



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS–JANUARY 10, 2021

TAMIL NADU

- **On January 8, Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - reopened eight protected historical monuments that were renovated by the state archaeology department recently**
 - ✓ These heritage structures were renovated at a cost of ₹13.3 crore by the state government.
 - ✓ The renovated structures include - Tirumalai Nayakar Mahal (Madurai), Maruthu Pandiar Palace (Sivagangai), Thyagadurgam fort (Kallakurichi), Udayagiri Fort (Kanayakumari), Chinnaiyan Kulam, Poondi Arugar temple, Thadagapureshwarar temple and Gaigaikonda Chozeswarar temple (Tiruvannamalai)
- **In Chennai, the monitoring of collection of garbage by the conservancy agency – to go 'online' through a virtual monitoring process**
 - ✓ Urbaser Sumeet, the contractor in-charge of conservancy operations in seven zones of Greater Chennai Corporation, will now be able to monitor the operations on a real-time basis
 - ✓ It has set up a command and control centre to monitor the operation of battery-operated vehicles on the earmarked route, the number of trips and the emptying of bins by compactor vehicles
 - ✓ The centre with a dashboard showing all the compactor and battery-operated vehicles was inaugurated in Alandur on January 8

AT A GLANCE		Below are details of vehicles and trash cans used by Urbaser-Sumeet
Battery-operated vehicles 3,000		Zones where conservancy work is taken over by the contractor Teynampet, Kodambakkam, Valasaravakkam, Alandur, Adyar, Perungudi and Sholinganallur
Compactor vehicles 128		
Trash cans 11,000		

- ✓ It will be able to monitor all the conservancy vehicles on duty.

- ✓ Based on the 'real-time' demand of requests or more generation of waste, the agency can now plan to send additional battery-operated vehicle to collect garbage in a particular area.
 - ✓ Further, the residents will be able to monitor the movement of vehicles through the dashboard on the corporation website and complain about abnormalities.
 - ✓ Urbaser Summet is in-charge of conservancy operations across Teynampet, Kodambakkam, Valasaravakkam, Alandur, Adyar, Perungudi and Sholinganallur zones
 - ✓ It collects garbage from houses, shops and bulk waste generators across 16,600 streets under 92 wards.
 - ✓ In case of a complaint received from a resident, staff manning the control centre would be able to check automated data on whether the garbage collection happened in a correct manner and then cross-verify it with the on-field workforce.
 - ✓ The dashboard would provide data on how many minutes a particular vehicle has spent at the designated garbage pick-up location as well, giving an idea of the efficiency of the operation.
 - ✓ It would also give the agency an idea about productivity and optimal use of the staff and vehicles.
 - ✓ The company also plans to introduce an app-based grievance redressal system.
- **Siruvani hills in Coimbatore district – has been identified as a butterfly super-hotspot, as per a six-year study conducted by The Nature and Butterfly Society (TNBS)**
- ✓ The society had identified 240 (74%) out of 325 butterfly species found in the state from Siruvani hills between March 2015 and December 2020
 - ✓ As per a methodology formulated by TNBS, a place can be defined as a hotspot if 25% (75 species and above) of the State checklist species (325) are found concentrated in a single area.
 - ✓ Accordingly, the TNBS has recommended the state Forest department to declare Siruvani hills as a butterfly hotspot, highlighting the rich biodiversity of the region.
 - ✓ Butterfly presence indicates a healthy ecosystem and can act as a measure of the overall eco-system.
 - ✓ The 240 butterflies are from six families — Swallowtails (17), Whites and Yellows (28), Brush-footed Butterflies (72), Blues (69), Metalmarks (1) and Skippers (53).



- ✓ The Siruvani hills falls within the limits of Boluvampatti forest range of Coimbatore Forest Division

- ✓ The various noted butterfly species recorded in the hills include Malabar Banded Peacock and Malabar Rose from the higher elevations and Nilgiri Grass Yellow from the mid-elevation.
 - ✓ The Brush-footed butterfly families are the most dominant species, while rare sightings include Nilgiri Tiger, Malabar Tree Nymph, Tawny Rajah and Tamil Catseye.
 - ✓ Many-tailed Oakblue, a tiny butterfly with flashing blue inner wings is an iconic representation of Siruvani hills
 - ✓ The hills are a mix of dry deciduous forest, moist deciduous forest and tropical evergreen forest lower to higher altitudes.
 - ✓ As per the report, rare butterflies from the Blues family such as Abnormal Silverline, Shiva Sunbeam, Large 4-lineblue, Dark Ceylon 6-lineblue, Kanara Oakblue, Common Onyx and Malabar Flash are also seen.
- **A new species of fruit fly discovered in Coimbatore district - is named after Siruvani, an ecological hotspot in the Western Ghats.**



