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**BUSINESS & ECONOMY**

**Odisha Completes Ease Of Doing Business Reforms**

Odisha became the seventh state to complete the ease of business reforms.

**Highlights:**

Odisha has become the seventh state in the country that has successfully implemented the "Ease of Doing Business" reform prescribed by the Ministry of Finance and Expenditure.

Therefore, New York State is eligible to mobilize additional rupee funds. It received Rs 1,429 crore through open market borrowings.

Orissa has now joined the six states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, and they have completed this reform.

**India Sign $10 Million Loan To Support Himachal Pradesh**


**Highlights:**

The PRF project will support the adoption of advanced actions to achieve a high level of project preparation through detailed design activities, capacity building of state-level institutions, and the creation of a favorable environment for the state's subtropical horticulture development.

It aims to ensure implementation readiness by testing the new production technology and marketing system in advance, so that the project is cost-effective and can be completed in time.

The project will support the development of subtropical horticulture in the southern part of the state, including the cultivation of fruits and vegetables. Due to the limited long-term access to water, crop losses caused by wildlife invasion and limited access to high-value markets, the state is currently lagging behind.

PRF supports the establishment of a Water User Association (WUA) based on the completed irrigation scheme and increases women's participation.
India Signs Loan To Enhance Power Generation Capacity

The Asian Development Bank - ADB and the Indian government signed a loan of US$231 million to increase the power generation capacity of Assam by building a 120-megawatt hydroelectric power plant.

**Highlights:**
- This is the third loan under the ongoing Assam State Power Industry Investment Plan, which was approved by the ADB Board of Directors in July 2014.
- The plan includes the first two parts, focusing on increasing the capacity and efficiency of the energy production and distribution system in Assam to improve the power services provided to end users.
- The project promotes an increase in the supply of affordable clean electricity, which will help improve living conditions in the state, promote business expansion and increase employment opportunities in the state, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- The project is an upstream project on the Kobili River, which will help increase clean energy supply by 469 gigawatt hours (GWh) by 2025 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 360,000 tons of carbon dioxide annually.
- The US$2 million grant from Japan's Poverty Alleviation Fund (JFPR) is also related to the equipment and consulting services.

**Asian Development Bank (ADB):**
Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank which is established on December 19, 1966. Its headquarters are located in Mandaluyong, Ortigas Center, Metro Manila, Philippines. The bank promotes social & economic development in Asia. It is modeled on the World Bank and has a similar weighted voting system in which votes are distributed in proportion to the capital subscriptions of members. As of December 31, 2018, Japan and the United States each held the largest proportion of shares, which was 15.571%. China accounted for 6.429%, India accounted for 6.317%, and Australia accounted for 5.773%.

**IFSCA Becomes A Member Of IOSCO**
The International Financial Services Center Authority (IFSCA) has become an Associate Member of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO).
IOSCO:
IOSCO is an international organization which brings together global securities regulatory agencies, covering more than 95% of the global securities market. It is also a global standard-setter for the securities sector. IOSCO works closely with the G20 and the Financial Stability Board (FSB) to develop standards to strengthen the securities market. The FSB has recognized IOSCO Objectives and Principles of Securities Regulation as one of the key standards for a sound financial system.

Highlights:
IOSCO membership will provide a platform for IFSCA to exchange information on areas of common interest at the global and regional levels.
In addition, the IOSCO platform will enable IFSCA to learn from the experience and best practices of regulatory agencies in other well-established financial centers. This is an important milestone linking IFSCA with global securities market regulators, and will make a huge contribution to the development and supervision of financial products, financial services and financial institutions at the Gujarat International Finance Tec-City International Financial Services Centre.

Indias Rice Exports To Vietnam

Due to attractive prices, Vietnam has recently started to buy grain, especially rice, from India. Although Vietnam is the world's third-largest rice exporter, Vietnam has started to import rice from India.

Highlights:
Vietnam has started to import rice from India because the country's local price has jumped to the highest level in 9 years due to limited domestic supply. This is mainly because Vietnam has begun to stock a large amount of rice for the future.
In addition, the price of Indian rice is very attractive. The huge price difference forced the Vietnamese government to import rice from India.
Indian traders will export 70,000 tons of rice to Vietnam at a price of approximately US$310 per ton. India will export broken rice to Vietnam in January and February 2021.
The global pandemic has prompted Vietnam and other countries to stock up rice. This is because the reduction in food supply makes people increasingly worried about food insecurity.
Vietnam plans to reserve US$270,000 of rice to ensure access to food in the event
of a disruption in the global covid-19 supply chain. Therefore, it is facing shortages and is dependent on imports.

The price of broken rice in India ranges from US$381 to US$387 per ton.

The attractive price of Indian rice has increased the demand in Asian and African countries. It is expected that Thailand and other Asian countries will also transfer rice imports to India.

Vietnam's total production in 2020 has dropped by 1.85% compared to 2019. In addition, Vietnam's rice exports in 2020 fell by 3.5% compared to 2019.

**GST Compensation Shortfall In States**

The 10th Instalment of Rs 6,000 crore was issued to the States as a back-to-back loan to meet the GST compensation shortfall.

**Highlights:**

The Ministry of Finance has issued the tenth instalment of 60 billion rupees a week to the states to make up for the shortage of goods and services tax compensation.

The money has been released to 23 states and 3 UTs with legislative assemblies.

The remaining 5 states (Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim) have no income gap due to the implementation of GST.

Now, more than 50% of the estimated GST compensation shortfall has been issued to the States & UTs with legislative assemblies.

**Digital Payments Index by RBI**

The Reserve Bank of India has established a comprehensive Digital Payment Index (DPI) to record the degree of digitization of payments across the country.

**Highlights:**

The RBI-DPI has been constructed with March 2018 as the base period.

The DPI in March 2019 and March 2020 reached 153.47 and 207.84, respectively, indicating considerable growth.

RBI-DPI contains five main parameters: Payment Enablers, Payment Infrastructure Demand-side factors and Supply-side factors, Payment Performance and Consumer Centricity.

The RBI-DPI should be published on the RBI's website every six months starting in March 2021 for 4 months.
World Bank Released Global Economic Prospects Report

According to the report, the Indian economy will contract by 9.6% in 2020-21. The Indian economy will recover by 5.4% in 2021-22. India's economic contraction will be mainly attributed to the sharp decline in household spending and private investment.

**Highlights:**

The informal sector accounts for four-fifths of the country's employment, is severely affected. On the other hand, the world economy will grow by 4% in 2021. Services and manufacturing are gaining momentum. According to the World Bank, India is facing its first technological decline.

When GDP exceeds the quarter's negative growth for two consecutive quarters, it is called a period of a technical recession. In India, the gross domestic product for the April to June quarter fell by 23.9%.

In the July and September quarters, the GDP growth rate contracted by 7.5%. This clearly shows that India's GDP growth has experienced negative growth for two consecutive quarters. Therefore, India is in a period of technological decline.

According to data from the Indian Economic Monitoring Center, during the covid-19 pandemic, more than 500,000 salaried people lost their jobs.

Several global rating agencies have already made predictions on the Indian economy. In September 2020, the exchange substantially reduced its growth expectations for India. The country's GDP is expected to decrease by 10.5% in the 2020-21 fiscal year.

Previously, it had expected a 5% contraction. The Asian Development Bank predicts that India's economic growth will contract by 9% in 2020-21.

Exim Bank Has Raised $1 Billion By Dollar-Bond Sale

The Export-Import Bank has raised US$1 billion through the sale of US dollar bonds to international investors.

**Exim Bank:**

The Export-Import Bank of India is a specialized financial institution wholly-owned by the Indian government and was established in 1982 to provide financing, facilitation and promotion of trade in India.

The Export-Import Bank provides financial assistance to exporters and importers.
It is the main financial institution responsible for coordinating the work of institutions engaged in financing the import & export of goods and services to promote international trade in the country.
UK To Abolish The Tampon Tax

Beginning in 2021, the UK abolished the 5% Value Added Tax (VAT) on women's sanitary products, commonly referred to as the tampon tax, & many activists call it sexist. Now it joins countries/regions that have eliminated this tax, including India, Australia and Canada.

Highlights:

Until December 31, the United Kingdom was still part of the European Union. During this period, regular products such as sanitary napkins and tampons were classified as non-essential goods, requiring member states to impose a 5% tax on them.

Today, Britain has withdrawn from the ranks of 27 member states, and it is not subject to its directives. According to the directive, since 1973, hygiene products have been subject to five different VAT rates-the lowest rate applicable since 2001 is 5%.

As a result, tax cancellation has been well received by women's rights activists and Brexit supporters.

The EU itself has been abolishing regular product taxes. In 2018, the European Union issued proposals to change tax rules, but these proposals have not yet been accepted by all members.

The British government estimates that the removal of the tampon tax will save the average woman about 40 pounds in her lifetime- as a pack of 20 pounds will be cheaper by around 7 pence and 12 sanitary pads by 5 pence.

Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - JCPOA

Iran notified the IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) that it intends to produce uranium enriched up to 20% purity, far exceeding the threshold set by the 2015 Vienna Accord (also known as JCPOA).

About JCPOA:

Commonly as the Iran nuclear deal or Iran deal, is an agreement on the Iranian nuclear program reached in Vienna on July 14, 2015, between Iran and the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council-China,
France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States plus Germany) together with the European Union.

According to JCPOA, Iran agreed to eliminate its enriched uranium stocks, reduce its low-enriched uranium stocks by 98%, and reduce its gas centrifuges by about two-thirds within 13 years.

In 15 years, Iran will only enrich uranium up to 3.67%. Iran agreed not to build any new heavy-water facilities during the same period.

Uranium enrichment activities are limited to a single facility using the first-generation centrifuge for 10 years. Other facilities will be modified to avoid proliferation risks.

To monitor and verify Iran's compliance with the agreement, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will regularly use all Iran's nuclear facilities.

The agreement stipulates that in return for verifiable compliance with its commitments, Iran will receive relief from the U.S., European Union, and UNSC nuclear-related sanctions.

On 5th January, 2020, after the airstrike on the Baghdad Airport that targeted and killed Iranian General Qassem Soleimani, Iran announced that it would no longer comply with the restrictions of the agreement, but would continue to coordinate with the IAEA to restore compliance.

**India-Japan Partnership In Specified Skilled Worker**

The United Cabinet recently approved a memorandum of understanding between India and Japan on "specified skilled workers". According to the agreement, India will send skilled workers to Japan.

**Highlights:**

- The memorandum of understanding will establish an institutional framework for cooperation between India and Japan to accept skilled workers. The only condition is that workers should have the qualifications to pass the necessary skills exams and Japanese exams.

- According to the memorandum of understanding, qualified Indian workers can work in 14 specific sectors in Japan. According to the agreement, Indian workers will be provided with new residency status of "specifically skilled workers".

- A joint working group formed to implement the memorandum of understanding. The memorandum of understanding will also increase connections between people.
In addition, it will facilitate the flow of workers and skilled professionals from India to Japan.

The nuclear agreement between India and Japan was signed in 2016. As, India is not a member of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty, the agreement has attracted attention. For India, this transaction is necessary because it is the key to India's dealings with French and American nuclear companies that have shares in Japan or are owned by Japanese companies.

In 2015, India agreed to introduce Japan's high-speed bullet train Shinkansen system.

India and Japan formed the "Act East Forum" to expand cooperation between India in the Northeast region and Japan.

India Formally Began Its Two-Year Term As A Non-Permanent Member Of The UNSC

Together with Norway, Mexico, Ireland and Kenya, India formally serves as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for a two-year term. On June 17, 2020, India was elected to the Security Council with a total of 192 votes and 184.

**Highlights:**

India formally serves as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for a two-year term. On June 17, 2020, India was elected to the Security Council with a total of 192 votes and 184.

A member state needs to obtain a two-thirds majority in the General Assembly to become a non-permanent member. This is the 8th time for India to be elected as a non-permanent member.

India will serve as a permanent member of the UN Security Council in August 2021, and will also serve as a permanent member of the UN Security Council for another month in 2022. According to the English alphabetical order of the member states, each member of the Security Council will serve as the President of the Security Council for one month.

**UNSC:**

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) was established in 1946 and is one of the six main organs of the United Nations. It is often regarded as the highest peak of the United Nations system. It is responsible for maintaining international peace and security.
Its powers include establishing peacekeeping operations, establishing international sanctions, and authorizing military operations through Security Council resolutions. It is the only United Nations agency that has the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states. The UNSC is composed of 15 members. The council has five permanent members (P-5), namely the United States, Russia, China, the United Kingdom and France. These permanent members can veto any substantive resolutions of the Security Council, including those concerning the admission of new members. The Security Council has 10 non-permanent members, elected by region as follows:
- Five items for African and Asian countries;
- One for Eastern European countries;
- Two Latin American and Caribbean countries; and
- Two are used in Western Europe and other countries.
Every year, the UN General Assembly (UNGA), composed of 193 member states, elects 5 non-permanent members for a two-year term. The chairman of the organization is rotated by its members every month.

**Solidarity and Stability Deal - Gulf Countries**

The Gulf countries signed the "Solidarity and Stability" deal at the 41st Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit held in Al Ula, Saudi Arabia.

