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6. Short News

Indian Standard for Community Seed Banks

Context - BIS has released IS 20201 -2026 to standardise Community Seed Banks and strengthen conservation of indigenous crop varieties amid climate change challenges.

About IS 20201 -2026 – Community Seed Bank Management Requirements

1. IS 20201 -2026 is India's first standardized framework for the establishment and management of Community Seed Banks (CSBs) across India.
2. Developed By - The standard was developed by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) under the Department of Consumer Affairs through its Environment and Ecology Department.
3. Technical Support - The draft was prepared under the convenorship of the ICAR-National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources with inputs from key biodiversity and farmers' rights institutions.
4. Key Features of IS 20201 -2026
 1. Standardised Seed Bank Operations - The standard prescribes uniform procedures for seed collection, acquisition, processing, storage, documentation and exchange of indigenous seeds.
 2. Quality Assurance and Viability Testing - It establishes protocols for seed viability assessment, quality control, regeneration practices and risk management to maintain seed integrity.
 3. Community-Led Decentralised Model - The framework promotes locally managed seed repositories that enable farmers to conserve, access and exchange climate-resilient traditional varieties.
 4. Voluntary Certifiable Standard - It is a voluntary management-system standard that can be adopted and certified by community seed banks and agricultural organisations.

About Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) UPSC CSE Pre 2026

1. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the National Standards Body of India responsible for standardization, quality certification and conformity assessment of goods and services.
2. Nodal Ministry - BIS functions under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.
3. Statutory Status - It is a statutory body established under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 2016, which replaced the BIS Act, 1986.
4. Key Roles
 1. Standard Formulation - BIS develops Indian Standards to ensure product quality, safety, reliability and environmental sustainability.
 2. For Example, BIS introduced the first dedicated national standard to test and assess bomb disposal systems (IS 19445 - 2025)) to improve interoperability across various security agencies
 3. Product Certification - It operates the BIS Standard Mark Certification Scheme, which is generally voluntary but can be made mandatory through Quality Control Orders (QCOs).
 4. Hallmarking Authority - BIS is the sole agency authorized to grant hallmarking licences for precious metals such as gold and silver.
 5. Consumer Protection - BIS safeguards consumer interests by ensuring that products conform to prescribed quality and safety standards.

Important Certification Marks Used in India

1. ISI Mark (Indian Standards Institution Mark) – Issued by the Bureau of Indian Standards, it certifies that industrial and consumer products meet prescribed Indian safety and quality standards.
2. BIS Hallmark (Bureau of Indian Standards Hallmark) – It certifies the purity and fineness of gold and silver jewellery and precious metal artefacts.
3. ECO Mark (Ecological Mark) – Issued by BIS, it identifies products that are environmentally friendly and have reduced ecological impact.
4. AGMARK (Agricultural Marketing Mark) – It certifies the quality and grading of agricultural and allied products under prescribed government standards.
5. FPO Mark (Fruit Products Order Mark) – It indicates that processed fruit products conform to prescribed quality and safety requirements.
6. FSSAI Logo (Food Safety and Standards Authority of India) – It signifies compliance with food safety and hygiene standards prescribed by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India.
7. India Organic – It certifies that agricultural products conform to the National Standards for Organic Production and organic farming practices.

Significance of the IS for Seed Bank

1. The initiative supports the Protection of Plant Varieties and Farmers' Rights Act, 2001, the Biological Diversity Act, 2002, and contributes to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 – Zero Hunger.

Telecommunications (Television, Radio and Associated Services) Rules, 2026

Context – The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting has released the draft Telecommunications (Television, Radio and Associated Services) Rules, 2026 for public consultation.

Draft Telecommunications (Television, Radio and Associated Services) Rules, 2026

1. The draft rules aim to establish a unified regulatory framework for television, radio and associated broadcasting services under the Telecommunications Act, 2023.
2. Legal Basis – The rules derive their authority from the Telecommunications Act, 2023, which replaced the colonial-era Indian Telegraph Act, 1885.
3. Nodal Ministry – The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is responsible for administering provisions relating to television, radio and associated services.
4. Key Provisions
5.
 1. Unified Regulatory Framework – The draft consolidates multiple broadcasting guidelines into a single rulebook to simplify compliance and regulation.
 2. Coverage of Broadcasting Services – It covers satellite television uplinking and downlinking, Direct-to-Home (DTH), Headend-in-the-Sky (HITS), private FM radio, community radio and IPTV services.
 3. Digital Authorisation Process – The rules propose a fully digital and streamlined authorisation mechanism to improve efficiency and transparency.
 4. Simplified Compliance Requirements – The requirement to execute a Grant of Permission Agreement (GOPA) has been removed to reduce procedural burdens.
 5. Transparent Adjudication Mechanism – A structured adjudication framework has been introduced to ensure fair and transparent resolution of regulatory disputes.

Significance

1. Ease of Doing Business – A single regulatory framework reduces compliance complexity and improves regulatory certainty for broadcasters.

