

Week 4 Current Affairs Update

22nd- 31st July 2020

EVENTS

NATIONAL

ECONOMY

NPCI, FCC AND PCI ORGANISES 1ST GLOBAL FINTECH FEST



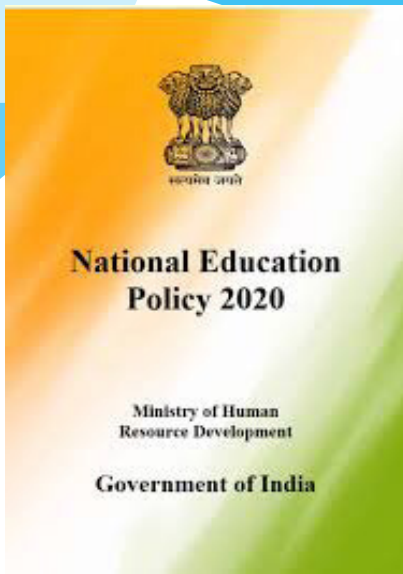
Date: 23rd July, 2020

Key Points :

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), Fintech Convergence Council (FCC) and Payments Council of India (PCI) are organized the first edition of Global Fintech Fest (GFF).
- The GFF aimed at to bring together global leaders in the financial world, to discuss the road ahead and collaborate in ways to do business in the post-pandemic world.
- It was on the theme ‘ Fintech : With and Beyond COVID
- The objectives of the GFF include to bring together the brightest minds in the financial services and FinTech across the globe, together in an innovative digital format.
- This global Fest was also supported by the World Bank & United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF).

EDUCATION

UNION GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES NATIONAL EDUCATION POLICY 2020



Date: 29th July, 2020

Key Points :

- Union Government announces the new National Education Policy (NEP-2020) bringing transformational reforms in school and higher education systems in the country.
- It will replace three decade old National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986.
- New Policy aims for universalization of education from pre-school to secondary level.
- 100 % Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in school education by 2030.
- New 5+3+3+4 curricular structure will replace the current 10+2 system
- Ministry of Human Resources Development is renamed as Ministry of Education.
- Teaching up to at least Grade 5 to be in mother tongue/ regional language.
- Centre and the States will work together to increase the public investment in Education sector to reach 6% of GDP at the earliest.
- Greater autonomy to colleges through stage-wise mechanism for granting graded autonomy and affiliation of colleges is to be phased out in 15 years
- Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be set up as a single overarching umbrella body tfor entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education.
- 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree will be the minimum degree qualification for teaching by 2030.
- Set up of National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) as an autonomous body to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration.

POLITY

NICARAGUA BECOMES 87TH COUNTRY TO SIGN THE INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE



Date: 23rd July, 2020

Key Points:

- Nicaragua becomes the latest country to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Framework Agreement.
- International Solar Alliance is an initiative led by India and France to promote sustainable energy.
- With signing of this agreement Nicaragua becomes 87th country to sign the International Solar Alliance.
- It is a major global initiative for the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement, envisioning rapid deployment of solar energy units.
- The ISA is an alliance of 121 countries, most of them being sunshine countries which lie either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.
- ISA last year amended its Framework Agreement to expand the scope of Membership of the ISA to all Member States of the United Nations.
- The International Solar Alliance was launched jointly by the Prime Minister of India and the President of France during COP21 in Paris.
- It aims to contribute to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement through rapid and massive deployment of solar energy.
- In 2018, the Founding Conference of the ISA was held in New Delhi and jointly hosted by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron.

WTO SETS UP DISPUTE PANELS AGAINST INDIA'S TECH TARIFFS



WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION

Date: 30th July, 2020

Key Points:

- The World Trade Organisation (WTO) on the request of Japan and Taiwan sets up two dispute panels against India's tech tariffs on these countries.
- Both the countries accused India of targeting import duties on a number of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) products.
- Last month a similar dispute panel was established at WTO on request of European Union.
- The goods covered by Japan in its complaint include telephone sets and other apparatus for the transmission, telephones for cellular networks etc.
- Both the countries accused that India is applying tariffs on ITC goods falling under five tariff lines in excess of the zero per cent bound rate set out in its WTO schedule of commitments.
- India on the other hand argued that all these complainants were seeking to get the country to take on commitments under ITA-II which it never agreed to.
- In 2017, India for the first time levied 10% tariffs on ICT products.
- India considered these ICT products are part of WTO's Information Technology product Agreement (ITA-II), of which India is not a signatory.



