



Important Facts for Prelims (10th August, 2018)

SWAYAM

- **Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM)**, was launched on July 9, 2017 by Ministry of Human Resource Development to provide one integrated platform and portal for online courses.
- This covers all higher education subjects and skill sector courses.
- The objective is to ensure that the every student in the country has access to the best quality higher education at the affordable cost.
- Academicians from hundreds of institutions throughout the country are involved in developing & delivering Massive open online courses (MOOCs) through SWAYAM in almost all disciplines from senior schooling to Post Graduation.

Unnat Bharat Programme 2.0

- The Government has recently launched **Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0**, which covers 750 Higher Educational Institutes.
- Unnat Bharat Abhiyan aims **to link the Higher Education Institutions with atleast 5 villages**, so that these institutions can contribute to the economic and social betterment of these village communities using their knowledge base.
- Unnat Bharat Abhiyan is inspired by the vision of transformational change in rural development processes by leveraging knowledge institutions to help build the architecture of an Inclusive India.
- It also aims to create a virtuous cycle between the society and an inclusive university system, with the latter providing knowledge base; practices for emerging livelihoods and to upgrade the capabilities of both the public and private sectors.
- Objective of the scheme are-
 - To engage the faculty and students of Higher Educational Institutions in understanding rural realities
 - Identify and select existing innovative technologies, enable customization of technologies, or devise implementation methods for innovative solutions, as required by people
 - To allow Higher Educational Institutions to contribute to devising systems for smooth implementation of various Government Programs.

Environmental Performance Index

- Ministry of Environment has refuted the The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) report, 2018 which has **ranked India at 177 out of 180 countries**.
- As per the report, **India's poor performance is linked to its Environmental Health policy objective** and the increase in deaths due to increasing PM2.5 levels.
- India was ranked 141 in the 2016 edition of the report.
- The 2018 Environmental Performance Index (EPI) **ranks 180 countries on 24 performance indicators** across ten issue categories covering environmental health and ecosystem vitality.
- Innovations in the 2018 EPI data and methodology have generated new rankings founded on the latest advances in environmental science and analysis.
- In general, high scorers exhibit long-standing commitments to protecting public health, preserving natural resources, and decoupling greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from economic activity.
- Low scores on the EPI are indicative of the need for national sustainability efforts on a number of

fronts, especially cleaning up air quality, protecting biodiversity, and reducing GHG emissions.

- This index is prepared by Yale University and Columbia University in collaboration with the World Economic Forum.
- Switzerland leads the world in sustainability, followed by France, Denmark, Malta and Sweden in the EPI.
- Overall, India (at 177) and Bangladesh (179) is among the least five performers followed by Nepal (176), Dem Rep. of Congo(178) and Burundi(180).

Michelle Bachelet as New UN Rights Chief

- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday nominated Chile's twice-serving president and prominent women's rights advocate Michelle Bachelet to be the global body's next human rights chief.

NOTE: United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

- The UN Human Rights Council, formed in 2006 comprises 47 member countries within the United Nations, which has been tasked with the upholding of Human Rights.
- The UN Human Rights High Commissioner is the principle official who speaks out for human rights across the whole UN system, strengthening human rights mechanisms; fighting discrimination in all its forms; widening the democratic space and protecting the most vulnerable from all forms of human rights abuses.
- The council meets three times a year to examine the issues related to human rights violations worldwide.
It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

- In a bid to boost rural road connectivity, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, approved the continuation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) beyond the 12th five year plan period.
- PMGSY was launched on 25th December, 2000 **to provide all weather road connectivity in rural areas of the country.**
- The program envisages to provide rural connectivity consisting of 500 persons and above in the plain areas and 250 persons and above in the hilly States, desert areas, Tribal areas and selected Tribal and Backward Districts.
- The Union Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal implementing authority of the scheme.
- It also envisages to complete GIS mapping of all roads by 2018.
- The concept of Green and innovative technologies is also encouraged under the scheme.
- It also launched a mobile application 'Meri Sadak' to enable citizens to register complaints regarding the quality and pace of construction of PMGSY roads.