

# Week 4 Current Affairs Update

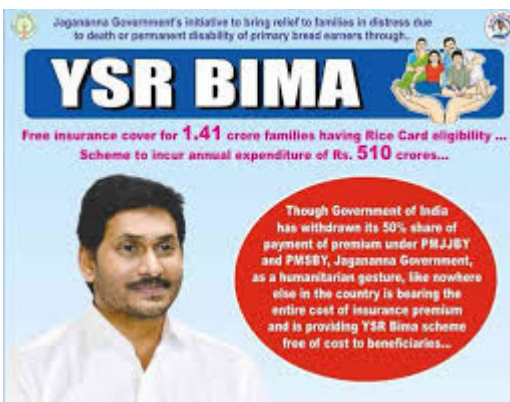
24<sup>th</sup>- 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020

## EVENTS

### NATIONAL

## POLICIES & SCHEMES

### ‘YSR BIMA’ SCHEME



Date: 24th October 2020

Andhra Pradesh government launched ‘YSR Bima’ scheme under which 1.41 crore Below Poverty Line (BPL) will be provided insurance cover for death and permanent disability.

### Key Points:

- The insurance cover amount will be directly credited into the bank account of the beneficiary within 15 days of making the claim.
- Immediate assistance of Rs 10,000 will be provided to the families of victims through village and ward secretaries.
- The accidental death and total permanent disability for people between age group 18-50 years is Rs 5 lakh.
- The accidental death and total permanent disability for people between age group 51-70 years is Rs 3 lakh.
- Natural death cases of the people between age 18-50 years is Rs 2 lakh.
- For partial permanent disability in an accident case of people between age 18-70 years is Rs 1.5 lakhs.

## PM MODI LAUNCHED THREE PROJECTS IN GUJARAT



Date: 26th October 2020

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched 'Kisan Suryoday Yojana', 'Girnar Ropeway' and 'Paediatric Heart Hospital in UN Mehta Heart Research Institute' in Gujarat state.

### Key Points:

- The 'Kisan Suryoday Yojana' has been launched to provide day time power supply for irrigation facilities in Gujarat.
- The state farmers will be provided with a power supply between 5 am to 9 pm.
- The funds allotted for 'Kisan Suryoday Yojana' is Rs 3500 crores, which will be used to install transmissions lines in which each transmission line will carry 66KW of power.
- Also, 22kv substations will also be installed with the help of these funds.
- PM Modi also inaugurated a ropeway located in Mount Girnar in Junagadh district of Gujarat. This ropeway is considered as the longest ropeway in Asia.
- Total cost of this ropeway is Rs 130 crore and is 2320 meters long, with the capacity of carrying 1000 passengers in one hour.
- PM Modi also inaugurated the Paediatric Heart Hospital at UN Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre at Civil Hospital campus of Ahmedabad and Mobile Application for telecardiology. The funds utilised for this is Rs 470 crore.

## ART & CULTURE

### 'LIFE IN MINIATURE' PROJECT



Date: 25th October 2020

'Life in Miniature' project has been launched by the National Museum, New Delhi, Ministry of Culture and Google Arts and Culture.

## Key Points:

- Under this project, hundreds of miniature paintings from the National Museum will be displayed and viewed on Google Arts and Culture app.
- People across the world can experience the first augmented reality-powered art gallery designed with traditional Indian architecture with the help of Google Arts and Culture app.
- The miniature work will be captured with the help of technologies like machine learning, augmented reality and digitization with the help of HD specific cameras.
- The artwork will be showcased based on five universal themes namely, Human relationship with nature, love, celebration, faith and power.
- The showcased art and painting collection include Ramayana, Royal Saga and Pahari style paintings.

## ECONOMY

### ‘CII AGRO AND FOOD TECH: INDIA INTERNATIONAL FOOD AND AGRICULTURE WEEK’



INDIA INTERNATIONAL  
FOOD & AGRICULTURE WEEK 2020

16-22 October 2020: CII Virtual Platform

Date: 25th October 2020

Ministry for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare inaugurated first ‘CII Agro and Food Tech: India International Food and Agri Week’ during the 14th Agro and Food Tech event.

## Key Points:

- The ‘CII Agro and Food Tech: India International Food and Agri Week’ was observed from 16th Oct to 22nd Oct 2020.
- It was organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in partnership with the ministry of fisheries, animal husbandry and dairying and ministry of food processing industries.
- The week was observed with an aim to use technology in the food and agriculture sector so as to boost farmers income.
- Along with this observation of the week, the Ministry of food processing also launched ‘Anna Devo Bhava’, which is an awareness campaign.

## BANKING & FINANCE

### RBI FIXED MINIMUM NOF SIZE TO HFCS AT RS 25 CRORE



Date: 25th October 2020

Reserve Bank of India, the new regulatory body for Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) has proposed changes to the prescribed HFCs.

