

NEWS TODAY

US POSTPONES G7 SUMMIT, WANTS INDIA, OTHERS TO JOIN GROUP

- US President has suggested **expansion of the Group of Seven (G7)**, calling G7 a “very outdated group” which doesn't properly represent “what’s going on in the world.”
- He called for **inclusion of India, Australia, South Korea, and Russia in G7.**
 - Becoming member of grouping would add to **India’s rising global profile and its emerging role as decision maker at global level.**

About G7

- It is an intergovernmental organisation formed in 1975 by the top economies of the time as **an informal forum to discuss pressing world issues** such as global economic governance, international security, and energy policy.
 - It is different from G20 which is a broader group that focuses on the global economy
- G7 members are **United States, Britain, France, Japan, Germany, Italy and Canada.**
 - Russia joined the group in 1998, making G7 to be known as the G8, but was suspended in 2014 after its annexed Crimea from Ukraine.
- **Challenges to G7** include **internal disagreements, no G7 members from Africa, Latin America or the southern hemisphere and rise of India and China.**



HOW A LOW PRESSURE IN THE ARABIAN SEA CAN AFFECT THE MONSOON

- IMD forecasted that development of a low-pressure area in Arabian Sea in the first week of June is expected to give a boost to southwest monsoon in its advance over India.
- **Anti-clockwise winds** of a depressions might pull monsoon trough towards India, making conditions favourable for the onset.
 - Direction of winds around a low-pressure system in northern hemisphere is cyclonic (anti-clockwise) due to rotation of earth.

Impact of Cyclonic circulation on Monsoon

- While such depressions are normal during the advent of monsoon and usually aid monsoon’s advent and progress in India, it is **not necessary that a cyclone would always have positive impact on monsoon.**
- For instance, last year, **Cyclone Vayu had formed**, just after the onset of monsoon over Kerala. Monsoon winds were not able to move forward till the dissipation of the cyclone and the rains were arrested in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- Thus, it is the **track of cyclonic system that determines whether Indian subcontinent will receive rains or not.** So, if low-pressure system moves away from mainland, subcontinent may not receive much rains during the onset.

TRADE WAR, THEN TECH WAR, AND NOW CAPITAL WAR

- **Trade war:** since 2018, **US and China imposed additional tariffs on goods imported from other country**, meaning buyers in opposing country needed to pay higher import taxes to bring their purchases into country.
- **Technology war:** It is led by a charge against Chinese telecom giant Huawei by US. Huawei is leading the next 5G stage of telecom evolution.
 - US also **denied Huawei ability to use its popular apps** such as Gmail and **access to its technologies**, such as operating systems and chips.
 - 5G is a crucial component of Fourth Industrial Revolution, which also includes technologies such as AI, robotics, autonomous vehicles, IoT.
- **Capital war:** US Senate has passed a **Bill to delist Chinese firms from US stock markets.** Chinese companies have a significant weight in US stock markets, and delisting will hurt these companies, and China.
 - In response, China is introducing crypto currency backed by gold, to counter dominance of the US Dollar.
- These three reflects **changing nature of US and China’s face off to achieve the** global hegemony and are expected to impact global trade, global supply chain, global capital movement and global trust.

GOVERNMENT INCLUDES ADDITIONAL MINOR FOREST PRODUCE (MFP) ITEMS IN MSP LIST

- Tribal ministry announced inclusion under **“Mechanism for Marketing of MFP through Minimum Support price (MSP) and development of Value Chain of MFP” Scheme.**
 - It **enhanced coverage from 50 to 73 items.**
 - Earlier in May, MSP revisions for existing 50 MFPs were announced.
- It is expected to benefit tribals residing in dense forest areas, especially those in North-eastern states.

About the scheme

- Scheme was introduced in 2013 as centrally sponsored scheme.
- **Objectives of Scheme:**
 - To **provide fair price to MFP gatherers**
 - To ensure **sustainable harvesting of MFPs.**
 - It will **have a huge social dividend for MFP gatherers**, majority of whom are tribals.
- MSP would be determined based **on cost of collection, cost of cleaning and primary processing, packaging and transportation cost for each state.**
- It has provisions to bridge last mile connectivity between **tribals and markets through activation of Haat bazars by strengthening of grassroots infrastructure for MFP procurement**, storage, transportation, marketing etc.
 - For marketing of these products **‘Van Dhan Vikas Karyakram’** was launched in 2018.
- **TRIFED is nodal agency** for implementation of scheme.

