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**MADE EASY  
WEEKLY  
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**WEEK-3**

**15<sup>th</sup> November - 21<sup>st</sup> November**

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**Targeted Examinations:**

**CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Exams,  
SSC and Banking Exams**

15<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2020

## nCOP2 Vaccine

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has added a vaccine to its emergency listings. The added vaccine is the nCOP2 developed by BioFarm of Indonesia.
- The vaccine has been developed for the treatment of the derived poliovirus strain.

### Key Highlights:

- This WHO approval is the first of its kind. According to the World Health Organisation, there have been a total of 149 poliovirus-derived immunodeficiency vaccines since May 2020.
- The vaccine was identified on the World Health Organisation Emergency Use List.
- The new Emergency Usage Listing System was established by the World Health Organisation in response to the Ebola virus epidemic that occurred between 2014 and 2016.

## Puerto Rico

- For the seventh time in ten years, the United States territory of Puerto Rico has voted in favour of statehood.
- It asks for equal treatment like the other 50 Nations of the United States.
- Joe Biden's Democratic Party has embraced the principle of recognizing the two institutions as states. On the other hand, Trump was opposed to it.

### Background:

- Puerto Rico is a Spanish-speaking island. It's smaller than the state of Tripura. Yet there's a population of 31 lakhs.
- It's situated in the Caribbean Sea. The residents of Puerto Rico were given citizenship in 1917. The island was not, however, made a province. It continues to be the domain of the United States.

- In the past, Puerto Rico has had six referendums. At such referendums, voters were asked to choose between secession, statehood or the commonwealth. 52% supported statehood in the 2020 referendum.

### Washington demand:

- Washington D.C. The notion that national capital should not be part of any state was founded in 1776.
- The citizens of Washington were given the freedom to vote only in 1961, after the 23rd US constitutional amendment. Much like Puerto Rico, Washington still has only one member of the House of Representatives who has no legislative rights.

### NOTE:

To Washington, D.C. And in order to gain statehood, all the chambers of the US Congress (Senate and House) would need to approve the proposal. After that the President of the United States would authorise it.

## Tristan da Cunha

- The isolated UK overseas territory of Tristan da Cunha was declared the largest fully protected Marine reserve of the Atlantic Ocean.
- This will prohibit sand extraction, bottom trawling fishing and deep-sea mining in more than 90% of waters of the territory.

### About Tristan da Cunha:

- It is a small chain of islands inhabited by less than 300 humans. It is located 6,000 miles from London in the South Atlantic Ocean.
- The waters around the island are the richest in the world. It is home to tens of millions of seabirds, unique land birds.
- There are two endangered species and five endangered species on the island. The island is also home to World Heritage sites such as Gough and Inaccessible Islands.

## 16<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2020

### Hanoi Declaration

- India was recently represented by the External Affairs minister S Jaishankar at the East Asia Summit. The summit adopted the Hanoi Declaration.

#### Key highlights:

- The Minister expressed concern about the deterioration of trust in the South China Sea Area.
- The declaration of Hanoi reaffirmed the following declarations of the East Asia Summit
  - 2005 Kuala Lumpur Declaration
  - 2010 Hanoi Declaration
  - 2011 Bali Declaration
  - 2015 Kuala Lumpur Declaration
- The declaration highlighted the ASEAN-centric regional architecture
- It stressed upon the effective implementation of Manila Plan of Action to advance the Phnom Penh Declaration (2018-2022). It focuses on the East Asia Development Initiative.

### East Asia Summit

- The Summit is held between 18 members including 10 ASEAN countries. The other eight are India, China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Russia, US and the Republic of Korea.

### SpaceX Crew-1 Mission

- SpaceX has launched four astronauts into space under Mission Crew 1. The Crew Dragon capsule is the first spacecraft to be certified by NASA after 40 years.
- As the first of a series, there will be regular SpaceX flights to the International Space Station.

#### Key Highlights:

- The SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket has been used to launch the spacecraft and is reusable. SpaceX is expected to fly two more crewed flights in 2021.

- The mission was initially expected to commence in July 2020. It was however, delayed due to a COVID-19 pandemic.

#### NOTE:

Crew 1 is the first operating mission under NASA's Commercial Crew Program. Through the initiative, NASA aims to transport crews to and from the International Space Station and the Low Earth Orbit..

