

Weekly Current Affairs 12th -17th July 2021 साप्ताहिक करंट अफेयर्स 12-17 जुलाई 2021

Important News: State

India's first Cryptogamic Garden

Why in News

- India's first Cryptogamic Garden was inaugurated in the **Chakrata town of Uttarakhand's Dehradun district.**

Key Points

About the Cryptogamic Garden:

- Around 50 species of lichens, ferns and fungi have been grown in the garden at Deoban in Chakrata at a commanding height of 9,000 ft.
- This site is chosen at Deoban because of its low pollution levels and moist conditions which are conducive for the growth of these species.
- Deoban has pristine majestic forests of Deodar and Oak which create a natural habitat for cryptogamic species.

Cryptogamae:

- Cryptogamae means "hidden reproduction" referring to the fact that no seed, no flowers are produced.
- Algae, bryophytes (moss, liverworts), lichens, ferns and fungi are the best-known groups of cryptogams that require moist conditions to survive.

Source: Indian Express

Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary named Rajasthan's 4th tiger reserve

Why in News

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change approved the conversion of the Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary in Rajasthan's Bundi district into the 4th tiger reserve in the state.
- A proposal of converting the Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary into a tiger reserve was recently given a green signal by the technical committee of the **National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA).**
- It will be the country's 52nd tiger reserve.

Key Points

About Ramgarh Vishdhari Wildlife Sanctuary:

- The Sanctuary is spread across 1,071 square kilometres in Rajasthan's Bundi district.

The other three are - **Ranthambore Tiger Reserve** in Sawai Madhopur, **Sariska Tiger Reserve** in Alwar, and **Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve** in Kota.

About National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA):



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- NTCA is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under enabling provisions of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, as amended in 2006.

About Project Tiger:

- Project Tiger is a tiger conservation programme launched in April 1973 by the Government of India.
- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme that provides the required support for the conservation of the tiger in the country.

About Wildlife Sanctuary:

- An area where animals and plants are protected under their natural habitat and are protected from any sort of disturbance is termed a Wildlife Sanctuary.
- There are 553 wildlife sanctuaries in India (National Wildlife Database, December 2019).

Jaipur to get India's second largest Cricket Stadium

Why in News

- The **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)** released a financial grant of Rs 100 crore to the **Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA)**, which will be used to build India's second-largest cricket stadium.
- It will be the **world's third largest cricket stadium**.

Key Points

- The new stadium will have the capacity to accommodate 75,000 people and shall be constructed in two phases.
- The **first** largest cricket stadium -- **Narendra Modi Stadium** is situated in Ahmedabad while the **second** largest stadium is situated in **Australia's Melbourne**.
- **Note:** In February, 2021, President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the newly-built Motera Stadium which was renamed as Narendra Modi Stadium.

Important News: India

Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary

Why in News

- Central government has approved continuation of the **Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary** for further 5 years from 01.04.2021 to 31.03.2026 at a total cost of Rs.9000 crore.
- Rs.50 crore will be for the **Gram Nyayalayas Scheme** and their implementation in a Mission Mode through **National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms**.

Key Points

About National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms (NMJDLR):



- It was initiated with twin goals in 2011. First is increasing the access by reducing delays and arrears and another is enhancing accountability through structural change and setting performance standards.
- A Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary has been in operation since 1993-94.
- This proposal will help in construction of 3800 court halls and 4000 residential units (both new and ongoing projects) for judicial officers of District and Subordinate Courts, 1450 lawyer halls, 1450 toilets complexes and 3800 digital computer rooms.

Gram Nyayalaya:

- The Cabinet also approved the decision to support the Gram Nyayalayas by providing recurring and non-recurring grants for a period of 5 years with a total outlay of Rs 50 crores.
- The **Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008** that came into force from 2 October 2009 was enacted for the establishment of Gram Nyayalayas for speedy and easy access to the justice system in the rural areas of India.

Monitoring of the Scheme

- An on-line monitoring system has been set up by the Department of Justice enabling data collection on progress, completion of court halls and residential units under construction as well as better asset management.
- The Department of Justice has developed an online monitoring system with technical assistance from ISRO.
- The upgraded web portal “**Nyaya Vikas-2.0**” and mobile application is used for monitoring physical and financial progress of CSS judicial infrastructure projects.
- The **Gram Nyayalaya Portal** helps online monitoring of working of the Gram Nyayalayas by the implementing states.

