

Week 1 Current Affairs Update

1st - 7th January 2021

EVENTS

NATIONAL

DEFENCE

DRDO & INDIAN NAVY CONDUCTED TRIAL OF SAHAYAK-NG



Date: 1st January 2021

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy jointly conducted the successful maiden test trial of SAHAYAK-NG.

Key Points:

- The SAHAYAK-NG is India's first indigenously designed and developed Air Dropped Container from IL 38SD aircraft.
- The trial was executed off the coast of Goa.
- Indian Navy conducted the trial operation to enhance the logistics capabilities of SAHAYAK-NG and make it capable of offering critical engineering stores to ships which are deployed more than 2,000 km from the coast.
- The SAHAYAK-NG is developed by the Naval Science and Technological Laboratory, Visakhapatnam and the Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment, Agra. These are the two labs of DRDO.
- The SAHAYAK-NG is an advanced version of SAHAYAK Mk I.

AGRICULTURE

NORTH EAST'S FIRST-EVER SPECIALIZED "GINGER" PROCESSING PLANT



Date: 1st January 2021

North East's first-ever specialised “Ginger” Processing Plant at district Ri-Bhoi in Meghalaya is being revived and is likely to become functional in the beginning of 2021.

Key Points:

- The Plant is located at the Export Promotion Industrial Park (EPIP), Raja Bhagan, Byrnihat Hatt.
- It will process ginger and help in preparing products like waxed ginger, ginger paste, ginger powder, ginger flakes, ginger oil etc.
- Significantly ginger has attained a place of prominence in recent months because of its reported properties as an immunity booster against COVID-19 Virus.
- The ginger products being prepared from this Plant will be available for domestic consumption and will be able to meet the Global demand as well.
- This will also be in keeping with Prime Minister Modi's calls for “Vocal for Local”.

DEFENCE

DEFENCE MINISTRY SIGNED AGREEMENT WITH BEL



Date: 2nd January 2021

The Ministry of Defence entered into an agreement with Bharat Electronics Limited to procure the 10 numbers of Lynx U2 Fire Control Systems i.e. LYNX U2 GFCS.

Key Points:

- The LYNX U2 GFCS will be supplied for frontline warships of Indian Navy.
- This will be supplied at the cost of Rs 1355 crore.
- The LYNX U2 GFCS is basically a Naval Gun Fire Control System which tracks and engages targets amidst sea clutter. It is designed to track air and surface targets.
- It is indigenously designed with open and scalable architecture which adds simple and flexible implementation in different configurations.
- This 10 Lynx U2 Fire Control Systems from BEL will be installed on Naval Offshore Patrolling Vessel Talwar and Teg class of ships.

ENERGY

ADB, INDIA SIGN \$231 MILLION LOAN TO ENHANCE POWER GENERATION CAPACITY IN ASSAM



Date: 2nd January 2021

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$231 million loan to augment electricity generation capacity in Assam through construction of a 120 megawatts (MW) hydroelectric power plant.

Key Points:

- This is the third tranche loan for the ongoing Assam Power Sector Investment Programme that was approved by the ADB Board in July 2014.
- The programme, including its two previous tranches, focuses on enhancing capacity and efficiency of the energy generation and distribution systems in Assam to improve electricity service to end users.
- Increased supply of affordable and clean electricity facilitated through the project will help improve living conditions, promote business expansion, and increase employment opportunities in the state beside reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The project is run-of-the-river project over Kopili river which will help increase electricity supplied from clean energy by 469 gigawatt hour (GWh) by 2025 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 360,000 tons of carbon dioxide annually.

HEALTHCARE

INDIAN SARS-COV-2 GENOMIC CONSORTIA (INSACOG)



Date: 1st January 2021

Key Features:

- Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG) was recently launched with the coordinated efforts of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) along with MoH&FW, ICMR, and CSIR.
- The consortium will ascertain the status of a new variant of SARS-CoV-2 in the country.
- INSACOG will have a high level Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee.
- It will have a Scientific Advisory Group for scientific and technical guidance.
- Its aim is to monitor the genomic variations in the SARS-CoV-2 on a regular basis through a multi-laboratory network.
- This vital research consortium will also assist in developing potential vaccines in the future.

ENVIRONMENT

METEOROLOGICAL (MET) CENTRE AT LEH (LADAKH)



Date: 2nd January 2021

The Union Minister of Earth Sciences inaugurated Meteorological (Met) Centre at Leh (Ladakh).

Key Points:

- Located at a height of 3500 m, Meteorological Centre Leh will be the highest meteorological centre in India.
- The Centre will be a world class facility for high altitude meteorology.
- It will cater to the various kinds of weather and climate needs of the people and the administration of Ladakh.
- It will provide forecasts for important tourist places like Nubra, Changthang, Pangong Lake, Zaskar, among others.