- ✓ The fruit fly 'Euphranta siruvani' of the family Tephritidae, was identified by researchers in a non-forest area near Siruvani.
- ✓ The discovery has recently been published in Zootaxa, a peer-reviewed journal.
- ✓ According to the authors, 104 known species of the genus Euphranta are distributed across the world, out of which 14 are found in India.
- ✓ The discovery of Euphranta siruvani is the 15th species in the Indian list.
- ✓ This fruit fly is differentiated from the other species of Euphranta by the presence of a 'V' shaped black band on the wing and prominent subapical band connected to the apical black patch
- ✓ It lays eggs in fruits, and the larvae feed on the pulp.
- ✓ Apart from the fruit fly, the researchers also discovered a new fairyfly species in the Siruvani area.
- ✓ This discovery has recently been published in the Journal of Threatened Taxa.
- ✓ The fairyfly feeds on eggs laid by plant feeders like hoppers.

STATES

- **In Karnataka, Reliance Retail Ltd – signs agreement with a local firm to procure 1,000 quintals of paddy**

- ✓ This is the first big transaction between a large corporate entity and farmers since the promulgation of the amended APMC Act in Karnataka

WHAT THE DEAL MEANS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Reliance Retail Ltd will buy paddy from Swasthya Farmers' Producing Company, an agro based firm in Sindhanur, Raichur district 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > SFPC to procure paddy from 1,100 farmers registered with it 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Reliance offering Rs 1,950 for one quintal of Sona Masoori, while MSP is Rs 1,868 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > It has stipulated that the paddy must not contain moisture more than 16% > Third party firm will test quality of produce

- ✓ As per the signed deal, Reliance Retail Ltd is to purchase 1,000 quintals of Sona Masoori paddy from the farmers of Sindhanur taluk in Raichur district.
 - ✓ Earlier, the agents registered with Reliance signed an agreement with Swasthya Farmers Producing Company (SFPC), which has around 1,100 paddy farmers registered with it
 - ✓ SFPC primarily trades in oil and has recently ventured into procurement and sale of paddy.
 - ✓ According to Reliance Retail, there should be less than 16% moisture in the crop.
 - ✓ Moreover, the company is offering ₹1,950 per quintal of Sona Masoori, which is ₹82 more than the minimum support price (MSP) for the crop set by the government (₹1,868).
 - ✓ The understanding between SFPC and the farmers entitles the former to a 1.5% commission for every ₹100 transaction.
 - ✓ The farmers have to bear the expenses of the sacks used to pack the crop and transporting it to the warehouse in Sindhanur.
 - ✓ In order to ensure that the crops are not tampered with at any stage, vehicles used for transporting paddy will be tracked using GPS.
- **India's first integrated manufacturing cluster of toys - will be set up at Koppal in Karnataka.**
- ✓ The ground-breaking ceremony for the cluster was performed on January 9 by Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa.
 - ✓ Koppal is known for traditional Kinnal toys carved in wood
 - ✓ However, the Koppal toy cluster, will largely manufacture plastic toys aimed at replacing Chinese toys which till recently dominated the Indian market.
 - ✓ The proposed Koppal Toy Cluster, an initiative of Aequus Infra, is expected to attract ₹5,000 crore investment and generate over one lakh direct and indirect jobs in the next five years.
 - ✓ Spread over 400 acres, the cluster is to accommodate around 100 toy-making units

Koppala will have India's First Toy Manufacturing Cluster

Karnataka will leverage its rich legacy of **Toy Making**

- Area**
400 acres SEZ
- Connectivity**
NH 63 and Belagavi Airport
- Likely Investment**
₹5,000 Crores
- Jobs Creation**
40,000
- Toy Industry Growth**
CAGR of 18%
- Market Size by 2023**
Over ₹2,300 Crores

