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सत्यमेव जयते



MK Yadav Sir

Table of Contents

1. Cholera Disease
2. India - Estonia Relations
3. Methanol
4. World Hydrography Day
5. Container Port Performance Index
6. Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV)
7. Mehrauli City
8. New Plan of FSSAI for Licence
9. Space Variable Objects Monitor
10. NFIES

DTE June 23

CHOLERA DISEASE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

As cholera cases rise, demand for vaccines still outpace supply: WHO



Context: The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that the demand for cholera vaccines is exceeding supply, as 24 countries have reported nearly 200,000 cases this year.

Cholera Disease

- **About**: It is a water-borne disease.
- **Caused by**: An acute, diarrheal illness caused by infection of the intestine with the bacterium Vibrio cholerae.
- **Symptoms**: Profuse watery diarrhoea, Vomiting, and Leg cramps
- **Transmission**: A person may get cholera by drinking water or eating food contaminated with the cholera bacterium.
  - The disease can spread rapidly in areas with inadequate treatment of sewage and drinking water.
- **Vaccine**: Currently there are three WHO pre-qualified oral cholera vaccines (OCV), Dukoral, Shanchol, and Euvichol-Plus.
  - All three vaccines require two doses for full protection.
  - It is not covered in Universal Immunization Programme (UIP).

Steps Taken for Control Cholera

- **Global Task Force on Cholera Control (GTFCC)**: Serve as a platform for technical exchange, coordination, and collaboration on cholera-related activities.
- **Ending Cholera**: To eliminate cholera in up to 20 countries by the year 2030.
- **Country Support Platform (CSP)**: Enhance GTFCC support to countries.

INDIAN EXPRESS

Page 15

Estonia looks at Indian partnership to beef up cybersecurity infrastructure

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

ESTONIA, ONE of the world's most advanced digital countries, is looking to partner with India to collaborate on strengthening the two countries' cybersecurity infrastructure, multiple officials from the Baltic country's government said.

Estonia, courtesy its vicinity to Russia, faces a barrage of cyberattacks from the country, more so because of the former's stance on the war between Russia and Ukraine. India, meanwhile, faces a similar threat from its neighbour China.

"We are keen to work with India and to conduct cyber exercises here. Globally, there is a rise in cyber attacks and Estonia is also facing attacks from hackers," Jonatan Vseviov, secretary general, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told a delegation of Indian journalists. He also highlighted areas like digital services and education systems as potential areas for collaboration between the countries.

Estonia, with a population of about 1.3 million, was a former member of the Soviet Union, and faced one of the largest cyberattacks on its digital infrastructure in 2007 by means of a distributed denial of service (DDoD) attack. At the time, the attack took place in the backdrop of riots by ethnic Russian Estonians, prompted by the removal of a Soviet war memorial from the centre of the country's capital, Tallinn.



A server farm of CR14 (Cyber Range 14), which is a foundation established by the Estonian Ministry of Defence, whose responsibility is to offer and develop cybersecurity training. File

Since the war between Russia and Ukraine, the country has experienced similar threats from Russian actors, government officials said. Government officials in India have previously said that New Delhi faces much of a similar challenge from Beijing, where a group of independent, and state-backed actors have increased attacks on critical infrastructure in New Delhi. China's army of hackers is part of the country's information warfare apparatus and its aim is to access information and primarily hold it as ransomware, said Mart Noorma, director of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, told reporters. Ransomware attacks are where a cyber-actor gains access to sensitive information of an entity and encrypts, with the condition of decrypting the data only after receiving a payment.

The NATO (CCDCOE) is a NATO-accredited knowledge hub, which was established in 2008, and offers an interdisciplinary approach to the most relevant issues in cyber defence. It has a group of international experts from the military, government, academia and industry from 39 countries.

Noorma said: "We wholeheartedly welcome like-minded democratic nations like India to join us. This will help in cyber knowledge and exchanging methods to address cyber-attacks. The cooperation will help a large-scale coalition through research, training, and exercises."