INFRASTRUCTURE

PM MODI LAID FOUNDATION STONE FOR LIGHT HOUSE PROJECTS (LHPS)



Date: 2nd January 2021

PM Modi laid the foundation stone of Light House Projects (LHPs) for Six Indian states.

Key Points:

- The Light House Projects (LHPs) showcase the best of new-age alternate global technologies, materials and processes in the construction sector for the first time in the country at such a large scale.
- Under this project, economical and potentially strong houses would be built employing various special techniques. House's beam-columns and panels would be prepared in the factories and brought directly to the place of construction so as to assemble them.
- They are being constructed under GHTC-India which envisages to provide an ecosystem for adoption of innovative technologies in the housing construction sector in a holistic manner.
- The LHPs are being constructed at Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Agartala (Tripura) and Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh).
- They comprise about 1000 houses at each location along with allied infrastructure facilities.

AGRICULTURE

ADB AND GOI SIGNED LOAN AGREEMENT TO FINANCE HORTICULTURE IN HP



Date: 3rd January 2021

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India has entered into a loan agreement to support horticulture in Himachal Pradesh.

Key Points:

- They have signed a \$10 million project readiness financing (PRF) agreement for the same.
- The funds will help to manage the horticulture activities from designing, capacity building in order to increase horticulture production and farm household income in Himachal Pradesh.
- The funds under the PRF facility will be used to undertake advanced solutions which will create an environment for subtropical horticulture development in the state.
- The fund amount will also be used to perform prior testing of new production technologies and marketing systems in order to have a cost-effective implementation of technology in a timely manner for horticulture development in HP.

AGRICULTURE

J&K GOVERNMENT SIGNED MOU WITH NAFED



Date: 3rd January 2021

The Jammu and Kashmir administration has entered into MoU with National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) for the purpose of increasing marketing for Horticulture produce in the UT.

Key Points:

- Both will work coordinately for branding and marketing of fruit crops and establish market exposure to non-seasonal veggies and flowers in Indian metro cities.
- Under this MoU, NAFED will offer financial support of Rs 1700 crores to implement high-density plantations like apple, walnuts, cherry pear flowers across 5500 hectares in upcoming 5 years.
- The NAFED will also establish 20 FPOs in J&K.
- The partnership will also lead to construct cold storage clusters in North Kashmir, South Kashmir and Kathua at the estimated cost of Rs 500 crores.

BANKING & FINANCE

RBI DIGITAL PAYMENT INDEX



Date: 3rd January 2021

The Reserve Bank of India has released the 'Digital Payments Index (DPI)' which measures the extent of digitisation of payments in India.

Key Points:

- The DPI is based on 5 key parameters which are used to measure deepening and penetration of digital payments in the country over different time periods.
- The parameters and their weightage are: payment enablers (25% weight), payment infrastructure – demand-side factor (10%), payment infrastructure – supply-side factors (15%), payment performance (45%), and consumer centricity (5%).
- The base period considered to measure DPI is March 2018 by RBI with the score set at 100.
- RBI has measured DPI for March 2019 and March 2020 which came to 153.47 and 207.84 respectively which indicated an appreciable growth.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

NATIONAL METROLOGY CONCLAVE 2021



Date: 4th January 2021

Recently PM Modi inaugurated and addressed the National Metrology Conclave on the significance of the 75th foundation day of CSIR.

Key Points:

- The theme for National Metrology Conclave: 'Metrology for the Inclusive Growth of the Nation'.
- The conclave was organised by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL) and is being held in New Delhi.
- While addressing the conclave, PM Modi appreciated Indian scientists for working with dedication for two 'Made in India' vaccines for COVID-19.
- He also highlighted that India is among the top 50 countries in the global innovation ranking and mentioned that partnership between institutions and industry has increased to a great extent.
- During this conclave, National Atomic Time Scale and Bhartiya Nirdeshak Dravya were dedicated to the nation along with the foundation stone laid for National Environmental Standards Labs.

ENVIRONMENT

INDIA TO CO-CHAIR IUCN SUPPORTED APAP



Date: 5th January 2021

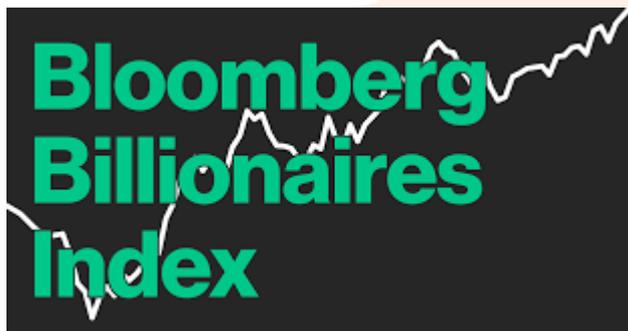
India is selected to co-chair the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) supported by Asia Protected Areas Partnership (APAP) for the tenure of 3 years i.e. till Nov 2023.

