

# Week 1 Current Affairs Update

1<sup>st</sup>- 7<sup>th</sup> November 2020

## EVENTS

### NATIONAL

#### TRANSPORT

##### INDIA'S FIRST SEAPLANE SERVICE



Date: 1st November 2020

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched India's first-ever seaplane on the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel with the aim of providing air connectivity between the Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad and the Statue of Unity in Kevadia.

##### Key Points:

- The seaplane will be operated by SpiceJet. It is a 19-seater seaplane, which will be able to accommodate 14 passengers.
- In the next phase, Dharoi dam (Mehsana district) will connect Ambaji and Shatrunjay dam (Bhavnagar district) and Tapi district.
- A seaplane is a fixed-wing aeroplane designed for taking off and landing on water.
- India's Seaplane Project: As per the direction of the Centre, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) requested governments of Gujarat, Assam, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and Andaman & Nicobar to propose potential locations for setting up water airports to boost the tourism sector.
- In 2019, the Centre approved flights from six water airports that include Shatrunjay Dam (Gujarat), Guwahati riverfront and Umrangso reservoir (Assam) and Nagarjuna Sagar (Andhra Pradesh), under the third round of Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) scheme.

## HAZIRA-GHOGHA RO-PAX FERRY SERVICE



Date: 7th November 2020

Indian Prime Minister inaugurated the Ro-Pax terminal at Hazira and flag off Ro-Pax service between Hazira and Ghogha in Gujarat.

### Key Points:

- Hazira-Ghogha Ro-Pax ferry service will work as a Gateway to South Gujarat and Saurashtra region.
- It will reduce the distance between Ghogha and Hazira from 370 Kilometres to 90 Kilometres.
- The reduced cargo travel time will result in huge savings of fuel approximately 9000 litres per day and will lead to reduction in CO2 emission by approximately 24 million tonnes per day.
- With the onset of Ferry services, the port sector, furniture and fertilizer industries in Saurashtra and Kutch region will get a big boost.

## ENVIRONMENT

### GREEN DELHI APP



Date: 1st November 2020

The Chief Minister of Delhi launched the Green Delhi mobile application.

### Key Points:

- The app is launched for citizens so that they can bring into the government's notice about the pollution causing activities in the capital.
- The app will keep a track on rising air pollution along with data related to pollution causing activities like burning waste, industrial pollution and dust.

- It is designed in such a way that it can be used to register photo and video complaints. Citizens can click photos or make a video of pollution causing activities and can upload it in the app.
- The app will then identify the location and will automatically transfer the complaint to the concerned department for time-bound redressal.
- Delhi Government has made strict timelines for each type of complaint received on the application.

## **GANGA UTSAV 2020**



Recently, the Ganga Utsav 2020 has begun to celebrate the glory of the National river Ganga.

Date: 4th November 2020

### **Key Points:**

- The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) celebrates the festival every year.
- Aim of the festival is to promote stakeholder engagement and ensure public participation.
- It celebrates river Ganga through storytelling, dialogues with eminent personalities, displaying traditional art forms, dance and music performance, etc.
- Ganga Task Force (GTF) also conducted an afforestation drive with National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets and educational tour for youth.
- Mini Ganga Quest was also held which was designed to make youth and students aware of environmental issues and explain their role in conservation.

## **COMMISSION FOR AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT (CAQM)**



Date: 3rd November 2020

The central government has notified an Ordinance to constitute a Commission for Air Quality Management in the National Capital Region (NCR) and Adjoining Areas.

**Key Points:**

- CAQM will supersede all existing bodies, including the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), as well as state governments in matters of air pollution mitigation.
- Through this Ordinance, the Centre has dissolved the Environment Pollution Prevention and Control Authority (EPCA) for the NCR.
- Only the National Green Tribunal (NGT), and not civil courts, is authorized to hear cases where the Commission is involved.
- Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) was constituted in 1998 under section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 for the National Capital Region in compliance with the Supreme Court order dated January 1998.
- It takes all necessary steps for controlling vehicular pollution, ensuring compliance of fuel quality standards, monitoring and coordinating action for traffic planning and management.