The ties between Estonia and India are increasingly growing. An Indian contingent was, for the first time, observers in an NATO-run cyber security exercise in Estonia last month. The exercise was the largest of its kind in Europe, Tiit Riisalo, Estonian economic affairs and information technology minister, said. It involved 32 NATO countries and a handful of invitees.

Although, it is worth noting that the Estonian security establishment does not view favourably the fact that India has become one of the largest purchasers of Russian oil since the war began. *The Indian Express* had earlier reported that India's Russian oil imports climbed to a 10-month high in May as low Russian refinery capacity use due to Ukrainian drone strikes made more of Moscow's oil available for the export market.

Estonian defence minister, Hanno Pevkur, said that the northern European country and India have worked together on cybersecurity issues previously and could further that collaboration not just from government engagements, but by involving the two nations' private sector as well.

The Estonian Secretary General Vseviov said that European countries are keen to diversify their bases in various industries over concerns emanating from over-reliance on specific countries, especially those with authoritarian regimes. In this context, Estonian officials highlighted, India could emerge as a potential partner for Europe and Estonia, despite the significant population and size differences between the countries. Courtesy of its NATO membership, Estonia has also become a crucial market for a number of Indian start-ups in the defence space as well.

There's another key similarity between Estonia and India – both the countries possess a ubiquitous national identity system, e-ID in the former, and Aadhaar in the latter, which are tied to a number of government services. In fact, in the early days of Aadhaar, when the system was being worked upon, Indian officials had closely studied Estonia's system, a former official at the Unique Identity Authority of India (UIDAI) said.

(The reporter was in Tallinn at the invitation of the Estonian government.)



INDIA - ESTONIA RELATIONS

(Syllabus GS Paper 2 – IR)

Context: Estonia, a global leader in digital innovation, seeks to collaborate with India to enhance cybersecurity infrastructure in both nations. This partnership aims to leverage Estonia's advanced digital expertise to bolster cybersecurity measures in India.

India - Estonia Relations

- **Historical Relations**: India first recognized Estonia on 22 September 1921, when Estonia was admitted into the League of Nations.
    - India re-recognized the Republic of Estonia on 9 September 1991, following its declaration of independence from the Soviet Union.
    - Diplomatic relations between India and Estonia were established on 2 December 1991.
- **Commercial Relations:** India and Estonia have potential for increased economic engagement in information technology, cybersecurity, e-governance, and blockchain.
    - **Indian Exports to Estonia**: Major exports include machinery, garments, iron and steel, leather products, travel goods, coffee, tea, spices, footwear, and pharmaceuticals.
    - **Estonian Exports to India:** Key exports are iron and steel, fertilizers, electrical machinery, paper products, and paper pulp.
- **Foreign Trade Agreement**: In December 2018, Indian Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Estonia was valued at 4.89 million Euro, mainly in manufacturing, construction, wholesale trade, transportation, accommodation, food service, information and communication, real estate, and human health and social work.
- **e-Residency Program**: Launched in 2014, Estonia's e-Residency Program allows non-Estonians to access banking, taxes, company formation, and payment processing. Over 3000 Indians have established nearly 700 enterprises through this program.
    - **Start-up Visa**: Estonia's Start-up Visa, introduced in 2017, ranks India among the top three for startup applicants in 2019, facilitating tech-based business plans for Indian entrepreneurs.
- **Cultural Relations:** Estonia shows a keen interest in Indian culture, with Sanskrit instruction beginning at the University of Tartu in 1837 and several publications on Sanskrit literature.
    - Renowned Indian musicians and dancers have performed in Estonia in recent years, enhancing cultural ties.

THE HINDU Page 8

METHANOL

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)



How is methanol procured and used as liquor?

Was the Kallakurichi incident the first time that methanol poisoning has come to light?

M. Kalyanaraman

The story so far:

The Kallakurichi illicit liquor tragedy that has so far claimed more than 50 lives is entirely familiar in its cause, sequence of events, and aftermath. Such tragedies happen periodically across India in various States. Almost all the postmortem reports of the victims attribute the cause to methanol consumption.

