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April

2021

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 iasbaba.com/2021/04/press-information-bureau-pib-ias-upsc-21st-march-to-31st-march-2021

Date April 1, 2021

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National Anti-Trafficking Bureau

(Topic: Social issues)

The Government of India amended the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008 in 2019 to inter-alia include Section 370 and 370A of the Indian Penal Code in the Schedule of the Act. The NIA has been given the mandate to investigate cases of human trafficking, including those having inter-state, national and international ramifications. Further, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has taken the following initiatives for the safety of women:

- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2013 was enacted for effective deterrence against sexual offences. Further, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018 was enacted to prescribe even further stringent penal provisions, including death penalty, for rape of girls below the age of 12 years.
- Emergency Response Support System provides a pan-India, single internationally recognized number (112) system for all emergencies, with computer aided dispatch of field resources to the location of distress.
- To promote use of technology to aid smart policing and safety management, Safe City Projects have been sanctioned in eight cities namely, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Lucknow and Mumbai in the first Phase. The projects have been prepared by State Governments taking into account the need for identification of hotspots for crimes against women for development of critical assets in urban areas including infrastructure, technology adoption and capacity building in community through awareness programmes.
- A cyber-crime reporting portal was launched on 20th September, 2018 for citizens to report obscene content.
- MHA launched the “National Database on Sexual Offenders” (NDSO) on 20th September, 2018 to facilitate investigation and tracking of sexual offenders across the country.
- MHA has launched an online analytic tool “Investigation Tracking System for Sexual Offences” to monitor and track time-bound investigation in sexual assault cases in accordance with Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018.
- MHA has notified guidelines for collection of forensic evidence in sexual assault cases and the standard composition in a sexual assault evidence collection kits. To facilitate adequate capacity in manpower, training and skill building programmes have been undertaken for Investigation Officers, Prosecution Officers and Medical Officers.
- In order to improve investigation, MHA has taken steps to strengthen DNA analysis units in Central and State Forensic Science Laboratories. A State-of-the-Art DNA Analysis Unit has been commenced in Central Forensic Science Laboratory, Chandigarh on 23rd December 2019.
- MHA has released Rs 200 crores to States/UTs for setting up and strengthening of Women Help Desks in police stations and Anti-Human Trafficking Units in all districts of the country.
- Further, a national level communication platform – Crime Multi Agency Centre (Cri-MAC) was launched by MHA on March 12, 2020. Cri-MAC facilitates dissemination of information about significant crimes, including human trafficking cases, across the country on real time basis and enables inter-State coordination. The coordination mechanism available to Police Officers in all States and UTs through Cri-MAC is an efficient and fast enabling-tool for sharing information in a safe and secure manner, which helps in locating and identifying the victims as also in prevention, detection and investigation of crimes.

Four Point Plan chalked out by the department of Commerce to deal with Blockage of Suez Canal

(Topic: India and world)

In News: A giant container ship was stuck in Egypt's Suez Canal for nearly a week now, blocking way for other ships to pass. At present, the cargo ship has been successfully refloated in the Suez Canal.

A Panama-flagged ship, The Ever Given, that carries cargo between Asia and Europe, ran aground in the narrow canal that runs between Africa and the Sinai Peninsula. Authorities have been making all possible attempts to free the vessel and reopen the waterway, which is very crucial for global shipping.

According to news reports, the blockage of the canal has resulted in a massive maritime traffic jam, causing **delays in global shipment chain**. According to official figures, some 19,000 vessels passed through the canal last year. Insurance company Allianz estimated that each day of the blockade was costing between \$6-10 billion (€5-8.5 billion).

Prioritisation of cargo: FIEO, MPEDA and APEDA will jointly identify cargo particularly perishable cargo for priority movement and work with the shipping lines for the same.

Freight Rates: CSLA assured that the freight rates as per existing contracts will be honoured. A request has been made to the shipping lines to maintain stability in freight rates during the period of this crisis. It was noted that the situation is temporary and is unlikely to have a long-lasting impact.

Advisory to Ports: Once the blockage is over, it is expected that some bunching may take place, especially at the ports of JNPT, Mundra and Hazira. Ministry of Ports, Shipping and waterway assured to issue an advisory to these ports so as to gear up arrangements and ensure efficient handling during the forthcoming busy period.

Re-routing decisions: Shipping lines were advised through CSLA to explore the option of re-routing of ships via the Cape of Good Hope. It was pointed that such re-routing usually takes 15 additional days' time.

Launch of the U.S. India Artificial Intelligence (USIAI)

(Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation)

Research, technology in artificial intelligence is being promoted and implemented in the country through a network of 25 technology hubs working as a triple helix set up under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS).

- USIAI will serve as a platform to discuss opportunities, challenges, and barriers for bilateral AI R&D collaboration, enable AI innovation, help share ideas for developing an AI workforce, and recommend modes and mechanisms for catalyzing partnerships.
- The U.S.-India AI Initiative will provide an opportunity for key stakeholder groups to share experiences, identify new R&D areas and opportunities that would benefit from synergistic activities, discuss the emerging AI landscape, and address the challenges of developing an AI workforce.
- The ambitious flagship initiative, USIAI, leverages IUSSTF's unique ability to bring together key stakeholders from India and the United States to create synergies that address challenges and opportunities at the interface of science, technology, and society. Over the next year, IUSSTF will conduct a series of roundtables and workshops to gather input from different stakeholder communities and prepare White Papers that identify technical, research, infrastructure, and workforce opportunities and challenges, and domain-specific opportunities for R&D in healthcare, smart cities, materials, agriculture, energy, and manufacturing.

India and the US can complement each other in this collaborative effort to ensure equitable progress –

For the US, India represents a massive consumer market – and one of the world's largest troves of data. Technology firms in the US accessing this data will be like energy firms finding oil in the Middle East.

For India, the US algorithms are solutions to a variety of development challenges India faces, from bringing banking to hundreds of millions of people to modernising the Indian military to offering healthcare to the masses. At the same time, for US technology firms, India churns out massive amounts of engineers and computer scientists – critical talent that these firms need.

Another major reason for a partnership between India and the US is the new geopolitical realities. China's growing influence in the field of AI is a pressing concern. What India and the US bring to the table is what is a supposedly democratic governance model of emerging technology. Despite the change in administration from Trump to Biden, there are certain things where there is continuity – like distrust in China and Chinese technology. There is a clear desire to ensure that supply chains are governed by standards, rules, and norms of the democratic world.

Both countries are leveraging AI and other emerging technologies to improve their relationships and gain a geopolitical edge.

Think: Technology is underpinning the future of relations between nations.

Cabinet approves

Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) signed between India and Japan in the field of Water Resources: This MoC was signed for development of a long-term cooperation in the field of Water and Delta management, and Water technology in order to increase the

exchange of information, knowledge, technology and scientific allied experience, as well as implementation of joint projects between the two countries. This MoC will help in achieving water security, improved irrigation facility and sustainability in water resources development.

Signing of an MoU between Union Public Service Commission, India and Independent Administrative Reforms and Civil Services Commission, Afghanistan

The MoU will strengthen the relationship between IARCSC and UPSC. It will facilitate sharing of experience and expertise of both the parties in the area of recruitment.

- Exchange of experience on modern approach to public service recruitment and selection, particularly the functions of the UPSC and the IARCSC.
- Exchange of information and expertise including books, manuals and other documents which are not of a confidential nature.
- Sharing of expertise in the use of Information Technology (IT) in the preparation of written examinations and holding of Computer Based Recruitment Tests and Online Examinations.
- Sharing of experience in Single Window System for expeditious scrutiny and speedy disposal of applications.
- Sharing of experience and expertise on various processes involved in examination system.
- Organize training sessions for officials, including short attachments to the Parties' secretariat/headquarters on all matters concerned by the respective mandate of the parties.
- Sharing of experience on the modalities adopted on audit of processes and procedures followed by various Government Agencies in recruitment of posts under the delegated power.

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Launch of 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain' campaign

(Topic: Conservation, Environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan: Catch the Rain' campaign for conserving water and stressed that every penny of MGNREGA funds be spent on rain water conservation till the monsoon arrives. Addressing an event at the virtual launch of the campaign on the World Water Day, Modi said it is a matter of concern that majority of rain water in India gets wasted. He said the more the rain water is conserved, the less will be the dependence on groundwater.

- India's self-sufficiency is dependent on its water resources and water connectivity, and its fast-paced development is not possible without effective water conservation.
- People should use water judiciously.

The Campaign

The 'Catch the Rain' campaign will be undertaken across the country, in **both rural and urban** areas.

Timeline: It will be implemented from March 22 to November 30 – the pre-monsoon and monsoon period in the country.

Aim: The campaign aims to take water conservation at grass-root level through people's participation. It is intended to nudge all stakeholders to create rainwater harvesting structures suitable to the climatic conditions and subsoil strata, to ensure proper storage of rainwater.

- After the event, Gram Sabhas will be held in all Gram Panchayats of each district (except in the poll-bound states) to discuss issues related to water and water conservation.
- Gram Sabhas will also take 'Jal Shapath' for water conservation.

'Buldhana Pattern' for Water Conservation

(Topic: Conservation, Environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment)

NITI Aayog has prepared draft guidelines for convergence of the activities of (i) sourcing earth for improvement/construction of national highways, state roads and railways and (ii) water conservation works through desiltation/ deepening of water bodies. This two-fold activity has already been successfully implemented as a pilot project in the Buldhana district of Maharashtra state.

Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Government of India has also issued a letter to all States/UTs and project/construction agencies in 2017 conveying that contractors/construction agencies responsible for construction of National Highways should excavate the earth as per their project requirements from such identified water bodies/areas at no cost to the village panchayats/ rural development departments/water conservation departments and transport the same to their project sites.

Similarly, the panchayats/water conservation departments of the states should not charge any amount from the agencies for the earth so excavated. Through this arrangement, gram panchayats/farmers will gain by having a pond/water body dug in their land at no cost which will help in restoration of such water bodies while the construction agency would get the material for embankments for its road building and road expansion projects free of cost.

National Biopharma Mission entitled: "Industry-Academia Collaborative Mission for Accelerating Discovery Research to Early Development for Biopharmaceuticals – Innovate in India Empowering biotech entrepreneurs & accelerating inclusive innovation"

(Topic: Science and Technology)

Objectives of the Mission:

- Development of products from leads that are at advanced stages in the product development lifecycle and relevant to the public health.
- Strengthening and establishing shared infrastructure facilities for both product discovery validation and manufacturing
- Developing human capital by providing specific training to address the critical skills gaps in researchers, nascent biotech companies across the product development value chain, including in business plan development and market penetration.
- Creating and enhancing technology transfer and intellectual property management capacities and capabilities in public and private sector.

Specific targets for the Mission, over a period of five years, include:

- Development of 5 biopharma products – Vaccines, biotherapeutics, medical devices and diagnostics
- Establishment of shared infrastructure and facilities such as GLP Validation and Reference Lab, CMC facilities;
- Med-Tech validation facility;
- Consortia for translational and interdisciplinary research, process development, development of cell lines and expression systems; Clinical trial networks;
- Setting up and establishment of technology transfer offices in public and private sector
- Imparting trainings for technical and non-technical skill development

To promote innovation for inclusiveness, the Mission is strengthening the ecosystem for affordable product development through the following:

- Development of vaccine candidates for Cholera, Influenza, Dengue, Chikungunya and Pneumococcal disease, Rabies and COVID-19;
 - Biosimilar products for Diabetes, Psoriasis, Cancer; Diagnostic kits;
 - Med Tech Devices for Imaging, Pumps for dialysis and MRI scanners;
 - Supporting shared facilities for Biopharmaceutical development (10), Med Tech device development (9) and Vaccine Development (2);
 - Establishment of hospital based and field site based Clinical Trial Networks for clinical trials of vaccines and bio-therapeutics;
 - Supporting Translational Research Consortia (TRC) for infectious diseases to accelerate vaccine development efforts;
 - Support for 7 Technology Transfer Offices for promoting entrepreneurship;
 - Imparting trainings to address the critical skill gaps among the nascent biotech companies in areas such as Product development, intellectual property registration, technology transfer and regulatory standards
-

Novel technique for tracking solar eruptions that disrupt space weather to be used in India's first solar mission

(Topic: Space technology)

Scientists have developed a new technique to track the huge bubbles of gas threaded with magnetic field lines that are ejected from the Sun, disrupting space weather and causing geomagnetic storms, satellite failures, and power outages.

As the ejections from the Sun, technically called Coronal Mass Ejections (CMEs), cause various disturbances of the space environment, forecasting their arrival time is very important. However, forecasting accuracy is hindered by limited CME observations in interplanetary space.

Software named Computer Aided CME Tracking Software (CACTus) based on a computer vision algorithm was so far used to detect and characterise such eruptions automatically in the outer corona where these eruptions cease to show accelerations and propagate with a nearly constant speed.

However, this algorithm could not be applied to the inner corona observations due to the vast acceleration experienced by these eruptions. This severely limited the capability to track the eruptions as CMEs accelerate in the lower corona. Moreover, with the advancement in space technology, there has been a tremendous increase in the amount of data obtained from spacecraft. To identify and track the solar eruptions in huge number of images can become tedious if done manually.

New clue about how particles self-assemble can pave the way for understanding dynamics in living cells

(Topic: Science and Technology)

Scientists have now found a clue to determine how self-assembled structures can be made using a strange class of particles that do not interact and have non-superimposable mirror images (chiral).

Molecular chirality is encoded in the static structure of building units of particles. It is well known that it results in interactions that are stereoselective. However, in many systems, chirality can be associated with how the particles move.

Whether such chiral activity can introduce stereoselective interactions between particles is still unknown to scientists. By investigating the role of chiral activity, a group of scientists have for the first time shown that objects can self-recognize even when their shape is not chiral. Further, they report spontaneous dimerization into two types of dimers- 'movers' and 'spinnners'.

Chiral active matter is ubiquitous in nature, and numerous biological systems possess some degree of chiral activity. The present study could thus pave the way towards understanding dynamics in living cells and their assemblies. However, in biological

systems, precisely tuning chiral activity is very difficult and how precisely it affects the emergent dynamics is not clear.

Prelims oriented news

World Water Day: 22nd March

Shaheedi Diwas: 23rd March

World Meteorological Day: Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav – On 23rd March

World Tuberculosis Day: 24th March

World Theatre Day: 27th March

Third phase of Indian Beamline for Materials Research in Japan initiated focusing on industrial application research: Set up under India-Japan Scientific and Technological Cooperation

- The phase would increase the number of young researchers from India to be trained in advanced X-ray techniques of material research. Besides, steps will be taken to allocate more beamtime so that more researchers can get access to it. At present, only 50 % of Indian researchers who apply receive beamtime.
- In the first phase (2009-2015) of this project, an X-ray beamline (BL18B) was constructed by SINP in PF, and over the years, this facility has provided substantial amount of quality beamtime for the use of Indian scientists to carry out front-ranking research in advanced materials including nano materials.

