

Weekly Current Affairs

31st May-4th Jun 2021

Important News: State

Assam Chief Minister appoints 'Guardian Ministers'

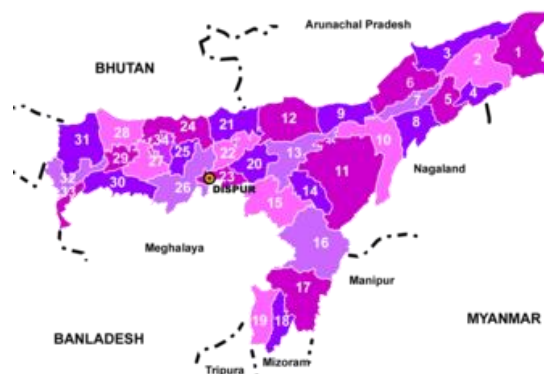
Why in the News?

- Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has appointed 'Guardian Ministers' for its various districts.



Key Points

- These guardians, each a minister of the Himanta Biswa Sarma Cabinet, have been given the responsibility of 2-3 districts to review implementation of all centrally-sponsored schemes & the state's own priority programmes.
- 13 ministers will be responsible for the implementation of the government's policy decision, administrative reforms and other welfare schemes for the public in the 34 districts.



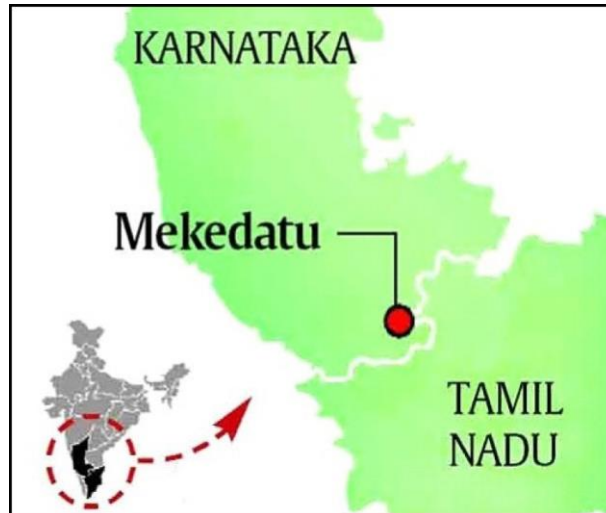
Facts about Assam:

- State Dance:** Bihu Dance
- State Bird:** White-winged wood duck
- State Animal:** One-horned rhinoceros
- State Flower:** Foxtail orchids
- State Tree:** Hollong

Mekedatu Project

Why in the News?

- Recently, the Karnataka government has decided on legal action against the **National Green Tribunal**, setting up a committee to look into the alleged violations at Mekedatu, the proposed site for construction of a dam across the Kaveri (Cauvery) River.



Key Points

About Committee:

- The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** has formed a committee to submit a report on alleged violation of norms in the construction of a reservoir across the Cauvery River at Mekedatu in Karnataka.



Mekedatu Project

- It is a multipurpose (drinking and power) project, which involves building a balancing reservoir, near Kanakapura in Ramanagara district.
- The project once completed is aimed at ensuring drinking water to Bengaluru and neighboring areas (4.75 TMC) and also can generate 400 MW power, and the estimated cost of the project is Rs 9,000 crore.
- It was first approved by the Karnataka government in 2017.
- The approval from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) is crucial because 63% of the forest area of the **Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary** will be submerged.

Note: In 2018, Tamil Nadu approached the Supreme Court against the project even if Karnataka had held that it would not affect the flow of water to Tamil Nadu.

Reasons for opposition by Tamil Nadu:

- Tamil Nadu is opposed to any project being proposed in the upper riparian unless it was approved by the Supreme Court.
- Karnataka has no right to construct any reservoir on an inter-state river without the consent of the lower riparian state i.e. Tamil Nadu in this case.
- The project is against the final order of the **Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT)** in which the Supreme Court held that no state can claim exclusive ownership or assert rights to deprive other states of the waters of inter-state rivers.

Kaveri River

- **The Kaveri (also known as Cauvery)** is an Indian River flowing through the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- It is the third largest river – after Godavari and Krishna – in South India and the largest in the State of Tamil Nadu.

The Dispute:

- As the river originates in Karnataka, flows through Tamil Nadu with major tributaries coming from Kerala and drains into Bay of Bengal through Puducherry the dispute therefore involves 3 states and one Union Territory.

Recent Developments:

- The final verdict of the Supreme Court came in 2018 where it declared the Cauvery a national asset and largely upheld the water-sharing arrangements finalized by the CWDT and also reduced the allocation of water from Karnataka to Tamil Nadu.
- As per the Supreme Court, Karnataka would get 284.75 thousand million cubic feet (tmcft), Tamil Nadu 404.25 tmcft, Kerala 30 tmcft and Puducherry 7 tmcft.
- It also directed the Centre to notify the **Cauvery Management Scheme**. The central government notified the '**Cauvery Water Management Scheme**' in June 2018, constituting the '**Cauvery Water Management Authority**' and the '**Cauvery Water Regulation Committee**'.

