



MADE EASY

India's Best Institute for IES, GATE & PSUs

**MADE EASY
WEEKLY
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WEEK-2

08th January - 14th January, 2021

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

8th JANUARY 2020

Rewari-Madar freight corridor section

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently dedicated the Rewari-Madar section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor.

Key points:

- It is situated in Haryana and Rajasthan. It runs for 227 km in Rajasthan. It crosses through Sikar, Jaipur, Ajmer, Nagaur and Alwar districts.
- With the new track, the freight trains are to run at a maximum speed of 100 km/hr. This is because the Indian Railways is planning to increase the maximum speed of freight trains to 100 km/hr. The line is compatible to achieve such speeds. The weight carrying capacity of the wagons in this route has been increased by 14%.
- The Rewari-Madar Freight Corridor section will be of great help to the E-Commerce companies such as Flipkart and Amazon. Apart from the E-commerce sector, the freight corridor will also open up doors for automobile sectors.
- The route is highly important for the transport of food grains and fertilisers from the northern region to the eastern and north eastern regions. Also, the northern region receives coal, jute, iron ore, petroleum products from the eastern parts through this route.

India-France Annual Strategic Dialogue

- India and France held their annual strategic dialogue in New Delhi.

Key takeaways:

- The countries mainly focused on COVID-19 vaccines, nuclear, Indo-Pacific, space, environment, maritime safety, digital economy, environment and defence sectors.
- France has a deep presence in the Indian Ocean Region. The territories of Mayotte Island and Reunion

Island are under French control. These overseas areas provide France an area of 28 lakh square kilometres in the Indian Ocean Region as Exclusive Economic Zone under the UNCLOS Treaty.

- China has increased its presence in the Indian Ocean with its presence in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Djibouti and Maldives. On the other hand, the French has established permanent Naval Bases in Abu Dhabi and Djibouti.

NOTE:

The India-France Strategic dialogue is held annually with the countries alternating as hosts. The India-France Strategic Dialogue, 2020 was held in Paris.

Central Government Scheme for Industrial Development of J&K

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs recently chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved an ambitious scheme to boost the industrial development of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Government of India has allocated 28,400 crores of Rupees for the industrial development of Jammu and Kashmir scheme. The funds are to be used to develop the industrial sector of the territory till 2037.

Key features:

- The main objective of the scheme is to generate jobs that will lead to economic development and boost industry and service later development of the union territory. This in turn will attract new investment.
- The scheme is ambitious as it offers attractions to both large and small industrial units.

Incentives offered under Scheme:

- The scheme will provide capital investment incentive at 30% in zone.
- It will provide an investment incentive of 50% in Zone B. This includes investment in the manufacturing and construction sector.

- The maximum limit of incentive is 5 crores of Rupees in zone a and 7.5 crores of Rupees in Zone B respectively.
- The scheme will provide interest subvention at an annual rate of 6 pc for 7 years on loan amounts up to 500 Crores of rupees.
- The GST linked incentive will be three hundred percent of the eligible value of actual investment.
- The amount of incentive provided should not exceed one tenth of the total eligible amount of incentive.

9th JANUARY 2020

25th Amendment of the US Constitution

- The United States Capitol Protests, 2021, has induced calls to invoke the 25th Constitutional amendment.

Key Points:

- The 25th Constitutional amendment lays out how a US President or a Vice President can be replaced or succeeded.
- It includes resolve issues revolving around unfortunate situations like death, resignation to removal of the US President and actions to be followed after a President becomes disabled to such a degree that he is unable to fulfil his responsibilities. The amendment has four sections.

Four sections of the amendment:

- In the case of the resignation of the President, the Vice-President will hold the position and the title of President. This will essentially prohibit the outgoing current from returning to office.
- The second part of the amendment contains the rules on vacancy of the office of vice-president.
- The vice president can take over as acting president if the president declares his or her inability to act as

president. When the president is unable to declare his or her incompetent then the fourth section of the amendment is invoked. This section requires the vice president and the cabinet to jointly prove the incompetence of the Vice-President.

India to chair 3 UNSC Committees

- The Ambassador of India to the United Nations recently announced that India has been asked to chair three important committees of the Security Council.
- Three UNSC committees to be chaired by India: Counter-Terrorism Committee, Libya Sanctions Committee and Taliban Sanctions Committee.