India's Vande Bharat mission: India's massive evacuation programme triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic has brought back over 67.5 Lakh people from abroad.

Exercise Desert Flag –VI successfully culminated today with de-induction of the Indian contingent from UAE. It is an annual multi-lateral large force employment exercise hosted by UAE.

- To expose coalition participating forces to large force employment, sharpen tactical capabilities, and enhance interoperability along with fostering closer relations between the participating forces.
- The aim for the participating crew and specialist observers was to expose them to operational environment in scenarios requiring multinational forces working together.

Ānandam: The Center for Happiness in IIM Jammu – Incorporating happiness in academic curriculum crucial towards empowering our nation. The Center for Happiness aligns with the National Education Policy 2020, aims to achieve holistic well-being for all

NITI Aayog Releases Report 'Investment Opportunities in India's Healthcare Sector': Outlines the range of investment opportunities in various segments of India's healthcare sector, including hospitals, medical devices and equipment, health insurance,

telemedicine, home healthcare and medical value travel. India's healthcare industry has been growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate of around 22% since 2016. At this rate, it is expected to reach USD 372 billion in 2022. Healthcare has become one of the largest sectors of the Indian economy, in terms of both revenue and employment. Read the [Report](#).

Jal Jeevan Mission deploys first-of-its-kind sensor-based IoT devices to monitor rural drinking water supply systems: To monitor the rural drinking water supply systems in villages, the Ministry of Jal Shakti has decided to take the digital route to use sensor-based IoT devices to effectively monitor the implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in more than six lakh villages.

The Internet of Things (IoT) based remote monitoring provides near real-time information without any manual intervention by using sensors. This would not only allow effective monitoring and management on-ground, but also enable real-time visibility to State water supply/ PHED officials, and citizens. With a futuristic vision to ensure regular tap water to every home, real-time measurement and monitoring is critical for rural drinking water supply schemes, with enormous gains in terms of operational efficiencies, cost reduction, grievance redressal, etc. Data will drive improvement in service delivery and instill transparency for precious natural asset such as water. Thus, making a strong social and economic case for deployment of such a system.

Indo-Korean Friendship Park Inaugurated: Located in Delhi Cantonment, the park's significance is not only because of it being a symbol of strong India-South Korea friendly relations, but also as a monument to India's contributions as part of 21 countries which participated in Korean war 1950-53, under the aegis of the United Nations. The park has been developed in joint consultation with Ministry of Defence, Government of India, Indian Army, Delhi Cantonment Board, Embassy of Korea and Korean War Veterans Association of India.

- The park also has a larger than life statue of General KS Thimayya, a celebrated soldier who led the Indian contingent as Chairman of Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission (NNRC) in Korea headed by India. The commission, through Custodian Force of India (CFI), was responsible for gathering unrepatriated prisoners of war into camps which was also India's first commitment to a UN assignment after independence.
- The five pillars raised in the backdrop of General Thimayya's statue are embossed with details of operations carried out by 60 Parachute Field Ambulance during the Korean war where they had treated about 1,95,000 cases, and performed about 2,300 field surgeries.
- One pillar also encompasses Nobel Laureate Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's narration of Korea as "The Lamp of the East" which was published in Korean daily "Dong-A-Ilbo" in 1929.

Launch of Certified E-Tendering Portal "PRANIT": By Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID), a central PSU under Ministry of Power – will lead to less paperwork and ease of operation, making the tendering process more transparent.

Amended TUFs (ATUFs) Scheme: To adopt innovative new technology in all the sub-sectors of textiles industry except Spinning by way of one time Capital Investment Subsidy (CIS) for eligible benchmarked machinery for a period of seven years from 2015-16 to 2021-22. The scheme aims to promote ease of doing business in the country, achieve the vision of generating employment and promoting exports through “Make in India” with “Zero effect and Zero defect” in manufacturing and promoting domestic textile clusters.

100+ Curriculum based Comic books launched: These comics can be accessed online on DIKSHA web portal (diksha.gov.in) or via the DIKSHA app. To provide holistic learning to students and to usher in vision envisaged in New Education Policy 2020 has launched comic books aligned to chapters of NCERT textbooks across grades 3-12. He further said that this innovative initiative will help in increasing the cultural and social sensitivity in our children while imparting knowledge.

- Each comic has been divided into smaller topics supported by worksheets and it dovetails with the learning objectives and outcomes.
- It has been created in a linear progression which will help to understand basic concepts and decrease the learning gaps.
- While deconstructing the academic content; care has been taken to address issues of gender sensitivity, women empowerment, value education among other life skills.

100 Years of First Visit of Mahatma Gandhi to Odisha: On 23rd March, 1921 – It energized the Non-Cooperation movement and strengthened the cause of freedom struggle. During the visit of Mahatma Gandhi, large section of youth participated in the movement and women folk regularly spun Charkha and propagated the use of Khadi. Clothes of foreign origin were abandoned. Such was the magical presence of Mahatma Gandhi that Odisha woke up from slumber and plunged itself in the national movement.

National Talent Search Portal (NTSP): With an aim to attract talented sports persons from all over the country, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports through Sports Authority of India (SAI) has launched National Talent Search Portal (NTSP). The NTSP allows access to the talented sportspersons from any part of the country to upload their online applications in their desired sports discipline for admission in Sports Centres run by SAI under its various sport's promotional schemes.

NAFED e- Kisan Mandis: NAFED e-Kisan mandis (NeKM) is electronic trading platform with physical infra-structure at each proposed location in partnership with local Farmer Producer Organisations (FPCs and Cooperatives) to be integrated with a National Level Digital Marketing Platform. The mandi has both physical and virtual infrastructure and it is based on spoke & hub model. The physical infra-structure will include digital platform with auctioning facility, pack-house (including sorting-grading, packing and pre-cooling facilities), warehouse and cold storages if required. FPOs will get funding support through Agriculture Infra-structure Fund (AIF) and subsidies available under various Central and State Government schemes. The mandis are made at farm gate bringing buyers to farmers.

National Film Award 2019

Best Feature Film on Social Issues: Marathi Film Anandi Gopal

- Follows the life of India's first female doctor, Anandi Gopal.
- The story revolves around her and her husband Gopalrao Joshi who encouraged her to study medicine.
- She went on to study at the Woman's Medical College, Pennsylvania in the late 19th century and graduated with an MD in 1886.
- The film also bagged award for the **Best Production Design**.

Most Film Friendly State: Sikkim

Best Non-Feature Film: An Engineered Dream

Best Feature Film: Marakkar-Arabikkadalinte-Simham

Best Children's Film award: Kastoori

Best Arts and Culture Film: Shrikshetra- Ru-Sahijata

Gandhi Peace Prize for Year 2020: Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

Gandhi Peace Prize for the Year 2019: (Late) His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said of Oman (*a visionary leader whose twin policy of moderation and mediation in addressing international issues won him praise and respect across the globe. He played an important role in supporting peace efforts in various regional disputes and conflicts. H.M. Sultan Qaboos was the architect of the special ties between India and Oman*)

- Gandhi Peace Prize is an annual award instituted by Government of India since 1995, the 125th Birth Anniversary commemoration year of Mahatma Gandhi. The award is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or sex.
- The Jury for Gandhi Peace Prize is chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister, Sh Narendra Modi ,and comprises of two ex-officio members, namely the Chief Justice of India and Leader of the single largest Opposition Party in Lok Sabha.

National Portal FOR Transgender Persons: Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has e-launched the National Portal for Transgender persons

- So far, 1915 Transgender Persons have applied for Certificate of Identity and Identity Cards. Out of 1695 valid applications, 277 Certificates of identity and Identity Cards have been issued. 220 applications have been rejected due to insufficient/invalid documents or being Duplicate applications.
- National Portal for Transgender Persons which provides for the procedure for identification certificates issued by the District Magistrate has been established and is functional in all districts of the country.
- As per the Census 2011, there are 4,87,803 persons under the category called 'Other' .

One District One Product Scheme: To reap the benefits of scale in terms of procurement of inputs, availing common services and marketing of products.

ODOP for the scheme has framework for value chain development and alignment of support infrastructure. This scheme is being implemented for a period of five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25 with an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crores.

Identifying district specific products would lead to the following benefits to the micro food processing entrepreneurs:

- Increased access to credit by existing Micro Food Processing entrepreneurs, FPOs, Self Help Groups and Co-operatives;
- Integration with organized supply chain by strengthening branding & marketing;

Support for transition of existing 2,00,000 enterprises into formal framework:

- Increased access to common services like common processing facility, laboratories, storage, packaging, marketing and incubation services;
- Strengthening of institutions, research and training in the food processing sector; and
- Empowers SC, ST and Women Entrepreneurs as the scheme lays special focus on SC, ST and women entrepreneurs.

Increased access for the enterprises, to professional and technical support: The scheme envisages strengthening backward and forward linkages, provision of common facilities, incubation centres, training, research and development (R&D), marketing and branding. The enhanced capacity of processing and value addition in agriculture and allied sector products will lead to a better price realization for the farmers. The identified products have potential for both domestic demand and export and will be promoted in a cluster approach through the converged resources of the Government of India.

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) and Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana-Saubhagya are being implemented across the country for various rural electrification works and electrification of the remaining un-electrified households in rural and urban areas, including NER and State of Meghalaya. All the inhabited census villages and households of Garo hills have been electrified. Under North Eastern Region Power System Improvement Project (NERPSIP) scheme, 14 power projects are under implementation in **Garo hills**.

Climate Data Service Portal: Developed for climate data management and supply to the users. It complements fully automated climate data management process from real-time data acquisition to expeditious data dissemination.

- Real-Time monitoring of weather observations recorded by IMD Observatories.
- Encapsulated IMD Metadata Portal, other reports and dashboards
- Online access to meteorological data through Data Supply Portal.
- Free download facility for Gridded Temperature and Rainfall Data of India.
- Climatological Tables, Extremes and Normal.

- Information on Monsoon Rainfall and Cyclone frequencies.
- Data analytics and info graphics.

Performance Evaluation of e-National Agriculture Market

As on 14th May, 2020, farmers have transacted over Rs 1 Lakh crore on the e-NAM platform with a trade volume of 3.43 crore tones of commodities and 38.16 Lakh bamboo and coconuts.

- Integration of additional 415 mandis with e-NAM, taking the total number of mandis to 1000 across 18 states and 3 UTs, thus bringing more markets access to farmers to sell their agriculture produce.
- FPO trading module has been launched whereby FPOs can trade their produce from their collection center/ premise without bringing the produce to APMC.
- Warehouse based trading module is provided in e-NAM to facilitate trade from warehouses based on e-NWR
- Further the e-NAM platform is made inter operable with Rashtriya e Market Services Private Limited (ReMS) platform of Government of Karnataka which will facilitate farmers of either platforms can sell their produce in other platform thereby increasing their market access.
- GPS Based e-NAM Mandi Locator: Farmers / Sellers can locate their nearby e-NAM mandi using GPS based mandi locator feature through e-NAM mobile app. This will help the farmers to easily locate and reach the selected mandis and sell their agri-produce.
- Integration with AGMARKNET platform: Farmer can access the prevailing commodity prices & arrival information of e-NAM mandi as well as non e-NAM mandi on e-NAM mobile app. prior to even going to the mandi.
- e-NAM portal is available in English and 11 Indian languages (Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi, Odiya, Dogri, Malayalam and Kannada) to facilitate farmers to use e-NAM in the language of their choice.

Progress under National Health Mission (NHM) 2019-20

New Initiatives in 2019-20:

- Social Awareness and Actions to Neutralize Pneumonia Successfully (SAANS) initiative was launched to accelerate action to reduce deaths due to childhood pneumonia.
- SurakshitMatritvaAashwasan (SUMAN) initiative was launched to provide assured, dignified, respectful and quality healthcare at no cost and zero tolerance for denial of services and all existing Schemes for maternal and neonatal health have been brought under one umbrella.
- Midwifery Services Initiative aims to create a cadre of Nurse Practitioners in *Midwifery* who are skilled in accordance to competencies prescribed by the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) and are knowledgeable and capable of providing compassionate women-centered, reproductive, maternal and newborn health care services.

- School Health and Wellness Ambassadors Initiative has been launched under the AB-HWCs Programme in partnership with Ministry of Education to promote health and well-being through an active lifestyle amongst school children.

Targets:

- Reduce MMR to 1/1000 live births
- Reduce IMR to 25/1000 live births
- Reduce TFR to 2.1
- Reduce prevalence of Leprosy to < 1 /10000 population and incidence to zero in all districts
- Annual Malaria Incidence to be <1/1000
- Prevent and reduce mortality & morbidity from communicable, non-communicable; injuries and emerging diseases
- Reduce household out-of-pocket expenditure on total health care expenditure
- Ending the TB epidemic by 2025 from the country

India has crossed a Key Milestone in Universal Primary Healthcare

- Target of Operationalizing 70,000 Ayushman Bharat – Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) achieved Ahead of Time
- About 41.35 crore people have accessed primary healthcare services at the AB-HWCs
- More than 9.45 lakh Tele-consultations done at the HWCs

Expanded Service Packages provided under AB-HWC are as follows:

- Care in Pregnancy and Child Birth.
- Neonatal and Infant health care services.
- Childhood and Adolescent health care services.
- Family planning, contraceptive services and other reproductive health care services
- Management of communicable diseases: National Health programmes
- General out-patient care for acute simple illnesses and minor ailments
- Screening, prevention, control and management of non-communicable diseases and chronic communicable diseases like tuberculosis and leprosy
- Basic oral health care
- Screening and basic management of mental Health ailments
- Care for common ophthalmic and ENT problem
- Elderly and palliative health care services
- Emergency medical services including burns and trauma

Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh

The temples at Khajuraho are all made of sandstone. They were patronized by the Chandella dynasty.