Madhya Pradesh government launches 'Ankur' scheme

Why in the News?

- Madhya Pradesh government launched 'Ankur' scheme to award people for planting trees during monsoon.
- People who take the initiative to plant saplings will be given the **Pranvayu Award** for their participation.



Key Points

About 'Ankur' scheme:

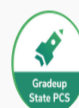
- The scheme will ensure public participation in the programme.
- People who wish to participate in the tree plantation drive can register themselves on the



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Vayudoot app.

- Participants need to upload a picture while planting the sapling and upload another photograph after taking care of the sapling for 30 days.
- After verification, the Chief Minister will give away the Pranvayu Award to winners selected from each district.

Important News: India

Ayush Clinical Case Repository Portal and Ayush Sanjivani App

Why in the News?

- The Ministry of Ayush launched the Ayush Clinical Case Repository (ACCR) Portal and the third version of Ayush Sanjivani App in a virtual event.



Key Points

About the Ayush Clinical Case Repository Portal:

- It will serve as a platform to support both Ayush practitioners and the general public.
- This portal aims at aggregating information about clinical outcomes achieved by Ayush practitioners on a large scale.

About the third version of Ayush Sanjivani App:

- The third version of Ayush Sanjivani App will facilitate a significant study regarding the efficacy of selected Ayush interventions, including **Ayush 64** and **Kabasura Kudineer medicines** in the management of asymptomatic and mild to moderate COVID 19 patients.
- First version was launched in May 2020.
- It is developed by the Ministry of Ayush and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- **Ayush 64** is a poly-herbal formulation developed by the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences. Ayush 64 is useful in the treatment of asymptomatic, mild and moderate COVID-19 infection. Initially the drug was developed for **Malaria** in the year 1980.
- **Kabasura Kudineer** is a traditional formulation used by Siddha practitioners. It is useful in the treatment of common respiratory health.

Related Initiatives:

- AYUSH Health and Wellness Centres
- **National Ayush Mission (NAM):** Government of India is implementing the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of NAM through States/UTs for development and promotion of AYUSH system of medicine.



- Recently, Government notification listed out specific surgical procedures by a postgraduate medical student of Ayurveda.

Traceability Provision in the new IT Rules 2021

Why in the News?

- Recently, Facebook-owned messaging platform WhatsApp has moved the Delhi High Court to challenge the traceability provision in the new IT Rules 2021.



Key Points

Traceability Provision:

- Traceability Provision is a part of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.
- As per guidelines, significant social media intermediaries providing messaging services must identify the first originator of the information based on an order by the court or competent authority.
- **According to WhatsApp**, Requiring messaging apps to 'trace' chats is the equivalent of asking to keep a fingerprint of every single message sent on WhatsApp, which would **break end-to-end encryption and fundamentally undermines people's right to privacy**.
- WhatsApp has invoked the Puttaswamy Judgement 2017 to argue that the traceability provision is unconstitutional and against people's fundamental right to privacy.

End-to-end encryption ensures that no one can read the message, except for the sender and the receiver. This includes WhatsApp itself.

The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 is secondary or subordinate legislation that suppresses India's Intermediary Guidelines Rules 2011. The 2021 rules have stemmed from section 87 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 and are a combination of the draft Intermediaries Rules, 2018 and the OTT Regulation and Code of Ethics for Digital Media.

Horticulture Cluster Development Programme

Why in the News?

- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare launched the Horticulture Cluster Development Programme (CDP) to ensure holistic growth of horticulture.





Key Points

About Cluster Development Programme (CDP):

- A central sector programme implemented by the **National Horticulture Board (NHB)** of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, CDP aims at growing and developing identified horticulture clusters to make them globally competitive.
- The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has identified **53 horticulture clusters, of which 12 have been selected for the pilot launch of the programme.**
- CDP will benefit about 10 lakh farmers and related stakeholders of the value chain.
- CDP is expected to attract an estimated investment of INR 10,000 crore when implemented in all the 53 clusters.



Horticulture Sector in India:

- India is the second-largest producer of horticulture crops globally, accounting for approximately 12% of the world's production of vegetables and fruits.
- India is a leader in producing fruits like Banana, Mango, Pomegranate, Acid Lime, Aonla and Sapota.

Recent steps taken:

- The Ministry has provided an enhanced allocation of Rs. 2250 Crore for the year 2021-22 for '**MIDH-Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture**'.
- MIDH is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the holistic growth of the horticulture sector.

NCPCR launches Online Tracking Portal “Bal Swaraj (COVID-Care)”

Why in the News?

- **The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)**, in furtherance to its function as a monitoring authority under section 109 of the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and in view of the growing problem related to children affected by COVID-19, has devised an online tracking portal “**Bal Swaraj (COVID-Care link)**” for child in need of care and protection.



Key Points

About “Bal Swaraj”:

- This portal of the Commission has been created with a purpose for **online tracking and digital real time monitoring mechanism of children** who are in need of care and protection.
- The Commission has extended the use of this portal for tracking children who have lost both their parents or either of the parents during COVID-19 and provided a link under the name of “**COVID-Care**” for uploading of data of such children by the concerned officer/department on the portal.

