

# Week 4 Current Affairs Update

22<sup>nd</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021

## EVENTS

### NATIONAL

#### ENVIRONMENT

##### ATAL PARYAVARAN BHAVAN



**Date:** 23rd February 2021

Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar inaugurated Atal Paryavaran Bhavan at Lakshadweep.

##### Key Points:

- During his visit to the UT, he also attended meetings with the secretaries of various departments and analysed the work undertaken under various projects for the welfare of UT.
- He also participated in various official programmes at Suheli, Kadmat and Bangaram islands.
- He undertook an analysis of the work of the Forest and Environment Department of the Union Territory.

#### POLITY & GOVERNANCE

##### GOVERNING COUNCIL OF NITI AAYOG



**Date:** 23rd February 2021

The sixth meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog was held recently. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the chair of the council.

**Key Points:**

- The Governing Council consists of Chief Ministers of all states and Lt. Governors of Union Territories.
- During the meeting, issues with respect to agriculture, manufacturing, infrastructure and human resource development were discussed.
- It was the sixth meeting of the Governing Council.
- The meeting was joined by Ladakh for the first time.
- Jammu and Kashmir also participated as a Union Territory this year.
- Other Union Territories which are headed by the administrators will also join the meeting.

**ART & CULTURE**

**‘SHRIGURURAVIDASVISHVAMAHAPEETHRASHTRIYAADHIVESHAN’**



**Date:** 23rd February 2021

Indian President recently addressed ‘Shri Guru Ravidas Vishva Mahapeeth Rashtriya Adhiveshan’ in New Delhi.

## Key Points:

- 'Shri Guru Ravidas was a Dalit-poet saint from the Bhakti movement era in northern India who probably lived during the 14th to 16th.
- He belonged to a leather-working Chamar community, whose profession involved processing dead animals and their skins.
- The 41 hymns of Guru Ravidas have been included in the Guru Granth Sahib.
- The famous saint poetess, Mirabai was a disciple of Guru Ravidas.
- According to his teachings: everybody is equal in all respects, irrespective of caste, color or a belief in any form of God; Emphasised on universal brotherhood and tolerance. God created man and not man created God.

## POLICIES & SCHEMES

### GOV OF KERALA TO BUILD 'SMART' ANGANWADIS



**Date:** 23rd February 2021

The Government of Kerala has sanctioned Rs 9 crore to build 'Smart' Anganwadi.

## Key Points:

- The state government will convert and upgrade the conventional anganwadis into 'smart' structures with better amenities.
- This work will be done by the state government under the Smart Anganwadi scheme.
- Under this scheme, the Department of Women and Child Development has approved to upgrade 48 anganwadis to 'smart' anganwadis.
- These smart anganwadis will help in developing the mental as well as the physical ability of students
- The 'smart' anganwadis will be designed under the Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS).

## ENERGY

### TERI SIGNED MOU WITH POSOCO



**Date:** 24th February 2021

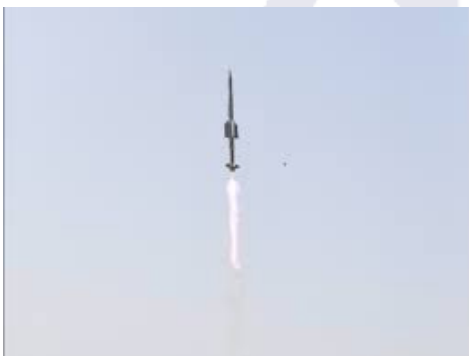
The Energy and Research Institute (TERI) has signed an MoU with the Power System Corporation of India (POSOCO).

**Key Points:**

- They have entered into MoU to enhance capacity building, strengthen research activity and knowledge sharing related to the domestic power sector.
- They will collaboratively develop power system simulation models and integrated resource plans for demand and supply needs.
- They will develop modelling capability backed, enriched with data sets that will tackle issues related to the power sector in India.

## DEFENCE

### DRDO SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED VL-SRSAM



**Date:** 24th February 2021

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted two successful launches of Vertical Launch Short Range Surface to Air Missile (VL-SRSAM).

