

## UPSC Daily Current Affairs 10 May 2021

### 1. Mandatory online certification of disability through UDID portal

(Topic- GS Paper II–Governance, Source-PIB)

#### Why in the news?

- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) has recently issued a Gazette notification for all States/UTs to grant certificate of disability through online mode only using UDID portal.
- The Central Government notified the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017 under Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016.
- Under rule 18(5) the centre can issue directions to the state government/authorities. This includes mandating the issue of a certificate of disability through online mode.

#### About Unique Disability ID

- "Unique ID for Persons with Disabilities" project is an initiative of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Government of India.
- The UDID project is under implementation since 2016.
- It aims at building a holistic end-to-end integrated system for Issuance of Universal ID & Disability Certificates for Person with Disabilities with their identification and disability details.

#### Benefits of UDID

- The UDID card shall bring a host of benefits to the Persons with Disabilities as given below:
  - Persons with disabilities will not need to make multiple copies of documents, maintain, and carry multiple documents as the card will capture all the necessary details which can be decoded with the help of a reader.
  - The UDID card will be the single document of identification, verification of the disabled for availing various benefits in future.
  - The UDID Card will also help in stream-lining the tracking of the physical and financial progress of beneficiary at all levels of hierarchy of implementation – from village level, block level, District level , State level and National level.

### 2. SC sets up task force for Covid response, oxygen audit, supply

(Topic- GS Paper II–Governance, Source- Indian Express)

#### Why in the news?

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- The Supreme Court has recently put in place a 12-member National Task Force (NTF), including top experts and doctors from across the country, “to facilitate a public health response to the pandemic based on scientific and specialised domain knowledge”.

### About the National task Force

- The Union Cabinet Secretary or a nominee of the official will serve as **Convener of the NTF**.
- The Task Force would also undertake an oxygen audit for “formulating a methodology for the scientific allocation of oxygen to states and UTs (Union Territories)”.
- The Court said the NTF will assess the need for oxygen for the entire country as well as availability and distribution, and devise allocation on a “scientific, rational and equitable” basis, reviewing this periodically.
- It will also make recommendations on augmenting the supplies.

### 3. Global greenhouse gas emissions estimates for 2019

(Topic- GS Paper III–Environment, Source- the Hindu)

#### Why in the news?

- Recently, the US-based Rhodium Group has released the Global Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report.

#### About the Report

- Rhodium provides annual estimates of economy-wide emissions—including all six Kyoto gases—for over 190 countries from 1990-2019.
- It also included land-use and forests and international bunkers.
- The six main gases under Kyoto Protocol are:
  - Carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>)
  - Methane(CH<sub>4</sub>)
  - Nitrous oxide(N<sub>2</sub>O)
  - Sulphur hexafluoride(SF<sub>6</sub>)
  - Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)
  - Perfluorocarbons(PFCs)
  -

#### Key highlights of the report

- The emissions of all six Kyoto gases, inclusive of land-use and forests and international bunkers—reached 52 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent in 2019 which is a 11.4% increase over the past decade.
- China emitted 27% of the world's greenhouse gases in 2019 which is more greenhouse gas than the entire developed world combined, a new report has claimed.
- The US was the second-largest emitter at 11% while India was third with 6.6% of emissions.

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- GHG emissions from all members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as well as all 27 EU member states, reached 14,057 MMt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2019, about 36 MMt CO<sub>2</sub>e short of China's total.
- China's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) rating is "highly insufficient" and "are not at all consistent with holding warming to below 2C".