#### Key Points:

- These changes are made with an aim to increase the efficiency of HFCs and address their issues related to liquidity and double financing.
- In this regard, RBI has revised the regulatory framework for HFCs under which minimum Net Owned Funds (NOF) size for HFCs is fixed to Rs 25 crore.
- As per this, HFC having CoR (Certificate of Registration) and having NOF less than Rs 25 crore will be required to achieve NOF of Rs 15 crore by 31st March 2022 and Rs 25 crore by 31st March 2023.
- Also, it would be mandatory upon such HFCs whose NOF is currently below Rs 20 crore to submit a statutory auditor's certificate to RBI within a month evidencing compliance with the prescribed levels.
- HFCs not fulfilling the prescribed level within the stipulated amount of time will not be eligible to hold CoR.

## ENVIRONMENT

### SURVEY ON HIMALAYAN BROWN BEAR—BY ZSI



Date: 26th October 2020

The Zoological Survey of India released a report of its survey on Himalayan Brown Bear.

**Key Points:**

- As per this report, the Himalayan Brown Bear habitat has shown a decline in the biological corridors.
- As per the survey, a massive decline of about 73% in the habitat of the Himalayan brown bear will be seen by 2050.
- The survey was conducted in the western part of the Himalayas.
- This habitat was considered for their survey as Himalayan Brown Bear are considered to be top carnivores of the Himalayan region.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### MOBILE APP FOR GEO-TAGGING OF COMPONENTS OF PMKSY-AIBP



Date: 27th October 2020

Ministry of Jal Shakti has launched a mobile app for geotagging project components under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana- Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (PMKSY-AIBP).

**Key Points:**

- The mobile app is developed by Bhaskaracharya National Institute of Space Applications and Geo-Informatics (BISAG-N).
- The mobile application will be useful for monitoring authorities of various projects to capture the images of project components like location, type of canal, completion status etc.
- Its objective is to track the pace of work and actual status of the projects.
- The captured information can be submitted by the user for geo-tagging on the geographic information system (GIS) portal developed for this purpose.
- Geo-tagging is the process of adding geographical identification data to various media such as websites, SMS messages, QR Codes.

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### TWO CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE FOR TRIBAL WELFARE



Date: 28th October 2020

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) in partnership with Art of Living (AoL) developed two Centers of Excellence (CoE) for the welfare of the tribal community.

#### Key Points:

- The First CoE is related to the field of training tribal farmer communities, set up in Aurangabad district of Maharashtra. This CoE will provide training based on sustainable natural farming through Go-Adharith farming techniques.
- The Second CoE is related to the field of 'Strengthening PRIs' (Panchayati Raj Institutions) in 5 districts covering 30-gram panchayats and 150 villages of Jharkhand.
- Strengthening PRIs will include providing education to the tribals about their constitutional rights which will lead to their overall development.
- Through both the CoEs, tribes will be made aware of schemes set by GOI for them, personality development training to tribes youths and development of a sense of social development in tribals.

### NATIONAL PROGRAM AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT POLICY FRAMEWORK



Date: 30th October 2020

NITI Aayog in partnership with Quality Council of India (QCI) has launched the 'National Program and Project Management Policy Framework (NPMPF)'.

## Key Points:

- The NPMPPF is launched to transform the infrastructure sector of India.
- Along with this, 'Indian Infrastructure Body of Knowledge (InBoK)' which is a book on NPMPPF. The book is unveiled to serve as a reference medium for all practitioners of the infra sector industry.
- The major action plans for NPMPPF are: (1) Adoption of program and project management strategies to develop the infra sector (2) institutionalize and promote the profession of program and project management (3) Build skilled workforce for this profession (4) Enhancing institutional capacity and capabilities in professionals.

## EDUCATION

### DST-IIEST SOLAR PV HUB



Date: 29th October 2020

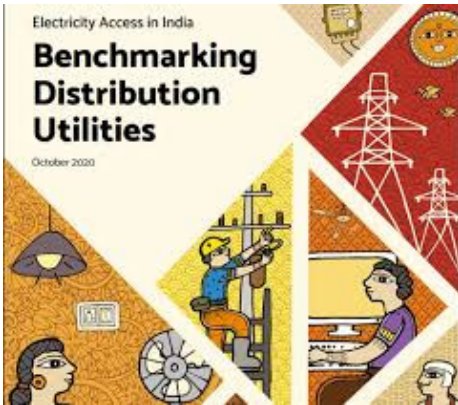
Union Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank inaugurated DST-IIEST Solar PV Hub.

