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01 July 2024

National & International News

<p>Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (SAUBHAGYA)</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Meghalaya Lokayukta has issued notifications to the former chief secretary and other former officials of the Meghalaya Energy Corporation Limited (MeECL) regarding alleged irregularities in the implementation of the Saubhagya scheme in the state. <p>About Saubhagya scheme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch Date: October 2017 Objective: Universal household electrification by providing electricity connections to all un-electrified households in rural areas and poor households in urban areas. Last-Mile Connectivity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electricity connections to all un-electrified households in rural areas. Free connections for BPL families in rural areas, including LED bulbs, wire, holders, switches, etc. Non-BPL families in rural areas: Connection cost of Rs. 500, payable in 10 installments of Rs. 50. Urban Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Free power connections to BPL families. Non-poor urban households are excluded from the scheme. Remote Areas: Solar Photo Voltaic (SPV)-based standalone systems for households in remote and inaccessible villages/habitations where grid extension is not feasible or cost-effective. Identification of Beneficiaries: Beneficiaries for free electricity connections identified using Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011 data. Nodal Agency: Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) designated as the nodal agency for the Saubhagya scheme.
<p>Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) Exercise</p>	<p>Why in the news?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indian multi-role stealth frigate INS Shivalik, which has been mission-deployed in the South China Sea and North Pacific Ocean, has arrived at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii to participate in the Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise. <p>About RIMPAC Exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event: World's largest international maritime exercise. Location: Hawaii. Objective: Enhance interoperability and build trust among navies of friendly foreign countries. Theme: Partners: Integrated and Prepared.



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- **Duration:** Until August 1, 2024.
- **Leadership:** Led by the US Navy.
- **Participation:** Approximately 29 countries.

Interest Equalisation Scheme

Why in the news?

- The **Department of Commerce** has extended the **Interest Equalisation Scheme** for pre- and post-shipment rupee export credit for **Micro, Small, and Medium-scale (MSME) exporters** until August 31.

About Interest Equalisation Scheme:

- **Implementation Date:** First implemented on 1st April 2015.
- **Purpose:** Provides pre- and post-shipment export credit to exporters in rupees.
- **Initial Validity:** Initially valid for 5 years, up to 31st March 2020.
- **Extensions:**
 - Extended during COVID for one year.
 - Further extensions and fund allocations have been made.
- **Implementing Agency:**
 - Implemented by the **RBI through various public and non-public sector banks**.
 - Banks provide pre- and post-shipment credit to exporters.
- **Monitoring:** Jointly monitored by the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** and the **RBI** through a consultative mechanism.
- **Objective:**
 - **Helps identified export sectors** be internationally competitive.
 - **Aims to achieve a high level of export performance.**

Artificial Intelligence Preparedness Index (AIPI)

Why in the news?

- The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** has recently released an **Artificial Intelligence Preparedness Index (AIPI) Dashboard**. This dashboard aims to evaluate and rank countries based on their readiness to adopt and integrate artificial intelligence technologies.

About AIPI:

- **Assessment Coverage:** The index assesses AI preparedness across 174 countries.
- **Rating Criteria:** Ratings are based on readiness in **four key areas:**
 - Digital infrastructure
 - Human capital and labour market policies
 - Innovation and economic integration
 - Regulation and ethics
- **Country Categorisation:**
 - Advanced Economy (AE)



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- Emerging Market Economy (EM)
- Low-Income Country (LIC)
- **Top Rated Advanced Economy:**
 - Singapore: 0.80
 - Denmark: 0.78
 - United States: 0.77
- **India's Rating and Ranking:**
 - Categorised as Emerging Market Economy
 - Rating: 0.49
 - Rank: 72 out of 174 countries
- **Other Countries' Ratings and Rankings:**
 - China: 0.63 (Rank 31)
 - Sri Lanka: 0.43 (Rank 92)
 - Bangladesh: 0.38 (Rank 113)

National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) and Spot Food Licence Initiative

Why in the news?

- The **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare** has launched several initiatives to enhance healthcare quality and promote wellness.
- These include the **National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) assessment**, a **Dashboard for Indian Public Health Standards (IPHS)**, and the **Spot Food Licence Initiative**, all aimed at providing "Healthcare for All."

About NQAS:

- **Launch and Compliance:** Launched for **Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (AAM)** and **Integrated Public Health Laboratories (IPHL)**.
- **IPHS Digital Platform:**
 - **Real-time monitoring** of public health facilities.
 - Provides a **comprehensive overview of assessment and compliance status**.
- **Spot Food Licence Initiative:**
 - **Purpose:** **Instant issuance of licenses and registrations** through the pan-India IT platform, **Food Safety and Compliance System (FoSCoS)**.
 - **Regulatory Framework:** Supplements existing procedures under the **Food Safety and Standards (Licensing and Registration of Food Businesses) Regulation, 2011**.
 - **Instant Issuance Categories:**
 - Wholesalers
 - Distributors
 - Retailers
 - Transporters



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- Storage without atmospheric control + cold
- Importers
- Food vending agencies
- Direct sellers
- Merchant-exporters
- **Exclusions:**
 - Milk
 - Meat
 - Fish

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