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**MADE EASY
WEEKLY
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WEEK-3

15th March - 21st March, 2021

**Targeted Examinations:
CSE, ESE, PSUs, State Exams,
SSC and Banking Exams**

15th MARCH 2021

INS Jalashwa

- The Indian Naval Ship Jalashwa arrived in the Comorian port of Anjouan. The ship was carrying 1000 metric tonnes of rice.

Background

- This consignment of 1000 metric tonnes of rice was flagged off to Comoros in response to a commitment made by India's Vice President, Venkaiah Naidu, during his short visit to Comoros in October 2019.
- Following the delivery of the consignment to the Comoros, the INS Jalashwa will travel to the Port of Ehoala to deliver another consignment of 1000 metric tons of rice and 100,000 HCQ tablets.

About INS Jalashwa

- It is an amphibious transport dock that is currently in service with the Indian Navy. This ship was purchased from the United States in 2005 for \$90 million.
- In June 2007, the ship was commissioned into service. This is the only Indian navy ship purchased from the United States. It is headquartered in Visakhapatnam and is part of the Eastern Naval Command.

UPI-Help

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), India's digital payments umbrella entity, has announced "UPI-Help" on the BHIM UPI Application.
- UPI-Help can serve as a grievance redressal mechanism for users of the BHIM application.

Highlights:

- The application would allow customers to check the status of pending transactions and file grievances about transactions that have not been processed or money that has not been delivered to the beneficiary.
- Users may also file complaints about merchant transactions. This window is currently available on the BHIM app for users of State Bank of India, HDFC Bank, AXIS Bank, and ICICI Bank.

- Other users, including those of Paytm Payments Bank, TJSB Sahakari Bank, and other participating banks, will be able to use UPI-Help at a later date.

About Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM)

- It is a mobile wallet app in India. The National Payments Corporation of India created the app (NPCI). It is built on the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) (UPI). The app is named after Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.
- The application enables e-payments to be made directly to banks. It is based on Immediate Payment Service and supports all Indian banks that use UPI (IMPS). The app is compatible with all mobile networks.

■ NOTE:

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is a non-profit umbrella organization that runs retail payment and settlement systems in India. It was established in December of 2008.

Shetrunjay Hills Reserve Forest Area

- A fire recently broke out in Gujarat's Shetrunjay Hills reserve forest area. The forest area in the Bhavnagar territorial forest division is home to Asiatic lions.

About Hills:

- The hills are in Gujarat's Palitana city, which is part of the Bhavnagar district. The hills are situated on the banks of the Shetrunji River and are considered holy by Jains. It is located 164 metres above sea level.
- These hills are similar to those in Gwalior, Mount Abu, Bihar, and Girnar where Jain temples have been erected.

■ NOTE:

The Shetrunji River is a river in Gujarat that flows eastward. The river begins in the Gir Hills to the northeast. The river stretches for a total of 227 kilometers.

16th MARCH 2021

International Solar Alliance

- The Indian Ministry of External Affairs has announced that Italy has signed a framework agreement with India to join the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

Key Highlights:

- Following the amendment to the ISA framework agreement, Italy ratified the framework agreement.
- This amendment made membership in the Solar Alliance available to all United Nations members.

About International Solar Alliance (ISA):

- The International Solar Alliance was launched jointly by the Indian Prime Minister and the French President during the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP21, in Paris. It aims to contribute to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement through rapid and massive deployment of solar energy.
- ISA is a treaty-based intergovernmental alliance comprising 121 countries. The establishment of the alliance was initiated by India. Most of the member countries are the sunshine countries. These countries are located either completely or partly in between Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn.
- However, the countries falling outside the tropics can also join the alliance and avail all the benefits which are available to the members except the voting rights.

India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum meeting

- The Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum meeting was organised in virtual mode.
- The virtual meeting was participated by the Ministers and officials who are responsible for Women Affairs of IBSA Countries.