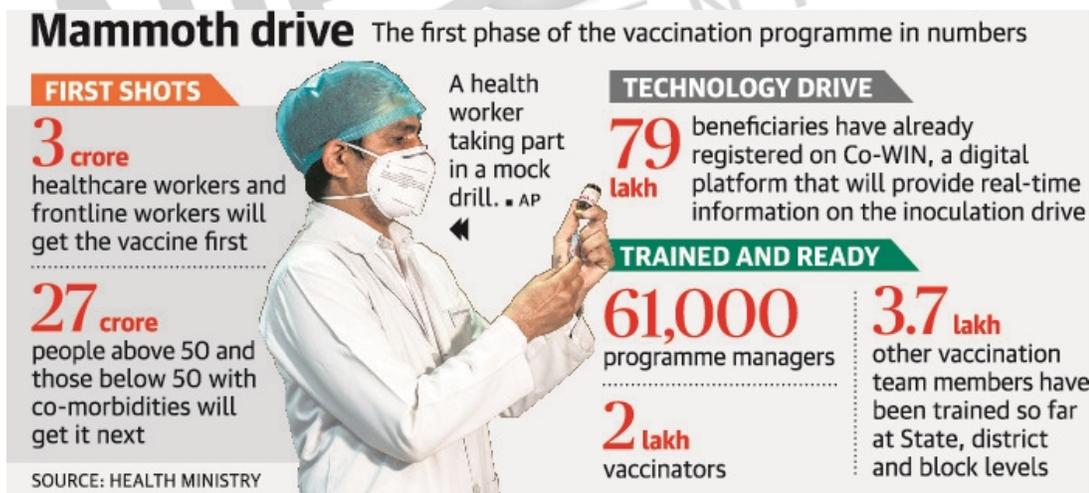
#VocalForLocal #AatmaNirbharBharat

- ✓ It will offer all the required raw materials for the toy manufacturing industry – plastic, steel, electronics and skilled labour.
- ✓ As per the data available, Karnataka is considered the third biggest State in toy manufacturing, after NCR and Maharashtra
- **Arunachal Pradesh - has sought a return to the British-era system of using porters to transport foodgrains in remote administrative circles**
- ✓ The move is attributed to save on air freight charges paid or payable to the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- ✓ The appointment of porters under the Auxiliary Labour Corps was discontinued after Arunachal Pradesh attained statehood in 1987.
- ✓ Porters have been hired temporarily since then, specifically during elections when polling material need to be carried to and from 518 remote and inaccessible polling stations.
- ✓ The old system of people carrying essentials is useful for transportation on steep mountainous tracks and through jungles.
- ✓ This will not only minimise the expenditure on air freight charges but also create job opportunities for the rural youth in areas along the State's international borders
- ✓ The State has a backlog of ₹337 crore in air freight charges to be paid to the IAF for service in 13 air-fed circles of the State.
- ✓ Arunachal Pradesh has a total of 1,680 km border with three countries – Bhutan, China and Myanmar
- ✓ It has 1,555 villages in the border blocks inhabited by more than 2.71 lakh people.
- **The Delhi Government - recently issued guidelines to reduce the weight of school bags of students in the National Capital Region under its Delhi School Bag Policy.**

- ✓ According to the New Delhi School Bag Policy, the weight of the school bag of students between Class 1 and Class 10 should not be more than 10% of their body weight.
- ✓ The policy suggests that the schools should follow and use textbooks prescribed by NCERT, SCERT and CBSE only.
- ✓ The policy envisages promoting holistic development of students through participation in games, art and culture, sports and other creative activities.
- ✓ The students should be practiced with the habit of reading library books.
- ✓ Only single notebook should be carried by class 1 and class 2 students, as per the policy
- ✓ For students of other classes, one notebook per subject should be prescribed.
- ✓ No homework should be issued to students of class 1 and class two students.
- ✓ The Delhi government has also issued class wise weight limit for school bags in order to avoid confusion in implementation of the policies.

NATIONAL

- **India – to launch its vaccination drive against Covid-19 on January 16**
- ✓ The decision on the rollout date was taken at a high-level meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on January 9
- ✓ The meeting reviewed the status of Covid-19 in the country and preparedness of states and Union territories for the vaccination programme that will target 30 crore people in the first phase.



- ✓ The health ministry is set to sign the supply order with the first tranche of 10 crore doses funded through PM-Cares Fund.
- ✓ The bulk of the order under the agreement is expected to be for Covishield (developed by Oxford University-Astra Zeneca), while the government is also likely to buy some stocks of Covaxin from Bharat Biotech.
- ✓ Initially, around three crore healthcare and frontline workers will be innoculated, followed by those above 50 years of age and the under-50 population with co-morbidities, estimated at around 27 crore.

- ✓ On January 9, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed at the inauguration of the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention

1ST ORDER TO BE MOSTLY COVISHIELD

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meeting chaired by PM Modi decides that Saturday, January 16, will be the date of India's vaccination drive launch ➤ Health ministry set to sign vaccine supply order for first tranche of 10 crore doses. It will be funded through PM-Cares Fund ➤ The first order to mostly comprise Covishield vaccine 	<p>supplied by Serum Institute. Some stocks of Covaxin from Bharat Biotech will also be bought, says an official</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The 2nd mock drill conducted on Friday covered around 550 districts and tested the Co-WIN system and protocols for reporting and redress of adverse events ➤ First phase of inoculation will target 30 crore people

