

**08 MARCH 2019**

## Soumya Swaminathan is WHO chief scientist

### Why in news?

- Soumya Swaminathan has been named as the Chief Scientist in a newly created Chief Scientists department in WHO. The Chief Scientists division has been created to strengthen WHO's core scientific work and ensure the quality and consistency of WHO's norms and standards.
- Swaminathan was one of the three the Deputy Director-General of the WHO.
- She was the first Indian to hold the position at WHO. Cabinet approves

#### World Health Organisation (WHO)

- WHO IS A SPECIALISED AGENCY OF UN, ESTABLISHED IN 1948
- IT IS CONCERNED WITH INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH & IT ACTS AS COORDINATING AUTHORITY ON INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH
- HQ : GENEVA, SWITZERLAND
- INDIA IS A FOUNDER MEMBER OF WHO.
- MEMBERS THE WHO HAS 195 MEMBER STATES, INCLUDING 192 MEMBERS OF THE UN (ALL EXCEPT LIECHTENSTEIN, THE COOK ISLANDS AND NIUE.

## Continuation of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)

### Why in news?

The Union Cabinet has approved continuation of the Atal Innovation Mission. The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) was set up in Niti Aayog in 2016.

### In Brief:

- It aims to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. It seeks to create institutions and programs that enhance innovation in schools, colleges, and entrepreneurs in general.
- The mission has two core functions: a) Entrepreneurship promotion and b) Innovation promotion
- Entrepreneur promotion is done through Self-Employment and Talent Utilization. The Mission supports and mentors innovators to become successful entrepreneurs.
- For promoting innovation, three schemes have been undertaken:
  - a) Atal Tinkering Labs,
  - b) Atal Incubation Centres and
  - c) Scale up support to established incubators.

**Atal Tinkering Labs** are established across schools in India. The objective is to a) foster curiosity, creativity and imagination among young children; and b) inculcate skills such as design mind set, computational thinking, adaptive learning, physical computing etc.

**Atal Incubation Centre scheme** seeks to establish new incubation centres to support innovative start-up businesses to become scalable and sustainable enterprises.

**Scale up support to established incubators scheme** seeks to augment capacity of established incubation centres by providing financial support.

### Note



## JKLF chief Yasin Malik booked under Public Safety Act

### Why in news?

Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief and Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) spokesman have been booked under Jammu and Kashmir's Public Safety Act.

### In Brief:

- The Public Safety Act was enacted in 1978 to take action against the timber smugglers. It provides for administrative detention for people against whom there may be no recognised criminal offence. Administrative detention is the detention of a person by State without trial. It is preventive detention i.e. Imprisonment of a person with the aim of preventing them from committing further offenses or for maintaining public order.
- Originally, the Act allowed for detention for a maximum of two years without trial in the case of persons acting in any manner which is detrimental to the security of the state. It further allowed for administrative detention of up to one year for disturbing public order. Anyone above the age of 16 could be detained.
- However, the Act was amended in 2011. Under the amendments, the detention period of suspects was reduced from one year to three months in cases of disturbing public order. It also reduced the detention period from two years to six months in cases where security of state is concerned. The minimum age for detention was also raised to 18 years from 16 years.
- The Public Safety Act has been highly criticised by rights activists on the grounds that it is against human rights and is being used as a tool to curb peaceful political dissent. Large hydro projects get 'renewable energy'

## Large hydro projects get 'renewable energy' status

### Why in news?

The government has introduced a slew of measures for the hydropower sector. The measures come at the time when the share of hydro-power in the total capacity in India has declined from 50.36% in the 1960s to only around 13% in 2018-19.

