

Use of ICT in school education in India receives UNESCO's recognition (GS Paper 2, Education)

Why in news?

- Recently, **use of ICT under** a comprehensive initiative called **PM eVIDYA** by the Department of School education, Ministry of Education, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic wins **UNESCO's recognition**.

About PM eVIDYA:

- The PM eVIDYA has been initiated as part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan by the Ministry of Education on 17th May, 2020, which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education to enable multi-mode access for imparting education by using technology to minimise learning losses.



UNESCO's King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize:

- The **Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET)**, a constituent unit of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) under Department of School Education and Literacy (DOSEL), Ministry of Education (MoE), has been awarded with the **UNESCO's King Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa Prize for the Use of ICT in Education for the year 2021**.

About the Award:

- This award “**recognizes innovative approaches in leveraging new technologies** to expand educational and lifelong learning opportunities for all, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and **its Goal 4 on Education**.”
- **Established in 2005** with the **support of the Kingdom of Bahrain**, the Prize rewards individuals and organizations that are implementing outstanding projects and promoting the creative use of technologies to enhance learning, teaching and overall educational performance in the digital age.
- An international Jury selects two best projects annually.
- Each **prize winner receives US\$ 25,000**, a medal and a diploma during a ceremony at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris”, which this year will be held on 24th June, 2022.

Initiatives of Ministry of Education through CIET:

- Keeping in view the recommendations of NEP-2020, Ministry of Education through CIET, NCERT has been working in designing, developing and disseminating a large number of eBooks, eContent - audios, videos, interactives, augmented reality contents, Indian Sign Language (ISL) videos, audiobooks, talking books, etc.; a variety of eCourses for school and teacher education; organizing digital events like online quizzes primarily for students and teachers through leveraging **Online/Offline, On-Air technology One Class-One Channel, DIKSHA, ePathshala, NISHTHA, school MOOCs on SWAYAM**, etc.
- To further the objectives of NEP & Samagra Shiksha and address the aforementioned pillars, PM eVidya- a comprehensive initiative which unifies all efforts and provides multi-mode access to digital/online/on-air education was launched in May 2020.
- The CIET was proactive in taking **learning to the doorsteps of the children through the extensive, resilient, ethical, and coherent use of 12 PM eVidya DTH TV channels** and nearly 397 radio stations, including community radio stations under PM eVidya program.

China finds signs of water in moon's 'Ocean of Storms'

(GS Paper 3, Science and Tech)

Why in news?

- Recently, Chinese scientists have found **signs of water in samples retrieved by China from a lava plain on the moon**, bringing them closer to understanding its origin there; a crucial question for future lunar exploration.

Observations made:

- The scientists had analysed remnants of solidified lava retrieved by an uncrewed Chinese mission from the plain known as the **'Ocean of Storms'** and found evidence of water in the form of hydroxyl encased in a crystalline mineral known as apatite.
- **Hydroxyl, comprising a single hydrogen atom and an oxygen atom** versus two hydrogen to one oxygen in a water molecule, was also found in samples retrieved by NASA decades ago.
- It was widely held that most of the water on the moon was the result of chemical processes triggered by the bombardment of charged particles from the sun on the lunar surface.
- The source of hydroxyl in minerals such as apatite is very likely indigenous.



Indigenous sources:

- The hydroxyl contents in foreign materials produced by the impact processes are probably negligible.
- The Chinese samples suggest that little or none of the hydroxyl in them was from extraneous sources.

Chang'e-5 mission:

- China's Chang'e-5 mission, named after the mythical Chinese goddess of the moon, brought back 1,731 grammes of samples in December 2020 after retrieving the soil and rock from a previously unvisited part of the Oceanus Procellarum plain.

What's next?

- China is expected to launch more uncrewed lunar missions in coming years, with the study of water one of the objectives.
- The presence of water on the moon could shed more light on the evolution of the solar system. It could also point the way to in-situ water resources vital to any long-term human habitation.

Historic torch relay for 44th Chess Olympiad

(Miscellaneous)

Why in news?

- Recently, the Prime Minister launched the historic torch relay for the 44th Chess Olympiad today at Indira Gandhi Stadium, New Delhi.
- He in turn handed it over to Grandmaster Vishwanathan Anand.



First Chess Olympiad in India:

- India is hosting the prestigious Chess Olympiad for the first time and in the process, Asia gets to host the event after a gap of 30 years.
- Philippines last hosted it from Asia in 1992.
- Being the host, India is set to field 20 players at the 44th FIDE Chess Olympiad. India is entitled to field 2 teams each in the Open and Women's category. Over 2000 participants will be representing at the event from 188 countries.
- The 44th Chess Olympiad will be held in Chennai from 28th July to 10th August , 2022.

India's achievements in Chess Olympiad:

- India, who made its debut at the event in 1956 Moscow (27th position), has a gold medal (joint winners with Russia in 2020) and two bronze medals (2021, 2014) from the Chess Olympiad.
- While the 2020 and 2021 editions were held virtually owing to the Covid 19 pandemic, the 2022 edition will be the first over-the-board Chess Olympiad being held since 2018 in Georgia.

What's next?

- This torch will be taken to 75 cities in a span of 40 days before the final culmination at Mahabalipuram near Chennai before heading over to the FIDE Headquarters, Switzerland.