



Chandigarh Sets Up Panels for Poor Prisoner Relief | Haryana | 04 Apr 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the Chandigarh administrator has constituted **two committees for the implementation of a scheme to provide relief to poor prisoners who cannot be released from jail due to financial constraints** like non-payment of fines or bail amount.

Key Points

- The **Support to Poor Prisoners Scheme** has been finalised by the **Union ministry of home affairs** and for its implementation.
- Administration has constituted:
 - One **“Empowered Committee”** to be **headed by the district collector (DC) and district magistrate (DM)**, and its members will be the secretary, district legal services authority, superintendent of police (SP) and chief judicial magistrate.
 - **Oversight committee** will have a **legal remembrancer-cum-director of prosecution, and secretary (Home/Jail), state legal services authority, and registrar general, Punjab and Haryana high court** as its members; and **the Chandigarh inspector general of prisons** will be the member convener of the committee.
- The committee will assess the requirement of financial support in each case **for securing bail or for payment of fine, etc**, and based on the decision taken, the DC and DM will draw money from the **Central Nodal Agency (CNA) account** and take necessary action.
- The committee **may appoint a nodal officer and take assistance** of any civil society representative, social worker and district probation officer to assist them in processing cases of needy prisoners.

The Support to Poor Prisoners Scheme

- It is an initiative by the Government of India **to provide financial assistance to poor prisoners who are unable to pay fines or bail amounts**, preventing their release from jail.
- The scheme **aims to address the issue of overcrowding in prisons** and ensure that **no prisoner remains incarcerated solely due to financial constraints**.

NABARD Extends Financial Support to Bihar | Bihar | 04 Apr 2024

Why in News?

[National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development \(NABARD\)](#) extended **financial support of Rs 10372.86 crore in Bihar** during the financial year 2023 - 24 in the form of refinance, direct finance,

and grant support.

- This is the **highest financial support extended by NABARD to the state** in a year so far and recorded a growth of 21 % over the previous financial year (2022-23).

Key Points

- Refinance was extended for production credit, investment credit and for paddy procurement operations of different commercial banks, **Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)** and **Co-Operative Banks**, while direct finance support was extended to the state government for the creation of rural infrastructures.
 - The **grant support** was extended to various agencies for piloting developmental initiatives in the field of **Farmers' Producer Organisations (FPOs)**, **Watershed Development**, **Tribal Development**, **Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies (PACS)** **Computerisation programme**, **Skill and Enterprise Development**, **Financial Literacy and Awareness programmes** in the rural areas.

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

- It is a development bank focussing primarily on the rural sector of the country. It is the apex banking institution to provide finance for Agriculture and rural development.
- Its headquarter is located in Mumbai, the country's financial capital.
- It is responsible for the development of the small industries, cottage industries, and any other such village or rural projects.
- It is a statutory body **established in 1982** under the Parliamentary act-**National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act, 1981**.

The Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)

- They were **established in 1975** under the provisions of the Ordinance promulgated on 26th September 1975 and **Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976**.
- RRBs are **financial institutions** which ensure adequate credit for agriculture and other rural sectors.
- The RRBs **combine the characteristics of a cooperative in terms of the familiarity of the rural problems** and a commercial bank in terms of its professionalism and ability to mobilise financial resources.

Cooperative Banks

- It is an institution **established on a cooperative basis to deal with the ordinary banking business**. Cooperative banks are **founded by collecting funds through shares, accepting deposits, and granting loans**.
- They are **Cooperative credit societies** where members from a community group together to extend loans to each other, at favorable terms.
- They are registered under the Cooperative Societies Act of the State concerned or the **Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002**.
- The Co-operative banks **are governed by the:**
 - **Banking Regulations Act, 1949**.
 - **Banking Laws (Co-operative Societies) Act, 1955**.
- They are broadly divided into **Urban and Rural cooperative banks**.

Primary Agriculture Cooperative Societies

- PACS are **cooperative societies that provide short-term credit** and other services to their members, who are mostly farmers.
- They are the **grassroots level institutions** of the cooperative credit structure in India.
- PACS are being transformed by **computerisation, undertaking multiservice, distribution of electricity, water, medicines** and offering services as **Common Service Centres (CSC)**.

SJVN Partners with IIT Patna to Improve Tunneling Project Performance | Bihar | 04 Apr 2024

Why in News?

Recently, **SJVN Limited** has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **Indian Institute of Technology Patna (IIT Patna)** to use advanced geological models in SJVN's tunnelling projects, thus significantly reducing time and cost overruns.

Key Points

- One of the key outcomes of this partnership will be the **development of predictive analytics algorithms**.
 - These algorithms, leveraging integrated geotechnical data, will **forecast potential risks and provide early warning systems** specifically tailored for tunnelling projects.
 - Such proactive measures are expected to substantially **mitigate time and cost** overruns during project execution.
- The primary focus of the MoU is to **develop cutting-edge methodologies** which integrate diverse geotechnical data sources.
 - These would include **geological surveys, borehole data, geophysical measurements and monitoring data from projects of SJVN**.
- The collaboration also aims to evaluate the intricate relationship between overburden and deformation, thereby enhancing the evaluation and design of support systems crucial for tunnelling projects.
 - By harnessing integrated geotechnical data and 3D geological models, SJVN and IIT Patna aim to **identify and analyze potential risks and hazards**.

Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN Limited)

- It is an **Indian public sector undertaking** involved in hydroelectric power generation and transmission.
- It was **incorporated in 1988 as Nathpa Jhakri Power Corporation**, a joint venture between the Government of India and the Government of Himachal Pradesh.

Uttarakhand High Court Seeks State Govt. Reply on Horizontal Reservation Plea | Uttarakhand | 04 Apr 2024

Why in News?

Recently, The Uttarakhand High Court sought a reply from the Uttarakhand government on a petition challenging **30% horizontal reservation to domiciled women of the state** in government jobs.

Key Points

- The petition challenges **Section 3(1) of the Uttarakhand Public Service Commission (Horizontal Reservation for Women) Act, 2022**, saying 30% reservation for women of the state is beyond the scope of [Article 16 of the Constitution of India](#).
- As per the case, Uttarakhand Public Service Commission had released an advertisement for various posts of **PCS (provincial civil services) on March 14, 2024**.
 - Clause 10(d) of the advertisement provides for 30% horizontal reservation for female candidates who are native of Uttarakhand.
 - The petitioner challenged the reservation and said horizontal reservation based only on domicile should not be made.
 - **Section 3(1) of the Uttarakhand Public Service Commission (Horizontal Reservation for Women) Act, 2022** is unconstitutional because it violates the **Article 16 of the Constitution of India**.

Article 16 of the Constitution of India

- It provides for the grounds of positive discrimination or Reservation in government jobs.
 - **Article 16(4)** provides that the State can make any provision for the **reservation of appointments or posts** in favor of any backward class of citizens who, in the opinion of the state, are not adequately represented in the services under the State.
 - **Article 16(4A)** provides that the State can make any provision for reservation **in matters of promotion** in favor of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes if they are not adequately represented in the services under the State.
 - **Article 16(6)** provides that the State can make any **provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favor of any economically weaker sections**.

PepsiCo India Establishing Flavor Plant in Madhya Pradesh | Madhya Pradesh | 04 Apr 2024

Why in News?

Recently, [PepsiCo India](#) announced to invest Rs 1,266 crore to **set up a flavour manufacturing facility at Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh** as part of its expansion plans in the country.

Key Points

- The plant, spread over 22 acres, will play a significant role in scaling up PepsiCo's beverage production in India, **generating employment and positively impacting the local economy**.
 - The construction of the upcoming plant is slated to **start in 2024** and is expected to be **operational in the first quarter of 2026**.
 - The new unit will be the company's second flavour manufacturing facility in India. **PepsiCo's first flavour manufacturing facility is in Channo, Punjab.**
- PepsiCo India said in line with its global sustainability goals, the new manufacturing facility will **operate entirely on renewable energy sources** leading to a **reduction in carbon footprint** by an impressive 1.9 metric tonne per day.
- With **zero liquid discharge technology**, the plant aims to achieve approximately **90% overall water efficiency**, ensuring responsible management of water resources, and replenishing 100% of the water used at the facility.

Note: The components of Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD), including **reverse osmosis**, enable extensive reuse and recovery of water and salts, and the process minimizes the freshwater requirements.

Gagan Shakti-2024 | Rajasthan | 04 Apr 2024

Why in News?

The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** is set to commence a '**Gagan Shakti-2024**', 10-day exercise to test its capabilities and preparedness for high-intensity operations.

Key Points

- IAF showcases its might and capability during the exercise "in a realistic environment" **from April 1-10, 2024**, involving all air force bases and assets scattered across the country.
 - 'Gagan Shakti' was **last held in 2018** when the IAF clocked more than 11,000 sorties during the two-phase air manoeuvre that saw the concentration of the force's deployed assets move from the western sector to the eastern front in less than 48 hours.
 - It sought to test the IAF's readiness for a two-front war with China and Pakistan.
- The latest drills follow the [Vayu Shakti-2024 exercise](#), **conducted** at the **Pokhran air-to-ground range near Jaisalmer**, where the IAF deployed its frontline assets, including the [Rafale fighter jets](#), **Mirage-2000s, Sukhoi-30 MKIs, Tejas light combat aircraft (LCA), Jaguars, Chinook heavy-lift helicopters, Apache attack helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles and surface-to-air missile systems.**
 - This year's Vayu Shakti was followed by the **tri-services Bharat Shakti exercise**. The integrated tri-services 'live fire and manoeuvre' **exercise displayed** how the **Indian military plans to leverage its indigenous capabilities for dominating the battlefield** and crushing any threat to national security.
 - The exercise featured several weapons and systems, including [Tejas LCA Mk-1](#), the [light combat helicopter Prachand](#), armed advanced light helicopters, **T-90 tanks, BMP-II infantry combat vehicles**, drone launched precision guided munitions, a variety of **unmanned aerial vehicles, rockets**, air defence weapons, and artillery guns such as the **Dhanush, Sharang and K9 Vajra**.
- The IAF will host 'Tarang Shakti', a mega exercise that is expected to **bring together 12 global air forces**, with a focus on **improving interoperability, imbibing best practices from one another and boosting military cooperation** among the participating countries.
 - It will be the **biggest multi-nation air exercise** to be conducted **on Indian soil**.
 - It will involve **fighter jets, transport aircraft, helicopters, mid-air refuellers, airborne warning and control system (AWACS) aircraft, and unmanned systems.**