### Lonar Lake and Sur Sarovar Lake

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has recently announced the addition of Lonar Lake in Maharashtra and Sur Sarovar Lake in Uttar Pradesh to the Ramsar sites.
- Lake Lonar is the only crater lake in the country. Sur Sarovar Lake is also called Keetham Lake.

#### Lonar Lake

- It was created by an asteroid impact during the Pleistocene Period. The crater is situated within the Deccan Traps of the Deccan Plateau. It has 160 birds, 12 species of mammals and 46 reptiles. Two small streams, Penganga and Purna, flow into Lonar Lake.

#### Keetham Lake or Sur Sarovar Lake

- More than 106 species of migratory birds are found in the lake of Sur Sarovar. The water of the lake is taken from the Agra Canal. The canal originates from the Okhla reservoir on the Yamuna River in Delhi.

## 17<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2020

### Japan - Australia Defence Pact

- Japan and Australia are to sign the "Reciprocal Access Agreement" to fight China's increasing dominance in the South China Sea and the Pacific Island.
- The security deal has taken six years to sign. This would push countries together in the wake of militarization in the South China Sea and a series of tensions over islands in the East China Sea.

**Key Highlights:**

- This is Japan's first agreement to authorise international military presence in its sovereign territories since 1960. It concluded a Forces Status Agreement with the United States in 1960 and with Djibouti in 2009.
- The agreement would pave the way for the renewal of the Japan-US Forces Status Agreement.

**Wholesale Price Index (WPI) Inflation**

- The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) increased to 1.48 per cent in October 2020. This has been the highest in the last eight months.

**Key Highlights:**

- The inflation rate based on the WPI Food Index fell from 6.92 per cent in September 2020 to 5.78 per cent in October 2020. WPI production rose to 2.12 per cent in October 2020 compared to 1.61 per cent in September 2020.
- According to RBI, the present inflation rate is unrelenting. The apex bank claims that recent steps by the Government of India, such as the implementation of stock limits on onion sellers, the temporary reduction of import duty on pulse and the imposition of stock limits on imports of onions and potatoes, have not kept prices under control.

**About Wholesale Price Index**

- It focuses primarily on goods traded between companies. WPI's key goal is to track market drifts. It helps to determine the microeconomic and macroeconomic conditions of the economy.
- India had the highest inflation rate of 34.68 per cent in September 1974.
- The WPI shall be published by the Ministry of Trade and Industry.
- The base year for the wholesale price index is 2011-12. It was 2004-2005 earlier. It has been revamped in 2017.

**DIPAM-World Bank Sign Agreement**

- DIPAM (Department of Investment and Public Asset Management) has concluded an agreement with the World Bank. Under the deal, the World Bank will offer consulting advice on the monetization of reserves.
- Asset Monetization creates additional streams of income by unlocking public properties owned or used.

**Key Highlights:**

- DIPAM is planned to promote the monetization of non-core assets and enemy assets of Rs 100 Crores. Plans are in motion to sell minority interests in LIC.
- DIPAM has a system for the monetization of properties. The World Bank Advisory Project will evaluate the monetization of public assets in India, benchmark its market and structural frameworks against international best practises.

**About Enemy Property**

- During the wars between India and Pakistan in 1965 and 1971, people relocated from India to Pakistan. Under the Protection of India Act, 1962, the Government of India took over the property of those citizens who had selected Pakistani nationality.
- They are the enemy's assets. They are under the jurisdiction of the Government of India under the Enemy Property Act.

**Enemy Property Act:**

- In 2017, India amended the Enemy Property Act in 1968. The amendment extended the term "enemy subject" and "enemy firm."
- Under the amendment, the Enemy Property will remain in the possession of the Government even though the enemy ceases to be an enemy due to death or other purposes. In fact, the amendment denied the rights of the enemy's legitimate descendants.

## Malabar Exercise

- The second phase of Malabar Exercise was held in the Northern Arabian Sea. The first phase of Malabar exercise was held in Bay of Bengal.

