

JANUARY

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CRUX 10

10 News. 10 Sources. One Place



MK Yadav Sir

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Keeping in view the disruptive nature of restrictions under Stage-III of GRAP impacting a large number of stakeholders and public as well as considering the significant improvement in the average AQI of Delhi, the GRAP Sub-Committee unanimously decided to revoke Stage-III of GRAP in the entire NCR with immediate effect

Context: Delhi's average Air Quality Index (AQI) clocked 346 as per the daily AQI Bulletin provided by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)

- **About:** It is a statutory organization, that was constituted in September, 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Environment and Forests
- CPCB was entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- **Functions:**
 - Advise the Central Government on any matter concerning the prevention and control of water and air pollution and improvement of the quality of air.
 - Plan and cause to be executed a nationwide program for the prevention, control or abatement of water and air pollution;
 - Co-ordinate the activities of the State Board and resolve disputes among them;
 - Plan and organise training of persons engaged in programme on the prevention, control or abatement of water and air pollution;
 - Organise through mass media, a comprehensive mass awareness programme on the prevention, control or abatement of water and air pollution.

Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

- **About:** A set of emergency measures that kick in to prevent further deterioration of air quality once it reaches a certain threshold in the Delhi-NCR region.
- **Origin:** Approved by the Supreme Court in 2016 and notified in 2017, the plan was formulated.
- **Basis:** It is based on a plan that was submitted by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in November 2016.

Why did FIU IND act against virtual asset providers?

How might the actions against non-compliant VDA SPs affect the users of these platforms, especially those operating in India? What potential repercussions or implications could these enforcement actions have?

Saptaparno Ghosh

The story so far:

In December 28, the Financial Intelligence Unit India (FIU IND) issued show-cause notices to nine offshore virtual digital asset service providers (VDA SPs), including Binance, Kucoin, Huobi, Bitfinex and MEXC Global, among others. This was for “operating illegally” without complying with the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA). It has also been written to the Secretary of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to block URLs of the mentioned entities.

What is the premise of the non-compliance?

In March 2023, Virtual Digital Asset Service Providers (VDA SPs) in India were brought under anti-money laundering/counter financing of terrorism regulations. They were mandated to comply with PMLA 2002, verify the identities of onboarded clients, and maintain records of their

financial positions and potentially suspicious transactions. This obligation applies to all VDA SPs operating in India irrespective of physical presence. Non-registration made entities non-compliant despite serving Indian users. To put it in perspective, the entities “though catering to a substantial part of Indian users were not getting registered and coming under the Anti Money Laundering (AML) and Counter Financing of Terrorism Network (CFT) framework”. Currently, 31 VDA SPs have registered with FIU IND.

What purpose does the PMLA compliance serve?

According to Ranjana Adhikari, Partner at INDUSLAW, the objective of the PMLA and its reporting obligation are to enable monitoring and tracking of financial transactions to curb money laundering and terror financing. She further observed, “While there is no denying that such AML and CFT measures are imperative for today’s global financial ecosystem, the FIU IND should seek compliance only from

those entities who fit within the parameters of the March 2023 notification and are capable of providing the information FIU and PMLA require.” Furthermore, Vipul Kharbanda, an independent legal researcher, told *The Hindu* that VDA SPs adhering to KYC mandates would be beneficial for them only. “It addresses one of the primary concerns of any regulator about the purported anonymity of the crypto assets and their potential use for unlawful purposes,” he stated, adding that mandatory KYC verifications would ensure lack of anonymity and businesses not encountering multiple hurdles.

Separately, Ms. Adhikari also argues that the government has made it amply clear that it intends to enforce PMLA obligations on offshore entities if they satisfy the ingredients of the March 2023 PMLA notification on VDA SPs. “This is also in line with India’s efforts through the G-20 where it has been advocating for global regulation of cryptocurrency and consequently the framework proposed by the International Monetary Fund and the Financial Stability Board to the G-20 in

Context: Recently, the Financial Intelligence Unit India (FIU IND) issued show-cause notices to 9 offshore virtual digital asset service providers (VDA SPs), including Binance, Kucoin, Huobi, Bitfinex and MEXC Global, among others.