## **TOURISM**

### **MANSAR LAKE DEVELOPMENT PLAN**



Date: 2nd November 2020 In a move to increase tourism, the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, inaugurated the Mansar Lake Development Plan in Jammu and Kashmir. Key Points: The project is eyed to attract almost 20 lakh tourists every year and increase employment opportunities also. Mansar Lake is situated 62 km from Jammu. It is a lake having a natural border of forest-covered hills. Surinsar-Mansar Lakes were designated as Ramsar Convention in November 2005. Mansar is of immense importance from the Pilgrimage as well Heritage point of view. Social Single Male Parent eligible for child care leave





Date: 3rd November 2020

Male Government employees who are single parents will now be eligible for child care leave.

**Key Points:**

- As per this rule, Now child care leave can be granted at 100% of leave salary for the first 365 days and 80% of leave salary for the next 365 days.
- In case of a disabled child, the condition of availing child care leave up to the age of 22 years of the child has been removed.
- Now, child care leave can be availed by a government servant for a disabled child of any age.
- Single male parents, includes unmarried employees, widowers and divorcees, who may be expected to take up the responsibility of caring for a child single-handedly.
- Child Care Leave is treated as earned leave. Earlier It has been generally granted to women employees.
- It is granted either for rearing children or to look after any of the needs of children like examination, sickness etc.

**TOURIST FACILITATION CENTRE – KERALA**



Date: 6th November 2020

Tourism Minister Prahlad Singh Patel has inaugurated a 'Tourist Facilitation Centre' at Guruvayur, Kerala.

### **Key Points:**

- The 'Tourist Facilitation Centre' is constructed under the "Development of Guruvayur" project of PRASAD Scheme of the Ministry of Tourism.
- The center is constructed at a cost of Rs 11.57 crores.
- The centre comprises CCTV Network infrastructure, multi-level car parking and tourist amenities centre.
- Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) Scheme was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in 2014-15 to perform integrated development of identified pilgrim and heritage destinations in India.

## **ART & CULTURE**

### **TRACES OF DAIRY PRODUCTION FOUND IN INDUS VALLEY CIVILIZATION**



Date: 3rd November 2020

Recently, a study by Indian and Canadian archaeologists has found that dairy products were being produced by the Harappans as far back as 2500 BCE.

### **Key Points:**

- The finding reveals the earliest evidence of dairy production.
- The results are based on molecular chemical analysis of residue of pottery found at Kotda Bhadli, in Gujarat.
- Traces seen in cooking vessels indicate the presence of milk, which may have been boiled for consumption. There are also remains of a perforated vessel, which indicates processing of milk into different forms.
- The researchers were able to identify that cattles were used for dairy through a process called stable isotope analysis.

## HEALTHCARE

### ‘STRATEGIC POLICY AND FACILITATION BUREAU’



Date: 2nd November 2020

The AYUSH Ministry has partnered with Invest India to set up ‘Strategic Policy & Facilitation Bureau’ (SPFB).

#### Key Points:

- The ‘Strategic Policy & Facilitation Bureau’ will help to provide systematically and planned growth of the Ayush sector.
- It will help in policy-making for AYUSH ministry along with framing strategic initiatives which will be helpful for the full potential development of the sector.
- The SPFB will also be supported by the stakeholders of Ayush sector.
- Invest India will help to frame a plan for ‘Strategic Policy & Facilitation Bureau’ and it will play a role to define long term and short term plans for this bureau.
- Invest India will appoint experts to execute the plan of this partnership with the Ministry of AYUSH.

### COVID-19 Shri Shakti Challenge



Date: 6th November 2020

Recently, six women led startups have won Covid-19 Shri Shakti Challenge organized by MyGov in collaboration with UN WOMEN.

### **Key Points:**

- Covid-19 Shri Shakti Challenge was launched by MyGov in collaboration with UN Women in April 2020.
- Its objective is to encourage and involve women led startups to come up with innovative solutions that can help in the fight against Covid-19 or solve problems that impact a large number of women.
- Evaluation of the solutions proposed by the startups was done on the parameters that included innovation, usability, relevance and impact of their idea on the society.
- Top 3 entries were selected as winners, and in view of the high quality of solutions presented, 3 additional entries were recognised as 'Promising Solutions'.
- The total prize money of INR 22,50,000 has been committed by UN Women towards COVID-19 Shri Shakti Challenge, under their program WeEmpowerAsia, supported by the European Union.

## **POLITY & GOVERNANCE**

### **NATIONAL CYBER CRIME REPORTING PORTAL**



Date: 3rd November 2020

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has written to all States to examine and register FIRs based on the complaints received on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal.