Temples

- Kandariya Temple
- Mahadev Temple
- Devi Jagadamba Temple
- Chitragupta Temple
- Vishwanatha Temple
- Parvati Temple
- Lakshmana or Chaturbhuja Temple: dedicated to Vishnu is the grandest temple of Khajuraho, built in 954 by the Chandela king, Dhanga
- Varaha Temple
- Chaunsat Yogini Temple

General features:

- Built of buff sandstone from quarries of Panna
- Soft texture and pleasing color
- High terraces
- Panchayatana architecture
- Circumambulatory path
- Jain Temples – Parshvanatha and Ghantai temple
- Khajuraho's temples are also known for their extensive erotic sculptures; the erotic expression is given equal importance in human experience as spiritual pursuit, and it is seen as part of a larger cosmic whole.
- Many Hindu temples therefore feature mithun (embracing couple) sculptures, considered auspicious.
- Usually, they are placed at the entrance of the temple or on an exterior wall or they may also be placed on the walls between the mandapa and the main shrine.
- The other notable example at Khajuraho is Kandariya Mahadeo temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.
- There are many temples at Khajuraho, most of them devoted to Hindu gods.
- There are some Jain temples as well as a Chausanth Yogini temple, which is of interest. Predating the tenth century, this is a temple of small, square shrines of roughly-hewn granite blocks, each dedicated to esoteric deities or goddesses associated with the rise of Tantric worship after the seventh century.
- Several such temples were dedicated to the cult of the yoginis across Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Tamil Nadu.
- Khajuraho complex of temples is yet another excellent example of sculptures representing women in different roles. For example on Kandariya laxmana temple we can see a woman with a purse in hand purchasing stuff from market showcases economic independence and her ability to make choice.
- Also Khajuraho is famous for erotic sculptures, where we can see women are supremely confident when it comes to exploring their sexuality. Practice of polyandry is evident on temple walls

Lakshmana Temple in Khajuraho

- The temples at Khajuraho are all made of sandstone. They were patronised by the Chandella dynasty.

- The Lakshamana temple represents the full-fledged, developed style of temple architecture during the time of the Chandellas. Its construction was completed by 954, the year as per the inscription found at the base of the temple, by Yashovarman, the seventh ruler of the Chandella dynasty.
- The temple plan is of a panchayana type.
- The temple is constructed on a heavy plinth. It consists of an ardhamandapa (porch), mandapa (porch), the maha mandapa (greater hall) and the garbhagriha with vimana.
- Many erotic sculptures are carved on the plinth wall. Some erotic sculptures are carved on the actual wall of the temple.
- An image of Chaturmukha Vishnu is in the garbhagriha.
- There are four shrines in each corner of the temple. There are images of Vishnu in three shrines and Surya in one, which can be identified by the central image on the lintel of the shrine-doors.

Markandeshwar temple: Known as the “Khajuraho of Vidarbha”, the temple of Markandadeo is situated on the bank of River Wainganga in district Gadchiroli of Maharashtra. The temples belong to the Nagara group of temples of North India. On stylistic grounds, their date ranges in between 9-12th centuries CE. The temples belong to saiva, vaishnava and sakta faith. Most of the temples have a simple plan, with ardhamandapa, mandapa, antarala and garbhagriha forming the component of the entire set up.

Stories of Madurai

Madurai, one of the oldest living cities, holds the soul of Tamil Nadu in its magnificent and grand temples that are among the finest and most awe-inspiring specimens of architecture in the country.

The most spectacular of these is the **Meenakshi-Sundareswarar Temple**, which is the heartbeat of the city and is visited by thousands of devotees.

Madurai once traded with ancient Rome and it preserves its distinct character in various arts and textiles that have been bestowed by the Pandian kings (4th century-16th century). Legend has it that king Kulasekhara once dreamt of Lord Shiva, from whose hair, drops of sweet madhu (nectar) rolled down on earth. The point where they fell was known as **Madhurapuri**. Earlier known as Madhurapuri and Thoonga Nagaram, meaning a city that never sleeps, Madurai grew around the Meenakshi Amman Temple, which was constructed 2,500 years ago by Pandian king, Kulasekhara. Popularly called the **Athens of the East**, it was visited by Greek explorer, Megasthenes in 3rd century BC. Other famous travellers who visited this ancient south Indian city included Pliny in 77 AD, Ptolemy in 140 AD, Marco Polo in 1203 AD and Ibn Batuta (1333 AD).

One of the largest temple complexes in India, **Sri Meenakshi-Sundareswarar Temple** is the most famous spiritual site in Madurai. An excellent example of **Dravidian architecture**, the temple is sprawled over a huge area, bordered by well-laid gardens and pristine fountains. Two shrines, more than 10 gateways or gopurams, several mandapas

(halls) and a giant pool, make up the structure of the temple, which is adorned with beautiful carvings inside and outside. One of the halls of the temple is famous as the **“Hall of a 1,000 pillars”** though only 985 of them exist today. It is said that whichever direction you view these pillars from, they always seem to be in a straight line. The highlight of the temple is the outermost corridor that comprises **musical pillars**. These produce different musical notes when tapped. While one of the sanctorum, Sundareswarar, is dedicated to Lord Shiva, the other is devoted to Goddess Meenakshi, his consort.

Madurai is also well known for its exquisite sarees to wooden toys and sculptures. It is also referred as hub of shopping, where visitors can find a fine selection of unique and handmade products.

Personality in News

Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia

- An activist for the Indian independence movement and a socialist political leader
- One of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party and editor of its mouthpiece Congress Socialist
- Wrote his PhD thesis paper on the topic of Salt Taxation in India, focusing on Gandhi's socio-economic theory.
- Also wrote – ‘Marx, Gandhi and Socialism’, ‘Guilty Men of India's Partition’, etc.

Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru, and Sukhdev Thapar:

- Three most shining icons of the country's freedom struggle
- They were the three unparalleled revolutionaries in history
- The trio, were members of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association

Contributions:

1. **Defined nation and nationalism:** At a young age, Bhagat Singh defined nation and nationalism for us.
 2. **On Universal Brotherhood:** At age 17, he published his first article (in 1924) in Matwala, a Hindi magazine from Calcutta. The subject was ‘Universal Brotherhood’.
- He imagined a world where “all of us being one and none is the other. It will really be a comforting time when the world will have no strangers.”
 - He emphatically exclaimed that “as long as words like black and white, civilized and uncivilized, ruler and the ruled, rich and poor, touchable and untouchable, etc., are in vogue there was no scope for universal brotherhood”.
 - He went on to say, “We will have to campaign for equality and equity. Will have to punish those who oppose the creation of such a world.”

(Today, when many are busy “othering” and creating strangers out of their own fellow citizens need to grapple with Bhagat Singh's views, instead of merely glorifying him as a martyr.)

1. Strongest critique of untouchability and communalism:

- He wrote series of articles on 'Anarchism' and was fiercely frank and bold enough to critically comment on the politics of senior leaders such as Lala Lajpat Rai and express his differences.
- He was also conscious of the international revolutionary struggles and ideologies.
- He was aghast that we claimed to be a spiritual country, yet discriminated against fellow human beings while the materialist West had done away with such inhuman obscenities long ago.

(Even today, untouchability and communalism continue to torment us as a nation.)

1. On inclusiveness:

- Bhagat Singh steadfastly remained committed to the idea of a plural and inclusive India.
- He founded the **Naujawan Bharat Sabha** in Lahore in 1926, whose manifesto said, "Religious superstitions and bigotry are a great hindrance in our progress. They have proved an obstacle in our way and we must do away with them. 'The thing that cannot bear free thought must perish'."
- In 1928, Bhagat Singh was acutely conscious of the **divisiveness of mixing religion with politics**.
- He wrote – "If religion is separated from politics, then all of us can jointly initiate political activities, even though in matters of religion we might have many differences with each other. We feel that the true well-wishers of India would follow these principles and save India from the suicidal path it is on at present."
- He even had authored masterly essay, '**Why I am an Atheist**'. Bhagat Singh observed: "Our retrogressive thinking is destroying us. We keep ourselves entangled in futile discussions about God and heaven, and remain busy in talking about the soul and God. We are quick to dub Europe as capitalist and don't think about their great ideas or pay any attention to them. We love divinity and remain aloof from the world."

(Even today, many continue to peddle religion to promote political prospects.)

Thus we can see here the evolution of his ideas on politics, society, religion and even faith in god.

- The lessons from the lives of these revolutionaries remain as relevant today as they were during the independence movement.
- Their lives are proof that one is never too young to be politically aware, to educate oneself about the truth of the world at large, and to actively play a role in shaping the society one wants to live in.
- In these rancorous times, Bhagat Singh's intellectual bequest should be a beacon to build a new India.

Chandra Shekhar Azad

Chandrashekhar Azad was a great Indian freedom fighter. His fierce patriotism and courage inspired others of his generation to enter freedom struggle. He was the mentor of Bhagat Singh, another great freedom fighter, and along with Bhagat Singh he is considered as one of the greatest revolutionaries that India has produced.

As a revolutionary

‘Azad’: In December 1921, when Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi launched the Non-Cooperation Movement, Chandra Shekhar, then a 15-year-old student, joined. As a result, he was arrested. On being presented before a magistrate, he gave his name as “Azad” (The Free), his father’s name as “Swatantrata” (Independence) and his residence as “Jail”. From that day he came to be known as Chandra Shekhar Azad among the people.

Became famous for: Involved in the Kakori Train Robbery of 1925, in the attempt to blow up the Viceroy of India’s train in 1926, and at last the shooting of J. P. Saunders at Lahore in 1928 to avenge the killing of Lala Lajpat Rai. The Colt pistol of Chandra Shekhar Azad is displayed at the Prayagraj Museum.

What inspired him: The Jallianwala Bagh tragedy which took place in 1919 was when he decided to join the Non-Cooperation movement led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920.

Formed: He was the chief strategist of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA).

He inspired: Bhagat Singh

Chandrashekhar Azad was attracted towards more aggressive and revolutionary ideals. He committed himself to complete independence by any means. Azad and his compatriots would target British officials known for their oppressive actions against ordinary people and freedom fighters.

A terror for British police: He was on their hit list and the British police badly wanted to capture him dead or alive. On February 27, 1931 Azad met two of his comrades at the Alfred Park Allahabad. He was betrayed by an informer who had informed the British police. The police surrounded the park and ordered Azad to surrender. Azad fought alone valiantly and killed three policemen. But finding himself surrounded and seeing no route for escape, he shot himself. Thus he kept his pledge of not being caught alive.

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 iasbaba.com/2021/04/press-information-bureau-pib-ias-upsc-1st-april-to-4th-april-2021

Date April 7, 2021

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Phase III of the eCourts Project

(Topic: Structure, organization and functioning of the Judiciary)

The eCommittee Supreme Court has prepared the draft vision document for Phase III of the eCourts Project under the auspices of the Supreme court of India.

E-Courts Project is a mission mode project undertaken by the Department of Justice, Government of India.

Objective: For all the stakeholders, i.e., Advocates, Litigants, common citizens, Law students, Technical experts to give valuable inputs suggestions and feedback as the knowledge, insight, concerns, and experience of the stakeholders will help to refine the vision document of the next phase of the eCourts Project and to plan its implementation.

Phase III of the eCourts Project in India

It is rooted in two central facets—**access and inclusion**. Phase III of the eCourts Project envisions a judicial system that is more easily accessible irrespective of geographical distances, efficient and equitable for every individual who seeks justice, makes more efficient use of human and other resources, and absorbs the latest technology for a positive environmental impact.

This vision for Phase III is sought to be built on the following **four building blocks**:

1. **Core Values:** Phase III must strive for a modern judicial system, governed by core values of trust, empathy, sustainability and transparency which, while simplifying procedures, will maximise the positives of technology and minimise its risks and challenges.
2. **Whole-of-system approach:** Phase III must aim to make processes more efficient across all three components of dispute management i.e. dispute avoidance, containment and resolution. Each of these components will require technological integration with different institutions.

3. **Adoption frameworks:** Phase III must focus on building strong adoption frameworks. Such frameworks must include behavioural nudges, adequate training and skill set development, feedback loops, along with the requisite mandate of law.
4. **Governance framework:** From a governance perspective, while numerous judicial decisions have validated the use of technology in judicial processes, Phase III must address the accompanying administrative structures. The key goals and strategy of Phase III prioritise the creation of a core digital infrastructure that can enable the development of services for dispute resolution by the judiciary and services of solutions for dispute containment and resolution by the ecosystem.

About eCommittee of the Supreme Court

The eCommittee of the Supreme Court has been overseeing the implementation of the eCourts Project, conceptualized under the “National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the Indian Judiciary-2005”. The eCommittee has evolved in terms of its roles and responsibilities over the last fifteen years.

Objectives

- Interlinking of all courts across the country
- ICT enablement of the Indian judicial system
- Enabling courts to enhance judicial productivity, both qualitatively and quantitatively
- Making the justice delivery system accessible, cost-effective, transparent and accountable
- Providing citizen-centric services

National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021

(Topic: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation)

The Rare Diseases Policy aims to **lower the high cost of treatment for rare diseases** with **increased focus on indigenous research** with the help of a National Consortium to be set up with Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare as convenor.

- Increased focus of research and development and local production of medicines will lower the cost of treatment for rare diseases.
- The policy also envisage creation of a national hospital based registry of rare diseases so that adequate data is available for definition of rare diseases and for research and development related to rare diseases within the country.
- The Policy also focuses on early screening and prevention through primary and secondary health care infrastructure such as Health and Wellness Centres and District Early Intervention Centres (DEICs) and through counselling for the high-risk parents. Screening will also be supported by Nidan Kendras set up by Department of Biotechnology.

- Policy also aims to strengthen tertiary health care facilities for prevention and treatment of rare diseases through designating 8 health facilities as Centre of Excellence and these CoEs will also be provided one-time financial support of up to Rs 5 crores for upgradation of diagnostics facilities.
- A provision for financial support up to Rs. 20 lakhs under the Umbrella Scheme of Rastriya Arogya Nidhi is proposed for treatment, of those rare diseases that require a one-time treatment (diseases listed under Group 1 in the rare disease policy). Beneficiaries for such financial assistance would not be limited to BPL families, but the benefit will be extended to about 40% of the population, who are eligible under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana.
- Besides, the Policy also envisages a crowd funding mechanism in which corporates and individuals will be encouraged to extend financial support through a robust IT platform for treatment of rare diseases. Funds so collected will be utilized by Centres of Excellence for treatment of all three categories of rare diseases as first charge and then the balance financial resources could also be used for research.

The Need for the Policy

The field of rare diseases is very complex and heterogeneous and prevention, treatment and management of rare diseases has multiple challenges. Early diagnosis of rare diseases is a major challenge owing to a variety of factors that include lack of awareness among primary care physicians, lack of adequate screening and diagnostic facilities etc.

