

Week 1 Current Affairs Update

1st- 7th October 2020

EVENTS

NATIONAL

TRANSPORT

WORLD'S LONGEST HIGHWAY TUNNEL OPENS IN ROHTANG



Date: 3rd October, 2020

Key Points:

- World's longest highway tunnel opens inaugurated in Rohtang by Prime Minister.
- The 9.02 kilometres long tunnel will connect Manali (Himachal Pradesh) to Lahaul-Spiti valley.
- The tunnel is named 'Atal Tunnel' after former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who had laid the foundation of this tunnel.
- The Tunnel is situated at an altitude of about 10000 feet (3000 meters); it will provide all weather connectivity between Manali and Lahaul-Spiti.
- Lahaul-Spiti valley region was used to cut off from other parts of the country for about 6 months during winter due to inclement weather conditions prevailing in the region.
- The people used to face various difficulties due to this cut-off, but with inauguration of this tunnel now there will be smooth movement of people and goods throughout the year.
- The tunnel has strategic significance as well and it will greatly assist in the movement of armed forces in the border region.

ENVIRONMENT

NMCG, WII LAUNCHES 'MY GANGA, MY DOLPHIN' CAMPAIGN



Date: 5th October, 2020

Key Points:

- 'My Ganga, My Dolphin' campaign was launched by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) with the respective State Forest Departments.
- This ecotourism programme for conservation of Gangetic dolphin and rejuvenation of Ganga river was started in six sites across the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal.
- It was launched on the Ganga River Dolphin Day on 5th October.
- Gangetic Dolphin was declared as national aquatic animals in 2009 on the suggestion of Bihar CM where first sanctuary for these dolphins is situated near kahalgaon.
- During the campaign dolphin safaris will start in Kahalgaon (Bihar), Bijnor, Brijghat, Prayagraj, Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), and Bandel (West Bengal).
- Dolphin census in the 250 km stretch from Bijnore to Narora is also part of this campaign.
- The main objective of this campaign is awareness creation for Dolphin Conservation and biodiversity along with rejuvenation of the river Ganga.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

VIRTUAL SUMMIT ON RAISE 2020



Date: 5th October, 2020

Key Points:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a mega virtual summit on Artificial Intelligence RAISE.
- The objective behind the summit named RAISE- 2020 is to apply AI in empowering different sectors like, education, healthcare, agriculture, etc.
- The theme of the summit is - 'Responsible AI for Social Empowerment 2020'.
- The summit is being organised by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and NITI Aayog.
- The 5 day summit also plans on leveraging AI for inclusive development, representing India's 'AI for ALL' strategy.
- PM in his address also emphasized on ways to protect the world from the weaponization of AI by Non-State Actors.

ENVIRONMENT

BAN ON HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS LISTED UNDER STOCKHOLM CONVENTION



Date: 7th October, 2020

Key Points

- Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister ratified ban on seven chemicals that are hazardous to health & environment listed under Stockholm Convention.
- It ratified ban on manufacture, trade, use, import and export of Chlordecone, Hexabromobiphenyl, Hexabromodiphenylether & Heptabromodiphenylether, Tetrabromodiphenylether & Pentabromodiphenylether, Pentachlorobenzene, Hexabromocyclododecane, and Hexachlorobutadiene.
- These all seven chemicals are listed as Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) under Stockholm Convention.

- The Stockholm Convention is a global treaty to protect human health and environment from Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).
- POPs are 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 various health disorders and environment hazards including cancer, damage to central & peripheral nervous systems, growth and reproductive disorders, etc.
- Union Environment Minister in a statement said that with this decision India is sending out a positive message to the world about India's commitment towards issues concerning health & environmental hazard.



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The logo features the word "disha" in a large, lowercase, light blue font. Below it, the tagline "Nurturing Ambitions" is written in a smaller, light blue font. A large, light blue arrow points upwards and to the right, partially overlapping the text.

PEOPLE

NATIONAL

APPOINTMENTS

S S DESWAL GETS ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF NATIONAL SECURITY GUARD DG



Date: 1st October, 2020

Key Highlights:

- Union Home Ministry directed ITBP Director General Surjeet Singh Deswal to hold additional charge of the post of Director General of National Security Guard.
- He will continue to this post till the joining of regular DG or until further orders, whichever is earlier”.
- Mr. Deswal gets the charge following retirement of NSG Director General Anup Kumar Singh
- S S Deswal is a 1984-batch officer of Indian Police Service.
- Incidentally this is second time when SS Deswal has been given additional charge of NSG, DG.
- He was appointed as NSG DG following the retirement of earlier DG Sudeep Lakhtakia

SHEIKH NAWAF AL-AHMAD AL-SABAH TAKES OATH AS KUWAIT'S NEW EMIR



Date: 1st October, 2020

Key Highlights:

- Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf al-Ahmad al-Sabah takes oath as new Emir of Kuwait.
- He was designated as ruler following the death of Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah.
- Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah passed away at the age of 91, following illness.
- Sheikh Nawaf pledged to work for the OPEC member country's prosperity, stability and security after taking the oath of office.
- Sheikh Nawaf takes the reins at a time when the government is trying to boost the finances of a country whose citizens enjoy good welfare system.
- Kuwait holds the world's seventh largest oil reserves and important member of OPEC.