About Counter-Terrorism Committee:

- The Counter-Terrorism Committee of the United Nations Security Council was set up in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in the United States on 09/11.
- Earlier India chaired the Counter-Terrorism Committee in 2011-12.
- It tracks and conducts counter-terrorism operations.
- There are 15 member states of the Counter-Terrorism Commission. They are Belgium, Dominic Republic, China, Germany, France, Niger, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Russia, South Africa, UK, Vietnam and US.

Libya Sanctions Committee:

- The Libya Sanctions Committee of the United Nations Security Council is enforcing the sanctions regime in Libya.
- It also controls Libya's two-way weapons embargo, travel bans, asset freezes.
- It calculated the illegal export of petroleum to the world.
- Member States of the Committee are required to prohibit the export of weapons supplies and associated materials to Libya.

Taliban Sanctions Committee:

- The Taliban Sanctions Committee is working to support the unity, harmony and security in Afghanistan.
- Which is also known as the 1988 Sanctions Commission.
- When will the UN Security Council enforce sanctions?
- The United Nations Security Council could enforce sanctions in response to the threat to international peace and security.

WHO Map of India

- The World Health Organization released a new map. The map differentiated Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh from the rest of Indian mainland with a different colour.

Key Points:

- The new WHO map of India has marked the newly created Union Territories of India, Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir in grey colour. Also, it has marked the disputed Aksai Chin region in grey colour with blue stripes.
- The blue streaks are of the same shade as China. The map depicts India in the colour of navy blue.
- India is not happy with the current map. India claims that China has a huge role to play in the WHO's new map. China's impact on the World Health Organization is strong, as the nation contributes an immense amount of support to the organisation.

10th JANUARY 2021

Single Window Clearance System for Coal Mines

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs launched the "Single Window Clearance System" for coal mines.

Key Points:

- The Single Window Clearance System for Coal Mines is an online platform launched to obtain clearances for smooth operationalisation of coal mines.

- It is aimed at allowing coal bidders to obtain all required clearances from a single portal. Currently, a company has to receive 19 major approvals to start a coal mine.
- Now with the single Window Clearance System, all the 19 approvals can be obtained in one place. This is one of the major steps in Coal Sector reforms of the Government of India.

NOTE:

It is a form of natural gas extracted from coal beds. Majority of the coal bed methane reserves are found in the Gondwana sediments of eastern India.

DRDO Landing Gear System for UAV

- DRDO recently developed the Retractable Landing Gear System for Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, TAPAS. These landing gear systems are to be used by the Indian Navy.

Key Points:

- The Retractable Landing Gear Assembly consists of a hydro-gas shock strut combined with a tyre and braking system.
- It absorbs and dissipates the load of the landing impact to secure the aircraft. It has nitrogen and hydraulic fluid to absorb and dissipate impact loads.
- It absorbs and dissipates the load of the landing impact to secure the aircraft. It also assists the aircraft during ground manoeuvres.
- The main purpose of Landing Gear systems in Drones is to facilitate safe take-off and landing of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.

NOTE:

TAPAS is a Tactical Airborne Platform for Aerial Surveillance beyond horizon. It is also known as RUSTOM-2. It was developed by India on the lines of American Predator Drones. The first flight of TAPAS took place in 2016.

Vanadium

- The Geological Survey of India has found promising concentrations of Vanadium in the Tamang and Depo areas of Arunachal Pradesh.

Key Points:

- According to the Geological Survey of India, the Vanadium mineralisation is geologically similar to the “Stone Coal” Vanadium deposits of China.
- The GSI has discovered about seven metre thick carbonaceous phyllite for a length of more than six kilometres in the Depo area. Vanadium was also found in Subansiri district for a length of 15.5 km and thickness of 7 metres.

About Vanadium:

- Vanadium is a by-product obtained from the processing of Vanadiferous magnetite ores. In its pure form, Vanadium is soft, ductile and grey in colour.
- According to Indian Bureau of Mines, the total estimated reserves of Vanadium in India is around 24.63 million tonnes. Of this, the estimated Vanadium Pentoxide is 64,594 tonnes.