**Key Points:**

- The VL-SRSAM was launched with the help of a static vertical launcher.
- They were launched from ITR Chandipur off the Odisha Coast.
- The VL-SRSAM is developed by DRDO and was launched for the Indian Navy.
- It has a strike range of 40-50 km and provides defence against aerial and water targets.

## POLICIES & SCHEMES

### NATIONAL URBAN DIGITAL MISSION



**Date:** 24th February 2021

The Central Government launched 'National Urban Digital Mission' to develop digital infrastructure for cities of India.

#### Key Points:

- It was launched by Union Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri and Union Minister of Electronics & IT, Ravi Shankar Prasad.
- The MoHUA mentioned that the 'National Urban Digital Mission' will lead to having an institutionalised citizen-centric and ecosystem-driven approach for transparent urban governance and service delivery in cities by 2022, and in all Indian cities and towns by 2024.
- Due to this mission, the Indian cities and towns will get the benefit of holistic and diverse forms of support of various digital initiatives of the MoHUA.
- During the event of launching of the mission, various other initiatives were also launched: India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX), SmartCode, Smart Cities 2.0 website, and Geospatial Management Information System (GMIS).

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### PM MODI VISITED WEST BENGAL & ASSAM TO DEDICATE VARIOUS PROJECTS



**Date:** 24th February 2021



Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited West Bengal and Assam with an aim to dedicate various projects to the nation.

**Key Points:**

- PM Modi dedicated important projects related to the oil and gas sector at the event held in Assam.
- He also launched projects in the railway sector in West Bengal.
- PM Narendra Modi dedicated the INDMAX Unit at Indian Oil's Bongaigaon Refinery.
- He also dedicated Oil India Limited's Secondary Tank Farm at Madhuban, Dibrugarh, Assam. It is constructed to have safe storage of 40,000-kilolitres of crude oil.

## ART & CULTURE

### 26TH HUNAR HAAT



**Date:** 25th February 2021

The 26th edition of 'Hunar Haat' was inaugurated by Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi.

**Key Points:**

- The theme for 26th Hunar Haat: Vocal for Local.
- The Hunar Haat event is organised to provide job opportunities to artisans and craftsmen.
- The Minority Affairs Ministry has set a goal to provide jobs to 7,50,000 artisans by organizing 75 Hunar Haats by 2022.
- Basically, the Hunar Haat is an exhibition that showcases India's traditional art and craft made by artisans and craftsmen.
- The event also has its online website through which people living abroad can purchase the artworks of artisans and craftsmen.

## AWARDS & HONOURS

### DADASAHEB PHALKE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL AWARDS 2021



**Date:** 25th February 2021

The prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival awards 2021 were announced, to honour the best in Indian cinema, television, music, and OTT.

#### Key Points:

- The Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival Awards 2021 are presented to honour the artists associated with films, music and television industry.
- Following is the list of winners in each category:
- Late Actor Sushant Singh Rajput: He was awarded the 'Critics Best Actor' award for his performance in the movie 'Dil Bechara'.
- Deepika Padukone: Best Female Actor for her role in the movie 'Chhapaak'.
- Akshay Kumar: Best Male Actor for his role in the movie 'Laxmii'.
- Kiara Advani: Critics Best Actress for her role in 'Guilty'.
- Dharmendra: Outstanding Contribution to the Indian Film Industry.
- Anurag Basu: Best Director

## POLICIES & SCHEMES

### ARTISAN-BASED SFURTI CLUSTERS INAUGURATED



**Date:** 25th February 2021

Fifty artisan-based Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) clusters, spread over 18 States, was recently inaugurated by the Ministry of MSME.

## Key Points:

- Artisans shall be supported in the traditional segments of muslin, khadi, coir, handlooms, woodcraft, pottery, carpet weaving, agro-processing, etc.
- Objective of the SFURTI is to organize traditional industries and artisans into clusters to make them competitive and increase their income.
- SFURTI clusters are of two types:
  - Regular Cluster (500 artisans) with Government assistance of up to Rs.2.5 crore
  - Major Cluster (more than 500 artisans) with Government assistance up to Rs.5 crore.