There are also fundamental challenges in the research and development for the majority of rare diseases as relatively little is known about the pathophysiology or the natural history of these diseases particularly in the Indian context. Rare diseases are also difficult to research upon as the patients pool is very small and it often results in inadequate clinical experience. Availability and accessibility to medicines are also important to reduce morbidity and mortality associated with rare disease. Despite progress in recent years, there is a need to augment effective and safe treatment for rare diseases. The cost of treatment of rare diseases is prohibitively expensive. Various High Courts and the Supreme Court have also expressed concern about lack of a national policy for rare diseases.

Prelims-oriented News

Utkala Dibasa: Odisha Day

- Utkala Dibasa is celebrated on 1 April in the Indian state of Odisha in memory of the formation of the state as a separate state out of Bihar and Orissa Province with addition of Koraput and Ganjam from the Madras Presidency on **1 April 1936**.
- After losing its political identity completely in 1568 following the defeat and demise of the last king **Mukunda Dev**, efforts resulted in the formation of a politically separate state under British rule on a **linguistic basis** on 1 April **1936**.

MyNEP2020” platform of NCTE Portal: The platform seeks to invite suggestions/inputs/membership from the stakeholders for preparing draft for development of National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) and National Mission for Mentoring Program membership (NMM). This exercise of digital consultation envisages the participation of teachers, education professionals, academicians, & other stakeholders in preparing the documents on teacher policy for sustainable and positive change in the Teacher’s Education Sector. For preparing the documents on above two major recommendations of NEP 2020, NCTE will work in close consultation with individuals/organizations.

Dadasaheb Phalke Award: Rajinikanth

- DadasahebPhalke (1870–1944), was an Indian film-maker who directed India’s first full-length feature film, Raja Harishchandra (1913). He is regarded as “the father of Indian cinema.”
- The award is given to people for their “outstanding contribution to the growth and development of Indian cinema”.
- It is presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals (an organisation set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting).
- The award prize consists of a golden lotus, a cash prize of ₹10 lakh and a shawl.
- The award was first presented in 1969. The first recipient of the award was actress Devika Rani, “the first lady of Indian cinema.”

Sankalp se Siddhi – Village & Digital Connect Drive

By: TRIFED under Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Aim: To activate the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras in the villages

- Starting from April 1, 2021, this 100 day drive will entail 150 teams (10 in each region from TRIFED and State Implementation Agencies/Mentoring Agencies/Partners) visiting ten villages each. 100 villages in each region and 1500 villages in the country will be covered in the next 100 days.
- It is expected that Sankalp Se Siddhi will aid in effecting a complete transformation of the tribal ecosystem across the country.

Good Friday

- It is observed by Christians a day before Easter to commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ at Calvary Hills.
- According to the Bible, Jesus was crucified to death in the most brutal way. The Bible says, “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). It says that he was beaten, tortured, and made to carry his own cross before being crucified on it.
- Good Friday also marks the end of over a month of fasting called Lent. It is a period during which Christians fast, pray and give alms.

- He gave the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Despite it being a terrible day, it paved the way for the salvation of mankind as Jesus resurrected and came back to life two days later i.e. on Sunday. Christians marked it as 'Good' as a symbol of victory of good over evil.
- There is another belief that it is originated from the term 'God's Friday.' Others interpret 'Good' as 'holy' and therefore call it 'Good Friday.'

Quotes

By the Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu

On Governance

- People must elect their representatives on 4Cs—Character, Conduct, Calibre and Capacity
- Citizen-centric governance will come from governance-centric electorate
- Good governance was essential to fulfill the aspirations of the people and in ensuring that various schemes were implemented effectively. Good governance was also equally important to fulfill the aspirations of the people. Happiness comes with good governance.

Usage of mother tongue


- Always remember your mother, mother tongue, motherland and native place
- Calls for extensive use of mother tongue in courts and administration

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 iasbaba.com/2021/04/press-information-bureau-pib-ias-upsc-4th-april-to-11th-april-2021

Date April 13, 2021

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Heat Waves in the country

(Topic: Geophysical phenomena)

A Heat Wave is a period of abnormally high temperatures, more than the normal maximum temperature that occurs during the summer season in the North-Western parts of India. Heat Waves typically occur between March and June, and in some rare cases

even extend till July.

If the average global temperature rose by more than one degree Celsius from the present, India could “annually” expect conditions like the 2015 heat wave that killed at least 2,000, according to the ‘Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C,’ commissioned by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Heat wave is not notified in the list of twelve disasters eligible for relief under National/ State Disaster Response Fund norms. However, a State Government may use up to 10 per cent of the funds available under the SDRF for providing immediate relief to the victims of natural disasters that they consider to be “disasters” within the local context in the State.

Heat wave is declared under these circumstances:

- An increase of 5°C to 6°C when the normal maximum temperature is less than or equal to 40°C.
- An increase of 7°C or more from the normal temperature is considered as severe heat wave condition.
- An increase of 4°C to 5°C when the normal maximum temperature of a station is more than 40°C.
- An increase of 6°C or more is considered as severe heat wave condition.
- If the actual maximum temperature remains 45°C or more irrespective of normal maximum temperature.

Threat posed by heat waves:

- The health impacts of Heat Waves typically involve dehydration, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and/or heat stroke.
- The Lancet Countdown 2018 report sounds a warning that rising temperatures will enable the dengue virus and malaria to spread farther and faster.
- Lancet Countdown 2018 report also mentions that India lost nearly 75 billion hours of labour due to heat waves in 2017.
- The agriculture sector is more vulnerable compared to the industrial and service sectors because workers there are more likely to be exposed to heat. This has worrying implications for rural employment and the well-being of a large section of the population (nearly 49%) that depends on farming.
- Food insecurity due to lowering of productivity due to extreme temperatures.
- It may further intensify the water scarcity and could lead to increased water disputes.

First Aid for heat stroke:

While waiting for the paramedics to arrive, initiate first aid with the aim to lower the body temperature.

- Move the person to an air-conditioned environment or at least a cool, shady area and remove any unnecessary clothing.

- Fan air over the patient while wetting his or her skin with water from a sponge or garden hose.
- Apply ice packs to the patient's armpits, groin, neck, and back because these areas are rich with blood vessels close to the skin, cooling them may reduce body temperature.
- Do not use ice for older patients, young children, patients with chronic illness, or anyone whose heat stroke occurred without vigorous exercise.

Way Forward

Increased exposure to heatwaves needs a policy response, nationally and globally. Long term measures should be taken to address the issue in the wake of global warming and climate change:

- **Establish Early Warning System and Inter-Agency Coordination** to alert residents on predicted high and extreme temperatures
- **Capacity building / training programme** for health care professionals at local level
- **Public Awareness and community outreach** to protect against the extreme heat-wave through print, electronic and social media and Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials.

Collaboration with non-government and civil society

Afforestation drives to increase green cover.

A further reduction in the share of coal in the energy mix through sustained support for renewable energy, particularly solar photovoltaic, must form the cornerstone of national policy

It is vital that India gets more ambitious about cutting back on carbon emissions, even as it presses for the fulfillment of the climate finance obligations of developed countries under the Paris Agreement of the UNFCCC. This must be matched by a shift away from use of fossil fuels for transport, and the induction of more electric vehicles.

Must Read: Heat Stroke (Hyperthermia)

Non-uniformity of Himalayas foresees significantly large earthquake events

(Topic: Geophysical phenomena)

Scientists have found that the Himalayas are not uniform and assume different physical and mechanical properties in different directions – a property present in crystals called anisotropy which could result in significantly large earthquake events in the Himalayas.

The NW region of India, an area covering Garhwal and Himachal Pradesh, has been hit by four destructive moderate to great earthquakes since the beginning of the 20th century — the Kangra earthquake of 1905, the Kinnaur earthquake of 1975, the Uttarkashi earthquake of 1991, and the Chamoli earthquake of 1999. These seismic activities manifest large-scale subsurface deformation and weak zones, underlining the need for deeper insights into the ongoing deformation beneath these tectonically unstable zones.

- The major contribution of the anisotropy is mainly because the strain induced by the Indo-Eurasia collision (going on since 50 million years) and deformation due to the collision is found to be larger in the crust than in the upper mantle.
- The inhomogeneity along the Himalayas influences the stressing rate is because of variation in the geometry of the Main Himalayan Thrust (MHT) system, and it controls the rupture size during the earthquake. This lack of homogenous physical and mechanical properties of the Himalayas could help explore new perspectives about deformations taking place at the Himalaya-Tibet crustal belt involved in the formation of the Himalayan Mountains.

GS-2

Launch of Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP), the revised next generation Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) digital platform

(Topic: Health)

Considered to be a new chapter in India's public health trajectory, with the launch of IHIP, India is the first country in the world to adopt such an advanced disease surveillance system.

IHIP will provide health information system developed for real time, case-based information, integrated analytics, advanced visualization capability. It will provide analyzed reports on mobile or other electronic devices. In addition, outbreak investigation activities can be initiated and monitored electronically. It can easily be integrated with other ongoing surveillance program, while having the feature of addition of special surveillance modules.

- The new version of IHIP will house the data entry and management for India's disease surveillance program. In addition to tracking 33 diseases now as compared to the earlier 18 diseases, it shall ensure near-real-time data in digital mode, having done away with the paper-mode of working
- The world's biggest online disease surveillance platform, is in sync with the National Digital Health Mission and fully compatible with the other digital information systems presently being used in India.
- The refined IHIP with automated -data will help in a big way in real time data collection, aggregation & further analysis of data that will aid and enable evidence-based policy making.

India's information system for precision public health is essential for delivering the right intervention at the right time, every time to the right population.

National Policy for Rare Diseases, 2021

(Topic: Health)

By Ministry: Ministry of Health

Aim:

- To lower the high cost of treatment for rare diseases with increased focus on indigenous research;
- To strengthen tertiary health care facilities for prevention and treatment of rare diseases through designating 8 health facilities as Centre of Excellence (CoEs).

Vision: Creation of a national hospital based registry of rare diseases so that adequate data about rare diseases is available.

Focus: Early screening and prevention through primary and secondary health care infrastructure such as Health and Wellness Centres and District Early Intervention Centres (DEICs) and through counselling for the high-risk patients.

Key Pointers:

- National Consortium shall be set up to provide the required help
- Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare will be its convenor.
- Screening will also be supported by Nidan Kendras set up by Department of Biotechnology.
- CoEs will also be provided one-time financial support of up to Rs 5 crores for upgradation of diagnostics facilities.
- A provision for financial support up to Rs. 20 lakhs under the Umbrella Scheme of **Rashtriya Arogya Nidhi** is proposed for treatment of those rare diseases that require a one-time treatment (diseases listed under Group 1 in the rare disease policy).
- Envisages a crowdfunding mechanism in which corporates and individuals will be encouraged to extend financial support through a robust IT platform for treatment of rare diseases. Funds so collected will be utilized by Centres of Excellence for treatment of all three categories of rare diseases as a first charge and the balance financial resources can also be used for research.

Do you know?

In India, **Haemophilia**, **Thalassemia**, Sickle cell anaemia and Primary Immuno Deficiency in children, auto-immune diseases, Lysosomal storage disorders such as Pompe disease and Gaucher's disease are in the rare diseases list.

Spices Board India and UNDP India's Accelerator Lab sign MoU

(Topic: Collaboration with International organisations)

Aim: To develop blockchain-powered traceability Interface for Indian spices to enhance transparency in supply chain and trade

- UNDP and Spices Board India are working towards integrating the Blockchain Traceability Interface with the e-Spice Bazaar portal developed by Spices Board India for connecting spices farmers with markets.
- The project will be piloted with over 3,000 farmers engaged in chilli and turmeric farming in select Districts of Andhra Pradesh.

Blockchain is a decentralized process of recording transactions on an open and shared electronic ledger. This allows for ease and transparency in data management across a complex network, including, farmers, brokers, distributors, processors, retailers, regulators, and consumers, thus simplifying the supply chain.

- It will allow farmers just as all other members of the supply chain to access the information which further makes the entire supply chain more efficient and equitable.
- Enhance consumer confidence and facilitate sourcing of spices for exports as well as for local value addition and use.

Spices in India

- India is the largest exporter, producer and consumer of spices in the world. India's spices export crossed a milestone of 3 Bn USD during 2019-20.
- Spices Board is the agency responsible for export promotion of Indian spices in the world markets

About Spices Board: Spices Board is one of the five Commodity Boards functioning under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry. It is an autonomous body responsible for the export promotion of the 52 scheduled spices and development of Cardamom (Small & Large). The main functions of the Spices Board are the following:

(i) Research, Development and Regulation of domestic marketing of Small & Large Cardamom;

(ii) Post-harvest improvement of all spices;

(iii) Export promotion of all spices and assisting exporters in technology upgradation, quality management, brand promotion, research & product development;

(iv) Development of spices in the North East;

(v) Regulation of quality of spices for exports through its quality evaluation services; etc.

About UNDP: UNDP works across 170 countries and territories to eradicate poverty while protecting the planet. We help countries develop strong policies, skills, partnerships, and institutions so they can sustain their progress. UNDP has worked in India since 1951 in almost all areas of human development, from systems strengthening to inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods, as well as sustainable energy, environment, and resilience. UNDP's programmes continue to integrate a global vision for catalytic change with India's national priorities. With over 30 projects on the ground in almost every state, today, it works to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by transforming traditional models to do development differently.

Atal Innovation Mission joins hands with CIPS for innovations in public systems

(Topic: Government policies in skill development and entrepreneurship)

Aim: To reinforce the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in India by developing a database of innovations in public systems for improving public services

- Will help startups to access and promote their innovations to grassroots levels by synergizing with the local administration. The challenges faced by the local administration in delivering the services to the citizens can be addressed through the start-ups by drafting a plan of action with the support of CIPS mentors.
- AIM and CIPS will jointly organize round tables involving the district and local level administration officials to create awareness about innovative products and solutions and help them understand standard processes and policies around procurement so that procurement and implementation of relevant innovative solutions can be expedited.
- The need of the hour is to ensure capacity building of teachers/mentors at grassroots levels to promote innovative learning among the students. This can be achieved by jointly creating an Innovation Learning Management System (iLMS).
- The partnership will also help promote the programs launched by AIM at state and district level and liaison with the states. It will strengthen the AIM Mentor of Change program through larger participation of government officers at district level.

There is growing evidence that multi-actor collaboration in networks, partnerships and inter-organisational teams can spur public innovation. The involvement of different public and private actors in public innovation processes may improve the understanding of the problem or challenge at hand, bring forth new ideas and proposals, and build joint ownership of new and bold solutions.