### Key Highlights:

- The exercise is important since the four countries together form the QUAD group. At the latest meeting of the QUAD Group in October 2020, the countries agreed on a free and open Indo-Pacific zone.
- The Indian, Japanese, Australian and US Navy will engage in the second phase of the Malabar Exercise. This is the first time in the decade that the four countries have engaged in such a large-scale naval war-gaming activity.

### NOTE:

The Japan Maritime Self Defence Force is to join the exercise. The Royal Australian Navy is to be represented by its frigate Ballarant.

18<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2020

## Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ministerial Meeting

- The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) members held a virtual ministerial meeting.
- During the meeting, representatives pledged to promote free and fair markets and investment in order to recover from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- He was chaired by Malaysia. This ministerial meeting will take place in the run-up to the APEC Economic Leaders Meeting to be held on 20 November 2020. The Bogor APEC priorities are one of its flagship programmes and the deadline for the 2020 goals was set.

### Bogor Goals:

- When APEC leaders met in Bogor, Indonesia, in 1994, they introduced long-term free and open trade and investment.

- The deadline for the completion of the Bogor targets has been set as 2020. The Bogor goals were not aimed at individual countries. However it provided guidelines to Member States on the adoption of bilateral, multilateral and unilateral policies.
- The policies introduced were aligned with the principles of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Exchange (GATT) and also with those of the GATT successors.

### About APEC:

- APEC is an economic group founded in 1989. The key goal of its establishment was to encourage free trade and sustainable growth in the Pacific Rim countries. It also seeks to improve the interdependence of Asia-Pacific economies. Collectively, APEC accounts for 50% of world trade and 57% of world GDP.
- The formation of the APEC was supported by the European Union and the now defunct North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA).

## BRICS members adopted Counter Terrorism Strategy

- The members adopted counter terrorism strategy during the 12th BRICS Summit. The main objective of the strategy is to deal with terrorism.

### Key Highlights:

- The Counter-Terrorism Strategy is based on the following principles.
- Respect for the rights of participating countries
- Commitment to international law
- Acknowledge the coordination position of the United Nations
- Include the goals of Member States and national interests
- Adopting a holistic approach to the war against terrorism

### Brasilia Declaration:

- The BRICS countries adopted the Brasilia Declaration at the 11th BRICS Summit in Brasilia. The declaration has condemned extremism in all its manifestations. According to the resolution, the two key pillars of extremism are philosophy and money.
- The Brasilia Declaration reflects on the following key concerns such as money laundering and the fight against financial terrorism, reaffirming the value of developing legislative systems.
- The declaration affirms that the BRICS nations will not give credibility to any government that promotes terrorism. China's compliance with this part of the declaration is significant to India because of China's proximity to Pakistan.

### Reserve Bank Innovation Hub

- Kris Gopalakrishnan was elected the first Chairman of the Reserve Bank Innovation Centre. He has been allocated to the Indian Reserve Bank.
- The aim of the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub is to foster innovation in the financial sector.

### Key Points:

- The RBI has set up a hub for fostering, encouraging and hand-holding cross-thinking. The goal of the hub would be to expand the use of emerging technology in the financial sector.
- The hub serves as a centre for the incubation and growth of new capabilities that can be leveraged to build creative financial services and goods.

### Kris Gopalakrishnan Committee:

- It will be headed by the Board of Governors, which will have nine other members. Members are IITs, IISc, Indian National Payment Firm, etc. The Board of Governors shall administer the Reserve Bank Innovation Center.

### Team Halo

- The United Nations unveiled "Crew Halo" along with the "Vaccine Trust Initiative" of the University of London. More than 100 scientists from various parts of the world have come together as part of the initiative.
- Team Halo seeks to counter misinformation on the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines. Under the programme, scientists will create social-media-friendly videos on the vaccine sciences of COVID-19 based on their personal knowledge.

### Food Coalition:

- In November 2020, the United Nations initiated a new coalition to prevent the food crisis of COVID-19. The coalition was proposed by Italy and is headed by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The partnership would seek to improve the resilience of the agricultural food system.

### Golden Card Visa by UAE

- The United Arab Emirates has recently accepted the issuance of a Golden Card Visa with several modifications. The Visa has been in effect for ten years. Visas are issued to professionals, scientists, engineers and PhD holders from those universities.