**Background:**
In June 2017, Saudi Arabia and allies, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Bahrain & Egypt severed ties with Qatar and imposed naval, air and land blockades on the country. Qatar is accused of being very close to Iran and supporting Islamic radical groups. The country was imagined to support and fund terror through its support of Iran and the Muslim Brotherhood (a Sunni Islamist political group outlawed by both Saudi Arabia and therefore the UAE).

**Solidarity and Stability Deal:**
The Gulf Cooperation Council member states signed a deal in Al Ula, Saudi Arabia, to remove all sanctions on Qatar and reopen its land, sea and air borders to Qatar. Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council.
To unite efforts to promote in the Gulf region and respond to the surrounding challenges, especially the threat posed by the Iranian regime's nuclear and ballistic missile program and its plans for sabotage and destruction.

**Gulf Cooperation Council**

GCC is a political, economic, social, and regional organisation which was established by an agreement concluded in the year 1981 among Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE in the view of countries geographic proximity, special relations, similar political systems based on Islamic beliefs, joint destiny & common objectives. The structure of GCC consists of the Supreme Council which is the highest authority, the Secretariat General and the Ministerial Council. The secretariat of GCC is found in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

**MoC Between India And Japan**

The Cabinet approves the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between India and Japan on Partnership in Specified Skilled Worker.

**Highlights:**

The memorandum of cooperation will provide an institutional mechanism for the partnership and cooperation between the two countries to dispatch and accept skilled Indian workers with specific skills and Japanese tests to work in 14 specific sectors in Japan.

These Indian workers would be given a new status of residence of "Specified Skilled Worker" by the Japan Government.

The Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) will strengthen people-to-people contacts, foster mobility of workers and skilled professionals from India to Japan. The 14 specified sectors are industrial machinery manufacturing industry, electric and electronic information related industry, construction, shipbuilding and ship-related industry, nursing care, building cleaning, material processing industry, lodging, agriculture, fisheries, automobile maintenance, aviation, food and beverages manufacturing industry and food service industry.
INDIAN AFFAIRS

Foundation Stone For Light House Projects By PM

The Prime Minister will lay the foundation for the Lighthouse Project (LHP) under the Global Housing Technology Challenge in India (GHTC-India), which plans to cover six states. And PM will also announce the winners of the "India Affordable Sustainable Housing Accelerator" (ASHA-India) and present the annual Outstanding Achievement Award in recognition of outstanding individuals who have performed Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-City (PMAY-U) mission.

Highlights:

The Prime Minister will also release an innovative construction technology certificate course called NAVARITH (New, Affordable, Validated, Research Innovation Technologies for Indian Housing), as well as the 54 types of innovative housing construction technology guidelines identified by GHTC-India.

The Lighthouse Project (LHP) has demonstrated on such a large scale in India that the best new era alternative global technologies, materials and processes in the construction field.

They were built under GHTC in India, and the idea is to provide an ecosystem for the overall adoption of innovative technologies in the residential building sector.

LHP is in India Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat), Chennai (Tamil Nadu), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Agatara (Tripura) and Le Know (Uttar Pradesh) construction

They include approximately 1,000 houses and related infrastructure in each location.

Compared with traditional masonry buildings, these projects will demonstrate and deliver habitable houses at a faster rate within twelve months.

They will be more economical, sustainable, high-quality and durable.

Cabinet Approved Industrial Corridor Nodes At Krishnapatnam And Tumakuru

The Cabinet approved the Industrial Corridor nodes at Krishnapatnam and Tumakuru under Chennai Bangalore Industrial Corridor (CBIC). The Cabinet has approved the Ministry of Industry and Internal Trade Promotion (DPIIT) proposal for the construction of various trunk line infrastructure components.
**Highlights:**

The Cabinet has approved the proposal by the Ministry of Industry and Internal Trade Promotion (DPIIT) to build various trunk line infrastructure components for use in:

- Krishnapatnam Industrial Zone, Andhra Pradesh
- Tumakuru Industrial Zone, Karnataka

**Multi-Modal Logistics Hub - MMLH and Multi-Modal Transport Hub - MMTH in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh**

**Industrial Corridors:**

In November 2019, the government approved the creation of five industrial corridor projects, which will be implemented via National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust - NICDIT.

Krishnapatnam Industrial Zone and Tumakuru Industrial Zone are under the Chennai Bangalore Industrial Corridor (CBIC).

These greenfield industrial cities will be self-sufficient through world-class infrastructure, road and rail connections, in order to achieve freight transportation to and from ports and logistics hubs, as well as reliable electricity and high-quality social infrastructure.

**Multi-Modal Logistics Hub:**

The logistics hub project will be developed into a world-class facility that can provide effective food storage for the dedicated freight channel (DFC).

It will provide a one-stop destination for freight companies and customers. The facility provides standard container handling activities.

It provides various value-added services to reduce logistics costs and increase operational efficiency.

**Multi-Modal Transport Hub - MMTH project:**

This project will be located near the already existing Indian railway station in Boraki.

It will serve as a transportation hub, providing passengers with rail, road and MRTS accessibility in a seamless manner.

MMTH will provide space for interstate bus terminal (ISBT), local bus terminal (LBT), subway, commercial, retail and hotel spaces, and green open spaces.

The project will provide world-class passenger transportation facilities for the growing population of the catchment area to cater to the upcoming development of...
the United States. The NCR sub-region thus eliminates the congestion in Delhi. This will also increase employment opportunities.

E-Committee Of Supreme Court Gets Award

E-committee of the Supreme Court (SC) of India conferred with the Platinum Award for Excellence in Digital Governance by the President of India.

**Highlights:**

The E-Court project conceived and implemented by the E-committee, the Supreme Court of India, the Department of Justice and the NIC (National Information Center) is a Mission Model Project of the Indian Government. Citizens can access the status of the case and the court order on the grounds of litigation anytime and anywhere through the e-court service website, mobile application, SMS and email services of the 3293 court building. People can also get 247 details of more than 130 million cases, court orders and judgments for free.

During the COVID pandemic, the courts used the digital infrastructure provided by the electronic court project pan India through video conferencing to hear more than 5.5 million cases through video conferencing, making Indian courts a global leader in handling cases through VC.

Kochi Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline Dedicated to the Nation

The Prime Minister dedicated the Kochi-Mangaluru Gas Pipeline to the nation. This is a 450-kilometer-long pipeline built by Gail (India) Ltd.

**Kochi Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline:**

It has a daily transportation capacity of 12 million metric standard cubic meters, and transports natural gas from the LNG (liquefied natural gas) regasification station in Kochi (Kerala) to Mangaluru (Dakshina Kannada District, Karnataka) while passing through The Ernakulam, Palakkad, Malapuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod regions of Thrissur.

Laying the pipeline is an engineering challenge because the route of the pipeline makes it necessary to traverse more than 100 water bodies. This is done through a special technique called Horizontal Directional Drilling method. The total cost of the project is approximately Rs. 3000 crores.
The pipeline will provide Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) to households in the form of Pipeline Natural Gas (PNG) and environmentally friendly and affordable fuel to the transportation sector.
It supplies natural gas to commercial and industrial sectors in various districts along the pipeline.
Consuming cleaner fuel will help improve air quality by suppressing air pollution. This event is also a milestone in the creation of "One Nation One Gas Grid".

TRIFED Signed Mou With Akhil Bhartiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram

TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India) led by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Akhil Bhartiya vanvasi Kalyan Ashram signed a memorandum of understanding to establish TRIFOOD Park in Madhya Pradesh.

**Highlights:**
Under the Memorandum of Understanding, TRIFED and Akhil Bhartiya vanvasi Kalyan Ashram will jointly implement Van Dhan Yojana. This will be achieved by mobilizing self-help groups, TRIFOOD Park, Van Dhan Vikas Kendra.
They will jointly provide machinery and equipment, identify self-help groups, organize training and build infrastructure. They will also focus on other activities such as gardening, fishing, floristry, animal husbandry and handicrafts. They will mainly focus on improving the lives of the tribe.
TRIFOOD is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the Ministry of Food Processing Industry and TRIFED. It was launched in August 2020 under the leadership of Van Dhan Yojana. TRIFOOD Park is a food processing center. TRIFOOD Park will source raw materials from Van Dhan Kendras. It will then be processed and sold nationwide through tribes of Indian tribes.
Except for secondary forest products, the minimum support prices for food crops are determined by the Agricultural Cost and Price Committee under the cooperation of the Ministry of Agriculture and Agriculture.
The minimum support price for 24 commodities is set twice a year.

ADB Signs Loan To Boost Power Supply In Bengaluru
The Asian Development Bank recently signed a US$100 million agreement to modernize and upgrade Bangalore's electricity.
Highlights:

According to the Bangalore Smart Energy Efficient Power Distribution Project, this US$100 million loan is used to improvise the quality and reliability of power supply in Bangalore. In addition, the loan will be used to install 2,800 kilometres of optical cable.

These fibre optic cables should be placed parallel to the underground power distribution cables. The parallel laying of electrical and communication lines will help reduce technical and commercial losses by 30%.

Fiber optic cables will be used in smart metering systems and distribution automation systems in the distribution network. In addition, the project will install 1,700 automatic ring network cabinets to control switchgear for distribution lines. The project aims to convert overhead distribution lines into underground cables. It will also install fibre optic cables in parallel with underground cables.

Install automatic ring network equipment in six districts of Bangalore. Improve the institutional operational capabilities of BESCOM (Bangalore Electricity Supply Company)

Rashtriya Kamadhenu Aayog Announces Online Exam

Rashtriya Kamadhenu Aayog recently announced that it will conduct a national-level "Gaau-Vigyan" (Cattle Science) online exam. This is done to arouse students and the public's interest in local cows and their benefits.

**Highlights:**

The exam will be on February 25, 2021.

All elementary, middle and university level students can take the test for free.

The exam will be held every year starting in 2021.

This exam is the first time in China.

All those who take the exam should receive a certificate, and the results of the exam will be announced immediately after the exam.

Rashtriya Kamadhenu Aayog has prepared learning materials about cow science to help aspiring candidates.

This exam will make all Indians curious about cows and make them aware of the business opportunities and untapped potential that cows can provide after they stop feeding.

**Rashtriya Kamadhenu Aayog:**
Rashtriya Kamadhenu Aayog was established to organize animal husbandry in accordance with modern and scientific methods. It will take steps to improve the breed of dairy cows and prohibit the slaughter of dairy cows. It is an integral part of Rashtriya Gokul Mission. The mission is to protect and develop indigenous cattle breeds. The mission was launched in 2014 according to the National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development.

**Sagarmala Seaplane Services Launched by Union Ministry**

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways is launching the Sagarmala Seaplane Service (SSPS). The Ministry is beginning the operation of Seaplane Services on specific routes under the framework of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) through potential airline operators.

**Sagarmala Seaplane Services:**

The Ministry is beginning the operation of Seaplane Services on specific routes under the framework of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) through potential airline operators.

The execution and implementation of the project will be carried out through Sagarmala Development Company Ltd. (SDCL), which is under the administration of the Ministry.

One such Seaplane Service has been operating between Kevadia and Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad in October 2020.

In order to provide connectivity and make it easier to reach remote areas, SDCL is exploring plans to take advantage of India's vast coastline and the potential of numerous water bodies/rivers by starting seaplane operations.

The Seaplane will use the nearby waters for take-off and landing, thus connecting these places in a very economical way, because the seaplane operation does not require conventional airport infrastructure such as runways and terminals.

**Benefits of seaplane operations:**

- Provide faster and more comfortable transportation across the country.
- Improve air connections with tourists/religious destinations.
- Promote domestic and international tourism.
- Save travel time to remote/hilly areas.
- Promote business activities in the area.
Freight Business Development Portal by Railways

The Ministry of Railways has launched a dedicated portal website to promote and develop the railway freight business—the freight business development portal.

**Highlights:**

Due to the coronavirus crisis, passenger train services have been suspended, and the railway sector relies heavily on freight revenue to make money.

The Dedicated Railway Freight Corridor of India Limited (DFCCIL) is a government enterprise under the administration of the Ministry of Railways. It is currently constructing a 3,342 km east-west freight corridor to be used exclusively for trains.

This is the first dedicated freight portal website that will ensure that all operations are customer-centric, reduce logistics providers' costs, provide online tracking facilities for suppliers, and simplify the cargo transportation process.

The purpose is to replace physical processes with online processes to minimize the need for interaction between people.

The portal focuses on the convenience of conducting business, bringing greater transparency and providing professional support.

The railway company also invited consolidators, truck drivers, warehouse owners and labor providers to provide services to more than 9,000 freight customers at more than 4,000 freight stations.

**DPIIT is organizing Udyog Manthan**

Ministry of Industry and Commerce, The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Government of India is organizing Udyog Manthan.

**Highlights:**

Udyog Manthan is a marathon of industry-specific online seminars aimed at promoting the quality and productivity of Indian industry.

DPIIT is organizing webinars in collaboration with the Quality Council of India, the National Productivity Council and industry bodies.

Udyog Manthan will identify challenges, opportunities, and learn from solutions and best practices.

The dialogue will enable cross-industry and cross-departmental learning to improve quality and productivity, thereby promoting the "Vocal for Local" and
realizing the vision of "Aatmanirbhar Bharat".

**Bharat Griha Raksha Policy Was Introduced**

The policy introduced is to replace the Standard Fire and Special Perils Policies. It has 3 key components which include Bharat Laghu Udyam Suraksha, Bharat Griha Raksha, and Bharat Sookshma Udyam Suraksha.

