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India's Best Institute for IES, GATE & PSUs

**MADE EASY
WEEKLY
CURRENT AFFAIRS**

WEEK-1

01st January - 07th January, 2021

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

1st JANUARY 2021

LYNX U2 GFCS

- The Ministry of Defense has recently signed an agreement with Bharat Electronics Limited to supply 10 LYNX U2 GFCS.
- LYNX U2 GFCS is a Maritime Weapons Fire Control System. It was planned to map and engage objectives in the middle of sea clutter.
- It can detect air and surface targets precisely. It can also produce the necessary target data to predict target points for weapons.
- The Gunfire Fire Control System is designed with open and scalable architecture that permits simple and flexible implementation in different configurations.

Key features:

- The machine has servo and arms control systems, radar monitoring. It guarantees full uptime.
- The new LYNX U2 GFCS proposed in the contract is of the fourth generation and is totally indigenized.
- The LYNX U2 GFCS shall be acquired from BEL. This is being built in the true spirit of Atma Nirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India).

LightHouse Project

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently established the Light House Project in six states.
- LightHouse schemes are being initiated in Agartala (Tripura), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Rajkot (Gujarat) and Chennai (Tamil Nadu) under the Global Housing Technology Challenge-India.

Key Features:

- LightHouse programmes provide residents with affordable homes, taking into account urban climate and biodiversity.
- In the background of the project, cheap and solid houses are constructed using special techniques.

- Beam-columns and panels of houses have to be prepared from manufacturers and taken to the building site.
- The whole carpet area of this project will be 34.50 square metres.
- Under this, 14-storey towers will be built.
- A total of 1,040 flats are to be built. Each flat will be 415 square feet.

Benefits:

- The main advantage of the initiative is that the length and costs of construction are minimised. Houses constructed under the LightHouse project would be completely resistant to earthquakes.
- They can be affordable and environmentally conscious due to the use of prefabricated materials.

RBI Digital Payments Index

- The Reserve Bank of India released the Digital Payments Index to measure the growth in cashless transactions in India.

Key Points:

- The Digital Payments Index consists of five large parameters. These metrics have different weights for calculating the penetration of digital payments in the region. The criteria and penetration of the Digital Payments Index are as follows:
- Payment Enablers: 25%
- Payment Infrastructure-Demand Side Factors: 10%
- Payment Infrastructure-Supply Side Factors: 15%
- Payment Performance: 45%
- Consumer Centricity: 5%

Sub parameters:

- The payment enablers of the Digital Payments Index include internet, internet, bank account, merchants and participants.

■ NOTE: _____

The Reserve Bank of India has set the base year of Digital Payments Index as 2018.

2nd JANUARY 2021

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has recently reported that more than 14 crores of cost-free cylinders under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana have been given to beneficiaries of the scheme during the Covid-19 crisis.
- The price of unsubsidized Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders of 14,2 kg shall remain at 694 rupees per cylinder.

How are LPG prices fixed in India?

- LPG pricing in India is based on the Import Parity Price. The import parity price is determined on the basis of LPG rates on the foreign market. It is focused on Aramco's LPG prices in Saudi Arabia.
- It also requires free on-board rates, custom duty, ocean freight costs, insurance, port fees, etc. The retail selling price of the non-subsidised LPG cylinder includes the cost of Inland right, GST, bottling charges, marketing costs and margins charged by the Oil Companies, dealer Commission.

NOTE:

According to the United Nations World Food Programme, the Import Parity Price is the price at the border of a goods being imported. It includes International transport cost and tariffs.

Kisan Kalyan Mission of Uttar Pradesh

- The Uttar Pradesh Government is to launch the Kisan Kalyan mission.

Key features:

- The goal of the Kisan Kalyan mission is to double the income of farmers in all the Assembly of the State of Uttar Pradesh. This is to be done by initiatives that increase consciousness among farmers about how to minimise agriculture by using fertilisers in a healthy way.

- The mission will also allow farmers to continue growing crops according to consumer demand.
- Under the mission several programmes such as exhibition of agriculture and associate sector including products of MSME missions and livelihood missions are to be launched.
- The mission will also distribute Kisan credit cards.

