

# Week 2 Current Affairs Update

8<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## EVENTS

### NATIONAL

#### AGRICULTURE

##### KRISHI SANJEEVANI VANS – KARNATAKA



**Date:** 8th January 2021

The Government of Karnataka has flagged off 40 Krishi Sanjeevani Vans to test the quality of soil, water for farming purposes.

#### Key Points:

- The Krishi Sanjeevani Vans will also suggest remedies for pest control in order to improve the productivity of farms.
- These vans are launched by the Agriculture Department of the state in partnership with central assistance under National Krishi Vikas Yojana.
- Upon analyzing the quality of soil, the Agri department will suggest a solution to the farmer community.

#### BANKING & FINANCE

##### RBI ANNOUNCED OPERATIONALIZATION OF PIDF SCHEME



**Date:** 8th January 2021

The Reserve Bank of India has announced the operationalization of Payments Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) Scheme.

**Key Points:**

- The scheme is operationalized with an initial corpus of Rs 345 crores for three years commenced from 1st Jan 2021. Among the corpus of Rs 345 crore, Rs 250 crore are contributed by the RBI and Rs 95 crore by the major authorized card networks in India.
- The functioning of PIDF Scheme will be managed by RBI's Deputy Governor, BP Kanungo.
- The main aim of this PIDF scheme is to increase the number of payment acceptance devices in Tier 3 to Tier 6 centres of India.
- For this purpose, it is decided to increase 30 lakh touchpoints which include 10 lakh physical and 20 lakh digital payment acceptance devices every year.
- The PIDF covers multiple payment acceptance devices and infrastructure supporting card payments like PoS, mPoS, GPRS, PSTN and QR code-based payments.

**REPORTS & INDICES**

**LONGITUDINAL AGEING STUDY OF INDIA (LASI) WAVE-1, INDIA REPORT**



**Date:** 9th January 2021

Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI) Wave-1, India Report was recently released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

### Key Points:

- LASI will provide an evidence base for national and state level programmes and policies for elderly population.
- A unique feature of LASI is the coverage of comprehensive biomarkers.
- No other survey in India collects detailed data on health and biomarkers together with information on family and social network, income, assets, and consumption.
- LASI is a full-scale national survey of scientific investigation of the health, economic, and social determinants and consequences of population ageing in India.
- The LASI, Wave 1 covered a baseline sample of 72,250 individuals aged 45 and above and their spouses including 31,464 elderly persons aged 60 and above and 6,749 oldest-old persons aged 75 and above from all States and Union Territories (UTs) of India (excluding Sikkim).
- It is India's first and the world's largest ever survey that provides a longitudinal database for designing policies and programmes for the older population.

## ECONOMY

### NEW INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME FOR JAMMU & KASHMIR (J&K IDS, 2021)



**Date:** 9th January 2021

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved a scheme for the Industrial Development of Jammu & Kashmir with a total outlay of Rs. 28,400 crore upto the year 2037.

### Key Points:

- It is a Central Sector Scheme for the development of Industries in the UT of J & K.
- Its objective is to generate employment which directly leads to the socio economic development of the area.

- Scheme is made attractive for both smaller and larger units.
- Smaller units with an investment in plant & machinery upto Rs. 50 crore will get a capital incentive upto Rs. 7.5 crore and get capital interest subvention at the rate of 6% for maximum 7 years.
- The scheme aims to take industrial development to the block level in UT of J&K, which is the first time in any Industrial Incentive Scheme of the Government of India.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### REWARI-MADAR SECTION OF WDFC



**Date:** 9th January 2021

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated 306 km long Rewari-Madar section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC).

#### Key Points:

- Along with this, PM Modi also flagged off the world's first 1.5 km long double-stack long haul container train between New Ateli in Haryana and New Kishangarh in Rajasthan.
- Rewari-Madar section of WDFC is situated in Haryana and Rajasthan. It consists of 9 dedicated freight corridors stations among which 6 are crossing stations and 3 of them are junction stations.
- The six crossing stations are New Dabla, New Bhagega, New Sri Madhopur, New Pachar Malikpur, New Sakun and New Kishangarh and three junction stations are at New Rewari, New Ateli and New Phulera.
- This Rewari-Madar section of WDFC will prove beneficial to many industries of both the states of Haryana and Rajasthan and will also enable better usage of the container depot of the CONCOR at Kathuwas.

### INDIA AND NDB SIGNED LOAN AGREEMENT TO UPGRADE HIGHWAYS IN ANDHRA PRADESH





**Date:** 9th January 2021

The GOI, Government of Andhra Pradesh has entered into a loan agreement with New Development Bank (NDB) to upgrade highway networks in Andhra Pradesh.

**Key Points:**

- The loan agreement is basically signed to fund two major projects of the state.
- The total loan agreement signed between the entities is of USD 646 million. Each project costs USD 323 million.
- The main motto of the projects is to improve transport efficiency, road safety, mobility and offer connectivity to socioeconomic centres.
- Project (1) Andhra Pradesh Roads and Bridge Reconstruction: This project includes widening of 1600 km of highways of the state. This will offer a double lane structure to the highways. The project also includes reconstructing of dilapidated bridges.
- Project (2) Andhra Pradesh Mandal Connectivity and Rural Connectivity Improvement: This project includes widening 1,400 km of district roads to have the double lane facility and to reconstruct dilapidated bridges of district roads.