PEOPLE

NATIONAL

SAHIL SETH



Date: 23rd July

Keypoints

- Sahil Seth appointed as an honorary advisor to the steering committee for the BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) young leaders for the period of 2020-2023.
- He is a 2011 batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) Officer
- He was serving as deputy Commissioner of Mumbai Customs.
- The BRICS Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI) is a parent organization that promotes commerce and industry in BRICS.
- The post of honorary advisor is on voluntary basis and no remuneration and financials are involved.

BENJAMIN MKAPA



Date: 23rd July

Key points

- Benjamin Mkapa the former President of Tanzania (1995-2005) passed away at the age of 81.
- He was a member of the Panel of Eminent Persons appointed by the UNCTAD Secretary-General in 2005 to review and enhance the role of UNCTAD within the UN reforms
- Benjamin Mkapa also served as the United States Ambassador (1983-1984) and as High Commissioner in Nigeria (1976), Canada (1982)
- He was appointed by UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to lead a special panel to monitor the January 2010 referendum in Southern Sudan.

AMALA SHANKAR



Date: 24st July

Key points

- Renowned danseuse Amala Shankar passed away at the age of 101.
- She was awardee of Sangeet Natak Akademi , Tagore Ratna award in addition to various honours she received for her contribution to dance.
- She was wife of legendary Indian dancer and choreographer Uday Shankar
- Amala also played the lead role in 'Kalpana' a film by her husband Uday Shankar.
- She was also awarded Banga Vibhushan by the West Bengal government in 2011 for her contributions in the field of art.

ARCHANA SORENG



Date: 28th July

Key points

- Indian climate activist Archana Soreng have been chosen as member of new UN Youth Advisory Group by Secretay General of United Nations António Guterres
- She belongs to the Khadia Tribe of Rourkela.
- She graduated from Patna Women's College and pursuing Masters from Tata Institute of Social Science (TISS), Mumbai,
- Archana Soreng joins six other young climate leaders from around the world who have been included in new Youth Advisory Group.
- The Youth Advisory Group is expected to give feedback for policy action to the UN body.
- Other members include Nisreen Elsaïm (Sudan), Ernest Gibson (Fiji), Vladislav Kaim (Maldova), Sophia Kianni (US), Nathan Metenier (France), and Paloma Costa (Brazil) .
- These seven young people range in ages between 18 and 28.



disha
Nurturing Ambitions

ISSUES

NATIONAL

SOCIAL

INDIA AMONG 10 WORST COUNTRIES FOR WORKING PEOPLE



Date: 23rd July, 2020

Key Points:

- India is placed among the 10 worst countries for working people.
- According to the seventh edition of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) Global Rights Index, India is among the 10 worst countries to work along with Bangladesh, Turkey, Zimbabwe.
- The ITUC report concludes that 85 per cent of countries violated the right to strike and 80 per cent of countries violated the right to collectively bargain.
- ITUC Global Rights Index ranks 144 countries on the degree of respect for workers' rights.
- Other countries in the worst ten list are Brazil, Colombia, Egypt, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Philippine.
- Incidentally India, Egypt and Honduras have entered the list of ten worst countries recently.
- The number of countries that denied or constrained freedom of speech increased from 54 in 2019 to 56 in 2020.
- Middle East and North Africa is the worst region in the world for working people for last 7 years due to the ongoing insecurity and conflict.

SECURITY

UN REPORT SIGNALS INDIA TO BE ON RED ALERTS OVER PRESENCE OF ISIS TERRORISTS



Date: 26th July, 2020

Key Points

- There is imminent threat to India by ISIS terrorists as per United Nations (UN) report on terrorism.
- The report has warned about significant numbers of ISIS terrorists in Kerala and Karnataka.
- The report warned that the terror organisation AQIS is planning attacks in the region to avenge the death of their leader Asim Umar.
- The National Investigation Agency (NIA) had also stated in its charge sheet against 17 accused that terrorist organisation, 'Al Hind', is planning to execute terror strikes in South India.
- 'Al Hind' is reportedly 'Hind Wilaya' which finds mention in the UN report.