Financial Intelligence Unit India (FIU IND)

- **About:** As an independent body, FIU-IND reports directly to the Economic Intelligence Council (EIC), led by the Finance Minister.
- **Established by:** In 2004
- **Objective:** Serves as the central national agency responsible for receiving, processing, analyzing, and disseminating information related to suspicious financial transactions.
- **Coordination:** FIU-IND works to coordinate and strengthen the collection and sharing of financial intelligence through an effective national, regional, and global network, aiming to combat money laundering and related crimes.
- **Functions:**
 - It acts as the central reception point for receiving various reports, including Cash Transaction Reports (CTRs), Non-Profit Organisation Transaction Reports (NTRs), Cross Border Wire Transfer Reports (CBWTRs), Reports on Purchase or Sale of Immovable Property (IPRs), and Suspicious Transaction Reports (STRs) from different reporting entities.
 - The unit analyzes the received information to uncover transaction patterns that may indicate suspicion of money laundering and related crimes.
 - FIU-IND collaborates by sharing information with national intelligence/law enforcement agencies, national regulatory authorities, and foreign Financial Intelligence Units.

Joint Military Exercise Desert Cyclone between India and UAE begins in Rajasthan

Context: The Joint Military Exercise 'Desert Cyclone 2024' between India and UAE will begin today in Rajasthan.

Desert Cyclone 2024

- **Objective:** The joint military exercise between India and the UAE is designed to enhance interoperability through the exchange of knowledge and best practices in urban operations.
- **Historical Context:** In September 2008, the inaugural India-UAE Joint Air Forces exercise occurred at the Al-Dhafra base in Abu Dhabi, marking a significant milestone in their defense cooperation.
- **Regular Participation at IDEX:** India has consistently participated in the biennial International Defence Exhibition (IDEX) held in Abu Dhabi, showcasing its commitment to fostering strong defense ties with the UAE.

Other Indian Exercise

- India and France - SHAKTI
- India and Australia - AUSTRA HIND
- India and China - HAND IN HAND
- India and Kyrgyzstan - KHANJAR
- India and Maldives - EKUVERIN
- India and Thailand - SIAM BHARAT
- India and Russia - INDRA
- India and France - GARUDA

Himachal govt issues notification to give ST status to Hattee community

Shimla: The Himachal Pradesh government issued notification to give Scheduled Tribe status to the Hattee community of Trans-Giri area of Sirmaur district. CM Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said he would go to Nahan on January 3 to make the announcement.



The implementation of the decision was delayed, as the state government sought some clarification on some points of the August 4, 2023, notification of the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Second Amendment) Act, 2023, in the gazette after consulting the law department. A letter was sent to the ministry of tribal affairs on September 23 last year and reminders on November 3 and 6 of last year.

Sukhu, while addressing the media in Shimla on Monday, said the state government received clarification from the Centre on Saturday evening on the Hattee's status and, that, within no time his government issued a notification.

Residents of the Trans-Giri area were demanding ST status on the lines of the Jaunsar-Bawar area of Uttarakhand which was granted in 1967. Both Trans-Giri and Jaunsar-Bawar area were part of the erstwhile Sirmaur princely state and have similarity in all aspects.

On Monday, a delegation of the Hattee community called on Sukhu in Shimla and thanked him for issuing the notification. Harshwardhan Chauhan, state industries minister, and various representatives of the Hattee community were also present on the occasion.

Jai Ram Thakur, the leader of opposition, said he has fulfilled his promise made to the Hattee community of Trans-Giri area. He said it was the right of people which should have been given 58 years ago.