## ART & CULTURE

### G KISHAN REDDY COMMITTEE



**Date:** 11th January 2021

The Central Government has decided to form a committee to protect the language, culture and land of Ladakh and ensure citizen's participation in the Union Territory's development.

## Key Points:

- The Committee will be headed by the Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy.
- It will include elected representatives from Ladakh, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, central government, and the Ladakh administration.
- The decision to form the Committee was taken after meeting a 10-member delegation from Ladakh who expressed their views about the need to protect Ladakh's unique cultural identity.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

### NCAVES INDIA FORUM 2021 ORGANISED



**Date:** 11th January 2021

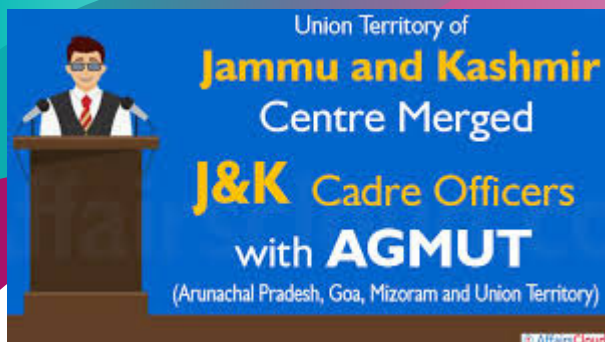
Natural Capital Accounting and Valuation of the Ecosystem Services (NCAVES) India Forum-2021 is being organised.

## Key Points:

- The NCAVES Project is funded by the EU. And jointly implemented by the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD).
- In India, it is being implemented by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation in close collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) and the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC).
- India is one of the five countries taking part in this project.
- The other countries being Brazil, China, South Africa and Mexico.

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### CENTRE MERGES J&K CADRE OFFICERS WITH AGMUT



**Date:** 12th January 2021

Recently, the Centre has merged J&K cadre for all India Services – IAS, IPS and IFoS officers – with that of Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT), also called the Union Territory cadre, through an ordinance.

### Key Points:

- The President has promulgated an ordinance to amend J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019 and make IAS, IPS and Indian Forest Service officers of existing cadre of J&K a part of AGMUT cadre.
- The move will allow officers posted in these states and UTs to work in J&K and vice versa.
- It will also help tackle the shortage of All India Services Officers in J&K owing to an earlier rule fixing the ratio of direct recruits in Civil Services to promotees from J&K State Civil Services (Kashmir Administrative Service) at 50:50 instead of 67:33 formula followed in other states.

## ENERGY

### IREDA SIGNED MOU WITH NHPC LIMITED



**Date:** 10th January 2021

The Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA) signed MoU with NHPC Limited (National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited).

### Key Points:

- The purpose of the MoU is to provide technical expertise for upcoming renewable energy projects.

- Under this MoU, IREDA will undertake Techno-Financial due diligence of Renewable energy and Energy Efficiency & conservation projects for NHPC.
- IREDA will develop an action plan to achieve the goal for various renewable energy projects of NHPC Ltd for the next 5 years.

## **BAKING & FINANCE**

### **ACADEMIC ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR COLLEGE OF SUPERVISORS (COS) SET UP**



**Date:** 12th January 2021

The RBI has set up an academic advisory council with former deputy governor N S Vishwanathan as the chairperson to advise the full-time director of the central bank's College of Supervisors (CoS).

#### **Key Points:**

- The College of Supervisors (CoS) was set up by RBI as part of the measures to further strengthen Supervision over regulated entities.
- Its objective is to augment and reinforce supervisory skills among its regulatory and supervisory staff both at entry level and on a continuous basis.
- While the CoS was functioning in a limited way in virtual mode since May 2020, it is now being fully operationalised.
- This will further contribute to effective oversight of the regulated entities by augmenting and ensuring a consistent quality of supervisory resources pool.
- Rabi Narayan Mishra, former Executive Director, RBI has been appointed as the Director of CoS.

## **ENVIRONMENT**

### **MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION OF INDIAN ZOOS (MEE-ZOO) FRAMEWORK**





**Date:** 12th January 2021

The Union Environment Minister launched the Management Effectiveness Evaluation of Indian Zoos (MEE-ZOO) framework.

**Key Points:**

- The framework proposes guidelines, criteria and indicators for evaluation of zoos of India in a manner which is discrete, holistic and independent.
- The assessment criteria and indicators look beyond the traditional concepts and include issues of animal welfare, husbandry and sustainability of resources and finance.
- The MEE-ZOO exercise is moving towards developing the highest standards in Zoos across India.
- It will help in adhering to core values of accountability, transparency, innovation, use of technology, collaboration and integrity to achieve the mandate of conservation of endangered species.