**Bharat Griha Raksha Policy**

According to the Bharat Griha Raksha policy, IRDAI (Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India) will introduce a standard housing insurance policy that will cover fire risks and other related hazards.

The policy will cover various hazards such as Natural catastrophes like cyclone, storm, tsunami, Hurricane, floods, earthquake, landslide, fires, bushfires, impact damages of any kind, strike, riot, acts of terrorism, malicious damage of, overflowing of water tanks, pipe leakage from automatic sprinkler installations, bursting of water tanks and tested within 7 days after the occurrence.

In addition to housing construction insurance, the policy will also provide General Home Content Insurance. The policy will provide 20% of the insurance amount of the building, up to 10 lakh rupees.

**Bharat Laghu Udyam Suraksha**

The plan will cover companies with insurable asset classes in the region whose total risk value exceeds Rs 5 crores.

**Bharat Sookshma Udyam Suraksha**

It is a standard product for enterprises, and its total value at risk does not exceed Rs 5 crore. It will cover machinery, buildings, factories, stocks and other assets.

**Delhi School Bag Policy by NCERT**

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

**Highlights:**

According to the notice, school teachers must notify students in advance of the books and notebooks to be brought to the school on a specific date.

They should check their bags frequently to ensure that they are not carrying
unnecessary material.

According to the policy, the weight of school bags should be:
(i) Classes I and II students --> 1.6 - 2.2 kg
(ii) Classes III, IV and V students --> 1.7 - 2.5 kg
(iv) Classes VI and VII --> 2.0 - 3.0 kg
(v) Class VIII --> 2.4 - 4.0 kg
(vii) Classes IX and X --> 2.5 - 4.5 kg
(ix) Classes XI and XII --> 3.5 - 5.0 kg

Teachers are responsible for checking the weight of students' schoolbags every three months on a selected day of the class.

Any information about heavy bags should be notified to parents.

In order to reduce the weight of school bags, school management should provide all students in the school with a sufficient amount of high-quality drinking water.

Status Of Avian Influenza within the Country

Avian Influenza (bird flu) may be an outbreak in several states of India. The Avian Influenza virus has been circulating globally for several years, with four known major outbreaks recorded within a century.

Highlights:
After confirming positive samples from ICAR-NIHSAD, Avian Influenza has been reported from the subsequent States: Rajasthan (crow), Madhya Pradesh (crow), Himachal Pradesh (migratory birds), Kerala (poultry-duck).

Suggested measures:
- Strengthen the biological safety of poultry farms
- Disinfect the affected area;
- Properly eliminate dead birds/carcasses;
- Collect and submit samples in time for confirmation and further monitoring.

It is also recommended to coordinate with the forest department to report any abnormal deaths of birds.

Other states are requested to be vigilant for any abnormal deaths in birds and immediately report the required measures.

Key Facts:
Avian Influenza (AI) - Caused by: Avian (bird) influenza (flu) A viruses.
This virus occurs naturally in wild aquatic birds worldwide and may infect poultry
and other birds and animals. Avian influenza viruses don't infect humans usually. India announced the primary outbreak of avian influenza in 2006. Although the disease is zoonotic, India has not yet reported human infections. There is no evidence that the AI virus are often transmitted to humans through the consumption of contaminated poultry products. The implementation of management practices that combine biosafety principles, personal hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection protocols may be a critical means to regulate the spread of AI viruses. In India, it is particularly spread by migratory birds entering India during winter (ie September-October to February-March). It is possible to hold out secondary transmission through human handling (through hazardous substances).

Longitudinal Ageing Study of India First Wave - India Report

The Union Health Minister releases the Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI) Wave-1, India Report.

LASI:

LASI (Longitudinal Ageing Study of India) may be a fullscale national survey of scientific investigation of the health, economic, & social determinants & consequences of population ageing in India. LASI is developed by the National Programme for Health Care of Elderly (Ministry of Health and Family Welfare) through the International Institute of Population Sciences (IIPS, Mumbai) together with the Harvard School of Public Health, Southern California University, USA. The first wave of LASI covers a baseline sample of 72,250 individuals aged 45 and over and therefore their spouses from all Indian states and the Confederation (UT), including 31,464 seniors 60 and over, and 6,749 people 75 and over(Except Sikkim).

Significance:

This is India's first and largest survey within the world, and it provides a longitudinal database for designing policies and programs for senior citizens during a wide selection of social, health and economic well-being. Evidence from LASI (Longitudinal Ageing Study of India) are going to be wont to
further strengthen and expand the scope of the National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly & also help in establishing a variety of preventive & health care programmes for the older population.
This is important because consistent with the 2011 Census, the population over 60 years old accounted for 8.6% of the Indian population.
It grows at a rate of about 3% per annum. By 2050, the elderly population will increase to 319 million, of which about 75% suffer from one or another chronic disease.

**Foundation Stone Laid For New Anubhava Mantapa**

The Chief Minister of Karnataka laid the foundation stone for the "New Anubhava Mantapa" of Basavakalyan, where the 12th century poet and philosopher Basavanna lived for most of his life.

**Highlights:**

The project will show the 12th-century Anubhava Mantapa ("first parliament within the world") established by him in Basavakalyan, where debates of philosophers and social reformers held.

The building will adopt the Kalyana Chalukya architectural style

During the period of the Kalachuri-dynasty Bijjala king I in Karnataka, Basavanna was a philosopher, statesmen, Kannada poet and social reformer in the twelfth century.

Basavanna spread social consciousness through his poems, popularly called Vachanaas.

Basavanna rejects gender or social discrimination, superstition and rituals.

He introduced new public institutions, such as Anubhava Mantapa (or the hall of spiritual experience), which welcomes men and women from all socioeconomic backgrounds to openly discuss spiritual and secular life issues.

As a leader, he developed & inspired a new devotional movement called Virashaivas, or "ardent, heroic worshippers of Shiva". The movement originated from the continuous Tamil Bhakti movement in the 7th to 11th centuries, especially the Shaiva Nayanars tradition.

Basava advocates pious worship, reject the temple worship and rituals led by Brahmanism, and replaces Shiva with personalized direct worship of Shiva through the practice of personally wearing icons and uvulas.
Basaveshwara was the first Kannadiga created to commemorate his social reforms. In November 2015, the Prime Minister of India held the unveiling ceremony of the Basaveshwara statue on the banks of the R.Thames in Lambeth, London.

**Central Scheme for Industrial Development in J&K**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved an ambitious plan to promote industrial development in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The Indian government has allocated 28,400 crore rupees for industrial development planned for Jammu and Kashmir. The funds to be utilized to enhance the industrial sector in the region until 2037.

**Highlights:**

- The main purpose of the plan is to create employment opportunities, thereby promoting economic development, and promote the development of industry and service industries. In turn, this will attract new investment.
- The plan is ambitious because it attracts large and small industrial sectors.
- The plan provides the following incentives:
  - The plan will provide 30% of capital investment incentives in the region.
  - It will provide 50% investment incentives in Zone B. This includes investments in manufacturing and construction.
  - The maximum rewards are Rs 5 crore for Zone A and Rs 7.5 crore for Zone B.
  - The plan will provide 7-year annual interest rate subsidies for loans up to 5 billion rupees for a period of 7 years.
  - The incentives related to the goods and services tax will be 300% of the qualified value of the actual investment.
  - The amount of reward provided should not exceed one-tenth of the amount of eligible reward.
  - The plan is expected to attract substantial investment and provide 4.5 lacs direct and indirect employment opportunities in the region.
  - So far, the central government has invested a total of 11.23 billion rupees as part of the industrial policy in Kashmir.
Kala Azar Is Endemic In India

Kala Azar is endemic in 54 areas in four Indian states (Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh).

Kala Azar:
Kala-azar, also known as visceral leishmaniasis, is the most serious form of leishmaniasis. Without proper diagnosis and treatment, it will lead to high mortality. Leishmaniasis disease is due by protozoan parasites of the genus Leishmania which is spread through sand bites. Leishmaniasis is a tropical disease which affects nearly 100 countries including India.
There are three main forms of Leishmaniasis:
- Visceral disease, which affects multiple organs, is the most serious form of disease
- Skin diseases may be the most common form of skin ulcers
- Skin and mucous membranes, causing skin and mucous membrane lesions

The only drug that can be used to combat leishmaniasis, mifefurcin, has developed new resistance to this drug due to its reduced accumulation in the parasite, and therefore quickly loses its effectiveness, which is necessary to kill the parasite.

A specific type of protein molecule, called a transporter, plays a major role in transporting Miltefosine enters or leaves the body of the parasite, which contains a cell.

A protein called "P4ATPase-CDC50" is responsible for the parasite's uptake of the drug, and another protein called "P-glycoprotein" is responsible for excreting the drug from the parasite.

The activity of the former protein decreases, while the activity of the latter protein increases, resulting in a decrease in the small amount of miltifocin accumulated inside the parasite's body, thereby making it resistant to drugs.

INSACOG Was Launched

The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG) was launched. The overall goal of the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia is to regularly monitor the genomic variation in SARS-CoV-2 through a multi-laboratory network.
Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG):

The Government launched the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG), which includes 10 laboratories located in India. The overall goal of the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia is to regularly monitor the genomic variation in SARS-CoV-2 through a multi-laboratory network. This vital research Consortia will also assist in the development of potential vaccines in the future. The consortium will determine the status of the new variant of SARS-CoV-2 (SARS-CoV-2 VUI 202012/01) in the country, establish a sentinel surveillance for early detection of genomic variants with public health implication, and determine the genomic variants in the unusual events/trends (super-spreader events, high mortality/morbidity trend areas, etc.).

Maiden Flight Trial of SAHAYAK-NG - Air Droppable Container

The Defense Research and Development Organization - DRDO and the Indian Navy conducted the successful maiden test trial of "SAHAYAK-NG" along the coast of Goa. This is India's 1st indigenously designed and developed Air Dropped Container from IL 38SD aircraft (Indian Navy)

**Highlights:**

- The trial was conducted by the IN -Indian Navy to enhance its combat logistics capabilities and provide critical engineering warehouses for ships deployed more than 2,000 kilometers from the coast.
- Reduced the requirement for ships to collect spare parts and warehouses near the coast.
- SAHAYAK-NG is the advanced version of SAHAYAK Mk I.
- The newly developed GPS-assisted airdrop container can carry a payload of up to 50 kg and can be dropped from a heavy aircraft.

**ACROSS by the Ministry of Earth Sciences**

ACROSS stands for Atmospheric and Climate Research-Modelling Observing Systems and Services. The ACROSS scheme applies to the atmospheric science program of the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).

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It covers different aspects of weather and climate services, including warnings for cyclones, storm surges, heatwaves, thunderstorms, etc.
The ACROSS scheme consists of 9 sub-programs, which are multidisciplinary and multi-institutional in nature and will be implemented in an integrated manner.
The goal of the ACROSS program is to provide reliable weather and climate forecasts for the development of society. Therefore, the scheme aims to improve weather and climate forecasting skills through continuous observation and intensive Research and Development activities.
The scheme improves weather, climate and ocean forecasts and services, thereby ensuring that the corresponding benefits are transferred to various services.

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Indigenously Developed DNA Vaccine Candidate

DBT-BIRAC supports Zydus Cadila indigenously developed DNA Vaccine Candidate, which has been approved for phase III clinical trials.

**Highlights:**

India's 1st indigenously developed DNA vaccine candidate against COVID-19, ZyCoV-D, by Zydus Cadila has been approved by the Drugs Controller General of India - DCGI, for the conduct of Phase III clinical trials.

The candidate is supported by the National Biopharma Mission (NBM) under the aegis of BIRAC and the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India.

After phase I and II trials, Zydus Cadila's interim data indicate that the vaccine is safe and immunogenic when three doses were administered intradermally.

Following the recommendation of the Subject Expert Committee, which reviewed the interim data, DCGI was approved to conduct Phase III clinical trials in 26,000 Indian participants.

BIRAC-The Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) established by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) supports the establishment of a vaccine production platform under the National Biopharma Mission.

Covishield Was Approved By Drug Controller General Of India

Covishield is a vaccine candidate for the Serum Research Institute headquartered in Pune, India, and has been approved by the Subject-Medical Experts Committee (SEC) of the General Drug Administration of India.

**DCGI:**

Director of Drugs of India-DCGI is the head of the Central Drug Standards Control Organization Department of the Government of India, responsible for approving specific types of drugs (such as blood and blood products, intravenous fluids, vaccines and serum) in India.

The Drugs Controller General of India is under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

DCGI also sets standards for the manufacturing, sales, import and distribution of drugs in India.

DCGI regulates the standards and quality of the manufacturing, selling, import and distribution of medicines in India.
Other Functions:
- If you have any disputes about the quality of medicines, please act as an appeal body.
- Develop and maintain national reference standards.
- To unify the implementation of the Drugs and Cosmetics Law.
- The training of drug analysts is commissioned by the National Drug Control Laboratory and other agencies.
- Analysis of cosmetics received from CDSCO as survey samples.

FSSAI Slashes Limit For Trans-Fat Levels In Foods

The Food Safety & Standards Agency of India - FSSAI has passed amendments to foods to limit the amount of trans fatty acids - TFA in fats and oils from the current 5% to 3% in 2021 and 2% in 2022. Standard (Prohibition and Restriction of Sales) Regulations.

Highlights:

The revised regulations apply to edible refined oils, vanaspati (partially hydrogenated oils), margarine, bakery shortenings and other cooking media, such as vegetable fat spreads and mixed fat spreads.

