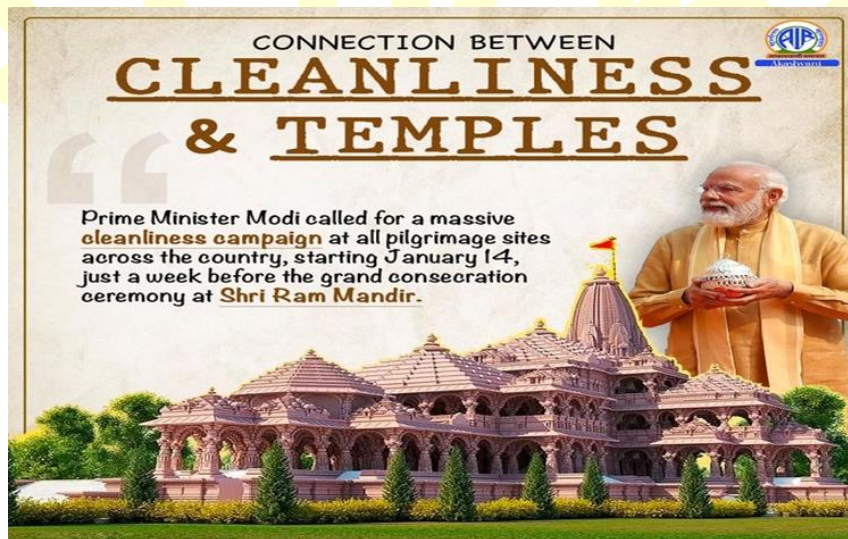


Daily Current Affairs

09 January 2024

'Swachh Mandir'

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has kicked off the 'Swachh Mandir' (Clean Temple) campaign across the country with an aim to make pilgrimage sites pristine.
- Prime Minister Modi launched the campaign, ahead of the upcoming consecration of the **Ram temple in Ayodhya on January 22**.
- In a video shared on Instagram, PM Modi called upon citizens to unite in making **Ayodhya the cleanest city in India**.
- He urged the people nationwide, to kick off a cleanliness campaign at smaller pilgrimage sites starting from Makar Sankranti (January 14) and continue until January 22.



- Addressing the residents of Ayodhya, Prime Minister Modi said, the people from across the nation will now visit Ayodhya regularly and therefore, the residents of Ayodhya should take a pledge to make **Ramnagari the cleanest city in India**.
- Emphasizing the inclusive nature of the initiative, PM Modi said Lord Ram belongs to everyone and when Lord Ram is coming, not a single temple or pilgrimage site should remain untidy.

- The **campaign will involve all elected representatives**, including MPs, MLAs, and panchayat representatives, who will collaborate to ensure the success of the cleanliness drive.
- Party functionaries have been tasked with identifying places of worship where the campaign will be launched ahead of the consecration ceremony.

Bilkis Bano case

- **Supreme Court quashed the Gujarat government's decision to grant remission to 11 convicts in the 2002 Bilkis Bano case.**
- A bench of **Justices BV Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan** said the Gujarat government was not the appropriate government to pass the remission order. **All 11 convicts were granted remission** by the Gujarat government and released on August 15, 2022.



- The Bilkis Bano case is a landmark case of gangrape and mass murder that occurred during the 2002 Gujarat riots in India.
- **Bilkis Bano, then a 21-year-old pregnant woman**, was raped and her family members were murdered during the riots that followed the Godhra train burning incident.
- The case was initially left unnoticed, but after persistent efforts by Bano and her supporters, the case was reopened and the perpetrators were brought to justice.

Inland Waterways Development Council Meeting

- Union Ports, Shipping and Waterways **Minister Sarbananda Sonowal** will chair the **first Inland Waterways Development Council** Meeting in Kolkata.
- During the meeting, Mr Sonowal, will unveil groundbreaking initiatives, **including Harit Nauka** - Guidelines for Green Transition of Inland Vessels and the River Cruise Tourism Roadmap 2047.



- The Ministry has set a target to elevate the modal share of Inland Water Transportation from the current two per cent to five percent, aligning with the goals outlined in the Maritime India Vision 2030.
- The **establishment of the Inland Waterways Development Council** in October last year underscores government's commitment to comprehensive development of inland waterways and the associated Inland Water Transport ecosystem for improved cargo efficiency, passenger movement and river cruise tourism.

Swedish Scientists Create 'E-soil'

- A groundbreaking development in agricultural technology has emerged from the laboratories of **Linköping University in Sweden**.
- Scientists have unveiled an **electrically conductive "soil"** engineered to foster exceptional growth in crops, particularly barley seedlings, marking a **potential 50 per cent surge in growth** within a mere 15-day period.
- This innovative **soilless cultivation method, termed hydroponics**, harnesses a sophisticated root system activated through a **novel cultivation substrate**. With

hydroponics, the prospect of cultivating food in urban landscapes under meticulously controlled conditions becomes a tangible reality.



