

Week 3 Current Affairs Update

16th- 23th May 2020

EVENTS

NATIONAL

POLITY

GOAL PROGRAMME



Date: 16th May 2020

Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) in partnership with Facebook launched the GOAL Programme.

Key Points:

- Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda has launched the GOAL (Going Online As Leaders) programme at a Webinar in New Delhi.
- The motto of the programme is to provide mentorship to tribal youth through digital mode. The programme will help to explore the hidden talents of the tribal youth, which will help in their personal development and contribute to all-round upliftment of their society.
- It will be beneficial to about 5,000 tribal youths.
- The programme also aims to create awareness amongst tribal beneficiaries about various schemes initiated by Central and State Governments for the welfare of STs as well as their fundamental duties.

DEFENCE

DEFENCE TESTING INFRASTRUCTURE SCHEME (DTIS)



Date: 18th May 2020

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has recently approved a Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme (DTIS).

Key Points:

- The scheme aims to create infrastructure for testing defence equipment for India and thus boost the domestic defence and aerospace manufacturing.
- In this scheme, the defence capability will be boosted by MSMEs and various startups working in this sector.
- The duration for the scheme is 5 years and aims to set up 6 to 8 testing infrastructure in partnership with private firms.
- The scheme is approved with a costing of Rs 400 crores.

HEALTHCARE

CSIR, INTEL INDIA AND IIIT-HYDERABAD COLLABORATES TO DEVELOP COVID-19 DIAGNOSTIC SOLUTION



Date: 18th May 2020

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and IIIT-Hyderabad and tech giant Intel India have joined together to develop a diagnostic solution to combat COVID-19.

Key Points:

- The role of Intel India will be to understand epidemiology and Artificial Intelligence based risk satisfaction for the patients.

- Intel India will develop an end to end system which will incorporate multiple applications, testing devices, data collection capabilities, data exchange SDK and an AI based model hub platform.
- IIIT-Hyderabad will work on developing a risk stratification algorithm in order to discover drugs and vaccines to combat COVID-19.
- CSIR and its various institutes will perform comprehensive diagnostics and testing with various hospitals.

‘SUKOON’ COVID-19 BEAT THE STRESS INITIATIVE



Date: 21st May 2020

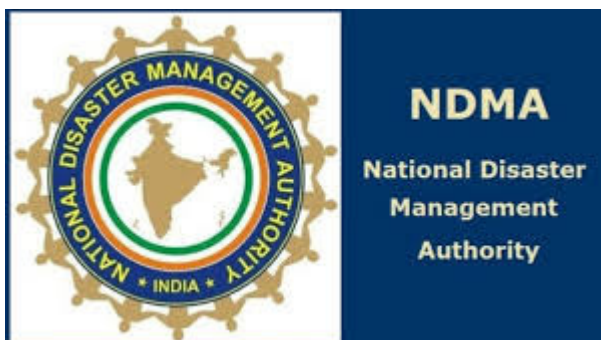
Jammu and Kashmir has launched an initiative called ‘SUKOON’ COVID-19 Beat the Stress.

Key Points:

- It has been launched in coordination with the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR).
- This initiative helps to create awareness and ensure the mental fitness of the people in the fearful condition of COVID-19.
- The programme under this initiative will be telecasted on Doordarshan Kashmir channel every Tuesday at 9.00 pm.
- The main motto is to ensure ‘Healthy Mind in Healthy Body’ along with the guidelines and remedies for COVID-19.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

NATIONAL MIGRANT INFORMATION SYSTEM (NMIS)



Date: 19th May 2020

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has developed ‘National Migrant Information System (NMIS)’.

Key Points:

- An online dashboard “National Migrant Information System (NMIS)” has been developed by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
- The dashboard has been developed by NDMA to secure information regarding the movement of migrants and to facilitate the smooth movement of stranded persons across States.
- National Disaster Management Authority is an apex Body of Government of India, with a mandate to lay down policies for disaster management.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

‘RAIL-BOT’



Date: 20th May 2020

South Central Railway has developed ‘Rail-Bot’ or ‘R-BOT’ which is a robotic device to help in the hospitals in order to manage activities like supplying medicines, medical accessories, to serve food to the patients, thus help in reducing physical contact of doctors and health workers with the positive COVID-19 patients.

Key Points:

- The robotic device is operated by the mobile application.
- ‘R-BOT’ has various sensors which are used to read blood heat of the patients and transmit this value to the display in mobile phones.
- It also has a two way audio and video communication facility which help to carry out interaction between doctors and patients by maintaining social distance.

BANKING

RS 20,500 CRORE TO CO-OP BANKS AND RRBS



Date: 20th May 2020

NABARD has released Rs 20,500 crore to the co-operative banks and Regional Rural Banks for lending process.

