

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (DCA)

Time: 45 Min

Date: 15-06-2024

Table of Content

- India's Informal Sector Recovery
- 50th G7 Summit
- Digital Agri Mission
- Traditional Medicine Research in India

NEWS IN SHORTS

- Kheer Bhawani Mela
- Raja Parb celebration
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
- CSIR- ASPIRE Scheme
- 30 years of UN Land Convention
- Pantanal Wetland
- GREAT Scheme

INDIA'S INFORMAL SECTOR RECOVERY

Context

- According to findings of the **National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)**, India's large **informal non-agricultural sector** has recovered gradually that was badly hit by the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

About the India's informal sector

- It plays a crucial role in driving economic activity, providing livelihoods to millions, and contributing significantly to the country's GDP.
- A high proportion of socially and economically underprivileged sections of society are concentrated in informal economic activities, which is characterised by its flexibility, adaptability, and ability to absorb a large portion of the workforce.
 - India with almost **85% informal labour** is generating more than **half of the country's GDP**.
- From small-scale manufacturing to services such as domestic work and construction, the sector contributes substantially to national income and serves as a safety net for many households.
- The **informal sector** encompasses a vast majority of **non-agricultural jobs in India**.

National Sample Survey Office(NSSO)

- It is responsible for conducting **large scale sample surveys** in diverse fields on an **All India basis**.
 - Primarily data are collected through **nation-wide household surveys** on various socio-economic subjects, Annual Survey of Industries (ASI), etc.
- Besides these surveys, NSSO collects **data on rural and urban prices** and plays a significant role in the improvement of crop statistics through supervision of the area enumeration and crop estimation surveys of the State agencies.

Divisions of NSSO

- Survey Design and Research Division (SDRD)
- Field Operations Division (FOD)
- Data Processing Division (DPD)
- Survey Coordination Division (SCD)

Key Findings of NSSO

- Post-Pandemic Rebound:** The informal non-agricultural sector in India, which suffered during the second COVID-19 wave, saw a recovery with a 6% increase in firms and an 8% rise in employees by the second half of 2022-23.
- Financial Improvement:** There was a 9.83% growth in Growth in Gross Value Added (GVA) at current prices from October 2022 to March 2023 compared to the fiscal year 2021-22.
- Significant Job Creation:** From October 2022 to March 2023, there was a notable increase in informal firms and employment, with other services and manufacturing sectors leading the job growth.
 - In 2022-23, there were approximately 65 million such enterprises employing around 110 million workers and contributing significantly to the GVA of the nation.
- Statistics Ministry Release:** The survey data contributes to national account statistics, highlighting the unincorporated non-farm sector's role in job generation and economic value.

Challenges Faced by the Informal Sector

- Lacking Contract and Social Security Benefits:** NSSO data reveals that nearly three-quarters of these jobs are informal, with 80% of employees lacking a written contract and 72% without social security benefits.
 - One of the primary issues is the lack of formal recognition and support, leading to **limited access to credit, social security benefits, and healthcare**.
- Informal workers often endure precarious **working conditions** and are **vulnerable to economic shocks**, which can adversely affect their livelihoods and overall well-being.
- Tax Evasion:** Because the informal economy's firms are not directly regulated, they typically dodge one or more taxes by concealing revenue and expenses from the legal system.
- It is a problem for the government because a large portion of the economy is not taxed.
- Lack of formal Data for Policy Making:** There are no official statistics available that reflect the true state of the economy, making it difficult for the government to formulate policies affecting the informal sector in particular and the economy as a whole.

Policy Interventions and Government Initiatives

- Recognizing the importance of the informal sector, successive governments have introduced various policies and initiatives aimed at promoting its growth and integration into the formal economy.
- Programs such as the **National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)** and **Skill India Mission** seek to enhance the skills and productivity of informal workers, thereby improving their earning potential and socio-economic status.
- Additionally, **financial inclusion** schemes like **Jan Dhan Yojana** have facilitated greater access to banking services for individuals operating in the informal sector, and **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY)** provided relief to vulnerable sections, offering a safety net during the crisis.
- Strengthening infrastructure, facilitating technology adoption, and simplifying regulatory frameworks are also crucial for enabling sustainable growth and integration into the formal economy.