Source: PIB

Government hikes DA from 17% to 28% for central government employees

Why in News

- The cabinet approved an 11 percentage point hike in Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) for central government employees and pensioners effective July 1, 2021.
- With this, the new DA rate will be 28 percent, up from 17 percent.

Key Points

- The DA and DR were frozen in 2020 as the pandemic hit the country.
- The rate for DA for the period between January 1, 2020 and June 30, 2021 will remain 17 percent.

About Dearness Allowance (DA):

- The Dearness Allowance is a calculation on inflation and allowance paid to government employees, public sector employees and pensioners.
- DA is revised twice a year -- once in January and once in July.

Source: Indian Express



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Cabinet Committees

Why in News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reconstituted the Cabinet Committees after the Union Cabinet expansion.

Key Points

About Cabinet Committee:

- i. Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs
- ii. Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development
- iii. Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs
- iv. Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs
- v. Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth
- vi. Cabinet Committee on Security
- vii. Cabinet Committee on Accommodation
- viii. Cabinet Committee on Appointments

- All committees except Cabinet Committee on Accommodation and Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs are headed by the Prime Minister.
- They are not mentioned in the Constitution. But, the Rules of Business provide for their establishment.
- The executive works under the Government of India (GoI) Transaction of Business Rules, 1961.
- These Business Rules emerge from Article 77(3) of the Constitution of India.

Purpose:

- Cabinet Committees are basically sub-committees within the Union Cabinet to look at specific remits and deliberate on various issues including security, economy, and even deciding on dates for Parliament sessions.

Group of Ministers (GoMs):

- Apart from the cabinet committees, several Group of Ministers (GoMs) have been constituted to look into different issues.
- These are ad hoc bodies that may have been empowered to take decisions on behalf of the cabinet or to make recommendations.

Source: The Hindu

Important News: World

Sher Bahadur Deuba sworn in as Nepal's Prime Minister for 5th time

- Sher Bahadur Deuba, President of the Nepali Congress, was sworn in as Prime Minister of Nepal for the 5th time.
- **President of Nepal, Bidya Devi Bhandari** administered the oath of office to Sher Bahadur Deuba.

Note: Sher Bahadur Deuba was appointed Prime Minister under Article 76(5) of the Constitution, which makes it mandatory for him to secure a vote of confidence in the House within 30 days of taking oath.



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- He has previously served 4 terms as the Prime Minister (1995–1997, 2001–2002, 2004–2005, and 2017–2018).

Source: Indian Express

Vietnam appoints first Honorary Consul General in India

Why in News

- Vietnam has appointed **N.S. Srinivasa Murthy** based in Bengaluru as **Honorary Consul General of Vietnam for Karnataka**.
- He is the **first Honorary Consul General of Vietnam from India** and the 19th across the world.
- The appointment is for a period of three years.

Key Points

- **The Honorary Consul General** will promote trade, economics, investment, tourism, educational and cultural cooperation between Vietnam and the State of Karnataka.
- Industrialist Mr. Murthy is the owner and Managing partner of N. K. Subbiah Setty & Sons which is into manufacture of incense sticks since 1932.

India-Vietnam Relations:

- Both the countries agreed to have various commemorative activities in the **year 2022**, to mark the **50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations** between the two countries.
- Vietnam and India have agreed to strengthen their strategic partnership in line with India's **Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative** and the **ASEAN's Outlook on Indo-Pacific**.
- Vietnam and India closely cooperate in various regional forums such as ASEAN, East Asia Summit, Mekong Ganga Cooperation, besides United Nations and World Trade Organisation.
- ASEAN- India Free Trade Agreement
- Science and Technology Cooperation
- India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership
- Military exercises: VINBAX, IN-VPN BILAT

Facts about Vietnam:

- **Capital:** Hanoi
- **Currency:** Vietnamese dong
- **President:** Nguyen Xuan Phuc
- **Prime Minister:** Pham Minh Chinh

Source: The Hindu

1st India-UK Financial Markets Dialogue

Why in News

- Recently, India and the United Kingdom (UK) held the inaugural meeting of the **India-UK Financial Markets Dialogue ('the Dialogue')**.