About NCPCR:

- **The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)** is an Indian statutory body established by an Act of Parliament, the **Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005**. The Commission works under the aegis of Ministry of Women and Child Development, Govt. of India. The Commission began operations on 5 March 2007.

NITI Aayog releases SDG India Index and Dashboard 2020–21

Why in the News?

- NITI Aayog has released the **third edition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index and Dashboard 2020–21**.
- NITI Aayog launched the report titled, ‘**SDG India Index and Dashboard 2020–21: Partnerships in the Decade of Action**’.
- The index documents the progress made by India’s States and Union Territories towards achieving the 2030 SDG targets.
- The SDG India Index 2020–21, developed in collaboration with the United Nations in India, tracks progress of all States and UTs on 115 indicators that are aligned to MoSPI’s National Indicator Framework (NIF).
- The 115 indicators incorporate 16 out of 17 SDGs, with a qualitative assessment on Goal 17, and cover 70 SDG targets.



Key Points

Methodology

- The SDG India Index computes goal-wise scores on the 16 SDGs for each State and Union Territory.
- Overall State and UT scores are generated from goal-wise scores to measure aggregate performance of the sub-national unit based on its performance across the 16 SDGs.

Methodology

Based on globally accepted SDSN methodology



- These scores range between 0–100, and if a State/UT achieves a score of 100, it signifies it has achieved the 2030 targets. The higher the score of a State/UT, the greater the distance to target achieved.



- States and Union Territories are classified as below based on their SDG India Index score:

Aspirant: 0–49

Performer: 50–64

Front-Runner: 65–99

Achiever: 100



Overall Results and Findings

- The country’s overall SDG score improved by 6 points—from 60 in 2019 to 66 in 2020–21.
- This positive stride towards achieving the targets is largely driven by exemplary country-wide performance in Goal 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and Goal 7(Affordable and Clean Energy), where the composite Goal scores are 83 and 92, respectively.
- Kerala has the top rank with a score of 75** followed by Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu with 74 points.
- Bihar has emerged as the worst performer with the lowest score of 52** followed by Jharkhand with score of 56.
- In Union Territories: Chandigarh has topped the list with the score of 79.**

Top-5 States	75	Kerala
	74	Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu
	72	Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Uttarakhand
	71	Sikkim
	70	Maharashtra
Bottom-5 States	61	Chhattisgarh, Nagaland, Odisha
	60	Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh
	57	Assam
	56	Jharkhand
	52	Bihar

- Note:** Mizoram, Haryana, and Uttarakhand are the top gainers in 2020–21 in terms of improvement in score from 2019, with an increase of 12, 10 and 8 points, respectively.

Union Cabinet approves Agreement on Mass Media Cooperation SCO

Why in the News?

- The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval for signing and ratification of an agreement on "Cooperation in the field of Mass Media" between all the member states of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).
- The agreement, which was signed in June, 2019, would provide an opportunity to the member states to share best practices and new innovations in the field of mass media.



Key Points

Main areas of cooperation:

- Creation of favorable conditions for wide and mutual distribution of information through mass media in order to further deepen the knowledge about the lives of the peoples of their states.
- Cooperation among the editorial offices of the mass media of their states, as well as among relevant ministries, agencies.
- It will assist in broadcasting of television and radio programmes and those, distributed legally within the territory of the state of the other side.
- The agreement will encourage the exchange of experience and specialists in the field of mass media, provide mutual assistance in training media professionals and encourage cooperation among the educational and scientific research institutions.



Facts about SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organisation or Shanghai Pact, is a Eurasian political, economic and security alliance.

- **Formed:** 15 June 2001
- **Members:** China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India &

Pakistan.

- **Headquarter:** Beijing, China

India became a full member of the SCO in 2017. Prior to that, India had an observer status, which was granted to it in 2005.

Important News: Defense

Offshore Patrol Vessel 'Sajag' commissioned into the Indian Coast Guard

Why in the News?

- National Security Advisor Ajit Doval commissioned the **Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) 'Sajag'** into the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)** and dedicated it to the nation for the protection of maritime interests.



Key Points

- Sajag is third out of five Offshore Patrol Vessels indigenously designed and built under the Make in India policy.
- OPV Sajag is constructed by M/s Goa Shipyard Limited.
- Other four OPVs are Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Saksham, ICGS Sachet, ICGS Sujeet, and ICGS Sarthak.



About Indian Coast Guard:

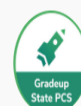
- The Indian Coast Guard is a maritime law enforcement and search and rescue agency of India with jurisdiction over its territorial waters including its contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone.
- The Indian Coast Guard was established by the **Coast Guard Act, 1978** of the Parliament of India.
- It operates under the Ministry of Defence.
- The blueprint for a multidimensional Coast Guard was conceived by the visionary **Rustamji Committee**.



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Note: ICG ships are being built within the country in various shipyards, including private yards in line with the Government's vision of 'Make in India'.

The ICG has a total 160 ships and 62 aircraft in its fleet.

'Second Positive Indigenisation List'

Why in the News?