"Even today, efforts were made to create obstacles for them. After getting approval from the President, there were bids to stall things and stop the Hattee community from being given tribal status," Thakur said.

He said the Hattee community should have got this status in 1968, the same time that the Jaunsari community of Jaunsar-Bawar in Uttarakhand received it.

HATTEE COMMUNITY

(Syllabus: GS Paper 1 – Art and Culture)

Context: The Himachal Pradesh government issued notification to give Scheduled Tribe status to the Hattee community of Trans-Giri area of Sirmaur district.

Hattee Community

- **About:** The Hatties express uncertainty regarding the identity of the community, especially concerning the inclusion of individuals already classified as Scheduled Castes (SC).
- **Origin of Name:** Hattee community, named after their traditional occupation of selling home-grown crops, vegetables, meat, and wool at small-town markets known as 'haats.'
- **Geographic Presence:** Himachal-Uttarakhand border in the basin of the Giri and Tons rivers—both tributaries of the Yamuna.
- **Similar Traditions in Trans-Giri and Jaunsar Bawar:** The two Hatti clans, situated in Trans-Giri and Jaunsar Bawar, share similar traditions, fostering a community where inter-marriages are common.
- **Caste System Dynamics:** The Bhat and Khash are considered upper castes, while the Badhois occupy a lower position. Traditionally, inter-caste marriages have been discouraged.
- **The 'Khumbli':** Governance within the Hatti community is overseen by a traditional council known as 'khumbli.' This council, akin to Haryana's 'khaps,' plays a crucial role in deciding community matters.
- **Political Presence in Sirmaur and Shimla Regions:** The Hattis wield a significant political presence, particularly in about nine Assembly seats within the Sirmaur and Shimla regions, showcasing their impact on regional politics.

Centre earmarks ₹28,100 cr for PM-AASHA restructuring

Plans to consolidate marquee schemes to safeguard the interests of farmers and consumers

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Ahead of the general elections, the government is planning to consolidate marquee schemes to safeguard the interests of farmers and consumers, under the Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA), with an allocation of ₹28,107 crore till 2025-26, three officials aware of the matter said.

The plan is to merge the Union Consumer Affairs Department's Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) with the agriculture ministry's Price Support Scheme (PSS), and bring the merged scheme under the PM-AASHA, along with the market intervention scheme (MIS).

The rationale for the merger is to achieve efficiency by removing duplication and get better coverage of farm commodities to ensure prices do not fluctuate. "There is a need for major institutional corrections to protect interests of consumers and farmers," one of the officials said.

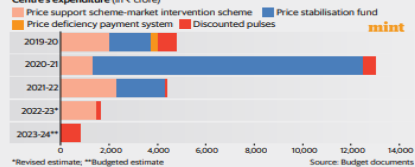
"After expert analysis of domestic and international experiences, it has been decided that a single department will be able to play a better role in price stabilisation. However, some components of the schemes will remain with the existing ministries."

Earlier, NITI Aayog had suggested "integrated price intervention activities

Consolidating schemes

The government spent ₹26,338 crore under PSS, PSF, MIS, PDPS and discounted pulses schemes between FY20 and FY23.

Centre's expenditure (in ₹ crore)



for better efficiency, coordination, and cost-effectiveness to achieve price stabilisation". In January 2023, it was decided to introduce a unified scheme for price support and buffer manage-

pulses, oilseeds and copra at MSP will be done by agriculture ministry and the price stabilisation component—non-MSP procurement of horticulture commodities for buffer and market intervention will be taken care of by the consumer affairs

structure in the perspective of overall needs of the economy, the official said.

"It has also been proposed to add MIS to the PM-AASHA basket to ensure remunerative prices to farmers of perishable agricultural and horticultural commodities for which MSP has not been announced," the official added.

"PDPS will ensure remunerative price to farmers of notified oilseeds without physical procurement."

PM-AASHA was launched in September 2018 to ensure minimum support price (MSP) for farmers amid falling crop production, and soaring food prices. It comprises of Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS) and the Private Procurement and Stockist Scheme (PPPS).