- ✓ The PM's virtual address was on the theme of 'Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat'
- ✓ During his speech, the PM said that India is ready to help protect the world with not just one, but two 'Made in India' coronavirus vaccines
- ✓ India is among the countries with the lowest mortality and the highest recovery rate in the world, as per the PM
- ✓ On January 3, the drug regulator granted emergency use authorisation to two vaccines – Covishield and Covaxin – both being manufactured in India by Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech, respectively.
- ✓ The Centre also conducted a second round of countrywide dry run on January 8.
- ✓ The mock drill was conducted in around 550 districts to test the feasibility of carrying out vaccination in several centres across the country
- ✓ The dry run also focused on testing the Co-WIN system and the protocol for reporting and redressing adverse events after immunisation
- **On January 9, an all-woman cockpit crew – will enter into aviation history when it operates the inaugural San Francisco-Bengaluru flight**



- ✓ The flight will fly over the North Pole and take the Atlantic route to reach Bengaluru, the Karnataka capital.

- ✓ This will be the longest commercial flight in the world to be operated by Air India or any other airline in India.
 - ✓ The total flight time on this route will be of more than 17 hours depending on the wind speed on that particular day
 - ✓ The direct distance between the two cities is 13,993 km, with a time zone change of around 13.5 hours
 - ✓ All women cockpit crew consisting of Capt Zoya Aggarwal, Capt Papagari Thanmai, Capt Akansha Sonaware & Capt Shivani Manhas will operate the historic inaugural flight between Bengaluru & San Francisco.
 - ✓ The Air India Express Flight AI 176 will depart from San Francisco in the U.S. at 8.30 p.m. (local time) on January 9, and land at the Kempegowda International Airport at 3.45 a.m. (local time) on January 11.
 - ✓ Captain Zoya Aggarwal is an accomplished pilot with a flying experience of more than 8000 hrs and command experience in a B-777 aircraft of more than 10 years and more than 2500 flying hours.
 - ✓ The flight will operate with a Boeing 777-200LR aircraft VT ALG with a seating capacity of 238 passenger seats — eight first class, 35 business class and 195 economy class — and four cockpit and 12 cabin crew
 - ✓ The first direct flight between the two tech hubs is almost fully booked — 225 of the 238 seats — despite the Covid-19 pandemic and concerns over air travel.
 - ✓ The flight will be the first direct non-stop flight between the west coast of the U.S. and southern India.
- **The Government of India – is planning to construct the largest floating solar energy project in the world at Omkareshwar Dam on Narmada River.**
- ✓ The 600-MW project is expected to commence its power generation within the next two years.
 - ✓ The estimated cost of the project, to be funded jointly by the Power Grid of India, International Finance Corporation and World bank, is Rs 3000 crore
 - ✓ The project is to have floating solar panels installed over the backwaters of the Omkareshwar Dam.
 - ✓ The electricity is to be generated in about two thousand hectares of water area by means of the installed solar panels in the dam.
 - ✓ The solar panels will automatically adjust upward and downward based on the water level of the Dam.
 - ✓ The floating solar power plant refers to solar panels installed on structures that float on surface of the water.
- **The Government of India - recently released the draft Arctic Policy.**
- ✓ The policy ensures that the Arctic resources are explored and used in a sustainable manner.
 - ✓ Under its policy, India will make sure that it abides by rules and regulations of Arctic Council.

- ✓ India became the observer of Arctic Council in 2013 and its membership as an observer was renewed in 2018 for another five years.
 - ✓ The main five pillars of Arctic Policy are - Science and Research, Economic and Human Development, Transportation and Connectivity, National Capacity building and Governance and International Cooperation
 - ✓ The National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research that operates under the Ministry of Earth Sciences will serve as the nodal agency in implementing the Arctic Policy.
 - ✓ The policy envisages connecting the Arctic residents, especially the indigenous communities with those living in the Himalayan regions.
 - ✓ The policy aims to create opportunities to the Indian enterprises in joining international commerce businesses and promote traditional indigenous knowledge.
 - ✓ India signed the Svalbard Treaty in Paris, which allows free access to the Arctic region along with the commitment of not militarizing it.
 - ✓ India launched its first scientific expedition to Arctic in 2007.
 - ✓ In 2008, India set up a research base called Himadri at Ny Alesund, Svalbard, Norway.
 - ✓ In 2014, India established IndArc, which is a multisensory observatory in Kongsfjorden.
 - ✓ In 2016, India launched Grubebadet Atmospheric Laboratory at Ny Alesund, Svalbard.
- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - recently inaugurated the National Atomic Scale at the National Meteorology Conclave.**
- ✓ Atomic Time provides the exact speed at which the clock ticks, indicating the actual length of a second, in technical terms.
 - ✓ Atomic Clocks deviate only one second in up to 100 million years.
 - ✓ The International System of Units (SI unit) defines one second (in atomic time) as the time taken by the Cesium-133 atom in the ground state to oscillate 9,192,631,770 times.
 - ✓ With the newly inaugurated National Atomic Time, India has now achieved the accuracy level of 2.8 Nanosecond matching the International Standard Time.
 - ✓ Also, accurate atomic time measurement is essential in the field of weather forecast, disaster management, telecom, Defence, Railways and Banking.
 - ✓ International Atomic Time is calculated by taking weighted average of more than 300 atomic clocks located at more than sixty timing laboratories around the world.
 - ✓ It is also called Astronomical time referring to the Earth rotation and computed by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM) located in Paris, France.
- **The Rashtriya Kamadhenu Aayog - recently announced that it is to conduct a National-level “Gau-Vigyan” (Cow Science) online exam.**