## **BANKING & FINANCE**

### **MUTUAL FUNDS (MF) RISK-O-METER BECOMES EFFECTIVE**



**Date:** 13th January 2021

SEBI has made it mandatory for mutual fund houses to characterise the risk level of their schemes on a six-stage scale from “Low” to “Very High”.

## Key Points:

- All mutual funds shall, beginning January 1, assign a risk level to their schemes at the time of launch, based on the scheme's characteristics.
- The risk-o-meter must be evaluated on a monthly basis.
- Fund houses are required to disclose the risk-o-meter risk level along with the portfolio disclosure for all their schemes on their own websites as well as the website of the Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) within 10 days of the close of each month.
- Any change in the risk-o-meter reading with regard to a scheme shall be communicated to the unit-holders of that scheme.
- The move will help investors to make a more informed investment decision.

## DEFENCE

### ‘SAGAR ANVESHKA’- A COASTAL RESEARCH VESSEL



**Date:** 11th January 2021

Union Minister Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the Coastal Research Vessel (CRV) named as 'Sagar Anveshika' at Chennai Port.

## Key Points:

- The CRV 'Sagar Anveshika' will be used to perform environment indexing and bathymetric in coastal and offshore waters.
- The National Institute of Ocean Technology will also make use of this CRV to conduct various research projects.
- The CRV 'Sagar Anveshika' is built by Titagarh Wagons, Kolkata, West Bengal.
- It is built under the Indian Register of Shipping (IR Class).
- The 'Sagar Anveshika' is a dynamic positioning capable vessel and will allow research in various oceanographic missions.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

## BINDU SAGAR LAKE CLEANING PROJECT



**Date:** 12th January 2021

The Government of Odisha launched the Bindu Sagar Lake Cleaning Project.

### Key Points:

- The state government launched this project jointly with the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, GOI.
- The Bindu Sagar Lake Cleaning Project is basically a CSR initiative of Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) in partnership with Institute of Chemical Technology, Mumbai and Indian Oil Campus, Bhubaneswar.
- For this project, IOCL will be spending Rs 70 lakh to clean the Bindu Sagar lake and thus to maintain the heritage site of the state.
- The patent world-class innovative technology of ICT will be used to conduct cleaning activities at the lake.

## ENVIRONMENT

### KHADI PRAKRITIK PAINT



**Date:** 12th January 2021

Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and MSME, Nitin Gadkari launched the 'Khadi Prakritik Paint'.

### Key Points:

- The 'Khadi Prakritik Paint' is an innovative new paint which is eco-friendly and non-toxic. It is a first-of-its-kind paint having antifungal, antibacterial properties.
- It is developed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and is certified by the Bureau of Indian Standards.

- It was tested at the National Test House of Mumbai, Shri Ram Institute for Industrial Research of New Delhi and National Test House of Ghaziabad.
- The KVIC developed this innovative paint with the main ingredient of cow dung.
- The 'Khadi Prakritik Paint' comes in two forms namely plastic emulsion paint and distemper paint and it is free from heavy metals like mercury, lead, arsenic, chromium, cadmium.
- This 'Khadi Prakritik Paint' will also help to increase farmers' income because it makes use of cow dung as a raw material, which will lead to an additional source of income for Gaushalas and farmers.

## POLITY & GOVERNANCE

### SINGLE WINDOW CLEARANCE SYSTEM FOR COAL SECTOR



**Date:** 12th January 2021

Union Minister for Home Affairs, Amit Shah launched the 'Single Window Clearance System' for coal mines.

#### Key Points:

- This online platform will provide ease in the process of clearance for the smooth operation of coal mines and in the associated sector. It will lead to having ease of doing business in the coal sector.
- This single clearance system will reduce the time required for various approvals.
- Currently, a company has to receive 19 major approvals to start a coal mine. But because of 'Single Window Clearance System', the company will be able to get all required clearances from a single portal; that is all 19 major approvals will be under a single platform.

## DEFENCE

### 2ND EDITION OF 'SEA VIGIL-21'





**Date:** 13th January 2021

The 2nd edition of 'Sea Vigil-21' commenced from 12th Jan 2021.

### Key Points:

- It is the biennial pan-India coastal defence exercise which is conducted to assess India's preparedness for coastal defence and maritime security.
- The 'Sea Vigil-21' is also a build-up towards TROPEX (Theatre-level Readiness Operational Exercise). The TROPEX is conducted every two years by the Indian Navy.
- Indian Navy, Customs, Coast Guard, and other maritime agencies have participated in 'Sea Vigil-21'.

## AWARDS & HONOURS

### 30TH NATIONAL ENERGY CONSERVATION AWARDS (NECA)



**Date:** 13th January 2021

The Ministry of Power, in association with the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), organised the 30th National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) function.

### Key Points:

- During the event, the Standards and Labelling Programme for Air Compressors and Ultra High Definition (UHD) TV was launched on a voluntary basis.
- The energy consumption standards will be effective from 01st January 2021.
- This initiative is expected to save around 8.41 Billion Units of electricity for Air Compressors and 9.75 Billion Units for UHD TV till 2030.