Activities undertaken by the Kisan Kalyan mission:

- It would have 100% coverage in bovine vaccine for foot and mouth disease.
- It would cover the eradication of sheep and goat pests.
- Distribution of mini oilseed and pulse kits.
- Insemination of the artificial
- Micro irrigation demonstration programmes
- Demonstrations of integrated cropping practice

About Kisan Kalyan Abhiyan:

- The Kisan Kalyan Abhiyan was launched in 2018 by the Ministry of Agriculture and farmers welfare. It aims to help farmers in improving their farming techniques.
- The objectives and intention of Kisan Kalyan Abhiyan is the same as that of Kisan Kalyan Mission.

Assam Ease of Doing Business (Amendment) Bill, 2020

- The Assam assembly recently passed the Assam Ease of Doing Business (Amendment) Bill, 2020. The bill makes amendments to the Assam ease of doing business act, 2016.
- The amendment will avail 0.25% additional borrowing from the centre.

Key features:

- The new bill will simplify procedures and bring transparency and efficiency in the system.
- Under the new Amendment Bill, the government has committed to create an investor friendly atmosphere in the state of Assam.

- The Government of Assam is to do away with all types of renewal certificate, permissions and licences under Assam is of doing business Amendment Bill . This is being done because a large number of renewable applications are pending at different levels in Assam. This causes unreasonable delay .
- A computerized Central random inspection system is to be implemented. Under the system allocation of inspectors will be done centrally at random. The allocation is to be done by the competent authorities. The amendment makes sure that the same Inspector is not assigned to the same unit in the subsequent year.

Australia makes changes to its National Anthem

- The Australian Government recently announced certain changes to its National Anthem “Advance Australia Fair”.
- The second line of the National Anthem has been changed from ‘For we are young and free’ to ‘For we are one and free.’

Key Points:

- The Australian National Anthem, “Advance Australia Fair” was written in 1878. It became the official National Anthem of Australia only in 1984.
- According to the critics, the words “for we are young and free” destroy the 50,000 years of history of Australia. The word young implies that the Australian history started only with Colonisation.
- Accordingly, it is believed that the national anthem celebrates British colonisation. This is unacceptable by the indigenous communities of the island nation who till date celebrate Australia Day as Invasion Day.

Other issues with the National Anthem of Australia:

- The National Anthem is also criticised for its fourth line of the anthem. That is, the fourth line, “Our Home is girt by sea”. This line is criticised for using the word “Girt”. According to the critics the word is archaic and impossible to understand.

3rd JANUARY 2021

RoDTEP Scheme

- The Government of India announced that the benefits of RoDTEP (Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products) scheme is to be extended to all goods.

Key points:

- The RoDTEP scheme was introduced in 2020 to improve India's exports to foreign markets. A system for refund of levies, taxes or duties at federal, state and local level would be set up under the scheme. No refunds were made under any process previous to the scheme.
- The MEIS was not WTO compatible.
- The RoDTEP Scheme will coordinate with the World Trade Organization to reduce the post production transaction costs for the exporters. In order to achieve this, the RoDTEP Scheme implementation measures must provide production-oriented processes.

Benefits:

- Under the RoDTEP Scheme, the exporters of India will meet international standards for exports. This will boost the value of Indian products in the international market.
- It is being achieved through certification and affordable testing that will be provided under the scheme rather than relying on international organizations.

FSSAI new Trans Fat levels

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has recently declared that all edible refined oils, vegetable fat spreads, vanaspati, margarine, pastry shortening and mixed fat spreads can contain only 3% or less of trans fat.
- This is to be finished by January 2021.

About Trans Fats:

- Trans fats are artificially formed during the process of hydrogenation of vegetable oils. The result is partly hydrogenated vegetable oils.
- These partly hydrogenated vegetable oils are the primary cause of trans fats. Some trans fats are also produced during the manufacturing process. For example, trans fats are produced during the process of high temperature processing used in the production of vegetable oils.
- Consumption of Trans fats results in heart diseases. In 2017, the Global market volume of partially hydrogenated oils (the main source of Trans Fats) was 13.6 million tonnes. Eliminating trans fats can save more than 17 million lives in the next 25 years.