Under PM-AASHA, states and Union territories (UTs) can choose either PSS or PDPS for each procurement season of oilseed crops. Pulses and dried coconut (copra) are procured under PSS. Only one scheme will be operational in a state for one commodity. Besides, states can also roll out PSS on a pilot basis in districts or at select APMCs, involving participation of private stockists for oilseeds. Wheat, paddy and coarse grains are procured under the existing schemes of Department of Food and Public Distribution, while cotton is procured under existing schemes of textiles ministry. This ensures higher MSP for farmers, providing adequate returns over the production costs.

Queries sent to expenditure department, agriculture & farmers' welfare and consumer affairs and food & public distribution ministries remained unanswered at press time.

NO REPETITION

UNDER the plan, Price Stabilisation Fund will be merged with agriculture ministry's PSS

THE rationale behind this merger is to achieve greater efficiency by removing duplication

PM-AASHA ensures MSP for farmers amid falling crop production and soaring food prices

ment, merging PSS and PSF schemes, to be executed by agriculture ministry.

"Under the proposed PSS and PSF merger or Integrated Price Support and Stabilisation Scheme (IPSSS), price support component—procurement of

ers by making supplies available at reasonable prices with a low cost of intervention," said a second official.

The aim is to prevent distress sale of pulses, oilseeds and copra by farmers at the mandi and to evolve a balanced price

Context: Recently, ahead of the general elections, the government has planned to consolidate marquee schemes under the Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA), allocating ₹28,107 crore until 2025-26 to safeguard the interests of farmers and consumers.

- The plan is to merge the Price Stabilisation Fund (PSF) with the Price Support Scheme (PSS), and bring the merged scheme under the PM-AASHA, along with the market intervention scheme (MIS).

Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA)

- About:** PM-AASHA is an umbrella scheme aimed at ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce.
- Launched:** In September 2018
- Objective:** To give reasonable prices and keep farmers and harvest/produce in mind.
- Nodal Ministry:** Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare
- Components:** Price Support Scheme (PSS), Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS), and Pilot of Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme (PPPS).
- Benefits of PM AASHA Scheme**
 - The **innovative PM-AASHA scheme provides a MSP-plus solution** to address the issue of non-remunerative prices.
 - Its three unique components aim to bridge gaps in crop procurement and compensation mechanisms.
 - By increasing farmer income, the **scheme is poised to contribute to the revitalization** of the rural economy.
 - Additionally, the **PM-AASHA scheme can promote crop diversification** and alleviate soil and water stress by enhancing oilseed prices.

India Starts Four-year Term as UN Statistical Commission Member

Term corresponds with the time when UN has to decide on new measures to compile national accounts

Our Bureau

New Delhi: India on Monday began its four-year term as a member of the UN Statistical Commission. The country won the election to the 24-member global statistics body after a gap of nearly two decades.

The period of India's term corresponds with the time when the UN has to decide on new measures to compile national accounts, which will also play an important role in changing India's GDP calculations.

The last revision to the national accounts was made in 2008. National accounts are compiled as per an internationally agreed standard set of recommendations for measuring economic activity, called the System of National Accounts (SNA).

India's membership in the statistical body will likely have a bearing on determination of systems

of environmental accounts and aspects of well-being and sustainability for economies, which will be part of the new SNA standards.

The country has been trying to create a regular database of parameters under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In its 2023 session, the statistical body organised a high-level forum on official statistics to look

THE IMPORTANCE

India's membership in the statistical body will likely have a bearing on the determination of systems of environmental accounts

beyond GDP, which measures economic performance, to focus also on measures of well-being aligning with SDGs that are to be met by 2030.

The forum also introduced a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index (MVI) to "assess the vulnerability of small island states as well as other countries".

UNI STATISTICAL COMMISSION (Syllabus: GS Paper 2 – International Organization)

Context: India started its four-year term as a member of the United Nations Statistical Commission.