Source: TH

50TH G7 SUMMIT

Context

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the G7 Summit in Puglia, Italy.

G7 Summit: Agenda

- **Ukraine war:** With a view to supporting Ukraine's current and future needs in the face of a prolonged defense against Russia, the G7 will launch **Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration (ERA)** Loans for Ukraine, in order to make available approximately **\$50 billion** in additional funding to Ukraine by the end of the year.
- **Stopping the war in Gaza:** The G7 will also focus on the Middle East, particularly the Gaza conflict. The US President has proposed a plan for an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.
- **Migration:** Italy wants Europe to help reduce illegal migration from Africa. Under the Mattei plan, significant investments in African infrastructure, development, and energy have been planned.
- **Climate change:** The G7 aims for a **40-42 percent** emission reduction by 2030, but current policies suggest only a **19-33 percent** reduction is likely. It will explore new strategies to meet climate goals.

- The G7 nations have committed to promote concrete infrastructure initiatives such as the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)** and **PGII (Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment) initiatives**.
- **Importance of the Indo-Pacific for G7:** The Indo-Pacific is of strategic significance, particularly for Japan, the only G7 member located in the region.

What is the G7 Summit?

- **The G7 originated** from a 1973 meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors.
 - ♦ This meeting was convened in response to major economic challenges of at time –an oil crisis, rising inflation and collapse of the Bretton Woods system.
- **The first Summit** of Heads of State and Government was held in **1975** in **Rambouillet, France**.
- **Members:** France, United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Italy, and Canada, and the European Union.
- The formation of G7 served **two purposes**;
 - ♦ **First**, to address economic, political and security differences and manage crises among the members.
 - ♦ **Second**, to reinforce the dominance of the Western democratic and liberal economic model in the global order.

- The G-7 does **not have a formal constitution** or a **fixed headquarters**. The decisions taken by leaders during annual summits are **non-binding**.

Timeline

- **Canada** joined the group in **1976**, and the European Union began attending in 1977.
- The G-7 was known as the '**G-8**' for several years after the original seven were joined by Russia in 1997.
 - ♦ The Group returned to being called G-7 after **Russia was expelled** as a member in 2014 following the latter's **annexation of the Crimea** region of Ukraine.

Why has India been invited?

- With a GDP of **\$3.94 trillion**, India boasts an economy larger than four G7 members.
- India plays a crucial role in the **Indo-Pacific region** countering Chinese dominance.

How relevant is it today?

- The G-7's share of global GDP is around **47%** and only five—the US, Germany, Japan, UK, and France—are among the top 7 global economies, while Italy and Canada have been upstaged by China and India.

Source: TH

DIGITAL AGRI MISSION**In Context**

- The Union government will announce a Rs 2,800 crore **Digital Agriculture Mission**.

Do you know ?

- The agricultural sector, which is estimated to constitute **18 percent of India's GVA in FY24**, is the bedrock of the nation's economy.
 - ♦ India ranks **second-largest producer of fruits**, vegetables, tea, farmed fish, sugarcane, wheat, rice, cotton, and sugar. The horticulture production was 355.25 million tonnes which is the highest ever for Indian Horticulture (as per third advance estimates).

About the Mission

- Digital Agriculture Mission will pave the way for creation of a nationwide farmers registry, crop sown registry, and georeferencing of village maps.
- A budgetary allocation of Rs 28,00 crore has been made for the mission and it will be rolled out over the next two years (till 2025-26).
- The launch of the mission was initially planned in 2021-22 but due to Covid-19 outbreak, it could not be rolled out nationally.

Components

- One of the components of the mission is to create a farmers' registry, in which every farmer will be given a unique ID
- The mission also envisages a crop sown registry.
 - ♦ This will have a record of crops sown by a farmer on his land.
 - ♦ It will help better planning and estimation of crop production.

Progress

- A pilot project has been undertaken across 6 districts — Farrukhabad in Uttar Pradesh, Beed in

Maharashtra, Gandhinagar in Gujarat, Fatehgarh Sahib in Punjab, and Virudhunagar in Tamil Nadu.

