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PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (PIB) IAS UPSC – 23rd November to 27th November – 2020

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Date December 3, 2020

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71st Constitution Day

(Topic: Indian Constitution)

Constitution Day also known as 'Samvidhan Divas' is celebrated in our country on 26th November every year, to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India.

By: The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Objective: The aim is to publicize the glorious and rich composite culture and diversity of our nation. Further, it aims to create awareness of Fundamental Duties as enshrined in the Indian Constitution. As citizens of our great nation, we believe firmly in Gandhian thought that 'The true source of rights is duty. If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek' and as said by Sardar Patel, 'Every Indian should forget that he is a Rajput, a Sikh, or a Jaat. He must remember that he is an Indian and he has every right in his country but with certain duties'.

Timeline:

- On December 6, 1949 the Constitution Assembly was formed and its first meeting was held on December 9. Rajendra Prasad was appointed its President and H C Mukherjee its vice-chairman.
- On August 29, 1947, the drafting committee appointed Ambedkar as its chairman and six other members — Munshi N Gopalaswami Ayyangar, Khaitan, Mitter, Muhammed Sadulla, Alladi Krishnaswamy Iyer.
- The members of the Constituent Assembly signed two hand-written copies of the document (one each in Hindi and English) on January 24, 1950.
- On November 26, 1949, the Constitution of India was adopted by the Assembly.
- On January 26, 1950, the Constitution was enforced.
- The words 'secular' and 'socialist' were added to the preamble post the emergency in 1976.
- When the Constitution was adopted in the year 1949, there were no provisions regarding Fundamental Duties to the Citizens though there was a Part III for Fundamental Rights. The Fundamental Duties of citizens were added to the Constitution by the 42nd Amendment in 1976, upon the recommendations of the **Swaran Singh Committee** that was constituted by the Government. The Committee suggested that steps needed to be taken to ensure that the individual did not overlook his duties while in exercise of his Fundamental Rights.

India's constitution is the longest written constitution in the world containing 395 Articles, 22 Parts and 12 Schedules. It took around 2 years, 11 months and 17 days to complete the Constitution.

At the beginning of each part of the Constitution, **Nandalal Bose** has depicted a phase or scene from India's national experience and history.

After the Constitution was passed, the historic session of the Constituent Assembly ended with the singing of the National Anthem "Jana-gana-mana adhinayaka Jai Hey, Bharat Bhagya Vidhata," by Purnima Banerjee, a veteran freedom fighter and sister of the late freedom fighter, Aruna Asaf Ali.

People of India are the ultimate custodians of the Constitution. It is in them that sovereignty vests and it is in their name that the Constitution was adopted. The Constitution empowers the citizen, but the citizen too empowers the Constitution – by following it, by adhering to it, by protecting it, and by persevering to make it more meaningful with words and deeds. The Constitution is nobody's preserve – and it is everybody's preserve.

The Preamble to the Constitution of India

"WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens:

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity;

and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION."

The Constitution of India declares India a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic, assuring its citizen's justice, equality and liberty and endeavours to promote fraternity.

Some of the shaping factors of the Constitution:

- **British colonial rule and the Freedom struggle:** The oppression leading to the enhanced importance of the rights of citizens like civil liberties (freedom of speech), etc., and through the freedom struggle has shaped the vision of the constitution.
- **INC session of Karachi's resolution** on Fundamental rights and National economic programme and other similar events.
- **British governance Acts for India:** Starting from the Regulating Act of 1773 till the Indian Independence Act of 1947, especially **Government of India Act of 1935**
- **International events: French revolution** (Republic, ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity), **Russian revolution** (ideals of justice), etc., has led to the increased importance and expansion of rights.
- **Indian philosophy and thinkers:** Like **Gandhi's philosophy** leading to the self-government institutions i.e, PRI (article 40 under DPSP), etc. Nehru report of 1928, the first attempt in drafting the Constitutional scheme indigenously had most of the present document's ideals like fundamental rights, responsible government at the centre and in states, etc.

Thus, the Constitution is a gradually evolved document over a period of time and was carefully articulated by the constituent assembly.

Quotes by President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind

- In a democratic system, the medium of dialogue is the best medium for not allowing the debate to become a dispute.
- In a parliamentary democracy, the opposition also has an important role along with the ruling party, and, therefore harmony, cooperation and meaningful deliberation between the two is necessary. It is responsibility of Presiding Officers to provide congenial atmosphere for a healthy debate to the peoples' representatives in the House and to encourage courteous dialogue and discussion.

- Fairness and justice is the bedrock of our parliamentary democratic system. The Chair of the Speaker of the House symbolizes both – dignity and duty. It demands sincerity and sense of justice. It also symbolizes impartiality, righteousness and fairness and it is expected from Presiding Officers that their conduct is inspired by these lofty ideals.
- Parliament and Legislative Assemblies are the cornerstone of our parliamentary system. They have an important responsibility to work for a better future of our countrymen. In the last few decades, expectations, aspirations and awareness of the general public have been on the rise. Therefore, the role and responsibilities of Parliament and Legislatures have come into focus even more. Peoples' representatives are expected to remain true to the principles of democracy. The biggest challenge before democratic institutions and peoples' representatives is to live up to the expectations of the people.
- The democratic system is eventually governed by the supreme goal of peoples' welfare, especially the upliftment of the poor, backward and the deprived sections of our society and the progress of the country.

Quotes by Vice President of India and Chairman of Rajya Sabha Shri M.Venkaiah Naidu

- Decency, Decorum and Dignity of the temples of democracy will be upheld only through adherence to the other three 'Ds' namely, Debate, Discuss and Decide
- None of the three organs of the 'State' can claim to be supreme as only the Constitution is supreme and the legislature, the executive and the judiciary are bound to work within the respective domains as defined in the Constitution.
- Referring to the Presiding Officers as the 'high priests of temples of democracy', urged them to ensure the sanctity of these temples. Stating that legislatures are the cornerstone of democracy that provide the basis for the actions of both the executive and the judiciary, Shri Naidu referred to the public opinion turning against the law making bodies and the legislators over the years. He noted that frequent disruptions, conduct of legislators both within and outside the chambers of the Houses, rising number of law makers with criminal background, rising money power in elections, flaunting of power by legislators are some of the reasons for this negative perception.
- Caste, Cash and Criminality replacing Conduct, Character and Calibre as the criteria for selection of candidates has been eroding the stature of legislators and their members. Shri Naidu urged the political parties to introspect about the present state of affairs to enhance the standing of legislatures and legislators and also to ensure disruption free functioning of legislatures.

Must Read: <u>Our Constitution Fundamental Duties and Rights of Citizen</u>

27 E-Lok Adalats organized in 15 States

(Topic: Judiciary)

The global pandemic has fundamentally changed the way in which the Legal Services Institutions function. To facilitate access to justice amidst the constraints placed by Covid-19 and various public health guidelines, the Legal Services Authorities have ingeniously integrated technology into its conventional methods of justice delivery.

Online Lok Adalat popularly known as E -Lok Adalat is one such innovation of Legal Services Institutions where technology has been used to its maximum advantage and has become a platform to deliver justice at the doorstep of people. E- Lok Adalats are also cost effective as it eliminates the need for organisational expenses.

In the period of turbulence caused by the pandemic, Legal Services Authorities creatively adapted to the new normal and moved Lok Adalat to the virtual platform. From June, 2020 to October 2020 –

- 27 E-Lok Adalats have been organized in 15 States wherein 4.83 lakh cases were taken up and 2.51 lakh cases disposed of resulting in settlement of Rs 1409 cr.
- Further, during November 2020, E-Lok Adalats have been organized in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Telangana so far wherein 16,651 cases were taken up and 12,686 disposed of resulting in settlement of Rs 107.4 cr.

About Lok Adalats

- Organised by Legal Services Authorities, Lok Adalats (State as well as National) are an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mode wherein pre-litigation and pending cases in the courts are disposed on the basis of amicable settlement without any expense on the part of litigants.
- It is free of cost and expeditious method of bringing litigating parties on the same side and saving them from the rigours of trial under adversarial system of adjudication which is generally perceived to be time consuming, complex and costly.
- Lok Adalats are also instrumental in reducing the burden on arrears of the court disposal of long pending litigation between the parties.

Significance of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR's)

- Reduce workload on the courts given that today about 3.3 crore cases are pending in Indian courts (National Judicial Data Grid data).
- Speedy disposal of cases thus timely justice by avoiding procedural delays associated with formal court system and thus fulfil fundamental right of speedy trial part of Article 21.
- Access to justice is improved as cost and time of litigation comes down thus duty of providing free legal aid to poor is met (39A).
- Saves common man from complex and adverse judicial process.
- ADR process offers confidentiality. Help preserve important social relationships for disputants especially in civil matters like divorce.
- To promote governance. Ex: Administrative Tribunals, National Company Law Tribunal, National Green Tribunal and others.

Issues related to ADR's-

- Lack of manpower
- Lack of experts
- Arbitrary procedure
- Appeals to regular courts

Launch of National Portal for Transgender Persons

(Topic: Government policies and schemes)

- Has been developed within 2 months of Notification of Transgender Persons (Protectionof Rights) Rules, 2020
- Would help a transgender person in applying for a Certificate and Identity card digitally from anywhere in the country.
- The most important benefit is that it helps the transgender person to get the I-Card without any physical interface and without having to visit any office.
- Through the Portal, they can monitor the status of their application that ensures transparency in the process. The issuing authorities are also under strict timelines to process the applications and issue certificates and identity cards without any necessary delays.
- Once the Certificate and I-card are issued, the applicant can download them from the Portal itself. In case of delay or rejection, the applicant has the options to submit grievances through the Portal which are forwarded to the concerned person and will be resolved at the earliest.

Inauguration of Garima Greh: A Shelter Home for Transgender Persons

- Will be run in association with Lakshya Trust, a Community based organisation entirely run by the Transgenders.
- The purpose of the Shelter Home is to provide shelter to Transgender persons, with basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and recreational facilities.
- Besides, it will provide support for the capacity-building/skill development of persons in the Community, which will enable them to lead a life of dignity and respect.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019

It came into effect on 10th January 2020 which is the first concrete step towards ensuring welfare of Transgender persons.

- To implement the provisions of the Act the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment issued the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020 which have been notified in the Gazzette of India.
- The Rules ensure that comprehensive welfare measures reach the Transgender Community and help them come into the mainstream of the Society.

- The right to self-perceived gender identity and the procedure to issue the Transgender certificate and Identity card has been defined in the Rules.
- The process has been made smooth and hassle free to ensure that Transgender persons are able to attain their self-perceived identity card without any inconvenience.

National Council for Transgender Persons constituted

National Council for Transgender Persons has been recently constituted.

Ministry: The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Key takeaways

Council's chairperson: The Social Justice Minister.

Members:

-
  - Officials from some other Ministries.
  - Five nominated members from the transgender community.
- **Associated Act:** Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019.

Functions:

  - Advising the central government on the formulation of policies, with respect to transgender persons
  - Monitoring and evaluating the impact of policies
  - Reviewing and coordinating the activities of all the departments
  - Redressing grievances of transgender persons
  - Performing other functions as prescribed by the Centre.

UNDP and Invest India launch the SDG Investor Map for India

(Topic: Policies and interventions)

UNDP and Invest India have launched the SDG Investor Map for India, laying out 18 Investment Opportunities Areas (IOAs) in six critical SDG enabling sectors, that can help India push the needle forward on Sustainable Development.

With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the financing gap for the SDGs in India has only widened further and decades of development progress is nearly on the verge of reversal. Investing in the SDGs at this point is crucial to 'Building Back Better' and making the economy and our societies more resilient and sustainable. Enhanced productivity, technology adoption and increased inclusion are all critical factors that this map uses to identify the most attractive sectors for investors.

- Of the 18 IOAs identified, 10 are already mature investable areas that have seen robust Private Equity and Venture Capital activity, and feature companies that have been able to unlock scale and demonstrate profitability. The remaining eight IOAs are emerging opportunities, which have seen traction from early-stage investors.
- The map has also identified eight White Spaces, which have seen investor interest and have the potential to grow into IOAs within a 5-6-year horizon. However, these require further policy support and private sector participation to mature into commercially attractive IOAs.
- Nearly 50% of the shortlisted IOAs have historical investments that have yielded IRRs in excess of 20%.
- 84% of the IOAs have investment timeframes ranging from the short term (less than 5 years) to the medium-term (between 5- 15 years).

The observations from the map present a strong case for investing in SDG enabling sectors and IOAs, bridging the gap between high-level development targets and the need for commercially viable returns. Moreover, investing in the SDGs is crucial to 'Building Back Better' from COVID-19 and enhancing India's resilience to future threats. Investing in opportunities that enhance employment and employability, push forward the inclusion of underserved communities and leverage technology will be of essence to India as it grapples with the challenges of a post-COVID economy.

83% of the identified IOAs address job creation and industrialization needs, 70% focus on inclusive business models and 50% leverage digital technologies to deliver commercial returns and impact at scale.

Notable IOAs include 'Online Supplementary Education for K12' (Education), 'Tech-Enabled Remote Care Services' (Healthcare), 'Digital Platforms to service input/output needs of farmers to enable easy access to markets' (Agriculture) and 'Access to credit by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and Low-Income Groups especially through digital platforms for Income Generating Purposes' (Financial Services).

By mapping the overlaps and gaps between public sector priorities and private sector interest, the SDG Investor Map lays out pathways that can bring together private-sector investment and public sector support for 6 SDG-enabling sectors including Education, Healthcare, Agriculture & Allied Activities, Financial Services, Renewable Energy & Alternatives and Sustainable Environment. These sectors and the IOAs within them were selected through a rigorous analytical process that included extensive consultations with a number of major domestic and international investors, government stakeholders and think-tanks. This ensured that the Map's findings were truly reflective of market sentiment.

India and Finland sign MOU for developing cooperation in the field of environmental protection and biodiversity conservation

(Topic: Agreements of India with other countries)

The MoU is a platform to

- Further advance Indian and Finnish partnership and support
- Exchange best practices in areas like prevention of Air and water pollution
- Waste management
- Promotion of circular economy, low-carbon solutions and sustainable management of natural resources including forests
- Climate change
- Conservation of Marine and Coastal Resources

The MoU also provides the possibility to have joint projects in areas of mutual interest. The MoU will strengthen technological, scientific and management capabilities and develop bilateral cooperation in the field of environmental protection and biodiversity conservation on the basis of equality, reciprocity and mutual benefit with due respect to promotion of sustainable development.

About India

India has achieved its voluntary target of reducing emissions intensity of its GDP by 21% over 2005 levels, by 2020 and is poised to achieve 35% reduction well before the target year of 2030.

As part of its Nationally Determined Contributions submitted under the Paris Agreement , India has taken three quantitative climate change goals viz.

- Reduction in the emissions intensity of Gross Domestic Product by 33 to 35 percent by 2030 from 2005 level
- Achieving about 40 percent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy resources by 2030
- Creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030

Prelims oriented News

Lok Virasat: A festival of films on folk art and painting by Films Division

National Organ Donation Day: 27 November

- With 12,666 organs transplanted in 2019, ranked third in the world as per data available on the WHO Global Observatory on Donation and Transplantation (GODT) website.
- Tamil Nadu has been adjudged the best in organ donation in the country for the sixth consecutive year.

However, organ donations have always been abysmally low in India. According to estimates, only 0.65 donations per million population take place in the country, compared to 35 in Spain and 26 in the US. A major reason for this shortage is the lack of awareness among people about the process of donation.

Several myths associated with organ donations also hamper the process in India, along with fears of disfigurement, non-acceptance of brain death, religious beliefs and migrant workers not having relatives on site to give consent. Several people are also under immense pressure from family members who are against organ donations.

- The National Organ Transplant Programme (NOTP) provides financial grants for establishing ROTTOs and SOTTOs, to develop new and upgrade existing retrieval and transplant centres, to set up regional and State biomaterial centres and to provide immunosuppressive therapy to Below Poverty Line (BPL) patients who have undergone organ transplantation in a Government hospital.
- Further, financial support is also provided for hiring of transplant coordinators by hospitals and for maintenance of brainstem dead donors, when at least one organ is shared with a Government hospital.

India Climate Change Knowledge Portal launched

- Single point information source on Climate Action – provides information on the different climate initiatives taken by various Line Ministries enabling users to access updated status on these initiatives.
- The portal captures sector-wise adaptation and mitigation actions that are being taken by the various line Ministries in one place including updated information on their implementation.
- The knowledge portal will help in disseminating knowledge among citizens about all the major steps Government is taking at both national and international levels to address climate change issues.
- The eight major components included in the knowledge portal are:
    1. India's Climate Profile
    2. National Policy Framework
    3. India's NDC goals
    4. Adaptation Actions
    5. Mitigation Actions
    6. Bilateral and Multilateral Cooperation
    7. International Climate Negotiations
    8. Reports & Publications

India has practically achieved its Pre-2020 Climate Action targets and said though historically India is not responsible for emissions

NIVAR: Deep Depression intensifies into a Cyclonic Storm "NIVAR" over southwest Bay of Bengal

- Cyclones are low-pressure systems that form over warm tropical waters, with gale force winds near the centre.
- The winds can extend hundreds of kilometres (miles) from the eye of the storm.
- Cyclones can unleash catastrophic storm surges — tsunami-like flooding — when they make landfall.

- The term "storm surge" refers to rising seas whipped up by a storm, creating a wall of water several metres higher than the normal tide level
- The tropical cyclone season in the Bay of Bengal and neighbouring Arabian Sea has two peaks around May and November, according to the World Meteorological Organisation.