- ✓ This is being done to generate interest among the students and public about the indigenous cow and the benefits associated with their rearing.
 - ✓ The exam is to be held on February 25, 2021.
 - ✓ All students of primary, secondary and college level can participate in the exam without any fee.
 - ✓ The exam is to be held every year starting from the year 2021.
 - ✓ All the participants of the exam are to be provided with certificates and the results will be declared immediately after the exam.
 - ✓ The Rashtriya Kamadhenu Aayog has prepared a study material on cow science to assist the exam aspirants.
 - ✓ The Rashtriya Kamadhenu Aayog was constituted to manage animal husbandry in lines of modern and scientific approaches.
 - ✓ It will take steps to improve cow breeds and prohibit cow slaughtering.
 - ✓ It functions as an integral part of Rashtriya Gokul Mission.
 - ✓ The agency will also review existing policies, laws and suggest the measures for the economic utilization of cow's wealth.
 - ✓ It will guide and advise state and central governments on policy matters concerned to protection, conservation, development and welfare of cows.
 - ✓ The Rashtriya Gokul mission aims to conserve and develop indigenous bovine breeds.
 - ✓ It was launched in 2014 under the National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development.
- **The Defence Research and Development Organisation - signed a memorandum of understanding with the Maharashtra metro rail Corporation.**
- ✓ It is a joint venture company of the Government of India and Government of Maharashtra.
 - ✓ The agreement will render technical support to implement the advanced biodigester Mk II technology to treat human waste in Metro Rail Network.
 - ✓ The Indian Railways has already installed more than 2.4 Lakh biodigester in its passenger coaches.
 - ✓ DRDO recently demonstrated a customised version of bio digester to treat human waste generated from the houseboats in the Dal lake.
 - ✓ This project is being monitored by a committee of experts constituted by the High Court of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - ✓ The biodigester technology was basically developed by DRDO for the Indian armed forces in high altitude Himalayan regions.
 - ✓ It degrades and converts human waste into usable water and gases.
 - ✓ The generated gas is used for cooking and water for irrigation purposes.
 - ✓ The biodigester technology involves bacteria that feed upon fecal matter.
 - ✓ The fecal matter is dumped into a tank along with the bio digesting bacteria, which degrades it through anaerobic process in the absence of oxygen.

- ✓ During the process, water and methane gas are released.
- **The World Bank, Government of India and Government of West Bengal - recently signed a \$105 million agreement.**
 - ✓ The fund has been allocated to the West Bengal inland water transport, logistics and special development project.
 - ✓ According to the agreement, the fund is to be used to improve the inland water transport infrastructure in Kolkata, West Bengal.
 - ✓ The funding under the project will facilitate freight and passenger movement in the Hooghly River.
 - ✓ During the first phase, the project will enhance the capacity of Inland water transport system.
 - ✓ This includes rehabilitating existing jetties, installing electronic gates and buying new ferries.
 - ✓ During the second phase of the project, it will support long term investments for passenger movements.
 - ✓ Also, it will improve the design of Inland water transport vessels and ensure night navigation on the most trafficked and hazardous routes.
 - ✓ It will encourage the private sector to invest in Ro-Ro vessels to facilitate easier movement of trucks across the Hooghly River.
- **The Centre's two flagship schemes - UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All) and SLNP (Street Lighting National Programme) - completed six years of successful implementation.**
 - ✓ The two programmes revamped household and public lighting system across the country.
 - ✓ Under UJALA, the EESL distributed 6.69 crore of LED bulbs and installed more than 1.14 crore of LED street lights.
 - ✓ This has helped to save more than 55.33-billion-kilowatt hour of energy per year.
 - ✓ The scheme helped to reduce Greenhouse gas emissions by 38.59 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.
 - ✓ The EESL installed more than 1.1 crore of LED street lights under SLNP, thereby saving 7.67-billion-kilowatt hour of energy per year.
 - ✓ The scheme helped to reduce the greenhouse gas emission by 5.29 million tonnes of carbon dioxide per year.
 - ✓ With the help of the scheme, the municipalities were able to save Rs. 5,210 crore in their electricity bills.
 - ✓ The awards received by these schemes include SAPIA, 2017 (South Asia Procurement Innovation Award) for innovative use of IT in SLNP, CIO 100 in 2019, Global Solid State Lighting Award for excellence in transformational contribution to LED sector and CII National Award for Excellence in Energy Management, 2020