## ECONOMY

### PRODUCTION LINKED INCENTIVE SCHEME FOR PHARMACEUTICALS



**Date:** 25th February 2021

The Union Cabinet has approved Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Pharmaceuticals for Financial Year 2020-21 to 2028-29.

## Key Points:

- The Scheme is expected to bring in investment of Rs.15,000 crore in the pharmaceutical sector.
- It will be part of the umbrella scheme for the Development of the Pharmaceutical Industry.
- Objective: (1) To enhance India's manufacturing capabilities by increasing investment; (2) Product diversification to include high-value goods.
- Target Groups: The manufacturers who are registered in India will be grouped based on their Global Manufacturing Revenue (GMR) to ensure wider applicability of the scheme

## INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### LAUNCH OF INDIA URBAN DATA EXCHANGE (IUDX)





**Date:** 26th February 2021

India Urban Data Exchange (IUDX) was launched recently by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs .

**Key Points:**

- IUDX has been developed in partnership between the Smart Cities Mission and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.
- IUDX serves as an interface for data providers and data users.
- Its objective is to share, request, and access datasets related to cities, urban governance, and urban service delivery.
- It is an open-source software platform.
- It will ensure secure and authenticated exchange of data amongst various data platforms.

## **BANKING & FINANCE**

### **PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS TO CONDUCT GOVERNMENT-RELATED BANKING TRANSACTIONS**



**Date:** 26th February 2021

The Government has lifted the embargo on private sector banks for the conduct of Government-related banking transactions.

### Key Points:

- These will include taxes and other revenue payment facilities, pension payments, small savings schemes, etc.
- Only a few banks were permitted to carry out these functions earlier.
- Besides, there is now no bar on RBI for authorization of private sector banks for Government business.
- For undertaking government agency business, the RBI pays a commission to banks.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) carries out the general banking business through agency banks appointed under Section 45 of the RBI Act, 1934.

## ECONOMY

### PRODUCTION LINKED INCENTIVE SCHEME FOR IT HARDWARE



**Date:** 26th February 2021

The Union Cabinet has approved the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for IT Hardware.

### Key Points:

- The scheme proposes PLI to boost domestic manufacturing and attract large investments in the value chain of IT Hardware.
- The Scheme shall extend an incentive of 4% to 2% on net incremental sales (over base year 2019-20) of goods manufactured in India and covered under the target segment, for 4 years.
- It will benefit 5 major global players and 10 domestic champions in the field of IT Hardware manufacturing including Laptops, Tablets, All-in-One PCs, and Servers.

## ECONOMY

### INDIAN ECONOMY TO CONTRACT BY 8% IN 2020-21 – BY NSO



**Date:** 26th February 2021

The National Statistical Office (NSO) has estimated that India's GDP to contract by 8% in FY 2020-21.

**Key Points:**

- Initially, it has projected GDP contraction to 7.7% for FY 2020-21.
- Also in the December quarter, the Indian economy will be expanded by 0.4%.
- With this, the economy will emerge from the recession which occurred due to the pandemic.

## ECONOMY

### SIDBI SIGNED MOU WITH ANDHRA PRADESH GOV.



**Date:** 28th February 2021

The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has signed an MoU with the Government of Andhra Pradesh for the development of the MSME ecosystem in the state.

**Key Points:**

- Under this MoU, a Project Management Unit (PMU) will be set up by SIDBI.
- The PMU will help to frame schemes and programmes to uplift the MSME ecosystem in the state.
- The schemes and programmes will be in areas like equity support, interest subvention, resolution of stressed MSMEs, supporting MSME entrepreneurs and facilitate other need-based intervention.
- The PMU will also analyse the current status of various schemes and programmes which are framed to uplift MSMEs and will accordingly make modifications if required.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### India and Maldives signed Various Agreements



**Date:** 23rd February 2021

India and Maldives have signed multiple agreements in various areas to boost the bilateral cooperation between them.

