



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) **rank 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.