## Key Points:

- It is inaugurated at Shibpur in Howrah district, West Bengal.
- It is established through approval and support from the Department of Science and Technology (DST), GOI under the aegis of CoE for Green Energy and Sensor System at IEST, Shibpur.
- The hub is equipped with world-class research facilities and will play a role of a central node for R&D activities in the field of solar energy, solar photovoltaics, testing of solar cells, solar PV modules and solar PV systems. This hub will prove beneficial to the entire North-Eastern states of India.
- The DST-IIEST Solar PV Hub will allow national as well as local industries, startups, and research institutes to work collaboratively with the 'Make in India' initiative to have the smooth transition from fossil fuel energy to solar energy.

## REPORTS & INDICES

### ELECTRICITY ACCESS IN INDIA AND BENCHMARKING DISTRIBUTION UTILITIES REPORT



Date: 29th October 2020

NITI Aayog, Ministry of Power, Rockefeller Foundation, and Smart Power India launched the 'Electricity Access in India and Benchmarking Distribution Utilities' report.

#### Key Points:

- According to the report, around 92% of customers reported the overall availability of electricity infrastructure within 50 metres of their premises.
- However, not all have connections. The primary reason being the distance of households from the nearest pole.
- Overall, 87% of the surveyed customers have access to grid-based electricity.
- The remaining 13% either use non-grid sources or don't use any electricity at all.
- The hours of supply have improved significantly across the customer categories to nearly 17 hours per day.
- Nearly 85% of customers reported to have a metered electricity connection.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### 'SUMANGAL' AND 'INTEGRATED ODISHA STATE SCHOLARSHIP PORTAL'





Date: 30th October 2020

The Chief Minister of Odisha launched two web portals: (a) Sumangal Portal (b) Integrated Odisha State Scholarship Portal.

**Key Points:**

- Sumangal Portal is launched to provide incentives to inter-caste marriages. It is developed by ST and SC Development Department. One time incentives of Rs 2.5 lakhs will be provided to the inter-caste married couples.
- Integrated Odisha State Scholarship Portal will provide scholarship to the eligible students of the state. It will provide 21 scholarships by 8 different state departments. It is predicted that around 11 lakhs students belonging to SC, ST and other backward classes will be benefited through this portal.
- Also, the portal will administer the professional programs of various state departments like SC and ST department, Higher education department, school and mass education department, ESI department, agriculture department and skill development and technical education department.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### DAM REHABILITATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (DRIP)



Date: 30th October 2020

The Government has approved the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) Phase II & Phase III.

**Key Points:**

- The project is being developed with the financial assistance of the World Bank (WB) and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).
- Its objective is to improve the safety and operational performance of selected dams across the whole country, along with institutional strengthening.
- The Scheme envisions comprehensive rehabilitation of 736 existing dams located across India.
- The Project will be implemented over a period of 10 years duration in two Phases.

- DRIP Phase II & Phase III has following components:
- Rehabilitation and improvement of dams and associated appurtenances;
- Dam safety institutional strengthening in participating States and Central agencies;
- Exploration of alternative incidental means to generate the incidental revenue for sustainable operation and maintenance of dams.

## **DIRECT PORT ENTRY (DPE) FACILITY OF V O CHIDAMBARANAR PORT TRUST**



Date: 31st October 2020

Recently, the Union Ministry of Shipping has inaugurated the Direct Port Entry (DPE) facility of V O Chidambaranar Port Trust (VOCPT).

### **Key Points:**

- The state-of-the-art DPE facility is created inside the Truck Parking Terminal which was developed under the ‘Sagarmala’ for issuing customs clearance of export cargo.
- The facility aligns with the ‘Maritime Vision 2030’ of the Ministry of Shipping.
- This facility will reduce logistics cost and increase the velocity of the cargo; Enable direct movement of containers from factories; and Help in increasing Ease of Doing Business for the exporters.
- Maritime India Vision 2030 is a ten-year blueprint for the maritime sector which will be released by the Indian Prime Minister at the Maritime India Summit in November 2020.

## **DEFENCE**

### **INDIAN NAVY TEST-FIRED ANTI-SHIP MISSILE**



Date: 31st October 2020

Indian Navy test fired the Anti-Ship Missile (AShM) from INS Kora in the Bay of Bengal.

**Key Points:**

- The Anti-Ship Missile (AShM) successfully hit the target with precise accuracy from maximum range.
- The Anti-Ship Missile (AShM), which is a guided missile and is designed for use against ships and large boats.
- The INS Kora is Indian Navy's Kora-class guided missile corvette, which was commissioned to Indian Navy in 1998.
- The INS Kora is equipped with Kh-35 anti-ship missiles.

**INTERNATIONAL**

**ECONOMY**

**WORLD BANK-IMF ANNUAL MEET 2020**



Date: 24th October 2020

The annual meeting of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) was held virtually.