#### Key Points:

- Total 5 agreements are signed between both nations which will help to boost infrastructure in the island nation.
- Following are the details of each agreement.
- The EXIM Bank of India and Fahi Dhiriulhun Corporation signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) for financing 2,000 social housing units in Hulhumale.
- MoU to establish Geydhoshu Masplant in Noonu Kendhikulhudhoo. This will help to develop small-scale fish processing plants in the Maldives.
- The EXIM Bank of India and the government of Maldives signed the Second Amendatory Dollar Credit Line Agreement. This agreement will help to develop roads in the island nation.
- MoU was signed to have capacity building and exchange of data between Prasar Bharati and Public State Media, Maldives.
- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs of GOI and the Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure of Maldives signed an agreement for sustainable urban development.

## EDUCATION

### GOI AND WORLD BANK TO IMPROVE SCHOOL EDUCATION IN NAGALAND





**Date:** 25th February 2021

The Indian Government, the Government of Nagaland and the World Bank have signed an agreement to enhance school education in Nagaland.

**Key Points:**

- They have signed a loan agreement of USD 68 million for the same.
- The agreement is signed for the project called 'Nagaland: Enhancing Classroom Teaching and Resources Project'.
- This project aims to improve teaching methods and the learning environment in the state.
- The project will prove beneficial to 1,50,000 students and 20,000 teachers.
- The project will undertake activities like: Improving classroom instructions, developing opportunities to have professional development of teaching staff, developing advanced technology based learning systems for online as well as offline mode of teaching, framing policies and programs.

## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

### 18TH BIOASIA 2021



**Date:** 25th February 2021

The 18th BioAsia 2021 was held in Hyderabad. It is Asia's largest Life Sciences and Biotechnology and Healthcare forum.



### **Key Points:**

- It was inaugurated by KT Rama Rao, Minister for Industries and Commerce & IT, Government of Telangana.
- The theme for 18th BioAsia 2021: Move the Needle.
- The 18th edition of the forum focused on COVID-19, Health, Pharma and MedTech sectors.
- The forum also observed discussions on topics like ‘Virtually connected healthcare’, ‘COVID19-Hits/Misses and hidden pandemic’ and ‘Immunizing the world’.
- At the forum, the Genome Valley Excellence Award 2021 was awarded to ‘Bharat Biotech’.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **DUTCH INDIAN WATER ALLIANCE FOR LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE (DIWALI)**



**Date:** 25th February 2021

Dutch Indian Water Alliance For Leadership Initiative (DIWALI) was established recently between India and Netherlands .

### **Key Points:**

- Its objective is to find solutions for water related challenges.
- The experts from both countries would explore the potential and sustainability of Dutch Solutions to resolve challenges in specific water-challenged sites in India.
- Scalable, sustainable, and affordable solutions shall be given importance.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **INDIA, AUSTRALIA AND FRANCE HELD TRILATERAL DIALOGUE**



**Date:** 26th February 2021

The senior officers from India, Australia and France participated to conduct trilateral dialogue among the three nations.

### **Key Points:**

- The trilateral dialogue was held to enhance the cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.
- All three nations reviewed the progress activities and assured to maintain peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The Indian delegation was represented by Sandeep Chakravorty, Joint Secretary of Europe West.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **IWAI SIGNED MOU WITH MOL (ASIA OCEANIA) PTE. LTD**



**Date:** 27th February 2021

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) signed MoU with MOL (Asia Oceania) Pte Ltd.

### **Key Points:**

- The MoU is signed for having transportation of LPG through barges on National Waterways-1 and National Waterways-2.
- Under this MoU, the MOL will perform investment for constructing and operating dedicated LPG barges.
- The Aegis Group will invest to construct storage terminals, pipelines and other necessary infrastructure.

- The IWAI will provide an adequate fairway and will manage LPG Cargo on IWAI terminals or multimodal terminal at Haldia, Sahibganj and Varanasi.

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

### INDIA HELD SHERPAS' MEETING



**Date:** 28th February 2021

India commenced its BRICS Chairmanship with an inaugural of Sherpas meeting.

#### Key Points:

- India succeeds Russia to hold the Chairmanship of BRICS.
- The Sherpas meeting was chaired by Sanjay Bhattacharya, Secretary of Consular Passport and Visa (CPV) and Overseas Indian Affairs (OIA).
- The meeting also observed the participation of P Harish, Additional Secretary of Economic Relations as India's BRICS Sherpa and Sous Sherpa.
- The meeting was held to focus on Culture and boost people-to-people engagement.
- During the meeting, India announced its priorities while handling the chairmanship for 2021.
- India also announced its theme for being chaired for BRICS. The theme is 'BRICS@15: Intra BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation and Consensus'.