Key Points



About the India-UK Financial Markets Dialogue:

- The Dialogue was led by senior officials from the Indian Ministry of Finance and HM Treasury.
- The Dialogue began with a government to government discussion, focused **on four themes:**
 - (1) GIFT (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City) City, India's flagship international financial centre
 - (2) Banking and payments
 - (3) Insurance
 - (4) Capital markets
- At the meeting, Indian and UK participants discussed progress on the UK-India **GIFT City Strategic Partnership**.
- Both sides agreed on areas for further collaboration, including sustainable finance and FinTech, with the aim of supporting increased UK industry presence in the centre.
- The **Dialogue** was established at the **10th Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD)** in October 2020 to deepen bilateral ties in the financial sector.
- Financial Cooperation is one of the key pillars of the **2030 Roadmap adopted by the two countries** during the recent meeting of the two Prime Ministers and the India-UK Financial Market Dialogue is one of the key elements of this Financial Cooperation.

About India-UK trade:

- India-UK trade has more than doubled since the first EFD in 2007, with bilateral investment supporting over half a million jobs across both countries.
- India-UK economic ties are important as together, they are two of the world's top seven economies with a combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of over \$5 trillion.

Source: PIB

STI-led BRICS Innovation Cooperation Action Plan

Why in News

- All BRICS countries have agreed to the **STI-led BRICS Innovation Cooperation Action Plan (2021-24)** proposed by **India** during the **12th Meeting of BRICS S&T Steering Committee**.
- **Department of Science and Technology (DST), India**, hosted the 12th Meeting of BRICS S&T Steering Committee.

Key Points

About STI-led BRICS Innovation Cooperation Action Plan:

- Indian had proposed the plan to facilitate sharing of experiences of each other's innovation ecosystem and networking of innovators and entrepreneurs.
- The Details of the Action Plan would be worked out by **BRICS Science, Technology Innovation Entrepreneurship Partnership (STIEP) Working Group**.

Thematic Areas:



- The BRICS officials discussed in detail about the thematic areas for this year's call for proposals at the meeting and unanimously agreed for collaboration in ten thematic areas.
- All countries agreed to thematic areas proposed by India **for the 6th edition of BRICS Young Scientist Conclave**, which will be held in **Bangalore during 13-16 September 2021**.
- The 3 themes to be discussed at the conclave include **Healthcare, Energy Solutions, Cyber-Physical System**, and their applications.

Note: The **13th BRICS Summit** will be held under India's Chairship in 2021, and it will be the third time India will host the BRICS Summit after 2012 and 2016.

- The theme for India's Chairship for 2021 would be '**BRICS @ 15: Intra-BRICS Cooperation for Continuity, Consolidation, and Consensus**'.

Facts about BRICS:

- **Formation:** 2009
- **Countries:** Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa

BRICS is an important grouping bringing together the major emerging economies from the world, comprising:

- 41% of world population with 3.14 billion people
- Total combined area of 29.3% of the total land surface of the world
- 24% of global GDP
- 16% of world trade

Note: The above data is based on World Bank data (2019).

Source: PIB

Important News: Health

Central government approves continuation of National AYUSH Mission

Why in News

- Central government has approved the continuation of the **National AYUSH Mission** as a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** from 01-04-2021 to 31-03-2026 with financial implication of Rs. 4607.30 crore.

Key Points

About National AYUSH Mission (NAM):

- The Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National AYUSH Mission is being implemented by the **Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India**.
- **Department of AYUSH**, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, GoI has launched National AYUSH Mission during 12th Plan for implementing through States/UTs.
- The AYUSH mission was launched on 15 September 2014.

Objective: The basic objective of National AYUSH Mission is to promote AYUSH medical systems through cost effective AYUSH services.

Components of the National AYUSH Mission:

Mandatory Components



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- AYUSH Services
- AYUSH Educational Institutions
- Quality Control of ASU & H Drugs (Ayurveda, Sidhha, Sowa Rigpa, Unani and also Homeopathy)
- Medicinal Plants

Flexible Components

- AYUSH Wellness Centres including Yoga & Naturopathy
- Tele-medicine
- Innovations in AYUSH including Public Private Partnership
- Voluntary certification scheme: Project based.
- Market Promotion, Market intelligence & buy back interventions

About Central welfare schemes:

- Central welfare schemes can be categorised into two sections: **(i) Centrally Sponsored Schemes, (ii) Central Sector Schemes.**

(i) Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS):

- Centrally Sponsored Schemes are those schemes which are implemented by the state government but sponsored by the central government with a defined shareholding.
- Centrally sponsored schemes can be further divided into **two sections — core of core schemes and core schemes.**

Core schemes: Green Revolution, White Revolution, Blue Revolution, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, Pradhan Manti Awas Yojana, Swachh Bharat Mission, Mid-day meals in schools and National Livelihood Mission are some core schemes.