- The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has notified the 'Second Positive Indigenisation List' of 108 items.



Key Points

About the Second Positive Indigenisation List:

- All the **108 items** will be procured from indigenous sources as per provisions given in **Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020**.
- This second list is planned to be implemented progressively with effect from **December 2021 to December 2025**.
- This will give further boost to indigenisation with active participation of public and private sector for fulfilling the twin objectives of achieving self-reliance and promoting defence exports.

Note: In August 2020, the '**First Positive Indigenisation**' List comprising **101 items** was notified.

About Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP 2020):

- The Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP 2020), which supersedes the Defence Procurement Procedure 2016 (DPP 2016), is a sincere effort by the Ministry of Defence to improve the capital procurement procedure.

Other Initiatives to boost domestic production of Defence Equipment:

- **Defence Industrial Corridors:** India has inaugurated two defence industrial corridors, one in Tamil Nadu and the other in Uttar Pradesh to boost the flagship "Make in India" programme.
- Increased Capital Acquisition Budget for Domestic Sector
- The Central government has increased the Foreign Direct Investment limit in the defence sector from 49 to 74% under automatic route and beyond 74% through the government route.
- Defence India Startup Challenge
- Corporatization of the Ordnance Factory Boards

Note: The Ministry of Defence is also expected to put out the final version of the '**Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy (DPEPP) 2020**'.

Environment News

Jayanti: A new species of Spider Cricket

Why in the News?

- **Recently**, a team of zoologists headed by Dr Ranjana Jaiswara of the Zoology Department of Panjab University, Chandigarh, have discovered a new species of Spider Cricket in the **Kurra caves of Chhattisgarh**.
- The new subgenus was named **Jayanti after Professor Jayant Biswas**, one of the leading cave explorers in the country.



Key Points

About the New Spider Cricket:

- Jayanti has become the twelfth subgenus, or species, of cricket identified under the genus Arachnomimus Saussure, 1897.
- Males of the new Jayanti subgenus cannot produce sound and their females don't have ears.
- The newly discovered subgenus, Indimimus, is different from the two subgenera, Arachnomimus and Euarachnomimus, because of the male genitalia structure.
- Insects have a lock-and-key model genitalia structure which is unique to each subgenus.

Significance of the Discovery:

- The new species may be communicating by beating their abdomen or any other body part on the cave walls.
- **Vibrational communication** is one of the softest but fastest modes of signal transmission.
- Further studies on their skills of **vibrational communication may help in designing hearing aids for humans** which can capture quietest signals and amplify to an audible hearing range.
- With the discovery of Jayanti from India, the genus Arachnomimus is now known from 12 species. Distribution of these species is very wide, ranging from Brazil to Malaysia.
- In India, the diversity of spider crickets is still unexplored. Given India is home to four **biodiversity hotspots**, and all the hotspots have unexplored caves, there is significant scope for many more discoveries.

Science and Technology

"AmbiTAG" India's first indigenous temperature data logger for the cold chain management

Why in the News?

- **Indian Institute of Technology, Ropar (IIT Ropar) in Punjab** has developed a first-of-its-kind IoT device – AmbiTag that records real-time ambient temperature during the transportation of perishable products, vaccines and even body organs and blood.



Key Points

About "AmbiTAG"

- Shaped as a USB device, AmbiTag continuously records the temperature of its immediate surroundings “from -40 to +80 degrees in any time zone for a full 90 days on a single charge.
- The device has been developed under **Technology Innovation Hub – AWaDH (Agriculture and Water Technology Development Hub) and its Startup ScratchNest.**
- AWaDH is a Government of India project.
- The device is certified with ISO 13485:2016, EN 12830:2018, CE & ROHS.
- **Note:** Such devices are being imported by India in a massive quantity from other countries such as Singapore, Hong Kong, Ireland, and China.

IFFCO launches “World’s First Nano Urea Liquid”

Why in the News?

- **The Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO)** launched the “World’s First Nano Urea Liquid”, a nutrient to provide nitrogen to plants as an alternative to the conventional urea.

Key Points

About Nano Urea:

- Urea that is produced from nanotechnology to improve the efficiency of the nutrients of the crops is called Nano Urea.
- Nano Urea Liquid is developed to replace conventional urea and it can curtail the requirement of the same by at least 50%.

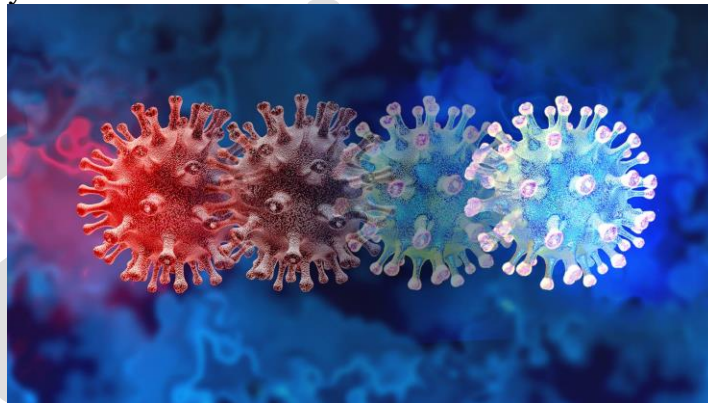


- Conventional urea is effective 30-40 per cent in delivering nitrogen to plants, while the effectiveness of the Nano Urea Liquid is over 80 percent.