# PEOPLE

## NATIONAL

### AWARDS & HONOUR

#### ANJALI BHARDWAJ



**Date:** 24th February 2021

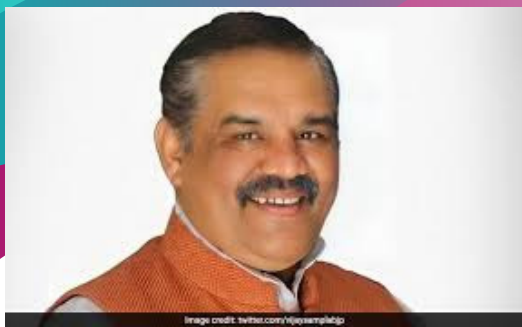
**Why in news:** Honored with the new International Anti-corruption Champions Award.

#### Key Points:

- International Anti-corruption Champions Award is a new award that will recognize individuals who have worked tirelessly to combat corruption, defend transparency, and ensure accountability in their own countries.
- Indian Right to Information (RTI) activist Anjali Bhardwaj is among the 12 winners chosen for the inaugural edition of the award by the US government.
- Anjali is a co-convenor of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information. She has been associated with the RTI movement for over two decades.
- She has been a part of movements to create legislation for RTI, whistleblower protection and grievance redressal, the Lokpal, and the Right to Food.
- Anjali is also a founder of the Satark Nagrik Sangathan and works to empower the residents of Delhi's slums to use the RTI Act to get their rights.

### APPOINTMENTS

#### VIJAY SAMPLA



**Date:** 26th February 2021

**Why in news:** Appointed as the Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC).

**Key Points:**

- Former Union Minister Vijay Sampla assumed the charge of Chairman National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC).
- Sampla has been the former Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment from 2014-19.
- He was president of the BJP Punjab unit.
- He also served as Chairman, Khadi and Village Industries Board, Punjab from 2009-12 and subsequently, his name was recommended for Rashtrapati Award.

## AWARDS & HONOURS

### PM NARENDRA MODI



**Date:** 27th February 2021

**Why in news:** Selected for the global energy and environment leadership award.

**Key Points:**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will receive the CERAWEEK global energy and environment leadership award during an annual international energy conference.
- The CERAWEEK Conference-2021 will be held virtually from March 1 to 5.
- The conference is being organized by IHS Markit.
- PM Modi will also deliver the keynote address at the conference.
- Other prominent speakers at the conference are the Co-chair of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the founder of Breakthrough Energy Bill Gates, the US special presidential envoy for climate John Kerry, and the president and CEO, Saudi Aramco, Amin Nasser.



## APPOINTMENTS

### WOOCHONG UM



**Date:** 23rd February 2021

**Why in news:** Appointed as Managing Director General of Asian Development Bank (ADB).

#### Key Points:

- Woochong Um of Republic of Korea was appointed as the new Managing Director General of Asian Development Bank (ADB).
- He will assist the President of ADB to institute the bank wide coherence on various key initiatives and issues.
- Woochong Um joined ADB in 1993 and has around 27 years of experience at ADB.
- He served as ADB Secretary from 2014 to 2018.
- He is concurrently Chief Compliance Officer of ADB since June 2018.

## APPOINTMENTS

### NATALIA VODIANOVA



**Date:** 27th February 2021

**Why in news:** Became a United Nations goodwill ambassador.

## Key Points:

- Russian supermodel and philanthropist Natalia Vodianova became a United Nations goodwill ambassador
- She will promote the sexual and reproductive rights of women and girls and tackle stigmas surrounding their bodies.
- She will be a campaigner for the U.N. Population Fund, which now calls itself the UN's sexual and reproductive health agency, known as UNFPA.
- Vodianova founded the Naked Heart Foundation to help children with special needs and their families in 2004 and is a member of the Special Olympics International board of directors.
- She made the Forbes top models list in 2012 and is nicknamed Supernova.