**Key Points:**

- The meeting was addressed by the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan.
- The meeting was held under two themes: (a) 'Unleashing the South Asian Century through Human Capital for All' (b) 'Investing in COVID-19 Vaccines and Primary Health Care Delivery System'.
- Dr Harsh Vardhan mentioned that India followed the 'Whole of Society, Whole of Government' approach to tackle the pandemic situation in the country.
- Also, he appreciated the support from private firms of India in providing PPE kits, N95 masks, oxygen supply, ventilators with an aim to ensure self-sufficiency.

- He highlighted that medical infrastructure in India from March has risen from having one lab in March 2020 to 2000 labs till now.
- He focused that India's current agenda is to provide affordable COVID-19 vaccine and to ensure its equal distribution through electronic Vaccine Intelligent Network (e-Vin).
- For this purpose, the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi is set up. This expert group will ensure equal distribution of vaccines in rural and remote areas.

## **19TH MEET OF SCO MINISTERS OF FOREIGN ECONOMY AND FOREIGN TRADE**



Date: 30th October 2020

The 19th meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Ministers of Foreign Economy and Foreign Trade was held virtually.

### **Key Points:**

- The meeting was chaired by Union Minister for Commerce and Industries, Piyush Goyal.
- Union Minister Piyush Goyal addressed the meeting that countries must work collaboratively to strengthen their economic strengths in order to increase trade and investment so as to achieve speedy recovery from pandemic.
- Also, the cooperation will help to achieve global economic growth as SCO nations contribute to 1/7th global trade in goods and 1/8th global trade in commercial services.
- Four major documents were adopted in the meet: (1) Statement on the response on COVID-19 (2) Statement on Multilateral Trading System (3) Statement on SCO Cooperation on Intellectual Property Rights (4) Action Plan for the implementation of MoU for increasing cooperation in MSMEs.
- First-ever SCO Startup Forum: It was launched by Union Minister Piyush Goyal ahead of this meet. The forum will perform the role of the foundation for multilateral cooperation and will allow engagement of SCO nations to develop startup ecosystems.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### 1ST MINISTERIAL MEET OF G20 ANTI-CORRUPTION WORKING GROUP



Date: 24th October 2020

The first-ever Ministerial meeting of the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group was held.

#### Key Points:

- The meeting was dressed by Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
- Saudi Arabia hosted the meeting and thus became the first country to host the G20 Anti-Corruption Working Group meeting.
- Union Minister Jitendra Singh mentioned that India is truly committed to the policy of zero tolerance against corruption and unaccounted money.
- He mentioned India's policies like Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Act 2018 and Fugitive Economic Offenders Act 2018 in combating corruption.
- He also highlighted India's initiative to operationalize Lokpal to check corruption.

### INDIA AUSTRALIA CIRCULAR ECONOMY HACKATHON (I-ACE)



Date: 27th October 2020

The 'India Australia Circular Economy Hackathon (I-ACE)' will be organised by Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) in association with Australia's Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).

## Key Points:

- This hackathon on the circular economy will be held on 7th and 8th Dec 2020.
- The hackathon will be based on four themes: (a) Innovation in reducing packaging waste (b) Innovation in food supply chains avoiding waste (c) Creating opportunities for plastic waste reduction (d) Recycling critical energy metals and e-waste.
- The aim behind conducting this hackathon is to address the issues and challenges being faced by the circular economy.
- Under this hackathon, various innovative solutions will arise which will help to reduce the problems related to eliminating and reusing waste.
- This will result in making the economy less resource-intensive and will provide a path to grow the economy in an ecological manner.

## INDIA-US 2+2 MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE



Date: 27th October 2020

The 3rd India-US 2+2 Dialogue was conducted to discuss global, bilateral and regional issues between India and the United States.

## Key Points:

- The meet was attended by US Secretary of Defence, Mark T. Esper and US Secretary of State, Michael R. Pompeo. India was represented by Defence Minister, Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar.
- During this meet, both the nations signed the BECA Agreement (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation).
- This agreement will allow India to access extremely accurate geo-spatial data.
- This spatial data will be having military applications which will improve the accuracy of India's missile systems.
- BECA is the agreement between National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency of the US Defence Department and Indian Union Ministry of Defence.

## 6TH BRICS PARLIAMENTARY FORUM



Date: 29th October 2020

The 6th BRICS Parliamentary Forum was conducted virtually under the chairmanship of Vyacheslav Volodin, Chairman of Russian Parliament.

### Key Points:

- The forum was held under the theme: ‘BRICS partnership in the interest of global stability, general safety and innovation growth: Parliamentary dimension’.
- From India, the forum was represented and addressed by Lok Sabha Speaker, Om Birla.
- The BRICS Parliamentary Forum is an effective platform which allows having inter-parliamentary dialogue and parliamentary diplomacy among BRICS nations. This helps to strengthen the roles of Parliament in addressing global issues.
- Om Birla addressed the forum to intensify the collaborative fight against terrorism and highlighted to immediately stop funding for terrorist activities.
- He also highlighted initiatives taken by GOI to tackle COVID-19 pandemic.