2. Harmonisation of Existing Policies – The rules rationalise diverse guidelines and create uniform standards across broadcasting platforms.
3. Continuity of Existing Authorisations – Existing licences and authorisations will continue while being aligned with the new regulatory framework.
4. Support for Digital Governance – Digital processing and simplified procedures are expected to enhance transparency, efficiency and accountability in the broadcasting sector.
5. Consultation Process – The draft rules have been placed in the public domain, and stakeholder comments have been invited.

Global Coalition for Social Justice (GCSJ)

Context – Recently, the Union Minister of State for Labour and Employment participated in the Coordination Group Meeting of the Global Coalition for Social Justice (GCJI) on the sidelines of the 114th International Labour Conference (ILC) in Geneva, Switzerland.

1. The International Labour Organization agreed to adopt the first binding employment standards for gig workers in sectors such as ride-hailing and food delivery, potentially giving them rights on pay, safety and social benefits.

About Global Coalition for Social Justice

1. It is an ILO-led initiative uniting governments, civil society, businesses, and international organisations to advance social justice worldwide.
2. Established – It was launched in November 2023
3. Mission – To foster multistakeholder cooperation and accelerate progress on social justice and sustainable development by promoting policy coherence, technical cooperation, knowledge exchange, and capacity-building.
4. Key Focus Areas –
 1. Inclusive Growth – Promotes equitable economic development.
 2. Social Protection – Strengthens welfare and safety-net systems.
 3. Labour Rights – Advances decent work and workers' rights.
 4. Responsible Business – Encourages sustainable and ethical business practices.
 5. Resilient Labour Markets – Support adaptation to economic and technological changes.
 6. International Cooperation – Fosters collective action on labour and social challenges.

About International Labour Organisation (ILO)

1. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is a United Nations specialised agency dedicated to promoting social justice, labour rights, and decent work worldwide.
2. Established – It was founded in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles.
3. Mandate – Promote social justice, labour rights, decent work, and social protection.
4. Headquarters – Geneva, Switzerland.
5. Unique Tripartite Governance – The only UN agency where governments, employers, and workers jointly participate in policymaking and decision-making.

Mohenjodaro's 'Dancing Girl'

Context – Recently, NCERT's new Class 9 Art textbook has drawn attention for its modified depiction of the iconic Mohenjodaro "Dancing Girl" sculpture.

About Mohenjodaro's 'Dancing Girl' UPSC CSE Pre 2025

1. The 'Dancing Girl' is a renowned bronze figurine of the Indus Valley Civilization, dating to around 2500 BCE, and is regarded as a masterpiece of Harappan art.
2. Discovery - The sculpture was excavated in 1926 by archaeologist Ernest Mackay from the HR area of Mohenjodaro in present-day Pakistan.
 1. HR Area (named after British archaeologist Harold Hargreaves, who led its initial excavations) is a prominent residential and commercial sector located in the Lower Town of Mohenjo-daro, southeast of the Citadel mound
3. Present Location - Following the Partition of India in 1947, the artefact was allocated to India and is currently preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi.
4. Key Features
 1. Material and Technique - The figurine is made of copper-alloy bronze using the advanced lost-wax (cire perdue) casting technique, reflecting sophisticated Harappan metallurgical knowledge.
 2. Distinctive Posture - The sculpture depicts a confident standing figure with one hand resting on the hip, conveying a sense of dynamism and self-assurance.
 3. Artistic Style - The figure is only 10.5 cm tall and displays elongated limbs, a naturalistic stance, prominent facial features and hair tied into an elegant bun, demonstrating remarkable artistic skill.
 4. Ornaments and Adornment - Although depicted nude, the figurine is richly decorated with numerous bangles on the arms and a necklace with a pendant, highlighting the importance of ornamentation in Harappan society.

Initiatives For Lakhpati Didi

Context - The Government has announced initiatives for Lakhpati Didi to strengthen women-led enterprises under DAY-NRLM.

Initiatives For Lakhpati Didi

1. The initiative aims to strengthen women's economic empowerment by creating sustainable livelihood opportunities and achieving the target of six crore Lakhpati Didis.
 1. A Lakhpati Didi is a Self-Help Group member earning at least ₹1 lakh annually through sustainable livelihood activities.
2. The Lakhpati Didi Scheme was launched in 2023.
3. Objective - To enhance income generation, entrepreneurship and financial independence among rural women.
4. Implementing Programme - The initiative is being implemented under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), which promotes Self-Help Groups (SHGs), financial inclusion and rural entrepreneurship.
5. Key Features
 1. SHE MARTS (Self Help Entrepreneurs - Marketing Avenues for Rural Transformation) - Around 700 SHE-MARTs will be established at high-potential commercial locations to provide dedicated market access for products made by women-led SHGs.
 2. District Fulfilment Centres - About 1,000 District Fulfilment Centres will strengthen storage, logistics, packaging and distribution networks for rural enterprises.
 3. Centres of Excellence - Specialised centres will support branding, innovation, product development and capacity building for women entrepreneurs.

4. Digital Market Integration - The revamped e-SARAS platform will function as a multi-vendor, omni-channel marketplace to expand the reach of SHG products nationwide.

Unified National Branding - The "Saras Aajeevika" brand seeks to create a common national identity for SHG products, improving v