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# ISSUES

## NATIONAL

### HEALTHCARE

#### NON-ALCOHOLIC FATTY LIVER DISEASE (NAFLD)



**Date:** 23rd February 2021

#### Key Highlights:

- According to the Health Ministry, India has become the first country in the world to identify the need for action for Non-Alcoholic Fatty Liver Disease.
- Operational guidelines have been launched for the integration of NAFLD with the National Programme for Prevention & Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases, and Stroke.
- NAFLD is an umbrella term for a range of liver conditions affecting people who drink little to no alcohol.
- Main characteristic of NAFLD is too much fat stored in liver cells.
- It is becoming increasingly common around the world, especially in Western nations.
- Some individuals with NAFLD can develop non-alcoholic steatohepatitis (NASH).
- NASH is an aggressive form of fatty liver disease, marked by liver inflammation which may progress to advanced scarring (cirrhosis) and liver failure.

### POLITY & GOVERNANCE

#### AMENDMENTS MADE TO THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT



**Date:** 24th February 2021

### **Key Highlights:**

- The Supreme Court has criticised the Union government for having not filed a reply to a petition by parliamentarian Jairam Ramesh challenging the amendments made to the Right to Information Act for over a year.
- The petitioner argues that the amendments gave the Centre unparalleled powers to dictate the tenure, salaries and service conditions of the Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners as per its “whims and fancies”.
- The petitioner contended that the RTI Amendment Act of 2019 and its Rules cripple the objectivity and independence of the Central Information Commission (CIC) by bringing under the yoke of the government.
- The amendments made in the RTI Act last year are seen as a “threat to the independence” of the Central Information Commissioner.

## **POLITY & GOVERNANCE**

### **U.P. ASSEMBLY PASSES THE CONTROVERSIAL BILL ON CONVERSION AMID PROTESTS**



**Date:** 26th February 2021

### **Key Highlights:**

- Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly passed Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2021.
- The Bill seeks to replace the ordinance promulgated in November last year that seeks to curb religious conversions carried out by fraudulent or any other undue means.
- It makes religious conversion for marriage a non-bailable offence.

- The onus will be on the defendant to prove that conversion was not for marriage.
- The ordinance, passed in November 2020, comes days after the Allahabad high court said in a verdict (Salamat Ansari-Priyanka Kharwar case) that the right to choose a partner or live with a person of choice was part of a citizen's fundamental right to life and liberty.
- The law has come under sharp criticism from several legal scholars who had contended that the concept of 'love jihad' did not have any constitutional or legal basis.

## INTERNATIONAL

### ECONOMY

#### UBER DRIVERS TO BE CONSIDERED WORKERS AND NOT FREELANCE CONTRACTORS: UK SUPREME COURT



**Date:** 24th February 2021

#### Key Highlights:

- The UK Supreme Court ruled that Uber drivers were to be considered workers and not freelance contractors.
- This order shall make them eligible for all employment related benefits such as minimum wage, annual leaves, and insurance.
- With this ruling, Uber and other service providing platforms could also potentially face legal and regulatory challenges in India.
- Besides, Indian budget 2021-22 has mandated that the law on minimum wages would now apply to workers of all categories including those associated with platforms such as Uber.
- Such workers would now be covered by the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC).
- In November 2020, the government had come out with specific norms for apps such as Uber and Ola.



# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

## CHINA-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC CORRIDOR (CPEC)



**Date:** 25th February 2021

### Key Highlights:

- Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that he was looking forward to enhancing trade ties with Sri Lanka through the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- The CPEC is the flagship project of the multi-billion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a pet project of China, aimed at enhancing Beijing's influence around the world through China-funded infrastructure projects.
- CPEC aims at linking the city of Gwadar in Pakistan to China's Xinjiang region through a vast network of highways and railways.
- India's concern is that it passes through PoK.
- CPEC rests on a Chinese plan to secure and shorten its supply lines through Gwadar with an enhanced presence in the Indian Ocean.
- Hence, it is widely believed that upon CPEC's fruition, an extensive Chinese presence will undermine India's influence in the Indian Ocean.



