

Prelim Bits 05-02-2019

Price monitoring and research unit

- Kerala has become the first State to set up a price monitoring and research unit (PMRU).
 - It is to track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO).
 - The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) had proposed such a system for the States and the Union Territories five years ago.
 - The State Health Secretary would be the Chairman of the society and the Drugs Controller would be its member secretary.
 - Its members include a State government representative, representatives of private pharmaceutical companies, and those from consumer rights protection forum.
 - The society would also have an executive committee headed by the Drugs Controller.
 - The new watchdog will
1. offer technical help to the State Drug Controllers and the NPPA to monitor notified prices of medicines
 2. detect violation of the provisions of the DPCO
 3. look at price compliance
 4. collect test samples of medicines
 5. collect and compile market-based data of scheduled as well as non-scheduled formulations.

Asian Infrastructure Finance Report 2019

- In AIIB's Asian Infrastructure Finance 2019 report, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank expects the cost of infrastructure financing in India to increase over the next one year.
- The bank sees slowing global economy, higher borrowing costs and geopolitical tensions leading to greater uncertainty among investors.
- India's infrastructure transaction activity, after reaching \$72.7 billion in 2014, dropped to \$48.9 billion in 2015 and to \$40.4 billion in 2016.
- While in 2017, it bounced back to \$81.3 billion due to surge in transaction in oil and gas segment, other sectors continued to see decline.
- Infrastructure financing scenario in India has been dominated by public

spending, while significant breakthrough in the mobilization of private capital for infrastructure is yet to be seen.

National Mission on Libraries

- National Mission on Libraries i.e High Level Committee has been set up by Ministry of Culture, Government of India on 2012.
- It was in pursuance of National Knowledge Commission recommendations for sustained attention for development of Libraries and Information Science Sector.
- National Mission on Libraries set up four working groups and after deliberating on the recommendations of the working groups formulated the scheme "National Mission on Libraries (NML) - up gradation of libraries providing service to the public".
- The scheme consists of four components.
 1. Creation of National Virtual Library of India (NVLI)
 2. Setting up of NML Model Libraries,
 3. Quantitative & Qualitative Survey of Libraries
 4. Capacity Building
- The purpose of National Virtual Library of India is to facilitate a comprehensive database on digital resources on information about India and on information generated in India, in an open access environment.
- The Quantitative & Qualitative Survey of Libraries would be undertaken to prepare a baseline data of libraries in India through a survey of 5000 Libraries.
- The Capacity Building would be undertaken to enhance the professional competence of library personnel.

Promoting IPR culture in Defense sector

- Boosting Intellectual Property culture in Defense would enhance the Intellectual Capital that is vital for the future endeavors
- The following are the steps taken to encourage in-house Research & Development in Ordnance Factories and Defense PSUs
- An Intellectual Property Rights Facilitation (IPF) Cell has been established under the Department of Defense Production.
- It is to promote self-reliance in Intellectual Property Rights in Defense Sector.
- Department of Defense Production has also launched the "Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti" .
- The mission aims to encourage Defense Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and Ordnance Factory Board to boost "IPR culture" in their respective

organization to promote self-reliance in defense sector.

- The challenges faced by the Defense Public Sector Undertakings and Ordnance Factory Board in pursuing Intellectual Property Rights in defense sector are
1. lack of awareness
 2. availability of trained manpower
 3. The need to collectively appraise the challenges ahead with private sector, Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and end users.

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan

- Department of School Education and Literacy has launched an Integrated Scheme for School Education called Samagra Shiksha.
 - It subsumes three erstwhile Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).
 - The new integrated scheme envisages school education as a continuum from pre-school to senior secondary level.
 - The main objectives of the scheme are
1. provision of quality education and enhancing learning outcomes of students
 2. bridging social and gender gaps in school education
 3. ensuring minimum standards in schooling provision
 4. Support to states in the implementation of RTE Act, 2009 and strengthening of teacher education institutions.
- The scheme also provides for support for up gradation of secondary schools to senior secondary level and addition of new streams in existing senior secondary schools.

Source: PIB, The Hindu, Indian Express