The scheme for Creation of Infrastructure for Agro-Processing Cluster (APC) has been approved under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana

- To incentivize the setting up of agro processing clusters in the country
- This scheme aims at development of modern infrastructure to encourage entrepreneurs to set up food processing units based on cluster approach.
- These clusters will help in reducing the wastage of the surplus produce and add value to the horticultural / agricultural produce which will result in increase of income of the farmers and create employment at the local level.

Inauguration of a Mega Food Park in Punjab: It is expected to benefit about 25000 farmers and likely to generate employment of about 5000 persons.

A 10,000 crore fund has been created under Aatmanirbhar Bharat, for development of food processing sector which will benefit farmers and create employment opportunities. Till date, 37 MFPs have been sanctioned and 20 have already started functioning.

3rd Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo (RE-Invest 2020):

- **Theme:** Innovations for Sustainable Energy Transition
- A 3-day conference on renewables and future energy choices, and an exhibition of manufacturers, developers, investors and innovators
- Aims to accelerate the worldwide effort to scale up development and deployment of renewable energy and connect the global investment community with Indian energy stakeholders.
- It aims to build upon the success of the first two editions held in 2015 and 2018 and provide an international forum for investment promotion in renewable energy.

Cabinet approves Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the field of Physical Culture and Sport among BRICS Countries

- Cooperation in the field of sports among the five countries will help in expanding knowledge and expertise in the area of sports science, sports medicine, coaching techniques etc, which would result in improvement in performance of our sportspersons in international tournaments and strengthening of bilateral relations with BRICS member countries.
- Benefits arising from cooperation in the field of sports among the five countries would be equally applicable to all sportspersons irrespective of their caste, creed, region, religion and gender.

Union Minister of Education inaugurates 46 online ATAL Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs) organised by AICTE

- To train teachers of higher education institutions associated with All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) in thrust and emerging areas in technology. The FDPs will be conducted in 22 Indian states.
- Book of World Records, London acknowledges the training of over one lakh people in 1,000 programs under 'FDP' as a world record
- The main objective of ATAL Academy is to provide quality technical education in the country and to promote research and entrepreneurship through training in various emerging fields. IITs, IIITs, NITs CU and research labs are organizing these ATAL FDPs

Cabinet approves the Memorandum of Understanding between the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and the Vereniging van Register controllers (VRC), the Netherlands

The MoU would help instrengthening and development of the Accounting, Financial and Audit Knowledge Base between the Netherlands and India.

Implementation strategy and Targets:

1. ICAI and VRC will work together to hold and conduct Technical Events, Seminars, Conferences in the Netherlands;
2. To establish possible co-operation in respect of Member Management, Professional Ethics, Technical Research, Continuing Professional Education; Professional Accountancy Training, Education and Examinations, as well as the Institutional Capacity Building of the Accountancy profession;
3. To offer short term professional courses in the domain of Accounting, Finance, Information Technology and Audit in the Netherlands;
4. To discuss potential emerging developments in form of Students and Faculty Exchange programmes;
5. Share available unrestricted information concerning the accountancy profession in India and the Netherlands and internationally when required.

Benefits:

The engagement between the premier Institutes of both the countries would help to generate greater employment opportunities for Indian Chartered Accountants and also greater remittances back to India.

Impact:

ICAI has a strong membership base of over 1500 members in the European region and around 80 members in the Netherlands. The contemplated MoU, for providing assistance to VRC, the Netherlands, shall benefit the ICAl members in the region and would provide an additional impetus to prospects of the ICAI members to get professional opportunitiesin the Netherlands.

Extension of Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme through ECLGS 2.0 for the 26 sectors identified by the Kamath Committee and the healthcare sector

Under ECLGS 2.0 entities with outstanding credit above Rs. 50 crore and not exceeding Rs. 500 crore as on 29.2.2020, which were less than or equal to 30 days past due as on 29.2.2020 are eligible. These entities/borrower accounts shall be eligible for additional funding up to 20 per cent (which could be fund based or non-fund based or both) of their total outstanding credit (fund based only) as a collateral free Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line (GECL), which would be fully guaranteed by National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC). The loans provided under ECLGS 2.0 will have a 5-year tenor, with a 12-month moratorium on repayment of principal.

The modified Scheme while providing an incentive to Member Lending Institutions (MLIs) to enable availability of additional funding facility to the eligible borrowers, both MSMEs/business enterprises and identified sectors that supports MSMEs, will go a long way in contributing to economic revival, protecting jobs, and create conducive environment for employment generation.

BIS standards revised for two wheeler helmets

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued the 'Helmet for riders of Two Wheelers Motor Vehicles (Quality Control) Order, 2020.'Protective Helmets for Two Wheeler Riders have been included under compulsory BIS certification and the publication of the Quality Control Order.

- As per the recommendations of the Committee, the BIS has revised specifications through which it is expected to make lighter helmets. With good competition in the Indian markets and with numerous helmet manufacturers, now it is expected that the competition would enable for good quality and lighter helmets demand.
- The total number of two-wheelers being manufactured in India annually is nearly 1.7 crore.
- QCO would mean that only BIS certified two wheeler helmets would be manufactured and sold in the Country for two wheelers. This would help in avoiding sale of low quality two wheeler helmets in the Country which would in turn help in protecting citizens involved in two wheeler accidents from fatal injuries.

'Martyrdom Day' of Guru Teg Bahadur

The ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Teg Bahadur dedicated his life to the betterment of humankind and to promote a sense of unity, service and fraternity in the society. He worked to alleviate the sufferings of the people and fought against oppression. For this reason, Guru Teg Bahadur is aptly called 'Hind Di Chadar'.

Lachit Diwas

- Celebrated after: Lachit Borphukan

- He was an outstanding leader and strategist, who played a pivotal role in protecting the unique culture of Assam.
- He also worked extensively towards empowering the poor and downtrodden.

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (PIB) IAS UPSC – 28th November to 5th December – 2020

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Date December 7, 2020

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India becoming pharmacy of the world

(Topic: India and COVID-19 related policies)

As the world races to develop the vaccine for Covid-19, India is looking to be self-reliant in both its development and production. While at least five pharmaceutical companies of India are engaged in vaccine development, Serum Institute in Pune has been chosen for mass production of Covishield vaccine developed by Oxford –Astra Zeneca. The government has initiated a robust Covid-19 vaccine manufacturing and delivery ecosystem to meet the demand.

Launch of Mission COVID Suraksha

The Government of India (GOI) has announced the third stimulus package of Rs. 900 Crore for the Mission COVID Suraksha- The Indian COVID-19 Vaccine Development Mission. This grant will be provided to the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) for Research & Development of Indian COVID-19 vaccines.

The COVID-19 Vaccine development Mission with end-to-end focus from preclinical development through clinical development and manufacturing and regulatory facilitation for deployment, would consolidate all available and funded resources towards an accelerated product development. This will help accelerate development of approx. 5-6 vaccine candidates and ensure that these are brought closer to licensure and introduction in market for consideration of regulatory authorities for introduction in public health systems, to combat further spread of COVID infection.

The important objectives of the fund will be

- Accelerating pre-clinical& clinical development; licensure of COVID-19 vaccine candidates that are currently in clinical stages or ready to enter clinical stage of development, establishing clinical trial sites, and strengthening the existing immunoassay laboratories, central laboratories and suitable facilities for animal studies, production facilities and other testing facilities to support COVID-19 vaccine development.
- Supporting development of common harmonized protocols, trainings, data management systems, regulatory submissions, internal and external quality management systems and accreditations.
- Capabilities for process development, cell line development and manufacturing of GMP batches for animal toxicology studies and clinical trials will also be supported under the Mission.
- A key element will be development of suitable Target Product Profile so that vaccines being introduced through the mission have preferred characteristics applicable for India.

Led by Department of Biotechnology and implemented by a dedicated Mission Implementation Unit at Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC),the existing activities under National Bio Pharma Mission (NBM) and Ind-CEPI Mission will provide complementary strengths to this Mission.

Growing world interest in India's pharma capability

Ambassadors of 100 countries are scheduled to arrive in Pune on December 4, to visit Serum Institute of India and Gennova Biopharma. Sweden has already acknowledged India's role as the 'pharmacy of the world' and is focusing on expanding bilateral cooperation in the areas of health and life sciences in view of the Coronavirus pandemic. Meanwhile, Luxembourg based company B Systems is partnering with India to produce portable vaccine refrigeration equipment, which will address the issue of vaccine distribution in India.

Health Ministry's telemedicine service e Sanjeevani completes 9 lakh consultations

(Topic: Government policies and interventions)

Completed 9 lakh consultations; over 7,16,000 consultations recorded on eSanjeevani OPD

- Telemedicine is a new modality for remote diagnosis and treatment of patients over internet. eSanjeevani enables virtual meetings between the patients and doctors & specialists from geographically dispersed locations, through video conferencing that occurs in real time.
- At the end of these remote consultations, eSanjeevani generates an electronic prescriptions which can be used for sourcing medicines. In order to enable delivery of outpatient services remotely during COVID-19 pandemic as many as 28 States have on-boarded the Ministry of Health's eSanjeevani initiative. These States are aggressively working towards long term enablement of telemedicine services.
- This eSanjeevani platform has enabled two types of telemedicine services viz. Doctor-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani) and Patient-to-Doctor (eSanjeevani OPD) Tele-consultations
- The former is being implemented under the Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centre (AB-HWCs) programme.
- The telemedicine platform is hosting over 40 online OPDs, more than half of these are speciality OPDs which include Gynaecology, Psychiatry, Dermatology, ENT, Ophthalmology, antiretroviral therapy (ART) for the AIDS/HIV patients, Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) etc.

Government constitutes High-level Ministerial Committee for implementation of Paris Agreement

(Topic: Government policies and intervention)

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has constituted a high-level inter-ministerial Apex Committee for Implementation of Paris Agreement (AIPA) under the chairmanship of Secretary, MoEFCC.

The purpose of AIPA is to generate a coordinated response on climate change matters that ensures India is on track towards meeting its obligations under the Paris Agreement including its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).

Senior officials from fourteen ministries will serve as Members to AIPA who will oversee the progress in implementation of India's NDC and receive periodic information updates to monitor, review and revisit climate goals to fulfil the requirements of the Paris Agreement.

Key functions of AIPA would be

- To operate as a National Authority to regulate carbon markets in India under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement
- Formulate guidelines for consideration of projects or activities under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement
- Issue guidelines on carbon pricing, market mechanism, and other similar instruments that have a bearing on climate change and NDCs.
- It will take note of the contributions of the private sector as well as multi-/bi-lateral agencies in the field of climate change and provide guidance for aligning their climate actions with national priorities.

The year 2021 would mark the beginning of implementation of the Paris Agreement and constitution of AIPA is central to **strengthening the national systems and institutional arrangements** for implementation and monitoring of climate actions. It will also ensure that India maintains its climate leadership as one the few countries in the world whose climate actions are consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement.

WHO World Malaria Report 2020: India continues to make Impressive Gains in reduction of Malaria Burden

(Topic: International Reports and India's ranking)

The World Malaria Report (WMR) 2020 released by WHO, which gives the estimated cases for malaria across the world, based on mathematical projections, indicates that India has made considerable progress in reducing its malaria burden.

- India is the only high endemic country which has reported a decline of 17.6% in 2019 as compared to 2018.
- The Annual Parasitic Incidence (API) reduced by 27.6% in 2018 compared to 2017 and by 18.4% in 2019 as compared to 2018. India has sustained API less than one since year 2012.
- India has also contributed to the largest drop in cases region-wide, from approximately 20 million to about 6 million. The percentage drop in the malaria cases was 71.8% and deaths was 73.9% between 2000 to 2019.
- India achieved a reduction of 83.34% in malaria morbidity and 92% in malaria mortality between the year 2000 (20,31,790 cases, 932 deaths) and 2019 (3,38,494 cases, 77 deaths), thereby achieving Goal 6 of the Millennium Development Goals (50-75% decrease in case incidence between 2000 and 2019).

High Burden to High Impact (HBHI) initiative

WHO has initiated the High Burden to High Impact (HBHI) initiative in 11 high malaria burden countries, including India. Implementation of "High Burden to High Impact (HBHI)" initiative has been started in four states i.e. West Bengal and Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh in July, 2019. A key strategy to reignite progress is the

"High burden to high impact" (HBHI) response, catalyzed in 2018 by WHO and the RBM Partnership to End Malaria continued to make impressive gains in India, with 18% reductions in cases and 20% reductions in death respectively, over the last 2 years.

ADB, India sign $132.8 million loan to strengthen Meghalaya's power distribution Sector

(Topic: International organisations)

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India today signed a $132.8 million loan to strengthen and modernize the distribution network and improve the quality of power supplied to households, industries, and businesses in India's northeastern state of Meghalaya.

The Benefits: The project supports the state government's "24×7 Power for All" initiative and will help the state reduce its high technical and commercial losses through network strengthening, metering and billing efficiency improvements. Technological Improvements to the distribution network adapted to extreme weather, introduction of smart meters and online meter reading, billing, and collection systems will help improve operational efficiencies and financial sustainability of the state's distribution system.

The Issue: Though Meghalaya has achieved 100% electrification, remote rural areas in the state suffer from frequent power interruptions due to overloaded distribution networks and substations that use outdated technology, resulting in high aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses. The Government of India and the state government of Meghalaya embarked on a joint 24×7 Power for All Meghalaya initiative to provide uninterrupted, quality, reliable, and affordable power supply to all electricity consumers.

The project will

- Construct 23 substations
- Renovate and modernize 45 substations, including the provision of control room equipment and protection systems
- Install and upgrade 2,214 kilometers of distribution lines and associated facilities covering three out of the six circles in the state.

Installation of smart meters will benefit about 180,000 households. The loan is proposed to be supplemented by a $2 million grant from ADB's Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction that will finance renewable energy mini-grids for improving power quality and supporting income generation activities, especially for women and other socially disadvantaged groups in three villages and three schools.

The project will help develop a distribution sector road map and a financial road map for the Meghalaya Power Distribution Corporation Limited (MePDCL). These road maps will strengthen the capacity of MePDCL to operate and manage the distribution networks.

ADB, India sign $50 million loan to boost West Bengal's digital platforms for public finance reforms

(Topic: International organisations)

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a $50 million policy-based loan to **improve financial management procedures and operational efficiencies** aimed at achieving more fiscal savings, promote informed decision making, and improve service delivery in the state of West Bengal.

- Integration of the state's financial and information systems through the programme's whole-of-government approach will help improve delivery of public services and generate fiscal savings that could help the state augment growth-enhancing development financing.
- Through support to interoperable e-Government platforms, the programme will ensure streamlining of social protection benefits such as pension and provident fund, facilitate gender-disaggregated data, tax payments, and revenue collection.
- Development projects could be better tracked and monitored with the help of a new module within the integrated financial management system (IFMS) leading to improved project management.
- A centre for fiscal policy and public finance will be established to deepen capacity of the state government officials on public finance management while developing a web-based grievance redress system for transport corporations and urban local bodies will provide a credible citizen-government interface.

The loan builds up on past ADB policy-based programmes in 2012 and 2017, supporting the Government of West Bengal on sustainable public financial management reforms. These programmes helped develop and implement an IFMS, established successful e-Governance systems for improved revenue administration, undertook measures for expenditure rationalisation, and promoted the private sector's involvement in service delivery.

The loan is proposed to be supplemented by a $350,000 technical assistance grant for capacity building, monitoring of IFMS reforms, and strengthening the integration of social and gender aspects in reform areas.

India, USA sign MoU on Intellectual Property cooperation

(Topic: India and USA relations)

The MoU aims at increasing IP co-operation between the two countries by way of:

1. Facilitating exchange and dissemination of best practices, experiences and knowledge on IP among the public, and between and among the industry, universities, research and development (R & D) organizations, and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises through participation in programs and events organized singly or jointly by the Participants;

2. Collaboration in training programs, exchange of experts, technical exchanges and outreach activities;
3. Exchange of information and best practices on processes for registration and examination of applications for patents, trademarks, copyrights, geographical indications, and industrial designs, as well as the protection, enforcement and use of IP rights;
4. Exchange of information on the development and implementation of automation and modernization projects, new documentation and information systems in IP and procedures for management of IP Office services;
5. Cooperation to understand various issues related to traditional knowledge, and the exchange of best practices, including those related to traditional knowledge databases and awareness raising on the use of existing IP systems for the protection of traditional knowledge; and
6. Other cooperation activities as may be mutually decided by the Participants.

The two sides will draw up Biennial Work Plan to implement the MoU which will include the detailed planning for carrying out of the co-operation activities including the scope of action.

The MoU will go a long way in fostering the cooperation between India and USA, and provide opportunities to both countries to learn from the experience of each other, especially in terms of best practices followed in the other country. It will be a landmark step forward in India's journey towards becoming a major player in global innovation and will further the objectives of National IPR Policy, 2016.

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APEDA and NABARD sign MoU to work together to synergize the activities in the interest of agriculture and allied sectors for bringing better value to the stakeholders

(Topic: Agriculture)

APEDA has been focusing on collaborative approach to bring synergy with number of organisations and institutions having inherent professional and specialised expertise in different areas for capacity building of various stakeholders and providing solutions for addressing some of the identified interventions for the development of Agriculture and its export enhancement, in consonance with the objectives set under Agri Export Policy announced by Government of India.

The **Agriculture Export Policy** was framed with a focus on agriculture export-oriented production, export promotion, better price realization to farmer and synchronization within policies and programmes of Government of India.

- It focuses on "Farmers' Centric Approach" for improved income through value addition at source itself to help minimize losses across the value chain.

- Policy therefore suggests to adopt the approach of developing product specific clusters in different agro climatic zones of the country to help in dealing with various supply side issues viz., soil nutrients management, higher productivity, adoption of market oriented variety of crop, use of Good Agriculture Practices etc.