How are ethanol, methanol made?

Ethanol is legal liquor for consumption. It is produced biologically whereas methanol is produced from fuels such as coal in India. Molasses, which are a by-product of the sugar making process, form the starting material of distilleries that are often located close to sugar factories. They produce rectified spirit which is distilled further to produce edible extra neutral alcohol that in turn goes into making Indian Made Foreign Liquor, a lucrative cash cow for State governments. During ethanol production in responsible distilleries, methanol is also produced but is carefully removed since the processes are highly controlled.

Methanol is produced from coal and other fossil fuels. While ethanol can be made edible, methanol is poison. Even very low concentrations of methanol can be toxic, often fatal. However, it is needed to produce a range of products that are highly useful. Paints, for instance, can't be produced without methanol.

Is methanol easy to procure?

Just like ethanol, methanol is a highly controlled substance. Rules in Tamil Nadu ensure the manufacturing, transportation and storage are all licenced, monitored and the quantity and quality audited.

In northern Tamil Nadu, much of the methanol used in industries is sourced from Andhra Pradesh. Ground reportage suggests the existence of a lucrative methanol pilferage racket operating enroute and at the end-user side as well.

It is possible that methanol formed during the crude distillation process, adopted by the bootleggers at Kallakurichi, wasn't removed, leading to methanol poisoning. However, the widespread nature of contamination and scale of the Kallakurichi tragedy suggests that methanol was procured and supplied separately, either as part of a brew or alone in a diluted form. Given that illicit liquor has been produced and distributed widely here over many months, possibly years, methanol use was not a one-off event that happened only this fateful week at Kallakurichi.

Why is methanol used?

Most of the hooch tragedies in India occur due to methanol contamination in liquor. Street wisdom, or belief rather, may well be that the relatively inexpensive but potent poison that is methanol, if diluted enough, could provide the same effect as ordinary liquor – a state of intoxication or 'kick' for consumers.

Prosecutors in the 2015 Malvani, Mumbai hooch tragedy case in which

Context: The Kallakurichi illicit liquor tragedy, which has resulted in over 50 deaths, follows a distressingly familiar pattern of methanol poisoning, echoing similar incidents that occur periodically across various states in India.

Methanol

- **About:** It is a wood alcohol (CH_3OH) that can be used as renewable energy, marine and auto fuel, and as fuel cells.
- **Physical Characteristics**: Methanol appears as a colorless, fairly volatile liquid with a faintly sweet pungent odor similar to ethyl alcohol.
- **Production**: Methanol is primarily produced by combining carbon monoxide gas and hydrogen in the presence of a catalyst. Increasingly, syngas derived from biomass is also used in its production.
- **Applications**: Methanol is used in chemical synthesis, as a fuel additive, solvent for paints and plastics, and in various consumer products.
- **Treatment of Methanol Poisoning**
  - **Ethanol Administration**: Ethanol competes with methanol for enzymes, preventing its toxic metabolites.
  - **Fomepizole Administration**: Slows down the enzyme action that converts methanol to toxic substances like formaldehyde.

Regulation of Methanol in India

- **Legal Classification**: Methanol is listed in Schedule I of the Manufacture, Storage and Import of Hazardous Chemical Rules 1989 in India.
- **Food Safety Standards:** The Food Safety and Standards (Alcoholic Beverages) Regulations 2018 specify permissible methanol limits in different alcoholic beverages.
- **Quality Standards**: Indian Standard IS 517 outlines quality requirements for methanol, and the Tamil Nadu Denatured Spirit, Methyl Alcohol, and Varnish (French Polish) Rules 1959 govern packaging and labeling requirements.

PIB June 23

WORLD HYDROGRAPHY DAY
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Env and Eco)

WORLD HYDROGRAPHY DAY 2024

Context: The International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) celebrated the World Hydrography Day recently.