### About Golden Visa Card:

- The visa also provides ten-year residence to the applicants and their spouses. All qualified visa holders, other than academics, are people with advanced degrees in Artificial Intelligence, Epidemiology and Big Data. Students who score at the top of the country (both at school and university level) are also able to receive a visa.

**19<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2020**

## United Nations Peacekeeping (UNPK) missions

- India, U.S. looking at training Southeast Asian nations in U.N. peacekeeping.
- With China significantly scaling up its troop contribution for United Nations Peacekeeping (UNPK) missions, India and the U.S. are looking to undertake training of military personnel for the missions from Southeast Asian countries on the lines of the ongoing initiative for African countries.

### India and the UN Peacekeeping:

- India has consistently been among the top troop contributing nations to the UN and is the fifth largest with 5,424 personnel in eight countries.
- India's contribution to the regular budget is 0.83% and 0.16% of the peacekeeping budget.
- India has so far participated in 51 of the 71 missions and contributed over 2 lakh personnel.
- It has troop deployment in Lebanon, Golan Heights, Congo and South Sudan in addition to staff officers in other missions.
- India has also set up two field hospitals in South Sudan and one in Congo.
- Since 2018, India has co-opted a contingent from Kazakhstan at the mission in Lebanon.

### About United Nations Peacekeeping:

- United Nations Peacekeeping was created in 1948.
- United Nations Peacekeeping helps countries torn by conflict create conditions for lasting peace.
- Peacekeeping has proven to be one of the most effective tools available to the UN to assist host countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace.
- Peacekeeping has unique strengths, including legitimacy, burden sharing, and an ability to deploy and sustain troops and police from around the globe, integrating them with civilian peacekeepers to advance multidimensional mandates.

- It deploys troops and police from around the world, integrating them with civilian peacekeepers to address a range of mandates set by the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the General Assembly.

## Japan and Australia sign Defence Pact

- Japan and Australia signed the "Reciprocal Access Agreement" to counter the growing influence of China in the South China sea and in the Pacific Island Nations.
- The defence agreement has taken six years of negotiations. This will bring the countries closer amidst militarization in the South China sea and series of disputes over islands in the East China sea.

### About Reciprocal Access Agreement:

- This is the first agreement of Japan to allow foreign military presence in its sovereign territory since 1960. It signed a Status of Forces Agreement with the US in 1960 and with Djibouti in 2009.
- The agreement will pave the way to renew Japan-US Status of Forces Agreement.

### India-Australia

- India and Australia signed the Mutual Logistics Support Agreement in June 2020. It is similar to the Reciprocal Access Agreement being signed between Japan and Australia.
- The agreement allowed reciprocal access to military bases. Also, it allowed the militaries to use each other's bases for replenishment of supplies and repair.
- India has signed similar defence agreements with the US, Singapore and France.

### Background

- The countries India, Japan, Australia and US are working under QUAD grouping and through various other means to achieve free and open Indo-Pacific.
- In other words, they intend to reduce and counter the influence of China in the region.

## Cow Cabinet

- The Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced that the State Government is to constitute 'Cow Cabinet' to conserve and promote cow cattle in the state. The first meeting of the cabinet is to be held on November 22, 2020. The meeting is to be held at Gau Sanctuary Salaria Agar Malwa.
- According to the Anti-Cow Slaughter Act, 2004, no one in the state is allowed to transport cattle in the state. Special permission was required even to transport cattle through the state.

### NOTE:

- In 2005, the Supreme Court of India upheld the constitutional validity of anti-cow slaughter laws enacted in different states of India. Around 20 states in India currently have laws to regulate cow slaughter (it includes cattle slaughter as well).
- The states such as Assam, Kerala, Goa, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and West Bengal have no restrictions on cow slaughter.
- However, some states allow slaughtering of bulls and bullocks. They are Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Goa, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar.

## Chapare Virus: Human to Human Transmission

- The researchers from the United States Centre for Disease Control and Prevention have discovered that the Chapare Virus is capable of human to human transmission.
- Bolivia is reportedly battling an outbreak of the virus. Like the Ebola virus, the Chapare virus is capable of causing haemorrhagic fever.

### Key Points:

- The Chapare hemorrhagic fever (CHHF) is caused by the same Arenavirus family that is responsible for diseases such as Ebola virus disease (EVD).