APEDA has been relentlessly engaged with State Govts. for the implementation of AEP.

APEDA and NABARD have signed MoU to utilise their expertise by mutually working together to synergize the activities in the interest of agriculture and allied sectors for bringing better value to the stakeholders.

Areas of Cooperation:

1. APEDA and NABARD would jointly work towards capacity development of various stakeholders.
2. APEDA and NABARD would jointly come towards organizing outreach programs, awareness programs and workshops for stakeholders.
3. To enhance farmers income for doubling the farmers' income as set out by the Government of India.
4. Extending benefit of relevant schemes/other initiatives of NABARD & APEDA for development of FPOs.
5. APEDA would formulate program in association with NABARD to provide technical knowhow to cooperatives/FPOs to upscale infrastructure created for post-harvest management for APEDA scheduled products to promote exports.
6. To jointly identify clusters in various States for scaling up. APEDA will facilitate exports by the FPOs assisted/promoted by NABARD.

NABARD: National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development is established as a development bank for providing credit for promotion of agriculture, small scale, cottage and village industries, handicrafts and other allied activities in rural areas, with a view to promote integrated rural development and securing prosperity of the rural areas and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The NABARD Act, 1981, empowers NABARD to associate with various institutions for various developmental functions in the field of agriculture and rural development. NABARD has various schemes and programmes to assist farmers and has a field force spread across the country to regularly guide and support farmers.

Prelims oriented News

Navy Day: 4th December

Passage Exercise (PASSEX): Between Russian Federation Navy and Indian Navy in Eastern Indian Ocean Region

How stars explode due to neutrinos?

- Scientists may soon find a clue to how stars explode due to neutrinos, one of the most abundant particles in the universe.

- These sub atomic particles are extremely difficult to detect because of their limited interactions with matter. However, they are very important to the study of supernovas or powerful luminous stellar explosions, because they power the explosion and provide an early warning signal that allows scientists to look in the right direction before the supernova explosion takes place.

AI & Robotics Technologies Park (ARTPARK)

- Will promote technology innovations in AI (Artificial Intelligence) & Robotics leading to societal impact by executing ambitious mission mode R&D projects in healthcare, education, mobility, infrastructure, agriculture, retail and cyber-security focusing on problems unique to India.
- ARTPARK, is a unique not-for-profit foundation established by Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru with support from AI Foundry in a public-private model
- ARTPARK will develop AI & Robotics facilities to support technology innovations as well as capacity building through advanced skills training of students and professionals in these areas. Some of these facilities will be key enablers for whole new sets of technologies, products and services. It will develop DataSetu – that will enable confidentiality and privacy-preserving framework to share data and run analytics spurring the data-sharing ecosystem and create a data marketplace, boosting AI applications and solutions.
- One such service will be BhashaSetu – that will enable real-time Indic language translation, both of speech to speech and speech to text. This will further unlock the economic potential of the country, and enable all Indian citizens to equitably participate in the economic progress, regardless of their language.

Developing improved disease-resistant banana plants

- An improved understanding of Fusarium, a root pathogen infection in banana plant may soon help develop strategies to prevent the disease that causes wilting of the fruit crop that is grown in at least 5 major states of India.
- India is the leading producer of banana in the world and the present cultivation is vulnerable to this fungal disease which dwells in soil as a saprophyte and shifts to the parasitic mode in presence of host roots. Scientists are trying to understand the disease paradigm for developing innovative management strategies.
- Scientists are working towards studying the role of a protein complex that drives the expression of the effector genes required for pathogenicity. Understanding this complex regulatory network can help in improved knowledge on the basic biology of fungal infection in plants, evolution of virulent strains, lifestyle switching in Fusarium from saprophytic to parasitic mode and also investigation of banana defense responses in terms of resistance genes.

3rd Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo (RE-Invest 2020):

- **Theme:** Innovations for Sustainable Energy Transition
- A 3-day conference on renewables and future energy choices, and an exhibition of manufacturers, developers, investors and innovators
- Aims to accelerate the worldwide effort to scale up development and deployment of renewable energy and connect the global investment community with Indian energy stakeholders.
- It aims to build upon the success of the first two editions held in 2015 and 2018 and provide an international forum for investment promotion in renewable energy.

India:

- India has continued to innovate in Renewable Energy deployment by increasing capacities and adopting practical solutions, newer technologies and market mechanisms.
- Our adoption of floating solar, wind-solar hybrid contracts, peaking power, and venture into Round-the-Clock (RTC) procurement contracts are indications of such innovation.
- India's target – 450 GW by 2030 and through reduction of prices and use of clean fuels; India has installed about 136000 mw of RE capacity with capacity addition of another 57000 mw under implementation.
- Increasing efficiencies in Solar PV and wind modules is bringing down prices, enhancing affordability and accessibility of energy and supporting better standards of living
- As a policy, India will shift to 'Green Ammonia' from imported Ammonia, as well as add volumes in the usage of hydrogen.
- Apart from 450 GW RE capacity we will also focus on building an integrated clean gas-based economy. Driving the use of biofuels and emerging hydrogen and providing digital innovations in the RE space. Biofuels is not just a science, it is a mantra.
- 'One Nation, One Gas Grid' for city gas distribution, using LPG as a social change, and using biofuels in the aviation sector
- One Sun One World One Grid is also a strategy that India continues to push for at an international level.
- India has targeted to have its Islands- A&N and Lakshadweep as Green Energy.
- The signing of the 5 MW PPA under the World Bank Accelerating Sustainable Private Investments in Renewable Energy (ASPIRE) project is a historic moment in the renewable energy history of the Maldives. The project is the first of its kind in scale for the Maldives and achieved a tariff of US$ 10.9 cents. This is one of the lowest tariffs for a Small Island Developing State (SIDS) like the Maldives and helps them gain the pole position in trying to achieve their RE goals. Moving ahead, the World Bank is working closely alongside the Government of Maldives through the upcoming Accelerating Renewable Energy Integration and Sustainable Energy (ARISE) project in achieving their dream for a fossil fuel free future .

Global Innovation and Technology Alliance (GITA) served as a catalyst for nurturing innovation and industrial R&D by fostering bilateral academic industry and government collaborations.

- PPP between Technology Development Board (TDB) of the Department of Science & Technology (DST) and Confederation of Indian Industry
- Mandate: To stimulate industry investment in R&D and its demonstration to deliver commercialised products and services
- DST through GITA has been able to successfully engage in implementation of bilateral industrial R&D projects in collaboration with some of the most innovative nations of the world such as Israel, Korea, Canada, Finland, Italy, Spain, and UK

First ever SCO Online International Exhibition on Shared Buddhist Heritage

- Launched during the 19th Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government (SCO CHG)
- This SCO online International exhibition, first ever of its kind, is developed and curated by National Museum, New Delhi, in active collaboration with SCO member countries. The exhibition deploys state of the art technologies like 3D scanning, webGL platform, virtual space utilization, innovative curation and narration methodology etc.
- Buddhist philosophy and art of Central Asia connects Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) countries to each other. This online international exhibition presents an excellent opportunity for visitors to access, appreciate and compare Buddhist art antiquities from SCO countries on a single platform and from the comfort of their home. Such transnational online exhibition also has potential to connect, heal and rejuvenate communities in current pandemic times.

Successful Test Firing of BrahMos

BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile in Anti-Ship mode was successfully test fired today at 0900 hrs against a decommissioned Ship. The test firing was carried out by Indian Navy. The missile performed highly complex manoeuvres and hit Bull's eye of the target.

- BrahMos is the supersonic cruise missile jointly developed by DRDO and NPOM of Russia as a Brahmos Aerospace joint venture, which became Brahmos Aerospace Private Limited.
- The missile has established itself as a major force multiplier in modern-day complex battlefields with its impeccable anti-ship and land-attack capabilities with multi-role and multi-platform abilities and has been deployed in all the three wings of the Indian Armed Forces.
- The first launch of Brahmos took place in 2001 and till date numerous launches have taken place from various ships, Mobile Autonomous Launchers and Su-30 MKI aircraft, making it a versatile weapon.

Personality in News

Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar

64th Death Anniversary – 6th December – **Mahaparinirvan Diwas**

Screening of the film "Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar": The biopic on Bharat Ratna Dr. Ambedkar is an elaborate and analytical film on the great jurist-economist and social reformer, especially on his relentless campaign against oppression of the downtrodden and the pivotal role Dr Ambedkar played in drafting and framing the Constitution of India.

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

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 Manusmrti. 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. Amebedkar observed "Equality of Opportunity" as the most important one.
- Regarding the constitutional remedies, he characterize **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 other 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 circumstance. 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 rap of India as if 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. **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 start 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: <u>Dr. B. R. Ambedkar insights on Labour Rights</u>

Guru Nanak

- Born in 1469 in Nankana Sahib, Pakistan
- He advocated *nirguna bhakti*
- He firmly repudiated practices of religions around him like sacrifices, ritual baths, idol worship, austerities, and scriptures of both Hindus and Muslims.
- He took the god as formless which has no gender and proposed a simple way to connect to him by just remembering and repeating his name.
- He set up rules for congregational worship (sangat) involving collective recitation.
- He appointed *Angad* to succeed him as the Guru.
- He never wished to establish new religion, but after his death his followers consolidated his practices and distinguished from both Hindus and Muslims by calling themselves 'Sikhs'.
- Fifth Guru Arjandev Ji compiled Guru Nanak, his successor, and other religious poets teaching in *Adi Granth Sahib*.

Values & teaching of Guru Nanak and present social challenges —

- The time in which Guru Nanak lived and present time are not very different. Back then, caste system, idol worship, exploitation of poor and women, intolerance towards other religions, fraud godman, addiction of drugs and other problems were prevalent. Unfortunately, all of them are present today also.
- Some basic teachings of Guru Nanak were —
    - Submission to the will of God (*Waheguru*)
    - One God
    - Goodwill for all
    - Speaking truth
    - Social Service
    - Overcoming 5 evils — Ego, Anger, Greed, Attachment and Lust
    - Adopting 5 virtues — Truth, Compassion, Contentment, Discipline and Contemplation
    - No discrimination
    - Stop following rituals/idol worship/superstitions
- Guru Nanak opined that moral principles have great value not just in thinking but also in practical orientation in society. Therefore, social philosophy of Guru Nanak was primarily based on moral philosophy with support of religious outlook.
- His teaching hold great value today in overcoming caste and religious discrimination, intolerance of other views, corruption, addiction of alcohol and drugs, clash of civilisations, terrorism and other social evils.

- Problem with today's generation is we have limited Guru Nanak and his teaching just to Guru Granth Sahib and have not adopted it, i.e., moral philosophy is lacking. Therefore, there is a strong need to revive the values and teachings of Guru Nanak.

Ik Onkar: Ek Onkar means "God is One". The symbol is an emblem of the Sikh religion and is found on Gurdwaras (Sikh temples) around the world.

Kartarpur corridor

The four-lane "human corridor" i.e. Kartarpur corridor is hoped to pave the way for peace and greater progress of all people. The corridor will drastically cut down the journey pilgrims have to make from more than 200 km to just 6 km.

> The gurdwara in Kartarpur stands on the bank of the Ravi, about 120 km northeast of Lahore.

- It was here that Guru Nanak assembled a Sikh community and lived for 18 years until his death in 1539.
- The shrine is visible from the Indian side, Sikhs gather in large numbers for darshan from the Indian side, and binoculars are installed at Gurdwara Dera Baba Nanak.
- Access to gurdwaras in Pakistan: Sikh jathas from India travel to Pakistan on four occasions every year — for Baisakhi, the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev, the death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev. These Indian pilgrims are given access to all gurdwaras in Pakistan.

Dr Rajendra Prasad

- The first President of India, in office from 1952 to 1962
- A supporter of Mahatma Gandhi, Prasad was imprisoned by British authorities during the Salt Satyagraha of 1931 and the Quit India movement of 1942.
- In office from 1952 to 1962
- A supporter of Mahatma Gandhi, Prasad was imprisoned by British authorities during the Salt Satyagraha of 1931 and the Quit India movement of 1942
- In his speech before the Constitution was adopted, Dr Rajendra Prasad rightly noted that the successful working of democratic institutions requires willingness to respect the views of others, and capacity for compromise and accommodation. He said, [quote] "Many things which cannot be written in a Constitution are done by conventions. Let me hope that we shall show those capacities and develop those conventions." [Unquote] Seventy years later, we have reasons to believe that the nation has lived up to his hopes to a fair degree.

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (PIB) IAS UPSC – 6th December to 19th December – 2020

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  - Aerosols in Indo-Gangetic Plain have led to increased incidents of high rainfall in the Himalayan foothills
  - Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu has called for the launch of a mass media campaign on the advantages of building green homes
  - Successful Trials of 5.56 x 30 mm Joint Venture Protective Carbine (JVPC)

ARCHIVES

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Ministry of AYUSH

(Topic: Government policies – Health)

A. To set up an AYUSH Export Promotion Council

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Ministry of AYUSH have decided to work together to set up an Export Promotion Council to boost AYUSH exports.

- The entire AYUSH sector will work together to achieve price and quality competitiveness to boost AYUSH exports.
- Trade and commerce in the AYUSH Sector needed to upscale quickly in order to meet the growing demands from India and abroad, and to serve the larger number of people who are now looking up to these systems for maintaining their health.

The spurt in exports of AYUSH products in the recent months is a direct reflection of their growing popularity in many countries. The standardisation of the HS codes related to export will be considered on priority as a step to promote exports.

The following are the action points that emerged from the meeting:

1. Ministry of AYUSH and Ministry of Commerce and Industry will work together for establishing an AYUSH Export Promotion Council (AEPC). The proposed AEPC can be housed at Ministry of AYUSH.
2. Standardisation of HS code for AYUSH will be expedited.
3. Ministry of AYUSH will work in collaboration with Bureau of Indian standards to develop international standards for AYUSH products as well as services.
4. Ministry of AYUSH and AYUSH industry will identify best practices/ success stories and promote them amongst the public.
5. AYUSH industry will work on ensuring quality and standards of AYUSH products as well as to become price-competitive.
6. AYUSH will figure in the Brand India activities.

B. Ministry of AYUSH and AIIMS have decided to initiate work on setting up a **Department of Integrative Medicine at AIIMS**

Draft Indian Ports Bill, 2020

(Topic: Transportation)

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has circulated draft of Indian Ports Bill 2020 for public consultation which will repeal and replace the Indian Ports Act, 1908.

The draft Indian Ports Bill, 2020, seeksto, *inter alia,* enable the structured growth and sustainable development of ports to attract investments in the Port sector for optimum utilisation of the Indian Coastline by effective administration and management of ports. The proposed Bill will

- Provide measures to facilitate conservation of ports, taking into account the prevalent situation with respect to the high number of non-operational ports.
- It shall further ensure greater investment in the Indian maritime and ports sector through the creation of improved, comprehensive regulatory frameworks for the creation of new ports and management of existing ports.

The Bill also seeks to, *inter alia*, create an enabling environment for the growth and sustained development of the ports sector in India through the following broad methods:

1. Constitution of Maritime Port Regulatory Authority
2. Formulation of the National Port policy and National Port plan in consultation with Coastal State Governments, State Maritime Boards and other stakeholders.

3. Formulation of specialised Adjudicatory Tribunals namely Maritime Ports Tribunal and Maritime Ports Appellate Tribunal to curb any anti-competitive practises in the port sector and act as a speedy and affordable grievance redressal mechanism.

The up-to-date provisions of the proposed Bill would ensure safety, security, pollution control, performance standards and sustainability of Ports. The Bill ensures that all up-to-date conventions /protocols to which India is a party, are also suitably incorporated. This will promote marine safety and security in the true sense. The Bill will fill up the gaps for achieving scientific development of Ports and Port Network.

The Bill seeks to provide increased opportunities for public and private investments in the Indian maritime and ports sector by way of removing barriers to entry, simplifying processes and establishment of agencies and bodies to plan and enable growth of the ports sector. Enhancing "Ease of Doing Business',it will provide greater impetus to a self-reliant domestic investment climate in the maritime sector, towards Atamanirbhar Bharat initiatives of the Government.

NITI Aayog releases 'Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India'

(Topic: Health)

NITI Aayog released a white paper: Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India with the vision:

- To make India's public health surveillance system more responsive and predictive to enhance preparedness for action at all levels.
- Citizen-friendly public health surveillance system will ensure individual privacy and confidentiality, enabled with a client feedback mechanism.
- Improved data-sharing mechanism between Centre and states for better disease detection, prevention, and control.
- India aims to provide regional and global leadership in managing events that constitute a public health emergency of international concern.

'Vision 2035: Public Health Surveillance in India' is a continuation of the work on health systems strengthening. It contributes by

- Suggesting mainstreaming of surveillance by making individual electronic health records the basis for surveillance. Public health surveillance (PHS) is an important function that cuts across primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of care. Surveillance is 'Information for Action'.
- The Covid-19 pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to revisit (re) emerging diseases due to increased interaction between human-animal-environment. Early identification of this interference is essential to break the chain of transmissions and create a resilient surveillance system.

- It envisions a citizen-friendly public health system, which will involve stakeholders at all levels, be it individual, community, health care facilities or laboratories, all while protecting the individual's privacy and confidentiality.'
- The white paper lays out India's vision 2035 for public health surveillance through the integration of the three-tiered public health system into Ayushman Bharat.
- It also spells out the need for expanded referral networks and enhanced laboratory capacity. The building blocks for this vision are an interdependent federated system of governance between the Centre and states, a new data-sharing mechanism that involves the use of new analytics, health informatics, and data science including innovative ways of disseminating 'information for action'.