- SAATHEE (State-wise Actions on Annual Targets and Headways on Energy Efficiency) – A portal for State Designated Agency for state level activities was also launched.
- BEE has developed this portal. It will facilitate real-time monitoring of the progress of implementation of various Energy Conservation endeavours at State level.

## AWARDS & HONOURS

### KAYAKALP AWARDS BY MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE



**Date:** 14th January 2021

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare annually presents Kayakalp Awards.

#### Key Points:

- The awards are presented to health facilities having the highest standards of sanitation and hygiene.
- District Hospital Reasi of J&K has won First prize under the Kayakalp scheme.
- Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) has won Second Prize under the scheme.
- AIIMS Bhubaneswar was awarded best central government hospital under Category B of Kayakalp Awards.
- Rairangpur Sub Divisional Hospital of Mayurbhanj district was awarded best Sub-divisional hospital community health centre category of Kayakalp Awards.

## DEFENCE

### PROCUREMENT OF LCA TEJAS



**Date:** 14th January 2021

The Union Cabinet has approved procurement of 73 LCA Tejas Mk-1A fighter aircrafts and 10 LCA Tejas Mk-1 Trainer aircrafts from state-run Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), in the biggest contract awarded to India's homegrown military aviation industry.

**Key Points:**

- Light Combat Aircraft Mk-1A variant is an indigenously designed, developed and manufactured state-of-the-art modern 4+ generation fighter aircraft.
- This aircraft is equipped with critical operational capabilities of Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) Radar, Beyond Visual Range (BVR) Missile, Electronic Warfare (EW) Suite and Air to Air Refuelling (AAR) would be a potent platform to meet the operational requirements of Indian Air Force, IAF.
- The Cabinet has also approved infrastructure development by IAF under the project to enable them handle servicing at their base depot so that the turnaround time would get reduced for mission critical systems and would lead to increased availability of aircraft.

## SPORTS

### KHELO INDIA ZANSKAR WINTER SPORT & YOUTH FESTIVAL 2021



**Date:** 15th January 2021

Zanskar Winter Sports & Youth Festival 2021 is being organized from 18th to 30th January 2021.

**Key Points:**

- The event is organised by the Dept. of Sports & Youth Services under the Khelo India banner in collaboration with the Ladakh Tourism Department.
- The Zanskar Range is a mountain range in the union territory of Ladakh that separates Zaskar from Ladakh.
- Geologically, the Zanskar Range is part of the Tethys Himalaya, an approximately 100-km-wide synclinatorium (synclinal form that includes a series of smaller folds) formed by strongly folded and weakly metamorphosed sedimentary series.
- The average height of the Zanskar Range is about 6,000 m. Its eastern part is known as Rupshu.

## DEFENCE

### INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUSLY DEVELOPED 9MM MACHINE PISTOL



**Date:** 15th January 2021

India's first indigenous 9mm Machine Pistol has been jointly developed by DRDO and Indian Army.

#### Key Points:

- The Machine Pistol fires the in-service 9mm ammunition and sports an upper receiver made from aircraft grade Aluminium and lower receiver from carbon fibre.
- 3D Printing process has been used in designing and prototyping of various parts including trigger components made by metal 3D printing.
- The weapon is named "Asmi" meaning "Pride", "Self-Respect" & "Hard Work".
- This small step will pave way for self reliance and it is expected that the Services and Paramilitary Forces (PMFs) will induct this expeditiously.

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### COLLABCAD SOFTWARE—BY NIC, CBSE AND ATAL INNOVATION MISSION



**Date:** 15th January 2021

The National Informatics Centre (NIC) in partnership with Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) of NITI Aayog launched CollabCAD Software.



### Key Points:

- The CollabCAD Software is based on engineering solutions which will be used by Class X and XII students and their faculty members to perform Engineering Graphics.
- With the help of this software, students from Atal tinkering labs will be able to develop 3D designs.
- The software is compatible with Linux and OS platforms and can work in standalone and client servant mode.

## INTERNATIONAL

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

#### MOU BETWEEN INDIA & JAPAN FOR SPECIFIED SKILLED WORKERS



**Date:** 8th January 2021

The Union Cabinet has given the approval for signing MoU between India and Japan for Specified Skilled Workforce.

### Key Points:

- The MoU will lead to an institutional mechanism which will develop a partnership between India and Japan on sending skilled Indian workforce who have working skills and Japanese language skill to Japan in order to work in fourteen specified sectors.
- These workers will be granted a new status of residence of 'Specified Skilled Worker' by Japan's Government.
- The workers will be selected based on skills in sectors like Nursing care, Building cleaning, material processing industry, industrial machinery manufacturing, automobile maintenance, aviation, lodging, electric and electronic information related industry, construction, shipbuilding, fisheries, food and beverage manufacturing industry and foodservice industry.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

### INDIA TO CHAIR THREE IMPORTANT UNSC COMMITTEES



**Date:** 10th January 2021

TS Tirumurti, who is the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations made an announcement that India will chair three vital committees of UN Security.