About REPLACE:

- It was launched by the World Health Organisation in 2018. REPLACE is six areas of actions as follows.
- Review dietary sources of industrially produced trans fats.
- Promote the replacement of industrially produced trans fats with healthy oils and fats.
- Legislate regulatory actions to eliminate trans fats.
- Assess trans-fat content in food supply and changes in trans-fat consumption.
- Create awareness about the ill effects of Trans fats.
- Enforce complaint policies and regulations.

NOTE:

According to the REPLACE annual report of the World Health Organisation that was released in September 2020, more than 40 countries have implemented the "Best practice policies to eliminate trans fats". The best practice policies limit trans fats to 2% or less.

National Metrology Conclave

- The Prime Minister of India will give an inaugural speech at the National Metrology Conclave on 4 January 2021.
- Theme: Metrology of the inclusive development of the country.

Key points:

- The National Metrology Conclave is organised by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL).
- It will take place on the 75th day of the CSIR Foundation, 4 January 2021.
- The National Atomic Time Scale is to be devoted to the country.
- Bhartiya Nirdeshak Dravya is to be dedicated to the nation.
- Foundation stone of National Environmental Standards Labs to be laid.

About National Atomic Timescale:

- The National Atomic Timescale will create the Indian Standard Time with 2.8 nanoseconds of accuracy.
- The National Physical Laboratory (NPL) is called the Timekeeper of India. The time scale is maintained with the help of five cesium atomic clocks. Time scale is the time standard.

4th JANUARY 2021**India approved two COVID-19 vaccines**

- The Drug Controller General of India has recently declared that it has approved selective emergency use vaccines for COVID-19 in India.
- The two COVID-19 vaccines approved for emergency use by DGCI are COVAXIN and COVISHIELD.

About COVAXIN:

- The COVAXIN is the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech and ICMR (Indian council of Medical Research). It was the first indigenous COVID-19 vaccine to be developed in the country.

About COVISHIELD:

- The COVISHIELD vaccine was developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca, the pharmaceutical company.

IFSCA in IOSCO

- The International Financial Services Centres Authority recently became an associate member of the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO).

Benefits of IOSCO membership:

- The IOSCO works closely with the Financial Stability Board (FSB) and the G20 to set criteria to improve the securities markets.
- According to FSB, membership of IOSCO is one of the key criteria for a stable financial system. This would improve the prestige of the participant on the global market.
- IOSCO membership will provide the International Financial Services Centres Authority a platform to interchange information at global level and at regional levels.

About IOSCO:

- The International Organisation of Securities Organizations is a multinational body of national securities regulatory commissions.
- Which comprises the Financial Service Authority (UK), the Exchange Commission & Shares in (US) and 100 other related agencies.
- To cooperate in developing, implementing, promoting and obeying internationally recognized and consistent standards of regulations and enforcement
- To protect the investors and to maintain fair and efficient markets. This will address systematic risks
- To promote investor confidence in the rightness of securities markets through strengthened information exchange and enforcement against misconduct.

5th JANUARY 2021

Malala Yousafzai Scholarship Act

- The United States recently passed the Malala Yousafzai Act for Pakistani Women.

Key Features:

- The Act mandates the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to award at least 50 per cent of its scholarship to Pakistani women between 2020 and 2022.
- It needs USAID to exploit investment by Pakistan's private sector in the United States. This is done to enhance and expand access to education services in Pakistan.
- The act makes it mandatory for the USAID to brief the US Congress about the number of scholarships provided under the programme. This includes the percentage of recipients who are involuntarily pushed out of the programme for their failure to meet programme requirements as well.

About Malala Yousafzai:

- Malala is a Pakistani activist for female education. She is also the Youngest Nobel Prize Laureate. She fought against the Taliban for women education. The Taliban had banned girls from attending schools.

NOTE:

USAID is an interdependent agency of the United States that is responsible for administering foreign aid. It is one of the largest aid agencies in the world with a budget of 27 billion USD.

Kochi-Mangaluru Natural Gas Pipeline

- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to dedicate the Kochi-Mangalore Natural Gas Pipeline to India on January 5, 2021.