Cabinet approves Atmanirbhar Bharat Rojgar Yojana (ABRY)

Objective: To boost employment in formal sector and incentivize creation of new employment opportunities during the Covid recovery phase under Atmanirbhar Bharat Package 3.0.

Cabinet has approved an expenditure of Rs. 1,584 crore for the current financial year and Rs.22,810 crore for the entire Scheme period i.e. 2020-2023.

1. Government of India will provide subsidy for two years in respect of new employees engaged on or after 1st October, 2020 and upto 30th June, 2021
2. Government of India will pay both 12% employees' contribution and 12% employers' contribution i.e. 24% of wages towards EPF in respect of new employees in establishments employing upto 1000 employees for two years,
3. Government of India will pay only employees' share of EPF contribution i.e. 12% of wages in respect of new employees in establishments employing more than 1000 employee for two years.
4. An employee drawing monthly wage of less than Rs. 15000/- who was not working in any establishment registered with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) before 1st October, 2020 and did not have a Universal Account Number or EPF Member account number prior to 1stOctober 2020 will be eligible for the benefit,
5. Any EPF member possessing Universal Account Number (UAN) drawing monthly wage of less than Rs. 15000/- who made exit from employment during Covid pandemic from 01.03.2020 to 30.09.2020 and did not join employment in any EPF covered establishment up to 30.09.2020 will also be eligible to avail benefit,
6. EPFO will credit the contribution in Aadhaar seeded account of members in electronic manner,
7. EPFO shall develop a software for the scheme and also develop a procedure which is transparent and accountable at their end.
8. EPFO shall work out modality to ensure that there is no overlapping of benefits provided under ABRY with any other scheme implemented by EPFO.

Cabinet approves the proposal of Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) tosign Bilateral Memorandum of Understanding between India and Luxembourg

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for the proposal of Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to sign a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Securities and Exchange Board of India and Financial and Commission de Surveillance du Secteur Financier (CSSF), Luxembourg.

Objectives

- Strengthen cross border cooperation in the area of securities regulations and facilitate mutual assistance
- Contribute towards efficient performance of the supervisory functions aid in imparting technical domain knowledge
- Enable effective enforcement of the laws and regulations governing the securities markets of India and Luxembourg.

Major impact

CSSF, like SEBI, is a co-signatory to International Organization of Securities Commissions' Multilateral MOU (IOSCO MMoU). However, the IOSCO MMoU does not have under its scope the provision for technical assistance. The proposed bilateral MOU would, in addition to contributing towards strengthening the information sharing framework leading to effective enforcement of securities laws, also help in establishing a technical assistance programme. The technical assistance programme would benefit the Authorities by way of consultations on matters relating to capital markets, capacity building activities and training programmes for the staff.

Cabinet approves Memorandum of Understanding between India and Suriname on Cooperation in the field of Health and Medicine

The bilateral Memorandum of Understanding will

- Encourage cooperation between the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Health of the Government of the Republic of Suriname through joint initiatives and technology development in the health sector.
- Strengthen bilateral ties between India and Suriname. It leads towards achieving Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) by way of sharing of expertise in public health system, and by promoting mutual research in various relevant areas.

Salient Features:

The main areas of cooperation between the two Governments include the following:

1. Exchange and Training of medical doctors, officials, other health professionals and experts;
2. Assistance in development of human resources and setting up of health care facilities;
3. Short term training of human resources in health;
4. Regulation of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and cosmetics and exchange of information thereon;

5. Promotion of business development opportunities in pharmaceuticals;
6. Procurement of generic and essential drugs and assistance in sourcing of drug supplies;
7. Procurement of health equipment and pharmaceuticals products;
8. Tobacco control;
9. Promotion of mental health;
10. Early detection and management of depression
11. Digital health and Tele-medicine

14th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus

(Topic: India and international organisations)

Online at Hanoi, Vietnam on 10 December 2020; marked the 10th anniversary of ADMM Plus.

ADMM Plus is an annual meeting of Defence Ministers of 10 ASEAN Countries and eight partner countries. This year marks the 10th year of inception of ADMM Plus forum.

In his address, Shri Rajnath Singh –

- Underlined the key role of ASEAN-centric forum in promoting dialogue and engagement towards a pluralistic, cooperative security order in Asia
- Highlighted the collective achievements of ADMM Plus in the past decade in advancing multilateral cooperation through strategic dialogue and practical security engagements
- Complimented the achievements of the seven Expert Working Groups in sharing best practices in key domains including Maritime Security, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief, Counter-terrorism and Peace Keeping Operations.
- Addressed the thematic discussions during the ADMM plus meeting on the Regional and International Security Environment, where in, he emphasized that Indo-Pacific region in particular confronts numerous traditional and non-traditional security threats.

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  - He recalled the launch of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) by India in last year's East Asia Summit and stated that IPOI is an open global initiative which draws on existing regional cooperation architecture and mechanism.
  - He noted the commonality between India's IPOI and ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific, both being opportunities for cooperation.
  - In his speech addressing the Defence Ministers of ASEAN member countries, USA, Russia, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, he emphasized India's call for an open and inclusive order in Indo-Pacific based upon respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations, peaceful resolutions of disputes through dialogue and adherence to International rules and laws.
  - Reiterated India's support to freedom of navigation and over-flight for all in International waters in accordance with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)
  - Underlined the importance of mutual trust and confidence based on restraint in activities and actions that may further complicate the situation in the region.
- Stated that terrorism remains a major scourge for the region and world, and reiterated that the structures that support and sustain terrorism continue to exist, including in India's neighbourhood. He called for stronger commitment and need to strengthen International mechanism to fight terrorism, jointly and vigorously.

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare digitally addressed the Inter-Ministerial meeting on Vaccination of South Asia against COVID-19 by the World Bank

(Topic: India and international organisations)

Presenting a detailed summary of the proactive, preemptive, graded, whole of government and society approach to the COVID-19 pandemic undertaken by India, Dr. Harsh Vardhan said, "Effective planning and strategic management has enabled India to keep its cases per million at 7,078against the global average of 8,883. The fatality rate is 1.45%, well below the global average of 2.29%."

Informed the audience of the vaccine distribution expertise, production and storage capacity of India along with the presence of an experienced and vast network of professionals to streamline COVID vaccination

- India's world-class research institutes have spearheaded the campaign against COVID-19 and are currently working towards facilitating capacity building for producing, distributing & administering the vaccine. 260 vaccine candidates are in different stages of development globally. Out of these, 8 are scheduled to be manufactured in India, including 3 indigenous ones. India has leveraged the support of international partners like Oxford University, UK, and Thomas Jefferson University, USA, for vaccine research with Indian entities, both public and private.
- It is expected that the vaccine will be available in the coming few weeks and the vaccination process will kickstart in India as soon as it is approved by the concerned regulatory agency. With stringent oversight, we are ensuring, that there is no compromise on scientific and regulatory norms, stretching from safety of the trials to efficacy of the vaccines.
- Detailed on how leveraging the existing digital interventions of India's Mission Indradhanush Immunization programs, India is building the advanced CO-WIN digital platform which will allow citizens to self-register for vaccination, monitor their status and be provided with a QR code based electronic vaccination certificate upon completion of the process.
- The government has analyzed the present requirement of vaccines and is working towards augmenting capacities, healthcare infrastructure & workforce.

Government of India and World Bank sign $400 million project to protect India's poor and vulnerable from the impact of COVID-19

(Topic: India and international organisations)

The Government of India and the World Bank today signed a $400 million project to support India's efforts at providing social assistance to the poor and vulnerable households, severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the second operation in a programmatic series of two. The first operation of $750 million was approved in May 2020. The programme will strengthen the capability of state and national governments in India to provide coordinated and adequate social protection to the poor and vulnerable from the shocks triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Early results from tracking the first operation through a representative household survey across India highlights the strengths and challenges of India's social protection system. The Second Accelerating India's COVID-19 Social Protection Response Programme signed will build on the shifts that the first operation has achieved.

- This second operation will complement the expansion of India's safety net programmes to create a portable social protection platform ensuring food and cash support for poor households, urban migrants, and unorganised sector workers across state boundaries.
- Given the continent-like size and heterogeneity in India, the post COVID-19 economic shocks are likely to manifest itself differently at the sub-national, community and household levels.

- The new operation will allow flexibility for state governments to cater to their contexts, while ensuring that the needs of migrants, informal workers and the urban poor are addressed.
- The proposed reforms will allow states to access flexible funding from disaster response funds to design and implement appropriate social protection responses to COVID-19 and future disasters.
- Given that larger shares of COVID-19 cases in India are currently in urban and peri-urban areas, geographically targeted support to these hot-spot districts will help deepen social protection coverage in urban areas.

ADB, India sign $300 million loan to upgrade power distribution network in Uttar Pradesh

(Topic: India and international organisations)

The project will establish separate feeders for electricity supply to agriculture and residential consumers to promote better rationing and utilization of unmetered power; strengthen financial management of the state power distribution entity and improve bill collection in rural areas through community engagement involving the women's self-help groups.

- Overall, the $430 million multi-tranche financing facility (MFF) approved for the project constituting two tranches, envisages conversion of 65,000 kilometers (km) of rural low-voltage distribution lines from bare conductors to aerial bundle conductors (ABC) to create a robust distribution network that will benefit an estimated 70 million people in 46,000 villages.
- The feeder separation network to be established over 17,000 km for agriculture and domestic consumers will facilitate the use of solar energy to meet the agriculture demand, increase in electricity supply duration to rural residential consumers, and energy and water conservation. In addition, the project will improve the gender inclusivity, corporate governance, and financial management capacity of Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL).
- To improve bill collection, the project will pilot test engaging rural women through women's self-help groups as community collection agents which will also help increase their family income.

ADB, India sign facility to support preparation of infrastructure projects in Tripura

(Topic: India and international organisations)

- This is ADB's first PRF facility for a state in the northeastern region of India.
- Inadequate urban infrastructure and low institutional capacity of urban local bodies (ULBs) have impeded urbanization-led growth in Tripura.

- The PRF will help finance preparation of integrated infrastructure development plans for 7 districts headquarter towns (DHT) and 13 ULBs focused on water supply, sanitation, storm water drainage, urban roads, and urban amenities.
- The state's tourism growth is also hindered by inadequate infrastructure and lack of planned activities. The PRF will support the state government's objectives of improving contribution of tourism to the economy and will support development of integrated tourism infrastructure plans. These include provisioning of amenities and improving road connectivity to the tourist destinations together with marketing and promotion strategies.

India-Bangladesh Virtual Summit

(Topic: India and its neighbours)

India-Bangladesh partnership

> Emphasized that relations between Bangladesh and India are based on fraternal ties and reflective of an all-encompassing partnership based on sovereignty, equality, trust and understanding that transcends a strategic partnership.

> Paid solemn tribute to the martyrs of the Liberation War of Bangladesh, the Muktijoddhas and the Indian soldiers, for their great sacrifices in 1971. They vowed to uphold and protect the cherished values of democracy and equality in line with the aspirations of the people of the two friendly countries.

Cooperation in Health Sector- addressing the global public health challenge

- Expressed satisfaction at the manner in which sustained engagement between the two countries has been maintained during this ongoing crisis.
- Reiterating the highest priority India attaches to Bangladesh under India's Neighbourhood First Policy, India assured that vaccines would be made available to Bangladesh as and when produced in India.
- India also offered collaboration in therapeutics and partnership in vaccine production.
- Bangladesh appreciated India's conducting capacity building courses for medical professionals in Bangla language.

Cultural Cooperation – Joint Celebration of Historical Links

- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina deeply appreciated the warm gesture of India in organizing various events on the occasion of ongoing 'Mujib Borsho'.
- The two Prime Ministers jointly unveiled a commemorative postal stamp issued by the Government of India on the occasion of birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.
- India thanked the Government of Bangladesh for issuing a stamp in honour of Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary celebrations earlier in September 2020.

- Both sides noted that the filming of the biopic on Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, under the direction of Indian film director Shyam Benegal will commence in January 2021.
- Noting that the year 2021 will be historic in India Bangladesh bilateral relations as they would be commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of the Liberation War and the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Bangladesh, it was agreed to jointly organize several activities to commemorate these two epochal events in India, Bangladesh and third countries.
- Bangladesh Prime Minister requested the Indian side to consider Bangladesh's proposal to name the historic road from Mujib Nagar to Nodia on Bangladesh-India border as "Shadhinota Shorok" commemorating the historic significance of the road during Bangladesh's Liberation War.

Border Management and Security Cooperation

- Both sides agreed to hold an early meeting of the Joint Boundary Conference to prepare a new set of strip maps along the stretch of Icchamati, Kalindi, Raimongol and the Hariabhanga Rivers from Main Pillar 1 to Land Boundary terminus, with a view to finalizing the delineation of the boundaries as fixed. It was agreed to carry out necessary work to convert the International Boundary along Kuhsiyara river into a fixed boundary.
- Bangladesh side reiterated the request for 1.3 km Innocent Passage through river route along River Padma near Rajshahi District. The Indian side assured to consider the request.
- Both leaders agreed to facilitate completion of border fencing at all pending sectors at the international border between both the countries at the earliest beginning from the Tripura (India)- Bangladesh sector.
- Both leaders also agreed that loss of civilian lives at the border is a matter of concern and directed the border forces concerned to enhance coordinate measures to work towards bringing such border incidents to zero. The leaders stressed on full implementation of the ongoing Coordinated Border Management Plan.
- Both sides noted with satisfaction the recent stepped-up efforts of the two border guarding forces against smuggling of arms, narcotics and fake currency and to prevent trafficking, particularly of women and children.
- Noting that Bangladesh and India were prone to frequent natural disasters, the two leaders directed officials on both sides to expeditiously conclude the MoU in the area of disaster management cooperation.
- Recognizing that terrorism remains a threat to global peace and security, both sides reiterated their strong commitment to eliminating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.
- Both sides emphasized simplifying people to people movement between the two countries. Bangladesh side requested for early implementation of India's commitment to remove remaining restrictions on entry/ exit from land ports in India for Bangladeshis travelling on valid documents in a phased manner, beginning with checkpoints at Akhaura (Tripura) and Ghojadanga (West Bengal).

Trade Partnership for Growth

- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina appreciated the Duty Free and Quota Free access given to Bangladeshi exports to India under SAFTA since 2011.
- Both Prime Ministers emphasized on addressing issues of non-tariff barriers and trade facilitation including port restrictions, procedural bottlenecks and quarantine restrictions so that both countries can take full advantage of SAFTA flexibility.
- The Bangladesh side requested that as India's export of essential commodities to Bangladesh are an important factor influencing their domestic market, any amendments in export-import policy of the Government of India may be conveyed in advance.
- Both the leaders commended trade and railway officials for the cooperation shown in maintaining uninterrupted supply chains during COVID-19, including facilitating bilateral trade through existing rail routes, using side-door container and parcel trains.
- Recognizing the immense potential of bilateral economic and commercial ties, both Prime Ministers directed the officials to expeditiously conclude the ongoing joint study on the prospects of entering into a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).
- Welcoming the first meeting of the India-Bangladesh Textile Industry Forum, earlier this year, the leaders emphasized the importance of increased linkages and collaboration in the textile sector and directed the officials to conclude the ongoing negotiations on the MOU between Ministry of Textiles, Government of India and Ministry of Textiles and Jute, Government of Bangladesh at the earliest. They welcomed the consultations on anti-dumping/anti-circumvention duties imposed on export of jute products from Bangladesh to India held recently and expressed hope that the issues related to ADD will be resolved expeditiously.

Connectivity for Prosperity

- Noted with satisfaction the continued progress made towards the restoration of pre-1965 railway linkages between both nations. They jointly inaugurated the newly restored railway link between Haldibari (India) and Chilahati (Bangladesh) and noted that this rail link will further strengthen trade and people to people ties between the two sides. It was decided to operationalize the train as and when the COVID situation improves.

- The two leaders took stock of the ongoing bilateral connectivity measures and welcomed the recent initiatives including the signing of the second addendum to the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade (PIWTT), trial run of trans-shipment of Indian goods from Kolkata to Agartala via Chattogram and operationalization of Sonamura-Daudkandi Protocol route under the PIWTT. Both the leaders agreed to expeditiously operationalise trans-shipment of Indian goods through Chattogram and Mongla Ports.
  To facilitate better connectivity and simplify movement of passengers and goods between both the countries, both leaders agreed to an early operationalization of the BBIN Motor Vehicles Agreement through expeditious signing of the Enabling MoU for Bangladesh, India and Nepal to commence the movement of goods and passengers, with provision for Bhutan to join at a later date.
- Bangladesh Prime Minister expressed keen interest in the ongoing India Myanmar Thailand trilateral highway project and sought support of India for enabling Bangladesh to connect with this project with a view to enhance connectivity between the regions of South and South East Asia. In the same spirit, the Indian side requested Bangladesh to allow connectivity from West Bengal (Hilli) to Meghalaya (Mahendraganj) via Bangladesh.
- India reiterated its request to the Government of Bangladesh of having at least one Land Port with minimal negative list between the each neighbouring states of India and Bangladesh, beginning with Agartala-Akhaura. Bangladesh side proposed that Bangladeshi trucks avail of the Feni Bridge, once completed, for transportation of goods from Chattogram port to the North East of India.
- Acknowledging the vibrant development partnership between the two countries, both sides stressed on active operationalization of the recently-constituted High Level Monitoring Committee headed by Secretary, Economic Relations Division from Bangladesh and the High Commissioner of India in Dhaka to regularly review the progress of the LOC Projects for their early completion.
- Both sides noted with satisfaction the commencement of a temporary Air Travel Bubble between the two sides to facilitate the urgent requirements of travellers on both sides during the COVID-19 pandemic. Bangladesh side also requested the Indian side to resume regular travel through land ports at the earliest

Cooperation in Water Resources, Power and Energy:

- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina highlighted the need for early signing of interim agreement for sharing of the Teesta waters, as agreed upon by both the governments in 2011. Prime Minister Narendra Modi reiterated India's sincere commitment and continued efforts of the Government of India in that regard.
- The two leaders underscored the need for early conclusion of Framework of Interim Agreement on sharing of waters of six joint rivers, namely, Manu, Muhuri, Khowai, Gumti, Dharla and Dudhkumar.