- ✓ The schemes have helped in the growth of domestic LED markets, thereby bringing down the average household electricity bills by 15%.
 - ✓ The SLNP has plans to bring investment of Rs 8,000 crore by 2024 to cover entire rural India.
 - ✓ More than 30 million LED street lights are to be installed by EESL in coming years, under the scheme.
- **The Insurance regulator, IRDAI - is to introduce standard products covering the risk of fire and allied perils.**
- ✓ The policy being introduced is to replace the Standard Fire and Special Perils Policy.
 - ✓ It has three main components namely the Bharat Griha Raksha, Bharat Laghu Udyam Suraksha and Bharat Sookshma Udyam Suraksha.
 - ✓ Under the Bharat Griha Raksha policy, the IRDAI (Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India) will introduce a standard home insurance policy that will cover risk of fire and other related dangers.
 - ✓ The policy will cover a wide range of dangers such as natural calamities like cyclone, storm, tsunami, Hurricane, floods, earthquake, landslide, fires, bushfires, impact damages of any kind, strike, riot, acts of terrorism, malicious damage of, overflowing of water tanks, pipe leakage from automatic sprinkler installations, bursting of water tanks and test within 7 days from the occurrence.
 - ✓ The policy will offer 20% of sum insured for the building subject to a maximum of Rs. 10 lakhs
 - ✓ There are two optional covers offered by the policy.
 - ✓ They are insurance for valuable content such as jewellery and insurance for personal accident of insured and spouse due to and insured danger under the policy.
 - ✓ Bharat Sookshma Udyam Suraksha is the standard product for enterprises for which the total risk value of up to Rs 5 crores.
 - ✓ It will provide coverage to machinery, buildings, plant, stocks and other assets.
 - ✓ Bharat Laghu Udyam Suraksha is another policy that will cover enterprises for which the total value of risk across the insurable asset classes in the location exceeds Rs 5 crores.
- **The Union Cabinet - recently approved the Memorandum of Understanding between India and Japan on “Specified Skilled Worker”.**
- ✓ Under the agreement, India will send skilled labours to Japan.
 - ✓ The only condition is that the workers should have qualified in the required skill test and in Japanese language test.
 - ✓ According to the MoU, the qualified Indian workers can work in fourteen specified sectors in Japan.
 - ✓ The Indian workers are to be provided new status of residence of “Specified Skilled Worker” according to the MoU.

- ✓ A joint Working Group is to be set up by the Government to implement the Memorandum of Understanding.
- ✓ The fourteen sectors are Industrial machinery, building cleaning, nursing care, material processing industry, electric and electronic information related industry, industrial machinery manufacturing industry, shipbuilding and ship-related industry, aviation, automobile maintenance, lodging, aviation, fisheries, agriculture, food and beverages manufacturing industries, food service industry, construction.
- **The National Board of Wildlife - recently approved advisory for Human-Wildlife Conflict Management.**
- ✓ The advisory empowers the Gram Panchayats to deal with problematic wild animals according to the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ✓ It encourages using the crop compensation allocated under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana against crop damage due to human-wildlife conflict.
- ✓ Apart from providing the advisory the National Board of Wildlife has also included Caracal into list of critically endangered species.
- ✓ Caracal is a medium sized wild cat found in Africa, Middle East, Central Asia and India
- ✓ Currently there are twenty-two wild life species under the programme for Critically Endangered species.