Key Highlights:

- The pipeline is 444 kilometres long.
- The pipeline is to convey natural gas from the Liquefied Natural Gas terminal at Kochi to Mangaluru.
- It travels through the districts of Ernakulam, Palakkad, Thrissur, Malappuram, Kannur, Kozhikode and Kasaragod. Approximately 8 districts would benefit from the pipeline expansion.
- The main junction of the pipeline is at Kootanad. At the junction, the pipeline bifurcates towards Bengaluru and Mangaluru.
- The pipeline is expected to fulfil the gas demand of 80 to 90 million cubic metres of gas per annum.
- The average cost of the project is Rs 5,750 crores.

Sagarmala Seaplane Services Project

- The Government of India is launching the Sagarmala Seaplane Services project on selected roads.
- Sagarmala Seaplane Services is being launched by the Ministry of Sports, Ships and Waterways.

Objective:

- The project aims to provide air access to a range of tourism, religious, remote and unexplored locations near water bodies.
- This is to make the trip smoother and to simulate tourism in these new areas. Ultimately, the project would lead to improving the country's GDP in the long term.
- The locations included under the Sagarmala Seaplane Services are as follows:
 - Andaman and Nicobar Islands
 - Lakshadweep Islands
 - Guwhati riverfront
 - Yamuna riverfront
 - Umrangso reservoir
 - Mumbai as a hub
 - Dwarka
 - Kandla
 - Khindsi dam
 - Erai Dam

TRIFOOD Parks in MP

- TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India) working under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Akhil Bhartiya vanvasi Kalyan Ashram to create TRIFOOD parks in Madhya Pradesh.

Key highlights:

- According to the MoU, TRIFED and Akhil Bhartiya vanvasi Kalyan Ashram will jointly introduce Van Dhan Yojana. This is to be done through the organisation of self-help organisations, TRIFOOD Parks, Van Dhan Vikas Kendra.
- Together, they would supply machinery and supplies, identify self-help organisations, coordinate preparation and develop facilities. They will also focus on other activities such as Horticulture, fisheries, floriculture, animal husbandry and craft. They will mainly work to improve the livelihood of tribals.

About TRIFOOD:

- TRIFOOD is a collaborative venture of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the Ministry of Food Processing and TRIFED. It was released in August 2020 under Van Dhan Yojana. The TRIFOOD Parks are food processing facilities. They will seek to encourage the added value of small forest goods.
- The TRIFOOD Parks will procure raw materials from Van Dhan Kendras. They will then be processed and sold across the country through the tribes India outlets.

6th JANUARY 2021

Floating Solar Energy Project

- The Government of India is to construct the largest floating solar energy project in the world.
- The scheme is to be installed at the Omkareshwar Dam on the Narmada River. The project will begin its production of electricity by 2022 to 2023.

- The project's energy potential is 600 megawatts of solar energy.
- Estimated cost of the project: 3,000 crores of Rupees
- The International Finance Corporation and the World Bank shall provide financial assistance to the initiative.
- The contraction in the Indian economy would mainly be due to a rapid fall in household consumption and private investment. The informal sector, which accounts for four-fifths of the country's jobs, has been seriously affected.
- On the other hand, the world economy is to expand by 4% in 2021.

Key features:

- The project is to provide floating solar panels with a power generating capacity of 600 megawatts.
- The solar panels are to be mounted above the Omkareshwar Dam.
- The scheme is planned to be finished in two years.
- Electricity is to be produced in approximately two thousand hectares of water area by the installation of solar panels in the dam.
- The solar panels will automatically adjust upward and downward based on the water level of the Dam. The floods and strong waves will not have any effect on the solar panels. The solar panels are to float on the surface of water.

NOTE:

- The floating solar power plant refers to solar panels installed on structures that float on the surface of the water.
- Floating photovoltaic Solar Power plant that uses photovoltaic panels installed on floating platforms. Floating concentrated solar power System. It uses mirrors to redirect the solar power to a tower.

Global Economic Prospects Report

- The World Bank recently released the Global Economic Prospects report.

Key findings:

- According to the report, the Indian economy is projected to decline by 9.6% in 2020-21. The Indian economy is set to rebound 5.4% in 2021-22.