Key Points:

- During the virtual meeting, the forum discussed the issues which have contributed in transforming the lives of women.
- They highlighted the initiatives, policies and best practices which the country initiated for the gender inclusive economy to transform and eliminate the gender-based discrimination & violence against women. This in turn will help in understanding each other's systems and programmes.
- Based on the understanding, the country would be able to create a strategic roadmap in order to promote the gender equality agenda to achieve the sustainable development goals.

India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum

- The IBSA Dialogue Forum is a tripartite grouping (India, Brazil, South Africa) for promoting cooperation among these countries.
- The grouping was formalized and named the IBSA Dialogue Forum when the Foreign Ministers of the three countries met in Brasilia (Brazil) on 6th June 2003 and issued the Brasilia Declaration.
- IBSA does not have a headquarters or a permanent executive secretariat. At the highest level, it counts on the Summits of Heads of State and Government.
- IBSA Fund for Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger, established in 2004, is a unique Fund through which development projects are executed with IBSA funding in fellow developing countries.

Mobile Integrated Network Terminal (MINT) Systems

- The Indian Army is in the process of procuring Mobile Integrated Network Terminal (MINT) systems under the Make II category of DAP 2020.
- It will provide a huge boost to the Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan of the government.

Key Highlights:

- The Ministry of Defence highlighted that; Indian Army is in the process of procuring the MINT systems under the Make II Category of DAP 2020.
- It is envisaged as a lightweight, portable, state of art integrated communication solution with satellite backhaul. It is equipped with a wireless access system to support voice, video and data.
- It creates a dedicated high-speed 4G network bubble, with on-request support for interoperability between LTE handsets and other existing tactical networks.
- It is capable of supporting all or at least one of CDMA, GSM and TETRA connectivity in the proposed defence band.
- It is meant for use in the mountains and high altitude terrain for seamless communication.

'Make-II' category:

- Make-II (Industry Funded): Projects under the 'Make-II' category will involve prototype development of equipment/ system/ platform or their upgrades or their subsystems/ sub-assembly/assemblies/ components, primarily for import substitution/ innovative solutions, for which no Government funding will be provided for prototype development purposes.

Draft National e-commerce Policy

- The Government of India is planning to develop regulations for the personal and non-personal data through the Draft National e-commerce policy.

Key Highlights:

- Every e-commerce company will have to construct a registered business entity in India as the importer on record or as the entity through which all sales in India are transacted. This is aimed at ensuring compliance with extant laws and regulations for preventing deceptive and fraudulent practices, protection of privacy, safety and security.

- e-commerce companies are mandated to disclose seller details such as their name, address and contact numbers. Sellers will also be required to provide an undertaking to the platform on the genuineness of their products.
- Trademark (TM) owners will be given an option to register themselves with e-commerce platforms and whenever a trade-marked product is uploaded for sale on the platform, the platform shall notify the respective TM owner.
- The policy says that the framework will be created to provide the basis for imposing restrictions on cross-border data flow from specified sources including data collected by IoT devices installed in public space, and data generated by users in India by various sources, including e-commerce platforms, social media, search engines.
- The policy grants data the status of the capital. The policy imposes conditions on a business entity that collects or processes any sensitive data in India and stores it abroad.
- The policy calls for a Suitable framework for sharing of community data that serves the larger public interest (subject to addressing privacy-related issues) with start-ups and firms. The implementation of this shall be undertaken by a 'data authority' to be established for this purpose.
- The policy stresses on developing physical infrastructure for a robust digital economy and suggests steps for developing the capacity for data storage in India.
- The policy calls to raise the cap of each export order placed online and dispatched through courier or postal mode from current 25000 to make Indian e-commerce exports attractive even for high-value shipments through courier mode.

About e-commerce policy:

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) prepared and published the draft e-commerce policy.

- The e-Commerce Policy establishes multiple regulatory strategies to solve concerns such as data safety, maintaining a fair playing field, and sector-consumer security.

17th MARCH 2021

Giant Space Telescope in Lake Baikal

- Russia launched one of the biggest underwater space telescopes of the world. This underwater space telescope was deployed deep into the universe from pristine waters of Lake Baikal.