Key Points:

- The infusion of Rs 20,500 crore is the part of a special refinance plan assigned by Reserve Bank of India.
- The special refinance plan is made for co-operative banks and Regional Rural Banks and microfinance institutions.
- Out of the total Rs 20,500 crore, co-operative bank has received Rs 15,200 crore and RRBs has received Rs 5,300 crore.
- The funds will help to ensure liquidity in the banks so that banks can provide finance to the farmers to carry out their pre-monsoon activities.

ENVIRONMENT

CYCLONE AMPHAN



Date: 21st May 2020

Higher than normal temperatures in the Bay of Bengal region triggered 'super cyclones' Amphan that put millions of lives at risk in India and Bangladesh

Key Points:

- Cyclone Amphan made landfall in West Bengal, India, near the Bangladeshi border. Amphan became the strongest storm ever recorded in the Bay of Bengal.
- The super cyclonic storm got this name from Thailand.
- The word 'Amphan' (pronunciation: Um-pun), means sky.
- It is the first tropical cyclone of the 2020 North Indian Ocean cyclone season, Amphan's origins can be traced back to a low-pressure area situated over the Bay of Bengal on April 29.

EDUCATION

‘NATIONAL TEST ABHYAS’ MOBILE APP



Date: 21st May 2020

The Human Resource Development Ministry has launched a new mobile phone application called ‘National Test Abhyas’.

Key Points:

- The mobile application is developed by the National Testing Agency.
- The mobile app helps the students to take the mock test for exams like JEE Mains, NEET etc.
- The main aim is to help students in covering their study in the lockdown situation and to face exams confidently in the post lockdown period.

ECONOMY

‘START-UP FUND’ – BY UTTAR PRADESH AND SIDBI



Date: 22nd May 2020

Uttar Pradesh government has signed a MoU with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to launch Uttar Pradesh ‘Start-Up fund’.

Key Points:

- ‘Start-Up fund’ has been launched under UP Information Technology and Start-up Policy 2017.
- It has been launched with an aim to promote entrepreneurship skills among the youth, to support the registered start-up ventures present in the state of UP and to create job opportunities.

- Initial contribution of Rs 15 crore has been made to the fund by the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh.
- The 'Start-Up fund' will be in the form of funds and will take part in SEBI approved alternative Investment Funds and would not be directly invested into start-ups.
- The tenure of the fund is 12 years and SIDBI will be acting as its fund manager.

RBI'S LATEST MONETARY POLICY STATEMENTS



Date: 22nd May 2020

The Reserve Bank of India announced various key points in order to curb the economic crisis faced by the nation due to the pandemic situation of COVID-19.

Key Points:

- RBI has decided to bring down the repo rate by a further 40 basis points that is from 4.4% to 4% reverse repo rate from 3.75% to 3.35% and marginal standing facility (MSF) has been reduced from 4.65% to 4.25%.
- Also, an announcement of extending the moratorium on term loans and working capital was made and it has been extended for a further period of 3 months that is till 31st August 2020.
- RBI has also granted a credit facility of Rs 15,000 crore to SIDBI for 90 days.
- The central bank also extended the credit period from 12 months to 15 months.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

MSME'S E-CONCLAVE 'SIDM MSME CONCLAVE 2020'



Date: 23rd May 2020

SIDM (Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers), CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) and Department of Defence Production jointly organized MSME's E-conclave 'SIDM MSME Conclave 2020'.

Key Points:

- Around 800 defence MSME's participated in the conclave via video conference.
- The theme for the conclave was 'Business Continuity for MSME in Defence and Aerospace Sector'.
- In the conference, Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh made various statements like SIDM has accelerated the manufacturing of PPE kits designed by DRDO, masks, and ventilator parts to support in combating COVID-19.
- He also assured that Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan will enhance the economic situation and will restore millions of jobs.

INTERNATIONAL

REPORTS & INDICES

GLOBAL NUTRITION REPORT 2020: INDIA LIKELY TO MISS NUTRITION TARGETS



Date: 16th May 2020

According to the Global Nutrition Report 2020, India is among 88 countries that are likely to miss global nutrition targets by 2025.

Key Highlights:

- India will miss targets for all four nutritional indicators for which there is data available:
- stunting among under-five children
- anaemia among women of reproductive age
- childhood overweight
- exclusive breastfeeding

- Underweight rates: Between 2000 and 2016, these rates have decreased from 66.0% to 58.1% for boys and 54.2% to 50.1% in girls.
- 37.9% of children under five are stunted and 20.8% are wasted.
- One in two women of reproductive age is anaemic.
- Overweight and obesity: They continue to rise, affecting almost one-fifth of the adults, at 21.6% of women and 17.8% of men.