Transfat is associated with an increased risk of heart attack and death from coronary heart disease.

According to data from the WHO (World Health Organization), due to the intake of industrially-produced trans-fatty acids, there are approximately 540,000 deaths worldwide each year.

The WHO has also called for the global elimination of trans fats by 2023.

Trans fats:
Trans fatty acids (TFA) or Trans Fats are the most harmful types of fats. Compared with other dietary ingredients, it is more harmful to the human body. Most of these fats are artificially produced, but a small amount is naturally produced. Therefore, these may be in the form of artificial TFA and/or natural TFA in our diet. Artificial TFAs are formed when hydrogen reacts with oil to produce fat similar to pure ghee/butter. In our diet, the main source of artificial TFA is partially hydrogenated vegetable oil (PHVO)/vanaspati/margarine, while natural TFA is found in meat and dairy products, though in small amounts.
Banana Grit Developed From Raw Nendran Bananas

Scientists from the CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research)-National Institute of Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST) in Pappanamcode, Kerala, have proposed a new product, Banana Grit or Granules developed from the original Nendran banana. CSIR is India's largest research and development (R&D) organization.

**Highlights:**
- Banana sand and its by-products can improve intestinal health and are ideal ingredients in a healthy diet. The concept was introduced to take advantage of the presence of resistant starch in bananas.
- Starch is a white, granular organic chemical substance produced by all green plants. It is a soft, white, odorless powder, insoluble in cold water, alcohol or other solvents.
- In humans and other animals, starch from plants is broken down into its constituent sugar molecules, which then provide energy for tissues.
- By diversifying the products from bananas, farmers can harvest higher prices. This will help maintain health and well-being.

**Nendran banana:**
Chengazhikodan Nendran banana, also known as Chengazhikode banana, is one of the most popular traditional fruits grown in the Thrissur district of Kerala. This variety of Nendran banana is known for its unique taste, bunch shape and fruit colour. The crops are mainly cultivated organically, and the crop duration is 13-14 months. In 2014, the Chengalikodan Nendran banana grown in Kerala received the Geographical Indication (GI) label.

The geographical indication refers to any sign that identifies a product as originating from a specific location where the given quality, reputation or other characteristics of the product can basically be attributable to its geographic origin.

Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica

The 40th Indian Scientific Expedition to Antarctica was launched.

**Highlights:**
- The 40th expedition will take off from Goa on January 5, 2021, with 43 members on board.
The chartered ice-class vessel MV Vasily Golovnin will take this journey and will reach Antarctica within 30 days.
After leaving the team of 40 members, it will return to India in April 2021. When returning, it will also bring back the winter team from the previous trip.
Due to existing challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the scientific and logistical activities of the 40th Indian Antarctic Expedition are restricted.
The focus is on supporting ongoing scientific projects on climate change, geology, ocean observation, electric and magnetic flux measurement, and environmental monitoring; re-supply of food, fuel, supplies and spare parts; and completed the repatriation of winter workers.

**About Indian Antarctic Programme:**
The Indian Antarctic Expedition began in 1981. The first trip consisted of a team of 21 scientists and support staff, led by Dr. SZ Qasim. After a humble beginning, India's Antarctic plans to establish three permanent research base stations in Antarctica, called Dakshin Gangotri, Maitri and Bharati. As of today, India has two operational research stations in Antarctica, named Maitri and Bharati. The National Center for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) in Goa manages the entire Indian Antarctic Project.

**Tide-Rainfall Flood Quotient: A New Measurement Devised**
In order to understand whether coastal cities are more prone to flooding due to tidal events or extreme rainfall, a research team from IIT Bombay has devised a new measure called the TideRainfall Flood Quotient.

**Highlights:**
Using past rainfall data, tide data and the topography of the area, this framework can be used to determine the main factors at play.
The team selected three coastal areas that are geographically diverse and vulnerable to flooding-Mithi catchment area in Mumbai, Jagatsinghpur district in Odisha and Greater Chennai Corporation in Tamil Nadu to test their new metric.
The new method helps to classify these areas as storm-tide dominated' or pluvial (rainfall) dominated'.
This metric can help disaster management experts develop better flood risk management systems for long-term planning.
Government Launched A Virtual Hackathon Toycathon

The government has launched the virtual toy hackathon "Toycathon 2021". This is an initiative of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and the All India Technical Education Commission.

**Highlights:**
- **Aim:** Conceptualize innovative toys according to the Indian value system, which will instill positive behavior and good value in children and to promote India to become a global toy manufacturing center (Atmanirbhar Abhiyan).
- **Based on:** Indian culture and ethos, local folklore and heroes, and Indian value system.
- **Theme:** Nine themes, including fitness and sports and rediscovering traditional Indian toys.
- **Participants:** students, teachers, start-ups and toy experts.
- **Prizes:** Participants can get prizes not exceeding Rs. 5000000.
- **Significance:** Toys can be an excellent medium to carry forward the spirit of "Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat"
  - The Prime Minister proclaimed "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat" in 2015 to enhance understanding and connections between countries, thereby strengthening the unity and integrity of India.
  - It will help promote the use of educational toys in accordance with the 2020 National Education Policy (NEP).
  - It will create an ecosystem for the domestic toy industry and local manufacturers to tap untapped resources and realize their potential.
  - This will help reduce toy imports. Although India's toy market is worth US$1 billion, 80% of toys are imported.

DRDOs Advanced Biodigester Mk-II Technology

DRDO and MAHA-METRO signed a memorandum of understanding to implement Advanced Biodigester Mk-II technology in the metro rail network.

**Highlights:**
- The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by the joint venture
company MAHA-METRO (Maharashtra Metro Corporation) between DRDO and GOI and Govt. Maharashtra.

According to the memorandum of understanding, DRDO will provide technical support for the implementation of its advanced bio-digester Mk-II technology to deal with human waste (night soil) in the subway network.

DRDO's biodigester is a native, green and cost-effective technology, and its rare feature is that it has one of the largest number of DRDO licenses.

Indian Railways has installed about 2.4 million bio-digesters in its passenger car fleet.

Now, for MAHA-METRO, the technology has been improved and further improved to save water and space.

DRDO also successfully proved to J&K Administration that the customized version of the MK-II bio-digester is suitable for the treatment of human waste generated by the Dal Lake houseboat.

It is now being implemented, and once it is fully completed, it is expected to greatly reduce the pollution of Dal Lake.

**IMD issues a statement on Climate of India**

Indian Meterology Department (IMD) issues a statement on Climate of India during 2020. Since the begining of national records in 1901, 2020 is the eighth hottest year on record. However, this is much lower than the highest temperature increase in India in 2016.

**Highlights:**

The monsoon and post-monsoon seasons with abnormal average temperatures are the main cause of this warming.

According to data from 1961 to 2010, the national annual rainfall in 2020 is 109% of its long-term average (LPA). The country's monsoon season rainfall is higher than normal, which is 109% of its LPA.

In 2020, five cyclones formed over the North Indian Ocean. These are the super cyclone storm AMPHAN, the very severe cyclone storms NIVAR and GATI, the severe cyclone storm NISARGA and the cyclone storm "BUREVI".

The country has also experienced other high-impact weather events such as extreme rainfall, floods, landslides, thunderstorms, lightning, cold waves, etc.

Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were the worst-hit states that year. According to reports,
thunderstorms, lightning and cold waves in each state caused more than 350 deaths. According to reports, events related to heavy rainfall and floods claimed the lives of more than 600 people in different parts of the country in the pre-monsoon, monsoon and post-monsoon seasons.

**Swasth Vayu Non-Invasive Ventilator Receives Regulator Nod**

The Swasth Vayu non-invasive ventilator developed by CSIR-NAL won the nod regulator award. Swasth Vayu non-invasive ventilator is a non-invasive bi-level positive airway pressure ventilator designed and developed indigenously.

**Highlights:**

The ventilator also has other functions for treating COVID-19 patients.

- It is a precise closed-loop adaptive control system based on a microcontroller, with a built-in biocompatible "3D printing manifold and coupler" and a HEPA filter (high efficiency particulate air filter).
- These unique features help alleviate the fear of the spread of the virus. It has functions such as CPAP, Bi-Timed, spontaneous / AUTO mode, and can be connected to an oxygen concentrator or concentration unit from the outside.
- The performance of the equipment been evaluated by an expert committee composed of the Director-General of Health Services, Health & Family Welfare Ministry of the Government of India.
- After careful evaluation, the expert committee concluded that Swasth Vayu can be used for COVID-19 patients who need supplemental 35% oxygen.
- CSIR-NAL has commercialized the technology with six private companies, one of which (belonging to the MSME category) has established a production facility of nearly 300 units per week.

**CSIR-NAL:**

The National Aerospace Laboratory (NAL) is a component laboratory of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) of India, and is the only government aerospace R&D laboratory in the civil sector. CSIR-NAL is a high-tech organization dedicated to advanced disciplines in aerospace. NAL was established in 1959 and is located in Bangalore, Karnataka. The mission of CSIR-NAL is to develop aerospace technology with strong scientific knowledge, design and manufacture small & medium-sized civil aircraft, & support all national aerospace programs.
Inviting Applications For Auction of Spectrum

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) inviting Applications for auction of Spectrum.

**Highlights:**
- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has issued a Notice Inviting Application (NIA) for auction of spectrum in the 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz and 2500 MHz frequency bands.
- The auction spectrum is valid for 20 years.
- There is an option of payment in instalments for successful bidders.
- The auction format is a Simultaneous Multi-Round Ascending (SMRA) e-auction.
- The auction is planned to be held in March 2021 and will be conducted online.

Science Technology and Innovation Policy Finalized

The 5th National STIP (Science Technology and Innovation Policy) has been finalized and is out there for public consultation.

**Highlights:**
- The STIP (Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy), 2020 formulation process are getting to be facilitated by the Principal Scientific Adviser to the GoI (Government of India) and thus the Department of Science and Technology (DST)
- The policy was formulated, employing a decentralized, bottom-up, and inclusive design process, aimed toward re-setting priorities, sectoral focus, and methods for research and technology development methods to realize greater socio-economic benefits
- Due to the COVID-19 and its impact on the economy and life, the planning of STIP 2020 is integrated with Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- The STIP 2020 formulation process is getting to be six-months long and has been organised into 4 highly interlinked tracks:
  - Track 1: It involves public and expert consultation process through the Science Policy Forum.
  - Track 2: Thematic consultations promoted by experts, incorporating evidence-based recommendations into the policy drafting process. to the present end, 21 thematic groups were formed.
Track 3: Involves extensive intra-state and departmental consultations with various ministries and states.
Track 4: It constitutes the very best level of multi-stakeholder consultation.

**Sulfur Dioxide Emission Norms Delayed**

The Ministry of Power has proposed to postpone the deadline for coal-fired power plants to adopt the new emission standards, stating that an "an unworkable time schedule" will burden utilities and cause a rise in power tariffs.

**Background:**
India initially set a 2017 deadline for thermal power plants to comply with emission standards for installing Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD) devices to reduce toxic sulfur dioxide emissions. This was later changed to varying deadlines for various regions, ending in 2022.

**Flue Gas Desulphurisation (FED):**
Removal of sulphur dioxide is named as Flue-gas Desulphurization (FGD). Seek to remove gaseous pollutants viz. SO2 generated from exhaust flue gas generated in furnaces, boilers and other industrial processes due to thermal processing, treatment and combustion.

**Proposal for the Ministry of Power:**
A "graded action plan" was proposed, during which the areas where plants are located are going to be graded consistently with the severity of the pollution, where Region 1 refers to the heavily polluted areas and Region 5 is the least polluted areas.

The plants in Region 2 can start taking action one year after the plants in Region 1. Currently, power plants located under Region 3, 4 and 5 do not need to take any measures.

According to the Ministry, the target should be to take care of consistent ambient air quality across the country, and not uniform emission norms for thermal power plants.

This can avoid an instantaneous increase in power prices in various relatively clean areas of the country (and) avoid unnecessary burdens on power utilities/users.
Asian Waterbird Census Conducted in AP

The census of Asian waterbirds is being conducted in the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary and nearby wetlands in Andhra Pradesh.

**Highlights:**
Every January, thousands of volunteers from Asia and Oceania visited the wetlands in their countries and counted waterbirds. The citizen science program is the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC).


In India, the Ministry of Forestry and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) supported the exercise.

Therefore, the census covers the entire East Asia-Australia route and most of the routes in Central Asia.

**Objectives:** During the non-breeding period (January) of most species, the annual information of the wetland waterbird population in the area is obtained as the basis for assessing locations and monitoring population. Annual monitoring of wetland conditions. Encourage citizens to have greater interest in waterfowl and wetlands.

Community Fishing Prohibited In Deepor Beel

The Kamrup (Metropolitan) District administration bans community fishing in Deepor Beel. This is a wetland on the southwestern edge of Guwahati. This is the only Ramsar site in Assam.

**Highlights:**
This order is necessary to prevent fishing, excavation and construction in and around the wetlands that have been shrinking over the years.

Deepor Beel was designated as a Ramsar site in 2002 to maintain multiple forms of aquatic life in addition to 219 species of birds.

About Ramsar Convention: It was signed on February 2, 1971. This is one of the oldest intergovernmental accords signed by member countries.