## INDIA-CENTRAL ASIA DIALOGUE HELD



Date: 31st October 2020

The second meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue was held under the chairmanship of the External Affairs Minister.

## Key Points:

- Foreign Ministers of Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and First Deputy Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic participated in the meeting.
- The Foreign Ministers of Central Asian Countries welcomed the provision by India of one billion US dollar Line of Credit for priority developmental projects in fields such as energy, IT, healthcare, education and agriculture in the region.
- The Ministers emphasized the need to continue close cooperation between the Sanitary and Epidemiological Services of India and the Central Asian countries in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic.
- The Ministers appreciated India's efforts to modernize the infrastructure of the Chabahar port in Iran, which could become an important link in trade and transport communications between the markets of Central and South Asia.

## 8TH INDIA-MEXICO JOINT COMMISSION MEET



Date: 31st October 2020

The 8th India-Mexico Joint Commission Meeting was held virtually to review the bilateral cooperation in various sectors of both nations.

## Key Points:

- India was represented by External Affairs Minister, Dr S Jaishankar and Mexico was represented by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, H.E. Marcelo Ebrard.
- Both the dignitaries discussed bilateral cooperation in sectors like agriculture, investment, trade, education and health.
- They assured to strengthen their cooperation to achieve economic strengths, growing regional and global profile status.
- They also assured to cooperate in new sectors like Trade and Commerce, Energy, Space, Health, Science & Technology, Culture & Education.
- Both nations agreed to make use of the UN Security Council to strengthen multilateralism and make it more representative and effective.
- They assured each other to collaboratively work to tackle post-COVID-19 recovery.



## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### IMD COMMISSIONED FLASH FLOOD GUIDANCE SERVICE IN SOUTH ASIA



Date: 26th October 2020

India Meteorological Department (IMD) has commissioned FFGS (Flash Flood Guidance Service) in South Asian Countries.

#### Key Points:

- FFGS is commissioned in India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- The Flash Flood Guidance Service is an advanced and robust system which provides warnings about threats in advance 6 hours and warnings about risks in advance 24 hours.
- The warnings for flash floods are provided in advance at the watershed level with a resolution of 4kmX4km.
- This system was approved at the 15th World Meteorological Congress.
- It is created by following two concepts namely, Flash Flood Guidance and Flash Flood Threat.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### ICSSR SIGNS PACT WITH EUROPEAN COMMISSION



Date: 31st October 2020

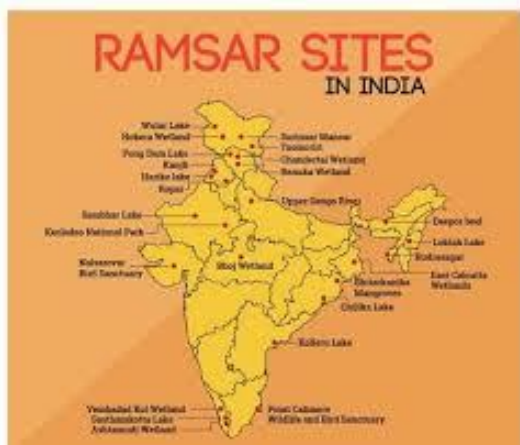
Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) has signed a pact with European Commission virtually.

## Key Points:

- They have signed a pact to enhance the scientific cooperation between them.
- The pact was virtually signed by Member Secretary of ICSSR, Virendra Kumar Malhotra and Ambassador of European Union to India, Ugo Astuto.
- Because of this agreement, top Indian Social Scientist, who is supported by ICSSR, will be able to perform research activities in collaboration with European researchers who are supported by the European Research Council (ERC).
- The ICSSR and REC will allow contacts between respective scholar scientists who intend to work for international cooperation works.

## ENVIRONMENT

### TWO NEW RAMSAR SITES IN INDIA



Date: 31st October 2020

Recently, Kabartal Wetland (Bihar) and Asan Conservation Reserve (Uttarakhand) have been designated as Ramsar sites.

## Key Points:

- Now, the total number of Ramsar sites in India is 39, the highest in South Asia.
- Kabartal Wetland is also known as Kanwar Jheel. It is located in Begusarai, Bihar.
- Asan Conservation Reserve (ACR) is formed by the Asan River running down to its confluence with the Yamuna River in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
- It is Uttarakhand's first Ramsar Site.
- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty adopted in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran.

## SOCIAL

### MICROSOFT PARTNERS WITH NSDC TO EMPOWER WOMEN WITH DIGITAL SKILLS



Date: 30th October 2020

Microsoft has entered into a partnership with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to provide digital skills training to underserved women.