### In Brief:

- The major measure has been the declaration of large Hydropower Projects (LHPs) as Renewable Energy source. At present, only small hydropower projects (SHPs) i.e. those up to 25MW are categorized as Renewable Energy.
- The government has also allowed LHPs sell renewable energy certificates under non-solar Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) to discoms. Discoms are required to either purchase specified proportion of renewable energy or buy renewable energy certificates in lieu of that. Accordingly, the Hydro Purchase Obligation (HPO) as a separate system will be commissioned within non-solar RPO to cover LHPs. At present, SHPs are already covered under non solar RPO.
- The government has also approved funding for enabling infrastructure like roads and bridges of Rs 1.5 crore per MW for projects up to 200 MW and Rs one crore per MW for projects above 200 MW.
- Further, LHPs have been allowed back loading (reducing) of tariff after a) increasing project life to 40 years, b) increasing debt repayment period to 18 years and c) introducing escalating tariff of 2%.

### Note

## Odisha forest dwellers seek permanent relief under FRA



### Why in news?

- A large number of forest dwellers have held a protest after the Central government's recent failure to defend the Forest Rights Act (FRA) in the Supreme Court. Protestors have demanded a permanent relief under the FRA.

### In Brief:

- The Supreme court had ordered eviction of more than 10 lakh Scheduled Tribe and other forest-dwellers (OTFDs) households from forestlands across 21 states after their claims over forest land rights under the FRA, 2006 were rejected by states. Recently, the Supreme Court has stayed its earlier order.
- The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 seeks to recognize forest rights of Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers who have been occupying and are dependent on the forest land for generations.
- The Act recognizes a) Community Rights or rights over common property resources of the communities in addition to their individual rights, b) right of ownership, access to collect, use, and dispose of minor forest produce, c) Rights in and over disputed land Rights of settlement and conversion of all forest villages, old habitation, un-surveyed villages and other villages in forests into revenue villages, d) right to protect, regenerate or conserve or manage any community forest resource which the communities have been traditionally protecting and conserving for sustainable use, e) right to rehabilitation in case of illegal
- eviction or displacement from forest land, f) Right to intellectual property and traditional knowledge related to biodiversity and cultural diversity

#### Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO)

It is a mechanism by which distribution companies, captive power plants and other large electricity consumers are obliged to purchase a certain percentage of power from renewable energy sources.

## India excluded again from student visa relaxation list

### Why in news?

- The UK government has once again excluded Indian students from a new list of countries considered "low risk" under Tier 4 visa category. It would have allowed an easier visa application process for Indian students to UK universities.

### In Brief:

- The British government has said that the exclusion of Indian students from a relaxation of visa rules were due to India's decision to pull out of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the return of illegal migrants.
- Earlier, Indian Cabinet had approved the MoU on returns to facilitate the deportation of illegal Indian immigrants in the UK to India before the Indian Prime Minister visit to Britain. However, India backed out of signing the pact due to reservations expressed by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) about Indian agencies being given only 15 days to verify the background of an undocumented migrant.

#### Note

## India, Russia sign deal on nuclear submarine

### Why in news?

India has signed a \$ 3.3 billion deal with Russia to take third Akula-class nuclear-powered submarine on lease for 10 years. The submarine is expected to join the Indian Navy by 2025. It will be fitted with Indian systems to validate them for the indigenous submarines



**In Brief:**

- The submarine will be called Chakra-3 and will replace Chakra-2, whose 10 years lease is set to expire by 2022. However, the lease of Chakra-2 is expected to be extended for another five years to have sufficient time for the Chakra-3 to come on board.
- Akula-class nuclear powered Submarine(SSNs) are a part of the navy's combat fleet. They are propelled by a nuclear reactor, but do not carry nuclear weapons. These vessels can remain underwater for months, making them almost impossible to detect and are a big deterrence for enemy vessels in the region. Their weapons load consists of land attack and anti-ship missiles, and torpedoes to sink enemy shipping.



- India has also indigenously designed and built a nuclear-propelled, nuclear ballistic missile submarine (SSBN), called INS Arihant. They are armed with nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles that are the underwater leg of nuclear Triad. Nuclear triad means the capability of delivering nuclear weapons by aircraft, land based ballistic missiles and submarine launched missiles.

**Note**