PM CARES FUND NOT A PUBLIC AUTHORITY UNDER RTI ACT

- Prime Minister's Office (PMO) states that Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund (PM CARES Fund) is **not a 'public authority' under Section 2(h) of the Right to Information Act, 2005.**
 - > Earlier, PMO denied information under RTI citing a Supreme Court observation that **indiscriminate and impractical demands under RTI Act for disclosure of all and sundry information would be counterproductive.**
- There is also **ambiguity regarding whether the PMNRF (Prime Minister's National Relief Fund) is subject to the RTI Act.**
 - > While the Central Information Commission directed it to disclose information in 2008, a division bench of the Delhi High Court gave a split opinion on the question of whether PMNRF is a public authority under the Act.
- PM CARES Fund was **created as a public charitable trust on 28 March 2020**, with primary objective of dealing with any kind of emergency or distress situation, like posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Prime Minister is the ex-officio Chairman of the PM CARES Fund** and Minister of Defence, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Finance are ex-officio Trustees of the Fund.

PUBLIC AUTHORITY UNDER SECTION 2(H) OF RTI ACT, 2005

Public Authority means any authority or body or institution of self government established a constant-

- by or under the constitution
- by any other law made by the parliament
- by any other law made by the state legislature
- by notification issued or order made by the appropriate government and includes any-
 - ▶ body owned, controlled or substantially financed
 - ▶ non government organization substantially financed, directly or indirectly by funds provided by the appropriate government.

ALSO IN NEWS

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| Nepal tables Constitution Amendment for new map | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nepal has tabled a constitutional amendment for adopting a new map, which includes some Indian territory. • The new map depicts strategically important land covering Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani as part of Nepal. The area is currently part of Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand. |
| Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defence system | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • China has raised objections to presence of US THAAD missile defence system in South Korea. • THAAD is transportable, ground-based missile defense system. • It is stationed in South Korea, as countermeasure against potential attacks by North Korea. • China believes that US influence in the region may interfere with its long-term military, diplomatic and economic interests in the region. |
| Band-tail scorpionfish (Scorpaenopsis neglecta) found in Gulf of Mannar | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish is called 'scorpionfish' because its spines contain neurotoxic venom. • It can change colour and blend with its surrounding environment to escape from predators and while preying. • It is distributed in Indian and South Pacific Oceans; temperate waters. • This was the first time this particular species was found live in the Indian waters. |
| National Artificial Intelligence Portal (www.ai.gov.in) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It will work as one stop digital platform for AI related developments in India, sharing of resources such as articles, startups, investment funds in AI, resources, companies and educational institutions related to AI in India. • National e-Governance Division of Ministry of Electronics and IT and NASSCOM will jointly run this portal. |
| Responsible AI for Youth Program | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is launched by National e-Governance Division, with Intel India and Department of School Education and Literacy (Ministry of Human Resource Development). • It aims to give young students a platform and empower them with appropriate new age tech mind-set, relevant AI skill-sets and access to required AI tool-sets to make them digitally ready for future. • It is designed to reach out to students from Government schools pan India and provide them opportunity to become part of skilled workforce in inclusive manner. |
| COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative is aimed at making vaccines, tests, treatments and other health technologies to fight COVID-19 accessible to all. • It will be voluntary and based on social solidarity. It will provide a one-stop shop for scientific knowledge, data and intellectual property to be shared equitably by global community. • Launched by: WHO and Costa Rica. 30 countries and multiple international partners and institutions have signed up to support C-TAP. As of now, India is not a part of this initiative. |
| My Life My Yoga contest (Jeevan Yoga) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a Video Blogging Contest by Ministry of AYUSH and Indian Council for Cultural Relations. • It focuses on transformative impact of Yoga on lives of individuals, and comes as one of the activities related to observation of sixth International Day of Yoga coming up on 21st June 2020. |

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