MoU between India and Japan for Academic and Research Cooperation and Exchange

(Topic: India and Japan)

The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, is apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between National Atmospheric Research Laboratory (NARL), Dept of Space, Government of India and Research Institute for Sustainable Humanosphere (RISH), Kyoto University, Kyoto, Japan for Academic and Research Cooperation and Exchange

Objectives

- This MoU shall enable NARL and RISH to continue their cooperation in areas of atmospheric science and technology, collaborative scientific experiments/campaigns and related modelling studies utilising the research facilities of RISH and NARL, exchange of scientific materials, publications and information, joint research meetings and workshops, exchange of faculty members, students and researchers.
- This MoU would lead to mutual utilization of facilities such as the Middle and Upper atmosphere (MU) radar in Shigaraki, Japan, the Equatorial Atmosphere Radar (EAR) in Kototabang, Indonesia and complementary instruments available from RISH, and the Mesosphere-Stratosphere-Troposphere (MST) radar and complementary instruments available at NARL.

Background

NARL and RISH have been collaborating in the area of atmospheric science and technology as well as exchange of scientists. This arrangement was formalised in 2008 through an MoU. The above MoU was renewed in the year 2013. A fresh MOU to promote collaborative research, as per the new guidelines, was signed in November 2020 by both sides and exchanged.

NARL scientists worked as resource persons in the international school on atmospheric radar conducted by RISH. A team of Professors and Researchers of Kyoto University visited NARL and conducted focused workshop to strengthen cooperative research being carried out by the two institutes.

Cabinet approves Production Linked Incentive scheme ‘National Programme on High Efficiency Solar PV Modules’

The Cabinet has approved the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy’s proposal for implementation of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme ‘National Programme on High Efficiency Solar PV (Photo Voltic) Modules’ for achieving manufacturing capacity of Giga Watt (GW) scale in high efficiency solar PV modules with an outlay of Rs.4,500 crore.

Solar capacity addition presently depends largely upon imported solar PV cells and modules as the domestic manufacturing industry has limited operational capacities of solar PV cells and modules. The National Programme on High Efficiency Solar PV Modules will reduce import dependence in a strategic sector like electricity. It will also support the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

Solar PV manufacturers will be selected through a transparent competitive bidding process. PLI will be disbursed for 5 years post commissioning of solar PV manufacturing plants, on sales of high efficiency solar PV modules. Manufacturers will be rewarded for higher efficiencies of solar PV modules and also for sourcing their material from the domestic market. Thus, the PLI amount will increase with increased module efficiency and increased local value addition.

The outcomes/ benefits expected from the scheme are as follows:

1. Additional 10,000 MW capacity of integrated solar PV manufacturing plants,
2. Direct investment of around Rs.17,200 crore in solar PV manufacturing projects
3. Demand of Rs.17,500 crore over 5 years for 'Balance of Materials',
4. Direct employment of about 30,000 and Indirect employment of about 1,20,000 persons,
5. Import substitution of around Rs.17,500 crore every year, and
6. Impetus to Research & Development to achieve higher efficiency in solar PV modules.

GS-3

MoU Signed between Ministry of AYUSH and Department of Animal Husbandry for research on new formulations in quality drugs for veterinary science

(Topic: Animal Husbandry)

An Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Ministry of AYUSH and Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying for research on new formulations in quality drugs for veterinary science through medicinal herbs. The initiative involves capacity building in related areas through training, exploring marketing possibilities for herbal veterinary medicines on a sustainable basis and providing for services including cultivation, preservation and conservation of medicinal plants.

The Ministry of AYUSH will support Department of Animal Husbandry for

- Developing curriculum and courses for AYUSH herbal veterinary education programs,
- Identifying potential medicinal plant species used in veterinary medicine and provide their standards, training and awareness program on Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs)& Good Field Collection Practices (GFCPs) etc.,
- Development of Good Manufacturing Practices (GMPs) for manufacturing of AYUSH/herbal veterinary medicines,
- Skill development and capacity building,
- Facilitate and render financial assistance for plantations and nursery development for medicinal plants,

- Facilitate standardizing norms for medicinal plants,
- Assist establishing research and testing centers as per scope of the Scheme.

The Department of Animal Husbandry will support Ministry of AYUSH for its expert technical opinion for essentiality, desirability and feasibility with respect to Ayurvedic medicines.

- The Department will create awareness with support of NDDB among dairy farmers and agro-farmers about utilization and importance of herbal veterinary medicine and cultivation of medicinal herbs,
- Develop course curriculum for Ayurveda and its allied subjects in veterinary medicine,
- Identify list of priority livestock and poultry diseases of economic importance with respect to research activity or application of veterinary Ayurveda and allied streams,
- Support farmers for undertaking cultivation and conservation of medicinal plants and related activities,
- Support identify opportunities for scientific and technological collaboration to research institute (Veterinary Colleges and ICAR research institutes).

Union Cabinet approves Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for White Goods (Air Conditioners and LED Lights)

(Topic: Indian Economy)

The prime objective of the PLI scheme is to make manufacturing in India globally competitive by removing sectoral disabilities, creating economies of scale and ensuring efficiencies. It is designed to create complete component ecosystem in India and make India an integral part of the global supply chains. The scheme is expected to attract global investments, generate large scale employment opportunities and enhance exports substantially.

The PLI Scheme for White Goods shall extend an incentive of **4% to 6%** on incremental sales of goods manufactured in India for a **period of five years** to companies engaged in manufacturing of Air Conditioners and LED Lights. Selection of companies for the Scheme shall be done so as to incentivize manufacturing of components or sub-assemblies which are not manufactured in India presently with sufficient capacity. Mere assembly of finished goods shall not be incentivized.

Companies meeting the pre-qualification criteria for different target segments will be eligible to participate in the Scheme. Incentives shall be open to companies making brown field or green field Investments. Thresholds of cumulative incremental investment and incremental sales of manufactured goods over the base year would have to be met for claiming incentives.

The Scheme is expected to be instrumental in achieving growth rates that are much higher than existing ones for AC and LED industries, develop complete component eco-systems in India and create global champions manufacturing in India. They will have to meet the compulsory BIS and BEE Quality standards for sales into domestic market and applicable standards for global markets. It will also lead to investments in innovation and research and development and upgradation of technology.

Copyright (Amendment) Rules, 2021

(Topic: Economy)

In India, the copyright regime is governed by the Copyright Act, 1957 and the Copyright Rules, 2013. The Copyright Rules, 2013 were last amended in the year 2016.

The amendments have been introduced with the objective of bringing the existing rules in parity with other relevant legislations. It aims to ensure smooth and flawless compliance in the light of the technological advancement in digital era by adopting electronic means as primary mode of communication and working in the Copyright Office. A new provision regarding publication of a copyrights journal has been incorporated, thereby eliminating the requirement of publication in the Official Gazette. The said journal would be available at the website of the Copyright Office.

In order to encourage accountability and transparency, new provisions have been introduced, to deal with the undistributed royalty amounts and use of electronic and traceable payment methods while collection and distribution of royalties. To reinforce transparency in working of copyright societies a new rule has been introduced, whereby the copyright societies will be required to draw up and make public an Annual Transparency Report for each financial year.

The amendments have harmonised the Copyright Rules with the provisions of Finance Act, 2017 whereby the Copyright Board has been merged with Appellate Board.

The compliance requirements for registration of software works have been largely reduced, as now the applicant has the liberty to file the first 10 and last 10 pages of source code, or the entire source code if less than 20 pages, with no blocked out or redacted portions.

The time limit for the Central Government to respond to an application made before it for registration as a copyright society is extended to one hundred and eighty days, so that the application can be more comprehensively examined.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Pre-packaged Insolvency Resolution Process) Regulations, 2021

(Topic: Economy)

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021 promulgated on 4th April, 2021 provides for pre-packaged insolvency resolution process (PPIRP) for corporate debtors classified as micro, small and medium enterprises. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India notified the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Pre-packaged Insolvency Resolution Process) Regulations, 2021 (PPIRP Regulations) today to enable operationalisation of PPIRP.

The PPIRP Regulations detail the Forms that stakeholders are required to use, and the manner of carrying out various tasks by them as part of the PPIRP. These provide details and manner relating to:

1. Eligibility to act as resolution professional, and his terms of appointment;
2. Eligibility of registered valuers and other professionals;
3. Identification and selection of authorised representative;
4. Public announcement and claims of stakeholders;
5. Information memorandum;
6. Meetings of the creditors and committee of creditors;
7. Invitation for resolution plans;
8. Competition between the base resolution plan and the best resolution plan;
9. Evaluation and consideration of resolution plans;
10. Vesting management of corporate debtor with resolution professional;
11. Termination of PPIRP.

India emerging a leader in supercomputing

(Topic: Science and Technology)

India is fast emerging a leader in high power computing with the National Super Computing Mission (NSM) boosting it to meet the increasing computational demands of academia, researchers, MSMEs, and startups in areas like oil exploration, flood prediction as well as genomics and drug discovery.

Computing infrastructure has already been installed in four premier institutions and installation work is in rapid progress in 9 more. Completion in of Phase II of NSM in September 2021 will take the country's computing power to 16 Petaflops (PF). MoUs have been signed with a total of 14 premier institutions of India for establishing Supercomputing Infrastructure with Assembly and Manufacturing in India. These include IITs, NITs, National Labs, and IISERs.

The National Supercomputing Mission was launched to enhance the research capacities and capabilities in the country by connecting them to form a Supercomputing grid, with National Knowledge Network (NKN) as the backbone.

- The NSM is setting up a grid of supercomputing facilities in academic and research institutions across the country. Part of this is being imported from abroad and part built indigenously.

- The Mission is being jointly steered by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and implemented by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune, and the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.
- **PARAM Shivay, the first supercomputer** assembled indigenously, was installed in IIT (BHU), followed by PARAM Shakti, PARAM Brahma, PARAM Yukti, PARAM Sanganak at IIT-Kharagpur IISER, Pune, JNCASR, Bengaluru and IIT Kanpur respectively.

Supernova explosion traced to one of the hottest kind of stars

(Topic: Space)

Indian astronomers have tracked a rare supernova explosion and traced it to one of the hottest kind of stars called Wolf–Rayet stars or WR stars.

The **rare Wolf–Rayet stars** are highly luminous objects a thousand times that of the Sun and have intrigued astronomers for long. They are massive stars and strip their outer hydrogen envelope which is associated with the fusion of Helium and other elements in the massive core. Tracking of certain types of massive luminous supernovae explosion can help probe these stars that remain an enigma for scientists.

A team of astronomers from Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology, Govt. of India with international collaborators have conducted the optical monitoring of one such stripped-envelope supernova called **SN 2015dj hosted in the galaxy NGC 7371** which was spotted in 2015. They calculated the mass of the star that collapsed to form the supernovae as well as the geometry of its ejection.

The scientists also found that the original star was a combination of two stars – one of them is a massive WR star and another is a star much less in mass than the Sun. Supernovae (SNe) are highly energetic explosions in the Universe releasing an enormous amount of energy. Long-term monitoring of these transients opens the door to understand the nature of the exploding star as well as the explosion properties. It can also help enumerate the number of massive stars.

Dozen rare quadruply imaged quasars discovered can help determine expansion rate of the universe

(Topic: Space)

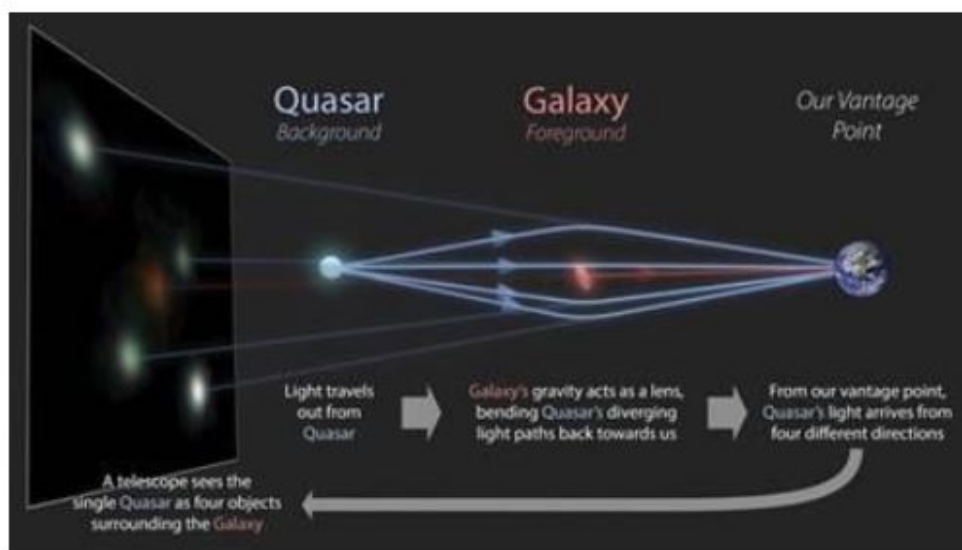
A group of astronomers have discovered a dozen quasars that have been warped by a naturally occurring cosmic “lens” and split into four similar images. This rare discovery increases the number of known quasars or quads by about 25 percent and can help determine the expansion rate of the universe and help address other mysteries.

Quasars are extremely luminous cores of distant galaxies that are powered by supermassive black holes. Quadruply imaged quasars are rare, and the first quadruple image was discovered in 1985. Over the past four decades, astronomers had found about fifty of these “quadruply imaged quasars” or quads for short, which occur when the gravity of a massive galaxy that happens to sit in front of a quasar splits its single image into four.

The study by Gaia Gravitational Lenses Working Group (GraL) of astronomers, which included scientists from Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Nainital, an autonomous institute of Department of Science and Technology, spanning only a year and a half, demonstrates the power of machine-learning to assist astronomers in their search for these cosmic jewels.

Cosmological Dilemma

In recent years, a discrepancy has emerged over the precise value of the universe’s expansion rate, also known as Hubble-Lemaître’s constant. Two primary means can be used to determine this number: one relies on measurements of the distance and speed of objects in our local universe, and the other extrapolates the rate from models based on distant radiation left over from the birth of our universe called the cosmic microwave background. The problem is that the numbers do not match. The quasars lie in between the local and distant targets used for the previous calculations. The new quasar quads, which the team gave nicknames such as “Wolf’s Paw” and “Dragon Kite,” will help in future calculations of Hubble-Lemaître’s constant and may illuminate why the two primary measurements are not in alignment.



Prelims-oriented News

World Health Day: 6th April

World’s highest Railway Bridge: Chenab Bridge in Jammu & Kashmir by Indian Railways

Exercise La Perouse: Led by French Navy

World Homoeopathy Day: 10th April – observed to commemorate the birth anniversary of the founder of Homoeopathy, Dr. Christian Fredrich Samuel Hahnemann.