WHO names COVID-19 variants first found in India as 'Kappa' and 'Delta'

Why in the News?

- **The World Health Organisation (WHO)** announced the B.1.617.1 and B.1.617.2 variants of the COVID-19, first identified in India, have been named as 'Kappa' and 'Delta' respectively.



Key Points

- They will not replace existing scientific names but are aimed to help in public discussion of Variants of Concern (VOCs) & Variants of Interest (VOIs).

Other COVID-19 variants:

- The B.1.1.7 COVID-19 strain which was first detected in the UK will be known as 'Alpha'.
- The COVID-19 strains that were found in the US are 'Epsilon' and 'Iota'.
- The B.1.351 variant detected in South Africa is now called 'Beta'.
- P.1 variant which was first found in Brazil is 'Gamma' and the P.2 variant is 'Zeta'.



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Award and Honours

Nobel Laureate Amartya Kumar Sen conferred with Spain's Princess of Asturias Award 2021

Why in the News?

- **Indian economist and Nobel Laureate** Amartya Kumar Sen has been conferred with Spain's top Princess of Asturias Award 2021 in the **social sciences category**.



Key Points

- Amartya Sen won the award for his research on famines and his theory of human development, welfare economics and the underlying mechanisms of poverty have contributed to the fight against injustice, inequality, disease and ignorance.
- The award comprises a Joan Miro sculpture representing and symbolising the Award, a diploma, an insignia and a cash prize of 50,000 Euros.

Note:

- Amartya Sen won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1998.
- He was awarded Bharat Ratna in 1999.

Launch of Gopal Ratna Awards and Integration of e- Gopala app with UMANG platform

Why in the News?

- The Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying announced the launch of the Gopal Ratna Awards and Integration of e- Gopala app with UMANG platform on the occasion of World Milk Day.
- Every year, the **first day of June is observed as World Milk Day**.



Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries
Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying
Government of India



By

Shri Giriraj Singh

(Hon'ble Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying)

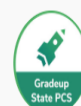
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Points

About the Gopal Ratna Awards:

- The Gopal Ratna Awards are the National Awards for the Cattle and Dairy sector.
- The award has three categories - i) Best Dairy farmer, ii) Best Artificial Insemination Technician (AIT) and (iii) Best Dairy Cooperative/ Milk producer Company/ FPO.

About UMANG platform:

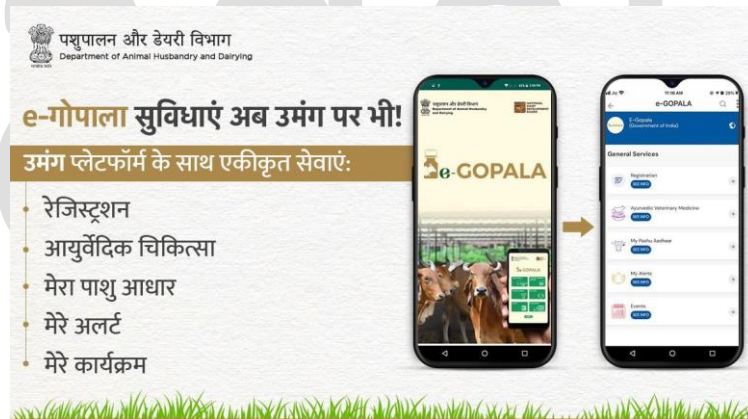
- Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG) is a mobile app, a Digital India initiative of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, by the Government of India for access to central and state government services.
- The app was developed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology with the National e-Governance Division and launched in November 2017 by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

About e- Gopala app:

- e- Gopala app (Generation of wealth through Productive Livestock), a comprehensive breed improvement marketplace and information portal for direct use of farmers, was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2020.

Other Initiatives related to the Dairy sector:

- National Animal Disease Control Programme & National Artificial Insemination Programme
- National Action Plan on Dairy Development 2022
- Rashtriya Gokul Mission
- Pashu-Aadhar



About Operation Flood (White Revolution):

- Operation Flood, launched on 13 January 1970, was the world's largest dairy development program and a landmark project of India's National Dairy Development Board (NDDB).
- Operation Flood is the program that led to the "White Revolution".
- Verghese Kurien is known as the "Father of the White Revolution" in India.

Note:

- India is a global leader amongst dairying nations and produced 198.4 million tonnes of milk during 2019-20.
- Currently, India is the world's largest milk producer, with 22% of global production.

WHO awards Harsh Vardhan with 'WHO Director-General Special Recognition Award'

Why in the News?

- On account of the World No Tobacco Day, World Health Organisation (WHO) has awarded Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan with 'WHO Director-General Special Recognition Award' for his accomplishments in the area of tobacco control.