Key Points:

- It is basically a regional forum which conserves the wildlife habitats.
- India will be replacing South Korea which held this position for the last 3 years.
- Under this co-chairmanship, India will assist other Asian nations to manage and conserve the wildlife protected areas.
- The APAP is chaired by IUCN Asia and co-chaired by an APAP member nation on a rotational basis.

REPORTS & INDICES

BLOOMBERG BILLIONAIRES INDEX 2021



Date: 4th January 2021

The Bloomberg Billionaires Index for 2021 was released.

Key Points:

- The index is topped by Jeff Bezos with a net worth of 190 Billion USD.
- The second and third position is marked by Elon Musk (170 Billion USD) and Bill Gates (132 Billion USD) respectively.
- India's richest man Mukesh Ambani has achieved the 12th position in the index.
- The net worth of Mukesh Ambani dropped from 90 Billion USD (in early 2020) to 76.7 Billion USD due to the correction in the Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) shares which fell to Rs 1995.50 on 30th Dec 2020, which was 16% from its all-time value of Rs 2369.35.

POLICY & SCHEMES

TRIFED, DONER AND INDIA POST TO PROMOTE NORTH-EAST TRIBAL PRODUCTS



Date: 5th January 2021

The TRIFED which comes under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has collaborated with DoNER (Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region) and India Post to promote the tribal products of North-Eastern India.

Key Points:

- They will be promoting the products by implementing and adopting marketing and logistics strategies.
- They have partnered with an aim to create a brand of products from the NE region and to offer a global platform for products.
- This partnership will lead to enhanced entrepreneurship skills among tribal and increase their income source.
- For this purpose, all the three entities have planned activities which include identification of suppliers and weaving clusters, sourcing of products, training and development, procurement of products and transportation and distribution to the end-users.

EDUCATION

TAMIL ACADEMY TO BE SETUP IN DELHI



Date: 5th January 2020

The Government of Delhi announced to set up Tamil Academy to promote the language and culture of Tamil Nadu.

Key Points:

- The decision and announcement for the same were made by the Delhi government's Department of Art, Culture, and Language.
- The Tamil Academy will be responsible to promote the language and culture of the southern state of Tamil Nadu.
- For this, the Delhi Gov. has appointed a former councillor and member of Delhi Tamil, Sangam N Raja as the Vice-Chairman of the academy.
- The Tamil Academy will also be conducting various programmes and cultural festivals which will promote Tamil culture.

HEALTHCARE

ZYCOV-D: INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUSLY DEVELOPED DNA VACCINE CANDIDATE AGAINST COVID-19



Date: 6th January 2020

India's first indigenously developed DNA vaccine candidate against COVID-19, ZyCoV-D has been approved by Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), for conduct of the Phase III clinical trials.

Key Points:

- The candidate has been supported by the National Biopharma Mission (NBM) under the aegis of BIRAC and the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India.
- Zydus Cadila completed Phase-I/II clinical trials of this DNA Vaccine candidate, in India, in more than 1,000 participants.
- Interim data has indicated that the vaccine is safe and immunogenic when three doses were administered intradermally (in the skin).
- The DCGI has accorded permission for conducting Phase-III clinical trials in 26,000 Indian participants.

POLICIES & SCHEMES

SCHOOL BAG POLICY, 2020



Date: 6th January 2021

The Directorate of Education has issued a circular asking schools to follow the new 'School Bag Policy, 2020' released by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

Key Points:

- According to the circular, school teachers should inform the students in advance about the books and notebooks to be brought to school on a particular day.
- They should frequently check their bags to ensure that they are not carrying unnecessary material.
- The weight of the school bags, as per the policy, should be: (i) 1.6 to 2.2 kg for Classes I and II students, (ii) 1.7 to 2.5 kg for Classes III, IV and V, (iii) 2 to 3 kg for Classes VI and VII, (iv) 2.5 to 4 kg for Class VIII, (v) 2.5 to 4.5 kg for Classes IX and X and (vi) 3.5 to 5 kg for Classes XI and XII.
- The teachers should take the responsibility of checking the weight of school bags of the students every three months on a day selected for the whole class.
- Any information about heavy bags should be communicated to the parents.
- To reduce the weight of the school bag, the school management should provide quality potable water in sufficient quantities to all the students in the school.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

40TH INDIAN SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION TO ANTARCTICA



Date: 6th January 2021

India launched the 40th scientific expedition to Antarctica.

