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Important Facts for Prelims (2 August 2018)

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Agricultural Scientists' Recruitment Board

- It was set up by the government in November 1973, as an independent recruitment agency following the recommendations of the Gajendragadkar Committee.
- It functions as an independent recruitment agency in recruitment to various scientific positions in Agricultural Research Service and Research Management Positions of ICAR/DARE.
- For the purpose of autonomy, secrecy, accountability and efficient functioning, the government has decided to de-link ASRB from Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). It will be attached with Deptt. of Agricultural Research & Education (DARE) under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare.
- Agricultural Scientists' Recruitment Board (ASRB) is a now 4-member body comprising of one Chairperson and three Members.

Indian-Origin Mathematician Wins Fields Medal

- Akshay Venkatesh, a renowned Indian-Australian mathematician, is one of four winners of mathematics' prestigious Fields Medal, known as the Nobel prize for math.
- He was awarded for his profound contributions to an exceptionally broad range of subjects in mathematics and his strikingly far-reaching conjectures.
- The other three winners are Caucher Birkar, Peter Scholze, Bonn and Alessio Figalli.

NOTE: Fields Medals

- The Fields medals are awarded by the International Mathematical Union every four years to the most promising mathematicians under the age of 40.
- International Mathematical Union is an international non-governmental and non-profit scientific organization, with the purpose of promoting international cooperation in mathematics.

- The prize was inaugurated in 1932 at the request of Canadian mathematician John Charles Fields.
- Each winner receives a 15,000 Canadian-dollar cash prize.

Karkidaka Vavu Bali

- Karkidaka Vavu Bali is a ritual performed by Hindus in Kerala to honour their dead ancestors. It is observed every year on Amavasya or no moon days.
- Karkidakam (July to August) is the last month of the Malayalam calendar.
- This ceremony, called the Vavubali, is said to free the departed from their earthly shackles and ensure their safe passage in the afterlife.

GI Logo, Tagline Launched

- The Government of India launched a logo and tagline for Geographical Indications (GI) to increase awareness about intellectual property rights (IPRs) in the country.
- A GI product is primarily an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product (handicraft and industrial goods) originating from a definite geographical territory.
- Such a name conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness which is essentially attributable to the fact of its origin in that defined geographical locality, region or country.
- Under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property and Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement, geographical indications are covered as an element of IPRs.
- India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 with effect from September 2003.

Mission Solar Charkha

- On the occasion of UN SME Day (June 27, 2018), the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has launched the Mission Solar Charkha.
- The mission will oversee the implementation of 50 Solar Charkha Clusters across the country with a budget of Rs.550 crore for the year 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- The Solar Charkha Mission will entail a subsidy of Rs 550 crore in the initial two years for 50 clusters and every cluster will employ 400 to 2000 artisans. and contribute to the green economy.
- Solar Charkha Units have been classified as village industries and is expected to generate direct employment to nearly one lakh persons and contribute to the green economy.

Power Tex India

- The Government is implementing Power Tex India, a comprehensive scheme for powerloom sector development.
- India is the largest producer of cotton in the world and the second largest exporter of textiles in the world.
- Under the scheme, to improve quality and productivity, existing plain powerlooms are upgraded to semi-automatic and shuttleless looms, by providing financial assistance to powerloom units.
- The comprehensive scheme has the following components:
 - In-situ Upgradation of Plain powerlooms
 - Group Workshed Scheme (GWS)
 - Yarn Bank Scheme
 - Common Facility Centre (CFC)
 - Pradhan Mantri Credit Scheme for Powerloom Weavers
 - Solar Energy Scheme for powerlooms
 - Facilitation, IT, Awareness, Market Development and Publicity for Powerloom Schemes
 - Tex Venture Capital Fund
 - Grant-in-Aid and Modernisation & Upgradation of Powerloom Service Centres (PSCs)