- According to the CDC website, arenaviruses such as the Chapare virus are usually borne by rats and can be spread by direct contact with the infected rodent, its urine and droplets, or by contact with the infected human.

## Ariel Space Mission

- The European Space Agency (ESA) has formally adopted Ariel.

### Key Highlights:

- Ariel (Atmospheric Remote-sensing Infrared Exoplanet Large-survey) will be launched in 2029.
- It will perform a large-scale survey of over a thousand exoplanets over a period of four years.
- The explorer that will study the nature, formation and evolution of exoplanets.

### About Exoplanets:

- All of the planets in our solar system orbit around the Sun. Planets that orbit around other stars are called exoplanets. Exoplanets are very hard to see directly with telescopes. They are hidden by the bright glare of the stars they orbit.
- So, astronomers use other ways to detect and study these distant planets. They search for exoplanets by looking at the effects these planets have on the stars they orbit.

## First Convergence Project of India: Renewable Energy

- The Energy Efficiency Services Limited signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of New and Renewable Energy, Goa.

### Key Points:

- The project seeks to focus on energy technologies that have developed on the basis of ideas that incorporate climate change, clean energy and artificial intelligence.
- The key objective of the project is to link sectors such as LED lighting, solar energy and energy storage and provide solutions that will allow decarbonisation.

### About Convergence Projects:

- Convergence projects are those projects where physical, social, structural and economic infrastructure is combined. It also requires a variety of schemes to accomplish its aims. For eg, India's Smart City mission is a convergence initiative.

**20<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2020**

### Indian Cities selected by WEF for Smart Cities

- The World Economic Forum picked 36 cities from 22 countries to be the pioneers of the smart cities project road map.
- These smart cities are being built under the Global Smart Cities Alliance of the G20.
- Four of the 36 cities selected are Indian cities. The four selected Indian cities are Bengaluru, Faridabad, Indore and Hyderabad.
- These 36 cities will implement five measures, including greater internet coverage, protection of privacy, accountability for cyber security, enhanced access to digital city facilities for the physically disabled and increased transparency of city data.

### G20 Global Smart City Alliance:

- The Global Smart City Alliance of the G20 was set up in June 2019 at the Osaka G20 Summit (held in 2019). India has joined the coalition as a founding member.
- The key goal of the partnership is to accelerate best practise, to encourage greater transparency and to mitigate future risks and public confidence.

### The Pioneers of Change Summit, 2020:

- The World Economic Forum will open the Pioneers of Progress Summit between 16 November 2020 and 20 November 2020.
- The summit will concentrate on sustainable development, digital business, wellness, technology, financial innovation, modern job models and frontier technologies. The findings of the summit will be used to frame the smart cities road map.

### HIV Prevention Model of India

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare addressed the Ministerial meeting of the Global Prevention Coalition for HIV prevention.
- During the conference, the Minister expressed the progress of India's HIV Prevention Model.

### Key Highlights:

- The minister stressed upon the following as India's actions under its HIV Prevention Model.
- The HIV Prevention Model of India is centred around the concept of 'Social Contracting'. The Targeted Interventions Programme is implemented under this concept.
- Test and Treat Policy was adopted.
- Mission SAMPARK was launched. Under this, around 50,000 people living with HIV who were lost to follow-up were linked back to Anti-retroviral Treatment services.
- The Adolescence Education Programme is being implemented in 23 states. It covers more than 49,000 schools.
- HIV/AIDS (Prevention and Control) act, 2017 was passed.
- India has so far succeeded in reducing its HIV infection mainly because of the National AIDS Control Programme.

### National AIDS Control Programme

- It was introduced in 1992 in India to deter and monitor AIDS. Four stages of the initiative have now been implemented. The Program is being introduced by the National AIDS Control Organisation.
- India is actively pursuing a National Strategic Plan (2017-24) to eliminate AIDS by 2030.

### Antiretroviral Treatment:

- AIDS treatment in India is given at the ART Centres. The number of these centres has been raised from 54 to 91. ART medications are not used to treat AIDS. However, it does help to suppress the HIV virus.

## Belgaum border dispute

- The Karnataka Chief Minister condemned the comments made by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister over the border dispute between the two states.
- The border dispute between the states of Maharashtra and Karnataka is also called the “Belgaum border dispute” or the Belagavi dispute.

