the Indian Army is to be signed.

Key points:

- Currently, the Army Aviation Corps operates only smaller Cheetah and ALH (Advanced Light Helicopters) that weigh less than five tonnes.
- These are in addition to 22 Apaches being inducted by the Indian Air Force (IAF) which will replace the Russian Mi-35 attack helicopters in service.

AH-64E Apache Attack Helicopter

- Better known as an attack helicopter are received from the Boeing production facility in Mesa, Arizona, USA.
- These are all-weather capable, easily maintainable and have high agility and survivability against battle damage.
- The capabilities of the AH-64E Apache Attack Helicopter includes:
 - It can carry out precision attacks at standoff ranges and operate in hostile airspace with threats from the ground.
 - It can transmit and receive battlefield picture through data uplinking and networking.
 - It can also shoot fire and forget anti-tank guided missiles, air to air missiles, rockets while providing versatility to helicopter in network-centric aerial warfare.
 - It also carries fire control radar, which has a 360° coverage and nose-mounted sensor suite for target acquisition and night vision systems.
 - The addition of the Apache Attack Helicopter is a significant step towards modernisation of Indian Air Force helicopter fleet and the Indian Army

Ethiopia

- Ethiopia launched its first satellite, 'Ethiopian Remote Sensing Satellite' (ETRSS) from China. ERSS is a remote-sensing microsatellite, that was launched in order to help African country's research into climate change.
- It was sent into space together with 8 other satellites by a Long March-4B carrier rocket from Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center (TSLC) in Shanxi Province of north China.
- This wide-range multispectral remote-sensing microsatellite weighs about 65 kg and has a



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design life of 2 years.

- The satellite was donated to Ethiopia by China and this microsatellite program has helped establish strong collaboration between Ethiopia and China.
- The satellite was designed by Chinese and Ethiopian engineers and Chinese government paid about \$6m of more than \$7m manufacturing costs.
- Application: The satellite data will be used for monitoring and analysis of agriculture, environment, drought, natural disasters, mineral exploration, weather forecasts and climate change.
- This launch makes Ethiopia the 11th African country to put a satellite into space and Egypt was the first in 1998

General studies-2

HunarHaat

Why in News?

The Ministry of Minority Affairs will organize more than 100 HunarHaat in the next five years. The move aims to increase employment opportunities to craftsmen, artisans and culinary experts and also to increase their market exposure.

Key points:

- The Ministry will organize HunarHaats in Chennai, Delhi, Kolakata, Bengaluru, Lucknow, Patna, Dehradun and Indore. The ministry has also sanctioned to set up more than 100 Hunar hubs in different parts of the country.
- The Ministry in its report said that more than 65,000 artisans and craftsmen have been employed through HunarHaats in the last 2 years.
- Indian Handicrafts have great recognition in international market. US and EU are the major destinations that account to 65% of export of Indian handicrafts. China is a new buyer. Other countries where Indian crafts have great market includes Israel, Uruguay, Columbia and Chile. In 2019, India exported 128 billion rupees worth handicrafts. Last year, it stood at 118 billion rupees. The increase is 9%.
- The GoI has taken several steps to develop the handicraft sector. Government set up Indian Institute of Carpet at Bhadohi. It also reduced interest rates to MUDRA loans provided to handicrafts and artisans. The custom duties and exercises that were paid for importing inputs of handicrafts were refunded through Duty Drawback Channel.

Asian Development Bank signed loan

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Government of India has signed a \$490 million loan for public-private partnership (PPP) project for upgradation of about 1,600 km of state highways and major district roads (MDRs) from single-lane to two-lane widths, with road safety features and all-weather standards in state of Madhya Pradesh.
- An additional \$286 million investment will be mobilised via private sector participation under



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PPP modality.

- The state highways and major district roads provide a crucial link between rural roads and national highways, therefore, the upgradation of these roads under project will improve rural and peri-urban connectivity in state as well as improve access to markets and better services.
- . This new project will further open a new partnership by introducing PPP via hybrid-annuity model (HAM), thereby leveraging government financing and improving sustainability of capital investments.
- The project will also develop an e-maintenance system, which can record defects or required maintenance, along with a training program to develop capacity on contract implementation and project finance in Madhya Pradesh Road Development Corporation (MPRDC).