#### Key Points:

- The digital skill training will be provided to 1 lakh underserved women in India for the next 10 months.
- This partnership is the extension of the initiative of Microsoft and NSDC to provide digital skills to 1 lakh youths of India.
- Under this partnership, Microsoft and NSDC will provide live training sessions and digital skilling drives to girls and women.
- This will be helpful for girls and women to seek job opportunities.
- eSkill India, which is an initiative of NSDC will support in building this partnership through its skilling ecosystem like sector skill councils, training partners and training centres.
- Also upon completing the course, the girls and women will be provided with e-certificate for the same.

## REPORTS & INDICES

### GLOBAL FINANCES SAFEST BANKS 2020



Date: 30th October 2020

The Global Finances has released its 29th annual ranking of World's Safest Banks.

**Key Points:**

- As per the ranking, DBS Bank, Singapore is recognized as the Safest Bank in Asia for the 12th consecutive year.
- Also, DBS Bank is ranked at 4th position as the safest commercial bank in the world.
- And, DBS bank is ranked at 14th position as safest bank globally from 2019 and 2018.
- World's Safest Banks 2020: KfW, Germany (Rank1), Zuercher Kantonalbank, Switzerland (Rank2) and BNG Bank, Netherland (Rank3).
- Asia's Safest Banks 2020: DBS Group, Singapore (Rank1), Oversea-Chinese Banking Corporation, Singapore (Rank2) and United Overseas Bank, Singapore (Rank3).
- State Bank of India is the safest bank in India as per Global Finances.



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# PEOPLE

## NATIONAL

### APPOINTMENTS

#### APURVA CHANDRA



Date: 24th October 2020

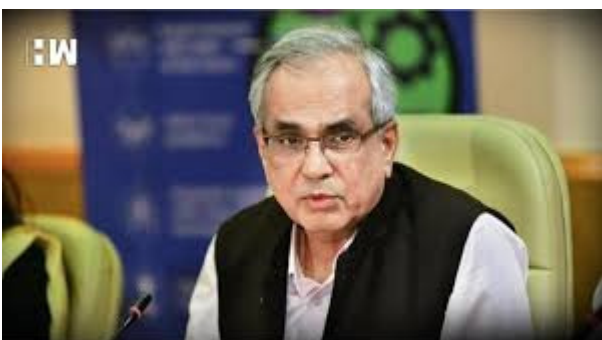
Why in news: Elected as the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

#### Key Points:

- After 35 years, India has assumed the Chairmanship of the Governing Body of International Labour Organization.
- Apurva Chandra, Secretary (Labour and Employment) has been elected as the Chairperson of the Governing Body of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for the period October 2020- June 2021.
- Apurva Chandra belongs to the 1988 batch of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS).
- The Governing Body (GB) is the apex executive body of the ILO which decides policies, programmes, agenda, budget and elects the Director-General.

### APPOINTMENTS

#### RAJIV KUMAR



Date: 24th October 2020

Why in news: Appointed as the head of the panel to reform the urban planning education system.

**Key Points:**

- The NITI Aayog recently constituted a 14-member panel to reform the urban planning education system.
- The panel is to be headed by Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog.
- The other members of the panel are Amitabh Kant, CEO of NITI Aayog, secretaries of Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Ministry of Education.
- The panel will review the urban planning education system and examine the availability, supply and demand of qualified urban planners in India.
- It will review the current system in terms of curriculum, multi-disciplinary and other issues at post graduate and graduate levels.

**APPOINTMENTS**

**YASHVARDHAN K SINHA**



Date: 30th October 2020

Why in news: Appointed as the new Chief Information Commissioner of India.

**Key Points:**

- The government has appointed former Indian Foreign Service officer and Information Commissioner Yashvardhan Sinha the new Chief Information Commissioner.
- The post of CIC chairman had been vacant for several months after Bimal Zulka retired from the post.
- The government also appointed journalist Uday Mahurkar as an Information Commissioner.
- The Central Information Commission consists of a chief and up to 10 commissioners. It has been constituted as the top transparency watchdog under the Right to Information Act of 2005.

## APPOINTMENTS

### WAVEL RAMKALAWAN



Date: 26th October 2020

Why in news: Elected as the President of Seychelles.

#### Key Points:

- India born Wavel Ramkalawan was elected as the President of Seychelles.
- This is the first time the opposition candidate has won elections in Seychelles since 1977.
- Seychelles is an archipelago in the Indian Ocean. It was a British colony till 1976.
- A year after its independence, in 1977 Mr Faure seized power in a coup and retained presidency in elections.
- He was in power till multi-party democracy was restored in the country in 1993.

## AWARDS & HONOURS

### ANZAR MUSTAEEN



Date: 27th October 2020

Why in news: Won special prize in Global Art Competition conducted by ICCR.