- Bangladesh side requested the Indian side to inform its concerned border authorities to allow excavation work of the remaining portion of the Rahimpur Khal for utilization of Kushiyara River waters for irrigation purposes. The Indian side was also requested to provide early concurrence on the proposed MoU to be signed between the two countries for monitoring the withdrawal of water from the Kushiyara River by both the sides, pending signing of the Treaty/Agreement regarding sharing of water of the Kushiyara River. The two leaders recalled the positive contribution of the Joint Rivers Commission and looked forward to the next round of Secretarial level JRC meeting at the earliest.
- Both sides expressed satisfaction at the robust cooperation in the power and energy sector, including between the private sector. It was agreed to expedite implementation of projects including India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, Maitree Super Thermal Power Project as well as other projects. Both sides welcomed the signing of the Framework of Understanding on Cooperation in the Hydrocarbon Sector which would further augment energy linkages by streamlining investments, technology transfer, joint studies, training and promoting hydrocarbon connectivity. It was also agreed to enhance cooperation in energy efficiency and clean energy, including in biofuels. In line with commitment of both countries to move towards green, clean, renewable sources of energy, it was agreed to strengthen subregional cooperation including with Nepal and Bhutan. Both sides also agreed to strengthen cooperation in the area of power and energy connectivity.

Forcibly Displaced Persons from the Rakhine State of Myanmar

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi appreciated the generosity of Bangladesh in sheltering and providing humanitarian assistance to the 1.1 million forcibly displaced persons from the Rakhine State of Myanmar.
- Both Prime Ministers reiterated the importance of their safe, speedy and sustainable return. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina congratulated India on its election as a member of the United Nations Security Council. She expressed Bangladesh's expectation to see India assist in the repatriation of the forcibly displaced Rohingyas back to Myanmar.

Partners in the Region and the World

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi thanked Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for supporting India in its election to the United Nations Security Council. Both countries agreed to continue working together towards achieving early reforms of the UN Security Council, combating climate change, attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and protection of the rights of migrants. Both Prime Ministers reaffirmed the need for developed countries to fulfill their commitments under the Global Partnership for ensuring the means of implementation of the SDGs as enshrined in the Agenda 2030.

- Both leaders highlighted that given the regional and global economic scenarios following the outbreak of COVID 19, regional organisations, such as SAARC and BIMSTEC have an important role to play. Bangladesh Prime Minister thanked the Indian Prime Minister for convening the SAARC leaders Video Conference in March 2020 in the outbreak of COVID-19. She also thanked the Indian Prime Minister for proposing creation of the SAARC Emergency Response Fund to counter effects of the global pandemic in the South Asian region.
- Bangladesh Prime Minister also reiterated the proposal for establishment of a SAARC Medical and Public Health Research Institute and sought support in this regard. Bangladesh will assume chairmanship of the IORA in 2021 and requested the support of India for working towards greater maritime safety and security. Prime Minister Modi appreciated the Presidency of Bangladesh at the Climate Vulnerable Forum in the current tenure.
- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina appreciated the work of the New Development Bank and thanked India for inviting Bangladesh to join the Institution. She welcomed the work of the Bank in multiple sectors including infrastructure development and expressed Bangladesh's willingness to be a part of the initiative.

Signing of Bilateral Documents and Inauguration of Projects

On this occasion, the following bilateral documents were signed and exchanged by the officials of the Governments of India and Bangladesh:

- Framework of Understanding (FOU) on Cooperation in Hydrocarbon Sector;
- Protocol on Trans-boundary Elephant Conservation;
- MOU regarding Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) through Local Bodies and other Public Sector Institutions;
- MOU on Supply of Equipment and Improvement of Garbage / Solid Waste Disposal Ground at Lamchori Area for Barishal City Corporation;
- Terms of Reference of India-Bangladesh CEOs Forum;
- MoU between Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Museum, Dhaka, Bangladesh and the National Museum, New Delhi, India; and
- MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture.

The following bilateral development partnership projects were also inaugurated:

Beautification and city development project in Rajshahi City

Construction of Khalishpur Collegiate Girl's School in Khulna

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Indigenous mRNA vaccine candidate supported by DBT gets Drug Controller nod to initiate Human clinical trials

India's first indigenous mRNA vaccine candidate has received approval from Indian Drug regulators to initiate Phase I/II human clinical trial. The novel mRNA vaccine candidate, HGCO19 has been developed by Gennova, Pune and supported with seed grant under the Ind-CEPI mission of Department of Biotechnology of M/o Science & Technology.

- The mRNA vaccines do not use the conventional model to produce immune response. Instead, mRNA vaccine carries the molecular instructions to make the protein in the body through a synthetic RNA of the virus.
- The host body uses this to produce the viral protein that is recognized and thereby making the body mount an immune response against the disease.
- mRNA-based vaccines are scientifically the ideal choice to address a pandemic because of their rapid developmental timeline.
- The mRNA vaccine is considered safe as is non-infectious, non-integrating in nature, and degraded by standard cellular mechanisms.
- They are expected to be highly efficacious because of their inherent capability of being translatable into the protein structure inside the cell cytoplasm.
- Additionally, mRNA vaccines are fully synthetic and do not require a host for growth, e.g., eggs or bacteria.
- Therefore, they can be quickly manufactured in an inexpensive manner under cGMP conditions to ensure their "availability" and "accessibility" for mass vaccination on a sustainable basis.

A tough novel species of Muraingrass identified by scientists in the plateaus of Western Ghats of Goa

(Topic: Biodiversity)

A new species of Indian Muraingrasses known for their ecological and economic importance, such as fodder, have been spotted by scientists in Goa in the Western Ghats, one of the four global biodiversity hotspots of India. The species has adapted to survive harsh conditions, low nutrient availability, and blossoms every monsoon.

Globally 85 species are known from Ischaemum, of which 61 species are exclusively found in India. The Western Ghats have 40 species with the highest concentration of the genus.

- Ischaemumjanarthanamii grows on low altitude lateritic plateaus in the outskirts of Bhagwan Mahavir National Park, Goa.
- The vegetation is exposed to extreme climatic conditions like desiccation in drier months and soils with low nutrient availability.
- However, withstanding these, the species has adapted to survive harsh conditions and blossom every monsoon.

Aerosols in Indo-Gangetic Plain have led to increased incidents of high rainfall in the Himalayan foothills

(Topic: Environment, Climate change)

Scientists have found that aerosols like black carbon and dust, which makes the Indo-Gangetic Plain one of the most polluted regions of the world, have led to increased incidents of high rainfall events in the foothills of the Himalayan Region.

The Indo-Gangetic Plain is located south and upwind of the Himalayan foothills. The region is associated with high aerosol loading, much of which is black carbon and dust, and thus provides an opportunity for studying how aerosol affects extreme rainfall events, particularly when air mass is forced from a low elevation to a higher elevation as it moves over rising terrain technically called orographic forcing.

The study shows that particulate emissions can alter the physical and dynamical properties of cloud systems and, in turn, amplify rainfall events over orographic regions downwind of highly polluted urban areas.

Why is the study important: The atmospheric aerosols play a key role in the regional/global climate system through scattering and absorption of incoming solar radiation and by modifying the cloud microphysics. Despite the large progress in quantifying the impact of different aerosols on radiative forcing, it still remains one of the major uncertainties in the climate change assessment. Precise measurements of aerosol properties are required to reduce the uncertainties, especially over the oceans and high altitude remote location in the Himalayas where they are scarce.

The transport of light-absorbing carbonaceous aerosols and dust from the polluted Indo-Gangetic Plain and desert areas over the Himalayas constitutes a major climatic issue due to severe impacts on atmospheric warming and glacier retreat. This heating over the Himalayas facilitates the "elevated-hat pump" that strengthens the temperature gradient between land and ocean and modifies the atmospheric circulation and the monsoon rainfall. A better understanding of the aerosol optical and microphysical properties through the study can improving the modelling of aerosol effects in view of aerosol-climate implications via modifications in atmospheric warming and changes in the snow/glacier albedo over the trans-Himalayan region.

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu has called for the launch of a mass media campaign on the advantages of building green homes

(Topic: Environment)

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu has called for the launch of a mass media campaign on the advantages of building green homes, saying the Green buildings movement should become a people's movement.

- Virtually inaugurating the 12th Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment Summit, the Vice President said that India has the potential to lead the Global Green Building Movement and emphasised the need to promote green building concept by both the private sector and the government.
- He also appealed to the Finance Commissions and local bodies to encourage green buildings through various measures including tax incentives, and urged states to create online portals to provide single window clearance to green buildings.

According to the World Green Building Council data, buildings and construction account for 39% of energy-related CO_2 emissions in the world. Therefore, there is an urgent need for concerted and coordinated efforts to ensure that the buildings are environment-friendly and energy & resource-efficient.

Green Buildings

A 'green' building is a building that, in its design, construction or operation, reduces or eliminates negative impacts, and can create positive impacts, on our climate and natural environment. Green buildings preserve precious natural resources and improve our quality of life.

There are a number of features which can make a building 'green'. These include:

- Efficient use of energy, water and other resources
- Use of renewable energy, such as solar energy
- Pollution and waste reduction measures, and the enabling of re-use and recycling
- Good indoor environmental air quality
- Use of materials that are non-toxic, ethical and sustainable
- Consideration of the environment in design, construction and operation
- Consideration of the quality of life of occupants in design, construction and operation
- A design that enables adaptation to a changing environment

Any building can be a green building, whether it's a home, an office, a school, a hospital, a community centre, or any other type of structure, provided it includes features listed above.

Several benefits –

Environmental: Green buildings can not only reduce or eliminate negative impacts on the environment, by using less water, energy or natural resources, but they can – in many cases – have a positive impact on the environment (at the building or city scales) by generating their own energy or increasing biodiversity.

Economic: Green buildings offer a number of economic or financial benefits, which are relevant to a range of different people or groups of people. These include cost savings on utility bills for tenants or households (through energy and water efficiency); lower construction costs and higher property value for building developers; increased occupancy rates or operating costs for building owners; and job creation. Post-Covid,

there has been a consensus to "build back better" and invest in those sectors of the economy that can generate jobs as well as fuel green growth. Green buildings provide an ideal avenue to support this goal.

Social: Green building benefits go beyond economics and the environment, and have been shown to bring positive social impacts too. Many of these benefits are around the health and wellbeing of people who work in green offices or live in green homes.

Given the pandemic and its aftershocks, the appeal of green buildings has increased for the occupants of residential houses as well as workspaces. Post-Covid, individuals are expected to become all the more cautious about their health, well-being and comfort, and would want to live in buildings that have a better ventilation system, ample daylight and fresh water availability.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), respiratory and lung diseases associated with poor indoor environment quality are three of the top five causes of death. The features of green buildings have proven to have a positive impact on health and well-being. Green homes and offices optimise natural light in the construction design and limit the usage of artificial lighting.

Research shows that natural daylight helps in reduction of stress levels, provides psychological comfort and increases employees' productivity by approximately 15 percent in an office environment. Therefore, by investing in green designing and development, companies can ensure better returns on their most valued assets — employees.

GRIHA

GRIHA is an acronym for Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment. GRIHA is a Sanskrit word meaning – 'Abode'.GRIHA , the green rating system developed by The Energy Resources Institute (TERI), is promoted by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) as the National rating system.

Given India's commitments to Paris Summit, it has become all the more important to reduce GHG emissions and improve the environmental friendliness of every economic activity. Construction activities contribute a significant chunk to the Pollution level. Further careless building designs add onto the urban heating phenomena, which is on rise due to rising population and migration. The need to make constructions compliant to such codes are as follows:

- Reduced energy consumption without sacrificing the comfort levels.
- Reduced destruction of natural areas, habitats, and biodiversity, and reduced soil loss from erosion etc.
- Reduced air and water pollution (with direct health benefits)
- Reduced water consumption
- Limited waste generation due to recycling and reuse
- Reduced pollution loads
- Increased user productivity
- Enhanced image and marketability

- Optimize energy performance of building within specified comfort limits

The Way Forward

- The Finance Commissions and local bodies to encourage green buildings through various measures including tax incentives.
- States to create online portals to provide single window clearance for green buildings
- The implementation of Bureau of Energy Efficiency's Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) has not been uniform across the nation
- The roof cooling should be an area of priority for all. In India, over 60 per cent of roofs are made from metal, asbestos, and concrete – thus trapping heat inside buildings and contributing to heat island effect in urban areas. Cool roofs offer a simple and a cost-effective solution that can lower indoor temperatures by 2 to 4 degrees Celsius as compared to traditional roofs, especially in low-income households and slums in urban areas.

Given the ongoing recession, green buildings can become a strong driver of economic growth and the prerogative to "build back better," by providing nine million skilled jobs in both the renewable and construction sector by 2030. The government, in collaboration with the banking sector, can together provide fuel to the green construction sector and help India achieve its potential in this regard.

Our civilisation teaches us to live in harmony with nature. We need to revisit our traditional house designs refined over thousands of years. Unfortunately, our modern structures are such that no sparrow can come and make a nest in our house. This is not our culture.

Successful Trials of 5.56 x 30 mm Joint Venture Protective Carbine (JVPC)

(Topic: Defence)

Defence Research and Development Organsiation (DRDO) designed 5.56×30 mm Protective Carbine has successfully undergone the final phase of User trials on 7th December 2020 meeting all the GSQR parameters. This has paved the way for induction into the services. This was the last leg of trials in a series of User trials which have been carried out in extreme temperature conditions in summer and high altitudes in winter. JVPC has successfully met the stringent performance criteria of reliability and accuracy in addition to quality trials conducted by DGQA.

JVPC is a Gas Operated Semi Bull-pup automatic weapon having more than 700 rpm rate of fire. The effective range of the carbine is more than 100 m and weighs about 3.0 kg with key features like high reliability, low recoil, retractable Butt, ergonomic design, single

hand firing capability, and multiple Picatinny rails etc. These features make it a very potent weapon for Counter Insurgency /Counter Terrorism operations by security agencies.

Prelims oriented News

Armed Forces Flag Day – 7th December

Prime Minister of the State of Kuwait: Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah

Amir of the State of Qatar: His Highness Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani

Universal Healthcare Coverage Day: 12th December

Meghdoot awards: Postal Department confers this award to Postal Employees annually

A Sport recently recognized as a competitive sport: Yogasana

50th anniversary celebrations of Indo-Pak War: In December 1971, the Indian Armed Forces secured a decisive and historic Victory over Pakistan Army, which led to creation of a Nation – Bangladesh and also resulted in the largest Military Surrender after the World War – II. From 16 December, the Nation will be celebrating 50 Years of Indo-Pak War, also called 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh'. Various commemorative events are planned across the Nation.

Swahid Diwas: To pay homage to the martyrs of the Assam movement

Two new Zoos one each in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh granted recognition by Central government

- Rajgir Zoo Safari in Nalanda, Bihar
- Shaheed Ashfaque Ullah Khan Prani Udyaan in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh

'CO-WIN': A new digital platform for COVID 19 Vaccination Delivery called 'CO-WIN' is being used for COVID-19 Vaccination Delivery

- About 30 crore line-listed for COVID-19 vaccination, includes healthcare and frontline workers, prioritized population groups
- About 1.54 lakh ANMs working for Universal Immunization Programmes to work as COVID vaccinators, more vaccinators to be arranged in collaboration with states and UTs
- A transparent, effective & sustained communication strategy on vaccine safety and effectiveness is crucial for educating people, dispelling doubts

India strengthens its commitment to Clean Sport, contributes USD 1 million to WADA for scientific research

- Will allow WADA to develop innovative anti-doping testing and detection methods. The money will also be used to further strengthen WADA's independent Investigations and Intelligence Department.

- India's contribution of USD 1 million is the highest among contributions made by other world governments, including China, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.
- The total contribution of all member nations will be matched by an equal sum by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to create a corpus of USD 10 million.
- The decision to build this corpus was made at WADA's Fifth World Conference on Doping in Sport held in Katowice, Poland in 2019. This contribution is over and above the annual contribution made to WADA's core budget by India.

India Post Payments Bank launches its digital payments' services 'DakPay':
To Transform Banking Experience at the last mile

DakPay is not just a digital payment app but a suite of digital financial and assisted banking services provided by India Post & IPPB through the trusted Postal ('Dak') network across the nation to cater to the financial needs ('Pay') of various sections of the society – be it sending money to the loved ones (Domestic Money Transfers – DMT), Scan QR code and make payment for services/merchants digitally (Virtual debit card & with UPI), enabling cashless ecosystem through biometrics, providing interoperable banking services to the customers of ANY BANK (AePS) and Utility Bill Payment services.

About India Post Payments Bank

India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has been established under the Department of Posts, Ministry of Communication with 100% equity owned by Government of India. IPPB was launched by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on September 1, 2018. The bank has been set up with the vision to build the most accessible, affordable and trusted bank for the common man in India. The fundamental mandate of India Post Payments Bank is to remove barriers for the unbanked & underbanked and reach the last mile leveraging the Postal network comprising 155,000 Post Offices (135,000 in rural areas) and 300,000 Postal employees.

IPPB's reach and its operating model is built on the key pillars of India Stack – enabling Paperless, Cashless and Presence-less banking in a simple and secure manner at the customers' doorstep, through a CBS-integrated smartphone and biometric device. Leveraging frugal innovation and with a high focus on ease of banking for the masses, IPPB delivers simple and affordable banking solutions through intuitive interfaces available in 13 languages.