Key Points:

- Since 2015, the deep underwater telescope has been under renovation. The telescope was built to detect neutrinos, the smallest known particles.
- The telescope is known as the "Baikal-GVD." It was sunk to a depth of 750-1300 meters across four kilometers from Lake Baikal's coast.
- The floating observatory comprises strings along with the spherical glass and the attached stainless-steel modules.

About Lake Baikal:

- Lake Baikal is a rift lake located in the southern Siberia, Russia. It is the largest freshwater lake by volume across the world. The lake is also the World's deepest lake with the maximum depth of 1,642 m. Lake Baikal has been designated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in the year 1996.

Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020

- The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020, has been enacted by Parliament. The bill was passed in order to amend the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971.
- The bill amendments were made with the aim of increasing women's access to safe and legal abortion services on eugenic, therapeutic, social, and humanitarian grounds.

Key Features:

- Pregnancy Termination Under Medical Guidance (Amendment) Bill 2020 recommends obtaining a single provider's opinion to terminate a pregnancy up to 20 weeks of gestation.
- It has incorporated the requirement of two providers' opinions in order to terminate a pregnancy up to 20-24 weeks.
- The bill also raises the upper gestation limit for specific categories of women, such as rape survivors, differently-abled women, minors, and incest victims, from 20 weeks to 24 weeks.
- The bill recommends that the upper gestation limit be waived in cases of significant foetal anomalies diagnosed by the Medical Board.
- The composition, functions and other details of the Medical Board will be provided under the Act. The bill also proposes that the name and other such details of a woman whose pregnancy has been terminated should only be revealed to the person authorised by law.

Sinatra Doctrine

- The Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) member countries have accepted the "Sinatra Doctrine" as a counter to China's increasing aggressiveness.

Key points:

- The Sinatra Doctrine will be based on two pillars:
 - Continuing cooperation with China in addressing global issues such as Covid-19, climate change, and
 - Regional conflicts, as well as strengthening the European Union's strategic sovereignty by protecting its technical industries.

About Sinatra Doctrine

- This doctrine was the name given by Mikhail Gorbachev's Soviet government to their policy of allowing neighboring Warsaw Pact states to decide their own internal affairs.

- The song "My Way," popularized by Frank Sinatra, inspired the moniker. The doctrine's implementation was part of Gorbachev's doctrine of new political thought.

■ NOTE:

The Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) member countries include- Bosnia, Albania, Herzegovina, Croatia, Bulgaria, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Poland, Slovakia, Serbia and Slovenia.

18th MARCH 2021

Insurance Amendment Bill 2021

- The Rajya Sabha has passed the "Insurance Amendment Bill 2021" which will amend the Insurance Act, 1938.

Key features:

- The bill will increase the limit of foreign direct investment (FDI) from 49 percent to 74 percent in Indian insurance companies.
- The bill also comprises the provision for removal of restrictions on ownership & control on the insurance companies.
- As per the bill, majority of directors on the board and key management persons will have to be resident Indians.
- This move will provide access to fresh capital to some of the insurers. The experts also believe that the decision will also benefit the individual policyholders.

■ NOTE:

The Government of India has proposed during her presentation of the Union Budget 2020-21 to liberalize the foreign direct investment (FDI) in Indian insurance companies to 74% .

New Vehicle Scrapping Policy

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has recently introduced the Vehicle Scrapping Policy in the Lok Sabha.

Key Highlights:

- The Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways said that this policy would result in the scrapping of 51 lakh light motor cars that are 20 years old or older.
- He went on to say that 34 lakhs of light motor vehicles are more than 15 years old, and around 51 lakhs are more than 20 years old.

About Vehicle Scrapping Policy:

- The Union Minister emphasized that the scrapping policy would bring about transformational changes in the automotive industry by lowering pollutant emissions from vehicles. The policy was implemented with the goal of establishing an ecosystem to phase out unfit, old, and polluting cars.
- Personal cars will be required to undergo fitness testing at automated centers after 20 years, according to the policy.
- Commercial cars, on the other hand, would be required to pass a fitness test for 15 years. The owner would be unable to drive the car on the road if it failed the fitness test three times.