# IDIEAS

## NATIONAL

### POLITY & GOVERNANCE

#### SMARTCODE PLATFORM



**Date:** 24th February 2021

#### Key Features:

- SmartCode Platform was recently launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- SmartCode is a platform that enables all ecosystem stakeholders to contribute to a repository of open-source code for various solutions and applications for urban governance.
- It is designed to address the challenges that urban local bodies (ULBs) face in the development and deployment of digital applications.
- It shall enable cities to take advantage of existing codes and customise them to suit local needs, rather than having to develop new solutions from scratch.
- The source code will be free to use without any licensing or subscription fees.

### ENVIRONMENT

#### CARBON WATCH APP



**Date:** 24th February 2021

**Key Features:**

- Chandigarh became the first state or Union Territory in India to launch Carbon Watch, a mobile application to assess the carbon footprint of an individual.
- A carbon footprint is the total amount of greenhouse gases—primarily carbon dioxide—released into the atmosphere by a particular human activity.
- The app focuses on individuals' actions and calculates carbon footprint on the basis of Transport, Energy, Waste and Water consumption.
- It will also provide information such as the national and world average of the emission, and the individual's level of emission generation.
- It encourages people to be Climate-Smart Citizens while making them capable of accessing their carbon footprint, along with providing them with steps to reduce it.
- It also sensitizes people about their lifestyle emissions, their impact and possible countermeasures to mitigate the same.

## SPACE

### DEVASTHAL TELESCOPE



**Date:** 25th February 2021

**Key Features:**

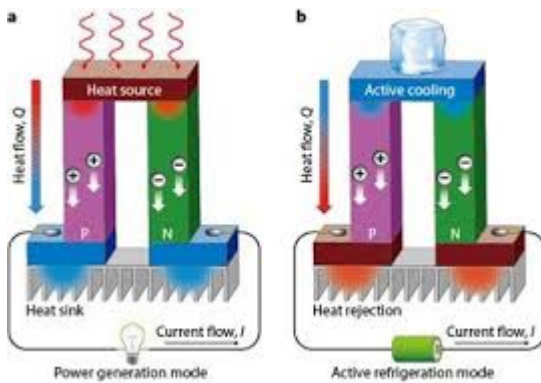
- The optical telescope set up at Devasthal has assumed global importance for observing important cosmic explosive events such as Gamma-Ray Bursts and Supernovae.
- Devasthal is a mountain peak in Uttarakhand.
- It is a world-class 3.6 m optical telescope.
- It is Asia's largest fully steerable optical telescope.
- It was set up by the Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), an autonomous research institute of DST, with support from the Belgian government in 2016.

- It will also be helpful for future optical facilities such as the Thirty Meter Telescope.

## INTERNATIONAL

### SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

#### NEW LEAD (PB) FREE MATERIAL DISCOVERED



**Date:** 23rd February 2021

#### Key Features:

- Scientists at Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bengaluru have found a new Lead (Pb) free material.
- It is called Cadmium (Cd) doped Silver Antimony Telluride ( $\text{AgSbTe}_2$ ).
- It can efficiently convert waste heat to power our small home equipment and automobiles.
- Most efficient thermoelectric materials developed so far use Lead (Pb) as a major constituent element, restricting their use for mass-market applications.
- This work is supported by Swarna-Jayanti fellowship. The Swarna Jayanti Fellowships scheme provides special assistance and support to a selected number of young scientists with a proven track record to enable them to pursue basic research in frontier areas of science and technology.

### BANKING & FINANCE

#### BAD BANK



**Date:** 26th February 2021

**Key Features:**

- The Indian Banks' Association (IBA) has begun identifying bad loans which can be transferred to the Centre's proposed bad bank.
- The IBA has written to banks asking them for a list of all bad loans worth Rs 500 crore and above to "identify magnitude of the problem" and "get clarity over initial capital required for the entity".
- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had proposed setting up of a bad bank during her Union Budget 2021 speech on February 1.
- A bad bank is a bank set up to buy the bad loans and other illiquid holdings of another financial institution.
- The entity holding significant nonperforming assets will sell these holdings to the bad bank at market price.
- By transferring such assets to the bad bank, the original institution may clear its balance sheet—although it will still be forced to take write-downs.



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