REPORTS & INDICES

‘WORLD ECONOMIC SITUATION AND PROSPECTS’ REPORT



Date: 16th May 2020

The United Nations has released the ‘World Economic Situation and Prospects’ Report.

Key Points:

- The report projected that the world economy will shrink by 3.2% in 2020 because of COVID-19 pandemic situation.
- The growth rate for India has been projected to 1.2% for FY 2020 and has reported that the growth rate will increase at 5.5% in 2021.
- GDP growth in developed countries will plunge to –5.0 % in 2020, while the output of developing countries will shrink by 0.7 %.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

2ND G-20 VIRTUAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT MINISTERS MEETING



Date: 16th May 2020

The 2nd G-20 Virtual Trade and Investment Ministers Meeting was held under the presidency of Saudi Arabia.

Key Points:

- The meeting focused on immediate actions that can ease the stress faced by people in combating COVID-19 pandemic situations.
- In the meet, The Ministers agreed to provide diagnostic and protective equipment and health care professionals across borders where they are most needed.
- Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal suggested to all the G-20 nations to ensure access to essential medicines, treatments, and vaccines at affordable prices.
- The meeting also focused on providing digital skills to develop the countries. And various decisions were taken on digital trade and e-commerce.

BANKING

\$145 MILLION LOAN AGREEMENT BETWEEN AIIB, GOI AND WEST BENGAL



Date: 17th May 2020

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved a loan agreement of \$145 million with the Government of India and West Bengal state government.

Key Points:

- The loan is approved for the purpose of improving flood management strategies and irrigation services in the Damodar Valley Command Area (DVCA) in West Bengal state.
- The project is named as West Bengal Major Irrigation and Flood Management Project.
- The project will be highly beneficial to 2.7 million farmers from five districts of West Bengal.
- The West Bengal state government will be improving the irrigation facility and thus the agriculture by optimizing the use of surface and groundwater. This will also improve flood management.

HEALTHCARE

ACCELERATING INDIA'S COVID-19 SOCIAL PROTECTION RESPONSE PROGRAMME



Date: 19th May 2020

The Government of India and the World Bank have recently signed an agreement for \$750 million of \$1 billion assistance.

Key Points:

- Assistance is proposed for Accelerating India's COVID-19 Social Protection Response Programme to support India's efforts at protecting vulnerable households impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It will be implemented by the Ministry of Finance.
- Also, \$1 billion support was announced earlier in April 2020 as well by the Bank.
- It will be implemented countrywide through the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMGKY).

ENVIRONMENT

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY



Date: 22nd May 2020

International Day for Biological Diversity observed on 22nd May every year to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues.

Key Points:

- Theme for the year 2020 is “Our solutions are in nature”.
- The resolution to celebrate the day was adopted in 1992. The day was initially celebrated on December 29 till 2000 starting from 1993.
- It was marked on December 29 to celebrate the Day the Convention on Biological Diversity came into effect.
- It was later shifted to May 22 to commemorate the adoption of convention at Rio Earth Summit.



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Nurturing Ambitions

PEOPLE

NATIONAL

APPOINTMENTS

GOVINDA RAJULU CHINTALA



Date: 21st May 2020

Why in news: Appointed as the Chairman of NABARD.

Key Points:

- The government has promoted Govinda Rajulu Chintala as chairman of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development.
- Chintala is currently chief general manager at Nabard.
- He has replaced Dr Harsh Kumar Bhanwala.
- Besides him, Shaji KV and P V S Suryakumar have been appointed deputy managing directors in the NABARD.

DR. HARSH VARDHAN



Date: 22nd May 2020

Why in news: Elected as the Chairman of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Executive Board.

Key Points:

- Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan took charge as the Chairman of the World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board.
- He succeeded the incumbent Dr. Hiroki Nakatani of Japan.
- The Chairman's post of the 34 member WHO Executive Board is rotational. It is held for one year among the regional groups. It was decided last year that India's nominee would be the chairman of the board for the first year starting from May 2020.

INTERNATIONAL

APPOINTMENTS

BENJAMIN NETANYAHU



Date: 20st May 2020

Why in news: Sworn-in for the fifth time as the Prime Minister of Israel.

Key Points:

- Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has won the Israeli national election, securing a record fifth term in office, after a controversial power-sharing deal with rival-turned-partner Benny Gantz.
- President Reuven Rivlin officially granted Netanyahu, two-week mandate to form his government, following which, Netanyahu announced the formation of his coalition government on 17 May 2020.
- Under the three-year coalition deal Netanyahu will serve as Prime Minister for the coming 18 months.
- Till then Benny Gantz will serve as the Defence Minister of the country. After 18 months, both of them will swap their roles.