#### Key Points:

- The three UNSC committees to be chaired by India are: (1) Taliban sanctions committee (2) Counter-terrorism committee (3) Libya sanctions committee.
- Taliban sanctions committee: It is also called the 1988 sanctions committee as it was formed through resolution number 1988 in 2011 by splitting the 1267 sanctions regime on al-Qaeda – amid growing concern worldwide at alarming levels of violence in Afghanistan that has been blamed on the Taliban. It will work with a commitment to peace, security, development and progress of Afghanistan.
- Counter-terrorism committee: It will be chaired by India in 2022. Under this committee, India will work to combat terrorism, especially cross-border terrorism.
- Libya sanctions committee: It is also known as 1970 sanctions committee, which implements a sanctions regime, including a two-way arms embargo, assets freeze, travel ban and measures to prevent illicit export of petroleum. The committee will focus on maintaining peace in Libya.

### VIRTUAL INTERNATIONAL AKHAND CONFERENCE ‘EDUCON 2020’



**Date:** 10th January 2021

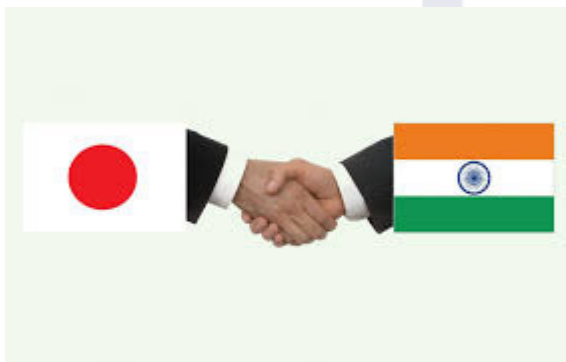
Union Education Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank inaugurated the Virtual International Akhand Conference ‘EDUCON 2020’.

### **Key Points:**

- The conference was organised by the Central University of Punjab, Bathinda (CUPB) in partnership with the Global Educational Research Association (GERA).
- The theme for the conference: 'Envisioning Education for Transforming Youth to Restore Global Peace'.
- In this conference, scholars from the United Kingdom, Canada, Thailand, USA, Australia, Bhutan and India discussed the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in higher education which will promote the equitable quality education in India.
- They also held discussions about NEP-2020, possibilities for higher education by 2050 and developing technologies for STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) Education.

## **HEALTHCARE**

### **JAPAN COMMITS FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR COVID RELIEF EFFORTS TO INDIA**



**Date:** 11th January 2021

Japan has committed the Official Development Assistance loan to India for COVID relief efforts.

### **Key Points:**

- Japan has committed to offering the loan of 30 billion Japanese Yen which is Rs 2113 crore to India.
- This loan amount will help India to provide social assistance to the poor and vulnerable households who are severely affected by COVID-19.
- This financial assistance support from Japan to India will lead to strengthening the Strategic and Global Partnership between both nations.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### INDIA-FRANCE STRATEGIC DIALOGUE 2021



**Date:** 11th January 2021

The annual Strategic Dialogue between India and France was held in New Delhi.

#### Key Points:

- India was represented by Ajit Doval, National Security Advisor and France were represented by Emmanuel Bonne, Diplomatic Advisor to the French President.
- Both the nations held discussions about counter-terrorism, cybersecurity, defence cooperation, maritime security and regional and global issues.
- They also discussed the Indo-Pacific region and assured to strengthen their strategic partnership.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

### 7TH TPR OF INDIA HELD AT WTO



**Date:** 12th January 2021

The 7th Trade Policy Review of India was recently conducted at the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Geneva.

#### Key Points:

- The TPR is a mechanism which comes under WTO's monitoring function. Under this mechanism, WTO examines trade and policies of member countries.
- At the 7th TRP of India, the Indian delegation was represented by Anup Wadhawan, Commerce Secretary.



- During this session of TPR, WTO released the report which mentioned that India's economic growth is at 7.4% from 2015-20.
- The report also highlighted that various measures like simplification of procedures, customs clearance for import and exports have led to facilitate trade activities in India.
- India was also acknowledged for the introduction of Goods and Service Tax and Ease of Doing Business ability.

## REPORTS & INDICES

### HENLEY PASSPORT INDEX 2021



**Date:** 13th January 2021

The Henley Passport Index 2021 was released by Henley and Partners.

#### Key Points:

- The index was prepared on the basis of the International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- As per the report, India is ranked at 85th position among 110 nations with a visa-free score of 58.
- The list is topped by Japan.
- The second and third position is marked by Singapore and Germany respectively.
- The last rank of 110th is marked by Afghanistan.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### 13TH INDIA-VIETNAM DEFENCE SECURITY DIALOGUE



**Date:** 13th January 2021

The 13th edition of India-Vietnam Defence Security Dialogue was held virtually.