Key Points:

- This Indian expedition marks four decades of India's scientific endeavour to the Antarctica.
- The 40th expedition journey will be flagged off from Goa on January 5, 2021, with 43 members onboard.
- The chartered ice-class vessel MV Vasiliy Golovnin will make this journey and will reach Antarctica in 30 days.
- After leaving behind a team of 40 members, it would return to India in April 2021.
- On return, it will also bring back the winter team of the preceding trip.

POLICIES & SCHEMES

'LAUNCH PAD SCHEME' OF MADHYA PRADESH



Date: 6th January 2021

The Madhya Pradesh Government has launched 'LaunchPad Scheme'.

Key Points:

- The scheme is launched for boys and girls who have completed 18 years of age and aims to offer employment opportunities to them in order to make them self-reliant.
- The scheme is launched by the Women and Child Development Department of MP under Child Protection Scheme.
- Under this scheme, the state government will offer space to the young boys and girls to open coffee shops, stationery shops, photocopying or Xerox shops, computer typing and DTP institutions.
- Also, the Women and Child Development Department will offer financial support of Rs 6 lakhs to install the launchpad which will be operated by NGOs.

INFRASTRUCTURE

KOCHI-MANGALURU NATURAL GAS PIPELINE



Date: 6th January 2021

Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Kochi-Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline which is 450 km long.

Key Points:

- The pipeline is a one step forward to fulfil the GOI's aim of 'One Nation One Gas Grid'.
- The Kochi-Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline was constructed by GAIL India Ltd with the funds of Rs 3000 crore.
- The pipeline will be carrying natural gas from LNG regasification terminal at Kochi, Kerala to Mangaluru, Karnataka.
- The Kochi-Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline which is 450 km long is having the capacity to carry 12 MMSCMD (Million Metric Standard Cubic Meter of Natural gas per Day).
- It will be offering affordable and environment-friendly fuel in the form of Piped Natural gas (PNG) to the households and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) to the transportation sector.

ENERGY

NHPC, PDD AND JKPDC SIGNED MOU FOR MEGA HYDRO PROJECT IN J&K



Date: 6th January 2021

The National Hydro Power Corporation Ltd (NHPC), Power Development Department (PDD) and Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Corporation (JKPDC) have entered into MoU to set up a mega hydropower project in UT Jammu and Kashmir.

Key Points:

- The three entities will be implementing 850 MW Ratle Hydro Electric Power Project (HEP) & 930 MW Kirthai-II HEP and will be executing Sawalkote HEP (1856 MW), Uri-I (Stage-II) (240 MW), and Dulhasti (Stage-II) (258 MW).
- The projects will be built and executed with an investment of Rs 35000 crore.
- This mega hydropower project will improve the power sector of J&K, provide energy security and 24 hours power supply to the UT.
- These projects will provide additional 3498 MW power in the upcoming 3-4 years.

TRANSPORT

WORLD BANK, GOI AND WEST BENGAL GOVT. SIGNED LOAN AGREEMENT



Date: 6th January 2021

The World Bank, Government of India and Government of West Bengal have entered into a loan agreement to improve waterways in West Bengal.

Key Points:

- For this purpose, a loan agreement of \$105 million was signed.
- These funds will be utilized to upgrade inland water transport infrastructure, logistics and special development projects in Kolkata.
- The loan is having a maturity of 17 years including the grace period of 7 years.
- The up-gradation in Waterways will facilitate freight and passenger Movement in the Hooghly River.
- The funds will also be used to improve accessibility in the Kolkata Metropolitan Area which will improve logistics in the state.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

FOUNDATION STONE OF TIHAN-IIT HYDERABAD



Date: 6th January 2021

Union Minister of Education laid the foundation stone of ‘TiHAN-IIT Hyderabad’.

Key Points:

- The Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, has sanctioned Rs. 135 crores to IIT Hyderabad under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS) to set up a Technology Innovation Hub on Autonomous Navigation and Data Acquisition Systems (UAVs, RoVs, etc.).
- The Technology Innovation Hub on Autonomous Navigation Systems for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and Remotely Operated Vehicles at IIT Hyderabad, known as ‘TiHAN Foundation’ has been incorporated as a Section-8 company by the institute in June 2020.
- TiHAN Foundation is a multi-departmental initiative, including researchers from Electrical, Computer Science, Mechanical and Aerospace, Civil, Mathematics, and Design at IIT Hyderabad with collaboration and support from reputed institutions and industry.