- Linköping University's Prof. Stavrinidou highlights the crucial importance of their breakthrough amidst global challenges, stating, '**Growing world population and climate change** show existing agricultural methods alone can't sustain our planet's food needs.
- In **hydroponic cultivation, plants thrive sans soil**, reliant solely on water, nutrients, and a supportive substrate for root attachment. This enclosed system facilitates water recycling, ensuring precise nutrient delivery to each seedling.



- Consequently, **minimal water usage** and optimal nutrient retention distinguish hydroponics from conventional methods.
- Moreover, the vertical cultivation potential of hydroponics, using towering structures, maximizes space efficiency.
- Traditionally, **mineral wool serves as the cultivation substrate** in hydroponics. However, this non-biodegradable material entails an energy-intensive production process, prompting researchers to seek sustainable alternatives.
- eSoil: a pioneering electronic **cultivation substrate** fashioned from **cellulose**, the most abundant biopolymer, combined with a conductive polymer known as **PEDOT**.
- While the blend isn't novel per se, its unprecedented application in plant cultivation and the creation of a plant interface mark a groundbreaking stride.

India-Guyana Hydrocarbon Sector Collaboration

- **Union Cabinet**, led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India's **Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas** and the **Ministry of Natural Resources in the Republic of Guyana**.
- The MoU aims to **foster collaboration in the hydrocarbon sector**, covering various aspects of the value chain.
- **Crude Oil Sourcing**: Involving India's engagement in sourcing crude oil from Guyana.



- **Exploration and Production (E&P) Sector**: Enabling Indian companies' participation in Guyana's Exploration and Production sector.

- **Oil Refining:** Collaborating in the refining of crude oil.
- **Capacity Building:** Initiatives for skill development and capacity building in the hydrocarbon sector.
- **Bilateral Trade:** Strengthening bilateral trade relations between the two countries.
- **Natural Gas Sector:** Cooperation in the exploration and development of natural gas resources.
- **Regulatory Policy Framework:** Collaboration in developing a regulatory policy framework in Guyana's oil & gas sector.



- **Clean Energy:** Collaboration in clean energy areas such as biofuels and solar energy.
- **Expected Impact** The signing of this MoU is expected to have significant effects:
- **Diversification of Crude Oil Sources:** India aims to diversify its crude oil sources by engaging in Guyana's hydrocarbon sector, enhancing energy and supply security.
- **Global Experience for Indian Companies:** Indian companies will gain valuable experience by collaborating with global oil & gas entities in upstream projects.
- This collaboration aligns with **India's vision of self-reliance in the hydrocarbon sector.**
- **Implementation and Duration** The MoU will be effective for an initial five-year period, automatically renewing thereafter on a quinquennium basis, unless either party provides a written three-month notice in advance of termination.

International Purple Fest 2024

- In a groundbreaking initiative, **the International Purple Fest – Goa 2024**, India's inaugural inclusive festival for **persons with disabilities**.
- The festival, **organized by the Office of the State Commissioner** of Persons with Disabilities, Government of Goa, and supported by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, showcases unity and diversity in a spectacular display.



- **Purple Ambassadors:** 22 esteemed ambassadors representing the 21 types of disabilities listed under the RPwD Act, 2016, and Spinal Cord Injury.
- **Purple Anthem 'Dhumal':** A standout moment featuring PwDs and revered creators from the Indian Music Industry, emphasizing inclusivity and unity.
- **Initiatives Launch:** The launch of various initiatives by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and the Government of Goa.
- With an expected **global turnout of over 8,000 delegates**, the International Purple Fest promises to be a global celebration of diversity, inclusivity, and empowerment. Stay tuned for updates on this extraordinary journey towards a more inclusive future.

India Maldives

- A **row erupted on social media** last week when a minister and some other leaders in the Maldives used derogatory remarks against PM Modi after he posted a video of him on a beach in Lakshadweep.
- The **post by Mariyam Shiuna** – which has now been deleted – featured the pictures of PM Modi from his recent visit to Lakshadweep. The Deputy Minister

of Youth Empowerment, Information and Arts, referred to the Indian prime minister as a 'clown' and a 'puppet of Israel'.



- **PM Modi's visit to the country's smallest Union Territory** comprising 36 islands was seen a move to promote tourism on the island.
- In the tweets, the ministers used derogatory words against **PM Modi, accused India of targeting Maldives**, and said India faces significant challenges in competing with the Maldives in beach tourism.
- The **Maldivian Foreign Ministry** said they were aware of the “**derogatory remarks** on social media platforms against foreign leaders and high-ranking individuals”, adding that “these opinions are personal and do not represent the views of the Government of Maldives.”