World Hydrography Day

- **About:** Initiated in 2006, it aims to raise awareness about hydrography's crucial role in enhancing understanding of the world's seas and oceans.
- **History**: Celebrated on June 21st each year, it coincides with the establishment of the International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) in 1921, highlighting its foundational contributions to marine science and safety.
- **Theme for 2024:** Hydrographic Information - Enhancing Safety, Efficiency and Sustainability in Marine Activities.

International Hydrographic Organisation

- **About:** It is an intergovernmental technical consultative organisation established under the Convention on the IHO.
- **Established in:** 1921.
- **Headquarters**: Monaco, Europe.
- **Aim**: Ensures surveying and charting of all seas, oceans, and navigable waters worldwide.
- **Membership:** Currently comprises 100 member states as of 2024, encompassing coastal and landlocked nations.
    - India has been a member since 1955.
- **Objectives:**
    - Ensures accuracy and uniformity of hydrographic charts and publications worldwide.
    - Coordinates activities of national hydrographic offices to promote uniformity in nautical charts and documents.
    - Adopts reliable and efficient methods for hydrographic surveys and exploitation.
    - Advances sciences and techniques in hydrography and descriptive oceanography.

CONTAINER PORT PERFORMANCE INDEX

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)

Nine Indian ports ranked among top 100 in Container Port Performance Index 2023

Context: As many as nine ports of India have made it to the global top 100 rankings in the latest edition of Container Port Performance Index.

Container Port Performance Index (CPPI)

- **About:** It is a widely recognized benchmark evaluating port performance based on productivity, efficiency, and reliability metrics.
- **Released by:** World Bank and S&P Global Market Intelligence.
- **Published**: Annually
- **Stakeholders and Utility**: CPPI serves as a crucial reference for national governments, port authorities, development agencies, supra-national organizations, and private operators in optimizing trade, logistics, and supply chain operations.
- **Highlights of CPPI 2023**
  - **Top Performers:** Yangshan port (China) and Salalah port (Oman) achieved the highest rankings in the 2023 index.
  - **Indian Ports**: Nine Indian ports secured spots in the top 100 global ports, marking significant progress in global rankings.
  - **Specific Port Achievements**
    - ✓ Visakhapatnam Port improved its ranking to 19th globally, showcasing notable advancements from previous years.
    - ✓ Mundra Port climbed to 27th place, demonstrating substantial improvement since the last assessment.
    - ✓ **Other Indian Ports in Top 100:** Pipavav (41), Kamarajar (47), Cochin (63), Hazira (68), Krishnapatnam (71), Chennai (80), and Jawaharlal Nehru Port (96) also featured prominently in the 2023 rankings, underscoring India's growing influence in global maritime logistics.

THE HINDU

Page 12

Pushpak, ISRO's reusable launch vehicle, clears test

This was the third and final test of a series; the mission demonstrated the autonomous landing capability of the vehicle under more challenging release conditions, says the space agency

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation successfully completed the third reusable launch vehicle landing experiment (RLV LEX) at the Aeronautical Test Range in Chitradurga, Karnataka on Sunday.

The third and final test in a series was conducted at 7.10 a.m.

"Following the success of RLV LEX-01 and LEX-02 missions, RLV LEX-03 re-demonstrated the autonomous landing capability of the RLV under more challenging release conditions and more severe wind conditions," the ISRO said.

On Sunday morning, Pushpak, the space agency's winged vehicle, was released from an Indian Air Force Chinook helicopter at an altitude of 4.5 km.

The ISRO said that from the release point 4.5 km away, Pushpak autonomously executed cross-range correction manoeuvres, approached the runway, and performed a precise horizontal landing at the runway centre line.



