

Headlines at a Glance - 8th October 2020

written by iasexam.com | 08/10/2020



Union Cabinet approves ratification of Stockholm Convention, bans 7 hazardous chemicals

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved ratification of the Stockholm Convention by banning seven hazardous chemicals that are harmful for health and environment. The seven banned chemicals are listed as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) under the Stockholm Convention. The Cabinet has delegated its powers to ratify chemicals under the Stockholm Convention to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC) in respect of POPs already regulated under the domestic regulations thereby streamlining the procedure. The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and environment from POPs, which are identified chemical substances that persist in the environment, bio-accumulate in living organisms, adversely affect human health/environment and have the property of long-range environmental transport (LRET). Exposure to POPs can lead to cancer, damage to central and peripheral nervous systems, diseases of the immune system, reproductive disorders and child development. POPs are listed in various Annexes to the Stockholm Convention after thorough scientific research, deliberations and negotiations among member countries.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

World Bank: Biennial Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report

The World Bank on Wednesday warned that by 2021, as many as 150 million people are likely to be in extreme poverty because of the coronavirus pandemic and countries will have to prepare for a “different economy” post-Covid by allowing capital, labour, skills and innovation to move into new businesses and sectors. The Covid-19 pandemic is estimated to push an additional 88 million to 115 million people into extreme poverty this year, with the total rising to as many as 150 million by 2021, depending on the severity of the economic contraction, according to the Washington-based global lender.

This would represent a regression to the rate of 9.2 per cent in 2017, according to the biennial Poverty and Shared Prosperity Report. Had the pandemic not convulsed the globe, the poverty rate would have been expected to drop to 7.9 per cent in 2020, it said. Noting that the new poor will be in countries that already have high poverty rates, the report said that a number of middle-income countries will see significant numbers of people slip below the extreme poverty line. About 82 per cent of the total will be in middle-income countries, the report estimates.

SOURCE: *Hindustan Times*

PM Modi to launch Covid-19 Awareness Campaign

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch an awareness campaign to promote [Covid-19 appropriate behaviour](#) ahead of the upcoming festive season and amid reopening of the economy. The campaign, launched to encourage people to help deliver messages of mask wearing, physical distancing and hand hygiene, got the Union Cabinet’s nod on Wednesday. “Mask, social distancing and washing hands are the only weapons to remain safe, in the absence of a [Covid-19 vaccine](#),” information and broadcasting minister Prakash Javadekar said. According to an official statement released Wednesday, the campaign will be conducted in various languages across the country and a Covid-19 pledge will be taken by all. “An action plan will be implemented by central ministries and state and UT departments,” the statement said. “Dissemination throughout the country using all media platforms, banners and posters at public places, involving frontline workers and targeting beneficiaries of government schemes, will be part of the plan,” the statement added.

SOURCE: *The New Indian Express*

UGC declares 24 universities as fake; maximum from Uttar Pradesh followed by Delhi

The University Grants Commission (UGC) on Wednesday announced a list of 24 “self-styled, unrecognised institutions” in the country, terming them as “fake” with the maximum of them operating from Uttar Pradesh followed by Delhi. The majority of eight of these universities are from Uttar Pradesh—Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya, Varanasi; Mahila Gram Vidyapith, Allahabad; Gandhi Hindi Vidyapith, Allahabad; National University of Electro Complex Homeopathy, Kanpur; Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Open University, Aligarh; Uttar Pradesh Vishwavidyalaya, Mathura; Maharana Pratap Shiksha Niketan Vishwavidyalaya, Pratapgarh and Indraprastha Shiksha Parishad, Noida. “Regarding Bharitya Shiksha Parishad, Lucknow, the matter is sub-judice before a district judge in Lucknow,” Jain said. Delhi has seven fake universities—Commercial University Ltd, United Nations University, Vocational University, ADR Centric Juridical University, Indian Institution of Science and Engineering, Vishwakarma Open University for Self Employment and Adhyatmik Vishwavidyalaya (Spiritual University). “The UGC Act, 1956 provides that a degree can be awarded, only by a university established under a central, state, provincial Act or an institution especially empowered by an Act of Parliament to confer the degree,” Jain said.

SOURCE: *The Hindu*

Union Cabinet approves signing of cybersecurity agreement with Japan

The union cabinet on Wednesday approved signing of an agreement with Japan that is aimed at enhancing cooperation in emerging technologies, protection of critical infrastructure, cyberspace and to mitigate threats to communication networks, the government said. It said India and Japan are committed to an “open, interoperable, free, fair, secure and reliable” cyberspace environment and will work towards promoting the Internet as an engine of innovation and economic growth. “The union cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for signing a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) in the field of cybersecurity between India and Japan,” the government said in a statement. The approval of the pact by the cabinet comes in the midst of growing concerns over cyber attacks from China, particularly after India banned over 100 mobile apps with Chinese links. It said the MoC will enhance cooperation in the area of cyberspace and emerging technologies and provide for protection of critical infrastructure and sharing of information on cyber security threats and malicious cyber activities as well as on best practices to counter them.

SOURCE: *The Print*