INTERNATIONAL

- **An Indonesian passenger jet 'Sriwijaya Air Flight 182' carrying more than 60 people - crashed into the Java Sea on January 9, minutes after taking off from the Indonesian capital, Jakarta.**



- ✓ The Boeing 737-524 plane was on an estimated 90-minute flight from Jakarta to the city of Pontianak on Borneo, carrying 50 passengers and 12 crew members.
- ✓ Sriwijaya Air is an Indonesian airline based in Jakarta.
- ✓ Four minutes after taking off amid heavy rain, the 26-year-old plane lost contact at more than 10,000 feet of altitude in less than 60 seconds

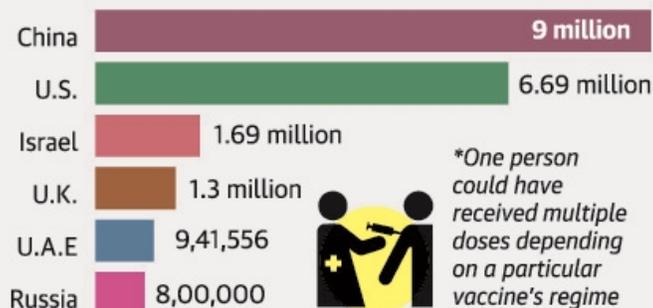
- ✓ The Indonesian National Search and Rescue Agency said it had found pieces of debris in waters just northwest of Jakarta that it believed may be from the plane's wreckage
- ✓ The aviation sector in Indonesia has long been troubled by crash accidents.
- ✓ In 2018, Lion Air Flight 610 plunged into the Java Sea with 189 people aboard after the 737 Max jetliner's anti-stall system, designed by Boeing, malfunctioned.
- ✓ Another 737 Max crashed in Ethiopia in 2019 after a similar erroneous activation of the anti-stall system, leading to the worldwide grounding of the entire Max fleet for nearly two years.
- ✓ On January 7, the US government said that Boeing would pay more than \$2.5 billion in a settlement with the US justice department related to the anti-stall software.
- ✓ The Sriwijaya Air plane was from Boeing's earlier 737 500 series, which is considered a workhorse model with years of safe flying.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro - wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi this week asking for 2 million Covishield vaccines manufactured by Serum Institute.**
- ✓ With more than 8 million cases of COVID-19, Brazil is second only to the U.S. (22.4 million cases) and India (10.4 million cases)
- ✓ However, in terms of number of deaths due to the virus, Brazil with more than 200,000 fatalities, is second only to the U.S. (378,000-plus deaths), and much higher than India's 150,000-plus deaths.
- ✓ Among the vaccines selected by the Brazilian government, are those from the Indian company Bharat Biotech International Limited (Covaxin) and AstraZeneca and University of Oxford (Covishield), produced by the Serum Institute of India.
- ✓ Brazil conducted phase 3 clinical trials for the Astra-Zeneca vaccine and China's Coronavac by Sinovac Biotech.

Counting the doses

Close to 23.26 million COVID-19 vaccination doses have been administered worldwide as of January 9. The graph shows the top five nations in terms of the number of doses* administered



Source: Our World In Data

- ✓ The latter had to be stopped midway following adverse incidents in some volunteers.
- ✓ The Brazilian regulatory authority only allowed resumption of trials in December.
- ✓ Brazil's Butantan Institute in Sao Paulo is partnering Sinovac for the vaccine.
- ✓ Bolsonaro dismissed the Chinese vaccine and pushed for the Astra-Zeneca one, which also completed phase 3 trials in Brazil's premier Fiocruz Institute.
- ✓ Brazil is one of India's close partners, being a member of BRICS and IBSA, as well as the G-4 (which has been campaigning for UNSC reform).
- ✓ During the pandemic, Brazil became part of one of the Quad Plus groupings to focus on a Covid vaccine and Covid therapeutics — along with South Korea and Israel and the Quad countries.

PERSONALITIES

- **Alok Sharma, one of the Indian-origin ministers in UK PM Boris Johnson's cabinet, has been appointed as the president of COP26 - Climate change conference**
- ✓ The COP26 - UN climate summit is scheduled to be held in Glasgow, Scotland in November
- ✓ He will now relinquish his role as a 'Business Secretary' and focus only on the summit exclusively



- ✓ The Agra-born minister will concentrate on what has been dubbed as the largest summit the UK has hosted, bringing together representatives from nearly 200 countries.
- ✓ The COP26 President will be based in the UK Cabinet Office, continuing as a full member of Cabinet
- ✓ He will chair the Climate Action Implementation Committee to coordinate government action towards 'net zero emission' by 2050 in the run up to the November summit.
- ✓ The UK has set a high standard of commitment to reduce emissions by at least 68% by 2030
- ✓ The Climate Ambition Summit co-hosted by the UK in December last year saw 75 world leaders set out new commitments to climate action.
- ✓ Sharma has been described as the "leading force" behind the UK's climate diplomacy, since assuming the role in February 2020

