

22 August 2019: UPSC Exam PIB Summary & Analysis

MoU between AWHO and Tata Realty

Context

- A historic milestone was reached with the signing of an MoU between the Indian Army and Tata Realty & Housing

About the MOU

- The MoU enables the personnel of Indian Army to immediately take over dwelling units in 13 'Ready to Move in' projects of Tata Realty pan India spread over 10 cities including Gurugram, Chennai, Bengaluru, Pune among others at a discount.
- This also heralds a new era for the Army Welfare Housing Organization (AWHO), which has always endeavoured to provide quality housing for Army personnel who are deployed in remote locations across the country.
- AWHO will now facilitate the acquisition of homes from reputed private builders at discounted rather than building them for the soldiers.

Dr Ajay Kumar appointed Defence Secretary

Context

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Dr Kumar who will replace Shri Sanjay Mitra.

Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC)

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) decides appointments to several top posts under the Government of India.
- The committee is composed of the Prime Minister of India (who is the Chairman), and the Minister of Home Affairs.
- Originally the Minister-in-charge of the concerned Ministry was also the part of the committee but as per the new notification (2016) the minister of concerned ministry has been excluded from the committee.

Sabka Vishwas - Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme

Context

- In the Union Budget 2019-20, the Hon'ble Finance Minister announced the Sabka Vishwas-Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme, 2019.

About the Scheme

- The two main components of the Scheme are dispute resolution and amnesty.
 - The dispute resolution component is aimed at liquidating the legacy cases of Central Excise and Service Tax that are subsumed in GST and are pending in litigation at various forums.
 - The amnesty component of the Scheme offers an opportunity to the taxpayers to pay the outstanding tax and be free of any other consequence under the law.
 - The most attractive aspect of the Scheme is that it provides substantial relief in the tax dues for all categories of cases as well as full waiver of interest, fine and penalty.
 - As the objective of the Scheme is to free as large a segment of the taxpayers from the legacy taxes as possible, the relief given thereunder is substantial.
 - The Scheme is specially tailored to free a large number of small taxpayers of their pending disputes with the tax administration.
 - Government urges the taxpayers and all concerned to avail the SabkaVishwas - Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme, 2019 and make a new beginning.
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Meeting of Western Zonal Council

Context

- Union Minister for Home Affairs, Shri Amit Shah chaired the 24th meeting of the Western Zonal Council at Panaji (Goa)

About Zonal Councils

- The five Zonal Councils - Western, Eastern, Northern, Southern and Central - were set up under the States Reorganization Act, 1956 to foster Inter-State co-operation and co-ordination among the States.
 - The Zonal Councils are mandated to discuss and make recommendations on any matter of common interest in the field of economic and social planning, border disputes, linguistic minorities or inter-State transport etc.
 - They are regional fora of cooperative endeavour for States linked with each other economically, politically and culturally.
 - Being compact high-level bodies, specially meant for looking after the interests of respective Zones, they are capable of focusing attention on specific issues taking into account regional factors while keeping the national perspective in view.
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Proposal to declare ocean energy as Renewable Energy

Context

- In a decision that would give a boost to the ocean energy in India, Union Minister of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy (IC) and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship, Shri RK Singh approved a proposal to declare ocean energy as Renewable Energy.

Significance of Ocean energy

- Oceans cover 70 per cent of the earth's surface and represent an enormous amount of energy in the form of wave, tidal, marine current and thermal gradient.
- A variety of different technologies are currently under development throughout the world to harness

this energy in all its forms.

- Deployment is currently limited but the sector has the potential to grow, fuelling economic growth, reduction of carbon footprint and creating jobs not only along the coasts but also inland along its supply chains.
- India has a long coastline with the estuaries and gulfs. MNRE looks over the horizon at development of new technology and considers the various options available to support its deployment.
- The objective of the technology programme is to accelerate and enhance support for the resource assessment and deployment of ocean energy in the country and to harness it for power generation and to overcome the barriers.
- The potential locations identified at Khambhat & Kutch regions, and large backwaters, where barrage technology could be used.
- The total theoretical potential of wave energy in India along the country's coast is estimated to less intensive than what is available in more northern and southern latitudes.
- Although currently under-utilised, Ocean energy is mostly exploited by just a few technologies: Wave, Tidal, Current Energy and Ocean Thermal Energy.