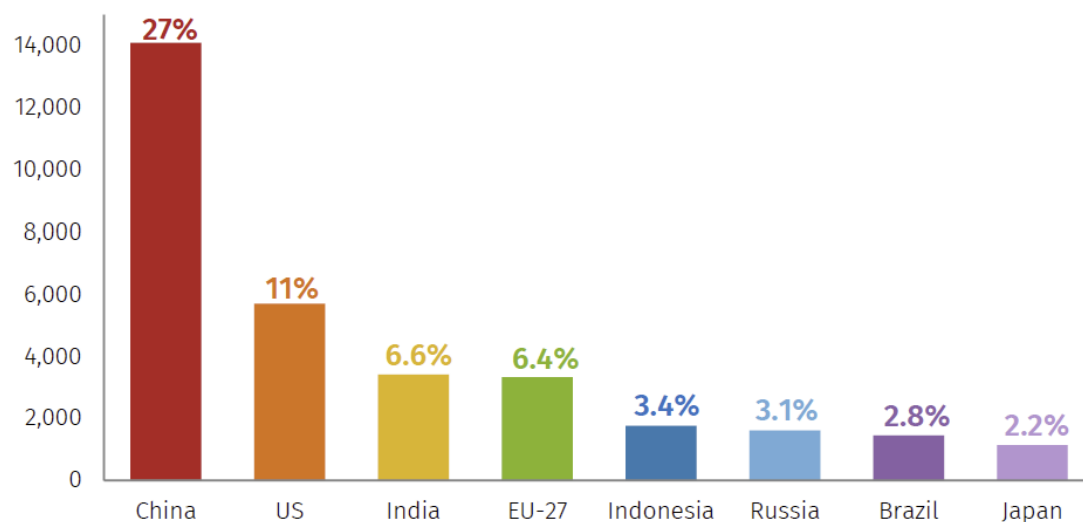
**Note:**

- **Nationally Determined Contributions** represent the commitments by each country - under the Paris pact - to reduce their own national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

FIGURE 1

**2019 net GHG emissions from the world's largest emitters**

Million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e, including emissions and removals from land-use and forests and share of global total



Source: Rhodium Group

**Reasons for China Carbon Emission**

- China is heavily reliant on coal power.
- The country is currently running 1,058 coal plants - more than half the world's capacity.

**Related Information**

- Recently US President Joe Biden had announced the country's updated climate goal ahead of the White House's Leaders' Summit, pledging to cut carbon emissions as much as 52 per cent by 2030 compared to 2005 levels.
- China has also vowed to reach net-zero emissions by 2060 with a peak no later than 2030.

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- Recently European Union (EU) Environment Ministers have signed a deal that aims to make the EU's 2050 net-zero emissions target legally binding on the states.

**Note:**

**Net zero emissions**

- It refers to achieving an overall balance between greenhouse gas emissions produced and greenhouse gas emissions taken out of the atmosphere.

**Zero Carbon law**

- It was passed by New Zealand with the aim to tackle climate change by setting a net-zero targets for almost all greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

**4. World food price index**

**(Topic- GS Paper III–Economics, Source- the Hindu)**

**Why in the news?**

- The Food and Agriculture Organization has recently released the World food price index.

**About the World food price index**

- The index was introduced in 1996 to help in monitoring the developments in the global agricultural commodity markets.
- It measures monthly changes for a basket of cereals, oilseeds, dairy products, meat and sugar.
- All these five indices are given weightage based on the average export shares.

**Base Year**

- The Base Year for the index is 2014-16.

**Key findings**

- World food prices increased for an 11th consecutive month in April, hitting their highest level since May 2014, with sugar leading a rise in all the main indices.
- FAO's cereal price index rose 1.2% in April month-on-month and 26% year-on-year.
- FAO's vegetable oil price index rose 1.8% on the month.
- Dairy prices rose 1.2%, with butter, skim milk powder and cheese all lifted by good demand from Asia, while the meat index climbed 1.7%.
- FAO raised its forecast for global cereal production in 2020 by 1.7 million tonnes to 2.767 billion tonnes, 2.1% up on 2019 levels.

**About Food and Agriculture Organization**

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- It is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security.
- It was established in 1945 with the objective of eliminating hunger and improving nutrition and standards of living by increasing agricultural productivity.
- **Its secretariat is in Rome, Italy.**

Some of the important key programmes of FAO are

- a. Food Security Programmes
- b. Codex Alimentarius
- c. International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) etc.,

### About The Codex Alimentarius Commission

- It has been established by FAO and WHO is an international food standard setting body.
- It has recently adopted three Codex standards for black, white and green pepper, cumin and thyme owing to India's efforts to benchmark global spices trade.
- With the adoption of codex standards, spices have been included for the first time as commodities that will have universal standards.