Goal: Maintain the ecological characteristics of wetlands of international
The importance of Ramsar is significant as it is named after Ramsar, the Iranian city where the treaty was signed. The place selected for protection under it is marked as "Ramsar Site".

The aim of the Ramsar List: To develop and maintain an international wetland network, which is essential for maintaining global biodiversity and maintaining the composition of its ecosystems, processes and benefits to sustain human life.

**Stricter Monitoring Of Indian Pangolin**

The Odisha Forest Department emphasized the need for stricter monitoring of social media platforms to check for pangolin poaching and trading.

**Key Facts:**
- Pangolins are scaly anteater mammals and their skin has large protective keratin scales. They are the only mammals with this feature.
- Pangolins are nocturnal and their diet is mainly composed of ants and termites.
- Among the eight species of pangolin, the Indian pangolin (Manis crassicaudata) and the Chinese pangolin (Manis pentadactyla) are found in India.
- In addition to arid regions, the Himalayas and the Northeast, Indian pangolins are widely distributed in India. This species has also been found in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- Chinese pangolins are found in the foothills of the Himalayas in Eastern Nepal, Bhutan, Northern India, North-East Bangladesh, and throughout southern China.
- Threats to Pangolins in India: Hunting and poaching for local consumptive use (e.g. as a protein source and traditional medicine) and international trade for its meat and scales in East and South East Asian countries, particularly China and Vietnam. Pangolins are found to be the most trafficked mammals in the world.

**Conservation Status:**
- Wildlife Protection Act,1972: Schedule I
- IUCN Red List: Endangered
- CITIES: Appendix I

**AI based Survey of African Elephants**

An international research team led by Oxford University has developed a new method of investigating African elephants using satellite imagery and artificial intelligence.
**Highlights:**
This method uses satellite orbits capable of capturing images of more than five thousand square kilometers in space. Then, the captured image is processed through a deep learning model, which will detect the elephant and eliminate other objects. The international team used a customized data set to cover thousands of elephants in South Africa.

This method eliminates the risk of double counting. In addition, it can conduct repeated investigations in a short period of time.

This method can identify calves separately.

The number of elephants in India is 27,312. The Indian elephant is one of the three subspecies of the Asian elephant.

In 1986, Asian elephants were listed as "endangered" in the IUCN Red List. They have been included in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora India launched the "Elephant Project" in 1992 to provide financial and technical support for wildlife management.

The project plans to extend the life of elephants in their natural habitat by protecting their habitat and migration corridors.

There are 138 elephant corridors in India. 28 of these states are interstate highways, and 17 are international state corridors.

The Elephant Corridor is a narrow land that connects two large elephant habitats. They are essential to reduce animal deaths caused by accidents.

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**GoI Sets Up Control Room To Control Spread Of Bird Flu**

After confirming the avian influenza outbreaks in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Himalayas, the Ministry of Animal Husbandry has established control rooms.

**Highlights:**

The control room will pay close attention to the situation and evaluate the preventive and control measures taken by the state governments on a daily basis.

The control room will also comply with the National Avian Flu Action Plan.

**National Action Plan on Avian Influenza consists of the following parts:**

Advise states and federal territories on preventing bird flu outbreaks.

The second part of the action plan specifies actions to be taken if an avian influenza outbreak is suspected.
The third part describes the actions during the outbreak. The fourth part determines that people who have infected poultry with bird flu will be treated. The person will advise on biosafety and biosafety measures.

Influenza viruses are categorised into types A, B and C. It is known that influenza A viruses only infect animals and are zoonotic. This means that type A can also infect humans.

The subtypes of avian influenza are H5N1, H7N9 and H9N2. The subtypes are classified according to surface proteins called neuraminidase and hemagglutinin.

This is the global influenza surveillance and response system initiated by the World Health Organization in 1952. It monitors global seasonal trends and potential pandemic influenza. It is the backbone of the global flu alert system.

Global Influenza Strategy was launched by the World Health Organization for 2019-2030. It aims to prevent seasonal influenza and control the spread of viruses from animals to humans.

**Conflict Over Nile - Great Renaissance Dam**

Ethiopia, Sudan, and Egypt recently agreed to resume negotiations to resolve a decade-long complex dispute over the hydropower project of the Great Renaissance Dam in the Horn of Africa. The Horn of Africa is the easternmost point of the African land, including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia, and other countries whose cultures are linked together in their long history. Ethiopia is building a Grand Renaissance Dam on the Nile River.

**Highlights:**

The River Nile is the longest river in Africa. It is the middle of a decade-long complex dispute involving multiple countries that believe river waters.

**Grand Renaissance Dam:** The 145-meter (475-foot-high) hydropower project initiated by Ethiopia was the cause of the conflict. Given the dam's location on the Blue Nile tributary, it might allow Ethiopia to realize control of the flow of the river's waters. The River Blue Nile may be a tributary of the Nile, which carries about two-thirds of the river's water and most of the silt. Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan are the forefronts of this dispute.

Ethiopia believes that the dam will generate approximately 6,000 megawatts of electricity and will support its industrial development. It can also export excess electricity to neighbouring areas to generate income.
Egypt's Concern: Egypt lies downstream and cares that Ethiopia's control over the water could end in lower water levels within its own borders. About 97% of Egypt's drinking water and irrigation supplies depend on the Nile. The dam will endanger the food, water security and livelihoods of ordinary Egyptian citizens.

Sudan's Stand: Sudan is also worried that if Ethiopia gains control of the river, it will affect the water level that Sudan obtains. Sudan may benefit from the electricity generated by the dam. Regulated river flow will save Sudan from severe flooding in August and September. Therefore, it proposed joint management of the dam.

Last Year Was Eighth Warmest Year Since 1901

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) recently issued a statement on India's climate in 2020. According to its data, 2020 is the eighth warmest year since 1901, but it is much lower than the highest warming in 2016.

Highlights:

- The past two decades (2001-2010 and 2011-2020) are also the warmest decade on record, with anomalies of 0.23 degrees Celsius & 0.34 degrees Celsius, respectively, indicating that the overall temperature has risen.
- 12 out of 15 warmest years since 1901 were considered in the past 15 years itself between 2006 and 2020.
- From 1901 to 2020, the annual average mean temperature in India showed an increasing trend of 0.62 degrees Celsius per 100 years.
- It also shows a clear increasing trend in the highest temperature (0.99 degrees Celsius/100 years), and a relatively low increasing trend (0.24 degrees Celsius/100 years) in minimum temperature.
- In the year 2020, the annual mean land surface air temperature is 0.29 degrees Celsius higher than normal (based on data from 1981-2010).
- The 2020 Northeast monsoon season (October to December) for the entire country has normal rainfall (101% of LPA).

A Study Group Constituted To See Ammoniacal Nitrogen In Yamuna

A meeting was convened between the CPCB (Central Pollution Control Board) and
the officials of DPCC (Delhi Pollution Control Committee), HSPCB (Haryana State Pollution Control Board), DJB (Delhi Jal Board), Haryana and Irrigation, Irrigation & Water Resources Department, and Flood Control Department, Delhi.

**Highlights:**

The main purpose is to discuss the recurring problem of Ammoniacal Nitrogen increase in the Yamuna River and the short-term and long-term remedial measures required.

The long-term review of this issue identified and agreed that possible reasons may be:
- Lean flow in the Yamuna river and anaerobic decomposition of accumulated sludge on river bed.
- Discharge from industries, Common Effluent Treatment Plants (CETPs) & Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs)
- Illegal discharge from unsewered colonies in outer Delhi via tankers
- Untreated sewage discharge from upstream towns in Haryana;

Formed a research team consisting of the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), Haryana State Pollution Control Board, Delhi Pollution Control Committee, Irrigation and Water Resources Department, Haryana, Irrigation and Flood Control Department, Delhi.

The team will review:

1. Unified monitoring protocol and requirements for enhanced monitoring mechanisms;
2. Analyze past data and conduct field investigations to identify key hot spots and periods of high ammonia levels.

It is also required to suggest short-term and long-term measures for continuous solutions and submit a report within one month.

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**Advisory For Managing Human-Wildlife Conflict**

Government of India along with SC-NBWL (Standing Committee of the National Board of Wildlife) approves advisory for management of Human-Wildlife Conflict across the country.

**Highlights:**

The advisory has laid down important regulations for States/Union Territories to deal with conflicts between humans and wildlife, and seeks to speed up coordination and effective action between departments.
In accordance with Article 11(1)(b) of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972, the organization envisages empowering the gram panchayats to deal with problematic wildlife.

It is also envisaged to use additional coverage under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana to compensate crop compensation for crop damage caused by HWC and increase feed and water sources in forest areas.

It also stipulates that the victim/family shall be paid a part of special temporary relief within 24 hours after the incident.

The advisory also discussed the establishment of inter-departmental committees at the local/state level, the use of early warning systems, the installation of obstacles, and a special circulation control room with toll-free hotlines numbers, which can be operated on a 24X7 basis to identify hot spots and formulate plans and implement special plans to improve livestock breeding, etc.

The National Board for Wildlife also approved the inclusion of Caracal on the list of Critically endangered species so that conservation work can be carried out under the funding of the centrally sponsored scheme- Development of Wildlife Habitat.

This makes the entire number of critically endangered' wildlife species under the recovery programme for critically species to 22.
ARTS & CULTURE

Vandalism Of The Idol Of Lord Rama

The 16th-century Ramateertham temple was seen in the news due to the vandalism of the idol of Lord Rama at the Kodandarama Swamy temple.

**Highlights:**
- On December 29, Lord Rama's idol was destroyed on the top of the historic Ramateertham Temple, which is 12 kilometres away from Vizianagaram.
- It is located in Andhra Pradesh.
- Ramateertham is one of the sacred places of traditional communication with Lord Sree Rama.
- The famous ancient temple of Ramachandra Swamy can be found here.
- The idols of Lord Ramachandra Swamy, Sita and Lakshmana in Silver kavachas can be seen at this temple.

Yakshagana Artiste Died While Performing On Stage

The Yakshagana artist died while performing on the stage. Yakshagana is a traditional theatre form in Karnataka. This is a temple art form depicting myths and Pune.

**Highlights:**
- Performance performed with large headwear, exquisite facial makeup, and vibrant costumes and decorations.
- It is usually quoted in Kannada and is also used in Malayalam and Tulu (a dialect of southern Karnataka).
- Tulu is a Dravidian language and its speakers are concentrated in the Tulu Nadu region, which includes the Dakshina Kannada and Udupi regions of Karnataka and the northern part of the Kasaragod region of Kerala.
- The oldest inscriptions available in Tulu are from the 14th to 15th century AD.
- It is played with percussion instruments such as chenda, maddalam, jagatta or chengila (cy) and chakratala or elathalam (small).
- The most popular episodes are from Mahabharata, namely Draupadi swayamvar, Subhadra vivah, etc., and Ramayana, namely Rajyabhishek, Lav-Kush yuddh, etc.
SUMMITS & CONFERENCE

National Metrology Conclave To Be Held

The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL) in New Delhi is organizing the National Metrology Conference 2020.

About the Conclave:
The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL) in New Delhi is organizing the National Metrology Conference 2020. The theme of the conclave is "Metrology for the Inclusive Growth of the Nation". The Prime Minister will also dedicate the National Atomic Timescale on the occasion of the National Metrology Conclave.

The National Atomic Time scale generates Indian Standard Time (IST) with an accuracy of 2.8 nanoseconds.

World Of Coriander Webinar For High-Quality Production

Webinar on World of Coriander was happened to improve the high-quality products and also to enhance the export of Coriander.

Highlights:
The Spices Board of India and therefore the DBT-SABC Biotech Kisan Hub together with ICAR-NRCSS, Rajasthan State Agricultural Marketing Board (RSAMB) and Kota Agricultural University.
The South-East Rajasthan's Hadoti region and the Guna district, Madhya Pradesh is known for the production of coriander i.e., Coriandrum sativum L., which contributes a major share in coriander export from the country.
The Hadoti-Guna region has great potential for exporting whole coriander and other processed products such as coriander split (daal), powder and essential oils.
**SCHEMES**

**Swachh Swasth Sarvatra - Kayakalp Winner**

Swachh Swasth Sarvatra is a joint venture of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

**Highlights:**

Swachh Swasth Sarvatra is a joint venture of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

The program was launched in 2016 and aims to achieve better health outcomes by improving sanitation and increasing people's awareness on healthy lifestyles.

In this case, one-time one-time grant of Rs. 10 lakh is provided to the non-Kayakalp winner Community Health Center (CHC) located in the ODF block.

Kayakalp is an award for public health facilities in recognition of their contributions to Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

The purpose of the grant is that the resource will help CHC become a Kayakalp winner.

**UJALA and SLNP completes six years of Illuminating India**

Govt of India's UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All) and SLNP (Street Light National Programme) completes six years of Illuminating India efficiently.

Both plans were first implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a PSU joint venture under the Ministry of Electricity of the Government of India.

**UJALA:**

The plan was launched in 2015. The goal is to replace 770 million incandescent lamps with LED bulbs and eliminate the high cost of LEDs, which have previously been used in energy-saving systems. Implement this program to establish phased LED distribution. The purpose is to promote efficient lighting and increase awareness of using efficient equipment to reduce electricity bills and protect the environment. This is the largest home lighting project in the world.

