

1. 12th BRICS summit 2020

- The 12th BRICS summit, hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin, was also attended by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa on Nov 17, 2020.
- The theme was BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that terrorism is the "biggest problem" facing the world, there is a need to ensure that countries supporting and assisting terrorists are held guilty.
- BRICS is known as an influential bloc that represents over 3.6 billion people, or half of the world's population. The BRICS countries have a combined GDP of \$16.6 trillion.
- **Note:** India will host the 13th BRICS Summit next year. Since its inception, it would be the third BRICS Presidency for India, after 2012 and 2016.

2. First solar power-enabled Textile Mill in Asia

- In Maharashtra, the first solar power-enabled Textile Mill in Asia is coming up in Parbhani district.
- The Jai Bhawani women's cooperative textile mill will be the first in Asia that will operate on solar power.
- Chairman of the textile mill Dr. Sampriya Rahul Patil said that the finest quality cotton will be procured from Parbhani itself.
- **Note:** Parbhani is the leading cotton producing district in Maharashtra.

3. DIPAM signs an agreement with World Bank for advisory services on Asset Monetization

- **Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM)** has signed an agreement with World Bank. Under the agreement, World Bank is to provide advisory services to DIPAM for asset monetization.
- DIPAM is mandated with facilitating monetization of non-core assets of government CPSEs (Central Public Sector Enterprises) under strategic disinvestment or closure and enemy property of value of INR 100 crores and above.
- The World Bank advisory project, approved by the Finance Minister, is aimed at analyzing public asset monetization in India and benchmarking its institutional and business models against international best practices as well as supporting development of operational guidelines and capacity building for their implementation.

4. International Crops Research Institute permitted to use drones for agricultural research activities



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- Civil Aviation Ministry and Directorate General of Civil Aviation have granted conditional permission to the International Crops Research Institute for the deployment of drones for agricultural research activities.
- **Note:** Drones are poised to play a big role in the agriculture sector especially in areas like precision agriculture, locust control and improvement in crop yield. The government is encouraging young entrepreneurs and researchers to look at low-cost drone solutions for more than 6.6 lakh villages in the country.

5. Lonar Lake in Buldana district of Maharashtra and Sur Sarovar, also known as Keetham lake, in Agra, Uttar Pradesh declared as a wetland area under 'Ramsar Convention'

- India has 41 wetlands, the highest in South Asia, with two more added to the list of recognised sites of international importance under the treaty of Ramsar Convention.
- **Note:** Recently, Kabartal in Bihar's Begusarai district was recognised as a wetland of international importance, the first such wetland in the State, under the Ramsar Convention.
- The Asan Conservation Reserve in Dehradun, the first wetland from Uttarakhand to be recognised by Ramsar convention, was added to the list in October this year.
- **About Ramsar Convention:** Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat is an international treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It is also known as the Convention on Wetlands. It is named after the city of Ramsar in Iran, where the Convention was signed in 1971.

6. 15th East Asia Summit

- External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar represented India at the 15th East Asia Summit (EAS) on 14 November 2020.
- The Summit was chaired by the Prime Minister of Vietnam H.E. Nguyen Xuan Phuc in his capacity as ASEAN Chair. All the eighteen EAS countries participated in the virtual Summit.
- EAM noted the growing interest in the Indo-Pacific as an integrated and organic maritime space, with ASEAN at its centre. He appreciated the synergy between the ASEAN Outlook and India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative.
- The Summit discussed ways to strengthen the EAS platform and to make it more responsive to emerging challenges on its 15th anniversary and adopted the Ha Noi Declaration. The Leaders underlined the importance of cooperation in ensuring safe, effective and affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines.

7. RCEP: Asia-Pacific countries form world's largest trading bloc

- Fifteen countries have formed the world's largest trading bloc, covering nearly a third of the global economy.



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- **The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** is made up of 10 Southeast Asian countries, as well as South Korea, China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.
- The pact is seen as an extension of China's influence in the region.
- Negotiations over the new RCEP deal began in 2012 and it was finally signed on the sidelines of a 37th meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- The RCEP is expected to eliminate a range of tariffs on imports within 20 years. It also includes provisions on intellectual property, telecommunications, financial services, e-commerce and professional services.
- **Note:** India was also part of the negotiations, but it pulled out last year over concerns that lower tariffs could hurt local producers.

8. 2020 Masters Tournament

- **Dustin Johnson** won the 84th Masters Tournament with a record-shattering performance at the Masters golf tournament Augusta National Golf Club in Augusta, Georgia.
- He was ahead of Australia's Cameron Smith and Sungjae Im of South Korea.

9. Maharashtra Governor releases former minister Rajendra Darda's book

- Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari released the book "**Majhi Bhint**" authored by former Maharashtra Minister of Education Rajendra Darda at Raj Bhavan.
- The book is a compilation of Darda's selected Facebook posts pertaining to a range of issues written over the last four years.



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