Tidal Energy

- The tidal cycle occurs every 12 hours due to the gravitational force of the moon. The difference in water height from low tide and high tide is potential energy.
- Similar to traditional hydropower generated from dams, tidal water can be captured in a barrage across an estuary during high tide and forced through a hydro-turbine during low tide.
- The Gulf of Cambay and the Gulf of Kutch in Gujarat on the west coast have the locations in the country where the potential exists.

Wave Energy

- Wave energy is generated by the movement of a device either floating on the surface of the ocean or moored to the ocean floor. Many different techniques for converting wave energy to electric power have been studied.
- Wave conversion devices that float on the surface have joints hinged together that bend with the waves. This kinetic energy pumps fluid through turbines and creates electric power.
- Stationary wave energy conversion devices use pressure fluctuations produced in long tubes from the waves swelling up and down. This bobbing motion drives a turbine when critical pressure is reached.

Current Energy

- Marine current is ocean water moving in one direction. This ocean current is known as the Gulf Stream.
- Tides also create currents that flow in two directions. Kinetic energy can be captured from the Gulf Stream and other tidal currents with submerged turbines that are very similar in appearance to miniature wind turbines.

Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC)

- Ocean thermal energy conversion, or OTEC, uses ocean temperature differences from the surface to depths lower than 1,000 meters, to extract energy. A temperature difference of only 20°C can yield usable energy.
- Research focuses on two types of OTEC technologies to extract thermal energy and convert it to electric power: closed cycle and open cycle.
- In the closed cycle method, a working fluid, such as ammonia, is pumped through a heat exchanger and vaporized. This vaporized steam runs a turbine.
- The cold water found at the depths of the ocean condenses the vapour back to a fluid where it returns

to the heat exchanger.

- In the open cycle system, the warm surface water is pressurized in a vacuum chamber and converted to steam to run the turbine. The steam is then condensed using cold ocean water from lower depths.

San-Sadhan Hackathon

Context

- The government calls for applications for its latest initiative under the Swachh Bharat Mission called the 'San-Sadhan' Hackathon.

About the initiative

- It is an initiative to ease the lives of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) by making toilets smarter, more accessible, and easier to use
- In this hackathon, the government is looking for smart, scalable and innovative solutions for economical toilets for individual and community use in rural and urban contexts
- The initiative is being organized jointly by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, in collaboration with Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and 91springboard.
- The Hackathon invites researchers, start-ups, student innovators, technology enthusiasts, and industry experts to participate.
- This hackathon is a great opportunity to win exciting prizes and get handholding and mentoring support by the ministry, industry experts and ecosystem enablers.
- The applicants will be showcasing their innovations on the final day of the hackathon and the winners shall be felicitated during the valedictory function which is slated to be held in mid-September.

Composite Water Management Index 2.0

Context

- NITI Aayog will release the second Round of Composite Water Management Index (CWMI 2.0)

About Composite Water Management Index

- The CWMI is an important tool to assess and improve the performance of States and Union Territories inefficient management of water resources.
- This has been done through a first of its kind water data collection exercise in partnership with Ministry of Jal Shakti, Ministry of Rural Development and all the States/ Union Territories.
- The index would provide useful information for the States and also for the concerned Central Ministries/Departments enabling them to formulate and implement suitable strategies for better management of water resources.
- CWMI 2.0 ranks various states for the reference year 2017-18 as against the base year 2016-17.
- NITI Aayog first launched and conceptualized the Composite Water Management Index in 2018 as a tool to instil the sense of cooperative and competitive federalism among the states.
- This was a first-ever attempt at creating a pan-India set of metrics that measured different dimensions of water management and use across the lifecycle of water.

- The report was widely acknowledged and provided actionable guidance to States on where they were doing well absolutely and relatively and what they needed to focus on to secure their water future.