### **Key Points:**

- As per Ministry of Home Affairs, only 2.5% of total complaints registered on the portal are converted into FIRs.
- Through the portal, the Government seeks to promote Cyber Crime Volunteers for identifying, reporting and removal of illegal/unlawful online content.
- According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the number of registered cyber crimes increased by 63.5% in the year 2019 compared to 2018.



- National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal is a citizen-centric initiative enabling citizens to report cybercrimes online. It was launched in 2019.
- The portal specifically focuses on crimes against women, children, child pornography, online content pertaining to rapes/gang rapes, etc. It also focuses on crimes like stalking, cyberbullying, etc.

## **INITIATIVES FOR GOOD AND VIGILANT GOVERNANCE**



Date: 4th November 2020

Recently, the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) has come up with new initiatives for good and vigilant governance on the last day of the Vigilance Awareness Week 2020.

### **Key Points:**

- “Ideas Box on Good Governance Practices in a Pandemic” has been launched and operationalised both on the DARPG as well as on the MyGov platform.
- Social media tweets on the “Best Practices in e-governance” have been launched.
- Round table discussion on “Satark Bharat, Samriddh Bharat” (Vigilant India, Prosperous India) was held.
- The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) observes the Week every year during the week of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel’s birthday (31st October) to affirm India’s commitment to the promotion of integrity and probity in public life through citizen participation.
- Theme for 2020: Satark Bharat, Samriddh Bharat

## **HARYANA’S RERA PUTS CAP ON COMMISSION**



Date: 6th November 2020

In a first of its kind order, Haryana's RERA has put a cap on the commission being charged by the brokers while facilitating a land deal.

**Key Points:**

- Now, no real estate agent in Haryana can charge more than 0.5% commission each from the buyer and the seller per deal.
- The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act took effect in May 2016 to regulate and promote the real estate sector and to bring about transparency and efficiency in the Industry.
- It has a mandate to protect consumer interest, including establishing a speedy redressal system.
- It applies to all under-construction projects with a plot size above 500 sq. m or projects with 8 apartments or more.
- Each state has to set up its own regulator, keeping the central law as the framework.
- Real estate agents must be registered with the authority before executing any transaction.

## REPORTS & INDICES

### 5TH PUBLIC AFFAIRS INDEX 2020



Date: 2nd November 2020

Recently, the Public Affairs Centre has released the Public Affairs Index (PAI)-2020.

**Key Points:**

- It is a unique statistical tool to evaluate the performance of governance in the States.
- Kerala was adjudged the best-governed state in the country while Uttar Pradesh ended at the bottom in the large states category.
- The four southern states, namely, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, and Karnataka stood in the first four ranks in the large state category in terms of governance.

- Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Bihar were at the bottom of the ranking, scoring negative points in the category i.e. -1.461, -1.201 and -1.158 points respectively.
- In the small state category, Goa ranked first, followed by Meghalaya and Himachal Pradesh.

## EDUCATION

### SWAMI ATMANAND GOVERNMENT ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOL



Date: 3rd November 2020

The Government of Chhattisgarh launched Swami Atmanand Government English Medium School Scheme to mark the occasion of statehood day.

#### Key Points:

- The aim of this scheme is to build English medium schools in the state so as to give an education facility in the English language also.
- Under this scheme, initially, 52 English medium schools will be started.
- These schools will be having online learning facilities and will comprise computer labs, science labs and state-of-the-art libraries.
- The amount allotted for this scheme is Rs 130 crore.

## DEFENCE

### DRDO SUCCESSFULLY TEST FIRED ADVANCED VERSION OF PINAKA ROCKET



Date: 6th November 2020

The Defence Research Development Organization (DRDO) has successfully test-fired the advanced version of Pinaka rocket system.

### Key Points:

- It was test-fired from the Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur, Odisha.
- This advanced version of the Pinaka rocket system has replaced Pinaka Mk-I rockets.
- The Pinaka rocket system can hit the target which is 45-60 km away, while its old version Pinaka Mk-I rockets have a range of 40 km.
- Basically, Pinaka is a multi-barrel rocket launcher system which can fire 12 rockets in 44 seconds.
- In this test-fire operation, a total of six rockets were launched.

## INTERNATIONAL

### ENVIRONMENT

#### SUPER TYPHOON GONI



Date: 2nd November 2020

Recently, Super Typhoon Goni hit the Philippines with authorities warning of “catastrophic” conditions in the region expected to receive the hardest hit.