**SLNP:**

The National Street Lamp National Plan is a government initiative aimed at improving energy efficiency in the country.
IMPORTANT DAYS

World Braille Day is Celebrated On 4 January

Every year, the United Nations and several other international organizations celebrate World Braille Day on January 4. The purpose of celebrating Braille day is to make people realize the importance of Braille as a means of communication to realize the human rights of the blind.

Highlights:

January 4th is a celebration, because this day is the birthday of Louis Braille, the creator of the writing system. He was born in France in 1809. The first World Braille Day was celebrated in 2019.

Braille is a letter and number symbol represented by six dots. Dots represent letters and numbers as well as math, music, and science symbols. Braille was invented in France in the 19th century by Louis Braille.

India adopted a unified braille code in 1951 to represent different languages. India established its first Braille factory in Dehradun, the Central Braille Factory. In 1954, a central Braille printing press was established to produce Braille electrical appliances.

The printing press produces simple devices such as braille boards, stylus pens and arithmetic braille boards. GoI promulgated the "Disabled Persons Act" of 1995. The bill provides special categories called "low vision" and blind people.

In addition, the bill also complies with the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. India has accepted several UN resolutions on disabled persons. These include the 1981 International Year of Disabled Persons commemorating activities and the 1983-92 United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons commemorating activities.

India has also complied with the "Asia-Pacific Decade for the Disabled" announced by ESCAP. ESCAP is the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific. It is a regional think tank that provides analysis and opinions on the social, economic and environmental dynamics of the region.

Global Family Day is celebrated on 1st January

Every January 1st, Global Family Day is celebrated all over the world (especially in
the United States). This is a global day of peace and sharing. We all know how important "family" is to everyone. This is the case for Global Family Day 2021. This day treats the whole world as one family.

**Highlights:**

Global Family Day (GFD) celebrated on January 1. GFD was born in the United Nations Millennium Celebration "Day of Peace". It was first observed on January 1, 2000. Since then, the first day of each year will be the annual Global Family Day. GFD aims to promote multiculturalism, diversity, and teach how to coexist in peace and harmony. This day advocates the concept of the world becoming "a big global family". This also allows humans to surpass all other parameters.

The main purpose of this day is for all families to gather in one place on the first day of the year to welcome the new year.

January 1, 2021, is approaching. We recently wish you and your family "Happy Global Family Day 2021", and hope that the bond between you & your loved ones will be stronger.

**CSIR-NPL Celebrates Its Foundation Day**

CSIR-NPL, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-The National Physical Laboratory (NPL) celebrates its 75th Foundation Day.

**CSIR-NPL:**

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-The National Physical Laboratory (NPL) is one of the main laboratories of CSIR.

It was established in January 1947 and is located in New Delhi.

It is the National Metrology Institute of India and the main research institute in the field of physical sciences.

The main purpose of the laboratory is to strengthen and advance physics-based research and development to promote the overall development of science and technology in the country.

NPL has the responsibility of realizing the units of physical measurements based on the International System (SI units) under the subordinate legislations of Weights & Measures Act 1956 (reissued in 1988 under the 1976 Act).

NPL also has a statutory obligation to realize, establish, maintain, replicate and update national standards for measurement and calibration facilities for different parameters.
The laboratory is currently maintaining six of the seven SI basic units. These are meters, kilograms, seconds, Kelvin, ampere, and candela. In order to realize and establish the seventh SI basic unit of mole (mol), R&D work is underway. The supplementary units of SI are radians (rad) and steradian (sr).

The physical measurement units currently maintained in the laboratory are: force, pressure, vacuum, luminous flux, sound pressure, ultrasonic power and pressure, and units of electrical and electronic parameters, namely DC voltage; resistance; current and power; AC voltage current and power; Low frequency voltage; impedance and power; high frequency voltage; power; impedance; attenuation and noise; microwave power; frequency, impedance, and attenuation and noise.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention Organized on 9 January

Although the Covid pandemic is still ongoing, the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention is being organized on January 9, 2021. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) was celebrated on January 9th to commemorate the contribution of overseas Indian communities to the development of India (NRI).

**Highlights:**

The PBD Convention is the flagship activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and provides an important platform for contact and contact with overseas Indians.

Since 2003, the PBD Convention has been held every year. Since 2015, the format has been revised to celebrate PBD every two years.

The theme of Article 16 of the 2021 PBD Convention is: "Contribution to Aatmanirbhar Bharat".

Since this day in 1915, Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi, returned to India from South Africa, leading India's struggle for freedom and changing the lives of Indians forever. Therefore, January 9th was set to celebrate this day. Days.

These conventions provide a platform for overseas Indian communities to interact with their ancestral governments and local people to carry out mutually beneficial activities.

These conventions are also very useful for connecting between overseas Indian communities living around the world and enabling them to share their experiences in various fields.

World War Orphans Day is Observed on 6th January
Every January 6th, World War Orphans Day is celebrated to raise people's awareness of the plight of war orphans and to resolve the painful conditions they face.

**Highlights:**

According to UNICEF, children under 18 who have lost one or two parents due to any cause of death are considered orphans.

According to UNICEF data, there were approximately 140 million orphans worldwide in 2015, including 10 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, 61 million in Asia, 7.3 million in Eastern Europe and Central Asia and 52 million in Africa.

This day highlights the lives of children affected by the results of the war and aims to improve their future.

According to UNICEF data, in the wars of the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, nearly 50% victims were civilians, and this number gradually increased in 2001. Since that year, the figure has fallen by 0.7% per year.

In World War II, about two-thirds of the victims were civilians, and by the end of the 1980s, this number had risen to 90%.

Based on the above data, it is obvious that civilians in many countries around the world have become victims of wars. Among them, the child is the victim of silence. Millions of children grew up in war zones without family racial conflicts. Orphans are not only forced to take care of themselves, but also their young siblings (if any). Therefore, this day highlights the plight of orphans and reminds us that we must take care of every child.
World Food Price Index by FAO

Food Price Index of the Food & Agriculture Organization - FAO averaged 107.5 points in December 2020, which is an increase of 2.3 points from November 2020. This is the 7th consecutive month of growth.

**Highlights:**
- The food price index was established in 1996 as a public good.
- The Price Index is a public good in order to help monitoring the development of the global agricultural market.
- The FAO Food Price Index (FFPI) is a measure of the monthly changes in the international price of a basket of food.
- It measures changes in a basket of grains, oilseeds, dairy products, meat, and sugar.
- The Base period is 2014-16.

**Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):**

Food and Agriculture Organization - FAO is one of the specialized agencies of the United Nations (UN), leading international efforts to eradicate hunger globally. On October 16, World Food Day is observed every year globally. Celebrate this day to mark the tenth anniversary of the founding of FAO in 1945. India issued a commemorative rupee coin of 75 denominations to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the founding of FAO (October 16, 2020). It is one of the United Nations food aid organizations based in Rome (Italy). Its sister institutions are the World Food Program and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

PMI Data  Service Sector of India is at Slow Pace

According to the latest PMI data, India's service industry activity grew at a slower rate in December. The service industry PMI rose to 52.3 in December from 53.7 in November.

**Purchasing Managers Index:**

The Purchasing Managers Index is an economic indicator that can indicate the business activities and economic health of the manufacturing and service industries. India's PMI was published by Japanese company Nikkei, but was written and
constructed by IHS Markit, a global information provider based in London.
Unlike the Industrial Production Index (IIP), which denotes changes in input or output.
PMI is an investor sentiment tracking index, and it is more dynamic in nature. They come from a monthly survey of about 400 private companies.
The variables used to calculate PMI are: output, new orders, employment, input costs, output prices, backlogs, export orders, purchase quantities, supplier delivery time, purchase inventory, and finished goods inventory.
While Purchasing Managers Index >50 implies an expansion of business and economic activity, Purchasing Managers Index
QUIZ CORNER

1) Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank which is established on ____________.

A. December 19, 1966
B. December 19, 1967
C. December 19, 1968
D. December 19, 1969

Answer A

Explanation Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank which is established on December 19, 1966. Its headquarters are located in Mandaluyong, Ortigas Center, Metro Manila, Philippines. The bank promotes social & economic development in Asia.

2) Asian Development Bank (ADB) headquarters are ____________.

A. Mandaluyong
B. Ortigas Center
C. Metro Manila
D. All the above

Answer D

Explanation Asian Development Bank (ADB) is a regional development bank which is established on December 19, 1966. Its headquarters are located in Mandaluyong, Ortigas Center, Metro Manila, Philippines. The bank promotes social & economic development in Asia.

3) Global Family Day is celebrated on ____________.

A. January 4
B. January 1
C. January 3
D. January 2

Answer B
Explanation Every January 1st, Global Family Day is celebrated all over the world (especially in the United States). This is a global day of peace and sharing. We all know how important

4) Global Family Day (GFD) was first observed on ____________.
A. 1998 
B. 1999 
C. 2000 
D. 2001 

Answer C

Explanation Global Family Day (GFD) celebrated on January 1. GFD was born in the United Nations Millennium Celebration "Day of Peace". It was first observed on January 1, 2000. Since then, the first day of each year will be the annual Global Family Day. GFD aims to promote multiculturalism, diversity, and teach how to coexist in peace and harmony. This day advocates the concept of the world becoming "a big global family". This also allows humans to surpass all other parameters.

5) World Braille Day Is Celebrated On ____________.
A. 4 January 
B. 3 January 
C. 2 January 
D. 1 January 

Answer D

Explanation Every year, the United Nations and several other international organizations celebrate World Braille Day on January 4. The purpose of celebrating Braille day is to make people realize the importance of Braille as a means of communication to realize the human rights of the blind.

6) The first World Braille Day was celebrated in ____________.
A. 2016 
B. 2017 
C. 2018 
D. 2019
Answer D

Explanation January 4th is a celebration, because this day is the birthday of Louis Braille, the creator of the writing system. He was born in France in 1809. The first World Braille Day was celebrated in 2019. Braille is a letter and number symbol represented by six dots. Dots represent letters and numbers as well as math, music, and science symbols. Braille was invented in France in the 19th century by Louis Braille.

7) Braille is a letter and number symbol represented by ____________ dots.

A. 6
B. 7
C. 8
D. 9

Answer A

Explanation Braille is a letter and number symbol represented by six dots. Dots represent letters and numbers as well as math, music, and science symbols. Braille was invented in France in the 19th century by Louis Braille. India adopted a unified braille code in 1951 to represent different languages. India established its first Braille factory in Dehradun, the Central Braille Factory. In 1954, a central Braille printing press was established to produce Braille electrical appliances.

8) Braille was invented in France in the ____________th century by Louis Braille.

A. 17
B. 18
C. 19
D. 20

Answer C

Explanation Braille was invented in France in the 19th century by Louis Braille. India adopted a unified braille code in 1951 to represent different languages. India established its first Braille factory in Dehradun, the Central Braille Factory. In 1954, a central Braille printing press was established to produce Braille electrical appliances.

9) India adopted a unified braille code in ____________ to represent different languages.
India adopted a unified braille code in 1951 to represent different languages. India established its first Braille factory in Dehradun, the Central Braille Factory. In 1954, a central Braille printing press was established to produce Braille electrical appliances. The printing press produces simple devices such as braille boards, stylus pens and arithmetic braille boards. GoI promulgated the "Disabled Persons Act" of 1995. The bill provides special categories called "low vision" and blind people.

10) SAHAYAK-NG is the advanced version of ____________.
   A. SAHAYAK Mk I
   B. SAHAYAK Mk II
   C. SAHAYAK Mk III
   D. None of the above

   Answer A

   Explanation SAHAYAK-NG is the advanced version of SAHAYAK Mk I. The newly developed GPS-assisted airdrop container can carry a payload of up to 50 kg and can be dropped from a heavy aircraft.

11) The newly developed GPS-assisted airdrop container can carry a payload of up to ____________ and can be dropped from a heavy aircraft.
   A. 50 g
   B. 50 kg
   C. 60 kg
   D. 60 g

   Answer B

   Explanation The newly developed GPS-assisted airdrop container can carry a payload of up to 50 kg and can be dropped from a heavy aircraft.
12) E-committee of the Supreme Court (SC) of India conferred with the __________ Award for Excellence in Digital Governance by the President of India.

A. Gold
B. Diamond
C. Platinum
D. Silver

Answer C

Explanation E-committee of the Supreme Court (SC) of India conferred with the Platinum Award for Excellence in Digital Governance by the President of India.

13) Swachh Swasth Sarvatra was launched in ____________.

A. 2015
B. 2016
C. 2017
D. 2018

Answer B

Explanation Swachh Swasth Sarvatra is a joint venture of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. The program was launched in 2016 and aims to achieve better health outcomes by improving sanitation and increasing people's awareness on healthy lifestyles.

14) Swachh Swasth Sarvatra is a initiative of ____________.

A. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
B. Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation
C. Both A and B
D. None

Answer C

Explanation Swachh Swasth Sarvatra is a joint venture of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. The program was launched in 2016 and aims to achieve better health outcomes by improving sanitation and increasing people's
awareness on healthy lifestyles.

15) Odisha has become the ____________ state in the country that has successfully implemented the "Ease of Doing Business" reform prescribed by the Ministry of Finance and Expenditure.

A. 7th
B. 6th
C. 5th
D. 4th

**Answer A**

**Explanation** Odisha has become the seventh state in the country that has successfully implemented the "Ease of Doing Business" reform prescribed by the Ministry of Finance and Expenditure. Therefore, New York State is eligible to mobilize additional rupee funds. It received Rs 1,429 crore through open market borrowings. Orissa has now joined the six states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Telangana, and they have completed this reform.