Core of the core schemes: The umbrella scheme for development of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Minorities, Other Vulnerable Groups and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.

(ii) Central Sector Schemes:

- Central sector schemes are implemented by the central government and the budget or financing needed for the scheme is entirely sourced by the central government.
- **For example,** National Rural Health Mission is a central sector scheme.

Source: PIB

‘India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Package: Phase II’

Why in News

- The Union Cabinet has approved a new scheme **‘India COVID-19 Emergency Response & Health System Preparedness Package: Phase-II’** amounting to **Rs. 23,123 crore** for FY 2021-22.
- Phase-II would be implemented from 01 July 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Key Points

About the Phase-II of the Package:

- The Phase-II of the Package has Central Sector (CS) and Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) components.

Aim:

- This scheme aims to accelerate health system preparedness for immediate responsiveness for early prevention, detection and management.
- Support would be provided to Central Hospitals, AIIMS, and other Institutions of National Importance for repurposing 6,688 beds for COVID management.
- The National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) would be strengthened by providing Genome Sequencing machines.
- Support would also be provided for expanding the National Architecture of eSanjeevani Tele-consultation platform to provide upto 5 lakhs tele-consultations per day from the present 50,000 Tele-consultations per day.
- Create Paediatric units in all 736 districts and also, to establish Paediatric Centre of Excellence (PaediatricCoE) in each State/UT.
- Augment 20,000 ICU beds in the public healthcare system out of which 20% will be Pediatric ICU beds.
- Augment the existing feet of ambulances - 8,800 ambulances will be added under the package.

About the Phase-I of the Package:

- In March 2020, when the country was faced with the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Prime Minister announced a Central Sector Scheme of Rs. 15,000 crore for the "India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Package".

DBT-NIBMG creates world's first database of genomic variants of oral cancer 'dbGENVOC'

Why in News

- **DBT-National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBMG)**, Kalyani an Autonomous Institute funded by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India has created the **world's first database of genomic variants of oral cancer 'dbGENVOC'**.

Key Points

About dbGENVOC:

- It is a browsable online database of GENomic Variants of Oral Cancer and is a free resource.
- It also allows a reasonable extent of statistical and bioinformatic analysis to be carried out online, including identifying variants in associated altered pathways in oral cancer.

Cancer in India:

- India had an estimated 1.16 million new cancer cases in 2018 as per the World Cancer Report 2020.
- The 6 most common cancer types in India are oral cancer, breast cancer, cervical cancer, lung cancer, colorectal cancer and stomach cancer.

Oral cancer is the most prevalent form of cancer among men in India, largely fuelled by tobacco-chewing.

- Tobacco-chewing causes changes in the genetic material of cells in the oral cavity. These changes (mutations) precipitate oral cancer.

Other Related Initiatives:

- National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS)
- National Cancer Grid (NCG)
- National Genomic Grid (NGG)

About National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBMG):

- It has been established as an autonomous institution by the Government of India, under the aegis of the Department of Biotechnology.
- It is the first institution in India explicitly devoted to research, training, translation & service and capacity-building in Biomedical Genomics.

Important News: Economy

NTPC's New Solar Projects

Why in News

- **NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd, a 100% subsidiary of NTPC, signed a MoU with the Union Territory of Ladakh to set up the country's first Green Hydrogen Mobility Project** in the region.
- The signing of the MoU was also marked with the inauguration of **NTPC's first solar installations** in Leh in the form of solar trees and a solar car port.
- NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd will set up a **4750 MW renewable energy park at Rann of Kutch in Khavada, Gujarat**. It will be **India's largest solar park**.

Key Points

Green Hydrogen Mobility Project:

- The MoU will enable NTPC to help Ladakh develop a carbon free economy based on renewable sources and green hydrogen.
- NTPC has planned to ply 5 hydrogen buses, to start with, in the region and the company will be setting up a solar plant and a green hydrogen generation unit in Leh towards this end.
- This will put Leh as the first city in the country to implement a green hydrogen based mobility project.