**Key Points:**

- The Indian delegation was led by Defence Secretary Dr. Ajay Kumar and Vietnamese delegation was led by Sr. Lt Gen Nguyen Chi Vinh, Deputy Defence Minister, Socialist Republic of Vietnam.
- Both the dignitaries acknowledged the support received from each other's nation during this pandemic state of COVID-19.
- They expressed satisfaction in the defence cooperation between both nations.
- They also assured to strengthen the cooperation between armed forces by following the framework of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- They also assured to boost cooperation in the defence industry and technology sector.

## CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

### 4TH ONE PLANET SUMMIT



**Date:** 13th January 2021

The 4th edition of One Planet Summit was organised by the Government of France in partnership with the United Nations and the World Bank..

**Key Points:**

- The theme for 4th One Planet Summit: 'Let's act together for nature!'
- The summit was inaugurated by Secretary-General of UN, Antonio Guterres, President of France, Emmanuel Macron and President of the World Bank, David Malpass.
- The main aim of the summit was to have a focus on biodiversity preservation.
- The participants held discussions on: (a) Protection of marine and terrestrial ecosystems (b) Promoting agroecology (c) Increasing funds to protect biodiversity (d) Identify linkage between deforestation and health of humans and animals.
- They launched the initiative called 'PREZODE' (PREventing Zoonotic Disease Emergence) to prevent the emergence of zoonotic diseases.

## HEALTHCARE

### BHARAT BIOTECH SIGNED PACT WITH PRECISA MEDICAMENTOS



**Date:** 13th January 2021

Bharat Biotech has entered into an agreement with Precisa Medicamentos.

#### Key Points:

- They have signed a pact to supply its COVID-19 vaccine, called 'Covaxin' to Brazil.
- For this purpose, the expert team of Precisa Medicamentos visited the Bharat Biotech facility in Genome Valley in order to discuss the export of Covaxin.
- Bharat Biotech has developed 'Covaxin' in partnership with Indian Council of Medical Research and the National Institute of Virology.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### UNION CABINET APPROVED MOU BETWEEN INDIA AND UAE



**Date:** 14th January 2021

The Union Cabinet has approved the MoU between India and UAE for scientific and technical cooperation.

#### Key Points:

- The MoU was approved between India's Ministry of Earth Sciences and UAE's National Centre of Meteorology.
- Because of this MoU, both the countries will be able to share data, knowledge and operational products for seismological, meteorological, and oceanic services such as satellite, radar, seismic, tide gauges, and meteorological stations.

- MoU will also allow the exchange of visits by experts and scientists between India and UAE to carry out research activities.
- Both the countries will also conduct workshops, training, seminars and conferences in the field of meteorology.
- Both India and UAE will develop expert capacities of the Tsunami Model researchers in order to have high reliability and fast forecasting of Tsunamis which propagate through Arabian and Oman Sea.



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Nurturing Ambitions



## PEOPLE

### NATIONAL

#### AWARDS & HONOURS

##### DR SHAILLA CANNIE



**Date:** 8th January 2021

**Why in news:** Selected for the prestigious National Florence Nightingale Award 2020.

##### Key Points:

- Dr Shaila Cannie, Principal, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi College of Nursing, has been selected for the prestigious National Florence Nightingale Award 2020, to be conferred by President of India.
- The National Florence Nightingale Award is given to outstanding nursing personnel employed in Central, State/UTs, Private, Missionary and Voluntary Organizations.
- It is the highest national distinction awarded to nurses or nursing aides, which consists of a cash amount of Rs 50,000, a certificate and a medal.

#### OBITUARY

##### A. MADHAVAN



**Date:** 9th January 2021

Renowned Tamil writer A. Madhavan, who won the Sahitya Akademi award in 2015 passed away recently.

## Key Points:

- Though he spent his entire life in Thiruvananthapuram and studied Malayalam in school, Mr. Madhavan came under the influence of the Dravidian movement and his stories were published in the Pongal special issues of magazines run by leaders of the movement.
- Mr. Madhavan was attracted to the social reformist ideas of the Dravidian movement.
- He translated Malayalam writer P.K. Balakrishnan's Ini Njan Urangatte, the story of Karna through the eyes of Draupadi, in Tamil as Ini Naan Urankattum and was published by the Sahitya Akademi.
- The Sahitya Akademi conferred the award for his collected prose writings Ilakkiya Chuvadukal.
- His novel Punalum Manalum was translated into English as On A River's Bank.

## OBITUARY

### MADHAV SINGH SOLANKI



**Date:** 11th January 2021

- Recently, veteran Congress leader and Chief Minister of Gujarat, Madhavsingh Solanki passed away at the age of 93.
- Key Points:
- Madhav Singh Solanki served as the Chief Minister of Gujarat three times between 1976 and 1990. He was the longest-serving leader of the state before Narendra Modi.
- Madhav Singh Solanki took over as India's foreign minister from June 1991 to March 1992.
- The Congress party won its last Assembly polls in Gujarat under Madhav Singh Solanki leadership in 1985. In 1985, the Congress won 149 out of the 182 Assembly seats, which still remains a record in Gujarat State politics.