FDI inflows in India

- India Attracts total FDI inflow of US\$ 72.12 billion during April, 2020 to January, 2021;
- Computer Software & Hardware emerged as top sector with 45.81% of total FDI Equity inflow
- Japan leads the list of Investor countries with 29.09% of the total FDI Equity inflows during January, 2021

Launch of NanoSniffer, a Microsensor based Explosive Trace Detector

- World's first Explosive Trace Detector using microsensor technology
- NanoSniffer is a 100% Made in India product in terms of research, development & manufacturing
- Will reduce our dependency on imported explosive trace detector devices
- Home-grown Explosive trace detector device (ETD) – NanoSniffer can detect explosives in less than 10 seconds

Launch of 'मधुक्रान्तिपोर्टल' & 'Honey Corners'

- An initiative of National Bee Board (NBB), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare under National Beekeeping & Honey Mission (NBHM)
- This portal is being developed for online registration to achieve traceability source of Honey and other beehive products on a digital platform. The portal enables consumers to know the source of honey and assure quality of the products
- Honey Mission will lead to increase in income of farmers, employment generation and increase in exports

National Beekeeping & Honey Mission (NBHM) was approved by Government of India for Rs. 500.00 crores allotted under Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Announcement for overall promotion and development of scientific beekeeping & to achieve the goal of "Sweet Revolution".

NBHM is implemented through National Bee Board (NBB). The scheme has three Mini Missions (MM-I, II & III) under which main thrust is given on awareness, capacity building/trainings, focus on women empowerment through beekeeping, setting up of requisite infrastructural facilities, viz.; Integrated Beekeeping Development Centres (IBDCs), Honeybees Disease Diagnostic Labs, Setting up of/upgradation of Honey Testing labs, Beekeeping Equipment Manufacturing Units, Custom Hiring Centres, Api therapy Centres, Development of Quality Nucleus Stock Centres & Bee Breeders, etc., Digitization/online registration, etc. under MM-I, processing, value addition, market support, etc. under MM-II and R&D under MM-III.

Minister of State for Education to attend consultation meeting of Education Ministers of E9 countries

E9 initiative: Scaling up digital learning to accelerate progress towards SDG4

The initiative aims to accelerate recovery and advance the Sustainable Development Goal 4 agenda by driving rapid change in education systems in three of the 2020 Global Education Meeting priorities:

- (i) Support to teachers;
- (ii) Investment in skills; and
- (iii) Narrowing of the digital divide

E9 Countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Nigeria, and Pakistan

India –

Spoke about the One Nation-One Digital Platform -DIKSHA, One Nation-One Channel programme of -SWAYAM PRABHA, SWAYAM MOOCS and radio broadcasting were used to take education to the remotest part of the country. The online education was imparted to differently-abled children, and launched PM e-VIDYA to provide multi-modal access to education which benefitted nearly 250 million school-going children across India.

The pandemic has demonstrated amply that digital and multi-modal education is a must to ensure affordable education for all. This requires strengthening digital infrastructure, developing tools and digital skills. It also requires teacher training, data security and privacy, funding, and assessment tools.

Government is setting up National Digital Education Architecture to deliver a ‘digital first’ approach to support teaching and learning.

India-Sri Lanka Police Chiefs’ Dialogue (PCD): While appreciating each other’s ongoing action against the drug traffickers and other organised criminals exploiting the narrow sea route between the two countries, the two sides emphasized the need for sharing of real time intelligence and feedback. Both sides also agreed to work jointly against the terrorist entities including the Global Terrorist Groups and fugitives, wherever they are present and active. As the way forward, it was decided to strengthen the existing cooperation mechanisms, as also designate ‘nodal points’ for timely and effective handling of existing as well as emerging security challenges.

India-Netherlands Virtual Summit

- It was the first high level Summit attended by Netherlands’ PM Mark Rutte after the general elections held in March 2021.
- During the Summit, the two leaders exchanged views on further expanding the relationship in trade and economy, water management, agriculture sector, smart cities, science & technology, healthcare and space.

- The two Prime Ministers also agreed on instituting a 'Strategic Partnership on Water' to further deepen the Indo-Dutch cooperation in the water related sector, and upgrading the Joint Working Group on water to Ministerial-level.
- Netherlands' Indo-Pacific Policy was also welcomed.

92% target achieved in the 1st phase of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin

Under PMAY-G with the introduction of certain implementation reforms, the Government has aimed at improving the speed and quality of houses construction, ensuring timely release of funds to beneficiaries, direct transfer of funds to beneficiaries' account, technical assistance to beneficiaries, stringent monitoring through MIS-AwaasSoft and AwaasApp.

- The Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G) is one of the flagship programmes of the Government of India which is driven by the noble objective of providing "Housing for All" by the year 2022.
- It is a social welfare program through which the Government provides financial assistance to houseless beneficiaries identified using SECC 2011 data to help them construct a house of respectable quality for their personal living.
- The Scheme envisaged constructing 2.95 crore PMAY-G houses with all basic amenities by the year 2021-22.
- The scheme envisioned providing other facilities to make it an aspirational home for the beneficiaries through convergence with other schemes like Swachh Bharat Mission, PM Ujjwala Yojana for providing LPG connection and unskilled wage component of 90-95 days under MGNREGS.

Significant progress has been made in this direction since the launch of the scheme by the Prime Minister in November 2016.

Babu Jagjivan Ram

Babu Jagjivan Ram, who was affectionately known as Babuji, was born on the 5th of April, 1908. He was much more than a politician where he dedicated his life fighting for the freedom of the country and bringing the voices of the oppressed communities of the country.

Crusader of Social Justice

- Being a Dalit leader himself, his contributions as a social reformer were immense apart from his other influences.
- He was a member of the First Cabinet of Jawaharlal Nehru's interim Government where he was the youngest Minister and a member of the Constituent Assembly of India.
- Babu Jagjivan Ram was among the few who gave a very strong emphasis on the importance of the principles of social justice that was cherished in the Indian Constitution.

- Babu Jagjivan Ram as a crusader of social justice was instrumental in the establishment of the All Indian Depressed Classes League in the year 1935. This organization primarily sought to provide welfare and equality for the untouchables in the caste ridden societies.

He is also well known for the mass organization of movements that were dedicated for the welfare of the rural labour after he became a member of the Legislative Assembly of Bihar in the year 1937.

Babu Jagjivan Ram went on to be a prominent member of the Indian National Congress where he worked whole heartedly for the party for over forty years in a wide range of portfolios after which he also became the Deputy Prime Minister of India from 1977 to 1979.

He was the **Defence Minister of India** during the **Indo-Pak war of 1971**, which resulted in the **creation of Bangladesh**.

His contribution to the **Green Revolution in India and modernising Indian agriculture**, during his two tenures as Union Agriculture Minister are still remembered, especially during 1974 drought when he was asked to hold the additional portfolio to tide over the food crisis.

Babu Jagjivan Ram went to convince Mahatma Gandhi to join Constituent Assembly as his guidance was required. This was when Gandhi ji gave him what is popularly known as Gandhi ji's Talisman.

Dandi March

The salt movement led by Gandhi started on March 12 in 1930, from Sabarmati Ashram to the coastal village of Dandi (240 miles). The Salt March is also known as the Dandi March and the Dandi Satyagraha.

Objective:

- To produce salt from the seawater in the coastal village of Dandi, as was the practice of the local populace until British officials introduced taxation on salt production and deemed their sea-salt reclamation activities illegal.
- It was a direct-action campaign of tax resistance and nonviolent protest against the British salt monopoly under the 1882 British Salt Act.

The march directly followed the **Poorna Swaraj** declaration of sovereignty and self-rule by the Indian National Congress on **26 January 1930**. The then Viceroy, **Lord Irwin** was hardly perturbed by the threat of a salt protest and the government did nothing to prevent the salt march from taking place.

The salt tax accounted for 8.2% of the British Raj revenue from tax. When Gandhi broke the salt laws on 6 April 1930, it sparked large scale acts of civil disobedience against the British Raj salt laws by millions of Indians.

As per the **Gandhi-Irwin Pact** Indians were allowed to **make salt for domestic use**.

National Salt Satyagraha Memorial: In Dandi, Gujarat; Dandi memorial encapsulates the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi- Agrah for Swadeshi, Swatchagrah and Satyagraha

- One can view statues of Mahatma Gandhi and 80 Satyagrahis who had marched with him during the historic Dandi Salt March in 1930 to make salt from sea water against the British law.
- The memorial also has 24-narrative murals depicting various events and stories from the historic 1930 Salt March.
- Solar trees are installed to meet the energy requirements of the memorial complex.

Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621–1675) – 400th Birth Anniversary (Prakash Purab)

The period of history in India in the last four centuries cannot be imagined without the influence of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru.

- Guru Tegh Bahadur was the ninth of ten Gurus of the Sikh religion. Born at Amritsar in 1621, was the youngest son of Guru Hargobind.
- One hundred and fifteen of his hymns are in Guru Granth Sahib.
- There are several accounts explaining the motive behind the **assassination** of Guru Tegh Bahadur on **Aurangzeb's orders**. He stood up for the **rights of Kashmiri Pandits** who approached him against religious persecution by Aurangzeb.
- He was publicly killed in 1675 on the orders of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb in Delhi for himself refusing Mughal rulers and defying them.
- Gurudwara Sis Ganj Sahib and Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib in Delhi mark the places of execution and cremation of his body.

Impact of his martyrdom: The execution hardened the resolve of Sikhs against religious oppression and persecution. His martyrdom helped all Sikh Panths consolidate to make the protection of human rights central to its Sikh identity. Inspired by him, his nine-year-old son, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, eventually organized the Sikh group into a distinct, formal, symbol-patterned community came to be known as Khalsa (Martial) identity.

Sri Sri Harichand Thakur

- Harichand Thakur, sometimes known as Shri Shri Harichand Thakur worked among the untouchable people of Bengal Presidency. He formed the Matua sect of Hindus.
- According to historian Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, Thakur “experienced atma darshan or self revelation, through which he realized that he was the incarnation of God himself, born in this world to bring salvation to the downtrodden”.
- Thakur, whose family were Vaishnavite Hindus, founded a sect of Vaishnavite Hinduism called Matua. This was adopted by members of the Namasudra community, who were then also known by the pejorative name of Chandalas and considered to be untouchable.

- The sect was opposed to caste oppression and, according to Sipra Mukherjee “[inspired] the community towards education and social upliftment”. It has subsequently attracted adherents from other caste communities that were marginalised by the upper castes, including the Chamars, Malis, and Telis.

Mahatma Jyotiba Phule

- Given the title of Mahatma on May 11, 1888
- Work: eradication of untouchability and caste system, emancipation and empowerment of women, reform of Hindu family life
- Along with his wife, Savitribai Phule, he is regarded as pioneers of women’s education in India. Both Savitribai Phule & her husband Jyotirao Phule went on to found India’s first school for girls called Bhide Wada in Pune in 1848. Later started schools for children from the then untouchable castes such as Mahar and Mang.
- The Phules started the Satyashodhak Samaj (Society for Truth-Seeking), through which they wanted to initiate the practice of Satyashodhak marriage, in which no dowry was taken.
- The Phules also started the Literacy Mission in India between 1854-55
- In 1863, he opened a home for pregnant Brahmin widows to give birth in a safe and secure place.
- Opened an orphanage home to avoid infanticide. In this regard, he is believed to be the first Hindu to start an orphanage for the unfortunate children.

Savitribai Phule: Savitribai Phule, the social reformer who is considered to be one of India’s first modern feminists, was born on January 3, 1831


- A crusader for women empowerment, she broke all stereotypes and spent her life promoting the noble cause of women’s education
- Savitribai was married at a very young age of 9 to social reformer Jyotirao Phule. Jyotirao was 12 years old at the time of marriage. It was Jyotirao who helped her learn how to read and write. He helped her attain high levels of education and live her life with her head held high.
- Savitribai set up India’s first women’s school from different castes in Bhidewada, Pune and became first woman teacher in the country. In her lifetime she built 18 such schools in the region.
- She also worked towards preventing female infanticide and set up a home, Balhatya Pratibandhak Griha, to prevent the killing of widows. She also campaigned against child marriage and sati pratha, which undermined the existence of women. As part of the Satyashodhak Samaj, the Phule couple organised marriages without a priest, without dowry, and at a minimum cost. The wedding vows in these marriages were the pledges taken by both the bride and the bridegroom.
- In 2014, the Maharashtra government in a tribute to Savitribai Phule renamed Pune University in her name.

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Date April 19, 2021

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102nd Anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre

(Topic: Indian History)

On: 13th April, 2021

- On this day, soldiers of the British Indian Army, on the orders of Colonel Reginald Dyer, massacred peaceful and unarmed celebrators, including women and children, on the occasion of the Punjabi New Year (Baisakhi).
- This massacre is remembered as one of the deadliest attacks on peaceful civilians in the world.

Jallianwala Bagh's importance lies not in the numbers killed but in what preceded it and in what followed –

1919 Rowlatt Act

- The Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919, popularly known as the Rowlatt Act, was passed by the Imperial Legislative Council in Delhi on 10 March 1919.
- The Act passed by the British Government was intended to give themselves greater power over the people.
- Rowlatt Act allowed the British to arrest and jail anyone they wished without trial, if they were thought to be plotting against the British. The Viceroy Government also had the power to silence the press.
- The Rowlatt Act sparked a large amount of anger with the leaders and common people of India. This however did not greatly affect the British as they were still able to keep control over the people.
- To try and put an end to this, Gandhi and the other leaders called for a Hartal (a time of fasting and suspension of work) to show the British the Indians' discontent with their rule.
- In the Punjab the protest movement was very strong, and two renowned leaders Dr Satya Pal and Dr Saifuddin Kithlew were arrested on 10th April, 1919.
- In order to protest against the arrest, public had held meeting on 13th April at Jallianwala Bagh in a small park. The meeting was attended by many women and children as well, and is considered to be a peaceful meeting.

What preceded after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre?

- The perpetrator of the massacre, General Dyer, was honored and rewarded by the British public and this removed all illusions about benign British rule in the country.
- It also marked the start of a liberation struggle like no other under Mahatma Gandhi.
- The brutality of massacre stunned entire nation. Gandhiji overwhelmed by atmosphere of violence withdrew movement on April 18. Mahatma Gandhi gave up the title of Kaiser-i-Hind, bestowed by the British for his work during the Boer War.
- Rabindranath Tagore renounced his knighthood in protest against Jallianwala Bagh incident.
- Winston Churchill condemned the shooting as "monstrous."
- The insults and sufferings faced by the people of Punjab trickled through the gagged silence, reached every corner of India, and the universal agony of indignation roused in the hearts of people throughout the country.
- This event caused many moderate Indians to abandon their loyalty to the British and become nationalists distrustful of the British.
- The massacre stirred nationalist feelings across India and had a profound effect on one of the movement's leaders, Mohandas Gandhi. After the Amritsar Massacre he became convinced that India should accept nothing less than full independence. To achieve this end, Gandhi began organizing his first campaign of mass civil disobedience against Britain's oppressive rule.
- In December 1919, the congress session was held at Amritsar. It was attended by a large number of people, including peasants. It was clear that the brutalities had only added fuel to the fire and made the people's determination stronger to fight for their freedom and against oppression.