United Nations Statistical Commission

- **About:** It is the highest body of the global statistical system bringing together the Chief Statisticians from member states from around the world.
- **Establishment:** In 1946
- **Objective:** It is the highest decision making body for international statistical activities, responsible for setting of statistical standards and the development of concepts and methods, including their implementation at the national and international level.
- **Collaboration with:** The Statistical Commission oversees the work of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), and it is a Functional Commission of the UN Economic and Social Council.
- **Membership:** 24 member countries of the United Nations elected by the United Nations Economic and Social Council on the basis of an equitable geographical distribution.

India's Role in International Statistical Decision-Making

- **Term Alignment with Norm Development:** India's term aligns with the period during which the 24-member body is set to decide on new norms for national accounts, significantly impacting India's GDP calculations.
- **Influence on Environmental Accounts and Well-being:** India's membership in the statistical body is expected to influence the establishment of new systems for environmental accounts and contribute to determining aspects of well-being and sustainability for economies.
- **Database Creation for Sustainable Development Goals:** The country is actively working on creating a systematic database of parameters in line with the objectives of the SDGs.

XPoSat launch: what is ISRO's first mission of this yr

ANJALI MARAR
BENGALURU, JANUARY 1

THE X-RAY Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat), which ISRO launched Monday, is the world's second satellite-based mission (after NASA's) dedicated to X-ray polarimetry measurements.

What exactly is XPoSat?

The mission will allow astronomers to study the nature of X-ray emissions emanated by bright celestial sources in the medium energy band. It comprises two payloads, Indian X-ray Polarimeter (POLIX) and X-ray Spectroscopy and Timing (XSPECT), built by Raman Research Institute and UR Rao Satellite Centre, both located in Bengaluru.

It has an estimated mission life of about five years, during which XPoSat will observe sources that emit polarised X-rays. The observations will be done when the neutron stars

are in transit through the Earth's shadow – for instance, during the eclipse period.

What do the two payloads do?

POLIX is the world's first instrument designed to operate in the medium X-ray of 8 to 30 kilo electron Volt (keV) energy band. It consists of a collimator, which is the key component to filter light originating from bright sources in the field of view. Besides, there is a scatterer along with four X-ray proportional counter detectors. The XSPECT, meanwhile, is designed to conduct fast and high spectroscopic resolution in soft X-ray energy bands (0.8–15 keV). It will observe a variety of sources like X-ray pulsars, black hole binaries, low-magnetic field neutron stars, active galactic nuclei, and magnetars.

Why is the XPoSat mission significant?
So far, only the timing and broad band spectroscopy of X-ray objects were per-



ISRO's PSLV-C58 lifts off from Sriharikota on January 1. PTI

The XPoSat team has identified several sources radiating X-rays. XPoSat will observe two kinds of sources – persistent sources (targeted and known sources), and transient sources (pulsars, magnetars).

Out in space, X-rays get polarised due to multiple causes, such as being subject to strong magnetic fields or due to interactions with material present around black holes. So, by studying the polarised X-rays emanating from excellent sources like magnetars, scientists can probe the nature of the radiations and the multitudinous processes involved in the generation of these radiations.

POLIX will undertake important measurements like the degree and angle of polarisation of X-ray photons from the environment surrounding black holes, neutron stars, and other such cosmic entities. These two additional parameters, along with the spec-

trographic, timing, and imaging data, will aid researchers improve understanding about celestial bodies and ultimately unravel some of the mysteries of the universe.

But what is the polarisation of X-rays?

X-rays comprise electric and magnetic waves that are constantly in motion. Being sinusoidal waves, they do not follow a patterned direction of motion. However, a polarised X-ray is both organised and has two waves vibrating in the same direction.

