

The Hindu

Front Page

First set of Agniveers will join service in June 2023, says Army (Page no. 1)

(GS Paper 3, Defence)

The Army has issued the first notification for recruitment of Agniveers under the Agnipath scheme, with the process set to begin in July and the first set of Agniveers to join service in June 2023.

The Army has already said it will recruit 40,000 Agniveers in two batches this year. The registration will open on July 1, and the first recruitment rally is expected to be held in mid-August”.

Registration will be opened from July by the respective AROs [Army Recruiting Office] for Agniveer general duty, Agniveer technical, Agniveer technical (aviation/ammunition examiner), Agniveer clerk/ store keeper technical, Agniveer tradesman 10th pass and Agniveer tradesman 8th pass.

The Army plans to conduct the rallies till November, with induction into training centres to be done in two batches — a first batch of 25,000 Agniveers by the first half of December, with the remaining recruitments in the second batch by the first half of February 2023. The Army has planned 83 rallies across the country.

States

Rare dragonfly spotted in Kerala for first time (Page no. 5)

(GS Paper 3, Environment)

Dragonfly enthusiasts have recorded the presence of a rare dragonfly that was hitherto unseen in Kerala. Afsar Nayakkan and Vibhu Vipanchika spotted the Spiny Horntail, *Burmagomphus chaukulensis* Joshi, Ogale & Sawant, 2022 (or *B. chaukulensis*), during a recent expedition to the Kottiyoor forests of Kannur.

The species that is known to be endemic to the Western Ghats was discovered in Maharashtra earlier this year. The discovery that was recorded from Kottiyoor was confirmed by Vinayan P. Nair, an odonate expert who represents the TNHS Odonata Research Group (TORG) of the Travancore Nature History Society (TNHS).

Researchers had spotted the species from Chaukul in Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra. Prior to their finding, the dragonfly genus *Burmagomphus* was represented by three species – *B. cauvericus*, *B. pyramidalis* and *B. laidlawi*. While *B. laidlawi* is found throughout the Western Ghats, *B. cauvericus* is more restricted in its distribution.

Editorial

A case of the court straying into the legislative sphere (Page no. 6)

(GS Paper 2, Polity and Governance)

Recently, the Allahabad High Court, while allowing two criminal revisions pertaining to a dowry case, took cognisance of the misuse of Section 498A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), proposed certain safeguards and directed the State authorities of Uttar Pradesh to take the necessary steps for their implementation in a given time period.

The High Court expressed its concern over the growing tendency of dowry victims to rope in the husband and all his family members using general and sweeping allegations.

The directions, inter alia, include constitution of a family welfare committee in each district under the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA), handing over the first information report to such a committee immediately after its registration, and no arrest to be made by the police during this “cooling period” of two months.

As far as the High Court judgment reads, there were no allegations against the police that had dropped charges against two persons for lack of evidence and chargesheeted only the husband and his parents based on available evidence.

OPED

At the centre of job creation (Page no. 7)

(GS Paper 3, Indian Economy)

With his announcement that 10 lakh government jobs will be provided over the next 18 months on a “mission mode”, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent four messages.

One, the creation of employment is indeed a problem and can no longer be hidden from the public discourse. Two,

the private sector, especially modern sectors such as the service and manufacturing sectors, which are dominated by multinational companies, have not created many jobs.

Even if the Information Technology sector or the modern gig economy have created jobs, these are either very high skilled jobs or low skilled ones.

Three, the government in the Nehruvian scheme of development occupied an important place in the labour market. The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, whose ideology is different and which often attacks the Nehruvian model, is now ironically forced to step in as persistently rising inflation, unemployment and underemployment threaten to politically affect it.

And four, the NDA government has blown the 2024 general election bugle.

Resurrecting a dead law (Page no. 7)

(GS Paper 2, Polity and Governance)

Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000, which the Supreme Court had declared unconstitutional in 2015 in *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India* for having a “chilling effect on free speech”, is back in the news.

As part of the ongoing negotiations at the United Nations for a proposed international treaty on combating cybercrime, India made a formal submission for criminalizing “offensive messages”.

The language in the submission is similar to what was used in Section 66A. Many contend that this amounts to a ‘backdoor’ attempt at legislation — that is, if India’s submission becomes part of the proposed treaty, it would result in Section 66A springing back to life and being used by the state to curb free speech once again. However, it is not so simple.

First, international treaty negotiations are complex. It is premature to believe that India’s suggestion of criminalising “offensive messages” will be readily accepted.

The U.K. and many countries in the European Union have reportedly already contested India’s submission because they see this as an undue impediment to the freedom of speech.

Explainer

El Salvador’s Bitcoin bet (Page no. 8)

(GS Paper 3, Science and Tech)

The crash in the price of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies has put El Salvador’s government in trouble. The Central American country, led by President Nayib Bukele who is a self-proclaimed fan of cryptocurrencies, had adopted Bitcoin as an official currency in September last year.