Key Points:

- The award has been given to Mr Vardhan for **banning E-cigarettes and heated tobacco products.**
- His leadership was instrumental in the **2019 national legislation to ban e-cigarettes and heated tobacco products.**
- WHO has also awarded **Madhya Pradesh Voluntary Health Association and Uttar Pradesh Tobacco Control Cell** with the **World No Tobacco Day award** in the **South East region category.**

Note: World No Tobacco Day 2021 was celebrated on 31st May 2021.

New Appointments

Aashritha V Olety becomes India's 1st woman flight test engineer

Why in the News?

- Aashritha V Olety, an officer of the Indian Air Force (IAF),** has become the country's first woman flight test engineer.



Key Points

- Aashritha V Olety, a native of Karnataka, has graduated as part of the 43rd Flight Test Course after completing a one-year course at the pilot school.
- Olety will be responsible for evaluating aircraft and airborne systems before their induction into the armed forces.

Note: Excluding the medical wing in which women have been serving for decades, the army accounts for 6,807 women officers, the IAF 1,607 and the navy has 704 women officers. In percentage terms, women still form a small part of the military- 0.56% of the army, 1.08% of the air force and 6.5% of the navy.

Justice (Retd) Arun Kumar Mishra takes charge as NHRC Chairman

Why in the News?

- Justice Arun Kumar Mishra (Retd) took charge as the Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).



Key Points

- Arun Kumar Mishra** retired from the Supreme Court in August 2020.
- About National Human Rights Commission (NHRC):** It is a statutory public body constituted on 12 October 1993 as per provisions of Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.

Jagjit Pavadia elected as president of International Narcotics Control Board

Why in the News?

- Jagjit Pavadia, former Narcotics Commissioner of India, has been elected president of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB).
- She succeeds Cornelis P. De Johncheere.



Key Points

- Jagjit Pavadia** is the first Indian to be heading the Vienna-based organization and the second woman to hold this office.
- She has been a member of the INCB since 2015. She was elected first vice-president of the Board in 2016.



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About International Narcotics Control Board (INCB):

- INCB is an independent, quasi-judicial expert body established by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 by merging two bodies: the Permanent Central Narcotics Board and the Drug Supervisory Body.
- Its headquarters is Vienna, Austria.

Schemes

YUVA - Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors

Why in the News?

- The Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education launched YUVA- Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors.

Key Points

About YUVA (Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors) Scheme:

- It is an Author Mentorship programme to train young and budding authors (**below 30 years of age**) in order to promote reading, writing and book culture in the country, and project India and Indian writings globally.
- **YUVA is a part of India@75 Project (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav)** to bring to the fore the perspectives of the young generation of writers on themes like Unsung Heroes, Freedom Fighters, Unknown and Forgotten Places and their role in National Movement, and other related themes in an innovative and creative manner.

Implementation and Execution:

- **The National Book Trust, India** under the Ministry of Education will be the **Implementing Agency** of the scheme.
- The books prepared under this scheme will be **published by National Book Trust, India.**
- A total of 75 authors will be selected through an All India Contest to be conducted from 1 June - 31 July 2021.
- The winners will be announced on 15 August 2021.
- The young authors will be trained by eminent authors/mentors.
- Under the mentorship, the manuscripts will be readied by 15 December 2021 for publication.
- The published books will be launched on **12 January 2022 on the occasion of National Youth Day (Yuva Diwas).**

- A consolidated scholarship of Rs.50,000 per month for a period of six months per author will be paid under the Mentorship Scheme.

Monetary Assistance through DBT under MDM Scheme

Why in the News?

- The Ministry of Education has approved the proposal to provide monetary assistance through **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)** of the cooking cost component of the **Mid-Day-Meal (MDM) Scheme**, to all eligible children, as a special welfare measure.



Key Points

- This decision will help safeguard the nutritional levels of children and aid in protecting their immunity during the challenging **pandemic times**.
- This is in addition to the Government of India's announcement of distribution of free-of-cost food grains @ 5 Kg per person per month to nearly 80 Crore beneficiaries under **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY)**.
- The Central Government will provide additional funds of about Rs 1200 crore to State Governments and UT Administrations for this purpose.
- This one-time special welfare measure of the Union Government will benefit about 11.8 crore children studying in class I to VIII in the 11.20 lakh Government and Government aided schools across the country.

About Midday Meal (MDM) Scheme:

- It is a centrally sponsored scheme which was **launched in 1995**.
- The Midday Meal Scheme is a school meal programme in India designed to better the nutritional standing of school-age children nationwide.
- The programme supplies free lunches on working days for children in primary and upper primary classes in government, government aided, local body, Education Guarantee Scheme, and alternate innovative education centres, Madarsa and Maqtabas supported under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and National Child Labour Project schools run by the ministry of labour.

Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT):

- Direct Benefit Transfer is an attempt to change the mechanism of transferring subsidies launched by the Government of India **on 1 January 2013**. This program aims to transfer subsidies directly to the people through their bank accounts.

Other Schemes involving DBT:

- Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, National Food Security Mission, PM KISAN (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana), Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin, National AYUSH Mission, Atal Pension Yojana.

'PM-CARES for Children' Scheme

Why in the News?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched 'PM-CARES for Children' Scheme for children orphaned due to COVID 19.