Chabahar port

- India, Afghanistan and Iran met at New Delhi to discuss the issues in the implementation of Chabahar port in Iran. The port is considered as a gateway of opportunities with Central Asian Nations by all the three countries.
- The work of the Chabahar port is being conducted by the Port Global Ltd Company and the progress of the project was welcomed by all three countries.
- It was also agreed to include Mormugoa and New Mangalore ports of India under the Chabahar Agreement. It was also decided that a study will be conducted by Freight Forwarder Association in India to streamline the cargo transit in the country.
- The professionals of the meet also agree to finalize a protocol to harmonize transit of goods, consular matters and customs and till then the TIR convention is to be used.
- The meeting also high lightened that the port has handled 5 lakh tons of cargo in 2019. It includes exports from Afghanistan from the port that began in February 2019.
- The first meeting of the committee was held in October 2018
- The third meeting is to be held in the first half of 2020.

Panel for Legislature in Amaravati, HC in Kurnool

Why in News?

- The expert committee on development strategies for Andhra Pradesh has come out with its recommendations.

Key points:

The expert committee on development strategies for Andhra Pradesh has recommended the following:

- The Secretariat, the Chief Minister's camp office, summer Assembly and a High Court (HC) Bench be set up in the Visakhapatnam metropolitan region.
- The State Legislature, a HC Bench and the Governor and Ministers' quarters be set up in



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the 'Amaravati-Mangalagiri complex'.

- The High court and allied courts be situated in Kurnool.
- This is in line with the government's proposal of setting up legislative, executive and judicial capitals in Amaravati, Visakhapatnam and Kurnool respectively.
- The expert committee has stated that its recommendations have been made as per the terms of the Sribagh Pact.
- Sribagh Pact is an agreement made between the political leaders of Coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema regions during the “separate Andhra movement” in November 1937. The main aspect of the pact was that the Rayalseema region would be granted either the capital city or high court as a symbol of decentralization to overcome any doubts regarding the neglect of the region from the dominant coastal political leaders.
- Another significant recommendation is setting up of four commissionerates comprising Visakhapatnam-Srikakulam-Vizianagaram (north coastal), East Godavari-West Godavari-Krishna (central coastal), Guntur-Prakasam-Nellore (south coastal) and Anantapur-Chittoor-Kadapa-Kurnool (Rayalaseema) regions for the sake of administrative convenience on the lines of the pattern followed in Karnataka.
- There have been protests against the Chief Minister's proposal of three capital cities mainly by the farmers and people of the villages in and around Amaravati who had given up their lands for the proposed capital at Amaravati.

The import cover rose to 10 months

Why in News?

- With foreign exchange reserves rising to \$429.84 billion as at end of June 2019 from \$412.47 billion as at end March 2019, the import cover rose to 10 months compared with 9.6 months, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said in a report.

Key points:

- According to the latest data, India's foreign reserves stood at \$554 billion as on December 2019.
- The Foreign reserves of India consists of the following four categories (in decreasing proportion):
 - Foreign Currency Assets
 - Gold
 - Reserve Tranche Position
 - Special Drawing Rights(SDRs)
- Reserve Bank of India Act and the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 set the legal provisions for governing the foreign exchange reserves. The reserves are managed by the Reserve Bank of India for the Indian government.
- Foreign exchange reserves of India act as a cushion against rupee volatility once global interest rates start rising. Foreign-exchange reserves act as the first line of defence for India



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in case of economic slowdown, but acquisition of reserves has its own costs.

- Long-term government bond yields remained sticky despite surplus system liquidity and back-to-back policy rate cuts of 135 basis points by the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) between February-October 2019.
- Concerns on higher market borrowings by the government on risks of likely fiscal slippage have weighed on the bond yields.
- The yields on the 10-year benchmark government bond had risen by around 40 basis points since December 2019, when the Monetary Policy Committee took an unexpected pause on rate cuts on concerns of rising inflation.

Operation "Twist":

- Market experts had suggested unconventional steps by the central bank as policy rate cuts are unable to bring down the bank lending rates proportionately.
- There were suggestions that the Indian central bank must resort to measures like 'Operation Twist' to ease the long-term rates.
- RBI's Open Market Operations (OMO) mechanism allows it to manage liquidity conditions in the banking system by sale or purchase of government bonds via open auctions.
- Following the review of the liquidity status and market situation and an assessment of the financial conditions, the Reserve Bank has decided to conduct simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities under Open Market Operations (OMO) for 10,000 crore each.
- Operation Twist' is when the central bank uses the proceeds from sale of short-term securities to buy long-term government debt papers, leading to easing of interest rates on the long term papers.
- Under the OMO, RBI will sell four securities maturing in 2020 and will purchase the 6.45 percent government bond maturing in 2029.
- RBI said that it reserves the right to decide the quantum of the OMOs and may accept or reject any or all bids either wholly or partially without assigning reasons.

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