- ♦ Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra have already started generation of farmers' ID.
 - The unique farmer ID will allow launch of new value-added services and farmers will be able to avail various government schemes including PM-Kisan and Fasal Bima Yojana through this ID.
 - It will also enable them to avail financial services like farm loans and insurance.

Importance

- The adoption of digital technologies can help India to increase agricultural productivity, reduce waste, increase agricultural export, increase farmers' income and improve food and nutrition security.
- Apart from this, this will help in protecting the environment and sustainable development of the overall agricultural sector.
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) will be a tool for farmers to detect crop anomalies, predict the weather, analyse soil quality, and provide required solutions
- Therefore, The Digital Agriculture Mission aims to encourage and speed up projects based on cutting-edge technologies, including AI, blockchain, remote sensing, robots, and drones.

Challenges

- There is a lack of a centralized repository for agricultural data, posing challenges for startups and organizations developing AI solutions.
- AI solutions require sensors, mechanization for precision farming and connectivity none of which are viable for a majority of Indian farmers.
- Finally, concerns of farmer data privacy and safeguards over who can access personal data need to be addressed in the solution architecture.

Other related steps

- The Union government has also launched **AI programmes** assisting agriculture and **Kisan e-Mitra**, an AI-powered chatbot that assists people regarding the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme.
- **The National Pest Surveillance System** uses AI to detect crop issues, enabling timely intervention for healthier crops.

- **Agricultural mechanisation** - During the period from 2014-15 to December, 2023 an amount of Rs 6405.55 crore has been allocated for agricultural mechanisation.
 - ♦ From within the funds of **Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)**,
 - ♦ So far an amount of Rs 141.41 crores have been released towards **Kisan drone promotion**
- **National e-Governance Plan in Agriculture (NeGPA)**: NeGPA aims to achieve rapid development in India through use of Information & Communication Technology (ICT) for timely access to agriculture related information for the farmers.
- The launch of the digital platform **e-NAM (National Agriculture Market)** in 2016 has facilitated the integration of Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees (APMC) mandis and has provided multi-faceted benefits to farmers, farmer-producer organisations (FPOs), buyers, and traders

Conclusion and Way Forward

- Digital agriculture has excellent potential in India to resolve many of the existing problems that farmers face to realise value and provide strong competition in national and global markets.
- Its success will depend on policy and legal enablers along with significant public private partnerships.
- Realising the AI potential requires the establishment of an AI-ready ecosystem equipped with ethical frameworks, robust data-sharing mechanisms, an effective risk management protocols
- Given the direction that the union and various state governments have taken in recent times along with the booming growth of agri-startups in the country, India is on the right path to transforming its agricultural sector and providing accelerated value to all farmers.

Source: IE

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE RESEARCH IN INDIA

Context

- Recently, the World Health Organization (WHO) has designated the National Institute of Indian Medical Heritage, Hyderabad as a **WHO Collaborating Centre** for 'Fundamental and Literary Research in Traditional Medicine'.

About the Traditional Medicine in India

- India has a rich heritage of traditional medicine that includes **Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa, and Homeopathy**.
- **Practices**
 - ♦ **Ayurveda and Yoga** are practised widely across the country.
 - ♦ **The Siddha system** is followed predominantly in **Tamil Nadu and Kerala**.
 - ♦ **The Sowa-Rigpa system** is practised mainly in **Leh-Ladakh and Himalayan regions** such as Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling, Lahaul & Spiti.
- These systems have been **integrated into the national healthcare system** with institutionalised education and research councils.
- **WHO describes traditional medicine** as the total sum of the "**knowledge, skills and practises indigenous** and different cultures have used over time to maintain health and prevent, diagnose and treat physical and mental illness.

Related Efforts by WHO

- It has established the **WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in India** to harness their potential through modern science and technology.
- **WHO Collaborating Centre**: In India, there are **approximately 58 WHO Collaborating Centres** spanning various disciplines of biomedicine and allied sciences.
 - ♦ The **National Institute of Indian Medical Heritage (NIIMH), Hyderabad** ranks as the **third WHO Collaborating Centre** in the domain of Traditional Medicine, following the **Institute for Teaching & Research in Ayurveda, Jamnagar**, and the **Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY), New Delhi**.