Key Points

- All children who have lost both parents or surviving parents or legal guardian/adoptive parents due to COVID 19, will be supported through the 'PM-CARES for Children'.

About 'PM-CARES for Children' Scheme:

- Such children to get a monthly stipend once they turn 18 and a fund of Rs 10 lakh when they turn 23 from PM CARES
- Free education to be ensured for children who lost their parents to COVID 19
- The children will be assisted to get an education loan for higher education & PM CARES Fund will pay interest on the loan
- The children will get free health insurance of Rs 5 lakh under Ayushman Bharat Scheme (PM-JAY) till 18 years & premium will be paid by PM CARES Fund

About PM CARES Fund:

- Keeping in mind the need for having a dedicated national fund with the primary objective of dealing with any kind of emergency or distress situation, like posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to provide relief to the affected, a public charitable trust under the name of '**Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund**' (PM CARES Fund)' has been set up.
- Prime Minister is the ex-officio Chairman of the PM CARES Fund and Minister of Defence, Minister of Home Affairs and Minister of Finance, Government of India are ex-officio Trustees of the Fund.
- Donations to PM CARES Fund would qualify for 80G benefits for 100% exemption.
- Donations to PM CARES Fund will also qualify to be counted as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) expenditure under the Companies Act, 2013
- PM CARES Fund has also got exemption under the FCRA and a separate account for receiving foreign donations has been opened.

Kerala's Smart Kitchen Scheme

Why in the News?

- The Chief Minister of Kerala, Pinarayi Vijayan has announced that the Secretary level committee is set to make the recommendations and guidelines for the implementation of the 'Smart Kitchen scheme' by July 10, 2021.



Key Points

About the Smart Kitchen Scheme:

- It aims to reduce the workload of women’s domestic labour.
- The women will be provided a loan by the government to refurbish their kitchens with a low-interest rate in the installment schemes.

Important Days

May 29, International Day of UN Peacekeepers

Why in the News?

- The International Day of UN Peacekeepers is observed annually on May 29 to pay tribute to the uniformed and civilian personnel for their invaluable contribution to the work of the world organisation and to honour the peacekeepers who have lost their lives serving under the UN flag.



Key Points

- The **theme** of 2021 is **“The road to a lasting peace: Leveraging the power of youth for peace and security.”**
- The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers was established by the General Assembly in 2002.

Dag Hammarskjold Medal Award:

- The **three Indian peacekeepers (Corporal Yuvraj Singh, two civilian peacekeepers- Ivan Michael Picardo and Mulchand Yadav)** were awarded posthumously the Dag Hammarskjold Medal on the occasion of International Day of UN Peacekeepers.

Note: India is the fifth largest contributor of uniformed personnel to UN peacekeeping with more than 5,500 military and police serving in peace operations.



May 31, World No Tobacco Day

Why in the News?

- World No Tobacco Day is observed on May 31 every year to highlight the risk associated with the use of tobacco.

Key Points

- The theme of World No Tobacco Day 2021 is “**Commit to quit.**”
- Celebrated around the world every year on May 31, World No Tobacco Day was created by the Member States of World Health Organization (WHO) in 1987 to draw global attention to the tobacco epidemic and the preventable death and disease it causes.



About National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP):

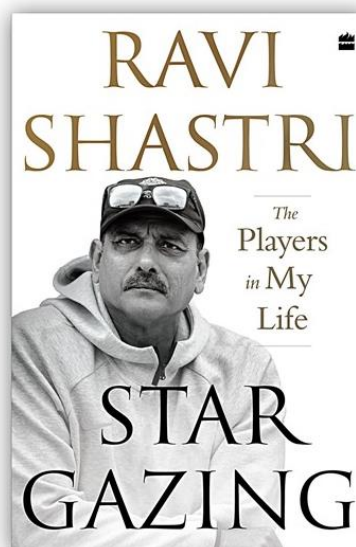
- Government of India** launched the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTCP) in the year 2007-08 during the 11th Five-Year-Plan.

Books and Authors

Cricket legend Ravi Shastri's book 'Stargazing: The Players in My Life'

Why in the News?

- Cricket legend, commentator and one of Team India's most successful coaches, Ravi Shastri has penned a book titled '**Stargazing: The Players in My Life**'.



Key Points

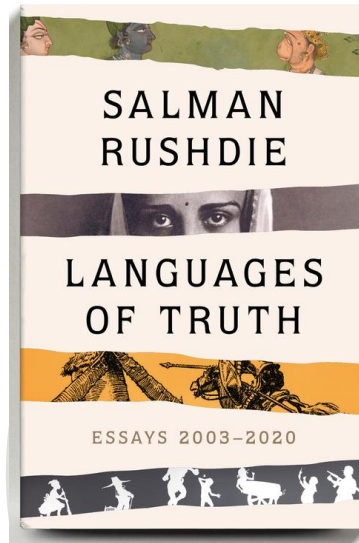
About the Book

- The 'Stargazing: The Players in My Life' is co-authored by Ravi Shastri and sports journalist Ayaz Memon and it is expected to be out in 2021.
- In the book, Shastri writes about some 60 extraordinary talents he has met from across the world who have inspired him.
- It will be published by HarperCollins India.