### Key Points:

- The strongest typhoon of the year so far made landfall on Catanduanes Island.
- A week before, Typhoon Molave had hit the same region.
- Since 2009 the Hong Kong Observatory has divided typhoons into three different classifications: typhoon, severe typhoon and super typhoon.
- A typhoon has wind speed of 64–79 knots (73–91 mph; 118–149 km/h), a severe typhoon has winds of at least 80 knots (92 mph; 150 km/h), and a super typhoon has winds of at least 100 knots (120 mph; 190 km/h).



## DEFENCE

### INDIAN NAVAL SHIP AIRAVAT ENTERS PORT SUDAN UNDER MISSION SAGAR II



Date: 3rd November 2020

As part of 'Mission Sagar-II', Indian Naval Ship Airavat recently entered Port Sudan.

#### Key Points:

- The Government of India is providing assistance to Friendly Foreign Countries to overcome natural calamities and COVID-19 pandemic.
- INS Airavat is carrying a consignment of 100 Tonnes of food aid for the people of Sudan for the same purpose.
- Mission Sagar-II follows the first 'Mission Sagar' undertaken in May-June 2020, wherein India reached out to Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros, and provided food aid and medicines.
- As part of Mission Sagar-II, Indian Naval Ship Airavat will deliver food aid to Sudan, South Sudan, Djibouti and Eritrea.

## DEFENCE

### MALABAR NAVAL EXERCISE 2020



Date: 4th November 2020

The Navies of India, the United States, Japan and Australia have begun the four-day-long Malabar naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal.

### **Key Points:**

- The Phase-I of the exercise was conducted from 3rd Nov to 6th Nov 2020 in the Bay of Bengal.
- The Phase-II of the exercise will be held from 17th Nov to 20th Nov 2020 in the Arabian Sea.
- India's side will be represented by: Destroyer Ranvijay, frigate Shivalik, off-shore patrol vessel Sukanya, fleet support ship Shakti, submarine Sindhuraj, advanced jet trainer Hawk, long-range maritime patrol aircraft P-8I, Dornier maritime patrol aircraft and several helicopters.
- Whereas, US Navy Ship USS John S McCain which is the Guided-missile destroyer, Australian Navy Ship HMAS Ballarat which is the long-range frigate and Japan's Maritime Self Defence Ship named as Ship JS Onami will be participating in the drill.
- It was started in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between the Indian Navy and US Navy. Japan became a permanent member of this drill from 2015.
- Australia also joined in Malabar 2020 making it an exercise of QUAD countries.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **2020 ANNUAL POLITICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN INDIA AND GCC TROIKA**



Date: 5th November 2020

The Annual Political Dialogue between India and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Troika was held virtually.

### **Key Points:**

- India was represented by Union Minister for External Affairs, Dr S. Jaishankar and GCC was represented at the Troika-level by Secretary-General of GCC, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bahrain and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, UAE.
- Also dignitaries from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar also participated in the dialogue.

- All the dignitaries reviewed their work in detail which they coordinately handled since last few years.
- They also discussed the satisfactory cooperation between India and GCC countries during COVID-19 pandemic.
- Both India and GCC agreed to develop the cooperation to address challenges like Covid-19 pandemic, Terrorism, climate change and sustainable development.

## **FIRST INDIA-NORDIC-BALTIC CONCLAVE**



Date: 7th November 2020

The First India-Nordic-Baltic Conclave was held virtually.

### **Key Points:**

- The First India-Nordic-Baltic Conclave was hosted by the Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- The theme for the conclave was: 'An Innovation-Driven Partnership for Growth in New World'.
- The dignitaries discussed the adoption of clean technologies and renewable energies.
- They also held discussions related to Artificial Intelligence, supply chain logistics and blockchain led transformation.
- Nordic Countries: Group of five nations in Northern Europe- Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and Finland.

## **ENERGY**

### **ADB LOAN TO IMPROVE POWER DISTRIBUTION IN MEGHALAYA**



Date: 5th November 2020

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved the loan of USD 132.8 million to improve and upgrade the power distribution network in Meghalaya.

**Key Points:**

- This loan amount will be used to improve and upgrade the power distribution system & financial sustainability of the Meghalaya Power Distribution Corporation Limited (MePDCL).
- Also, MePDCL has an outstanding against the power purchased from central power generating stations and to the Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCIL). So, this loan amount will be used to clear these outstanding dues.
- Under this project, 23 substations will be constructed along with renovation and modernization of 45 substations in the state.
- Installation and up-gradation of 2214 km of distribution lines and developing provision of control room equipment and protection systems will be carried out under this project.