16) Covishield, the first vaccine to get emergency-use nod from DGCI, is being manufactured by which company?

A. Bharat Biotech
B. Serum Institute of India
C. Biocon
D. Dr Reddys Labs

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Covishield is the vaccine candidate from Pune-based Serum Institute of India. It has been approved by a Subject Expert Committee (SEC) of the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI).

17) Where is the headquarters of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) located?

A. Geneva
B. Madrid
C.Rome  
D.Lausanne

**Answer B**

**Explanation** The International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) is an association of organizations, which regulate the world's securities and futures markets. International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), established by the Government of India in 2019, has become an associate member of the IOSCO. With this, IFSCA can exchange information at the global level, learn from the best practices of the other regulators.

18) Which organisation is to provide USD 100 million to improve power distribution in Bengaluru?

A.AIIB  
B.World Bank  
C.ADB  
D.IMF

**Answer C**

**Explanation** The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is to provide a USD 100 million loan to upgrade the power distribution system in Bengaluru city. Another USD 90 million loan will also be provided to the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company. The project also includes laying over 2500 km of fibre optical cables and moving distribution lines underground.

19) What is the cap imposed on trans fatty acids (TFA) in oils and fats for the year 2021?

A.10%  
B.5%  
C.3%  
D.1%

**Answer C**

**Explanation** India's food regulator Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has capped the quantum of trans fatty acids (TFA) in oils and fats to 3% for 2021. The cap is further reduced to 2% for 2022. Trans fat are found to increase the risk of heart attacks and death from coronary heart disease. The WHO has called all its members to eliminate trans-fat by 2023.
20) Which county has announced its plan to enrich uranium to 20 per cent?

A. USA  
B. China  
C. Japan  
D. Iran

**Answer D**

**Explanation** Iran has announced to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that it plans to enrich its uranium to 20% purity, which was a level achieved before 2015 accord. This is supposed to be done at its Fordow site which is buried into a mountain. Iran has been continuously breaching the 2015 deals with IAEA since 2019, in response to USAs withdrawal from the agreement and imposition of sanctions against Iran.

21) Britain has recently ended taxation on which product?

A. Mobile Phones  
B. Sanitary Products  
C. Laptops  
D. Paracetamol tablets

**Answer B**

**Explanation** Britain became the latest nation that has eliminated taxation on womens sanitary products. These taxes were called tampon tax has been completely abolished in the country. This decision was earlier announced in the countrys annual budget by its Treasury chief, but has been implemented only now, when Britain has left the European Union.

22) The Asian Development Bank recently signed a ____________ million agreement to modernize and upgrade Bangalores electricity.

A. US$100  
B. US$1000  
C. US$200  
D. US$2000

**Answer A**

**Explanation** The Asian Development Bank recently signed a US$100 million agreement to
modernize and upgrade Bangalores electricity.

23) **TRIFOOD is launched on ____________.**

A. August 2020  
B. August 2019  
C. August 2018  
D. August 2017

**Answer A**

**Explanation** TRIFOOD is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the Ministry of Food Processing Industry and TRIFED. It was launched in August 2020 under the leadership of Van Dhan Yojana. TRIFOOD Park is a food processing center. TRIFOOD Park will source raw materials from Van Dhan Kendras. It will then be processed and sold nationwide through tribes of Indian tribes.

24) **TRIFOOD is a initiative of ____________.**

A. Ministry of Tribal Affairs  
B. Ministry of Food Processing Industry  
C. TRIFED  
D. All the above

**Answer D**

**Explanation** TRIFOOD is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the Ministry of Food Processing Industry and TRIFED. It was launched in August 2020 under the leadership of Van Dhan Yojana. TRIFOOD Park is a food processing center. TRIFOOD Park will source raw materials from Van Dhan Kendras. It will then be processed and sold nationwide through tribes of Indian tribes.

25) **The minimum support price for 24 commodities is set ____________ a year.**

A. Once  
B. Twice  
C. Thrice  
D. None
**26) TRIFED Signed Mou With Akhil Bhartiya Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram to establish TRIFOOD Park in ____________.

A. Uttar Pradesh  
B. Arunachal Pradesh  
C. Madhya Pradesh  
D. Assam

**Answer C**

**Explanation** TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India) led by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Akhil Bhartiya vanvasi Kalyan Ashram signed a memorandum of understanding to establish TRIFOOD Park in Madhya Pradesh.

**27) India will export broken rice to Vietnam in ____________.

A. January 2021  
B. February 2021  
C. Both A and B  
D. March 2021

**Answer C**

**Explanation** Indian traders will export 70,000 tons of rice to Vietnam at a price of approximately US$310 per ton. India will export broken rice to Vietnam in January and February 2021. The global pandemic has prompted Vietnam and other countries to stock up rice. This is because the reduction in food supply makes people increasingly worried about food insecurity. Vietnam plans to reserve US$270,000 of rice to ensure access to food in the event of a disruption in the global covid-19 supply chain. Therefore, it is facing shortages and is dependent on imports. The price of broken rice in India ranges from US$381 to US$387 per ton.

**28) The ACROSS scheme consists of ____________ sub-programs, which are **
multidisciplinary and multi-institutional in nature and will be implemented in an integrated manner.

A.9  
B.8  
C.7  
D.6

Answer A

Explanation The ACROSS scheme consists of 9 sub-programs, which are multidisciplinary and multi-institutional in nature and will be implemented in an integrated manner. The goal of the ACROSS program is to provide reliable weather and climate forecasts for the development of society. Therefore, the scheme aims to improve weather and climate forecasting skills through continuous observation and intensive Research and Development activities.

29) The theme of the National Metrology Conference 2020 is ____________.

A. Metrology for the Exclusive Growth of the Nation  
B. Metrology for the Growth of the Nation  
C. Metrology for the Inclusive Growth of the Nation  
D. None of the above

Answer D

Explanation The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL) in New Delhi is organizing the National Metrology Conference 2020. The theme of the conclave is "Metrology for the Inclusive Growth of the Nation". The Prime Minister will also dedicate the National Atomic Timescale on the occasion of the National Metrology Conclave.


A. 1.8  
B. 2.0  
C. 2.8  
D. 3.0

Answer C
The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL) in New Delhi is organizing the National Metrology Conference 2020. The theme of the conclave is "Metrology for the Inclusive Growth of the Nation". The Prime Minister will also dedicate the National Atomic Timescale on the occasion of the National Metrology Conclave. The National Atomic Timescale generates Indian Standard Time (IST) with an accuracy of 2.8 nanosecond.

31) The Prime Minister dedicated the Kochi-Mangaluru Gas Pipeline to the nation. This is a __________-kilometer-long pipeline built by Gail (India) Ltd.

A. 150  
B. 250  
C. 350  
D. 450

**Answer D**

The Prime Minister dedicated the Kochi-Mangaluru Gas Pipeline to the nation. This is a 450-kilometer-long pipeline built by Gail (India) Ltd. Kochi Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline: It has a daily transportation capacity of 12 million metric standard cubic meters, and transports natural gas from the LNG (liquefied natural gas) regasification station in Kochi (Kerala) to Mangaluru (Dakshina Kannada District, Karnataka) while passing through the Ernakulam, Parakkad, Malapuram, Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod regions of Thrissur.

32) Kochi Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline is built by ____________.

A. GAIL  
B. BHEL  
C. GoI  
D. None of the above

**Answer A**

The Prime Minister dedicated the Kochi-Mangaluru Gas Pipeline to the nation. This is a 450-kilometer-long pipeline built by Gail (India) Ltd.

33) Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary is in ____________.

A. Andhra Pradesh
B. Karnataka
C. Kerala
D. Tamil Nadu

**Answer A**

**Explanation** The census of Asian waterbirds is being conducted in the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary and nearby wetlands in Andhra Pradesh. Every January, thousands of volunteers from Asia and Oceania visited the wetlands in their countries and counted waterbirds. The citizen science program is the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC).

34) **Asian Waterbird Census is the annual exercise since ___________.**

A. 1988  
B. 1987  
C. 1986  
D. 1985

**Answer B**

**Explanation** AWC is a component of the Global Waterbird Monitoring Program, International Waterbird Survey coordinated by Wetlands International. In India, the Ministry of Forestry and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) supported the exercise. Therefore, the census covers the entire East Asia-Australia route and most of the routes in Central Asia.

35) **Chinese pangolins are found in ___________.**

A. Bhutan  
B. North-East Bangladesh  
C. Southern China  
D. All the above

**Answer D**

**Explanation** Chinese pangolins are found in the foothills of the Himalayas in Eastern Nepal, Bhutan, Northern India, North-East Bangladesh, and throughout southern China. Threats to Pangolins in India: Hunting and poaching for local consumptive use (e.g. as a protein source and traditional medicine) and international trade for its meat and scales in East and South East Asian countries, particularly China and Vietnam. Pangolins are found to be the most trafficked mammals in the world.
36) IUCN Red List Status of Indian Pangolin is ____________.

A. Vulnerable  
B. Critically Endangered  
C. Endangered  
D. Extinct

**Answer C**

**Explanation** Chinese pangolins are found in the foothills of the Himalayas in Eastern Nepal, Bhutan, Northern India, North-East Bangladesh, and throughout southern China. Threats to Pangolins in India: Hunting and poaching for local consumptive use (e.g. as a protein source and traditional medicine) and international trade for its meat and scales in East and South East Asian countries, particularly China and Vietnam. Pangolins are found to be the most trafficked mammals in the world. Conservation Status: -Wildlife Protection Act,1972: Schedule I-IUCN Red List: Endangered-CITIES: Appendix I

37) Ramateertham temple is located in ____________.

A. Karnataka  
B. Kerala  
C. Andhra Pradesh  
D. Tamilnadu

**Answer C**

**Explanation** On December 29, Lord Ramas idol was destroyed on the top of the historic Ramateertham Temple, which is 12 kilometers away from Vizianagaram. It is located in Andhra Pradesh. Ramateertham is one of the sacred places of traditional communication with Lord Sree Rama. The famous ancient temple of Ramachandra Swamy can be found here.

38) Ramsar Convention was signed on ____________.

A. February 2, 1971  
B. February 3, 1971  
C. February 4, 1971  
D. February 5, 1971

**Answer A**
Explanations

39) **Deepor Beel was designated as a Ramsar site in ____________.**

A. 2001  
B. 2002  
C. 2003  
D. 2004  

**Answer B**

Explanations

40) **The 40th expedition will take off from Goa on ____________.**

A. January 5, 2021  
B. January 6, 2021  
C. January 7, 2021  
D. January 8, 2021  

**Answer A**

Explanations

41) **The Indian Antarctic Expedition began in ____________.**

A. 1980
The Indian Antarctic Expedition began in 1981. The first trip consisted of a team of 21 scientists and support staff, led by Dr. SZ Qasim. After a humble beginning, India's Antarctic plans to establish three permanent research base stations in Antarctica, called Dakshin Gangotri, Maitri and Bharati. As of today, India has two operational research stations in Antarctica, named Maitri and Bharati. The National Center for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) in Goa manages the entire Indian Antarctic Project.

42) CSIR-NPL, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-The National Physical Laboratory (NPL) celebrates its ____________ Foundation Day in 2021.

A. 75th  
B. 76th  
C. 77th  
D. 78th

Answer A

Explanation CSIR-NPL, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-The National Physical Laboratory (NPL) celebrates its 75th Foundation Day. It was established in January 1947 and is located in New Delhi. It is the National Metrology Institute of India and the main research institute in the field of physical sciences.

43) CSIR-NPL, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-The National Physical Laboratory (NPL) was established in ____________.

A. January 1947  
B. January 1948  
C. January 1949  
D. January 1946

Answer A

Explanation Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-The National Physical
Laboratory (NPL) is one of the main laboratories of CSIR. It was established in January 1947 and is located in New Delhi. It is the National Metrology Institute of India and the main research institute in the field of physical sciences.

44) CSIR-NPL, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-The National Physical Laboratory (NPL) is located in ____________.

A. New Delhi  
B. Mumbai  
C. Chennai  
D. Kolkata

**Answer A**

**Explanation** Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)-The National Physical Laboratory (NPL) is one of the main laboratories of CSIR. It was established in January 1947 and is located in New Delhi. It is the National Metrology Institute of India and the main research institute in the field of physical sciences. The main purpose of the laboratory is to strengthen and advance physics-based research and development to promote the overall development of science and technology in the country.

45) Chengalikodan Nendran banana grown in Kerala received the Geographical Indication (GI) label in ____________.

A. 2011  
B. 2012  
C. 2013  
D. 2014

**Answer D**

**Explanation** Chengazhikoden Nendran banana, also known as Chengazhikode banana, is one of the most popular traditional fruits grown in the Thrissur district of Kerala. This variety of Nendran banana is known for its unique taste, bunch shape and fruit color. The crops are mainly cultivated organically, and the crop duration is 13-14 months. In 2014, the Chengalikoden Nendran banana grown in Kerala received the Geographical Indication (GI) label. Geographical indication refers to any sign that identifies a product as originating from a specific location where the given quality, reputation or other characteristics of the product can basically be attributable to its geographic origin.
46) Crop duration of Chengazhikodan Nendran banana is ____________.
A. 12-14 months
B. 13-14 months
C. 11-13 months
D. 10-12 months

Answer B

Explanation Chengazhikodan Nendran banana, also known as Chengazhikode banana, is one of the most popular traditional fruits grown in the Thrissur district of Kerala. This variety of Nendran banana is known for its unique taste, bunch shape and fruit color. The crops are mainly cultivated organically, and the crop duration is 13-14 months. In 2014, the Chengalikodan Nendran banana grown in Kerala received the Geographical Indication (GI) label.