POLICIES & SCHEMES

SAGARMALA SEAPLANE SERVICES (SSPS)

SEAPLANE TOURISM

Estimated Cost for Infrastructure: ₹15 cr (for each site)

Aircraft Configuration: 7-9 seater with twin engine

FEATURES OF THE WATER AERODROME Jetty, arrival/ departure areas including waiting area, security check points

Date: 6th January 2021

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways is initiating the ambitious Project of Sagarmala Seaplane Services (SSPS) with potential airline operators.

Key Points:

- Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways is initiating the process of commencing operations of the Seaplane services, on the select routes, under a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) framework through prospective airline operators.
- The project execution and implementation would be through Sagarmala Development Company Ltd (SDCL), which is under the administrative control of the Ministry.
- Several destinations are envisaged for seaplane operations.
- The proposed Origin-Destination pairs under Hub and Spoke model include various islands of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep, Guwahati Riverfront & Umranso Reservoir in Assam, Yamuna Riverfront / Delhi (as Hub) to Ayodhya etc.
- One such Seaplane Service is already in operation between Kevadia and Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad, which was inaugurated by the Prime Minister on 31st October 2020.

ENVIRONMENT

DRDO SIGNS MOU WITH MAHA-METRO FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ADVANCED BIODIGESTER



Date: 6th January 2021

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Maharashtra Metro Rail Corporation (MAHA –METRO), a joint venture company of the GoI and Government of Maharashtra, are working together to conserve water and protect the environment by installing DRDO's eco-friendly biodigester units in its facilities.

Key Points:

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was inked recently between MAHA-METRO and DRDO.
- Through MoU, DRDO will render technical support for the implementation of its advanced biodigester Mk-II technology for the treatment of human waste in the metro rail network.
- DRDO's biodigester is an indigenous, green and cost-effective technology.

- A customized version of this MK-II Biodigester, suitable for treating human waste generated from houseboats in Dal Lake was also successfully demonstrated by the DRDO to J&K Administration.

ECONOMY

TOYCATHON 2021 AND TOYCATHON PORTAL



Date: 7th January 2021

Union Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank and Union Women and Child Development Minister, Smriti Irani together launched the inter-ministerial initiative called ‘Toycathon 2021’ and ‘Toycathon Portal’.

Key Points:

- The ‘Toycathon 2021’ initiative is launched to make India self-reliant in the Toy manufacturing sector by promoting toy manufacturing industries.
- The initiative aims to make India a Global Toy Manufacturing Hub.
- The initiative ‘Toycathon 2021’ is based on 9 themes: (1) Indian Culture, History, Knowledge of India and Ethos (2) Learning, Education and Schooling (3) Social and human values (4) Occupations & specific fields (5) Rediscovering/redesigning traditional Indian toys (6) Divyang (7) Environment (8) Fitness and sport (9) Out of the box, creative and logical thinking
- The Toycathon platform will provide innovative ideas to develop toys based on the Indian value system which will lead to the overall development of children.

HEALTHCARE

CEPI CENTRALIZED NETWORK LAB AT DBT-THSTI FARIDABAD INAUGURATED



Date: 7th January 2020

One of the seven labs of the world called as the centralized network lab of Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) established was recently established at Translational Health Science & Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad.

Key Points:

- The CEPI centralized laboratory at DBT-THSTI Faridabad is first of its kind in India and one of the seven in the world.
- THSTI is the only laboratory of such kind in India and is also accredited by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL).
- CEPI is an innovative partnership between public, private, philanthropic, and civil organizations, launched at Davos in 2017, to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics.
- The Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology is implementing the Ind-CEPI mission titled 'India Centric Epidemic Preparedness through Rapid Vaccine Development: Supporting Indian Vaccine Development Aligned with the Global Initiative of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)'.

INTERNATIONAL

AGRICULTURE

UN'S FAO NAMED 4 ASIAN TEA CULTIVATION SITES AS GIAHS



Date: 2nd January 2021

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) has named 4 Asian Tea Cultivation Sites across three countries as the Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS).

Key Points:

- The name of the Asian Tea Cultivation Sites added under GIAHS: (1) Pu'er Traditional Tea Agrosystem (China) (2) Traditional Tree Grass system (Japan) (3) Fuzhou Jasmine tea site (China) (4) Traditional Hadong Tea Agrosystem (South Korea).
- The Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) was started by FAO in 2022 which identifies and conserves the importance and value of traditionally important agricultural systems all over the world.

POLITY & GOVERNANCE

MALALA YOUSAFZAI SCHOLARSHIP ACT



Date: 5th January 2021

The US Congress has passed the 'Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act'.