**4TH HIGH-LEVEL MEET OF THE INDIA-OPEC ENERGY DIALOGUE**



Date: 7th November 2020

The 4th High-level meeting of the India-OPEC Energy Dialogue was held virtually.

**Key Points:**

- The meet was co-chaired by Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan.
- Also, the meeting observed the participation by OPEC Member countries, Secretary Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, and CMD & MDs of India's oil and gas industry.
- The dignitaries discussed assessing COVID-19 induced disruptions of oil supply.
- Indian side urged OPEC to address the anomalies that are prevalent in differential crude oil prices.





# PEOPLE

## NATIONAL

### OBITUARY

#### TN KRISHNAN



Date: 3rd November 2020

Padma Bhushan awardee, Violin maestro TN Krishnan passes away at 92.

#### Key Points:

- Legendary violin maestro and Padma Bhushan awardee TN Krishnan passed away in Chennai on November 2, 2020. He was 92.
- Along with Lalgudi Jayaraman and M. S. Gopalakrishnan he was considered part of the violin-trinity of Carnatic music.
- He was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1974 and was a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship from the academy in 2006.
- He was awarded the Madras Music Academy's Sangeetha Kalanidhi in 1980.
- TN Krishnan was honoured with the Padma Shri in 1973. He was later conferred the Padma Bhushan in 1992.

### AWARDS & HONOURS

#### MM NARAVANE



Date: 6th November 2020

Why in news: Conferred the honorary rank to be the General of Nepal Army.

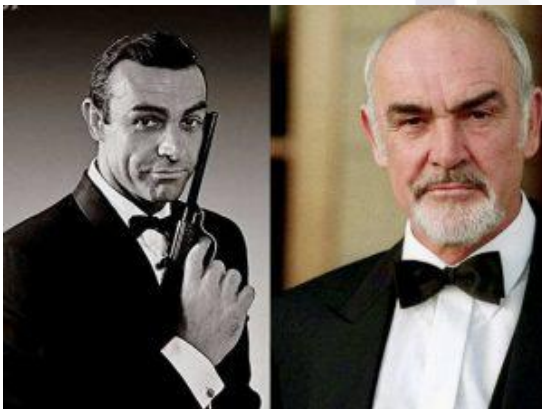
**Key Points:**

- Army Chief MM Naravane was conferred the honorary rank of General of the Nepali Army.
- The practice follows a seven-decade-old tradition of conferring Army Chiefs of each other's country with the honorary title.
- Commander-in-Chief General KM Cariappa was the first Indian Army Chief to be decorated with the title in 1950.
- In January last year, Chief of Nepali Army, General Purna Chandra Thapa, was also made the honorary General of the Indian Army by President Ram Nath Kovind.

**INTERNATIONAL**

**OBITUARY**

**SEAN CONNERY**



Date: 3rd November 2020

James Bond Fame Actor Sir Sean Connery passes away at 90.

**Key Points:**

- Hollywood legend, Sir Sean Connery, the Scottish star who was best known for his portrayal of James Bond, has passed away. He was 90.
- He was the first actor to portray fictional British secret agent James Bond in film, and had appeared in seven Bond films between 1962 and 1983.
- His acting career spanned seven decades during which he won his first and only Oscar trophy in 1988 for his role as Irish cop Jimmy Malone in The Untouchables.

## APPOINTMENTS

### DUARTE PACHECO



Date: 4th November 2020

Why in news: Elected as the President of Inter-Parliamentary Union.

#### Key Points:

- Portugal has won the elections for the post of the President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).
- Duarte Pacheco of Portugal has been elected the new President of IPU for the term 2020-2023.
- He will succeed Mexican MP Gabriela Cuevas Barron who completed his tenure recently.
- IPU is based in Geneva, Switzerland, founded in 1889. It consists of representatives from the National Parliaments of 179 countries.

### PRIYANCA RADHAKRISHNAN



Date: 5th November 2020

Why in news: Become New Zealand's first-ever Indian origin minister.