Textbook touchdown: Pushpak performed a 'precise horizontal landing at runway centre line', the ISRO says. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

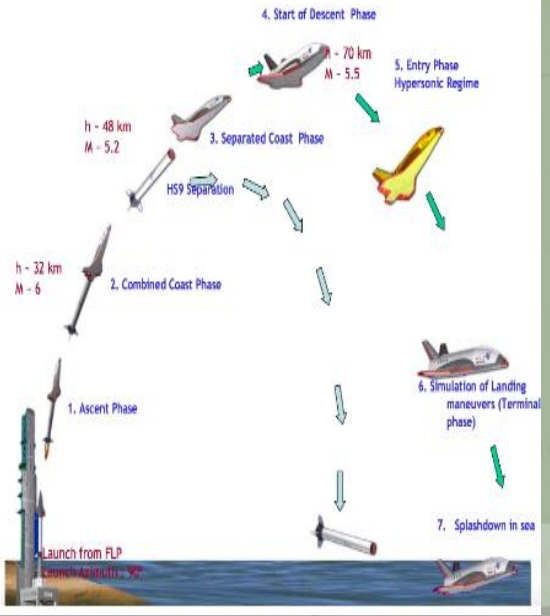
"Due to this vehicle's low lift-to-drag ratio aerodynamic configuration, the landing velocity exceeded 320 kmph, compared with 260 kmph for a commercial aircraft and 280 kmph for a typical fighter aircraft. After touchdown, the vehicle velocity was reduced to nearly 100 kmph using its brake parachute, after which the landing gear brakes were employed for deceleration. During this ground roll phase, Pushpak utilises its rudder and nose-wheel steering system to autonomously maintain a stable and precise ground roll along the runway," it said.

The space agency said this mission simulated the approach and landing interface and high-speed landing conditions for a vehicle returning from space, reaffirming its expertise in acquiring the most critical technologies required for the development of an RLV.

"Through this mission, the advanced guidance algorithm catering to longitudinal and lateral plane error corrections, which is essential for the future Orbital Re-entry Mission has been validated," it said.

The ISRO said that the LEX used sensors such as an inertial sensor, radar altimeter, flush air data system and NavIC. Notably, the LEX-03 mission reused the winged body and flight systems from the LEX-02 mission without any modification, demonstrating the robustness of the ISRO's capability of design to reuse flight systems.

ISRO Chairman S. Somanath congratulated the team for its efforts in maintaining the success streak in such missions. S. Unnikrishnan Nair, Director, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, emphasised that this "consistent success boosts ISRO's confidence in the critical technologies essential for future orbital re-entry missions".



REUSABLE LAUNCH VEHICLE (RLV)

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

Context: Pushpak, ISRO's reusable launch vehicle, successfully completed its third and final test under the LEX (03) series conducted by the ISRO.

Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV)

- **About:** It is a launch vehicle that is designed to return to Earth substantially intact after launching satellites into designated orbit.
- **Aim:** It may be launched more than one time or that contains vehicle stages that may be recovered by a launch operator for future use in the operation of a substantially similar launch vehicle, thereby reduce the associated cost.
  - RLVs may contain additional avionics and propellant, making them **heavier** than their expendable counterparts.
- **Technology:** The RLV is essentially a space plane with a **low lift-to-drag ratio**, requiring an approach at high glide angles that necessitated a landing at high velocities of 350 kmph.
- **It uses:** Pseudolite system, Ka-band Radar Altimeter, NavIC receiver, indigenous Landing Gear, Aerofoil honey-comb fins and brake parachute system.
- **Reusable Launch Vehicle-Technology Demonstration (RLV-TD) Programme**: It is planned as a series of technology demonstration missions that have been considered as a first step towards realising a Two Stage to Orbit (TSTO) fully reusable vehicle.

Pushpak

- **About**: It is India's futuristic Reusable Launch Vehicle, often referred to as the "swadeshi space shuttle."
- **Design and Technology**: It is designed as an all-rocket, fully reusable single-stage-to-orbit (SSTO) vehicle. It incorporates technologies from the X-33, X-34, and DC-XA flight demonstrators.
- **Reusable Upper Stage**: Pushpak features a reusable upper stage, including expensive electronics, which is safely brought back to Earth after each launch.
- **Capabilities:** Future capabilities of Pushpak include in-orbit satellite refueling and satellite retrieval for refurbishment, enhancing its versatility in space missions.
- **Addressing Space Debris**: Pushpak contributes to India's goal of minimizing space debris, crucial for sustainable space exploration.