India's Largest Solar Park:

- NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd will set up a **4750 MW renewable energy park at Rann of Kutch in Khavada, Gujarat** under the **Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Park Scheme**. It will be **India's largest solar park**.



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- NTPC Renewable Energy Ltd has been given the go-ahead by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy under Mode 8 (Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Park) of Solar Park Scheme.
- NTPC REL has plans to generate green hydrogen on a commercial scale from this park.

About NTPC:

- NTPC Limited, formerly known as National Thermal Power Corporation Limited, is a Maharatna PSU under the Ministry of Power.

NTPC Target:

- NTPC has recently revised its target of achieving 60GW renewables capacity by 2032, almost doubling the earlier target.

NTPC's Project:

- Recently, NTPC has commissioned India's largest floating solar project of 10MW at Visakhapatnam.
- The 100 MW Floating Solar Project on the reservoir of Ramagundam Thermal Power Plant, Telangana is in the advanced stage of implementation.

Other Solar Energy Initiatives:

National Solar Mission:

- It is an initiative of the Government of India and State Governments to promote solar power.
- It is one of the several policies of the National Action Plan on Climate Change.
- The program was inaugurated as the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on 11 January 2010 with a target of 20 GW by 2022.
- This was later increased to 100 GW by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the 2015 Union budget of India.

About International Solar Alliance (ISA):

- ISA was launched jointly by the Indian Prime Minister and the French President during the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP21, in Paris.
- **Headquarters:** Gurugram, Haryana, India
- **Founded:** 30 November 2015

Source: PIB

BHIM–UPI in Bhutan

Why in News

- Union Minister of Finance & Corporate Affairs Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, along with her counterpart, the Hon'ble Finance Minister of Bhutan, Mr Lyonpo Namgay Tshering, jointly launched **BHIM–UPI in Bhutan**.
- **National Payment Corporation of India's** arm, **NPCI International Payments Ltd. (NIPL)** has partnered with the **Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) of Bhutan** for implementing BHIM-UPI in Bhutan.

Key Points



- **Bhutan is the first country to adopt UPI standards for its QR deployment**, and the first country in our immediate neighbourhood to accept mobile based payments through the BHIM App.

Advantages:

- With the launch of BHIM-UPI in Bhutan, the payment infrastructures of the two countries are seamlessly connected and will benefit a large number of tourists and businessmen from India who travel to Bhutan each year.
- **BHIM-UPI** is one of the brightest spot and an achievement for digital transactions in India during the time of COVID-19 pandemic with more than 100 million UPI QRs have been created in last 5 years and BHIM UPI in 2020-21 has processed 22 billion transactions worth value Rs 41 lakh crore.

About BHIM:

- It is an Indian mobile payment App developed by the **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, based on the **Unified Payments Interface**.

About Unified Payments Interface (UPI):

- It is an instant real-time payment system, allowing users to transfer money on a real-time basis, across multiple bank accounts.

Note: India and Bhutan have already enabled inter-operability in acceptance of **RuPay cards** in each other's countries in two phases – acceptance of RuPay cards issued in India at Bhutan based terminals in the first phase, and vice versa in the second phase.

About RuPay:

- It is an Indian multinational financial services and payment service system, conceived and launched by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) on 26 March 2012.

About National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI):

- It is an umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems under the ownership of RBI in India.
- Founded in December 2008, the NPCI is a **not-for-profit organisation** registered under **Section 8 of the Companies Act 2013**.

Source: PIB

Review meeting for making India Aatmanirbhar in Fertilisers

Why in News

- **Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers Mansukh Mandaviya** reviewed the initiatives of **Department of Fertilizers** for Making India Aatmanirbhar in Fertilisers.
- The Government is planning to liberalise **Market Development Assistance Policy** to promote the use of alternative fertilizers.

Key

Points

About Market Development Assistance (MDA) Policy:

- Market Development Assistance (MDA) Policy was earlier limited to city compost only.

- There was a need to expand this policy by incorporating organic waste like Biogas, organic compost of rural areas, Green Manure, solid/liquid slurry, etc.
- This expansion will fully complement the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) of the Government of India.