### AWARDS & HONOURS

#### CHANDRIKAPERSAD SANTOKHI



**Date:** 11th January 2021

**Why in news:** Will be the chief guest at India's Republic Day Parade on January 26, 2021.

#### Key Points:

- Chandrikapersad Santokhi, Indian-origin President of Suriname, will be the chief guest at India's Republic Day Parade on January 26, 2021.
- The news comes after UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson cancelled his visit to India.
- The Suriname President was earlier the Chief Guest at the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, which was conducted by the Ministry of External Affairs.
- Chandrikapersad Santokhi was sworn in as the 9th President of the Republic of Suriname in July 2020 after his party- Progressive Reform Party won the 2020 General Elections.

### APPOINTMENTS

#### RAJ IYER



**Date:** 9th January 2021

**Why in news:** Takes over as the first Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the U.S. Army.

**Key Points:**

- Indian-American Raj Iyer has taken over as the first Chief Information Officer (CIO) of the US Army after the Pentagon created the position in July 2020.
- One of the highest ranking Indian-American civilians in the U.S. Department of Defense, Dr. Iyer, serves as the Principal Adviser to the Secretary of the Army and directs representation of the Secretary in matters relating to information management/ information technology (IT).
- Equivalent in rank to a three-star General, Dr. Iyer will supervise an annual budget of \$16 billion for the U.S. Army's IT operations.
- Over 15,000 civilians and military personnel posted across 100 countries work under him.



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# ISSUES

## NATIONAL

### ENVIRONMENT

#### HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



**Date:** 9th January 2021

#### **Key Highlights:**

- The Standing Committee for National Board of Wildlife (SC-NBWL) has approved advisory for Human-Wildlife Conflict Management.
- The advisory for Human-Wildlife Conflict Management will be set up to have effective interdepartmental coordinated actions.
- The advisory for Human-Wildlife Conflict Management will be responsible to empower Gram Panchayats to deal with problematic wild animals as per the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The advisory will also be responsible to encourage usage of crop compensation under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana against crop damage due to human-wildlife conflict.
- They will work to augment fodder and water sources within forest areas.
- The advisory will identify the hotspots and will formulate solutions to improve stall-fed farm animals.

### POLITY & GOVERNANCE

#### **SC'S ORDER ON PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS (CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF CASE PROPERTY ANIMALS) RULES, 2017**



**Date:** 12th January 2021

### **Key Highlights:**

- The Supreme Court has asked the Centre to delete its three-year-old law – Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Care and Maintenance of Case Property Animals) Rules, 2017.
- The SC warned the government that it would “stay” the implementation of a 2017 law, which allowed authorities to seize cattle on a mere suspicion that they suffered cruel treatment at the hands of their owners or were being primed for slaughter.
- According to the law, these animals would then be lodged in gaushalas as case property to await the court’s verdict.
- Thus, a farmer, a livestock owner or a cattle trader loses his animals before being found guilty of the charge of cruelty.
- SC ruled that these rules are contrary to Section 29 of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, under which only a person convicted of cruelty can lose his animal.

**INTERNATIONAL**

## **TRANSPORT**

### **SRIWIJAYA AIR FLIGHT 182 GOES MISSING**



**Date:** 9th January 2021

### **Key Highlights:**

- Boeing 737-500 (PK-CLC) operating Sriwijaya Air Flight 182 went missing after taking off from Jakarta Soekarno–Hatta Airport on route to Pontianak Supadio Airport.
- The aircraft crashed near the Thousand Islands.
- The Thousand Islands (officially Kepulauan Seribu) are a chain of islands to the north of Jakarta's coast.
- It forms the only regency of Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia.
- It consists of a string of 342 islands stretching 45 km (28 mi) north into the Java Sea at West Jakarta Bay and in fact north of Banten Province.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **POLITICAL CRISIS IN NEPAL**

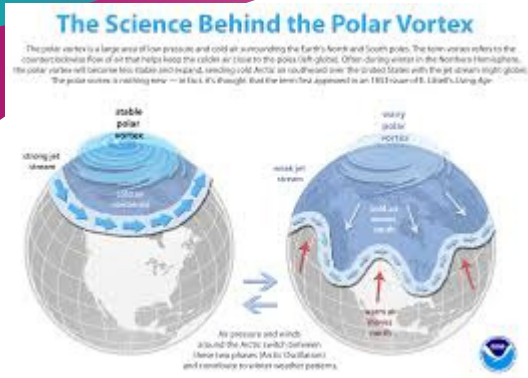


**Date:** 12th January 2021

### **Key Highlights:**

- Recently, Nepal has drifted into a political crisis following its Prime Minister (PM) KP Sharma Oli's decision to dissolve Parliament.
- The Nepalese PM has stated that this decision was on the backdrop of infighting within the ruling Nepalese Communist Party (NCP).
- As India's role in the mediation of earlier political crises in Nepal has led to the development of anti-Indian sentiment in Nepal, India has done right by not meddling into Nepal's internal matters.
- However, India is apprehensive that political instability in Nepal will expand space for China to intervene in Nepali politics and shape a government that is favourable to China.

