



19 July 2024

National and International News

<p><b>Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovation (CEPI)</b></p>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The <b>Union Minister for Science &amp; Technology</b> recently <b>inaugurated Asia's first "Pre-clinical Network Facility"</b> for health research in Faridabad.</li> <li>This facility is established under the <b>Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>About CEPI:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Launch and Founders:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched in <b>2017</b>.</li> <li>An <b>innovative partnership</b> between public, private, philanthropic, and civil organisations.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Founded in Davos, Switzerland by:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Governments of Norway and India</li> <li>Bill &amp; Melinda Gates Foundation</li> <li>Wellcome Trust</li> <li>World Economic Forum</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Mission:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Accelerate the development of vaccines</b> and other <b>biologic countermeasures against epidemic</b> and pandemic threats.</li> <li>Ensure accessibility to all people in need.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Achievements:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supported the development of over 50 vaccine candidates or platform technologies.</li> <li><b>Targets multiple known high-risk pathogens and potential future threats like Disease X.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Pandemic-Beating Plan (2022-2026):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Central goal:</b> '100 Days Mission.'</li> <li><b>Aim:</b> Compress the time to develop safe, effective, globally accessible vaccines against new threats to just 100 days.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Ind-CEPI Mission:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implemented by the <b>Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology</b>.</li> <li><b>Focus:</b> Epidemic preparedness through rapid vaccine development.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Program Management:</b> Managed through a dedicated Program Management Unit (PMU) at <b>Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MV Sea Change</b></p>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>MV Sea Change</b>, the world's first commercial passenger ferry powered entirely by hydrogen fuel, was recently launched at the <b>San Francisco Ferry Building</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>About MV Sea Change:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>World's First Zero-Emission Hydrogen Fuel Cell Ferry:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The ferry is powered entirely by <b>zero-emission hydrogen fuel cells</b>.</li> <li>○ Built by <b>All American Marine Shipyard</b> for SWITCH Maritime.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Specifications and Performance:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Capacity: 75 passengers.</li> <li>○ Hydrogen-powered fuel cells produce electricity for electric motors.</li> <li>○ Operational endurance: About 16 hours.</li> <li>○ Travel range: Around 300 nautical miles between refueling.</li> <li>○ Maximum speed: 20 knots.</li> <li>○ Service speed: 8-12 knots.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Technology and Environmental Impact:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Uses H2 fuel cells combining hydrogen from storage tanks and oxygen from the ambient air</b> to generate electricity.</li> <li>○ <b>Byproducts:</b> Only heat and water vapor, no pollutants.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)</b></p>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The government aims to boost the capital base of the <b>National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)</b> to <b>1 trillion</b> with support from banks.</li> </ul> <p><b>About NaBFID:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Establishment:</b> Set up in 2021 by the <b>National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Act, 2021</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Nature:</b> Specialized Development Finance Institution in India.</li> <li>• <b>Objectives:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Address gaps in long-term non-recourse finance</b> for infrastructure development.</li> <li>○ Strengthen the <b>development of bonds and derivatives markets</b> in India.</li> <li>○ Sustainably boost the country's economy.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Regulation:</b> Regulated and <b>supervised by the RBI</b> as an <b>All-India Financial Institution (AIFI)</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Purpose:</b> Provide a dedicated and specialized institution focused on <b>addressing the long-term financing needs of the infrastructure sector in India</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Common Services Centres Special Purpose Vehicle</b></p>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Common Services Centres Special Purpose Vehicle (CSC SPV)</b> recently celebrated its <b>15th anniversary</b>.</li> </ul>



	<p><b>About Common Services Centres Special Purpose Vehicle:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Initiative of MeitY:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Incorporated under the <b>Companies Act, 1956</b>.</li> <li>○ Monitored by the <b>Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Mission Mode Project:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Part of the <b>Digital India Programme</b>.</li> <li>○ Ensures <b>systemic viability and sustainability of the scheme</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Service Delivery:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Acts as front-end delivery points</b> for government, private, and social sector services.</li> <li>○ <b>Provides a centralized collaborative framework for service delivery</b> through <b>CSCs</b>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Access Points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Delivers various <b>electronic services to villages</b>.</li> <li>○ Contributes to a <b>digitally and financially inclusive society</b>.</li> <li>○ Provides essential public utility services, social welfare schemes, healthcare, financial, education, and agriculture services.</li> <li>○ <b>Offers a range of B2C services to rural and remote areas</b>.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Late Blight Disease</b></p>	<p><b>Why in the news?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>Central Potato Research Institute (CPRI)</b> has issued an advisory to potato farmers nationwide, <b>warning of a high risk of late blight disease</b> in their crops <b>due to changing weather conditions</b>.</li> </ul> <p><b>About Late Blight Disease:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Transmission:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Spread from infected transplants</b>, volunteer potato/tomato plants, and related weeds.</li> <li>○ <b>Airborne spores</b> can travel long distances in storms.</li> <li>○ <b>Rain deposits</b> spores on plants, leading to infection.</li> <li>○ <b>Favored by cool, wet weather</b> and cycles repeatedly under favorable conditions.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Symptoms:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Leaves, Petioles, and Stems:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Lesions appear as round or irregular dark green to purplish-black areas, resembling frost injury.</li> <li>■ <b>Whitish growth of spore-producing structures</b> may be seen at lesion margins on under-leaf surfaces.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <b>Potato Tubers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Rot up to 15 mm (0.6 inch) deep.</li> <li>■ <b>Secondary fungi and bacteria</b> (particularly <i>Erwinia</i> species) often invade, causing significant rotting and losses during storage, transit, and</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>



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marketing.

- **Management:**
  - Timely application of fungicide is effective.
  - Rapid epidemics can occur once crops are infected.

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