### Key Points:

- Belgaum is now a part of Karnataka and earlier was a part of Bombay Presidency of British India. During British rule, the Bombay Presidency encompassed Maharashtra, Gujarat and certain areas of North Karnataka.
- The Mahajan Committee was formed in 1966 by the Central Government with representatives from both the states.
- Maharashtra is claiming all the 814 villages and the Belgaum city. Maharashtra invokes Article 131 (b) in the Supreme Court to justify its claim.
- According to Article 131 of the Constitution, the SC shall have original jurisdiction in any dispute between the state governments or between the state governments and the Government of India.

## Deemed Forests

- The State Government of Karnataka recently announced that it will soon declassify 6.64 lakh hectares of 9.94 hectares of deemed forests in the state. This is around 67% of the deemed forest land.

### About Deemed Forests:

- Deemed Forests are land areas that tend to be forest but have not been recorded as forest in historical documents or government records.
- Deemed Forests are known to be 1% of forest land in India. In 1996, the Supreme Court directed the States to recognise and classify deemed forests. States have full freedom to describe the forest they consider to be a deemed forest.

### ■ NOTE:

According to the Godavarman case judgement of Supreme Court in 1996, the State Governments should obtain permission from the Supreme Court for implementing changes to land that are classified as deemed forests.

## Lakshmi Vilas Bank

- The Reserve Bank of India Bank has recently placed a 30-day moratorium on Lakshmi Vilas Bank of India.
- The central bank has also drawn up a merger scheme for the bank. Under the plan, the Lakshmi Vilas Bank is to be amalgamated with the Singapore DBS Bank.

### Key Points:

- The Chennai-based bank had undergone a steady decline in the last three years. It has been experiencing continuous withdrawal of deposits and very low levels of liquidity. The bank failed to raise adequate capital to address its issues.
- Around one-fourth of the bank advances have turned into bad assets. Also, the non-performing assets of the bank were at 25.4% of its advances in the September quarter. The RBI has put a cap of Rs 25,000 on withdrawals from the bank.

### ■ NOTE:

Moratorium is temporary suspension of financial activities until issues are resolved.

## Last White Giraffe of the world

- The world's only confirmed White Giraffe was mounted with GPS tracking devices in North East Kenya.
- Giraffe is white in colour due to an unusual hereditary disorder called leucism. Leukism is a lack of pigmentation. The tracking unit will provide hourly updates on the position of the Giraffe.
- The IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) has listed Giraffe in the 'Vulnerable' category. According to IUCN, there are currently 68,293 giraffes in the World.

## Four Species of Giraffe

- Masai Giraffe: It lives in Tanzania and Kenya
- Reticulated Giraffe
- Southern Giraffe: It lives in Botswana
- Northern Giraffe: It lives in the north of Africa.

**21<sup>st</sup> NOVEMBER 2020**

## PM-FME Scheme

- Recently, the Ministry of Food Processing Industries launched the Capacity building Component of the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PM-FME) Scheme.
- Under the capacity building component of the scheme, the trainers are to be delivered with classroom lecture and demonstration through online mode.
- These trainers will in turn train the district level trainers who will ultimately train the beneficiaries. Currently, the training is to be provided for fruits and vegetable processing.

### About PM-FME Scheme:

- The Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro-Food Processing Enterprises (PM-FME) scheme was initiated under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan and introduced by the Ministry of Food Processing.
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme.
- Scheme will be implemented over a 5 year period from 2020-21 to 2024-25. 2,00,000 micro-enterprises are to be assisted with credit linked subsidies.
- It aims to assist two lakh micro food processing units to provide technical, financial and business support to upgrade the existing micro food processing enterprises.
- **Objectives:**
  - Increase in access to finance by micro food processing units.
  - Increase in revenues of target enterprises.
  - Enhanced compliance with food quality and safety standards.

- Strengthening capacities of support systems.
- Transition from the unorganized sector to the formal sector.
- Special focus on women entrepreneurs and Aspirational districts.
- Focus on minor forest produce in Tribal Districts.

### NOTE:

India is the second largest producer of fruits and vegetables in the world after China.

## Operation Calypso

- Operation Calypso has recently been initiated by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI). During the mission, 504 grammes of cocaine were confiscated and a transnational drug racket was dismantled.