Fertilizer Consumption in India:

- India's fertiliser consumption in FY20 was about 61 million tonnes — of which 55% was urea—and is estimated to have increased by 5 million tonnes in FY21.

Government Initiatives and Schemes:

- New Investment Policy- 2012
- New Urea Policy 2015
- Neem Coating of Urea
- Policy on Promotion of City Compost
- The Nutrient Based Subsidy Scheme
- Use of Space Technology in Fertilizer Sector

Source: PIB

India Industrial Land Bank (IILB)

Why in News

- The **India Industrial Land Bank (IILB), a GIS-based portal**, has seen a 30% increase in page views each month since April 2021.

Key Points

About India Industrial Land Bank (IILB):

- **The Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT)** has developed IILB.
- It is a one-stop repository of all industrial infrastructure-related information – connectivity, infra, natural resources & terrain, plot-level information on vacant plots, line of activity, and contact details.
- Currently, the IILB has approximately 4000 industrial parks mapped across an area of 5.5 lakh hectare of land, serving as a decision support system for investors scouting for land remotely.
- The system has been integrated with industry-based GIS systems of 17 states to have details on the portal updated on a real-time basis and **will achieve pan-India integration by December 2021.**
- Regarding country wise **visitors**, after India, the US has the maximum number of visitors followed by Australia, UK, Singapore, UAE, Germany, and Indonesia.

About Geographic Information System (GIS):

- It is a computer system for capturing, storing, checking, analyzing and displaying data related to positions on Earth's surface.
- It can show many different kinds of data on one map, such as streets, buildings, and vegetation.
- It can use any information that includes location.



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- The location can be expressed in many different ways, such as latitude and longitude, address, or ZIP code.

Source: PIB

Country's first LNG Facility plant

Why in News

- Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport and Highways inaugurated the country's first **LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) Facility plant** at **Nagpur, Maharashtra**.
- The LNG Facility plant has been set up by **Baidyanath Ayurvedic Group**.

Key Points

About LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas):

- LNG is natural gas (predominantly methane, CH₄, with some mixture of ethane, C₂H₆) that has been cooled down to liquid form for ease and safety of non-pressurized storage or transport.
- It takes up about 1/600th the volume of natural gas in the gaseous state (at standard conditions for temperature and pressure).
- LNG is odorless, colorless, non-toxic and non-corrosive.
- LNG is cost effective and a clean fuel which is capable of decreasing the logistics cost.

Note:

- The Government is promoting Ethanol, Electric, CNG, LNG gas as an alternative to conventional fuels.
- The Ministry has designed a policy that encourages development of imports substitute cost effective pollution free and indigenous ethanol, bio CNG, LNG and hydrogen fuels.

Flex Engines:

- Mr. Gadkari talked about flex engines.
- The decision for flex engines will be taken in three months making it mandatory for automobile manufacturers particularly the four wheelers and two wheelers to make flex engines.
- A '**Flex engine**' is an internal combustion engine that can run on more than one fuel and also a mixture. Several countries like the USA, Brazil and Canada already have them.

Source: PIB

Important News: Defense

SPARSH [System for Pension Administration (Raksha)]

Why in News



- **The Ministry of Defence (MoD)** has implemented a web-based system SPARSH [System for Pension Administration (Raksha)].

Key Points

About SPARSH:

- It is an integrated system for automation of sanction and disbursement of defence pension.
- This web-based system processes pension claims and credits pension directly into the bank accounts of defence pensioners without relying on any external intermediary.
- It envisages establishment of Service Centres to provide last mile connectivity to pensioners who may be unable to directly access the SPARSH portal for any reason.
- In addition to several offices of the Defence Accounts Department, which are already functioning as Service Centres for pensioners, the two largest banks dealing with defence pensioners – State Bank of India (SBI) and Punjab National Bank (PNB) – have been co-opted as Service Centres.

Other Initiative:

- **One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme:** OROP implies that uniform pension be paid to the Armed Forces Personnel retiring in the same rank with the same length of service regardless of their date of retirement.

Source: PIB

Indian Army names Military Firing Range after Vidya Balan

Why in News

- In recognition of Vidya Balan's phenomenal contribution to Indian cinema, the Indian Army has recently named one of its firing ranges after the actress.
- The **Vidya Balan Firing Range is located in Gulmarg, Kashmir.**

Key Points

- Vidya Balan is an Indian actress in Hindi cinema.
- She is the recipient of several awards, including a National Film Award and six Filmfare Awards.
- She was awarded the Padma Shri by the Government of India in 2014.