AWARDS & HONOURS

RATAN TATA GETS LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD FROM IACC



Date: 3rd October, 2020

Key Highlights:

- Ratan Tata has been honoured with lifetime achievement award from Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC).
- The award was given to Ratan Tata as part of IACC's recent global leadership awards.
- Ratan Tata grew the revenues for India's largest conglomerate 'The Tata Group' to nearly \$100 billion by 2011-12.
- The TATA group had transformed into the largest Indian employer in the US under his leadership in three decades.
- He remains an influential industrialist, philanthropist and humanitarian to the day.
- Mr. Tata received the honour as he believed that these awards inspire future global leaders and strengthen bilateral economic ties between India and the US.

- IACC recognised his contribution and said that IACC believe that he was the first Indian to recognise and tap the potential of the US market.

RESIGNATION

OMAR RAZZAZ RESIGNS AS JORDAN'S PRIME MINISTER



Date: 4th October, 2020

Key Highlights:

- Jordan's Prime Minister Omar-al-Razzaz and his cabinet resigned.
- King Abdullah II has instructed Omar-al-Razzaz to remain acting prime minister until a new government is formed.
- Last week the monarch dissolved parliament at the end of its four-year term in a move that under constitution means the government had to resign within a week.
- A new government will pave the way for the November vote, as the country grapples with the rapid spread of CoVid-19 infections.
- The Razzaz Government had been widely criticised for its poor handling of CoVid-19 pandemic.
- King Abdullah appointed Omar-al-Razzaz as PM in 2018 to defuse the biggest protests in years over tax increases sought by the IMF to reduce Jordan's large public debt.



ISSUES

NATIONAL

SOCIAL

DGCA FURTHER EXTENDS BAN ON INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS



Date: 1st October, 2020

Key Points

- Directorate General of Civil Aviation has extended the ban on International flights till 31st October.
- The decision to extend the ban was taken keeping in view a rise in number of CoVid-19 cases across India.
- Earlier the international travel ban was extended till September 30.
- The DGCA initially on March 23rd banned all International flights due to country wise lockdown
- The ban however will not apply to international all-cargo and international scheduled flights approved by the DGCA.
- DGCA also confirmed that flights may be allowed on selected routes by the competent authority on case to case basis.
- Full-fledged resumption of international flight operations will depend on the state of pandemic all over the world.

ECONOMY

RRBS INCUR NET LOSS OF OVER 2000 CRORE IN 2019-20



Date: 4th October, 2020

Key Points:

- The data released by NABARD show that all Regional rural banks (RRBs) in India as a group reported net loss of Rs 2,206 crore during the financial year 2019-20.
- There were 45 Regional rural banks in the country as on 31st March 2020.
- During 2018-2019 the RRBs suffered Rs 652-crore net loss.
- In 2019-20, 26 RRBs earned profit of Rs 2,203 crore, while remaining 19 RRBs incurred losses of Rs 4,409 crore.
- Gross non-performing assets as a percentage of gross loans outstanding of RRBs also marginally declined to 10.4 per cent.
- These RRBs were sponsored by 15 commercial banks and operating through a network of 21,850 branches.
- Total business of RRBs stood at Rs 7.77 lakh crore as on 31st March, 2020.
- During 2019-20 deposits and advances increased by 10.2 per cent and 9.5 per cent, respectively.

STUBBLE BURNING STARTS IN PUNJAB



Date: 7th October, 2020

Key Points

- Stubble burning started in Punjab with the beginning of harvesting season of Paddy.
- Data released by SAFAR has reported that farm fires have begun in Amritsar, Punjab, and neighbouring border regions and are likely to influence the air quality.
- The stubble burning in neighbouring states surrounding Delhi has been reported to be the major factor behind poor air quality of the capital region especially during winters.
- Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB) has already imposed a fine of Rs 12.25 lakh till October 1st week.
- In these reported cases Rs 70,000 has been recovered so far.
- As per satellite imagery data 1692 incidents have been reported till October 1st week.
- PPCB officials although confirmed observation of only 763 cases of stubble burning during this period.
- Majority of the stubble burning cases have been reported from Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Patiala and Gurdaspur districts.