The crash in the price of Bitcoin has raised concerns over the government’s ability to repay its debt. The crash in the price of Bitcoin from around \$69,000 in November last year to around \$20,000 this week has caused losses to investors around the world.

According to some estimates, the average cryptocurrency investor is deep in losses after the significant correction in the prices of cryptocurrencies.

The crash in Bitcoin’s price has not spared the government of El Salvador either. President Bukele has been using taxpayer’s money to bet on Bitcoin.

In fact, a lot of times when the price of Bitcoin crashed steeply, he had gone on popular social media site Twitter to announce to the world that he was ‘buying the dip’ (this refers to purchasing an asset after it has dropped in price).

Even during the current crash, he has plunged into the market to buy Bitcoin and has urged citizens of El Salvador to be patient. It is said that the El Salvador government’s investment of over \$100 million in Bitcoin has lost more than half of its value till date due to the crash.

Text and Content

Dutch disease (Page no. 9)

(GS Paper 3, Economy)

Dutch Disease in economics refers to a phenomenon wherein a country witnesses uneven growth across sectors due to the discovery of natural resources, especially large oil reserves.

According to the concept, when a country discovers natural resources and starts exporting them to the rest of the world, it causes the exchange rate of the currency to appreciate significantly and this, in turn, discourages the exports from other sectors while encouraging the import of cheaper alternatives.

While the idea was first proposed by economists Peter Neary and Max Corden in 1982, the term ‘Dutch disease’ was first coined by The Economist in 1977 to describe the decline of the manufacturing industry in the Netherlands. The origin of the term In the 1960s, the Netherlands discovered gas reserves in the North Sea. The subsequent export of oil and the appreciation of the Dutch currency made Dutch exports of all nonoil products less competitive on the world market.

Unemployment rose from 1.1% to 5.1% and capital investment in the country dropped. Following this, over the years, the country witnessed a downfall in the industrial sector.

According to a recent research paper titled “40 years of Dutch Disease literature: lessons for developing countries”, by Edouard Mien and Michael Goujon, the framework of the model of the phenomenon is based on three sectors: energy (traditionally oil, gas or mining resources), tradeables, and nontradeables of a small economy.

As labour and capital are immobile internationally, the Dutch disease is a “purely domestic phenomenon” which cannot be “exported.”

News

Central Vista Avenue will be opened in a few days, says Puri (Page no. 12)

(GS Paper 2, Polity and Governance)

The Central Vista Avenue is set to open in the next few days after remaining closed to the public since February 2021 for redevelopment, Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri said.

At the launch of the National Initiative for Promoting Upskilling of Nirman workers (NIPUN) to train one lakh construction workers, he said: “In spite of heavy rain and all impediments, Central Vista Avenue will be opened in a few days.”

The area, which is popular with Delhiites and visitors alike, was briefly unveiled for the Republic Day parade, but was barricaded again after January 26 as portions of the redevelopment project were yet to be completed.

The project was to have been completed in November 2021. Mr. Puri said the Pragati Maidan integrated transit corridor was an example of a project completed within a stipulated time.

Referring to a visit by Delhi’s Deputy Chief Minister and Public Works Department Minister Manish Sisodia in March,

Australia seeks to revitalise Indo-Pacific ties (Page no. 12)

(GS Paper 2, International Relation)

India is one of Australia’s closest security partners and the government is focused on revitalising Australia’s historically deep engagement with our partners across the Indo-Pacific, Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister of Australia Richard Marles said ahead of a visit to India.

The visit is scheduled from June 20 to 23. This is the first high-level visit from Australia after the formation of a new government under Prime Minister Anthony Albanese in May, just two days before the Quad leaders summit in Tokyo where he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Defence and security cooperation between India and Australia has significantly expanded in the past few years both at bilateral and multilateral levels.

“The rulesbased international order that has brought peace and prosperity to the Indo-Pacific for decades is experiencing pressure, as we face shifts in the geostrategic order,” Mr. Marles said in a statement issued by the Australian Defence Ministry.

“Australia stands ready to work closer with India in support of an open, inclusive and resilient Indo-Pacific”.

Business

India faces near-term challenges: Fin Min (Page no. 14)

(GS Paper 3, Indian Economy)

India is facing near-term challenges in managing its fiscal deficit, sustaining economic growth, reining in inflation and containing the current account deficit but the country is relatively better placed to weather these headwinds compared with other nations, the Finance Ministry said in its monthly economic report.

Near-term challenges need to be managed carefully without sacrificing the hardearned macroeconomic stability, the ministry said.

Many countries around the world, especially developed countries, face similar challenges. India is relatively better placed to weather these challenges because of its financial sector stability and its vaccination success in enabling the economy to open up.

India's medium-term growth prospects remain bright as pent-up capacity expansion in the private sector is expected to drive capital formation and employment generation in the rest of this decade.

Observing that the capex budget for 2022-23 was expected to underpin growth, the ministry said an upside risk to the budgeted level of gross fiscal deficit had emerged following cuts in excise duties on diesel and petrol.