### International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)

- It aims to protect cultivated and wild plants by preventing the introduction and spread of pests.

### India & FAO

- FAO council approved India's membership to the Executive Board of the World Food Program (WFP) for 2020 and 2021.
- It has also decided to observe „International Year of Millets“ in 2023, upon the request from Indian government.
- **India celebrated 2018 as “National Year of Millets“** and notified millets as nutri-cereals & allowed its inclusion in Public Distribution System (PDS).
- **WFP is the world's largest humanitarian agency that fights hunger by providing food** assistance, school meals, cash-based transfers etc.
- In India, WFP has moved from providing direct food aid to providing technical assistance and capacity building services.
- **The Ministry of Agriculture is the nodal agency.**

### Note:

- Indian Civil Service Officer Dr. Binay Ranjan Sen was the Director General of FAO during 1956-1967.
- The World Food Programme, which has won the Nobel Peace Prize 2020, was established during his time.

## 5. Leatherback turtle

(Topic- GS Paper III–Environment, Source- the Hindu)

### Why in the news?

- The Environment Appraisal Committee (EAC) - Infrastructure I of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has flagged serious concerns about NITI Aayog’s ambitious project for Great Nicobar Island (‘NITI Aayog vision for Great Nicobar ignores tribal, ecological concerns’).
- It has now asked for “an independent study/ evaluation for the suitability of the proposed port site with specific focus on **Leatherback Turtle, Nicobar Magapod (sic) and Dugong**”

### About the Leatherback Turtle



- The leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*), sometimes called the lute turtle or leathery turtle or simply the luth, and is the largest of all living turtles.
- It is the only living species in the genus *Dermochelys* and family *Dermochelyidae*.

### Geographic Range

- Leatherbacks are found in all oceans except the **Arctic and the Antarctic**.
- Within the Indian Ocean, they nest only in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands

### Conservation Status

- They are listed in **Schedule I of India’s Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.

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- These are listed as **Vulnerable** in **IUCN Red list**.

### Nicobar megapode



- The Nicobar megapode or Nicobar scrubfowl (*Megapodius nicobariensis*) is a megapode endemic to the Nicobar Islands (India).
- The Nicobar Islands are on the edge of the distribution of megapodes, well separated from the nearest ranges of other megapode species.

### **Conservation status**

- These are listed as **Vulnerable** in **IUCN Red list**.

### Dugong



- The dugong is a medium-sized marine mammal.

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## Conservation Status

- These are listed as **Vulnerable** in **IUCN Red list**

## 6. US TRIPS waiver

(Topic- GS Paper III–Economics, Source- the Hindu)

### Why in the news ?

- The United States has finally relented and declared its support for a temporary waiver of the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement for COVID-19 vaccines at the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

### Background

- In October 2020, India and South Africa, at the WTO, proposed waiving Sections 1, 4, 5, and 7 of Part II of the TRIPS agreement (covering copyrights, industrial designs, patents, and undisclosed trade information) related to the prevention, containment, or treatment of COVID-19.
- Article IX of the WTO Agreement allows for waiving obligations in ‘exceptional circumstances.

### What is the TRIPS Agreement?

- The TRIPS Agreement has been in force since 1995.
- The TRIPS Agreement requires all its signatory countries to enact domestic law, which guarantees minimum standards of IP protection.
- Such legal consistency enables innovators to monetise their intellectual property in multiple countries.
- Under Article 27(2) of the TRIPS Agreement, WTO member countries may exclude patentability of inventions that are necessary to protect public health.
- Article 30 allows members to place limited exceptions to the rights conferred by a patent.
- This, along with a set of other tools known as the “TRIPS flexibilities”, allows governments to waive IP rights in the interest of public health.

### Compulsory licensing

- In 2001, the WTO signed the Doha Declaration, which clarified that in a public health emergency, governments could compel companies to license their patents to manufacturers, even if they did not think the offered price was acceptable.
- This provision, commonly referred to as “compulsory licensing”, was already built into the TRIPS Agreement and the Doha declaration only clarified its usage.