11th JANUARY 2021

National Youth Parliament

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to address the National Youth Parliament. The top winners of the National Youth Parliament will speak before the Prime Minister on January 12 valedictory function.

Key Points:

- The first National Youth Parliament was held in 2019 under the theme “be the voice of new India and find solutions and contribute to policy”.
- The National Youth Parliament is organised to hear the voice of the youth between the age of 18 and 25 years.

- It is held on January 12 to commemorate the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Also, the Government of India celebrates the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda as National Youth Day.
- It is held at three levels.

NOTE:

TAPAS is a Tactical Airborne Platform for Aerial Surveillance beyond horizon. It is also known as RUSTOM-2. It was developed by India on the lines of American Predator Drones. The first flight of TAPAS took place in 2016.

Khadi Prakritik Paint

- The Union Minister Shri Nitin Gadkari is to launch “Khadi Prakritik Paint”. It will be developed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission.

Key Points:

- The Khadi Prakritik Paint is a non-toxic eco-friendly paint with anti-bacterial and antifungal properties. It is the first-of-its kind product.
- The Khadi Prakritik Paint was developed with cow dung as its main ingredient. It is odourless and cost-effective.
- The Khadi Prakritik paint is available in two forms namely plastic emulsion paint and distemper paint.

Advantages:

- The paint is free from heavy metals such as mercury, lead, arsenic, chromium, cadmium.
- The paint will help in doubling farmers' income. This is because the technology adopted in the making of Khadi Prakritik paint will increase consumption of cow dung as raw material for eco-friendly products.

CollabCAD software

- The National Informatics centre and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) jointly launched the CollabCAD software.

Key Points:

- The CollabCAD software provides engineering solutions for students and the Faculty of Engineering Graphics curriculum. It aims to provide a platform to students across the country to create and modify digital designs.
- The aim is to provide a good platform to the students of Atal tinkering labs across the country. With the software the students of Atal tinkering labs will be able to create and modify 3D designs with free flow of creativity:

About Atal Tinkering Labs:

- The Atal Tinkering Labs aim to “cultivate 1 million children in India as neoteric innovators”. The Atal innovation mission will provide one time establishment cost of 10 lakh rupees and operational expenses of another 10 lakh rupees to each Atal tinkering lab. This financial support will be provided for a maximum period of 5 years.
- Any school can set up an Atal tinkering lab. The only criteria is that the applicant school should provide at least 1500 square feet of built up space.

12th JANUARY 2021

NASA's most powerful rocket ever built

- NASA is to launch the most powerful rocket in the world on January 17, 2021. NASA has named it as the “Space Launch System”.

Key Features:

- The Space Launch System is to carry the first woman and the next man to the moon.
- It is 98 metres tall. On the other hand, Saturn V that carried Astronauts to the moon in the 1960s was 110 metre tall.
- It has the capacity to carry more than twenty-seven tonnes.
- The Space Launch System is to be hauled into the Lower Earth Orbit.
- It has four RS-25 engines.

Solid Rocket Booster in SLS:

- The Solid Rocket Boosters provide extra power to escape gravity clutches. These solid boosters provide 75% of the total thrust. They will burn six tonnes of Solid Rocket Booster every second.
- The SLS will generate 39.1 mega Newtons of thrust at launch. This is 15% more than Saturn V. This is the highest thrust level ever achieved.

Atal Tinkering Labs

- The Indian Space Research Organization recently announced that it is to adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Labs across the country.

Key Points:

- By adopting a hundred Atal Tinkering Laboratories, ISRO aims to promote the mentoring and coaching of students in cutting-edge technology. It also contains developments related to space.
- ISRO will foster scientific disposition among students and allow them to use space-related technology.
- Via the class, students can acquire realistic and application-based knowledge of STEM.
- There are more than 7,000 Atal Tinkering Labs in India. It allows more than three million students to develop a problem-solving, creative and tinkering way of thinking.
- Atal Tinkering Laboratories has been set up by NITI Aayog.
- Atal Tinkering Laboratories has been set up under the Atal Innovation Mission Programme.

