

**March – 08**

## **NATIONAL**

### **AWBI headquarters shifted**

- ❖ Government has shifted headquarters of Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) to Ballabgarh in Faridabad District of Haryana from Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ It was shifted after consultation with AWBI for better coordination between the Environment Ministry and AWBI for carrying out the animal welfare activities.
- ❖ AWBI is a statutory advisory body established in 1962 under Section 4 of The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.
- ❖ The Board consists of 28 Members, who serve for a period of 3 years. S.P.Gupta, is the chairman of the board.
- ❖ Initially, it was within jurisdiction of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.
- ❖ Later in 1990, the subject of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was transferred to Environment Ministry.

### **Decline in Child Marriages**

- ❖ UNICEF has appraised India for a sharp decline of 20 per cent in child marriages during the last decade.
- ❖ According to UNICEF, India saw a sharp decline in child marriages over the last ten years with 27% of girls getting married before their 18th birthday as against 47% a decade ago.
- ❖ Globally, the proportion of girls who were married as children decreased by 15% in the last decade, from 1 in 4 to approximately 1 in 5.
- ❖ Also 25 million child marriages were prevented globally in the decade of 2005-06 to 2015-16.
- ❖ The largest reduction was seen in South Asia with India being at the forefront.
- ❖ The UN children's agency stated the following reasons for the decline,
  - ✓ Increasing rates of girls' education
  - ✓ Proactive government investments in adolescent girls
  - ✓ Strong public awareness about the illegality of child marriage and the harm it causes

### **M777 ultra-light howitzers**

- ❖ India and US officials has test-fired M777 ultra-light howitzers (ULH) at Pokhran firing range in Rajasthan.
- ❖ The test was conducted in the wake of accident and repairs during its trial in September 2017.
- ❖ In May 2017, the Army took delivery of two M777 ultralight howitzers made by the BAE Systems US under a contract signed in 2016.
- ❖ M777 Ultra-Light Howitzers (ULH) artillery Guns is manufactured by BAE Systems' Global Combat Systems division.
- ❖ Indian Army is going to deploy these artillery guns in high-altitude areas in Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh, bordering China.



## INTERNATIONAL

### India's top oil supplier

- ❖ Iraq has overtaken Saudi Arabia to become India's top crude oil supplier, meeting more than a fifth of the country's oil needs in the current financial year.
- ❖ It is notable that Saudi Arabia traditionally has been India's top oil supplier.
- ❖ Iran, for the second year in a row continued to be the third largest supplier.
- ❖ Venezuela is India's fourth largest supplier, followed by Nigeria.
- ❖ India is 80% dependent on imports to meet its oil needs.
- ❖ India's dependence on West Asia for its crude oil need has increased from 58% in 2014-15 to 63.7% in April-January period of this fiscal.

### Warship Squadron – Japan

- ❖ Japan's navy has appointed Ryoko Azuma as the Commander of the First Escort Division of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force.
- ❖ She became the first woman to command a warship squadron., including the flagship Izumo helicopter carrier.
- ❖ Ryoko Azuma, will command four ships with a combined crew of 1000, that make up the Maritime Self Defense Force's (MSDF) First Escort Division.

## ECONOMY

### FIN-Tech

- ❖ The centre has set up 8-member steering committee look into the development and regulation of the financial technology (fintech) sector in India.
- ❖ The committee will be headed by Subhash Chandra Garg, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs.
- ❖ Committee's objective is to consider various issues relating to
  - Means of using data available with Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) and information utilities such as credit information companies to make applications for financing of MSMEs.
  - How Fintech could be leveraged in critical sectors of economy.

- ❖ It will also work with entities such as UIDAI to create and use unique enterprise identification number.

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### Thermo electric compound

- ❖ Researchers have developed silver copper telluride (AgCuTe), a novel compound that exhibits poor thermal conductivity in the 25 °C to 425 °C range but shows good electrical conductivity.
- ❖ It was developed by researchers from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bengaluru.
- ❖ The new material having thermoelectric properties is made from silver, copper, and tellurium.
- ❖ The compound is used as a thermo-electric material for converting waste heat of chemical, thermal, or steel power plants into electricity.

## PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS

### Pritzker Prize - Balkrishna Vitthal Das Doshi

- ❖ Balkrishna Vitthal Das Doshi became the first Indian to receive the Pritzker Prize also dubbed as 'Architecture Nobel'.



- ❖ The international Pritzker prize is awarded each year to a living architects for significant achievement.
  - ❖ It was established by the Pritzker family of Chicago through their Hyatt Foundation in 1979.
  - ❖ It bestows laureates with \$100,000 along with a bronze medallion.
  - ❖ Balkrishna Doshi is a pioneer of low-cost housing design, committed to sustainable architecture that brought modernist design to a country rooted in traditionalism.
  - ❖ His noted works include Life Insurance Corporation Housing in Ahmedabad, Vidhyadhar Nagar in Jaipur, Aranya Low Cost Housing in Indore.
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