When magnetars or black holes emit X-rays, they encounter a wide variety of materials in the universe. As X-rays pass through the thick cloud of materials, their electric component emits a photon in a changed direction, as it has now undergone scattering. In the process, the new photon has got polarised in a direction perpendicular to the

plane formed between the original and the scattered photon.

Polarisation measurements are believed to provide clues about the bright X-ray-emitting sources and the nature of these radiations and the complex process they undergo.

What about other similar missions?

Missions on X-ray polarisation measurements have been only a handful. Some like IXPE and IXO have been balloon-based and short-duration experiments by NASA and collaborators. Indian astronomers, using AstroSat – India's first astronomy-based space mission launched in September 2015 – performed timing and broadband spectroscopy of X-ray sources.

The need for highly sensitive and precise instruments makes missions for polarisation measurements of X-rays challenging. Anjali is a Science Communication Officer with Raman Research Institute, Bengaluru.

Context: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) put its first polarimetry mission X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat) in a precise circular orbit of 650 km.

X-ray Polarimeter Satellite (XPoSat)

- **About:** It is India's maiden mission dedicated to analysing the polarisation of X-rays emanating from bright celestial sources in the medium frequency band.
- **Objectives:** Measuring X-Ray polarization in the energy band of 8-30 keV from X-Ray sources and conducting long-term spectral and temporal studies of cosmic X-Ray sources in the energy band of 0.8-15 keV.
- **Observation Period:** Approximately five years, with the payloads observing X-Ray sources during the spacecraft's transit through Earth's shadow, specifically during the eclipse period.
- **Primary and Secondary Payloads of XPoSat:**
- **POLIX:** It is the world's first instrument designed to operate in the medium X-ray of 8 to 30 kilo electron Volt (keV) energy band.
 - It comprises a collimator, which is the key component to filter light originating from bright sources in the field of view.
- **XSPECT:** It is designed to conduct fast timing and high spectroscopic resolution in a soft X-ray energy band (0.8-15 keV).
 - It will observe a variety of sources like X-ray pulsars, black hole binaries, low-magnetic field neutron stars, active galactic nuclei or AGNs (a compact region at the centre of a galaxy that emits a significant amount of energy across the electromagnetic spectrum) and magnetars.

What is the polarisation of X-rays?

- X-rays comprise electric and magnetic waves that are constantly in motion. Being sinusoidal waves, they do not follow a patterned direction of motion.
- Whereas, a polarised X-ray is both organised and has two waves vibrating in the same direction.
- **Polarisation measurements:** Angular and Degree of polarisation – are believed to provide clues about the bright X-ray emitting sources the nature of these radiations and the complex process they undergo.

Revamp of cotton farming to help boost production in India

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In a move aimed at arresting the declining cotton production in India, the Union government plans to promote the shift of cotton cultivation from disease-infested fields to disease-free cultivable and irrigated areas within Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Maharashtra and Telangana, according to two officials.

Shifting of cultivation means farmers in identified disease-free districts will be encouraged to change from conventional crops to cotton and those in infested areas would be motivated to shift to other crops.

The plan could double cotton production to 30 quintal per acre. This comes in the backdrop of cotton area, production and productivity registering a declining cotton production trend of 31.6 million bales in 2023-24 from 33.6 million bales in 2022-23.

In recent years, there has been a sharp decline in 'white gold' production, as per textile ministry data. Annual produc-



The plan could double cotton production. BLOOMBERG

tion in 2017-18 was 37 million bales (170 kg each) that fell to 33.3 million bales next year. After growth in 2019-20 (36.5 million bales), it slipped to 35.2 million bales in 2020-21 and 31.1 million in 2021-22.

The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), the research arm of the agriculture ministry, is working on a proposal to promote shifting of cotton cultivation from pink bollworm affected areas to fields which are not yet infected by insects like pink bollworm, and whitefly.

In areas where cotton has

been grown for an extended time, insects like pink bollworm and whitefly form a complex that infects all cotton crops grown in those specific regions, the first official said.