- **Ministers Mariyam Shiuna, Malsha Shareef and Mahzoom Majid** were suspended with immediate effect, hours after the Maldives government distanced itself from the remarks made by the ministers.
- Strongly condemning the comments by the ministers, former Maldives President Mohamed Nasheed asked the incumbent President Mohamed Muizzu to tell the world that the comments by the ministers "do not reflect government policy".

- "What appalling language by Maldives government official Mariyam Shiuna towards the leader of a key ally, that is instrumental for Maldives' security and prosperity. The Mohamed Muizzu government must distance itself from these comments and give clear assurance to India they do not reflect government policy," Mr Nasheed said in a post on X.

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Objective Of 'Swachh Mandir' Campaign Launched By PM Modi

- A. To Promote Pilgrimage Tourism
- B. To Ensure Cleanliness At Pilgrimage Sites
- C. To Conduct Religious Ceremonies
- D. To Organize Cultural Events

ANSWER: B

2. What Is The Significance Of The 'Harit Nauka' Initiative

- A. Guidelines For Eco-friendly Vessel Production
- B. River Cleaning Campaign
- C. Promotion Of Maritime Tourism
- D. Green Transition Of Inland Vessels

ANSWER: D

3. What Is The Composition Of Electronic Cultivation Substrate, 'E Soil'

- A. Plastic and Metal
- B. Mineral Wool
- C. Cellulose and PEDOT
- D. Cellulose

ANSWER: C

4. Term For Soilless Cultivation Method Developed By Linkoping University

- A. Aeroponics
- B. Hydroponics
- C. Geoponics
- D. Aquaponics

ANSWER: B

5. International Purple Fest 2024 Inaugurated In

- A. Punjab
- B. Goa
- C. Andhra Pradesh
- D. Uttar Pradesh

ANSWER: B

6. Which Indian State's Wancho Wooden Craft Recently Received A GI Tag

- A. Odisha
- B. Kerala
- C. Arunachal Pradesh
- D. Rajasthan

ANSWER: C

7. Name Of Robotic System Introduced By Stanford University To Enhance Bimanual Mobile Manipulation Capabilities

- A. Mobile ALOHA
- B. NanoBot X
- C. Quantum GRIP
- D. ManipuBOT

ANSWER: A

8. Who Has Become First Woman Director General Of Police In Maharashtra

- A. Rashmi Shukla
- B. Subhashini Sankaran
- C. Sangeeta Kalia
- D. Meera Borwankar

ANSWER: A

9. On Which Date Is The World Day Of War Orphans Observed

- A. January 3
- B. January 4
- C. January 5
- D. January 6

ANSWER: D

10. Which Country Declares January 5 As National Bird Day

- A. United Kingdom
- B. Canada
- C. Australia
- D. United States of America

ANSWER: D

11. Who Has Been Appointed As The Executive Director Of The Asian Development Bank

- A. Amitabh Kant
- B. Vikas Sheel
- C. Anuj Singh
- D. Narinder Batra

ANSWER: B

12. Indian Government To Establish 'Bharat Park,' Trade Zone For Showcasing And Storing Indian Goods

- A. Singapore
- B. UAE
- C. UK
- D. Australia

ANSWER: B

13. What Significant Milestone Have Researchers From IIT Madras And Mandi Achieved In The Field Of Biotechnology

- A. Genetic Modification of Animals
- B. Development of New Fertilizers
- C. Enhanced Crop Yield Techniques
- D. Production of the anti-cancer drug

ANSWER: D

14. Who Has Been Appointed As CEO Of Indian Olympic Association

- A. Suresh Kalmadi
- B. Raghuram Iyer
- C. Karthik Gupta
- D. Bhalindra Singh

ANSWER: B

15. Who Has Been Appointed As The Executive Director Of SEBI

- A. Amar Lal Daultani
- B. G Ram Mohan Rao
- C. M S Raghavan
- D. Shikha Sharma

ANSWER: B

16. Nationality Of Beatrice Chebet Broke World Record For Women's 5 Km Marathon At The Cursa Dels Nassos In Barcelona

- A. Ethiopia
- B. Jamaica
- C. Morocco
- D. Kenya

ANSWER: D

17. Which Organization Has Developed 'National Single Window System' To Simplify Import Of Medical Devices In India

- A. Wipro
- B. Infosys
- C. HCL Technologies
- D. TCS

ANSWER: D

18. Who Recently Become 1st Woman With A \$100 Billion Fortune, According To The Bloomberg Billionaires Index

- A. Françoise Bettencourt Meyers
- B. Mary Johnson
- C. Elena Rodriguez
- D. Sophia Wang

ANSWER: A

19. Which Company Is First In India To Receive ISCC-Plus Certification

- A. Indian Oil Corporation
- B. Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited
- C. Reliance Industries
- D. Tata Motors

ANSWER: C

20. ISRO Has Partnered With Which Company To Promote Space-tech Startups In India

- A. Tesla
- B. Microsoft
- C. Google
- D. Apple

ANSWER: B