### India and Patent Rights

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- Under Section 92 of the 1970 Indian Patents Act, the central government has the power to allow compulsory licenses to be issued at any time in case of a national emergency or circumstances of extreme urgency.

## 7. Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine

(Topic- GS Paper III–Science and Technology, Source- the Hindu)

### Why in the news?

- Recently the World Health Organisation (WHO) has finally granted the conditional approval to its Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use.
- China has approved about five of its vaccines for emergency use and especially using Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines for both at home and abroad.

### About Sinopharm Covid-19 vaccine

- It is produced by Beijing Bio-Institute of Biological Products Co Ltd, subsidiary of China National Biotec Group (CNBG).

### Efficacy

- Sinopharm vaccine efficacy for symptomatic and hospitalised disease was estimated to be 79 per cent, all age groups combined.

## 8. 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG) vaccine

(Topic- GS Paper III–Science and Technology, Source- the Hindu)

### Why in the news?

- Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has recently approved anti-COVID drug developed by DRDO for emergency use.

### About 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG)

- It is an anti-COVID-19 therapeutic drug which has been developed by Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), a lab of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), in collaboration with Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL), Hyderabad.

### Significance

- The drug comes in powder form in sachet, which is taken orally by dissolving it in water.
- It accumulates in the virus infected cells and prevents virus growth by stopping viral synthesis and energy production.
- Clinical trial results have shown that this molecule helps in faster recovery of hospitalised patients and reduces supplemental oxygen dependence.

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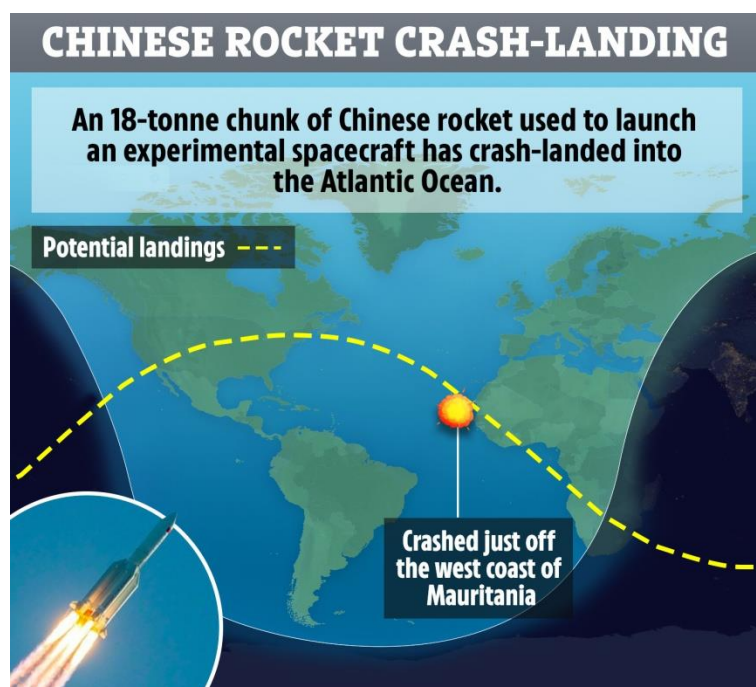
- Higher proportion of patients treated with 2-DG showed RT-PCR negative conversion in COVID patients.
- The drug will be of immense benefit to the people suffering from COVID-19.

## 9. Long March 5B Rocket

(Topic- GS Paper III–Science and Technology, Source- the Hindu)

Why in the news ?

- Recently, the debris from a Chinese rocket Long **March 5B Rocket** made an uncontrolled re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere and disintegrated over the Indian Ocean, with remnants falling at a location to the west of Maldives.



About Long March 5B

- Long March 5 or Chang Zheng 5 is a Chinese heavy-lift launch system developed by the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology (CALT).
- It is the first Chinese launch vehicle designed from the ground up to focus on non-hypergolic liquid rocket propellants.
- The maximum payload capacities of the base variant are ~25,000 kilograms to Low Earth Orbit and ~14,000 kilograms to Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit.

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