Efforts made by India

- **India** has established a **separate Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy)** to promote holistic health and well-being.
- It oversees the growth and development of traditional Indian medicines and Homoeopathy with the objective of making accessible, safe, effective, and quality medicines available to the public.

- **Digital Initiatives and Portals**
 - ♦ **AMAR Portal:** Catalogues Ayush manuscripts, with digitised content available.
 - ♦ **SAHI Portal:** Displays medico-historical artefacts.
 - ♦ **e-Books of Ayush:** Digital versions of classical textbooks.
 - ♦ **NAMASTE Portal:** Morbidity statistics from hospitals.
 - ♦ **Ayush Research Portal:** Indexes published Ayush research articles.
- **Collections and Publications**
 - ♦ **Manuscripts and Library:** Over 500 physical manuscripts, rare books from the 15th century AD.
 - ♦ **Journal:** Publishes the Journal of Indian Medical Heritage.

Source: PIB

NEWS IN SHORT

KHEER BHAWANI MELA

Context

- Thousands of Kashmiri Pandits converged at the Kheer Bhawani temple to attend the annual festival of Zeisht Ashtami.

Kheer Bhawani temple

- **It is located** in Tulmulla area of Ganderbal district in **Jammu and Kashmir**, amid chinar trees.
- The temple is constructed above a **sacred spring**, which is said to change its colors.
- Goddess **Ragnya Devi** – an incarnation of Goddess Durga – is the **presiding deity** of this temple.
- **Maharaja Pratap Singh** built this temple in **1912**, which was later renovated by Maharaja Hari Singh.

Kheer Bhawani Mela

- The annual Kheer Bhawani Mela, celebrated on Zeisht Ashtami, is being held at the shrines of **Tulmulla in Ganderbal, Tikker in Kupwara, Laktipora Aishmuqam in Anantnag, Mata Tripursundri Devsar** and **Mata Kheer Bhawani Manzgam** in Kulgam.

Source: TH

RAJA PARB CELEBRATION

In News

- The President of India attended the Raja Parb celebration at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- This is the first occasion when the Raja Parb was celebrated at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Raja Parb celebration

- It is an agriculture-based festival of Odisha and It is one of the most celebrated festivals.
- The three-day-long agricultural festival is celebrated during the onset of monsoons. Women and children celebrate this festival with immense fervour.

Other major festivals of Odisha

- **Ratha Yatra** : It is an annual chariot festival of Lord Jagannath and his siblings, and is the biggest festival celebrated in the state, in terms of footfalls and following.
- **Baliyatra**– The word Baliyatra literally means voyage to Bali. Each year during Kartik Purnima, people observe the ritual of 'Boita Bandana' by floating paper/cork boats, in ponds, rivers and other water bodies.
- **Dola Purnima** – Popularly known as Holi, the festival is celebrated by every household in the locality, where people greet each other with a splash of colours and sweets.
- **Magha Saptami**-It is also one the biggest festivals of Odisha, after RathaYatra.
- **Chhau Festival** –The festival celebrates the vibrant tribal culture of the state and is a tribute to the contribution of the tribal's in the field of art and craft of Odisha

Source:PIB

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR)

Context

- Recently, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has sent a proposal to the government to amend Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) rules in the Companies Act (2013) to include donations made by companies through **Social Stock Exchanges (SSEs)**

About the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

- Current CSR rules mandate companies **to spend at least 2% of their average net profit** over the last three years **on any social welfare activities** listed in the Companies Act, 2013.
 - ♦ All organisations listed on SSEs operate in the same domains of social welfare mentioned in the Companies Act, 2013.
- **Currently**, companies can donate to non-profit organisations **outside of SSEs under their CSR activities**.
 - ♦ They **cannot**, however, fund non-profit organisations through SSEs to fulfil their CSR mandate.
- For the above, **an amendment in Schedule VII of the Companies Act (2013)** is required.
 - ♦ **Schedule VII of the Act** lists the activities that companies undertake for CSR.

Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

- It was constituted as a **non-statutory body** in 1988 **through a resolution** of the Government of India.
- **Later**, Parliament of India passed the **Securities and Exchange Board of India Act in 1992**, and established it as a **statutory body**.
- **Objective:** To protect the interests of investors in securities and to promote the development of, and to regulate the securities market and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Social Stock Exchanges (SSEs)

- It was proposed by the Union Finance Minister in the **FY20 Budget Speech**, as a **segment under stock exchanges** where **non-profit organisations that work for social welfare** can be registered and listed to raise funds.
 - ♦ Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and the National Stock Exchange (NSE) both run Social Stock Exchanges (SSEs).
 - ♦ **Currently**, as many as eight non-profit organisations are listed on the NSE SSE, and it is believed that the SSEs would have more than **100 listings by the end of FY25**.

Source: LM

CSIR- ASPIRE SCHEME

Context

- 300 women Scientists to get research grants for 3 years under CSIR- ASPIRE scheme.

About

- As per the **CSIR-ASPIRE (A Special Call for Research Grants for Women Scientists)** programme women scientists can apply to carry out R&D in life sciences, chemical sciences, physical sciences, engineering sciences, and interdisciplinary sciences.

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research(CSIR)

- **CSIR is a R&D organization** known for its cutting edge R&D knowledge base in diverse S&T areas.
- **It was established** as an autonomous body in **1942** and Headquartered in **New Delhi**.
- CSIR has a dynamic network of **37 national laboratories, 39 outreach centers, 1 Innovation Complexes**, and three units with a pan-India presence.
- **The CSIR laboratories** specialize in topics ranging from the genome to geology, food to fuel, minerals to materials, and so on.

Source: PIB

30 YEARS OF UN LAND CONVENTION

In News

- 17 June 2024 will mark the 30th anniversary of the **Bonn-based United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)**.
- About United Nations Convention to [Combat Desertification \(UNCCD\)](#)
- It was adopted in 1994 and It is the first and only internationally legally binding framework set up to address the **problem of desertification**.
- It is based on the principles of participation, partnership and decentralization - the backbone of Good Governance.
- **Members** : There are 197 Parties to the Convention, including 196 country Parties and the European Union.
- **Focused areas** : It addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid, and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.
 - ♦ Parties to the Convention meet in Conferences of the Parties (COPs) every two years, as well as in technical meetings throughout the year, to advance the aims and ambitions of the Convention and achieve progress in its implementation.

- **Status of India :** India became a signatory to UNCCD on 14th October 1994 and ratified it on 17th December 1996.
 - ♦ The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is the nodal Ministry in the Government of India for the UNCCD, and Desertification Cell is the nodal point within the Ministry to co-ordinate all issues pertaining to the Convention.

Source: DTE

PANTANAL WETLAND

In News

- The Pantanal wetlands in Brazil are experiencing an alarming increase in wildfires due to exceptionally dry weather patterns.

About Pantanal Wetland

- The Pantanal, situated in the heart of South America, is the world's largest tropical wetland.
- It primarily lies within Brazil but extends into Bolivia and Paraguay. It is a unique and complex ecosystem, characterized by its seasonal flooding cycles.
- It is a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve, indicating its global

importance for biodiversity and conservation. It also encompasses two Ramsar sites, recognizing its significance as a wetland habitat.

Source: IE

GREAT SCHEME

In News

- The Empowered Programme Committee (EPC) has approved 7 startup proposals under the GREAT scheme.

About GREAT scheme

- The GREAT (Grant for Research and Entrepreneurship across Aspiring Innovators in Technical Textiles) scheme is a key initiative under the National Technical Textiles Mission (NTTM) of the Ministry of Textiles.
- Grant-in-aid of up to ₹50 lakhs for a period of 18 months would be given under the scheme.
- It is open to individual entrepreneurs, startups, and companies working on innovative technical textiles projects.
- It helps towards promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and indigenous production in the technical textiles sector in India.

Source: PIB