Salman Rushdie's book "Languages of Truth: Essays 2003-2020"

Why in the News?

- Salman Rushdie has penned a new book titled "Languages of Truth: Essays 2003-2020".



Key Points

About the Book:

- In his new book, "Languages of Truth: Essays 2003-2020," Rushdie attempts to perform a defensive castling move.
- He suggests his work has been misunderstood and mistreated because the literary culture has turned from brio-filled imaginative writing toward the humbler delights of "autofiction," as exemplified by the work of Elena Ferrante and Karl Ove Knausgaard.

About the Author:

- Salman Rushdie is a British Indian novelist and essayist. His second novel, 'Midnight's Children' (1981), won the Booker Prize in 1981. Much of his fiction is set on the Indian subcontinent.

Sports

Asian Boxing Championships 2021

Why in the News?

- The 31st edition of the Asian Amateur Boxing Championships was held from 24 to 31 May 2021 in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.



Key Points

- India ranked 4th with 2 gold, 5 silver and 8 bronze medals.

Medal table

Rank	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Kazakhstan	8	6	2	16
2	Uzbekistan	7	6	5	18
3	Mongolia	3	0	5	8
4	India	2	5	8	15

Note:

- India's **Mary Kom** settled for a silver medal at the 2021 Asian Boxing Championships.
- It is the second silver for Mary Kom at the Asian Championships who has previously won titles on five occasions --2003, 2005, 2010, 2012, and 2017 besides silver in 2008.

Miscellaneous

IBF renamed as Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation

Why in the News?

- In a bid to expand its purview to the OTT segment, the Indian Broadcasting Foundation (IBF), the apex industry body of broadcasters, has been renamed as the **Indian Broadcasting and Digital Foundation (IBDF)**.



Key Points

- IBDF** will form a Self-Regulatory Body (SRB), as per the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.
- The name of the self-regulatory body is **Digital Media Content Regulatory Council (DMCRC)** for digital OTT platforms.
- DMCRC** is a second-tier mechanism at the appellate level and is similar to Broadcast Content Complaint Council (BCCC), which IBF had implemented for the linear broadcasting sector way back in 2011.

About Indian Broadcasting Foundation: It is also known as a unified representative body of the television broadcasters in India. The organisation was founded in the year 1999. Over 250 Indian television channels are associated with it. The organisation is credited as the spokesman of India Broadcasting Industry.

About OTT: An over-the-top (OTT) media service is a media service offered directly to viewers via the Internet. OTT bypasses cable, broadcast, and satellite television platforms, the types of companies which traditionally act as controllers or distributors of such content.

DG NCC Mobile Training App 2.0

Why in the News?


- Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar launched **Directorate General (DG) National Cadet Corps (NCC) Mobile Training App Version 2.0**.

Key Points

About DG NCC Mobile Training App 2.0

- The app will assist in conducting countrywide online training to NCC cadets during the COVID-19 pandemic conditions.
- It is aimed at providing NCC-related basic information and entire training material on one platform.

महानिदेशालय रा. कै. को. प्रशिक्षण
DG NCC TRAINING



प्रारूप 2.0
Version 2.0

मुख्यालय महानिदेशालय रा. कै.को.
पश्चिमी ब्लॉक IV, राम कृष्ण पुरम
नई दिल्ली 110066

Mobile App by HQ Directorate
General NCC
West Block IV R K Puram
New Delhi 110066

- **Note: DG NCC Mobile App Version 1.0** for training was launched by Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh in 2020 in order to assist online cadet training.

RDSO becomes the first Institution to be declared SDO under "One Nation One Standard" mission on BIS

Why in the News?

- **RDSO (Research Design & Standards Organization)** of Indian Railways has become the first Institution to be declared **SDO (Standard Developing Organization)** under "One Nation One Standard" mission on **BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards)** which is Institution under Department of Consumer Affairs.
- RDSO took the initiative to seek recognition as a Standard Developing Organization (SDO) under the **BIS SDO Recognition Scheme**.



Key Points

- **RDSO**, Lucknow, which is the sole R&D Wing of the Ministry of Railways, is one of India's leading Standard formulating Body undertaking standardization work for the



railway sector.

- The **recognition is valid for 3 years** and will require renewal after completion of the validity period.

About the BIS SDO Recognition Scheme:

- To attain “Nation One Standard” vision of Govt. of India, Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the National Standards Body, has launched a scheme which provides for “Recognition of SDO”.
- Through this scheme, BIS aims at aggregating and integrating the existing capabilities and dedicated domain specific expertise available with various organizations in the country engaged in standards development in their specific sectors and enable convergence of all standard development activities in the country resulting in “One National Standard for One Subject”.

About BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards):

- The Bureau of Indian Standards is the national Standards Body of India working under the aegis of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India. It was established by the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986 which came into effect on 23 December 1986.

Other Initiatives of BIS:

- Portal for Consumer Engagement
- BIS-Care App
- COVID-19 Standards
- Quality Control Orders

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