ISSUES

NATIONAL

ECONOMY

INDIA OPPOSES REJOINING RCEP OVER CHINA CONCERNS



Date: 18th May 2020

Key Highlights:

- May 15 was the deadline for a response to a fresh proposal of India rejoining negotiations on the ASEAN-led trade Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).
- India didn't sign the agreement because its trade deficit with the RCEP nations is \$105 billion, of which China alone accounts for \$54 billion. Further relaxations would enhance the deficit.
- The worry is also over Chinese manufactured goods and dairy products from New Zealand flooding Indian markets, hurting domestic interests.
- The trade agreement was also seen as being detrimental to the government's Make in India initiative.

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

CHINA TEAMS UP WITH PAKISTAN TO BUILD DIAMER-BHASHA DAM



Date: 19th May 2020

Key Highlights:

- China has recently teamed up with Pakistan to build the Diamer-Bhasha dam in Gilgit-Baltistan region. It has created some tension between India and China since India has laid claims over this region.
- Power China, one of the biggest Chinese power companies, received a contract to build the Diamer-Bhasha dam.
- Once completed, the dam will allow Pakistan to use the waters of the Indus for irrigation.
- Diamer-Bhasha Dam is a concrete-filled gravity dam, in the initial stages of construction, on the River Indus between Kohistan district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Diamer district in Gilgit Baltistan.

POLITY

AFGHANISTAN'S POWER SHARING DEAL



Date: 19th May 2020

Key Highlights:

- Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani and his rival Abdullah Abdullah have signed a power-sharing deal, ending months of political uncertainty.
- Mr Ghani will stay on as president. Dr Abdullah will lead peace talks with the Taliban, should they get under way.
- The deal calls for Abdullah to lead the country's National Reconciliation High Council and some members of Abdullah's team would be included in Ghani's Cabinet.
- The Reconciliation Council has been given the authority to handle and approve all affairs related to Afghanistan's peace process.
- Mr Ghani and Dr Abdullah – who both claimed victory in last September's election – last month held rival inauguration ceremonies.



TRANSPORT

GEOTEXTILES



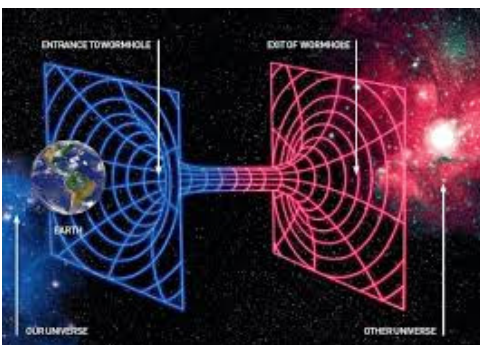
Date: 22nd May 2020

Key Features:

- National Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (NRIDA) has announced that coir geotextiles will be used for construction of rural roads under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY-III).
- Geotextiles are permeable fabrics which, when used in association with soil, have the ability to separate, filter, reinforce, protect, or drain. These are typically made from polypropylene or polyester.
- Coir is a 100% natural fiber, obtained from a renewable source – the coconut husk.
- Coir Geotextile is naturally resistant to rot, molds and moisture, and free from any microbial attack hence it needs no chemical treatment. It has a permeable, natural and strong fabric with high durability.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

QUANTUM ENTANGLEMENT



Date: 22nd May 2020

Key Features:

- Researchers from Kolkata have developed a novel protocol to find out whether a pair of electrons is in an entangled state so that they can be safely used as resources for facilitating quantum information processing tasks.
- Quantum entanglement is a quantum mechanical phenomenon in which the quantum states of two or more objects have to be described with reference to each other, even though the individual objects may be spatially separated.
- It is the physical phenomenon that occurs when a pair or group of particles is generated, interact, in a way such that the quantum state of each particle of the pair or group cannot be described independently of the state of the others.
- Quantum entanglement is one of the peculiarities of quantum mechanics, which makes phenomena such as quantum teleportation and super-dense coding possible.

INTERNATIONAL

ECONOMY

TRAVEL BUBBLE



Date: 19th May 2020

Key Features:

- The Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have started what is being referred to as a ‘travel bubble’ to help put their economies back on track post-Covid lockdowns.
- With the pandemic throwing both international and domestic trade and travel out of gear since earlier this year, such ‘travel bubbles’ are now being recommended to keep at least parts of the global economy afloat.
- Creating a travel bubble involves reconnecting countries or states that have shown a good level of success in containing the novel coronavirus pandemic domestically.
- Such a bubble would allow the members of the group to rekindle trade ties with each other, and kickstart sectors such as travel and tourism.
- In the Estonia-Latvia-Lithuania travel bubble, residents would be able to travel freely by rail, air, and sea without quarantine measures.