## Key Points:

- A six year old Bangladeshi boy Anzar Mustaeen Ali won a special prize of USD 1000 for his artwork in the global art competition organised by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR).
- The ICCR had launched a global painting competition named 'United Against CORONA- Express through Art' which attracted 8000 artwork entries from around the world.
- Six other art works from Bangladesh were selected for showcasing at the digital art exhibition of ICCR.
- ICCR is an autonomous body under administrative control of Ministry of External Affairs. It was founded in 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.



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Nurturing Ambitions

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



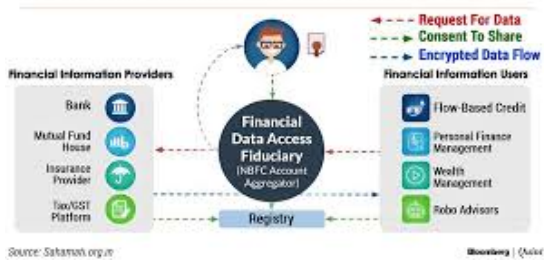
# IDEAS

## NATIONAL

### BANKING & FINANCE

#### ACCOUNT AGGREGATOR FRAMEWORK

##### HOW ACCOUNT AGGREGATORS WILL WORK



Date: 31st October 2020

##### Key Features:

- IndusInd Bank has become the first bank to go live as a ‘Financial Information Provider’ (FIP) under the new ‘Account Aggregator Framework (AAF)’ of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Account Aggregator (AA) is the construct/ framework that provides a digital platform for easy sharing and consumption of data from various entities with user consent. This primarily includes transfer, but not storing, of a client’s data.
- The RBI in 2016 approved Account Aggregator as a new class of NBFC, whose primary responsibility is to facilitate the transfer of user’s financial data with their explicit consent.
- An AA is ‘data-blind’ as the data that flows through an AA is encrypted. Also, an AA does not and cannot store any user’s data – thus, the potential for leakage and misuse of user’s data is prevented.
- RBI and other Financial Services Regulators (FSRs) are providing the required regulatory support and guidance for the rollout of AA.

### SECURITY

#### MERI SAHELI INITIATIVE



Date: 26th October 2020

### Key Features:

- Indian Railways has launched “Meri Saheli” initiative for focused action on security of women across all zones.
- Its objective is to provide safety and security to lady passengers travelling by trains for their entire journey from starting station to destination station.
- It entails interaction with lady passengers especially those travelling alone by a team of young lady Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel at the originating station.
- These lady passengers are briefed about all precautions to be taken during the journey and told to dial 182 in case they face or see any problem in the coach.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### SERB-POWER SCHEME



Date: 29th October 2020

### Key Features:

- SERB-POWER (Promoting Opportunities for Women in Exploratory Research) It is a scheme to mitigate gender disparity in science and engineering research funding in various S&T programs in Indian academic institutions and R&D laboratories.
- The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), a statutory body of the DST has been contemplating to institute a scheme to mitigate gender disparity in science and engineering.
- SERB – POWER Scheme will have two components namely (i) SERB-POWER Fellowship (ii) SERB- POWER Research Grants.
- SERB-POWER Fellowship:
- Target: Women researchers in 35-55 years of age. Up-to 25 Fellowships per year and not more than 75 at any point in time.
- Components of support: Fellowship of Rs. 15,000/- per month in addition to regular income; Research grant of Rs. 10 lakh per annum; and Overhead of Rs. 90,000/- per annum.

- Duration: Three years, without the possibility of extension. Once in a career.
- SERB – POWER Research Grants: It will empower women researchers by funding them under following two categories:
- Level I (Applicants from IITs, IISERs, IISc, NITs, Central Universities, and National Labs of Central Government Institutions): The scale of funding is up to 60 lakhs for three years.
- Level II (Applicants from State Universities / Colleges and Private Academic Institutions): The scale of funding is up to 30 lakhs for three years.

## INTERNATIONAL

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### BLUE DOT NETWORK

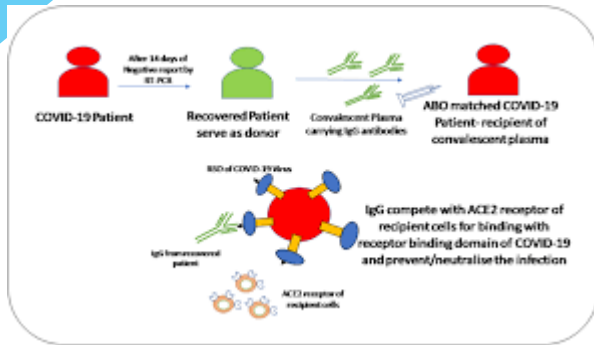


Date: 26th October 2020

#### Key Features:

- A group of the US Senators has asked India to join the Blue Dot Network (BDN) in a letter.
- The BDN was announced in 2019 at the Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok, Thailand.
- It is a multi-stakeholder initiative led by the USA along with Japan and Australia, to bring together governments, the private sector and civil society to promote high-quality, trusted standards for global infrastructure development.
- It is expected to serve as a globally recognized evaluation and certification system for roads, ports and bridges with a focus on the Indo-Pacific region.
- It does not offer public funds or loans for the project.
- Blue Dot certification shall serve as a globally recognized seal of approval for major infrastructure projects.