INDIAN EXPRESS Page 3

MEHRAULI CITY

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Art and Culture)

In heart of Mehrauli, this *Bhool Bhulaiyya* is more than just a maze

DEEPIKA SINGH
NEW DELHI, JUNE 23

DELHI'S HISTORIC Mehrauli area is home to several monuments – some renowned such as the Qutub Minar, others not as well known or completely unknown jutting out of various nooks and crevices. And then there is a third kind, which is familiar to local residents but for reasons that have nothing to do with the purpose the monument was originally built for.

One such structure is what is referred to as '*Bhool Bhulaiyya* (maze)' by the residents. Situated opposite the Mehrauli bus terminal, with its walls serving as a stand for autorickshaws, this is the tomb of Adham Khan, a general and foster brother of Mughal Emperor Akbar.

For visitors, though, the name rings no bell. "*Hum toh bhool bhulaiyya hi jaanein* (we only know it as Bhool Bhulaiyya)", says an elderly woman enjoying a somewhat pleasant evening after days of searing heat in Delhi.

On what gave the structure its moniker, author and filmmaker Sohail Hashmi tells *The Indian Express*: "The name comes from the stairs inside the walls. To ensure that the large dome does not fall off, buttresses were placed to lend some support. And to cover the buttresses, a circular outer wall was built. So, when you climb the stairs, entering the inner side of the dome, a gallery formed by the buttresses opens up. The outer opening comes after the inner opening, which is why it is difficult to trace the latter. Then you try to backtrack, and get lost in the process."



The tomb of Adham Khan in Mehrauli. *Gajendra Yadav*

Although the stairs have been closed off now, Hashmi remembers a time in his childhood, some 60-odd years ago, when he got lost inside.

A local legend in Mehrauli is that once a *baaraat* (wedding party) got lost inside the maze. Hashmi, though, dismisses the story. "There is not enough space inside for an entire *baaraat* to get lost!" he says.

Says Hashmi, "In history, there are no such lines demarcating different eras. There are always periods of transition... The pillars have been built fitting large stones together. This was a technique in use in India before the 12th Century. The dome is built with rubble, a technology introduced in India in the 13th Century. While this monument was built in the 16th Century."

Besides Adham Khan, his mother Maham Anga, Akbar's wet nurse and foster mother, is also buried here. Although, only one gravestone is visible now.

Raza Rumi, in his book, *Delhi by Heart*, calls the tomb a "lonely structure" that "represents a twilight zone between the noisy outer market of Mehrauli and the ghostlike calm of the Delhi Ridge".

For Asif Khan Dehlvi, a longtime Mehrauli resident and founder of Delhi Karavan, which conducts heritage walks in Delhi, the tomb forms a special part of his memories growing up.

"Around that time, I used to live in Chirag Dilli. Whenever I would go to Mehrauli to call on the dargah of Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, I would often make a pitstop here and it never failed to mesmerise me. Curiously, despite its imposing façade, the structure is not visible from a distance. And then, it suddenly comes into view. *Door se iski bulandi ka ehsaas hi nahi hota* (You cannot make out its enormity from afar)," he tells *The Indian Express*.

Author and historian Swapna Liddle writes in her book, *14 Historic Walks of Delhi*: "The eight-sided tomb is built mainly of grey quartzite, widely available in and around Delhi. The upper part of the building is covered with limestone plaster – sparsely decorated with carved or incised motifs.."

The tomb's architecture is a confluence of the styles of different eras: While the shape is reminiscent of the Lodhi era and turrets reflect Tughlaq influence, the carvings are a marker of the Mughal period.

PIN CODE 110001

Context: Delhi's historic Mehrauli area hosts numerous monuments, including the famous Qutub Minar, as well as many lesser-known or hidden structures scattered throughout its nooks and crevices.