#### Key Points:

- Indian-origin New Zealand politician, Priyanka Radhakrishnan has created history by becoming the first Indian-Kiwi woman to become a minister in New Zealand.
- The 41-year-old Radhakrishnan was born in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

- She was elected first as a Member of Parliament belonging to the Labour Party in September 2017.
- In 2019, she was appointed the Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Minister for Ethnic Communities.
- In addition to this, she has become the Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector and Associate Minister for Social Development and Employment.



disha

Nurturing Ambitions



# IDEAS

## NATIONAL

### TRANSPORT

#### WATER AERODROME AND SEA-PLANE



Date: 2nd November 2020

#### Key Features:

- Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Water Aerodrome in Sabarmati Riverfront and the Seaplane Service from Sabarmati Riverfront to Kevadia.
- A water aerodrome is an area of open water that can be used by seaplanes as well as amphibious aircraft to land and take off. Such aircraft are expected to take people across water faster and more safely than local boats.
- Seaplanes have the ability to land and take-off from water thus offering access to areas that do not have landing strips or runways.
- Thus it can help in connecting the geographies/regions that have challenges owing to its topography and bring the remotest parts of India into the mainstream aviation network without the high cost of building airports and runways.
- These smaller fixed wing airplanes can land on water bodies like lakes, backwaters and dams, gravel and grass, thus offering easy access to numerous tourist spots as well.

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

#### ITM COVID GAME – IIT MADRAS



Date: 3rd November 2020

### **Key Features:**

- Indian Institute of Technology, Madras has launched 'IITM COVID Game' to create awareness about COVID-19 amongst children.
- It is a browser-based software game which can be played on any device.
- The game is available in 12 different Indian languages.
- Other Similar games launched recently to create awareness on COVID-19 are: (a) 'Can You Save the World?' (b) 'Corona Fighters' Awareness Video Game etc.

## **SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**

### **ACCELERATOR FOR ELECTRONICS TECHNOLOGIES (ACE)**



Date: 4th November 2020

### **Key Features:**

- Kerala has launched a state-of-the-art Accelerator for Electronics Technologies (ACE) to boost and strengthen the southern state's startups that are striving to scale up as sustainable enterprises.
- The technology is jointly developed by Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC).
- The ACE will develop itself to be the leading accelerator for the country's electronics technologies. It will boost the developments for high-tech startups in the electronics sector.
- The technology is complementary to the KSUM, which is the supported incubator for electronics technologies.
- In this partnership initiative, CDAC will play the role of providing mentorships to the startups. It will provide startups with access to the latest technologies and infrastructure.

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### TELE-LAW



Date: 5th November 2020

#### Key Features:

- Tele-Law was in the news recently. Almost 4 Lakh beneficiaries have received legal advice under this through CSCs (Common Service Centres).
- It was launched by the Department of Justice in 2017 to address cases at the pre-litigation stage.
- Under this programme, smart technology of video conferencing, telephone /instant calling facilities available at the vast network of Common Service Centres at the Panchayat level are used to connect the vulnerable communities with the Panel Lawyers for seeking timely and valuable legal advice.
- It is proactively outreached to groups and communities through a cadre of frontline volunteers provided by NALSA and CSC- e Gov.

## INTERNATIONAL

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### ASTEROID 16 PSYCHE



Date: 2nd November 2020

## Key Features:

- A recent study has found that asteroid 16 Psyche, which orbits between Mars and Jupiter, could be made entirely of metal.
- It is worth an estimated \$10,000 quadrillion — more than the entire economy of Earth.
- New images from NASA's Hubble Space Telescope offer a closer view of the asteroid 16 Psyche, whose surface may mostly comprise iron and nickel, similar to the Earth's core.
- Scientists believe that the asteroid may be the leftover core of an earlier planet that lost its crust and mantle after multiple collisions during the creation of our solar system.
- The exact composition and origins of the asteroid will be uncovered in 2022, when NASA sends an unmanned spacecraft to study it up close.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### EPHEMERAL MESSAGING



Date: 7th November 2020

## Key Features:

- The WhatsApp app has officially announced a new feature of Ephemeral Messaging (disappearing messages) to the platform. It will be available to all users globally by November 2020.
- Ephemeral messaging is the mobile-to-mobile transmission of multimedia messages that automatically disappear from the recipient's screen after the message has been viewed.
- The word “ephemeral” describes something that only lasts for a short period of time.
- Other encrypted messaging apps like Telegram, Signal, Wire already offer such an option.
- By turning on disappearing messages, users will get some more control over which chats are getting saved.