19th MARCH 2021

Gram Ujala Scheme for Rural Areas

- The Government of India has launched the Gram UJALA Programme - an ambitious scheme offering the world's cheapest LED bulbs in rural areas at a mere Rs. 10.

About 'Gram Ujala Scheme':

- Under the programme, 7 watts and 12-Watt LED bulbs with 3 years warranty will be given to rural consumers against submission of working Incandescent bulbs.

- LEDs will be available for only Rs 10 each for each household. Each household will get up to 5 LEDs.
- In the first phase, 15 million LED bulbs will be distributed across villages of Aarah (Bihar), Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), Nagpur (Maharashtra), and villages in western Gujarat.
- The Gram Ujala programme will be implemented in villages of the 5 districts only. These rural households will also have metres installed in their houses to account for usage.

Significance of GRAM UJALA Programme

- Under the programme, the carbon credit documentation will be sent to UN accredited validators for inclusion into the Shine Program of activities.
- It will provide clean energy access and make a significant contribution towards mitigating climate change and achieving a sustainable future.
- It will have a significant impact on India's climate change action energy savings of 2025 million KWh/year and CO2 reductions of 1.65 million T CO2/year.

List of Grammy Award Winners 2020

- The 62nd Annual Grammy Awards announced on January 26, 2020. The Awards ceremony was held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles. The show was hosted by Singer-songwriter Alicia Keys.
- The Recording Academy bestows the Grammy Award to honor exceptional achievement in the mostly English-language music industry.
- The primary goal of awarding artists, industry members, and society at large is to recognize the positive effect on their lives.

List of Grammy Award Winners 2020	
Winner	Category of Awards
"When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?" - Billie Eilish	Album Of The Year
"Bad Guy" - Billie Eilish	Record Of The Year
"Bad Guy" - Billie Eilish O'Connell & Finneas O'Connell, songwriters (Billie Eilish)	Song Of The Year
"Ventura" - Anderson .Paak	Best R&B Album
"Come Home" - Anderson .Paak featuring André 3000	Best R&B Performance
"Say So" - PJ Morton, songwriter (PJ Morton Featuring JoJo)	Best R&B Song
"No Geography" - The Chemical Brothers	Best Dance/Electronic Album
"12 Little Spells" - Esperanza Spalding	Best Jazz Vocal Album
"Finding Gabriel" - Brad Mehldau	Best Jazz Instrumental Album
"Chernobyl" - Hildur Guðnadóttir, composer	Score soundtrack for a visual media
"Old Town Road" - Lil Nas X & Billy Ray Cyrus, Calmatic, video director; Candice Dragonas, Melissa Larsen & Saul Levitz, video producers	Best Music Video

20th MARCH 2021

World Happiness Report, 2021

- The United Nation Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) has released its annual report called "World Happiness Report, 2021". The report was collected and prepared slightly differently amid the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- The report measures the subjective well-being by relying on three indicators namely, Life Evaluation, Positive Emotions and Negative Emotions. The report was presented ahead of "World Happiness day" which is observed on March 20.

Key Highlights:

- India has been ranked 139, out of 149 countries evaluated. In 2020, India was ranked 144 out of 156 countries surveyed.
- Finland has been ranked as the happiest country in the world for the fourth consecutive year followed by Iceland, Denmark, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Sweden, Germany and Norway.
- Afghanistan (149) is the most unhappy country followed by Zimbabwe (148), Rwanda (147), Botswana (146) and Lesotho (145).

About Sustainable Development Network**Solution:**

- The SDSN, launched in 2012, mobilizes global scientific and technological expertise to promote practical problem solving for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Climate Agreement.
- It was established under the auspices of the United Nations Secretary-General.
- The SDSN and the Bertelsmann Stiftung have been publishing the annual SDG Index & Dashboards Global Report since 2016.

Govt of NCT of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021

- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) introduced the "Government of NCT of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in the Lok Sabha.