Mehrauli City

- **About:** It is one of the seven important cities that make up Delhi apart from Siri, Tughlaqabad, Jahanpanah and Shahjahanabad.
- **Associated with**: Tomar Dynasty, Delhi Sultanate, Mughals and British.
- **Mehrauli Archaeological Park**: It is spread over 200 acres and features 55 historic structures from various rulers, including the Khaljis, Tughlaqs, Lodhis, Mughals, and the British. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site recently revamped for the G-20 summit.
- **Adham Khan's Tomb:** Built in the 16th century, it is an octagonal Mughal-era structure located north of Qutub Minar. Known as 'Bhool-Bhulaiya' for its maze-like passages, it has served multiple purposes over time, including as a residence and police station.
- **Zafar Mahal:** Built by Akbar Shah II in 1820 and renovated by Bahadur Shah Zafar II, Zafar Mahal is adjacent to the dargah of Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki and houses the tombs of three generations of Mughal emperors.
- **Alauddin Masud Shah's Tomb**: The tomb of Masud Shah (1242-46) in the palace complex is made of grey sandstone and is a relic from the Sultanate era.
- **Balban's Tomb:** The tomb of Ghiyas-ud-din Balban, located in Dar-ul Amaan, is notable for being the first site in India to feature a true arch and dome.
- **Iltutmish's Tomb**: Built by Shamsuddin Iltutmish in 1235 CE, this tomb features a cenotaph in white marble with elaborately carved arched entrances and indigenous decorative motifs.

LIVEMINT

Page 9

NEW PLAN OF FSSAI FOR LICENCE

(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Economy)



FSSAI plans to issue licence in 24 hrs to traders, distributors

FSSAI has included this proposal as part of the government's 100-day post-poll agenda

Somrita Ghosh
somrita.ghosh@partner.livemint.com
NEW DELHI

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) aims to expedite licencing for traders and distributors, and may soon start issuing licences within 24 hours of application, to improve ease of doing business.

An official familiar with the matter, seeking anonymity, said the FSSAI has included this proposal as part of the government's 100-day agenda. Currently, acquiring a license takes one to two months.

"This initiative is not for manufacturers, but only for traders and distributors. As of now, the time taken for acquiring license even for traders and distributors is one to two months. FSSAI sensed that they don't require so much of time to get a license and it can be provided within a short span," the official stated.

Under the proposed plan, FSSAI will set up a dedicated digital platform, allowing traders to upload relevant documents and receive licences within 24 hours, the official added.

An email sent to the FSSAI chairperson remained unanswered till press time.

FSSAI licenses, which are mandatory for both exporting and importing food products, are issued digitally with a QR code, which provides access to the details of the licensed or registered entities stored in the FSSAI database. This helps in identifying any fraudulent activity.

All food business operators, including pharmacies selling health supplements or nutraceutical products, must obtain FSSAI registration or a licence.

Last year, a central advisory committee had recommended extending the validity of FSSAI licences for food business operators from one year to up to five years, eliminating the need for annual renewals.

FSSAI licenses are issued digitally with a QR code, which provides access to the details of the licensed or registered entities

The initiative, a long-standing demand of food business operators, was welcomed by the industry for facilitating ease of doing business.

Before the Lok Sabha elections, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government had formed 10 sectoral groups of secretaries (SGoS) to finalize its post-poll 100-day agenda. The move sought to identify 70 critical objectives that will be prioritized by the current government, according to relevance and urgency.

Context: The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) aims to expedite licensing for traders and distributors, and may soon start issuing licences within 24 hours of application, to improve ease of doing business.