## POLAR VORTEX THREATENS TO SEND US EUROPE INTO DEEP FREEZE



**Date:** 14th January 2021

### Key Highlights:

- Meteorologists have predicted that the polar vortex, which is splitting into two and swirling southward, will send the US and European countries into a chilling deep freeze.
- Previously, such vortex Developed in 2014.
- Polar vortex is losing stability and its splitting causes dramatic, extreme weather implications across the western nations such as the US and Europe.
- With a 'disrupted' polar vortex in 2021, the colder air is expected to spill out of the Arctic and result in the onset of extremely harsh winters.
- Polar vortex is described as a whirling cone of low pressure over the poles that is strongest in the winter months due to the increased temperature contrast between the polar regions and the mid-latitudes, such as the US and Europe.



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# IDIEAS

## NATIONAL

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

#### FREIGHT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PORTAL



**Date:** 9th January 2021

#### Key Features:

- Freight Business Development Portal was recently launched by the Ministry of Railways as a one stop solution for all the needs of freight customers.
- The portal is designed to replace physical processes with online ones to minimise the need of human-to-human interaction.
- it will help them use rail mode seamlessly.
- The personalised dashboard of freight business portal provides customers a view with their business in railways, outstanding indents, on-run consignments, status of various interactions and facility to apply for various services and raising concerns.
- Customers also get to know about discount schemes, diversion, rebooking, demurrage and wharfage waivers, stacking permissions.

#### NATIONAL INTERNET EXCHANGE OF INDIA (NIXI)

The logo for NIXI (National Internet Exchange of India) features the word 'nixi' in a stylized font. The 'n' and 'i' are dark blue, the 'x' is composed of orange and green diagonal bars, and the final 'i' is dark blue.

**Date:** 10th January 2021

**Key Features:**

- The National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) announced that it will offer a free IDN (Internationalized Domain Name) in any of their preferred 22 official Indian languages.
- It will be available along with every IN domain booked by the registrant.
- This offer has been created to stimulate the adoption of (IDN) domain name and proliferation of local language content.
- National Internet Exchange of India (NIXI) is a not for profit organization working since 2003 for spreading the internet technology to the citizens of India.

## **POLITY & GOVERNANCE**

### **PERIOD ROOM SET UP FOR MENSTRUATING WOMEN**



**Date:** 10th January 2021

**Key Features:**

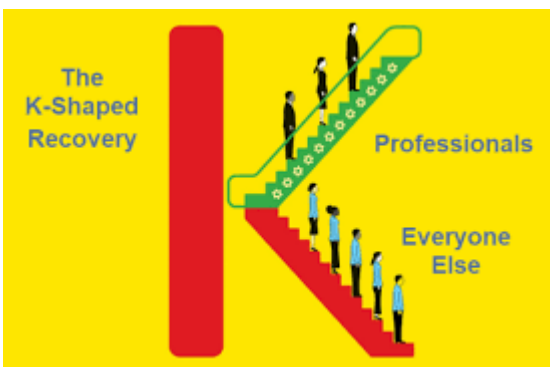
- In a bid to help the women residing in congested slums during their menstruation days, a 'period room' has been set up at a public toilet in Maharashtra's Thane city.
- Equipped with several basic facilities, the period room aims to facilitate menstrual hygiene among women dwelling in slums.
- The facility is set up keeping in mind the women living in small houses, who do not have a separate bathing section.
- Many times they find it difficult to change during periods.
- This facility will be a boon for such women and go a long way in promoting good hygiene.
- Claimed to be the first-of-its-kind initiative, the much-needed facility has been set up by the Thane Municipal Corporation in collaboration with an NGO, at a slum in Shanti Nagar locality of Wagle Estate area in Thane.

**‘SUPERMASSIVE BLACK HOLE SEEMS TO GO MISSING**

**Date:** 10th January 2021

**Key Features:**

- A supermassive black hole, which is estimated to weigh up to 100 billion times the mass of the Sun, is seemingly missing which has left astronomers perplexed.
- Scientists have been looking for the black hole using NASA's Chandra X-ray Observatory and Hubble Space Telescope.
- However, so far, they have found no evidence of its existence.
- The black hole is supposed to be located in Abell 2261, an enormous galaxy cluster that is about 2.7 billion light-years away from the Earth.
- At 2.7 billion light-years away, the Abell galaxy is at an overwhelmingly large distance away from us.

**ECONOMY****K-SHAPED ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

**Date:** 12th January 2021

## Key Features:

- Economists state the prospects of a K-shaped recovery from COVID are increasing both in India and across the world.
- A K-shaped recovery happens when different sections of an economy recover at starkly different rates.
- Households at the top of the pyramid are likely to have seen their incomes largely protected, and savings rates forced up during the lockdown, increasing “fuel in the tank” to drive future consumption.
- Meanwhile, households at the bottom are likely to have witnessed permanent hits to jobs and incomes.
- Example: Passenger vehicle registrations (proxying upper-end consumption) have grown about 4 per cent since October while two-wheelers have contracted 15 per cent.



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