Key Points:

- The act is passed to expand the number of scholarships available to Pakistani women which will help them pursue higher education under a merit and needs-based programme.
- The bill was passed by the United States Senate by a voice vote on 1st January 2021.
- The bill mentions that the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to award at least 50% of scholarships under a Pakistan-based higher education scholarship programme to Pakistani women from 2020 to 2022.
- The scholarship will be granted across a range of academic disciplines by following existing eligibility criteria.

VIETNAM IMPORTS RICE FROM INDIA FOR THE FIRST TIME



Date: 6th January 2021

Vietnam has started buying rice from India for the first time in decades after its local prices jumped to their highest in nine years amid limited domestic supplies.

Key Points:

- The purchases underscore tightening supplies in Asia, which could lift rice prices in 2021.
- It could even force traditional buyers of rice from Thailand and Vietnam to switch to India which is the world's biggest exporter of the Rice.
- Dwindling supplies and continued Philippine buying have lifted Vietnamese rice export prices to a fresh nine-year high.
- The reducing supplies will increase concerns about food insecurity with sub-Saharan Africa among the areas where import demand has been increasing partly due to population growth.



PEOPLE

NATIONAL

AWARDS & HONOURS

VINOD KUMAR YADAV



Date: 1st January 2021

Why in news: Awarded the “Eminent Engineer Award for the Year 2020’

Key Points:

- The chairman & CEO of Railway Board, Vinod Kumar Yadav has been conferred with the prestigious “Eminent Engineer Award for the Year 2020’.
- This award is given by the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) for his outstanding contribution towards modernization and reforms over Indian Railways.
- Every year the Institution of Engineering and Technology, Delhi Local Network celebrates Engineers’ Day on the 15th of September to commemorate the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Sir M Visvesvaraya.
- On this occasion, besides technical activities, the Institution also presents the Eminent Engineer’s Award to distinguished Engineering personalities for their outstanding services in the field of Engineering and technology.

HEMANT KUMAR PANDEY



Date: 3rd January 2021

Why in the news: wins DRDO's Scientist of the Year award.

Key Points:

- Senior scientist Hemant Kumar Pandey has been honoured with DRDO's "Scientist of the Year Award" for his contribution in developing several herbal medicines, including the popular drug Lukoskin meant for the treatment of leucoderma.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had recently facilitated the scientist at an event here with the prestigious award that comprises a certificate and cash prize of Rs 2 lakh.
- The scientist has developed six herbal drugs so far, Lukoskin used for treating leucoderma or Vitiligo, a condition in which white patches develop on the skin, has been most widely appreciated and found huge acceptance in the market.

OBITUARY

COLONEL NARENDRA KUMAR



Date: 4th January 2021

Ace mountaineer Colonel Narendra 'Bull' Kumar, who helped India secure the Siachen Glacier, passed away.

Key Points:

- Col Kumar, carried out multiple expeditions in the Siachen glacier area in the late 1970s and early 1980s.
- He was responsible for the success of Operation Meghdoot in 1984.
- He was the first Indian to climb Mount Nanda Devi. He climbed Mount Everest in 1965, Mont Blanc(highest peak in the Alps), and later Mount Kanchenjunga.
- He earned the nickname 'Bull' for relentlessly charging into everything he did.
- He has been awarded the Kirti Chakra, Padma Shri, Arjun Award and the McGregor medal among others.

AWARDS & HONOURS

PABLO CESAR



Date: 2nd January 2021

Why in news: Selected to head the 51st International Film Festival of India.

Key Points:

- Pablo Cesa, a filmmaker from Argentina and is selected to head the 51st International Film Festival of India by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- The ministry also selected other jury members like Prasanna Vithanage (Sri Lanka), Abu Bakr Shawky (Austria), Priyadarshan (India) and Rubaiyat Hossain (Bangladesh).
- Argentine filmmaker Pablo Cesar has contributed to the African cinema by making the critically acclaimed films, Equinox, the Garden of the Roses, Los dioses de agua and Aphrodite, the Garden of the Perfumes.
- The 51st International Film Festival of India is scheduled to be organised by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting from January 16 in Goa.

AWARDS & HONOURS

MALALA YOUSAFZAI



Date: 4th January 2021

Why in news: The United States recently passed an Act in her name.

Key Points:

- The United States recently passed the Malala Yousafzai Act in the name of Pakistani nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai.
- Malala is a Pakistani activist for female education. She is also the Youngest Nobel Prize Laureate. She fought against the Taliban for women education. The Taliban had banned girls from attending schools.
- On July 12, 2013, Malala spoke at the United Nations to call for worldwide access to education. This was on her 16th birthday coincidentally. The United Nations had dubbed the event as Malala Day.



disha
Nurturing Ambitions

The logo for 'disha' features the word 'disha' in a large, lowercase, light blue font. Above the letter 'i' is a stylized orange arrow pointing upwards and to the right. Below the word 'disha' is the tagline 'Nurturing Ambitions' in a smaller, light blue font.