About Atal Innovation Mission:

- The Atal Innovation Mission was launched to promote entrepreneurship and innovation in the country. It has two core functions namely entrepreneurship through self-employment and innovation promotion.
- Atal New India Challenges fosters product innovations. It aligns them to the needs of various ministries.
- Atal Incubation Centres fosters world class startups and will add a new dimension to the incubator model.

Heritage Conservation Committee

- The Supreme Court recently approved the Central Vista Scheme, which covers a distance of three kilometres between the Rashtrapati Bhavan and the India Gate. Following this, the Heritage Protection Committee approved the building of a new Parliament.

Key Points:

- The Heritage Conservation Committee is set up under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary, Ministry of Urban Affairs under the provisions of Section 23 in Delhi Building Byelaws, 1983 to protect heritage buildings. Only buildings in and around Delhi are governed by these laws.
- The Heritage conservation Committee offers three grades. They are as follows:
 - **Grade-I:** The buildings under Grade I include buildings of historic importance. No interventions are permitted either on the interior or exterior of the Heritage buildings unless it is essential in the interest of strengthening the life of the building.
 - **Grade-II:** These buildings consist of regional or local importance possessing architectural merit or historical significance. Internal changes are allowed in these buildings. Also, adaptive reuse shall be allowed.
 - **Grade-III:** It comprises buildings that evoke architectural or sociological interest. Both internal changes and adaptive reuse of these buildings are allowed.

13th JANUARY 2021

Legal Entity Identifier System

- The Reserve Bank of India announced the introduction of the Legal Entity Identifier System.

Key Points:

- The Reserve Bank of India has launched the Legal Entity Identifier scheme for all 50-crore and above payment transactions through NEFT (National Electronic Funds Transfer) and RTGS (Real Time Gross Settlement).

- The scheme is in order to classify legitimate persons involved in financial transactions. The central bank has adopted the system to improve the quality and accuracy of the financial data systems.
- Under the system, the banks have to include information of the remitter and beneficiary.
- Under which act has the Legal Entity Identifier system introduced in India?
- Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.

About Legal Entity Identifier:

- It is a twenty-digit unique number. It is a global identifier for entities participating in financial transactions. It is developed by the International Organization for Standardization.
- The validity of Legal Entity Identifiers is one year from the period of registration.

Pope's Amendment of Church Law

- Pope Francis also modified the rules of the Church in order to encourage women to do more during Mass.
- The law which specifies the process in Mass and Altar is called the Code of Canon Law. This legislation has now been changed to allow women to work at Altar.

Key Highlights:

- The new amendments would encourage women to do more during Mass.
- Women will read the Gospel and act as priests at the altar. Previously, those positions were reserved exclusively for men.
- Women could be permitted to play the role of readers and acolytes. Readers are people who read lessons in the worship service. An Acolyte is a person who supports a celebrant in a religious service or procession.
- Pope Francis has created a second study commission to study if women could be deacons. The first commission failed to reach a consensus.

About Code of Canon Law:

- The Code of Canon Law is the code of ecclesiastical laws that govern the Catholic Church.
- It is also called the Johanno-Pauline Code. It is the fundamental laws of Latin Church. It was promulgated by John Paul II and took legal effect in 1983. It replaced the Code of Canon Law, 1917. The Code of Canon Law was promulgated by Benedict XV.
- The Code of Canon Law, 1917 promulgated by Benedict XV was the first.

Sea Vigil 2021

- The second edition of coastal Defence Exercise Sea Vigil-21 is to be conducted between January 12 and January 13, 2021.

Key Points:

- The Sea Vigil exercise will be undertaken along the 7,516 kilo metres coastline. It involves all the thirteen coastal states, Union Territories and the Exclusive Economic Zone. Also, the exercise involves the fishing and coastal communities. The exercise is conducted by the Indian Navy.
- The Sea Vigil is a build-up towards the major theatre level exercise TROPEX that the Indian Navy conducts every two years. Both Sea Vigil and TROPEX will together cover the entire spectrum of maritime security challenges. This includes transition from peace to conflict.

About TROPEX:

- TROPEX is Tropical Level Readiness and Operational Exercise. It is an inter-service military exercise that involves the participation of Indian Air Force, Indian Army and Indian Navy.
- It is generally held at the beginning of the year. The exercise is held to test the combat readiness of the Indian Navy, Indian Air Force, Indian Army and Indian Coast Guard. The first TROPEX was held in 2005.