Launch of Socio-Economic Profiling of PM SVANidhi beneficiaries

- Under this, a complete profile of each PM SVANidhi beneficiary and their family members will be prepared. Based on the profiled data, benefits of the various eligible Central Schemes would be extended to them for their holistic socio-economic upliftment.

- The launch has been in the context of the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister that PM SVANidhi scheme should not be seen merely from the perspective of extending loans to street vendors but should also be seen as an instrument for outreach to street vendors and their families for their holistic development and socio-economic upliftment.

"eSanjeevani" telemedicine service records 1 million tele-consultations

India has crossed a landmark milestone in its eHealth journey. eSanjeevani telemedicine service of the Health Ministry has crossed 1 million (10 lakh) tele-consultations today.Telemedicine entails delivery of health services from a distance using internet and it not only extends the reach of health services but also improves quality of health services besides saving time and money. The roll out of eSanjeevani in India is supposedly the first of its kind of digital transformation in the delivery of health services at national scale by a developing country. During the COVID-19 pandemic, eSanjeevani not only brought about a huge digital transformation in the delivery of health services but had also boosted the digital health ecosystem in the country.

eSanjeevani initiative of Health Ministry is serving in two streams in 28 States and Union Territories. The eSanjeevaniAB-HWC enables doctor to doctor teleconsultations and is being used at around 6000 Health & Wellness Centres which are being served by specialists and doctors in around 240 hubs which have been set up by States in District Hospitals or Medical Colleges etc. Over 20,000 paramedics, doctors and specialists have been trained to use eSanjeevaniAB-HWC.

QCI Launches Recognition Scheme for Hygiene Rating Audit Agencies: To scale up Hygiene Rating by increasing the number of recognised Hygiene Rating Audit Agencies in the country**.**

- FSSAI's initiative of 'Food Hygiene Rating Scheme' is a certification system for food businesses supplying food directly to consumers, either on or off premise. The food establishments are rated based on food hygiene and safety conditions observed at the time of audit.
- The scheme aims to allow consumers to make informed choices/decisions pertaining to the food outlets where they eat by encouraging food businesses to improve their hygiene and safety standards. Currently, this scheme is applicable for Food service establishments (such as hotels, restaurants, cafeteria, dhabhas, etc), sweet shops, bakeries and meat retail stores.

2001 Parliament terror attack

On this day in 2001, a five-member suicide squad comprising Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad terrorists attacked Parliament house, while the Lok Sabha was in session: the Houses were adjourned at the time of the attack, but several parliamentarians and staff were present inside the building.

The attackers came in an Ambassador car, and were able to gain entry because of a forged government sticker. But as the car moved inside the Parliament complex, one of the staff members became suspicious. The vehicle was thus forced to turn back and in the course, hit then vice president Krishan Kant's vehicle.

The gunmen, armed with AK-47s and grenades, then got down and opened fire. The attack lasted for about 30 minutes, and all the five terrorists were neutralised outside the building itself. However, five security personnel of Delhi Police, one woman constable of the CRPF and two security assistants of Parliament Watch and Ward section died preventing the entry of terrorists into Parliament House. A gardener and a photojournalist too lost their lives.

BJP leader L K Advani said in the Lok Sabha that the attack "was executed jointly by Pakistan-based and supported terrorist outfits, namely, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad. These two organisations are known to derive their support and patronage from Pak ISI."

Within days, four people were arrested and charged as masterminds of the attack. The case against the four – Mohammed Afzal Guru, Shaukat Hussain, Afsan Guru and SAR Geelani – went on for about a decade, with the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court eventually acquitting two, and upholding the death sentence of one.

Geelani, a professor in Delhi University, was acquitted for "need of evidence" by the Delhi high court in 2003, a decision upheld by the Supreme Court in 2005. Afsan Guru, too, was cleared of charges and Hussain served jail time. Afzal Guru was hanged in 2013.

United Nations Declares 'Invest India', The Winner of the Investment Promotion Award 2020

The award recognizes and celebrates the outstanding achievements and best practices of Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) across the globe. The evaluation was based on UNCTAD's assessment of work undertaken by 180 Investment Promotion Agencies.

- The COVID-19 pandemic has led to numerous challenges for Investment Promotion Agencies forcing them to shift focus from routine investment promotion and facilitation towards crisis management, notification of government emergency and economic relief measures, provision of crisis support services, and contribution to national COVID-19 business response efforts.
- UNCTAD highlighted good practices followed by Invest India, such as the Business Immunity Platform, Exclusive Investment Forum webinar series, its social media engagement and focus COVID response teams (such as business reconstruction, stakeholder outreach and supplier outreach) created as a response to the pandemic, in its publications.
- Invest India has also shared long-term strategies and practices being followed for investment promotion, facilitation and retention at UNCTAD's high-level brainstorming sessions.

This United Nations Investment Promotion Award is the most coveted award for Investment Promotion Agencies. UNCTAD is a central agency that monitors performance of IPAs and identifies global best practices. Germany, South Korea and Singapore have been some of the past winners of the award.

India-Portugal Tech Summit: Identified several opportunities for engagement amongst stakeholders at various levels while deliberations on the possibilities of scaling up solutions to address societal challenges facing the world have yielded positive results

The bilateral cooperation between India and Portugal in the science and technology is the oldest and robust. Portuguese govt. is keen to work jointly in cleantech, healthcare, space etc. Since India is bringing in a new Geo-space policy, Portuguese Govt. is keen to collaborate in satellite areas. Intersection between space, earth and water is important for both the nations for generation of commercially viable sustainable solutions for the developing countries including waste and water management.

5th India – Myanmar bilateral meeting on Drug Control Cooperation

India

- Highlighted issues particularly regarding the trafficking of Heroin and Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS) in the country. High prevalence of drug abuse in the North Eastern States abutting the Myanmar border is a major cause of concern for India.
- Apart from porosity of the India-Myanmar border, drug trafficking through the maritime route in Bay of Bengal has emerged as a new challenge for both countries. NCB has remained committed towards strengthening the existing mechanism of sharing information and assistance with Myanmar, for combating the drug menace in the region.

Myanmar

- Elaborated on the growing threat of the production of yaba tablets (methamphetamine) which has caused a grave concern in the region, even though the cooperation mechanism between Myanmar and India has been enhanced over the past years
- Urged India to develop frequent information exchange on trafficking of drugs and precursor smuggling activities at every level
- The Commander of the DED complimented the Government of India and the NCB for their continuous efforts to combat the growing threat of the drug menace.

Both countries agreed

- On the exchange of intelligence information in a timely manner to conduct follow-up investigations in drug seizure cases, new psychotropic substances and their precursors

- Agreed to conduct Border Level Officers/Field Level Officers meetings on regular basis between frontline officers to strengthen the existing cooperation on drug law enforcement
- It was decided to exchange information on illegal entry and exit points of illicit drug trafficking on the Myanmar-India borders and information on technology being used to interdict drug trafficking.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and USA for exchange of information in areas of mutual interest in the electricity sector

The MoU will help in improving regulatory and policy framework for developing efficient whole sale power market and enhancing grid reliability.

1. Identify energy-related issues and develop topics and possible agendas for the exchange of information and regulatory practices in areas of mutual interest;
2. Organize visits by Commissioners and/or staff to participate in activities at each other's facilities;
3. Participate in seminars, visit, and exchanges;
4. Develop programs of mutual interests and where appropriate hold these programs locally to enhance participation;
5. When practical and of mutual interest, provide speakers on energy issues and other personnel (management or technical).

Human Rights Day: 10th December

About National Human Rights Commission:

The National Human rights commission is a statutory body established under the provisions of Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993. It is responsible for looking into cases of excesses which are violating human rights and to strengthen the efforts to uphold the human rights in the country. Recently Lok Sabha cleared Protection of Human Rights (Amendments) Bill, 2019 which will strengthen the Human Rights Institutions of India and in perfect sync with the agreed global standards and benchmarks towards ensuring the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual in the country.

Constitution of NHRC

The Commission consists of:

- A Chairperson
- One Member who is, or has been, a Judge of the Supreme Court of India
- One Member who is, or has been, the Chief Justice of a High Court

- Two Members to be appointed from among persons having knowledge of, or practical experience in, matters relating to human rights
- In addition, the Chairpersons of four National Commissions of (Minorities, SC, ST, Women) serve as ex officio members.

Functions and Powers of NHRC/SHRC

- They are empowered to inquire into the violations of human rights committed by state authorities, either upon petitions presented to them, or upon their own initiative.
- While conducting these inquiries, the Commissions are granted **identical powers to that of civil courts**, such as the examining witnesses, ordering for documents, receiving evidence, and so on.
- Section 18 of the Protection of Human Rights Act empowers the Human Rights Commission to **"recommend" to the concerned government**
    - to grant compensation to the victim
    - to initiate prosecution against the erring state authorities,
    - to grant interim relief, and to take various other steps.
- Furthermore, Section 18 of the Human Rights Act also **obligates the concerned government** to "forward its comments on the report, including the action taken or proposed to be taken thereon, to the Commission", within a period of one month.

National Family Health Survey-5

Objective: To provide reliable and comparable datasets on health, family welfare and other emerging issues.

- Four rounds of NFHS (1992–93, 1998–99, 2005–06 and 2015–16) have been successfully completed in India.
- The state factsheet released include information on 131 key indicators.
- These important indicators on population, health and family welfare, nutrition and others will help track progress of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country.

The key results from the State/UT factsheets are as follows:

- The Total Fertility Rates (TFR) has further declined since NFHS-4 in almost all the Phase-1 States and UTs. The replacement level of fertility (2.1) has been achieved in 19 out of the 22 States/UTs and only 3 states viz. Manipur (2.2), Meghalaya (2.9) and Bihar (3.0) have TFR above replacement levels now.
- Overall Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) has increased substantially in most States/UTs and it is the highest in HP and WB (74%). Use of modern methods of contraception has also increased in almost all States/UTs.
- Unmet needs of family planning have witnessed a declining trend in most of the Phase-1 States/UTs. The unmet need for spacing which remained a major issue in India in the past has come down to less than 10 per cent in all the States except Meghalaya and Mizoram.
- Full immunization drive among children aged 12-23 months has recorded substantial improvement across States/UTs/districts. More than two-third of children are fully immunized in all the States and UTs except Nagaland, Meghalaya and Assam. In almost three-fourths of districts, 70% or more children aged 12-23 months are fully immunized against childhood diseases.

Due to the launch of Mission Indradhanush

- There is increase in the per cent of women receiving the recommended four or more ANC visits by health providers in many States/UTs. This percentage has increased in 13 States/UTs between 2015-16 to 2019-20.
- Institutional births have increased substantially with over four-fifth of the women delivering in institutions in 19 States and UTs. Institutional delivery is over 90 per cent in 14 out of the total 22 Sates and UTs. Almost 91% of districts recorded over 70% institutional deliveries of births in the 5 years preceding the survey.
- Along with an increase in institutional births, there has also been a substantial increase in C-section deliveries in many States/UTs especially in private health facilities.
- Sex ratio at birth has remained unchanged or increased in most States/UTs. Majority of the states are in normal sex ratio of 952 or above. SRB is below 900 in Telangana, Himachal Pradesh, Goa, DNH & DD.
- Child nutrition indicators show a mixed pattern across states. While the situation improved in many States/UTs, there has been minor deterioration in others. Drastic changes in respect of stunting and wasting are unlikely in a short period.
- Anaemia among women and children continues to be a cause of concern. More than half of the children and women are anaemic in 13 of the 22 States/UTs. It has also been observed that aanaemia among pregnant women has increased in half of the States/UTs compared to NFHS-4, in spite of substantial increase in the consumption of IFA tablets by pregnant women for 180 days or more.
- For both women and men, there is a lot of variation in the high or very high random blood glucose levels across States/UTs. Men are more likely to have slightly higher blood glucose levels in the range of high or very high compared to women. The percentage of men with high or very high blood glucose is highest in Kerala (27%) followed by Goa (24%). Prevalence of elevated blood pressure (hypertension) among men is somewhat higher than in women.
- The percentage of households with improved sanitation facility and clean fuel for cooking has increased in almost all the 22 States/UTs over the last four years (from 2015-16 to 2019-20). The Government of India has made concerted efforts to provide toilet facilities to maximum households through Swachh Bharat Mission, and improved household environment through Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana in the country. For instance, the use of cooking fuel has increased more than 10 percentage point in all the States and UTs during the last 4 years with over 25 percentage point increase in states of Karnataka and Telangana.
- Women's empowerment indicators portray considerable improvement across all the States/UTs included in Phase 1. Considerable progress has been recorded between NFHS-4 and NFHS-5 in regard to women operating bank accounts. For instance, in the case of Bihar the increase was to the tune of 51 percentage point from 26 per cent to 77 per cent. More than 60 per cent of women in every state and UTs in the first phase have operational bank accounts.

Personality in News

Sardar Patel – The Iron Man of India

"By common endeavour we can raise the country to a new greatness, while a lack of unity will expose us to fresh calamities."

These pragmatic but profound remarks defined the vision and the sterling character of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the principal unifier of modern India.

- First Deputy Prime Minister of India
- Widely considered to be the architect of modern India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel played an important role in the integration of all the princely states (especially Hyderabad, Junagadh and Kashmir) into the Indian Union after the British left India in 1947.
- Provided good governance as an able administrator in diverse fields like modern farming and empowerment of tribal communities
- Organised peasants from Kheda, Borsad, and Bardoli in Gujarat in non-violent civil disobedience against the British Raj, becoming one of the most influential leaders in Gujarat.
    - He earned the title of "Sardar" after spearheading a no-tax campaign by peasants at Bardoli in Gujarat.
    - He also led the relief and rehabilitation operations when Gujarat was ravaged by floods and worked tirelessly during a plague outbreak in Ahmedabad.
- He is also remembered as the "patron saint of India's civil servants" for having established the modern all-India services system. "A civil servant cannot afford to, and must not, take part in politics. Nor must he involve himself in communal wrangles. To depart from the path of rectitude in either of these respects is to debase public service and to lower its dignity," he had cautioned them on April 21, 1947.

India without Sardar:

Subcontinent would be divided into two regions, one part a democratic India surrounded by the other part—close to 560 smaller states ruled by kings and their descendants.

Half of the Indians would be living under a democratic set-up with freedoms and the rest living under some monarchy.

The principle of Unity, Liberty, Equality enshrined in the Constitution would exist in one part and not in the other.

There would be restrictions on travelling and transporting goods from one part to another.

- One part of India would be governed by the ideas of Justice and Liberty, whereas the other would have survived devoid of these ideas.
- Chaos and anarchy would have followed, and the idea of India would have failed at the very start of its journey.

Force behind unification

- Sardar Patel's foresight and tactful navigation of the most turbulent period in post-Independence, and the resolve he demonstrated in integrating the more than 500 princely States into the Dominion of India is an unparalleled accomplishment in modern history.
- Hailing Patel's feat, Lord Mountbatten declared the unification of India as the first great success of the new independent government.
- Patel was a statesman with a strong sense of realpolitik, a realist to the core and an earthy politician whose sole aim was to build a strong and united India.
- The princely rulers had the option at that time to either accede to India or Pakistan or remain independent.
- Patel's wisdom, foresight, patriotism, tact, persuasive powers and abiding commitment to fair play enabled him to untangle a highly complex political and social problem without triggering any kind of revolt or civil unrest.

Operation Polo (Hyderabad) and case of Junagarh

- Patel was also compelled to use coercion by launching 'Operation Polo' to liberate and integrate Hyderabad after the Nizam of Hyderabad entertained false hopes of either joining Pakistan or remaining independent.
- In a swift operation lasting five days, Hyderabad State was liberated in September 1948.
- It was the most critical time when the country's political unity was in jeopardy, India found the man of the moment in Sardar Patel.
- He displayed amazing patience, tact and a steely determination in dealing with an intransigent ruler, who refused to see the writing on the wall and even wanted to take the issue to the United Nations.
- Displaying statesmanship of the highest order, Sardar Patel prevented the attempts to not only Balkanise India but internationalise the issue as well.
- The complicated case of Junagarh, Gujarat, was also handled with dexterity by Patel.
- The problem of Jammu and Kashmir may have been resolved long back had Sardar Patel been given a free hand to handle it at that time.

A builder of India

- Patel himself termed the entire exercise as a "bloodless revolution" when he wanted the Constituent Assembly to consider privy purse settlements for the surrender by the rulers of all their ruling powers and the dissolution of the States as separate units.
- Patel was an ardent follower of Mahatma Gandhi and never swerved in his loyalty to his mentor, although there were occasions when he differed with him.
- Similarly, he did not see eye-to-eye with Jawaharlal Nehru on certain issues, including the handling of Jammu and Kashmir.
- But he did not allow these differences or personal ego to come in the way of protecting the larger interests of the country.

- He worked shoulder-to-shoulder with Nehru in building a modern India.
- Patel was a multifaceted personality. He was a dynamic political leader, an organiser par excellence, a competent administrator and a skilful negotiator.
- After coming under the influence of Mahatma Gandhi, he became his loyal follower and successfully organised peasants against the imposition of taxes by the British at Kheda and Bardoli, Gujarat, and in the process he earned the title of 'Sardar' for his leadership qualities.
- The manner in which he marshalled the peasants and the unflinching stand taken by him eventually forced the authorities to roll back the taxes.