ISSUES

NATIONAL

ENVIRONMENT

2020 WAS 8TH WARMEST YEAR SINCE 1901



Date: 4th January 2021

Key Highlights:

A statement on Climate of India during 2020 was recently released by India Meteorological Department (IMD). According to it, the year 2020 was the eighth warmest since 1901 but it was substantially lower than the highest warming observed in 2016.

The past two decades – 2001-2010 and 2011-2020 – were also the warmest decades on record with anomalies of 0.23 degree Celsius and 0.34 degree Celsius respectively, indicating the overall rising temperature.

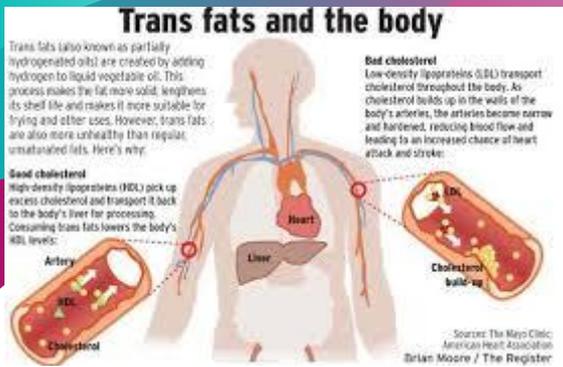
During 2020, annual mean land surface air temperature averaged 0.29 degree Celsius above normal (based on the data of 1981-2010).

The five warmest years on record in order were: 2016, 2009, 2017, 2010, and 2015.

The 2020 Northeast monsoon season (October-December) rainfall over the country as a whole was normal (101% of LPA).

HEALTHCARE

FSSAI SLASHES LIMIT FOR TRANS FAT LEVELS IN FOODS



Date: 3rd January 2021

Key Highlights:

- FSSAI has capped the amount of trans fatty acids (TFA) in oils and fats to 3% for 2021 and 2% by 2022 from the current permissible limit of 5% through an amendment to the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restriction on Sales) Regulations.
- The revised regulation applies to edible refined oils, vanaspati (partially hydrogenated oils), margarine, bakery shortenings and other mediums of cooking such as vegetable fat spreads and mixed fat spreads.
- Trans fats, or trans-fatty acids, are a form of unsaturated fat. They come in both natural and artificial forms.
- Trans fats are associated with increased risk of heart attacks and death from coronary heart disease.
- As per the World Health Organisation (WHO), approximately 5.4 lakh deaths take place each year globally because of intake of industrially produced trans fatty acids. The WHO has also called for global elimination of trans fats by 2023.

ENVIRONMENT

COMMUNITY FISHING PROHIBITED IN DEEPOR BEEL



Date: 5th January 2020

Key Highlights:

- The Kamrup (Metropolitan) district administration has prohibited community fishing in Deepor Beel.
- The order was necessary to prevent fishing, excavation and construction in and around the wetland that has been shrinking over the years.
- Deepor Beel is a wetland on the south-western edge of Guwahati. It is Assam's only Ramsar site.
- It was designated a Ramsar site in 2002 for sustaining a range of aquatic life forms besides 219 species of birds.

INTERNATIONAL

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

GIBRALTAR (UK-SPAIN DEAL)



Date: 5th January 2021

Key Highlights:

- Hours before the Brexit transition period ended on New Year's Eve, Spain announced it had struck a deal with the UK to maintain free movement to and from Gibraltar.
- Gibraltar is a small portion of land on the southern tip of the Iberian peninsula that Britain controls but Spain claims as its own.
- Officially remaining a British Overseas Territory, Gibraltar will now be part of the Schengen zone and follow EU rules, thus ensuring that a hard border does not separate it from the rest of Europe
- The result of the 2016 Brexit referendum gave rise to the possibility of a hard border coming up between Gibraltar and the rest of Europe, despite 96 per cent of the vote in Gibraltar being in favour of remaining in the EU.

- Gibraltarians mainly voted ‘Remain’ because the territory’s economy depends on an open border with Spain, which sends over 15,000 workers and 200 trucks there daily.
- However, free movement will now continue thanks to the Spain-UK deal, as Gibraltar is being placed in the Schengen area, with Spain acting as a guarantor.