Key points:

- According to the bill, the term "Government" in the national capital territory of Delhi refers to the "Lieutenant Governor" (L-G) of Delhi.
- It gives the L-G of Delhi discretionary powers even though the Legislative Assembly of Delhi has the authority to make laws.
- The proposed bill further seeks to ensure that the L-G is "necessarily granted an opportunity" in order to give opinion before any decision of the Council of Ministers or Delhi Cabinet is implemented.

Provisions regarding NCT of Delhi:

- Delhi is a Union Territory that has its own assembly. In accordance with Article 239AA of the Constitution, the UT was created in 1991. This article was added to the constitution by the Sixty-ninth (Amendment) Act of 1991.
- The current laws state that the Delhi Legislative Assembly has the authority to make laws in all areas except police, public order, and land.
- Section 44 of the 1991 Act states that; all the executive actions of the L-G, whether it is taken on the advice of his Ministers or any other ways, shall be taken in the name of L-G.
- Article 239AA mandates that the Council of Ministers will aid and advise the L-G in matters where the Legislative Assembly has been empowered to make laws except those matters where the L-G exercises his discretion

21st MARCH 2021**India-US Artificial Intelligence Initiative**

- 'Indo-US Science and Technology Forum (IUSSTF)' has launched the "US India Artificial Intelligence Initiative". The initiative will focus on the Artificial Intelligence cooperation in priority critical areas for both nations.

Key Highlights:

- The IUSSTF is a bilateral organisation funded by the Department of Science & Technology (DST), the GOI and the U.S. Department of States.
- USIAI will serve as a platform to discuss opportunities, challenges, and barriers for bilateral AI R&D collaboration, enable AI innovation, help share ideas for developing an AI workforce etc.
- AI R&D is being promoted and implemented in the country through a network of 25 technology hubs working as a triple helix set up under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS).

- It will bring together key stakeholders from India and the United States to create synergies that address challenges and opportunities at the interface of science, technology, and society.
- This will provide an opportunity to discuss the emerging AI landscape, and address the challenges of developing an AI workforce.

Artificial Intelligence

- It describes the action of machines accomplishing tasks that have historically required human intelligence.
- It includes technologies like machine learning, pattern recognition, big data, neural networks, self algorithms etc.
- AI is different from hardware driven robotic automation. Instead of automating manual tasks, AI performs frequent high volume computerised tasks reliably.

Spain Passed Law to legalise Euthanasia

- The Parliament of Spain has passed and voted in favour of law that legalises the euthanasia.
- This law was drafted following the public pressure which was generated due to several high-profile cases while most specific case being that of Ramon Sampedro whose situation was immortalised in Oscar-winning 2004 film titled “The Sea Inside”.

Key Points:

- The Spanish legislation will allow the passive euthanasia in which the medical staff will intentionally end a life to relieve the suffering. This will be done by halting the life serving medical treatment.
- The law has also allowed the assisted suicide in which the patient will carry out the procedure of ending life. In order to go through this procedure, the patient must be a Spanish national or a legal resident.

- The patients must also be “fully aware and conscious” while making the request. The request needs to be submitted in writing two times within the gap of 15 days.

NOTE:

Spain has become the fourth European nation which has decriminalised assisted. The other four EU Nations include Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg.

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) Initiative

- The European Union (EU) has joined the “Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) initiative” of India.
- The EU released its statement that the climate-related extreme events are increasing globally. The ongoing covid-19 pandemic has further reinforced the need for robust disaster preparedness.

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure initiative

- CDRI is a global alliance of governments, United Nations (UN) organizations, private sector, multilateral development banks, and academic institutions.
- The initiative's goal is to foster disaster-proof infrastructure. The initiative's goal is to promote research and knowledge sharing in the areas of infrastructure risk management, finance, and recovery mechanisms.
- It also supports sustainable development. The CDRI Initiative was launched by the Prime Minister of India in the year 2019. The initiative was launched at the UN Climate Change Summit. It also supports sustainable development.
- This initiative also aligns with the objectives of “European Green Deal” and “EU Strategy on Adaptation”. This further encouraged the EU to join the India-led initiative.