Architect of the steel frame

- The Iron Man of India was the chief architect of India's steel frame — the civil services.
- Thus, the All India Services were seen as an important cementing force in promoting the unity and integrity of the nation.
- It will be relevant to recall his famous address to the civil service probationers in 1947. when Patel told them that the service will have to adopt its true role of national service without being trammelled upon by traditions and habits of the past.
- He said: "Your (officers') predecessors were brought up in the traditions in which they felt out of touch and kept themselves aloof from the common run of the people. It will be your bounden duty to treat the common men in India as your own or to put it correctly, to feel yourself to be one of them."

The man of integrity and intentions of "nation first"

- He readily accepted the Mahatma Gandhi's advice to withdraw his candidacy for the post of Congress President in favour of Pandit Nehru in 1946, although a majority of State Congress committees supported his candidature.
- It was apparent that the Congress President would become the first Prime Minister of India. It once again proved his noble intention of placing the country's interests above self.
- His love for the motherland was best described by Maulana Azad when he said: "He made his choice out of two courses that come before a man, namely would he live for his country or for himself? Sardar chose his country."

Criticisms:

Patel's idea of unity was incomplete.

- He may have created a united India, but this India remains full of contradictions and inequalities, both social and economic.
- Politically, we may be equal and united, but socially and economically we are not.

Acknowledging the monumental contribution of Patel in nation building, Jawaharlal Nehru said, "History will call him the builder and consolidator of new India."

The remarks Patel made during the Quit India Movement are also relevant today. He said: "We have to shed mutual bickering, shed the difference of being high or low and develop the sense of equality and banish untouchability. We have to live like the children of the same father".

Statue of Unity

- On Sadhu Hill
- Standing at 182 meters in the middle of river Narmada at Kevadia in Gujarat's Narmada district, the Statue of Unity is the tallest statue in the world– much taller than the 153 metre Spring Temple Buddha in China and almost twice the size of the Statue of Liberty in New York. (remember the places for Prelims)
- One can have a view of the Satpura and Vindhyachal mountain ranges, which also form the point where Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra meet. (Prelims centric fact)
- Visitors can also get a distant view of the 12-km-long Garudeshwar Reservoir (which will help ensure there is always water around the statue), which is located downstream from the Narmada dam. (Prelims centric – location of the reservoir)
- Man Behind the Statue: Shri Ram Vanji Sutar, the 93-year-old sculptor.

PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU (PIB) IAS UPSC – 20th December to 26th December – 2020

🧘 **iasbaba.com**/2020/12/press-information-bureau-pib-ias-upsc-20th-december-to-26th-december-2020

Press Information Bureau (PIB) IAS UPSC – 20th to 26th December, 2020

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Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020

(Topic: Government policies)

- These Rules emanate from the conviction that the power systems exist to serve the consumers and the consumers have rights to get the reliable services and quality electricity.
- As the Distribution Companies across the country are monopolies – whether government or private – and the consumer has no alternative – therefore it was necessary that the consumers' rights be laid down in Rules and a system for enforcement of these rights be put in place.
- These rules are also an important step towards furthering the ease of doing business across the country. Implementation of these Rules shall ensure that new electricity connections, refunds and other services are given in a time bound manner. Wilful disregard to consumer rights will result in levying penalties on service providers.

Key areas are covered in the Electricity (Rights of consumers) Rules:

- Rights of consumers and Obligations of Distribution licensees
- Release of new connection and modification in existing connection
- Metering arrangement
- Billing and Payment
- Disconnection and Reconnection
- Reliability of supply
- Consumer as Prosumer
- Standards of Performance of licensee
- Compensation Mechanism
- Call Centre for Consumer Services
- Grievance redressal mechanism
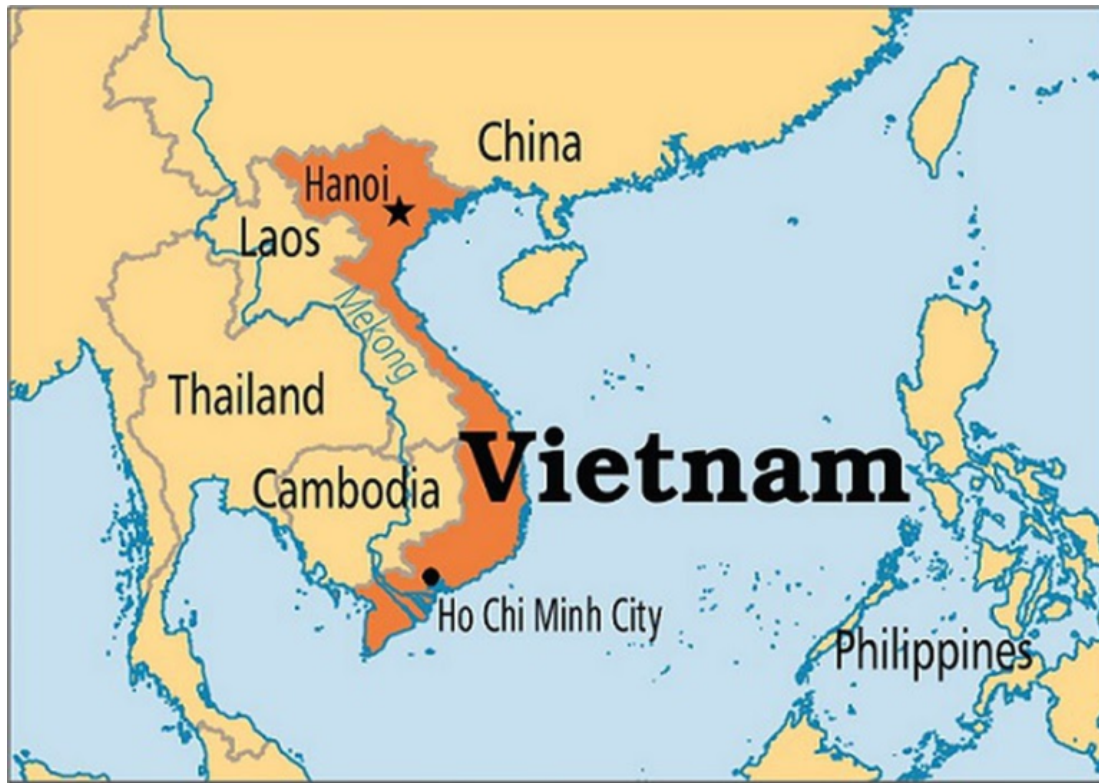
India-Vietnam Leaders' Virtual Summit

(Topic: International Relations)

Indian Prime Minister held a Virtual Summit with H.E. Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Prime Minister of Vietnam.

Key takeaways

- A 'Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity and People' document was adopted during the Summit, to guide the future development of the India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
- Both leaders also welcomed the signing of a Plan of Action for period 2021-2023 for further implementation of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to implement the Joint Vision.

Announcements made:

- Implementation of the High Speed Guard Boat (HSGB) Manufacturing Project for Vietnam Border Guard Command under the US$ 100 million Defence Line of Credit extended by Government of India to Vietnam;
- Completion and handing over of seven Development Projects with Indian 'Grant-in-Aid' Assistance of US$ 1.5 million for the benefit of local community in Vietnam's Ninh Thuan province.
- Enhancing the number of annual Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) from currently five to ten commencing FY 2021-2022.
- Three new Development Partnership projects in heritage conservation in Vietnam (F-block of Temple at My Son; Dong Duong Buddhist Monastery in Quang Nam province; and Nhan Cham Tower in Phu Yen province).
- Launch of bilateral project for preparing an Encyclopedia on India – Vietnam Civilizational and Cultural Relations.

World Bank Signs $500 Million Project to Develop Green, Resilient and Safe Highways in India

(Topic: India and international organisations)

The Government of India and the World Bank today signed a $500 million project to build safe and green national highway corridors in the states of Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. The project will also enhance the capacity of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) in mainstreaming safety and green technologies.

The Green National Highways Corridors Project will support MoRTH construct 783 km of highways in various geographies by integrating safe and green technology designs such as local and marginal materials, industrial byproducts, and other bioengineering solutions.

The project will

- Help reduce GHG emissions in the construction and maintenance of highways.
- Set new standards in the construction of safe motorable roads.
- The selected stretches in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh will also help improve connectivity and promote economic development.
- Will provide seamless connectivity and reduce logistics costs
- Support analytics to map the freight volume and movement pattern on the National Highway network, identify constraints, and provide innovative logistics solutions.

Historically, the transport sector in India has offered limited employment opportunities for women. The project will support the ministry with an in-depth analysis of gender-related issues in the transport sector along with help in creating jobs for women by training women-led micro enterprises and women collectives to implement green technologies in the highway corridors.

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Year End Review: Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying

1. **Rs. 15000 crore Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund** set up under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan for incentivizing investments by individual entrepreneurs, private companies, MSME, Farmers Producers Organization (FPOs) and Section 8 companies to establish (i) the dairy processing and value addition infrastructure, (ii) meat processing and value addition infrastructure and (iii) Animal Feed Plant
2. **Nationwide Artificial Insemination Programme** for 20,000 bovines per district for 600 districts in the country was recently launched. So far, under NAIP Phase-II, 2.64 lakh AIs performed and 1.73 lakh farmers have been benefited.
3. Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying has introduced a new component **"interest subvention on Working capital loans for Dairy sector"** as one of the component under its scheme "Supporting Dairy Cooperatives and Farmer Producer organizations engaged in dairy activities" (SDC&FPO).
4. A Special drive has been undertaken to provide concessional credit to PM-KISAN beneficiaries through **Kisan Credit Cards**. Animal Husbandry & Dairying farmers have been included in this drive. This will enable such farmers to gain access to institutional credit at concessional interest rate. 2.5 crore farmers will be covered and will benefit from credit flow of about Rs 2 lakh crores.

Year End Review 2020: Department of Fisheries

The fisheries sector has been recognized as a powerful income and employment generator as it stimulates growth of a number of subsidiary industries and is a source of cheap and nutritious food, at the same time it is an instrument of livelihood for a large section of economically backward population of the country. Fishery sector occupies an important place in the socio-economic development of the country. Fisheries and aquaculture continue to be an important source of food, nutrition, income and livelihood to millions of people.

- Fisheries is a fast-growing sector in India, which provides nutrition and food security to a large population of the country besides providing income and employment to more than 28 million people.
- India is the second largest fish producing country in the world accounting for 7.56% of global production and contributing about 1.24% to the country's Gross Value Added (GVA) and over 7.28% to the agricultural GVA.
- Export earnings from the Fisheries sector has been Rs.46,662.85 crores during 2019-20.
- The sector provides livelihood support to about 280 lakh people at the primary level and almost twice the number along the value chain and the annual average growth rate in the Fisheries sector has been 7% over the last few years.
- Fish being an affordable and rich source of animal protein, is one of the healthiest options to mitigate hunger and nutrient deficiency.

The sector has immense potential to double the fish farmers' income by 2022, as envisioned by the Government of India. Hence it is essential that sustained and focused attention is given to the fisheries sector through policy and financial support to accelerate its development in a sustainable, responsible, inclusive and equitable manner.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund

The Union Government in its Budget 2018 has set aside **Rs. 7,550crore** for setting up of a dedicated Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF). The fund has the potential to benefit over 4 million marine and inland fishers especially women, SHGs, weaker sections, due to availability of modern infrastructure and added value of produce. FIDF will provide concessional finance to the State Governments/Union Territories, State entities, cooperatives, individual entrepreneurs, etc. for development of fisheries infrastructure facilities both in marine and inland fisheries sector.

- Fill the large infrastructure gaps in fisheries sector
- Create employment opportunity to the rural population in fishing and allied activities
- Contributes towards enhancement of fish production and productivity
- Offers manifold benefits
- Fulfill the requirements of tapping the full fisheries potential and achieving the vision given by the Hon'ble Prime Minister for doubling farmers' income.

KCC to Animal Husbandry farmers and Fisheries: As on date, a total of 44,935 KCCs have been issued to fishers and fish farmers. In addition, about 3.80 lakh applications from fishers and fish farmers are with the Banks at various stages for issuance of KCCs

Brood banks (including seaweed banks) : 6 Nos approved

SagarMitras : 1997 Nos approved.

Integrated Development of Reservoirs: 12 Reservoirs approved.

Fish Farmers Producers Organizations(FFPOs): State/UT-wise targets for 720 FFPOs has been issued advising the States/UTs to submit the proposals.

MatsyaSevaKendra: 20 units approved**.** State/UT-wise targets prepared. Concept on establishment and operation of the MSK is being finalized.

Integrated Coastal Villages: Action Plan prepared and is being finalized.

Integrated Aqua Parks: Action plan prepared. Salient feature of the action plan is being forwarded to the States/UTs requesting them to submit the proposals accordingly.

Air Quality Commission directs strict enforcement of dust control measures to curb Air Pollution

(Topic: Pollution)

The Commission of Air Quality Management in Delhi-NCR and adjoining areas reviewed the deteriorating air quality situation and has directed strict enforcement of dust control measures to curb air pollution in Delhi-NCR. Strict action must be taken against violators of construction demolition waste rules and the guidelines.

- The body also issued statutory directions to Central Pollution Control Board and Pollution Control Boards and Delhi Pollution Control Committee to constitute teams for inspection and strict enforcement of dust control measures.
- It also issued directions to levy environment compensation charge from violators and stoppage / prohibition of construction / demolition activities based on extent of violations.

Dust emanating from the construction and demolition activities continues to be a major source of air pollution throughout the year. Such activities generate significant amount of dust, adversely impacting the Air quality by raising PM2.5 and PM10 levels.

In order to ensure strict compliance of Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change and guidelines on dust mitigation measures for handling Construction and Demolition Wastes, the Commission has directed the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) of Haryana, Rajasthan, UP and Delhi Pollution Control

Committee (DPCC) will constitute surprise inspection teams and to furnish fortnightly inspection reports to the Commission regarding compliance of rules with respect to construction and demolition activities in the National Capital Region.

Successful Maiden Launch of MRSAM

(Topic: Defence)

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) achieved a major milestone with the maiden launch of Medium Range Surface to Air Missile (MRSAM). The missile completely destroyed a high speed unmanned aerial target which was mimicking an aircraft with a direct hit.

- Army version of MRSAM is a surface to Air Missile developed jointly by DRDO, India and IAI, Israel for use of the Indian Army.
- MRSAM Army weapon system comprises of Command post, Multi-Function Radar and Mobile Launcher system.
- The complete Fire Unit has been used during the launch in the deliverable configuration.
- The team from the users i.e. Indian Army also witnessed the launch. Number of range instruments such as Radar, Telemetry and Electro-Optical Tracking System were deployed and captured the complete mission data, validating the weapon system performance including the destruction of the target.

Prelims oriented News

Kisan Diwas: 23rd December

Good Governance Day: 25th December, 2020

Leopards in India: India now has 12,852 leopards. More than 60% increase in population has been recorded over the previous estimate which was conducted in 2014.

India's first-ever driverless train operations: On Delhi Metro's Magenta Line

> The driverless trains will be fully automated, which will eliminate the possibility of human error. After the start of driverless services on the Magenta Line, the Pink Line of Delhi Metro is expected to have driverless operations by the mid of 2021.

Air Quality Commission directs for 100 percent switching over of industries in Delhi to PNG.

- Delhi Pollution Control Committee directed to identify the industries using unapproved fuels and take stringent penal action in case of non-compliance.
- Though sizeable number of Industries are using PNG, the Commission stressed the need to switch over to PNG by all identified Industries in Delhi considering the fact that industrial sector is one of the major contributors to air pollution in Delhi and National Capital Region.

- Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) and Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) were impressed upon to complete the pipeline network, metering and associated infrastructure.

Ladakh's Tso Kar Wetland Complex: India has added Tso Kar Wetland Complex (hypersaline) in Ladakh as its 42nd Ramsar site, which is a second one in the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh.

- A high-altitude wetland complex, consisting of two principal waterbodies
- Situated in the Changthang region of Ladakh, India. It is called Tso Kar, meaning white lake, because of the white salt efflorescence found on the margins due to the evaporation of highly saline water.
- The Tso Kar Basin is an A1 Category Important Bird Area (IBA) as per Bird Life International and a key staging site in the Central Asian Flyway. The site is also one of the most important breeding areas of the Black-necked Crane (Grus nigricollis) in India. This IBA is also the major breeding area for Great Crested Grebe (Podicepscristatus), Bar-headed Geese (Anserindicus), Ruddy Shelduck (Tadornaferruginea), Brown-headed Gull (Larusbrunnicephalus), Lesser Sand-Plover (Charadriusmongolus) and many other species.

1st in Ladakh: The freshwater Startsapuk Tso India now has forty-two Ramsar sites.

Ramsar List

The aim of the Ramsar list is "to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits".

Wetlands provide a wide range of important resources and ecosystem services such as food, water, fibre, groundwater recharge, water purification, flood moderation, erosion control and climate regulation. They are, in fact a major source of water and our main supply of freshwater comes from an array of wetlands which help soak rainfall and recharge groundwater. The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change would be working closely with the UT Wetland Authority to ensure wise use of this site.

- Ramsar Convention on Wetlands is an intergovernmental treaty adopted in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran.
- Those wetlands which are of international importance are declared as Ramsar sites.
- **Mission:** Conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world.
- The Montreux Record is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.

Other recently added Ramsar sites: Click here

Launch of Mobile Application "Swachhata Abhiyan": To Identify and Geotag the data of Insanitary Latrines and Manual Scavengers so that the insanitary latrines can be replaced with sanitary latrines and rehabilitate all the manual scavengers to provide dignity of life to them.

KVIC Brings Alive 1000-yrs Old Monpa Handmade Paper Industry in Tawang to Revive the Heritage Art; a Historic Feat for North East

The 1000-year old heritage art – the Monpa Handmade Paper of Arunachal Pradesh – which was driven to the extinction, has come to life once again, with the committed efforts of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).