INTERNATIONAL

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

EU IMPOSES FIRST EVER CYBER SANCTIONS TO PROTECT ITSELF FROM CYBER-ATTACKS



Date: 30th July, 2020

Key Points

- First time the EU has used its “cyber diplomacy toolbox” to impose sanctions against cyber-attacks.
- The sanction is against 6 individuals and 3 entities involved in significant cyber-attacks or attempted cyber-attacks against the EU or its Member States.
- 6 individuals include 4 members of Russia’s GRU military intelligence unit and 2 Chinese nationals.
- The banned entities are Chinese organisation Tianjin Huaying Haitai Science and Technology Development Co. Ltd., North Korean organisation Chosun Expo and Russian military intelligence service Unit 74455.
- The EU targeted the individuals and entities over their involvement in the attempted attack against the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in 2018 as well as the 2017 Not Petya Cyber attacks.
- The “cyber diplomacy toolbox” was established in 2017 as part of the EU’s Framework for a Joint EU Diplomatic Response to Malicious Cyber Activities.
- The Cyber sanctions include travel bans and the freezing of assets.
- It is also forbidden for EU persons and entities to make funds available to those individuals and entities listed.
- EU stated that the sanctions were part of the EU’s response to “promote international security and stability in cyberspace”.



Nurturing Ambitions

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

LARGEST SOLAR POWER PLANT OF INDIAN NAVY COMMISSIONED



Date: 23rd July, 2020

Key Points

- The Largest Solar Power Plant of Indian Navy Commissioned at Indian Naval Academy (INA), Ezhimala.
- This capacity of this Solar Power Plant is 3 Mega Watt.
- The solar plant is the largest in the Indian Navy and has an estimated life of 25 years. The main feature of this power plant is that all components have been indigenously developed.
- The project has been executed by Kerala State Electronics Development Corporation Ltd (KELTRON).
- The Power plant is in line with the Indian Government initiative of 'National Solar Mission' to achieve 100GW of solar power by 2022.
- The project will help INA in reducing the carbon foot print and is one of the many initiatives undertaken by it towards a clean and green environment.
- Recently the first 2 MW capacity Solar Power Plant of the Western Naval Command was installed at Naval Station Karanja.

DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY

INDIA SUCCESSFULLY TEST FIRES INDIGENOUSLY DEVELOPED 'DHRUVA' MISSILE



Date: 24th July, 2020

Key Points

- India has successfully conducted tests of its indigenously developed 'Dhruvastra' missile.
- This anti-tank guided missile was test fired from the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur in Odisha
- The helicopter-launched anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) is one of the most advanced anti-tank weapons in the world.
- The missile is developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The ATGM is guided by an infrared imaging seeker (IIS) operating in the lock-on before-launch mode and helps in further strengthening the defence capabilities of the country. Dhruvastra is the helicopter version of HELINA with several new features and meant to be fired from air to destroy enemy bunkers, armoured vehicles and main battle tanks.
- HELINA (Helicopter based NAG) is a third generation fire and forget class anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) system mounted on the Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH).

IIIT-B, BELFRICSBT & YOSYNC COLLABORATES TO LAUNCH INDIA'S 1ST COVID-19 BLOCKCHAIN PLATFORM



Date: 25th July, 2020

Key Points

- IIIT-Bangalore, BelfricsBT along with YoSync has signed a research collaboration to jointly develop India's first ever CoVid-19 blockchain platform, BelYo.
- BelfricsBT is a global block chain start-up while YoSync is a start-up incubated at IIITB-IMACX Studios.
- BelYo uses the BelfricsBT Belrium blockchain platform to convert CoVid-19 related clinical and vaccination data of citizens currently from the physical form into digital assets.

- The digital format can be retrieved by any contact tracing apps like Aarogya Setu via APIs.
- The project has been funded by the Mphasis F1 Foundation as a part of their larger outreach programme to tackle the pandemic in India.
- BelYo will simplify the tracking of all the CoVid-19 patients in India from symptoms to vaccination certificate in a decentralized manner.

INTERNATIONAL

SPACE TECHNOLOGY

SCIENTISTS DISCOVER WARM VENUS INTERIOR



Date: 23rd July, 2020

Key Points

- In a major finding Scientists have discovered that Venus has a warm interior.
- Prior to this study it was considered that Venus has cold interior like Mercury and Mars.
- With the help of new 3D models of interior structure of Venus 37 volcanic structures have been identified.
- Existence of these structures suggests Venus has a geologically active interior.
- This discovery significantly changes the view of Venus from a mostly inactive planet to one whose interior is still churning and can feed many active volcanoes.
- This evidence of a warm interior and geological activity is confirmed through coronae, ring-like structures on the surface that form when plumes of hot material rise up through mantle layer and crust from deep within the planet.