Proposed Plan of FSSAI

- **Digital Platform for Licensing**: Under the proposed plan, FSSAI will launch a dedicated digital platform. Traders can upload documents online and receive licenses within 24 hours.
- **Applicable**: This initiative excludes manufacturers. Only traders and distributors can avail themselves of the streamlined licensing process.
- **Issue of Licenses with QR Code**: FSSAI licenses will be issued digitally, accompanied by a QR code. This QR code grants access to details stored in the FSSAI database, enhancing transparency and security against fraudulent activities.
- **Mandatory**: All food business operators, including pharmacies selling health supplements or nutraceutical products, must obtain FSSAI registration or a license.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

- **About**: It is a statutory body established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.
- **Headquarters:** Delhi
- **Aim**: To regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.
- **Legislative Framework:** The Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 replaces various central acts like the Prevention of Food Adulteration Act, 1954, Fruit Products Order, 1955, Meat Food Products Order, 1973, Vegetable Oil Products (Control) Order, 1947, Edible Oils Packaging (Regulation) Order 1988, Milk and Milk Products Order, 1992.
- **Composition**: It consists of chairperson and 22 members.
    - The Chairperson of FSSAI holds the rank of Secretary to the Government of India.
- **Administrative control:** It operates under the administrative control of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

SPACE VARIABLE OBJECTS MONITOR
(Syllabus: GS Paper 3 – Sci and Tech)

Rocket carrying French-Chinese satellite launches from southwestern China to study gamma-ray bursts

Context: Recently, a Long March 2-C rocket launched the French-Chinese satellite Space Variable Objects Monitor (SVOM) from southwestern China, marking a successful mission.

Space Variable Objects Monitor (SVOM)

- **About:** It is a collaborative French-Chinese satellite designed to detect and study gamma-ray bursts (GRBs), which are powerful cosmic events releasing intense bursts of gamma rays.
- **Launched**: From the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in China via a Long March-2C rocket, SVOM entered orbit over 600 kilometers above Earth.
- **Instrumentation:** Weighing 930 kilograms, SVOM carries four instruments—two French and two Chinese—that are crucial for detecting and analyzing GRBs.
- **Orbit and Longevity**: Positioned in a strategic orbit, SVOM is expected to operate for at least five years, with potential operational capability extending up to 20 years, offering prolonged observational opportunities.

Gamma-ray Bursts (GRBs)

- **Origins**: GRBs typically originate from the explosion of massive stars or the collision of compact stellar remnants, releasing energy equivalent to billions of suns.
- **Cosmic Time Capsules:** Observing GRBs provides a unique opportunity to study distant cosmic events, offering insights into the early universe due to the time it takes for their light to reach Earth.
- **Scientific Significance**: The gamma rays from GRBs carry valuable information about the environments they traverse, such as gas clouds and galaxies, aiding in understanding cosmic evolution.

PIB June 23

NFIES
(Syllabus: GS Paper 2/3 – Govt Scheme/Economy)

Cabinet approves Central Sector Scheme "National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme" (N.F.I.E.S.)

Context: The Union Cabinet has approved the National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme (NFIES) to boost scientific investigations and improve conviction rates in criminal cases across the country.

National Forensic Infrastructure Enhancement Scheme (NFIES)

- **Operated by:** Union Ministry of Home Affairs
- **Funding**: Central Sector Scheme
- **Duration**: 2024-25 to 2028-29
- **Components under the scheme**:
  - Establishment of Campuses of the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) in the country.
  - Establishment of Central Forensic Science Laboratories in the country.
  - Enhancement of existing infrastructure of the Delhi Campus of the NFSU.
- **Aim**: To establish campuses of National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) across the country.
- **Infrastructure Enhancement:** The scheme includes setting up more central forensic science laboratories and enhancing the existing infrastructure of NFSU, Delhi.

National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU)

- **Establishment:** It was established by the Government of India in 2020.
- **Objective**: To address the acute shortage of forensic experts in India and worldwide.
- **Unique Status**: NFSU holds the status of an Institution of National Importance.
- It is the world's first and only university dedicated to forensic, behavioural, cybersecurity, digital forensics, and allied sciences.
- **Forensic Science**: It involves using scientific methods or expertise to investigate crimes or examine evidence for legal proceedings.
  - It includes a variety of disciplines, such as fingerprint and DNA analysis, anthropology, and wildlife forensics.

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