- The services and manufacturing sector are gaining Momentum.
- According to the World Bank India is facing its first technical recessionary phase.

About The Technical recessionary phase?

- When the GDP growth is negative for two consecutive quarters or more than the period it is called the technical recessionary phase.
- In India, the Gross Domestic Product declined by 23.9 percent between April and June quarter. The Gross Domestic Product growth rate contracted by 7.5 % during the July and September quarter.

Bird Flu outbreak in India

- Bird Flu has been recorded in wild geese in Himachal Pradesh, ducks in Kerala, crows in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
- Even, in Haryana, more than one lakh bird has died suddenly in the last few days.

Key Points:

- The Kerala Government has started culling ducks and chicken.
- The Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Government have stepped up surveillance and formed guidelines.
- In Madhya Pradesh more than 155 crows died of H5N8 strain.
- Migrant birds died in Pong Dam Lake Sanctuary due to H5N8 infections.
- In Rajasthan, birds in Kota and Baran were found dead with the infection.

About Avian Influenza or Bird Flu:

- It is a contagious viral disease caused by Influenza Type A virus. It usually affects poultry birds such as Turkeys and Chickens.
- There are several types of Influenza Type A virus. Some of the virus may cause low egg production and others result in early cracking of egg shells.

7th JANUARY 2021

Payment Infrastructure Development Funds

- The Reserve Bank of India recently announced operational guidelines to Payment Infrastructure Development Funds. The main aim of the funds is to deploy more digital payment infrastructure across tier-3 to tier-6 centres and in the north eastern states.

Guidelines:

- The Central Bank has constituted an advisory council under the chairmanship of B P Kanungo. The advisory council will basically govern the funds. On the other hand, the funds will be administered and managed by RBI.
- The fund is to be operational for two years, 2021 and 2022.
- The fund has a corpus of 345 crores of rupees. Of this, 250 crores will be contributed by RBI and 95 crores of rupees by card networks operating in India.

Function of the advisory council:

- The advisory council will plan a transparent mechanism to acquire banks, non-banks in different locations. This will help to increase the banking infrastructure of the country.
- Merchants providing essential services such as hospitality, transport, health care facilities, public distribution systems.

About Acceptance Development Fund:

- The Acceptance Development Fund was proposed by the RBI in 2019 to develop card acceptance

infrastructure such as swipe machines in Tier III and Tier VI cities.

- The fund will ensure growth of card acceptance infrastructure such as swipe machines in the country especially in Tier III and Tier VI cities.

Preservation of Ladakh's land, culture and language

- The Government of India recently formed a committee to protect language, land, culture of Ladakh and ensure participation of citizens in the development of Union Territory.
- The Committee is to be headed by Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy.
- It will include elected representatives from Ladakh, central government and Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development council.

Key highlights:

- A ten-member delegation from Ladakh met Home Minister Amit Shah to express their concerns about the threat to the unique culture, language and demography of the region in the development process.
- Concerns have also been raised about the rights and demand for the inclusion in the sixth schedule. Earlier, the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes had recommended the inclusion of Ladakh under the sixth schedule.

NOTE:

The Sixth Schedule has provisions for the administration of tribal areas in the states of Meghalaya, Assam, Tripura, Mizoram.

Food Price Index of FAO

- The Food and Agriculture Organization recently released the Food Price Index. The Food Price Index has been released for the seventh consecutive month in December 2019.

Key Highlights

- The food price index for the month of December was 100 7.5 points.
- The food price index for the month of November was 105.2
- The Food and Agriculture Organisation calculates the food price index measuring the monthly changes of a basket of oilseeds, cereals, meat, dairy products and sugar.
- The food crisis of all the major categories increased for the seventh consecutive month barring sugar.
- For the year of 2020, the food price index was 97.9 points. This is a three-year high and 3.1 % increase as compared to that of 2019.
- The historical peak of the food price index occurred in 2011.

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:

- The vice president would assume the position and title of the president in the event of the resignation of the president. Which will effectively prevent the departing current from returning to office.
- The second section of the amendment includes provisions of vacancies in the office of vice president.
- The third section of the amendment provides provisions to determine a city of presidents to discharge his powers and duties.
- 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.