One Planet Summit

- The One Planet Summit was held on January 11, 2021. The summit aims to advance the protection of nature.

Key Points:

- The One Earth Summit is an international event that focuses on biodiversity in order to mobilise commitments to conserve habitats and connect human health.
- The goal of the One Earth Summit is to facilitate global ecological change. The summit will measure environmental and climate security in combination with progress and the economy.
- The COVID-19 has reminded the importance of nature for our daily lives and economies. It is highly challenging to reverse a trend set by the pandemic. The One Planet Summit will help to transform the value chains, consumption habits and business models.
- With the global economic powers like the United States withdrawing from the Paris Agreement, it is important for international organizations to act swiftly. The One Planet Summit will help the world in this direction.

■ NOTE:

The first One Planet Summit was organised two years since the historic Paris Agreement. It then adopted twelve international commitments.

14th JANUARY 2021

Henley Passport Index

- The Henley Passport Index was launched by the International air Transport Association. The index is released based on the number of destinations the holders can access without visa.

Key findings:

- Nepal at rank 104 and Pakistan at 107 continue to be the “Worst passports to hold” category. Pakistan had a visa-free score of 32 countries and Nepal had a score of 38 countries.
- The countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria were the countries with the worst passport to hold with a score of 26, 28 and 29.
- The report said that Japanese citizens can travel to 191 countries and Japan was the top performer.
- South Korea and Germany were at third position with a score of 189.
- India ranked 85th in the Henley Passport Index. India scored 58 in the Henley Passport Index.

About Index:

- The Passport Index is an online tool. It provides insights about visa-free travel options.
- The Passport Index includes World Openness score, Visa-free scores and Global mobility scores.

Insect Apocalypse

- The entomologists from all over the world attended the proceedings of the National Academies of Sciences recently. According to the entomologists, the insect population is declining at a rapid rate. The scientists have named this as Insect Apocalypse.

Key Points:

- The Earth is losing 2% of its insects every year. This is being termed as “Insect Apocalypse”.
- The main reasons of Insect Apocalypse are as follows:
 - Insecticides
 - Climate Change
 - Light Pollution
 - Herbicides
 - Invasive Species

- Changes in land use
- Intensive agriculture
- Insect decline is the worst in North America and in parts of Europe. The first Global Scientific review published in the Biological conservation journal has found the following:
 - A third of the insect species have become endangered.
 - More than 40% of insect species have declined.
 - The rate of extinction of insects is eight times faster than that of birds, mammals and reptiles.
 - At the rate of insect apocalypse, insects could vanish within a century.

Global Ebola vaccine stockpile

- The Global Ebola Vaccine stockpile was recently established by four international health and humanitarian organizations.

Key Points:

- The four international organizations that established the Global Ebola Vaccine Stockpile: World Health Organization (WHO), Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and UNICEF.
- Together WHO, MSF, UNICEF and IFRC (the above 4 organizations) are called the International Coordinating Group.
- GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation), the vaccine alliance is to provide financial support to the Global Ebola Vaccine Stockpile.

NOTE:

The Ebola Vaccine was licensed by the European Medicines Agency in November 2019. The vaccine was pre-qualified by the World Health Organization. It has also been licensed by the US Food and Drug Administration. Also, the vaccine has been licensed in eight African countries.

India's Eight Point Action Plan

- The External Affairs Ministry recently addressed the United Nations Security Council open debate. During his address, the minister proposed an eight-point action plan.

About India's Eight Point Action Plan

- All the member nations should fulfil their obligations in international counter-terrorism conventions and instruments.
- The countries should not bring in double standards in the battle. For instance, there are countries that support terrorism by offering financial support. Such countries are black listed by the international bodies

such as FATF (Financial Action Task Force). These countries are being referred to double standard countries.

- The working methods of the committees dealing with counter-terrorism should be reformed.
- The enlisting and delisting of individuals and entities under the United Nations should be done objectively and not for political and religious considerations.
- The linkages between transnational organised crime and terrorism should be addressed vigorously.
- The FATF should continue to identify weaknesses in anti-money laundering and counter-terror financing frameworks.
- Adequate funding should be allocated to the UN Counter terrorism bodies.