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IDIEAS

NATIONAL

DEFENCE TECHNOLOGY

DRDO SUCCESSFULLY TESTS SMART WEAPON SYSTEM



Date: 5th October, 2020

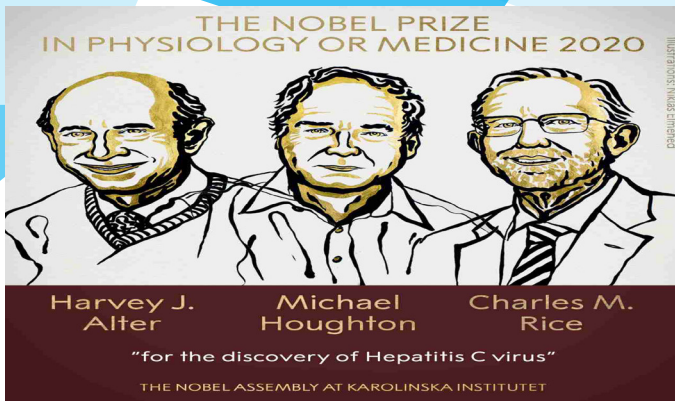
Key Points

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully flight tested the Supersonic Missile Assisted Release of Torpedo (SMART) weapon system.
- It was test fired from the Wheeler Island, Odisha.
- Different labs of DRDO , RCI Hyderabad, DRDL, NSTL Vishakhapatnam, ADRDE Agra have collaborated to develop the technologies required for SMART weapon system
- SMART is based on a missile assisted release of lightweight Anti-Submarine Torpedo System for the anti-submarine warfare operations far-beyond torpedo range.
- SMART is going to be a major technology breakthrough in anti-submarine warfare.

INTERNATIONAL

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

HARVEY ALTER, MICHAEL HOUGHTON AND CHARLES RICE GET MEDICINE NOBEL FOR STUDIES ON HEPATITIS C VIRUS

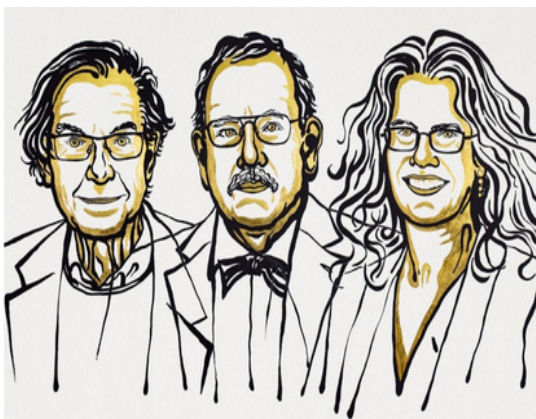


Date: 5th October, 2020

Key Points

- The 2020 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was jointly awarded to Harvey J. Alter, Michael Houghton and Charles M. Rice for the discovery of Hepatitis C virus.
- Blood borne Hepatitis caused by Hepatitis virus is a major global health problem that is major cause for cirrhosis and liver cancer in global population.
- All three scientists through their studies led to discovery and identification of novel virus.
- Harvey J. Alter carried out studies and demonstrated that an unknown virus was a common cause of chronic hepatitis.
- Michael Houghton isolated the genome of the new Hepatitis C virus.
- Charles M. Rice provided evidences showing that Hepatitis C virus alone could cause hepatitis
- Prior to discovery of Hepatitis virus the majority of blood-borne hepatitis cases remained unexplained and can only be explained after the discovery of Hepatitis C Virus.
- This scientific achievement also enabled the development of antiviral drugs that can cure the disease.

NOBEL PRIZE AWARDED FOR BLACK HOLES RELATED STUDIES



Date: 6th October, 2020

Key Points

- The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences announced to award the Nobel Prize in Physics 2020 related with Black holes.
- Three scientists Roger Penrose, Reinhard Genzel and Andrea Ghez were chosen for the coveted prize.
- One half of the award money goes to Roger Penrose “for the discovery that black hole formation is a robust prediction of the general theory of relativity”.
- The other half went jointly to Reinhard Genzel and Andrea Ghez “for the discovery of a supermassive compact object at the centre of galaxy”.
- Roger Penrose showed that the general theory of relativity leads to the formation of black holes.
- Reinhard Genzel and Andrea Ghez discovered that an invisible and extremely heavy object governs the orbits of stars at the centre of our galaxy

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

ROYAL SWEDISH ACADEMY ANNOUNCES CHEMISTRY AWARD FOR GENE EDITING WORK



Date: 7th October, 2020

Key Points

- This year Chemistry Nobel has been announced by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences for gene editing studies.
- Emmanuelle Charpentier from the Max Planck Unit for the Science of Pathogens, Berlin, Germany and Jennifer A. Doudna of University of California, Berkeley, USA were chosen for the prestigious award.
- This is first time that two women jointly won a Nobel Prize in chemistry.
- Charpentier and Doudna have discovered the CRISPR/Cas9 genetic scissors.
- CRISPR/Cas9 is used to alter the DNA of animals, plants and microorganisms with extremely high precision.
- This technology has changed the gene editing technology to a high level and contributing immensely to cancer therapies and gene therapies work.