"These insects significantly impact cotton production in almost every cotton-growing state. Shifting the crops will undoubtedly increase the yield," the official added.

In Haryana and Punjab, the acreage of cotton has come down drastically due to attacks by pests as production fell to 1 million bales in 2022-23 from 2.65 million bales in 2019-20.

Similarly, in Punjab, production shrank to 4.44 lakh bales (2022-23) from 9.50 lakh bales in 2019-20, as stated in the state-wise data on the website of the textile commissioner's office.

"In the case of Haryana, new areas such as Mahendragarh, Palwal, and Rewari have been identified for the shifting of crops from Sirsa, Hisar, Fatehabad, Jind, and others," the second official said.

Queries sent to ICAR, ministries of agriculture and textiles remained unanswered till press time.

Context: The Union government plans to promote the shift of cotton cultivation from disease-infested fields to disease-free cultivable and irrigated areas within Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Maharashtra and Telangana.

Cotton Cultivation

- **Position:** India got 1st place in the world in cotton acreage with 120.69 Lakh Hectares area under cotton Cultivation.
- **Cotton Cultivation in India:** Approximately 67% of the country's cotton is grown in rain-fed areas, while the remaining 33% is cultivated in irrigated areas.
- **Lead:** Gujarat is currently the leading producer of cotton in India followed by Maharashtra.
- **Climate:** It is tropical crop grows well in hot and humid climate with temp of 21-27° and annual rainfall between 75-100cm.
- **Concern:** Heavy use of pesticides, pest infestation, rising cost of seeds, farmer indebtedness-suicides.
- **White-Gold of India:** Due to its paramount economic role in India, cotton is often referred to as "White-Gold," emphasizing its economic significance and impact on the nation.
- **According to Ministry Data:** In recent years, there has been a sharp decline in 'white gold' production.

PM Modi urges citizens to take JANMAN Survey on NaMo app

Context: Prime Minister of India has urged the citizens to take JANMAN Survey on the NaMo app and share their views on the progress achieved by India in the last ten years.

JANMAN Survey

- **Aim:** To tap into the minds of the citizens ahead of 2024 elections.
- **Available on:** Digital Platform NaMo app.
- **Survey Presents:** A set of easy-to-answer questions to citizens, collecting their diverse opinions on various aspects of governance and leadership.

PM-JANMAM Scheme

- **Launch:** On Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas, commemorating the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda, in the state of Jharkhand.
- **Objective:** To provide essential amenities such as road and telecom connectivity, electricity, secure housing, clean drinking water, sanitation, as well as improved access to education, health, nutrition, and sustainable livelihood opportunities.
- **Coordinating Role:** Implementation of the scheme will involve the collaboration of nine ministries, with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs playing a pivotal role in overseeing the process.

DRDO celebrates 66th Foundation Day

Context: Recently, DRDO celebrated the 66th Foundation Day of its establishment.

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

- **About:** It is dedicated to empowering India with cutting-edge defence technologies. Its mission is to achieve self-reliance in critical defence technologies and systems.
- **Formation:** Established in 1958 through the amalgamation of existing entities, including the Technical Development Establishment (TDEs) and the Directorate of Technical Development & Production (DTDP).
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Defence.
- **Focus:** DRDO operates a network of laboratories spanning aeronautics, armaments, electronics, land combat engineering, life sciences, materials, missiles, and naval systems.
- **Major Projects**
 - **Project Indigo:** DRDO's initial venture into surface-to-air missiles faced limited success and was subsequently discontinued.
 - **Rustom 2 - Heavy-Duty Drone:** In 2016, DRDO successfully tested its first indigenously developed heavy-duty drone, Rustom 2, designed as an unmanned armed combat vehicle similar to the US's Predator drone.
 - **INS Arihant - Nuclear Ballistic Missile Submarine:** DRDO played a key role in co-developing INS Arihant, India's first nuclear ballistic missile submarine, which became operational in 2018.

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