Jallianwala Bagh massacre marks a turn for revolutionary violent resistance against British raj. Series of new revolutionary leaders justified violence and started new organisations for the execution of the same. A new beginning in the freedom struggle can be witnessed in the incidents of April 1919.

GS-2

Simplification of process for re-issue of OCI Cards

(Topic: Policies and Interventions around Citizenship)

The OCI Card has proved to be very popular amongst foreigners of Indian Origin and spouses of foreign origin of Indian citizens or OCI cardholders, as it helps them in hassle free entry and unlimited stay in India. So far about 37.72 lakh OCI Cards have been issued by the Government of India.

As per the extant law, a foreigner of Indian origin or a foreign spouse of an Indian citizen or foreign spouse of an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholder, can be registered as an OCI cardholder. OCI card is a life-long visa for entry into and stay in India with a number of other major benefits attached to it which are not available to other foreigners.

Presently, the OCI card is required to be re-issued each time a new passport is issued up to 20 years of age and once after completing 50 years of age, in view of biological changes in the face of the applicant. With a view to facilitate the OCI cardholders, it has now been decided by the Government of India to dispense with this requirement.

A person who has got registration as OCI cardholder prior to attaining the age of 20 years will have to get the OCI card re-issued only once when a new passport is issued after his/her completing 20 years of age, so as to capture his/ her facial features on attaining adulthood. If a person has obtained registration as OCI cardholder after attaining the age of 20 years, there will be no requirement of re-issue of OCI card.

Launch of Judgments & Orders portal and e-filing 3.0 module

(Topic: Judiciary)

The initiatives developed by Pune based e-Courts project team are aimed to strengthen legal system.

The Judgments and Orders search portal is a repository of judgments pronounced by various High Courts in the country. It provides facility to search judgements and final orders based on multiple search criteria (data of 106 million cases which are being disposed of & are available & the total number of 141 million orders.)

The main features of the portal are:

- Free text search facilitates user to search judgments based on any keyword or combination of multiple keywords
- Users can also search judgments based on various criteria like including bench, case type, case number, year, petitioner/ respondent name, judge name, act, section, disposal nature and decision date. Combination of several search options assist the users to get the desired results.
- The embedded filtering feature allows further filters on available results, thus adding value to the search.

The e-filing 3.0 module, introduced by the e-Committee of the Supreme Court, allows electronic filing of court documents. With the introduction of the new module, there will be no need for lawyers or clients to visit the court premises for filing of a case. The filing process can take place even when the court, client and lawyer are at three different locations. Version 3.0 is a much more user-friendly version which would simplify the registration of advocates on the e-filing software, enable Advocates to add their partners and clients on the e-filing module, provide online vakalatnama, readymade templates for pleadings, provision for online recording of oath, digital signing of case papers, multiple application filing besides enabling exchange of information and case papers effortlessly between advocates and courts without physical movement.

India Holds National Dialogue on UN Food Systems Summit 2021

(Topic: India and International Summits and organisations)

Background: The first ever UN Food Systems Summit is to be held in September 2021 to strategize the actions for positive change in Agri-food systems in the World to realize the vision of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Summit will focus on levers and pathways to shape food systems nationally and globally to accelerate progress in the SDGs, and independent consultation for the five Action Tracks related to

- Safe and nutritious food,
- Sustainable consumption patterns,
- Nature-positive production,
- Advance equitable livelihoods, and
- Resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

The COVID-19 pandemic led vulnerability and challenges faced by the humanity in food and related system has further added to the need for reorienting our actions and strategies beyond specific cropping or farming systems to entire agri-food systems covering production, distribution and consumption.

India with close to 18% humanity on the Globe owes paramount stake in this Food System Summit. India has volunteered, but not limited to, to the **Action Track 4: Advance Equitable Livelihoods for the UN Food System Summit 2021**. To take the

process further the Government has constituted a high level Interdepartmental Group along with the representatives from NITI Aayog, Ministries of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare (MoAFW), Rural Development and others.

The first National Level Dialogue on Agri-Food Systems-Advancing Equitable Livelihoods has been conducted –

- Urged the participants to share their ideas, experiences, success stories, transformative innovations, evidence based suggestions relating to policies, infrastructure, institutions, and the commitments India should be making to align food system to achieve SDGs towards 2030.
- We should plan for the elimination of poverty, zero hunger, nutrition security and health for all, raising incomes across food value chains, and ensuring economic, social and environment sustainability.
- Several game changing ideas for reimagining India's Agriculture like agro climate based farming, agro-ecology based farming, farmers owned and managed value chain systems, statutory backing for sustainable innovations, adopting best practices from the states, linking production incentives to nutrition goals, nutrition sensitive production and diets, regulatory framework for food safety of low income consumers, selective biofortification, FPOs of women farmers etc were suggested by participants.
- State Governments have been requested to conduct the state-level dialogues with all the stakeholders involved directly or indirectly in the agri-food systems in India. Such grass root dialogues offer a unique opportunity to various stakeholders to involve and provide inputs for sustainable food systems in India.

India-Denmark join hands through Atal Innovation Mission

(Topic: India and Denmark)

As part of Indo-Danish bilateral Green strategic partnership, India is all set to take a giant leap towards building a world class innovation ecosystem as Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) of India's premier policy think tank NITI Aayog and Embassy of Denmark to India today officially announced their collaboration.

Under this ambitious partnership, Innovation Center Denmark in India will collaborate with AIM to support various current and future initiatives of AIM, NITI Aayog and its beneficiaries in India as well as develop global innovation Green economy partnerships addressing SDG goals.

The purpose of Sol is to jointly work towards promoting innovation and entrepreneurship amongst the aspiring entrepreneurs. The partnership would be executed through Innovation Center Denmark (ICDK) under the aegis of Embassy of Denmark.

Emphasis will be on: Water, Women, and the World – Water is the stream of life hence its importance for present and future generations cannot be stressed enough. Women empowerment is key to the growth of a nation and to the sustainability goals of the World.

If we do not solve water management and challenges issue, regardless of the location, it will impact lives across the world.

GS-2

Findings of The National climate vulnerability assessment report

(Topic: Climate Change – Reports and findings)

The report titled 'Climate Vulnerability Assessment for Adaptation Planning in India Using a Common Framework', which identifies the most vulnerable states and districts in India with respect to current climate risk and key drivers of vulnerability, was released.

Has identified Jharkhand, Mizoram, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Bihar, Arunachal Pradesh, and West Bengal as states highly vulnerable to climate change. These states, mostly in the eastern part of the country, require prioritization of adaptation interventions.

The need

- Mapping the parts of India that are vulnerable to such changes will help initiating climate actions at the ground level. The report should be made easily accessible to all stakeholders so that it can benefit climate-vulnerable communities across India through development of better-designed climate change adaptation projects.
 - Assessing vulnerability was the first step towards assessing climate risk. There are two other components like Hazard and Exposure that need to be also assessed to arrive at overall climate risk.
 - The assessment will help Policymakers in initiating appropriate climate actions. It will also benefit climate-vulnerable communities across India through development of better-designed climate change adaptation projects.
 - In a developing country such as India, vulnerability assessment is considered as an important exercise to develop suitable adaptation projects and programmes. While climate vulnerability assessments for various states and districts already exist, the states and districts cannot be compared to each other as the framework used for assessments are different, thereby limiting decision-making capabilities at the policy and administrative levels. This necessitated an assessment using a Common Vulnerability Framework.
-

Scientists discover the farthest Gamma-ray emitting active galaxy with narrow emission lines

(Topic: Space)

Astronomers have discovered a new active galaxy identified as the farthest gamma-ray emitting galaxy that has so far been stumbled upon. This active galaxy called the Narrow-Line Seyfert 1 (NLS1) galaxy, which is about 31 billion light-years away, opens up avenues to explore more such gamma-ray emitting galaxies that wait to meet us.

Ever since 1929, when Edwin Hubble discovered that the Universe is expanding, it has been known that most other galaxies are moving away from us. Light from these galaxies is shifted to longer (and this means redder) wavelengths – in other words, it is red-shifted. Scientists have been trying to trace such red-shifted galaxies to understand the early Universe.

Scientists from ARIES, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India, in collaboration with researchers from other institutions, studied around 25,000 luminous Active galactic nuclei (AGN) from the Sloan Digital Sky Survey (SDSS), a major optical imaging and spectroscopic survey of astronomical objects in-operation for the last 20 years and found a unique object that emits high-energy gamma rays located at a high redshift (more than 1). They identified it as a gamma-ray emitting NLS1 galaxy, which is a rare entity in space.

Powerful relativistic jets, or sources of particles in the Universe traveling nearly at speed to light, are usually produced by AGN powered by large black holes and hosted in a giant elliptical galaxy. However, detection of gamma-ray emission from NLS1 challenges the idea of how relativistic jets are formed because NLS1s are a unique class of AGN that are powered by black hole of low mass and hosted in spiral galaxy. As of today, gamma-ray emission has been detected in about a dozen NLS1 galaxies, which are a separate class of AGN identified four decades ago. All of them are at redshifts lesser than one, and no method was present till date to find NLS1 at redshifts larger than one. This discovery opens up a new way to find gamma-ray emitting NLS1 galaxies in the early Universe.

New electronic nose with biodegradable polymer and monomer can detect hydrogen sulphide from sewers

(Topic: Development in Science and Technology)

Scientists have developed an electronic nose with biodegradable polymer and monomer that can detect hydrogen sulphide (H₂S), a poisonous, corrosive, and flammable gas produced from swamps and sewers.

H₂S is the primary gas produced from the microbial breakdown of organic matter in the absence of oxygen, and this necessitates easy detection of its emission from sewers and swamps.

Responding to this challenge, scientists from the Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS), Bangalore, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India, in collaboration with their counterparts from Saudi Arabia, have developed an exceptionally **sensitive and selective H₂S Gas sensor** developed by impersonating the neuron responsible for identification of airborne molecules or olfactory receptor neuron (ORN).

- The fabricated sensor consists of a heterostructure consisting of two layers – the top layer a monomer and is realized with a novel chemical tris (keto-hydrazone), which is both porous and contains H₂S specific functional groups, and the bottom layer is the active channel layer which plays a key role in altering the current and mobility of charge carriers.
- Thus, the synergistic combination helps to pre-concentrate the H₂S molecules, initiate an acid-base chemical reaction, and thereby brings a change in the majority carriers (holes) of the channel region in the device.
- The capacitance sensor (a sensor that detects nearby objects by their effect on the electrical field created by the sensor) developed by the scientists showed an excellent sensitivity in detecting H₂S gas with an experimental limit of detection of around 25 parts per billion.
- It also has high ambient stability of around 8 months without compromising sensing performance.

Prelims oriented News

Chief Election Commissioner: Shri Sushil Chandra

World Heritage Day: 18th April, 2021

Launch of Online Grievance Management Portal for Persons from Scheduled

Castes: On the occasion of 130th birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna Baba Saheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar; NCSC Grievance Management portal would make it easier for Scheduled Castes population of our country to register their complaint from any part of the country. The portal shall enable them to file their application and other atrocity and services related grievances online and to get them addressed in a time bound manner.

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) was set up under the **Article 338** of the Constitution of India with the objective to investigate and monitor all issues pertaining to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes under any law for the time being in force or under any order of the Government of India. The Commission also enquires into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards provided for the Scheduled Castes.

100th anniversary of the Kingdom of Jordan: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has congratulated Jordanian King Abdullah II on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the founding of Jordan and hailed the Middle Eastern country as a global symbol of moderation.

- Highlighting the key role of King Abdullah II in the promotion of peace in West Asia, Prime Minister Modi noted that Jordan has today emerged as a “powerful voice and global symbol of moderation in an important region of the world”.

- Noting the deepening of relations between India and Jordan, Modi recalled the historic visit of King Abdullah II to India in 2018, during which the Jordanian King had reiterated the Amman message of 2004 of tolerance, unity, and respect for human dignity. The prime minister noted that India and Jordan were united in the belief that moderation and peaceful co-existence were essential for peace and prosperity.

India's history with Jordan:

- The first bilateral agreement on cooperation and friendly relations was entered into soon after Indian independence in 1947.
- Established diplomatic relations in 1950 after India became a Republic
- The first ever visit by an Indian Head of State to Jordan took place in 2015 which provided a huge impetus to bilateral engagement between the countries

Raisina Dialogue-2021: An annual geopolitical event, organised by the Ministry of External Affairs along with the Observer Research Foundation (ORF). It is designed to explore prospects and opportunities for Asian integration as well as Asia's integration with the larger world. It is predicated on India's vital role in the Indian Ocean Region and how India along with its partners can build a stable regional and world order.

Launch of 'Poshan Gyan', a Digital Repository on Nutrition Information: NITI Aayog, in partnership with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Centre for Social and Behaviour Change, Ashoka University, has launched Poshan Gyan, a national digital repository on health and nutrition.

Real change can be brought about only through changing behaviours on the ground. High malnutrition persists despite India being a food-surplus nation, which points towards a clear need for behavioural change. With this context in mind, Poshan Gyan is an extremely important initiative, and can help make nutrition a Jan Andolan.

Launch of Aahaar Kranti

Mission: To spread the message of the need for a nutritionally balanced diet and to understand the importance of accessible to all local fruits and vegetables.

The 'Aahaar Kranti' movement is designed to address the peculiar problem being faced by India and the world called 'hunger and diseases in abundance'. Studies estimate that India produces as much as two times the amount of calories that it consumes. However, many in the country are still malnourished. The root cause of this strange phenomenon is a lack of nutritional awareness in all sections of our society.

There is a need for a nutritionally balanced diet also in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic. A healthy body would be able to handle the infection much better with greater immunity and higher resilience.

The United Nations has also declared **2021 as the International Year of Fruits and Vegetables**, which vibes very well with Aahaar Kranti. Fruits and vegetables make a large part of a balanced diet. Further, **UN sustainable goal # 3** that emphasizes on human well-being reads, “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.” This goal too makes Aahaar Kranti more meaningful. Diet and well-being are inseparable partners.