The art of making Monpa handmade paper originated over 1000 years ago. Gradually the art became an integral part of local custom and culture in Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh. Once produced in every household in Tawang, this handmade paper was a major source of livelihood for the locals. However, the handmade paper industry almost disappeared in the last 100 years; prompting KVIC to plan revival of this ancient art.

The fine-textured handmade paper, which is called Mon Shugu in the local dialect, is integral to the vibrant culture of the local tribes in Tawang. The paper has great historic and religious significance as it is the paper used for writing Buddhist scriptures and hymns in monasteries. The Monpa handmade paper, will be made from the bark of a local tree called Shugu Sheng, which has medicinal values too. Hence availability of raw material will not be a problem.

Back then, such was the scale of production that Monpas used to sell these papers to countries like Tibet, Bhutan ,Thailanand and Japan as no paper making industry existed in these countries at that time. However, the local industry gradually began declining and the indigenous handmade paper was taken over by inferior Chinese paper. An attempt for the revival of the this handmade paper industry was made in 1994 but failed as it was a mountainous task owing to various geographical challenges in Tawang.

TRIFED Signs MoU with MOFPI for Upliftment of Tribal Lives through the Implementation of the PM- FME Scheme

MoFPI is implementing the Prime Minister Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PM-FME) Scheme, which is a landmark initiative under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan to support micro-level food entreprenuers, FPOs, SHGs and co-operatives. An important component of this scheme is the tribal sub-plan.

- With the necessary funding under the PM-FME Scheme of MoFPI, the TriFood range of tribal food products would be developed, branded, and packaged by TRIFED. It has also been agreed that the SHGs working under the Van DhanYojana would be provided support under the PM-FME Scheme including for handholding, training, capital investment, and working capital.

- TRIFED will identify the eligible SHGs and their members and "Van DhanYojana" groups and their members engaged in food products and create a list with necessary details on their level of operations, type of product, marketing channels, means of production, production facilities, training, etc. and share them with State Government and MoFPI.
- As a part of capacity building,it has been decided that MoFPI under PMFME scheme would also provide necessary funds to TRIFED to undertake training, capacity building of tribals engaged in food processing.
- TRIFED will also provide handholding support to Tribal SHGs and Van Dhan SHG groups and their members in preparation of DPRs, application process, getting necessary technical training, etc. so as to enable them to benefit from various provisions under PMFME scheme including for capital investment.

Cabinet approves

Signing of revised air services agreement between India and Philippines: The revised Air Services Agreement signifies an important landmark in the civil aviation relations between the two countries. It will provide enabling environment for enhanced and seamless connectivity while providing commercial opportunities to the carriers of both sides ensuring greater safety and security. It has the potential to spur greater trade, investment, tourism and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

Signing of revised air services agreement between India and Afghanistan: The revised Air Services Agreement signifies an important landmark in the civil aviation relations between the two countries and has the potential to spur greater trade, investment, tourism and cultural exchanges between the two countries bringing it in tune with the developments in the civil aviation sector. It will provide enabling environment for enhanced and seamless connectivity while providing commercial opportunities to the carriers of both sides ensuring greater safety and security.

Government launches COVID Vaccine Intelligence Network (CoWIN) grand challenge

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) along with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has announced the launching of "CoWIN", a grand challenge for strengthening the Covid Vaccine Intelligence Network (CoWIN) system.
- This will be a digitalised platform to be used to effectively roll out and scale up the mechanism for Covid Vaccine Distribution System, nationally.
- The solutions once integrated with the platform through open APIs will be assessed for robustness and scalability
- Top two contestants from the challenge will be rewarded with ₹40 lakh and ₹20 lakh respectively post successful migrations of the developed solutions on the cloud on which the CoWIN is hosted, apart from their integration with CoWIN.
- MoHFW has identified seven focus areas of technology development to holistically address the likely limitations associated with complete and effective vaccine distribution system and its seamless administration across India.

Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY SEHAT: Will extend coverage to all the residents of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir; The scheme will ensure Universal Health Coverage and focus on providing financial risk protection and ensuring quality and affordable essential health services to all individuals and communities.

Achieving Universal Health Coverage: Universal Health Coverage (UHC) includes the full spectrum of essential, quality health services, from health promotion to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliative care and enables everyone to access the services, protecting people from the financial consequences of paying for health services out of their own pockets and reducing the risk that people will be pushed to poverty. The Ayushman Bharat program, with its two pillars – Health and Wellness Centres and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojna – is envisaged to achieve UHC.

Year-end Review – Ministry of AYUSH

New Legislations enacted- National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCIM) Act, 2020 and National Commission for Homoeopathy (NCH) Act, 2020: The NCIM Act, 2020 and NCH Act 2020 were enacted on 21stSeptember, 2020, to replace the existing Indian Medicine Central Council Act, 1970 and the Central Council of Indian Medicine established there under and Homoeopathy Central Council Act, 1973 and the Central Council of Homoeopathy established there under, respectively. The main objective of the said Acts inter-alia is to bring in reforms in the AYUSH education sector.

Establishment of Institute of National Importance (INI): The Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda Act, 2020 enacted on 22nd September, 2020 confers the status of INI to the Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA) at Jamnagar by conglomerating four institutes at Gujarat Ayurved University, campus Jamnagar.

Status of Deemed to be University on NIA Jaipur: National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur, Ministry of AYUSH has been declared as an Institution Deemed to be University under De-novo Category.

Setting up of WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in India: Director General of World Health Organisation (WHO), Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus announced the setting up of the Global Centre of Traditional Medicine in India.

Inclusion of AYUSH practitioners in WHO Doctors population ratio: AYUSH registered medical practitioners have been included in registered medical practitioners data thus improving WHO Doctors Population Ratio.

ICD (International Classification of Diseases) 11: The Ministry of AYUSH is actively engaging with WHO for development of Standardized Terminologies of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani systems of Medicine and also the National AYUSH Morbidity and Standardized Terminologies Electronic **(NAMASTE) Portal** is being maintained successfully and the collection of Morbidity statistics through National Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani Morbidity codes are being successfully undertaken through the portal.

AYUSH Health &Wellness centres (AHWCs): Since April this year, under Ayushman Bharat scheme, AHWCs are being established with the help of States/UTs Governments 12500 AHWCs are to be operationalized by 2024. This year 4400 AHWCs shall be made functional.

Champion Service Sector Scheme: Ministry of AYUSH has taken initiatives for establishment of AYUSH Health Care Super Specialty Day Care / Hospital, Skill Development in AYUSH Sector and Establishment of AYUSH GRID under Champion Service Sector Scheme with the provision of **Rs. 769 Cr**. for three years in collaboration with Ministry of Commerce.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Ministry of AYUSH and Ministry of Women and Child Development on 20th September, 2020 in New Delhi for controlling Malnutrition as a part of **POSHAN Abhiyaan**. The MoU will see some time-tested and scientifically proven Ayush-based solutions being adopted for controlling malnutrition in the country.

Establishment of Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) as a Subordinate Office for enhancing the standardization outcomes of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs towards their effective regulation and quality control.

Inclusion of Sowa-Rigpa into AYUSH systems: The Government has suitably amended the Allocation of Business Rules and inter-alia included the business of formulation of policy for development and propagation of Sowa-Rigpa under the ambit of Ministry of AYUSH.

Setting up of **National Research Institute of Sowa-Rigpa:** The National Research Institute of Sowa-Rigpa was upgraded to "National Institute of Sowa Rigpa" in Leh, UT of Ladakh.

Setting up of Central AYUSH Drugs Control Framework: In order to control quality of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani& Homoeopathy (ASU&H) Drugs, a new initiative has been taken by forming an independent vertical structure in Central Drugs Standard Control Organization with creation of 9 regulatory posts. It will enhance the enforcement mechanism of the provisions of Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940 and Rules made there under thus assuring availability of quality drugs to public.

Yogasana as a competitive Sport– Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, has recognised NYSF as a Federation for Yogasana as a Competitive Sport.

Setting up of four Satellite Centres of National Institutes of AYUSH: In view of 2017 National Health Policy, Ministry of AYUSH initiated the process to augment AYUSH educational facilities in India. The process to establish the Satellite Centres of existing National Institutes in the field of Ayurveda, Homoeopathy and Unani was initiated in 2017.

Pradhan Mantri VRIKSHAYUSH YOJANA: For the cultivation and post-harvest management of medicinal plants with the budget of Rs.4000 crore covering 10 lac hectares. This will also cover cultivation of medicinal plants in an area of 800 acres along the banks of river Ganga.

AYUSH Grid: In pursuance to the National Health Policy 2017 and e-governance initiative of Government of India, Ministry of AYUSH is in process of creating an IT backbone in the form of AYUSH GRID for the entire AYUSH Sector. Digitization of entire AYUSH Sector will lead to transformation of AYUSH Sector in fields of health care delivery at all levels, research, education, various health programmes, drug regulations, etc. Currently, Ministry has developed around 15 pilot IT initiatives and in process of drafting DPR of the AYUSH GRID project. It is envisaged that within 2 years entire AYUSH sector will go digital.

AYUSH- Health Management Information System (A-HMIS): It was launched on 5th Nov 2018 and currently around 90 health facilities of the Autonomous bodies under the Ministry are using A- HMIS for day to day OPD functioning.

Ministry of AYUSH is developing Indian Standards as well as International (ISO) Standards in collaboration with Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS): For Ayurveda, four Indian standards (IS) have been developed and two standards are accepted in program of work (PoW) of ISO. Work on nearly 25 standards including Yoga accessories and Panchakarma equipment are in pipeline. These standards incorporate all essential tenets of existing standards with inclusion of certain features for international compliance and their global acceptance. Development of such IS/ISO standards is poised to augment the domestic as well as cross-border trade of AYUSH products and services

Insurance coverage: AYUSH treatment has been covered under medical insurance with the efforts of Ministry of AYUSH. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) has issued necessary notification in this regard.

NABH Accreditation: Ministry has initiated steps to get all its hospitals accredited as per National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH). So far All India Institute of Ayurveda, New Delhi; National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur and ITRA, Jamnagar have been accredited.

ĀYURVEDAGRANTHASAMUCCAYAḤ a web portal for bringing all major classical compendia of Ayurveda on a single software platform has been developed.

Gurudwara Rakab Ganj Sahib

- Indian Prime Minister visited historic Gurudwara Rakab Ganj Sahib in New Delhi where the pious Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji's mortal remains were cremated.
- It is a historic gurudwara near Parliament House, New Delhi.
- It was built in 1783, after Sikh military leader Baghel Singh Dhaliwal (1730–1802) captured Delhi, on 11 March 1783.
- This one marks the site of cremation of the ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur.

- The ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Teg Bahadur dedicated his life to the betterment of humankind and to promote a sense of unity, service and fraternity in the society. He worked to alleviate the sufferings of the people and fought against oppression. For this reason, Guru Teg Bahadur is aptly called 'Hind Di Chadar'.

PM Modi's message at India-Japan SAMVAD Conference

- The governments must keep "humanism" at the core of its policies. We had dialogues in past but they were aimed at pulling others down, now let us rise together.
- Our actions today will shape the discourse in the coming times. This decade will belong to those societies that place a premium on learning and innovating together. It will be about nurturing bright young minds who will add value to humanity in the times to come
- Proposed to **create a library of traditional Buddhist literature and scriptures**, adding that India would be happy to host the facility and provide appropriate resources for it.
  - Its (the library's) research mandate will also include examining how Buddha's message can guide our modern world against contemporary challenges
  - The library will collect digital copies of all such Buddhist literature from different countries. It will aim to translate them, and make them freely available for all monks and scholars of Buddhism
- **On SAMVAD Conference:** Historically, lights of Buddha's message spread out from India to many parts of the world. In this journey, Samwad has remained true to its fundamental objectives which include: to encourage dialogue and debate; to highlight our shared values; to carry forward our ancient tradition of spiritual and scholarly exchanges
  - Samvad Conference revolves around the need to build the future of Asia on the positive influence of traditions of non-violence and democracy in Asia.
  - The first conference, Samvad-I, was held in New Delhi in 2015, at Bodh Gaya.

Visva Bharati's 100 years

- Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Visva Bharati and Shantiniketan have always been centers of attraction in India and abroad
- Be it the new ideas in the country's cultural heritage, art and tradition, or the freedom struggle, Bengal has been 50 years ahead of the times than other parts of the country in every aspect
- Shantiniketan and Visva Bharati have contributed to the framework of the education system in the country.

- Visva Bharati has always strived to rise above caste, religion and class to deliver the message of humanity. In Indian religion, there has been a system of preservation and promotion of philosophy, literature, music and art and VisvaBharati has amalgamated the literature and philosophy of European and other countries keeping in mind the basic mantra of world brotherhood of our Vedas to realise the mantra of "सर्वेभवंतुसुखिनः, सर्वेसंतुनिरामया"(may all become happy, may none fall ill). Unless we refresh the vision of rural development, we will not advance in the modern way, there cannot be all-round development of the country, which the Gurudev had started through VisvaBharati. From here, all such ideas as health, cleanliness, handicrafts andtechnology were taken forward.
- After 50 years when we will celebrate the 150th anniversary of Visva Bharati, we should aim to nurture at least ten people who excel in various fields and instil Gurudev Tagore's ideas across the country and make them a part of life and society.

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore

Idea of Globalism and Nationalism

- Tagore denounced "nationalism" as a narrow concept that breeds xenophobia, hatred, and war-mongering. Any action can be legitimized in the garb of nationalism no matter how remote it maybe from truth and justice.
- According to Tagore, the fetish for nationalism is what creates a "brotherhood of hooliganism" – cultivates absolutism, fanaticism, provincialism, greed, selfishness. He viewed British imperialism as a product of British nationalism.
- He wanted equal treatment of all human beings, irrespective of nationality, race, religion, caste, sex etc. He advocated for a "rainbow world", in which all races live together in amity, keeping their distinct characteristics intact, yet united by their bond of humanity and love.

On Cosmopolitanism:

The philosophical cosmopolitans are moral Universalists. Boundaries between nations, states, culture and societies are indeed irrelevant in terms of morally accepted notion of cosmopolitanism.

Cosmopolitanism shares some aspects of universalism, namely the globally accepted notion of human dignity that must be protected and enshrined with the internationalism instead of nationalism.

Rabindranath Tagore's understanding is that, though colonialism steers to nationalism, it has its own boundaries, which must be overcome to acquire a larger citizenship of the world. He persists beyond nationalism and his closeness towards internationalism predominantly has its ethics and acceptability when the individual is located in the universal domain. Tagore's literary works also reflect his philosophy of universal humanism. It is Tagore's wide travels in almost all parts of the world that led him to think beyond the mere national for a global cooperation of all the nations.

Through his establishment of Visva-Bharati at Santiniketan, he tried to strengthen this notion of 'Universalism': Yatra visva bhabatyek nidam, that is, 'where the whole world would find a shelter'. He wandered to different countries in the west and had rightly understood that coexistence of scientific advancement in the West and traditional culture of the East might have a positive effect in the resurgence of true humanity. Though he was a patriot, he believed and felt that co-existence of cultural and spiritual enlightenment along with the scientific ecstasy of the West could bring about an all-round progress and universal brotherhood. He was really in quest of union of all cultures in one place to signify the meaning of universalism.

His understanding of nationalism was influenced by the ruthless British colonial rule in India and the latter's anti-colonial struggle for independence. His extensive tours in different countries and British rule in India gave him tremendous insight into the socio-political patterns and narrow interest of power within which western nations were restricted. The imperialistic thoughts embedded in the western nationalism were devoid of spiritual ecstasy. He strongly felt that nationalism finds its true meaning when self is not in subordination.

He wrote at a time when a wind of strong anti-colonial sentiments and extreme nationalistic fervour was blowing all over his country He was optimistic about India's freedom and also felt the need of independence. But he believed that, a nation, which cultivates this moral blindness as a cult of patriotism will definitely meet with sudden and violent demise.

Love does not claim possession, but gives freedom.

Love is a selfless act of unconditional care and affection directed towards a person, object or even something abstract. It has little to do with what you are expecting to get and more with what you are expecting to give – which is everything. Rabindranath Tagore here talks about two intertwined important necessities of life- love and freedom.

Love by nature is an unconditional act; hence ideally it should free us from the expectations inherent in an otherwise transactional human relationship existing all around us. In view of this, when a person loves truly, he/she emanates a sense of freedom, a liberated environment for the other person to grow and exist.

When love does not claim possession, it exists as a beautiful engagement of motivation, respect and admiration for the receiving person or the object. For example: Relationships between youngsters, respect for teachers and parents etc.

The privilege of freedom associated with love can be seen in different societal institutions:

A mother's love for her children is all encompassing, with no expectations of return, helping them grow, giving them free choices, freedom to learn from actions, all of it while being a protective parent. If a mother were to think her child is her possession, there are unrealistic expectations on the child, and a rigid existence with no freedom to learn and take decisions on their own.

Relationships between a husband and wife, life partners often flourish and spread harmony and happiness when there is freedom between the two. A partner who treats the other as a possession, restricting their choices, actions, and decisions is indirectly hampering the overall betterment of the person or their relationship.

There are frequent instances where a misguided idea of love often results in a false exertion of possession and leads to extremities:

There are cases of murder, harm and crimes due to love gone bitter or wrong, arising out of feelings of possession of the other.

Retarding the growth of an individual, development of his/her full capacity, due to narrow ideas of love and protectiveness.

Suffering inflicted due to actions of vengeance and payback by partners, parents and friends.

As Buddha famously said "When u like a flower, u just pluck it. But when u love a flower, u water it daily..! "Love is also to give unconditionally.

Love is truly realised when linked not to possession of the other but to submission of the self. It should enable an individual to feel content and be accepting of one another, paving way for a peaceful co-existence, rather than curbing freedom and base their actions on the lines of possessiveness and misunderstood idea of love.