## CONVALESCENT PLASMA THERAPY



Date: 29th October 2020

### Key Features:

- Recently, the 'PLACID Trial' has shown that convalescent plasma (CP) therapy for Covid-19 patients gave no positive effects and did not improve the outcome of the patients.
- Convalescent Plasma, extracted from the blood of patients recovering from an infection, is a source of antibodies against the infection.
- The Convalescent Plasma Therapy uses blood donated by people who have recovered from Covid-19 has antibodies to the virus that causes it.
- The donated blood is processed to remove blood cells, leaving behind liquid (plasma) and antibodies. These can be given to people with Covid-19 to boost their ability to fight the virus.
- PLACID Trial was conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) with the aim to investigate CPT's effectiveness for the treatment of Covid-19.
- It is the first and largest randomised control trial to be completed in the world.



# ISSUES

## NATIONAL

### POLITY & GOVERNANCE

#### DEMAND OF REPEAL OF UAPA



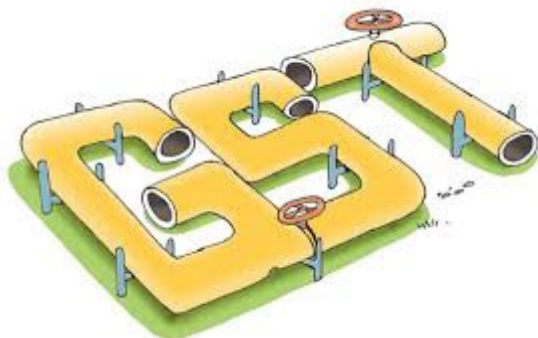
Date: 24th October 2020

#### Key Highlights:

- Major Opposition parties have demanded the repeal of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967.
- This came after the arrest of Stan Swamy, a tribal rights activist, in the Bhima Koregaon case.
- The UAPA Act aims at effective prevention of unlawful activities associations in India.
- The Act assigns absolute power to the central government. If the Centre deems an activity as unlawful then it may declare it so.
- It has death penalty and life imprisonment as highest punishments.
- Under UAPA, both Indian and foreign nationals can be charged.

### ENERGY

#### DEMAND FOR NATURAL GAS UNDER GST REGIME



Date: 27th October 2020

## Key Highlights:

- Major Global energy companies have called on the Government of India to bring natural gas under the GST regime at the India energy Forum held recently.
- Currently petrol, diesel, aviation turbine fuel, natural gas and crude oil fall outside India's GST regime.
- Government officials have also indicated that the government is considering bringing natural gas under the ambit of the GST regime.
- Benefits of bringing Natural gas under GST regime
- It would lead to a reduction in the cascading impact of taxes on industries such as power and steel, which use natural gas as an input.
- It would do away with the central excise duty and different value added taxes imposed by states.
- This would lead to an increase in the adoption of natural gas which would be in line with the government's goal to increase the share of natural gas in the country's energy basket from 6.3% to 15%.

## INTERNATIONAL

## SECURITY

### FATF DECIDES TO KEEP PAKISTAN ON ITS GREY LIST



Date: 25th October 2020

## Key Highlights:

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) decided to keep Pakistan on its "grey list".
- According to FATF, Pakistan has failed to act on six key mandates.
- It urged Pakistan to complete an internationally agreed action plan by February 2021.
- The FATF is a global watchdog founded to tackle money laundering initially but its role became prominent after the 9/11 terror attacks.

- It maintains two lists, namely a blacklist and a grey list.
- So far, only two countries have been blacklisted by it – Iran and North Korea.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### HISTORIC CEASEFIRE ANNOUNCED IN LIBYA



Date: 25th October 2020

#### Key Highlights:

- Rival parties in Libya announced a historic ceasefire followed by five days of the 5+5 Libyan Joint Military Commission (JMC) talks in Geneva.
- This gives way to the possibility that the long-drawn conflict might be coming to an end.
- As per this new agreement facilitated by the UN, all foreign mercenaries and armed forces will have to withdraw within the next 90 days.
- The parties also agreed that any violations in the ceasefire will be dealt by a joint military force, which will be under a unified command.
- The agreement has also established a Joint Police Operations room that will implement and propose special arrangements to secure the areas that are cleared of military units and armed groups.
- Further, the 5+5 have also agreed to open the land and air routes that connect the regions and cities of Libya.