- The movement proposes to address the current situation of hunger in abundance by working to rouse the people to the values of India’s traditional diet, to the healing powers of local fruits and vegetables, and to the miracles of a balanced diet. It will renew the focus on nutritionally balanced diets – उत्तम एवं संतुलित आहार (Uttam evam santulit aahaar) replete in locally sourced fruits and vegetables.
- The programme will focus on training teachers, who, in turn, will pass on the message to the multitudes of students, and through them to their families and finally the society at large. Such a strategy was adopted for the eradication of Polio and it turned out to be a grand success.
- Vijnana Bharati (Vibha) and Global Indian Scientists’ and Technocrats’ Forum have aimed to set Aahaar Kranti as a model for the entire world to follow.

Gender Samvaad: A joint attempt between DAY-NRLM and the Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy (IWWAGE) to create a common platform to generate greater awareness on gender related interventions under DAY-NRLM across the country and best practices, with a focus on hearing voices from the states and the field

Gender Samvaad provides states with opportunities to:

- Understand best practices/initiatives that other states have been undertaking to improve women’s agency (e.g. facilitating women’s access to land rights, their engagement in farmer producer organizations (FPOs), best practices around Food, Nutrition, Health and Water and Sanitation (FNHW), in establishing strong institutions for public service delivery, and in protecting and providing redress to vulnerable groups within women (e.g. to victims of witch hunting));
- Understand gender interventions globally;
- Engage with experts and other colleagues on suggestions regarding how to handle issues/implementation barriers;
- Contribute to creation of a ‘gender repository’ with resource materials on best practices for gender interventions across the country/other countries; and
- Build advocacy around the need to focus on gender issues across SRLMs and the NRLM.

Van Dhan Vikas Yojana – Promoting and backing tribal entrepreneurship

The Van Dhan Vikas Yojana is a programme for value addition, branding & marketing of Minor Forest Produces by establishing Van Dhan Kendras to facilitate creation of sustainable livelihoods for the forest-based tribes. One major scheme that has contributed to increasing employment and income generation among the tribal population

is the Van Dhan tribal start-ups programme, a component of the The 'Mechanism for Marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support Price (MSP) & Development of Value Chain for MFP' Scheme.

The focus of these initiatives is to make India self-reliant under the Atmanirbhar Abhiyan, with the motto, Go Vocal for Local Go Tribal – Mera Van Mera Dhan Mera Udyam. Manipur, in particular, which has emerged as the Champion state where the Van Dhan programme has emerged as a major source of employment for the local tribals.

Sankalp se Siddhi” – Village & Digital Connect Drive:

- It is a 100 day drive which was started from April 1, 2021.
- It will entail 150 teams visiting ten villages each.
- Aim: To activate the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras in these villages.
- The visiting teams will also identify locations and shortlist potential Van Dhan Vikas Kendras for clustering as TRIFOOD, and Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries- (SFURTI) units as larger enterprises.
- TRIFOOD aims to enhance the income of tribals through better utilization of and value addition to the Minor Forest Produce collected by the tribal forest gatherers.

Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana

- As a part of Atma Nirbhar Bharat 3.0 package, the Central Govt has launched the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (ABRY) to incentivize creation of new employment opportunities during COVID-19 recovery phase by providing financial assistance to employer of establishments registered with EPFO to recruit unemployed persons including giving re employment to those who rendered unemployment during the Pandemic. i.e between March ,2020 to September 2020.
- Under The Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana (ABRY), Central Government will pay both the employees' (12% of wages) and employer's (12% of wages) share of contribution payable under the EPF & MP Act, 1952 or only the employees' share, depending on the employment strength of the establishment, directly to the Universal Account Number of eligible employee maintained by the EPFO.

Launch of Infant Toddler and Caregiver-friendly Neighbourhoods (ITCN) Training and Capacity Building Programme: By National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) in partnership with Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF).

- The Programme is designed to help build capacities of city officials and young professionals for developing young children and family-friendly neighbourhoods within cities in India.

- The programme is envisioned with the twin objectives: first, embedding the learnings from the inventory of knowledge developed by NIUA and BvLF within the on-going and proposed urban development initiatives at neighbourhood and city level; and second, handholding participants to embed learnings into the various initiatives of the cities which take into account the everyday needs of young children and caregivers. In addition, an academic certified course for young professionals has been planned to sensitize them about the needs of young citizens (0-5 years) in the city and to equip them with the adequate tools for the purpose.

Launch of e-SANTA: An electronic marketplace providing a platform to connect aqua farmers and the buyers

It will enable the farmers to get a better price and the exporters to directly purchase quality products from the farmers enhancing traceability, a key factor in international trade. e-SANTA will RAISE the lives & income of farmers by:

- Reducing Risk
- Awareness of Products & Markets
- Increase in Income
- Shielding Against Wrong Practice
- Ease of Processes

e-SANTA is a Digital Bridge to end the market divide and will act as an alternative marketing tool between farmers & buyers by eliminating middlemen. It will revolutionize traditional aquafarming by providing cashless, contactless and paperless electronic trade platform between farmers and exporters. e-SANTA can become a tool to advertise collectively the kind of products the buyers, fishermen & fish producing organisations are harvesting, so people in India & internationally can know what is available & in the future, it can become an auction platform.

e-SANTA is a completely paperless and end-to-end electronic trade platform between Farmers and exporters. The farmers have the freedom to list their produce and quote their price while the exporters have the freedom to list their requirements and also to choose the products based on their requirements such as desired size, location, harvest dates etc. This enables the farmers and buyers to have greater control over the trade and enables them to make informed decisions.

Launch of India Energy Dashboards (Version 2.0) by NITI Aayog: India Energy Dashboards (IED) is an endeavour to provide single-window access to the energy data for the country.

Energy data published/provided by: Central Electricity Authority, Coal Controller's Organisation, and Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

The key features of India Energy Dashboards Version 2.0, are –

- The IED provides time series data from FY 2005-06 until FY 2019-20;

- Enhanced data download – It enables easy downloading of data into convenient spreadsheet formats in a cleaner, more intuitive way;
- IED provides data at sub-yearly frequencies as well. This includes monthly data and API linked data from some portals maintained by the government agencies. The monthly data is sourced from the monthly reports that are regularly published for the electricity, petroleum and natural gas sectors. API linked data from Saubhagya, UJALA, PRAAPTI, and Vidyut PRAVAH has been incorporated in the portal;
- A ‘Feedback and Suggestions’ forum for the engagement of energy data user community has been incorporated;
- A semi-automated workflow/ issue-tracking system for managing periodic updates to the IED. The workflow system performs basic checks and data validation, helping to avoid incorrect data entry;
- Addition of technical and financial data of electricity utilities available from the regulatory documents in the state of Maharashtra. Regulatory data specifically for the area served by the state-owned distribution utility – MSEDCL has been added. The Dashboards will include other states data in future.

Personality in News

Birth Anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar (14 April 1891 – 6 December 1956), popularly known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, was an Indian jurist, economist, politician and social reformer who inspired the Dalit Buddhist movement and campaigned against social discrimination towards the untouchables (Dalits), while also supporting the rights of women and labour.

He was independent India's first law and justice minister, the principal architect of the Constitution of India, and a founding father of the Republic of India.

Birth Anniversary: 14th April

6th December – Mahaparinirvan Diwas

Known famously as: The Architect of Modern India

His autobiography: Waiting for a Visa

His books:

- **Annihilation of Caste** – It strongly criticised Hindu orthodox religious leaders and the caste system in general, and included “a rebuke of Gandhi” on the subject.
- **Who Were the Shudras?** – Ambedkar tried to explain the formation of untouchables. He saw Shudras and Ati Shudras who form the lowest caste in the ritual hierarchy of the caste system, as separate from Untouchables.

Constitution of Reserve Bank of India

Based on the ideas that Ambedkar presented to the Hilton Young Commission

Ambedkar was trained as an economist, and was a professional economist until 1921, when he became a political leader. He wrote three scholarly books on economics:

1. Administration and Finance of the East India Company
2. The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India
3. The Problem of the Rupee: Its Origin and Its Solution

Ambedkar and Untouchability

While practising law in the Bombay High Court, he tried to promote education to untouchables and uplift them. His first organised attempt was his establishment of the central institution Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha, intended to promote education and socio-economic improvement, as well as the welfare of “outcastes”, at the time referred to as depressed classes.

For the defence of Dalit rights, he started five periodicals –

1. Mooknayak (the leader of the dumb, 1920)
2. Bahishkrit Bharat (Ostracized India, 1924)
3. Samta (Equality, 1928)
4. Janata (The People, 1930)
5. Prabuddha Bharat (Enlightened India, 1956)

Manusmriti Dahan Din: In a conference in late 1927, Ambedkar publicly condemned the classic Hindu text, the Manusmriti (Laws of Manu), for ideologically justifying caste discrimination and “untouchability”, and he ceremonially burned copies of the ancient text. On 25 December 1927, he led thousands of followers to burn copies of Manusmriti. Thus, annually 25 December is celebrated as Manusmriti Dahan Din (Manusmriti Burning Day) by Ambedkarites and Dalits.

Kalaram Temple movement: About 15,000 volunteers assembled at Kalaram Temple Satyagraha, making one of the greatest processions of Nashik. The procession was headed by a military band, a batch of scouts, women and men walked in discipline, order and determination to see the god for the first time. When they reached to gate, the gates were closed by Brahmin authorities.

Poona Pact: In 1932, British announced the formation of a separate electorate for “Depressed Classes” in the Communal Award.

- Gandhi fiercely opposed a separate electorate for untouchables, saying he feared that such an arrangement would divide the Hindu community. Gandhi protested by fasting while imprisoned in the Yerwada Central Jail of Poona. Following the fast, Congress politicians and activists such as Madan Mohan Malaviya and Palwankar Baloo organised joint meetings with Ambedkar and his supporters at Yerwada.

- On 25 September 1932, the agreement known as Poona Pact was signed between Ambedkar (on behalf of the depressed classes among Hindus) and Madan Mohan Malaviya (on behalf of the other Hindus). The agreement gave reserved seats for the depressed classes in the Provisional legislatures, within the general electorate.
- Due to the pact, the depressed class received 148 seats in the legislature, instead of the 71 as allocated in the Communal Award earlier proposed by British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald.
- The text uses the term “Depressed Classes” to denote Untouchables among Hindus who were later called Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under India Act 1935, and the later Indian Constitution of 1950. In the Poona Pact, a unified electorate was in principle formed, but primary and secondary elections allowed Untouchables in practice to choose their own candidates.

Views of Dr. Ambedkar regarding the Indian Constitution

Ambedkar warned –

No democratic constitution can be modelled on the Hindu tradition of state and village panchayats.

What is the village, Ambedkar asked, but a sink of localism, a den of ignorance, narrow-mindedness and communalism?

Sets Universal values –

The Constitution is a normative document, but the values it espouses are universal and ‘thin’. They do not reflect the belief system of one section of the population even if it is in a majority. Nor do these values dismiss the value systems of minority groups.

On Constitutional Morality –

- Dr. Ambedkar talked of constitutional morality.
- He said citizen will have deep respect or admiration for Constitution when they realize true intent of Constitution which helps them to possess freedom and rights. When they realize Constitution composes of thin conception of ‘good’ that can hold a plural and diverse people together.

Democracy is only a top-dressing for the Constitution of India

- For Ambedkar, democracy is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil which is essentially undemocratic.
- It is the institutionalisation of constitutional democracy that has changed the way Indians think of themselves in relation to each other, and in relation to the state. The Constitution has managed to inculcate democratic sensibilities and spark yearnings for more democracy, not less.

Concept of Federalism: His concept of federalism meant that the State was a federation in normalcy, but unitary in emergency.

Centre Was Made Strong:

- In the Draft Constitution Dr. Ambedkar offered more powers to the Centre and made it strong. Some members of the constituent assembly criticized him on the ground that since Dr. Ambedkar postulated – the rights and values of each individual and the development of each province and each– village, it was contradictory of his part to make the Centre strong.
- Justifying the provisions for a strong Central authority Dr. Ambedkar said that he made the Centre strong not only to ‘save minorities from the misrule of majority’ but also “for it is only the Centre which can work for a common end and for the general interests of the country as a whole.”

Equality of Opportunity:

- Of all the rights, Dr. Ambedkar observed “Equality of Opportunity” as the most important one.
- Regarding the constitutional remedies, he characterized Article 32 as the very soul of the Constitution and the very heart of it.
- To him, fundamental rights would mean establishment of equality and liberty in order to reform our social system, which is so full of inequalities, discriminations, and others which conflict with our fundamental rights.

Directive Principles of State Policy:

- The Directive Principles of State Policy contained the positive obligations of the state towards its citizens.
- The Directives were meant to ensure social and economic democracy which was secured by the provisions of fundamental rights in a written Constitution.
- Dr. Ambedkar said: “What are called Directive Principles is simply another name for Instruments of instructions to the legislature and the executive...as to how they should exercise their power.”

Constitution, A Dynamic Document: The Constitution is a dynamic document it should grow with the growth of the nation and should suit the changing needs and circumstances. So Dr. Ambedkar urged the necessity of amendment.

Concept of Sovereignty and Suzerainty: Dr. Ambedkar’s concept of sovereignty and suzerainty and of the Indian States, i.e., integration of the native Indian Princely States which gave the shape to the map of India as it is today, has indeed been prophetic.

National Integration: In the Draft Constitution Dr. Ambedkar prescribed single citizenship, a single judiciary and uniformity in fundamental Laws to integrate Indian society which was not only divided into caste and class, but also into regions, religions, languages, traditions and cultures. Therefore, a strong Centre was indispensable to maintain territorial integrity and administrative discipline.

Dr Ambedkar said – power is one thing, wisdom is quite another thing. When deciding the destiny of nations, dignities of people, dignities of leaders and dignities of parties ought to count for nothing. *The dignity of the country should count for everything.*

Note: Dr. Ambedkar Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-Caste Marriages (dalit)

1.

1. **Encouraging the practice of inter-caste marriages** – Indian society can only develop and progress if the curse of caste inequality is removed forever. The implementation of this program is a step towards achieving this goal.
2. **Assisting young couples with money** – Couples who opt for inter-caste are generally shunned by their families due to the rigidity of the caste system in India. They often face hardships, but with this grant, these couples will no longer have to worry about facing financial adversity during the initial days.
3. **Funded by the central government** – **All operational activities and financial requirements of this welfare scheme will be met for the coffers of central government. Money will be sent to each state or UT for its implementation.**
4. **Bringing equality among all castes** – The main aim of this scheme is to give a level ground to all castes. With this, the central government will be able to bring about equality among all castes, thereby eliminating caste related prejudices.

Must Read: Dr. B. R. Ambedkar insights on Labour Rights

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