Note: Vidya Balan was recently invited to join the board of the **Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences**, the governing body behind the Oscars.

Source: Economics Times

Environment

MoEFCC issues SOP to deal with environmental violations

Why in News



- The **Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** issued by the **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC)** to deal with environmental violations.
- The SOP is a result of orders from the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)**, which earlier in 2021 directed the ministry to put in place penalties and an SOP for green violations.

Key Points

The SOPs refer to two categories of green violations:

- **‘Violations’** involving cases where construction work, including expansion of an existing project, has begun without the project proponent having acquired environmental clearance;
- **‘Non-Compliance’** in which prior environmental clearance has been accorded to the project, but it is in violation of norms prescribed in the approval.
- According to the SOPs, projects that are not permissible for environmental clearance are to be demolished.
- Projects which are permissible according to environmental law but which have not acquired the requisite clearance are to be shut down.

Fines:

- In Violation cases, where operations have not commenced, 1 percent of the total project cost incurred up to the date of filing of the application will be levied.
- In cases where operations have commenced without the required environmental clearance, 1 percent of the total project cost and in addition 0.25 percent of the total turnover during the period of violation will be levied.

Other Related Initiatives of MoEFCC:

- In 2017, the ministry had initiated a six-month amnesty scheme on penalising green violations, which was later extended.

Environment Impact Assessment (EIA):

- The **UNEP (UN Environment Programme)** defines EIA as “an examination, analysis and assessment of planned activities with a view to ensuring environmentally sound and sustainable development.”
- **MoEFCC** released a new draft **Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) 2020**.
- Under the **Environment (Protection) Act of 1986**, the first EIA notification was issued in 1994. Later, it was replaced by a modified draft in 2006.
- The draft notification on EIA 2020 was to consolidate all the 55 amendments and 230 office memorandums issued since 2006.

About National Green Tribunal (NGT):

- NGT was established in 2010 under the **National Green Tribunal Act 2010** for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.
- New Delhi is the Principal Place of Sitting of the Tribunal and Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai is the other 4 places of sitting of the Tribunal.



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Source: Indian Express

Awards and Honours

Indian economist Kaushik Basu awarded Humboldt Research Award Why in News

- Indian economist Kaushik Basu has been awarded the Humboldt Research Award 2021 for Economics.

Key Points

- Kaushik Basu is currently a professor of Economics at Cornell University.
- He was the chief economist of the World Bank from 2012 to 2016.
- He served as the Government of India's chief economic advisor from 2009 to 2012.
- He is a recipient of the Padma Bhushan award.

About Humboldt Research Award:

- The Humboldt Research Award is sponsored by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation and awarded to as many as 100 recipients each year.
- The Award honours scientists and economists from across the world for their work.
- The award entails prize money of 60,000 euros and an offer to carry out research projects at a scientific institution in Germany for up to 12 months.

Note: Recently, Kaushik Basu has authored a new **book** on policymaking titled “Policymaker's Journal: From New Delhi to Washington D.C.”.

Books and Authors

‘The Ramayana of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji’ written by Late Mrs. Baljit Kaur Tulsi

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has received the first copy of the book, ‘The Ramayana of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji’ written by Late Mrs. Baljit Kaur Tulsi, who is the mother of Rajya Sabha MP and noted lawyer, KTS Tulsi.
- The book has been published by **IGNCA** (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts), New Delhi.
- **Note:** Guru Gobind Singh was the 10th and last of Sikh gurus in human form. He was enthroned at the 'Guru Gaddi' at the age of 9 after his father Guru Tej Bahadur, the 9th Guru.

Source: PIB



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Sports

India to host World Badminton Championships 2026

Why in News

- India will host the BWF (Badminton World Federation) World Badminton Championships in 2026.

Key Points

- This will only be the second time that India will be hosting the world championship, with Hyderabad having played hosts to the prestigious event in 2009.
- India were scheduled to organise the Sudirman Cup in 2023 but the Badminton World Federation decided to award the hosting rights of the world mixed team championships to China.