### About DRI:

- The Directorate is run by the officers of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs.
- It is one of the major intelligence agencies of India.

## World Drug Report, 2020

- The report is prepared by the Office of the United Nations on Drugs and Crime. According to the study, India is one of the main centres of illegal drug trafficking.
- Drug trade in India extends from ancient cannabis to new products such as methamphetamine. Drug trade is strong in India since India is situated in the centre of two of the world's largest opium-producing areas. They're the Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent.
- The Golden Triangle is the area where the borders of Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar meet at the confluence of the Ruak and Mekong rivers.
- The Golden Crescent comprises Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Along with Afghanistan in the Golden Crescent, it has been one of the largest opium-producing areas of the world since the 1950s.

## Drug policy in India

- India's two main drug laws are the Prevention of Illegal Trafficking of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988 and the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985.
- The NDPS Act makes it unlawful for an individual to produce, process, transport, buy, store or consume psychotropic substances or drugs.

## India-New Development Bank sign Agreement

- India and the New Development Bank have concluded a USD 500 million deal.
- Under the deal, the New Development Bank is to lend funds for the construction of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System project.

### Regional rapid transit system:

- The Regional Rapid Transit System links the fastest-growing small towns in the National Capital Region.
- The key goal of the project is to reduce reliance on highways. It is being implemented by the National Capital Region Transport Corporation.

### Technologies used

- Ballastless tracks are to be used in Regional Rapid Transit Systems. The tracks are being used for the first time in India. They're easy to substitute.
- These tracks offer outstanding riding experience at a speed of 180 kilometres per hour.

### About New Development Bank:

- The New Development Bank is commonly referred to as the BRICS bank. The bank's headquarters are situated in Shanghai, China.
- The idea to set up the New Development Bank was made by India at the fourth BRICS summit held in New Delhi in 2012.
- The shares of the bank shall be divided evenly among the shareholders.

## TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix

- Recently, TRACE has published the Global Bribery Risk Matrix. India ranked 77 with a score of 45 on the global ranking.

### Key Highlights:

- India has performed better than China, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal. Bhutan was the only neighbour to be ranked higher than India.
- Denmark has been the top of the chart, followed by Norway, Finland, Sweden and New Zealand. The lowest ranks were held by North Korea, Turkmenistan, South Sudan, Venezuela and Eritrea.

### About The Ranking:

- The ranking is prepared by TRACE International. It is the world leading anti-bribery standard setting organisation.
- The TRACE Bribery Risk Matrix, 2020 measured bribery in 194 jurisdictions.

## Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has initiated the "Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge." The goal of the challenge is to ensure that no life of septic tank or sewage cleaner is lost while cleaning.

### About the Challenge:

- The results of the challenge are to be announced on the day of independence. The goal of the challenge is to encourage mechanised cleaning. The awards for the participating cities are to be awarded in three subcategories as follows.
  - Cities with a population of more than 10 lakhs.
  - Cities with a population of 3-10 lakhs.
  - Cities with a population of fewer than 3 lakhs.

### ■ NOTE:

The Government of India has legislated The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Rehabilitation Act, 2013 to protect manual sewer cleaners.

## Meghalaya Integrated Transport Project

- India and the World Bank have signed an agreement to modernise the transport system in the state of Meghalaya.
- The project aims to boost the 300 km strategic road segment through climate sensitive and natural solutions.

### About Meghalaya Integrated Transport Project:

- The project would allow Meghalaya to develop as a big hub for trade with border countries such as Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh.
- The scheme will appeal to small-scale industries, agriculture, tourism, health and education centres. That would improve access to healthcare services.

## Wind-Solar Hybrid Park

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has proposed a new scheme to develop Wind-Solar Hybrid Parks. The scheme aims to address the key issues faced by renewable energy projects.

### Key Features:

- The Wind-Solar Hybrid Park will be a concentrated field of power projects. It will provide the region with the appropriate facilities.
- The National Wind Energy Institute shall choose the sites for the construction of wind-solar hybrid parks.
- The capacity of each park is estimated to be 500 MW or more. However, there are no limits on the construction of smaller capacity parks. In the case of smaller capacity parks, the capacity of the park may not be less than 50 MW.