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

US CAPITOL HILL VIOLENCE



Date: 7th January 2021

Key Highlights:

- An armed and angry mob of US President Donald Trump’s supporters stormed Capitol Hill and clashed with police just as Congress convened to validate Joe Biden’s presidential win.
- The U.S., said to be the “greatest nation on earth,” became hostage to an ugly attempted coup led by a mob, with slogans of support for outgoing President Trump. The event is an “unprecedented assault” on the very soul of democracy.
- The mob was eventually ejected, and lawmakers went on to reconvene and formally certify the election results.
- However, major social media platforms locked Trump’s accounts for violating their civic integrity policies.
- This includes inciting violence with months of contentious posts that made baseless allegations about electoral fraud.



IDIEAS

NATIONAL

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

GLOBAL PRAVASI RISHTA PORTAL AND MOBILE APP



Date: 1st January 2021

Key Features:

- The Ministry of External Affairs, GOI launched the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal and mobile app.
- This move by GOI will offer three-way communication between the Indian Missions, External Affairs Ministry and Indian diaspora.
- The portal and app were launched by Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan.
- With the help of portal and app, Indian diaspora members will get registration details. The portal and app will include PIOs (Person of Indian Origin), NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) and OCIs (Overseas Citizens of India).
- It will also help to give the benefits of various government schemes, help during crises and pandemics to the 3.12 crore Indians across the world.

HEALTHCARE

SWASTH VAYU



Date: 5th January 2020

Key Features:

- The expert committee constituted by Director General of Health Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, has concluded that SwasthVayu may be used on Covid-19 patients who require oxygen supplementation up to 35%.
- It has been indigenously designed and developed by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) – National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL).
- Its objective is to address the shortages of ventilators in the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- It is the non-invasive bi-level positive airway pressure ventilator.
- It is a microcontroller based precise closed-loop adaptive control system with a built-in biocompatible “3D printed manifold and coupler” with HEPA filter (Highly Efficient Particulate Air Filter).

BANKING & FINANCE

LEGAL ENTITY IDENTIFIER FOR NEFT, RTGS TRANSACTION ABOVE RS 50 CRORE



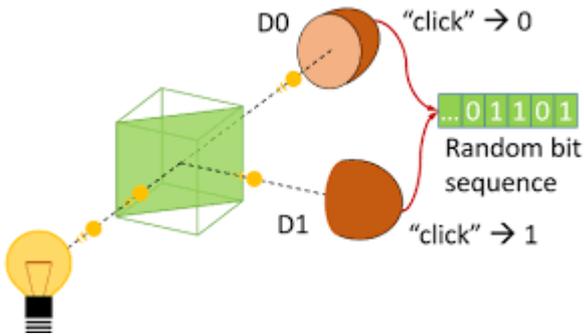
Date: 7th January 2021

Key Features:

- The Reserve Bank of India has introduced a Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) for the payment transactions above the value of Rs 50 crore in Centralised Payment Systems like RTGS and NEFT.
- It will be effective from 1st April 2021.
- The LEI is a 20 digit number which will be used to uniquely identify parties to financial transactions worldwide.
- This will lead to improving the quality and accuracy of financial data systems for better risk management post the global financial crisis.
- The LEI can be obtained from Legal Entity Identifier India Ltd which is the wholly-owned subsidiary of Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (CCIL).

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

QUANTUM RANDOM NUMBER GENERATOR (QRNG)



Date: 1st January 2021

Key Features:

- The DRDO's Young Scientist Laboratory for Quantum Technologies (DYSL-QT) has developed the Quantum Random Number Generator (QRNG).
- The QRNG has the ability to detect random quantum events and convert those into a stream of binary digits.
- With this development, India has entered in the list of those countries which makes use of technology to achieve the generation of random numbers by using Quantum Phenomenon.
- Random Numbers has the applications in Quantum communications, cryptography areas like key generation, key wrapping, authentication, security etc.

ENVIRONMENT

TIDE–RAINFALL FLOOD QUOTIENT



Date: 4th January 2020

Key Features:

- To understand if a coastal city is more prone to floods caused by tidal events or extreme rainfall, a team from the IIT Bombay devised a new measure called the Tide–Rainfall Flood Quotient.
- Using the past rainfall data, tidal data, and topography of the region this framework can be applied to pinpoint the major factor at play.
- The team selected three geographically diverse flood-prone coastal regions – Mithi Catchment in Mumbai, Jagatsinghpur District in Odisha, and Greater Chennai Corporation in Tamil Nadu to test their new metric.
- The new method helped classify these regions into ‘storm-tide dominated’ or ‘pluvial (rainfall) dominated’ regions.
- The metric can help disaster management experts in framing better flood risk management systems directed towards long term planning.



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Nurturing Ambitions