# ISSUES

## NATIONAL

### ENERGY

#### NATURAL GAS MARKETING REFORMS



Date: 3rd November 2020

##### Key Highlights:

- At the India Energy Forum, a much talked about subject was India's Natural Gas Marketing reforms that was announced in October 2020.
- The objective of the reforms is to prescribe standard procedures to discover the market price of gas to be sold in the market by gas producers, through a transparent and competitive process.
- The Director General of Hydrocarbon (DGH) will suggest an e-bidding platform to producers. It will list all government entities and other Credible companies.
- Producers will have a choice between different platforms in transparent public domain akin to how coal, spectrum and mineral auctions take place in the country.
- While producing companies themselves will not be allowed to participate in the bidding process, all other players and affiliate companies will be allowed to bid. This will facilitate and promote more competition in marketing of gas.
- The policy will also grant marketing freedom to the Field Development Plans (FDPs) of those Blocks in which Production Sharing Contracts already provide pricing freedom.

### HEALTHCARE

#### INDIA RANKS AMONGST THE BOTTOM IN BODY MASS INDEX (BMI) RANKING



Date: 7th November 2020

### Key Highlights:

- According to a study in The Lancet, India ranks third and fifth from the bottom respectively among countries where 19-year-old girls and boys have a low Body Mass Index (BMI).
- The study provides new estimates for height and BMI trends in 2019 across 200 countries after analysing data from 2,181 studies.
- The mean BMI of 19-year-old boys is 20.1 in India, compared to a high of 29.6 in the Cook Islands and a low of 19.2 in Ethiopia.
- For Indian girls, the mean BMI is again 20.1, compared to a high of 29.0 in Tonga and a low of 19.6 in Timor-Leste.
- The mean height of Indian 19-year-olds is 166.5 cm for boys and 155.2 cm for girls, well below the height of Netherlands boys (183.8 cm) and girls (170 cm).

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### THE END OF INSPECTOR RAJ IN INDIA'S IT SECTOR



Date: 7th November 2020

### Key Highlights:

- The Centre did away with the onerous Other Service Provider (OSP) regulations and issued new guidelines for the IT/ITeS industry.

- OSPs are entities providing applications, IT-enabled or any kind of outsourcing services using telecom resources. The term refers to BPOs, KPOs (knowledge process outsourcing), ITES, call centres, among others.
- In other words, OSPs are companies using telecom resources for its operations like tele-banking, tele-medicine, tele-trading, e-commerce, call-centre operations etc
- OSP regulations were introduced in the 1990s when business process outsourcing (BPO) started in India and the Indian telecom industry was going beyond BSNL.
- The government then introduced OSP terms and conditions to help the industry grow and ensure that they don't suffer due to lack of resources.
- The conditions included registrations for OSP licence, frequent reporting obligation to track the BPO firms and bank guarantees. What started as a facilitator became a burden as the industry grew over years.

## INTERNATIONAL

### HEALTHCARE

#### PANDEMICS TO EMERGE MORE OFTEN: NEW REPORT BY IPBES



Date: 6th November 2020

#### Key Highlights:

- A new report by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem (IPBES) warned that future pandemics will emerge more often, they'll spread more rapidly, do more damage to the world and kill more people than COVID-19, unless significant measures are taken.
- The report notes that COVID-19 is at least the sixth pandemic to have taken place in the last century since the Great Influenza Pandemic of 1918.
- More than 70% of emerging diseases, such as Ebola, Zika and Nipah, are caused by microbes found in animals that spill over due to contact among wildlife, livestock and people.

- About 30% of emerging infectious diseases are attributed to land use change, agricultural expansion and urbanisation.
- The report suggests that pandemic risk can be lowered by reducing the human activities that drive loss of biodiversity, by greater conservation of protected areas and through measures that reduce unsustainable exploitation of high biodiversity regions.

## ENVIRONMENT

### US AND PARIS AGREEMENT



Date: 7th November 2020

#### Key Highlights:

- The US formally left the Paris Climate Agreement on 4th Nov 2020, three years after President Donald Trump announced his intention to undo what had been seen as a key achievement of his predecessor Barack Obama.
- In December 2015, 195 countries signed an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), dealing with greenhouse-gas-emissions mitigation, adaptation, and finance.
- Its objective was to slow the process of global warming by limiting a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- During his 2016 presidential campaign, Donald Trump had described the Paris Agreement as “unfair” to US interests, and had promised to pull out of the agreement if elected. So in June 2017, months after his inauguration, Trump announced his government’s decision to quit the accord.