Facts about Badminton World Federation (BWF):

- BWF is the international governing body for the sport of badminton recognised by the International Olympic Committee.
- **Headquarters:** Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- **Founded:** 5 July 1934

Source: Indian Express

Italy wins UEFA Euro 2020

- Italy won the **European Football Championship** in the Wembley Stadium in London.
- Italy defeated England in the final.
- This is Italy's second European Championship title. First one was in 1968.

Source: Indian Express

Wimbledon Championships 2021

- Wimbledon Championships was a Grand Slam tennis tournament that took place at the **All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club in Wimbledon, London, United Kingdom in 2021.**
- **List of winners:**

Men's singles	Women's singles	Men's doubles	Women's doubles	Mixed doubles
Winner- Novak Djokovic (Serbia)	Winner- Ashleigh Barty (Australia)	Winner- Nikola Pietrangeli (Croatia), Mate Pavic (Croatia)	Winner- Hsieh Su-wei (Chinese Taipei), Elise Mertens (Belgium)	Winner- Neal Skupski (Britain), Desirae Krawczyk (America)
Runner-up- Matteo		Runner-up-	Runner-up-	Runner-up-

Berrettini (Italy)	Runner-up- Karolina Pliskova (Czech Republic)	Marcel Granollers (Spain), Horacio Zeballos (Argentina)	Veronika Kudermetova (Russia), Elena Vesnina (Russia)	Joe Salisbury (Britain), Harriet Dart (Britain)
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- **Note: Novak Djokovic (Serbia)** won his 6th Wimbledon title and 20th Grand Slam title.
- **Indian-American** tennis player **Samir Banerjee** has won the **Wimbledon Boys' singles title 2021**.

Source: Indian Express

Important Days

July 11, World Population Day

Why in News

- World Population Day is an annual event, observed on July 11 every year.
- The main purpose of this day is to draw attention towards the issues arising out of the rising population across the globe.

Key Points

- World Population Day was established by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1989.
- It was inspired by the public interest in Five Billion Day on July 11, 1987.
- The **theme for 2021** is 'the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on fertility'.
- In October 2011, the global population was estimated to be 7 billion. A global movement "7 Billion Actions" was launched to mark this.
- The world's population is expected to increase by 2 billion persons in the next 30 years, from 7.7 billion currently to 9.7 billion in 2050 and could peak at nearly 11 billion around 2100.

Note: India has the world's second-largest populace after China.

New Appointments

LIC to have CEO, MD; post of executive chairman scrapped

Why in News

- **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)**, which is gearing up to launch a mega **initial public offering (IPO)**, will now have a **MD (Managing**



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Director) and CEO (Chief Executive Officer) instead of an Executive Chairman.

Key Points

- The changes have been made by the **Department of Financial Services** under the **Ministry of Finance** by amending **Life Insurance Corporation of India (Employees) Pension (Amendment) Rules**. Besides, some other rules under **LIC Act, 1956**, have been amended.

Note: While public sector banks are run by MD and CEO appointed by the government, the board of directors will be headed by a non-executive Chairman selected by the government.

Present Management:

- Currently, LIC top management consists of the Executive Chairman and 4 MDs.
- The Chairman of the LIC is a government of India Secretary rank officer.

Source: Indian Express

Obituaries

Yashpal Sharma, India's 1983 World Cup winner, passes away

- Former India cricketer and a member of 1983 World Cup-winning squad Yashpal Sharma passed away.
- Yashpal Sharma was an important member of Kapil Dev's side that won the World Cup in England in 1983.
- A middle order batsman, Sharma represented India in 37 Test matches and 42 one-day internationals.

Source: The Hindu

Assassination of president of Haiti, Jovenel Moise

- Recently, Jovenel Moise, the president of Haiti, was assassinated at his residence in Port-au-Prince.
- He was a Haitian entrepreneur and politician who served as the president of Haiti from 2017 until his assassination in 2021.
- He was sworn in as president in February 2017 after winning the November 2016 election.

Facts about Haiti: Country in the Caribbean

Capital: Port-au-Prince

Currency: Haitian gourde

Noted Ayurvedic physician, Dr. PK Warriar passes away

- Dr. PK Warriar, Ayurvedic physician, was the managing trustee of the Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala - the famous



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Ayurveda treatment centre and producer of high-quality Ayurveda medicines.

- Dr. Warriar was honoured with the Padma Shri in 1999 and the Padma Bhushan in 2010.

Source: PIB

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