47) Rashtriya Gokul Mission is launched in ____________.
A. 2011
B. 2012
C. 2013
D. 2014

Answer D

Explanation Rashtriya Kamadhenu Aayog was established to organize animal husbandry in accordance with modern and scientific methods. It will take steps to improve the breed of dairy cows and prohibit the slaughter of dairy cows. It is an integral part of Rashtriya Gokul Mission. The mission is to protect and develop indigenous cattle breeds. The mission was launched in 2014 according to the National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development.

48) In Which year India agreed to introduce Japan's high-speed bullet train Shinkansen system?
A. 2015
B. 2017
C. 2019
D. 2021

Answer A
Explanation The nuclear agreement between India and Japan was signed in 2016. As, India is not a member of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty, the agreement has attracted attention. For India, this transaction is necessary because it is the key to India's dealings with French and American nuclear companies that have shares in Japan or are owned by Japanese companies. In 2015, India agreed to introduce Japan's high-speed bullet train Shinkansen system. India and Japan formed the "Act East Forum" to expand cooperation between India in the Northeast region and Japan.

49) The nuclear agreement between India and Japan was signed in 

A. 2017 
B. 2016 
C. 2018 
D. 2019 

Answer B

Explanation The nuclear agreement between India and Japan was signed in 2016. As, India is not a member of the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty, the agreement has attracted attention. For India, this transaction is necessary because it is the key to India's dealings with French and American nuclear companies that have shares in Japan or are owned by Japanese companies. In 2015, India agreed to introduce Japan's high-speed bullet train Shinkansen system. India and Japan formed the "Act East Forum" to expand cooperation between India in the Northeast region and Japan.

50) IUCN status of Asian Elephants is 

A. Vulnerable 
B. Critically endangered 
C. Endangered 
D. Extinct 

Answer C

Explanation The number of elephants in India is 27,312. The Indian elephant is one of the three subspecies of the Asian elephant. In 1986, Asian elephants were listed as "endangered" in the IUCN Red List. They have been included in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. India launched the "Elephant Project" in 1992 to provide financial and technical support for wildlife management.

51) How many elephant corridors are in India?
52) Project Elephant was launched on _____________.

A. 1992
B. 1991
C. 1990
D. 1993

Answer A

Explanation In 1986, Asian elephants were listed as "endangered" in the IUCN Red List. They have been included in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. India launched the "Elephant Project" in 1992 to provide financial and technical support for wildlife management. The project plans to extend the life of elephants in their natural habitat by protecting their habitat and migration corridors. There are 138 elephant corridors in India. 28 of these states are interstate highways, and 17 are international state corridors.

53) Global Influenza Strategy was launched by the World Health Organization for ________________.

A. 2019-2020
B. 2019-2030
C. 2019-2040
D. 2019-2031

Answer B

Explanation Influenza viruses are categorised into types A, B and C. It is known that influenza A viruses only infect animals and are zoonotic. This means that type A can also infect humans. The
subtypes of avian influenza are H5N1, H7N9 and H9N2. The subtypes are classified according to surface proteins called neuraminidase and hemagglutinin. This is the global influenza surveillance and response system initiated by the World Health Organization in 1952. It monitors global seasonal trends and potential pandemic influenza. It is the backbone of the global flu alert system. Global Influenza Strategy was launched by the World Health Organization for 2019-2030. It aims to prevent seasonal influenza and control the spread of viruses from animals to humans.

54) Global influenza surveillance and response system initiated by the World Health Organization in ______________.

A. 1950
B. 1951
C. 1952
D. 1953

Answer C

Explanation The subtypes of avian influenza are H5N1, H7N9 and H9N2. The subtypes are classified according to surface proteins called neuraminidase and hemagglutinin. This is the global influenza surveillance and response system initiated by the World Health Organization in 1952. It monitors global seasonal trends and potential pandemic influenza. It is the backbone of the global flu alert system. Global Influenza Strategy was launched by the World Health Organization for 2019-2030. It aims to prevent seasonal influenza and control the spread of viruses from animals to humans.

55) Virtual Hackathon Toycathon launched by ______________.

A. Ministry of Education
B. Ministry of Women and Child Development
C. All India Technical Education Commission
D. All the above

Answer D

Explanation The government has launched the virtual toy hackathon "Toycathon 2021". This is an initiative of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and the All India Technical Education Commission.

56) Yakshagana is a traditional theater form in ______________.
A. Karnataka
B. Kerala
C. Andhra
D. Telangana

Answer A

Explanation The Yakshagana artist died while performing on the stage. Yakshagana is a traditional theater form in Karnataka. This is a temple art form depicting myths and Pune.

57) The oldest inscriptions available in Tulu are from the __________ century AD.

A. 14th to 16th
B. 14th to 15th
C. 13th to 15th
D. 14th to 17th

Answer B

Explanation The oldest inscriptions available in Tulu are from the 14th to 15th century AD. It is played with percussion instruments such as chenda, maddalam, jagatta or chengila (cy) and chakratala or elathalam (small). The most popular episodes are from Mahabharata, namely Draupadi swayamvar, Subhadra vivah, etc., and Ramayana, namely Rajyabhishek, Lav-Kush yuddh, etc.

58) Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All is launched on ____________

A. 2010
B. 2011
C. 2012
D. 2015

Answer D

Explanation UJALA: The plan was launched in 2015. The goal is to replace 770 million incandescent lamps with LED bulbs and eliminate the high cost of LEDs, which have previously been used in energy-saving systems. Implement this program to establish phased LED distribution. The purpose is to promote efficient lighting and increase awareness of using efficient equipment to reduce electricity bills and protect the environment. This is the largest home
lighting project in the world.

**59) Who issued the Delhi School Bag Policy?**

A. NCERT  
B. AICTE  
C. GOI  
D. None of the above

**Answer A**

**Explanation** The Directorate of Education has issued a notice requiring schools to follow the new "School Bag Policy 2020" released by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

**60) What must be the weight of school bags of Class 1 and 2 according to Delhi School Bag Policy?**

A. 1.7 - 2.5 kg  
B. 1.6 - 2.2 kg  
C. 1.7 - 2.4 kg  
D. 1.7 - 2.3 kg

**Answer B**

**Explanation** According to the policy, the weight of schoolbags should be:  
1. Classes I and II students --> 1.6 - 2.2 kg  
2. Classes III, IV and V students --> 1.7 - 2.5 kg  
3. Classes VI and VII --> 2 - 3 kg  
4. Class VIII --> 2.4 - 4 kg  
5. Classes IX and X --> 2.5 - 4.5 kg  
6. Classes XI and XII --> 3.5 - 5 kg

**61) What must be the weight of school bags of Class 3 and 4 according to Delhi School Bag Policy?**

A. 1.6 - 2.2 kg  
B. 1.7 - 2.5 kg  
C. 2.4 - 4 kg  
D. 1.5 - 2.5 kg

**Answer B**
Explanation According to the policy, the weight of schoolbags should be:
1. Classes I and II students --> 1.6 - 2.2 kg
2. Classes III, IV and V students --> 1.7 - 2.5 kg
3. Classes VI and VII --> 2 - 3 kg
4. Class VIII --> 2.4 - 4 kg
5. Classes IX and X --> 2.5 - 4.5 kg
6. Classes XI and XII --> 3.5 - 5 kg

62) GCC is a political, economic, social, and regional organisation which was established by an agreement concluded in ____________.

A. 1979  
B. 1980  
C. 1981  
D. 1982  

Answer C  

Explanation GCC is a political, economic, social, and regional organisation which was established by an agreement concluded in the year 1981 among Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE in the view of countries geographic proximity, special relations, similar political systems based on Islamic beliefs, joint destiny & common objectives. The structure of GCC consists of the Supreme Council which is the highest authority, the Secretariat General and the Ministerial Council. The secretariat of GCC is found in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

63) Where is the secretariat of GCC?

A. Kuwait  
B. Oman  
C. Qatar  
D. Saudi Arabia  

Answer D  

Explanation GCC is a political, economic, social, and regional organisation which was established by an agreement concluded in the year 1981 among Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE in the view of countries geographic proximity, special relations, similar political systems based on Islamic beliefs, joint destiny & common objectives. The structure of GCC consists of the Supreme Council which is the highest authority, the Secretariat General and the Ministerial Council. The secretariat of GCC is found in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

64) Which is longest river in Africa?
A. River Nile  
B. River Congo  
C. River Niger  
D. River Blue Nile

**Answer A**

**Explanation** The River Nile is that the longest river in Africa. It is the middle of a decade-long complex dispute involving multiple countries that believe river waters.

65) **Which of the following countries involved in Conflict over Nile river?**

A. Ethiopia  
B. Sudan  
C. Egypt  
D. All the above

**Answer D**

**Explanation** The 145-meter (475-foot-high) hydropower project initiated by Ethiopia was the cause of the conflict. Given the dam’s location on the Blue Nile tributary, it might allow Ethiopia to realize control of the flow of the river's waters. The River Blue Nile may be a tributary of the Nile, which carries about two-thirds of the river's water and most of the silt. Ethiopia, Egypt and Sudan are the forefront of this dispute.

66) **Which of the following years are considered as Warmest years according to IMD?**

A. 2016  
B. 2009  
C. 2015  
D. All the above

**Answer D**

**Explanation** In the year 2020, the annual mean land surface air temperature is 0.29 degrees Celsius higher than normal (based on data from 1981-2010). The five warmest years on record are: 2016, 2009, 2017, 2010 and 2015. The 2020 Northeast monsoon season (October to December) for the entire country has normal rainfall (101% of LPA).
67) Which of the following years are not considered as Warmest years according to IMD?

A. 2016  
B. 2009  
C. 2015  
D. 2001  

Answer D

Explanation It also shows a clear increasing trend in the highest temperature (0.99 degrees Celsius/100 years), and a relatively low increasing trend (0.24 degrees Celsius/100 years) in minimum temperature. In the year 2020, the annual mean land surface air temperature is 0.29 degrees Celsius higher than normal (based on data from 1981-2010). The five warmest years on record are: 2016, 2009, 2017, 2010 and 2015. The 2020 Northeast monsoon season (October to December) for the entire country has normal rainfall (101% of LPA).

68) India announced the primary outbreak of avian influenza in ___________.

A. 2006  
B. 2001  
C. 2003  
D. 2004  

Answer A

Explanation India announced the primary outbreak of avian influenza in 2006. Although the disease is zoonotic, India has not yet reported human infections. There is no evidence that the AI virus are often transmitted to humans through the consumption of contaminated poultry products. The implementation of management practices that combine biosafety principles, personal hygiene, and cleaning and disinfection protocols may be a critical means to regulate the spread of AI viruses. In India, it is particularly spread by migratory birds entering India during winter (ie September-October to February-March).

69) The Prime Minister of India held the unveiling ceremony of the Basaveshwara statue on the banks of the ___________.

A. Nile  
B. Thames  
C. Niger
Basava advocates pious worship, rejects the temple worship and rituals led by Brahmanism, and replaces Shiva with personalized direct worship of Shiva through the practice of personally wearing icons and uvulas. Basaveshwara was the first Kannadiga created to commemorate his social reforms. In November 2015, the Prime Minister of India held the unveiling ceremony of the Basaveshwara statue on the banks of the R. Thames in Lambeth, London.

70) Basaveshwara statue was unveiled on ___________.
A. November 2017  
B. November 2016  
C. November 2015  
D. November 2018

Answer C

About ___________ of Egypt's drinking water and irrigation supplies depend on the Nile.
A. 97%  
B. 96%  
C. 95%  
D. 94%

Answer A

Ethiopia believes that the dam will generate approximately 6,000 megawatts of electricity and will support its industrial development. It can also export excess electricity to neighboring areas to generate income. Egypt’s Concern: Egypt lies downstream and cares that Ethiopia’s control over the water could end in lower water levels within its own borders.
97% of Egypt's drinking water and irrigation supplies depend on the Nile. The dam will endanger the food, water security and livelihoods of ordinary Egyptian citizens.

72) What must be the weight of school bags of Class 11 and 12 according to Delhi School Bag Policy?

A. 3.5 - 5.5 kg  
B. 3.5 - 5 kg  
C. 3.5 - 4.5 kg  
D. 3.5 - 5.4 kg

**Answer B**

**Explanation** According to the policy, the weight of schoolbags should be:
1. Classes I and II students --> 1.6 - 2.2 kg  
2. Classes III, IV and V students --> 1.7 - 2.5 kg  
3. Classes VI and VII --> 2 - 3 kg  
4. Class VIII --> 2.4 - 4 kg  
5. Classes IX and X --> 2.5 - 4.5 kg  
6. Classes XI and XII --> 3.5 - 5 kg

73) Bharat Griha Raksha Policy is related to ____________.  

A. IRDAI  
B. LIC  
C. Both A and B  
D. None

**Answer A**

**Explanation** According to the Bharat Griha Raksha policy, IRDAI (Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India) will introduce a standard housing insurance policy that will cover fire risks and other related hazards.
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