➤ **US President Donald Trump – permanently banned from Twitter on January 8**



- ✓ According to the social media giant, the permanent suspension of the account of Trump is to prevent the risk of further incitement of violence following the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on January 6
- ✓ In the Trump tweets cited by Twitter, Trump stated that he would not be attending the inauguration and referred to his supporters as “American Patriots,” who will have “a GIANT VOICE long into the future.”
- ✓ Twitter also permanently banned two Trump loyalists -- former national security adviser Michael Flynn and attorney Sidney Powell -- as part of a broader strategy.
- ✓ Several Republican leaders, including popular Indian-American politician Nikki Haley, also condemned Twitter.
- ✓ Twitter has long given the US President and other world leaders broad exemptions from its rules against personal attacks, hate speech and other behaviours.
- ✓ At the time of permanent suspension, Trump had 88.7 million followers and followed 51 people.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

➤ **The researchers – have identified the mineralogy of the meteorite that hit Mukundpura village near Jaipur on June 6, 2017**



- ✓ The bright trail of the meteorite in the sky crashed with a thunderous sound on the early morning of the day

- ✓ It was spotted as a burning object with a sulphur smell on the soft agricultural land.
 - ✓ The meteorite broke into several fragments, but a pit of about 15 cm in diameter and 10 cm in depth was formed at the impact site.
 - ✓ The local police immediately collected it and handed it over to the Geological Survey of India, Kolkata.
 - ✓ The meteorite named Mukundpura CM2 was classified to be a carbonaceous chondrite.
 - ✓ It is classified as a type of stony meteorite, considered the most primitive meteorite and a remnant of the first solid bodies to grow in the solar system.
 - ✓ The composition of carbonaceous chondrites is also similar to the Sun
 - ✓ The meteorites are broadly classified into three groups – stony (silicate-rich), iron (Fe–Ni alloy), and stony-iron (mixed silicate–iron alloy).
 - ✓ Chondrites are silicate-droplet-bearing meteorites and the Mukundpura CM2 chondrite is the fifth carbonaceous meteorite known to fall in India.
 - ✓ According to the detailed spectroscopic studies, the meteorite had very high (about 90%) phyllosilicate minerals comprising both magnesium and iron.
 - ✓ The results of the Mukundpura CM2 study are relevant to the surface composition of near-Earth asteroids Ryugu and Bennu.
 - ✓ In October 2020, NASA's OSIRIS-REx mission collected samples from Bennu and is expected to return in September 2023.
 - ✓ Last month, Japan's Hayabusa-2 mission landed on Earth with samples from Ryugu.
 - ✓ Meteorites are representative of asteroids.
 - ✓ Asteroids are the remnant debris of the inner solar system formation process and thus offer the formation history or the building blocks of the planets.
 - ✓ Therefore, by studying meteorites in the laboratory and asteroids by exploration and sample return mission, it is possible to reconstruct the activity of early solar system events.
 - ✓ Also, asteroids are often rich in volatiles and other minerals and can be exploited for future planetary exploration.
- **An international team of astronomers – have re-evaluated the age of the universe**
- ✓ As per a new study led by Cornell university, the age of the cosmos is 13.77 billion years old (plus or minus 40 million years)
 - ✓ The study used data from the National Science Foundation's Atacama Cosmology Telescope (ACT) in Chile and "cosmic geometry" to decide the age of the universe
 - ✓ This agrees with earlier rough estimates made using the Planck satellite
 - ✓ In 2019, scientists studying the movement of galaxies showed that the universe is hundreds of millions of years younger than previously estimated by the Planck Collaboration

- ✓ The Planck Collaboration is a group of scientists who have worked with the European Space Agency's Planck mission
 - ✓ Using data from the Planck space observatory, they found the universe to be approximately 13.8 billion years old.
 - ✓ By determining the age of the universe, the researchers also were able to estimate how fast the universe is expanding, indicating by the figure known as the Hubble constant.
 - ✓ Accordingly, an object at 1 megaparsec (or about 3.26 million light-years) away from Earth would be moving away from Earth at 42 miles per second (67.6 km/s).
 - ✓ This is extremely close to the 41.88 miles per second per megaparsec (67.4 km per second per megaparsec) previously estimated by the Planck team
 - ✓ The recent work of the scientists was published on December 30, 2020 in two papers in the Journal of Cosmology and Astroparticle Physics.
- **An International Team of researchers led by University of Oxford - have developed a new approach to survey African Elephants using satellite images and Artificial Intelligence.**
- ✓ The method uses satellite orbiting in space that is capable of capturing more than five thousand square kilometres of images.
 - ✓ The captured images are then processed through deep learning model that will detect elephants after eliminating other objects.
 - ✓ The International team used a customised dataset to cover more than thousand elephants in South Africa.
 - ✓ The method eliminates the risk of double counting and makes it possible to conduct repeat surveys in short intervals.
 - ✓ The method is capable of identifying calves separately.
 - ✓ At present, Manual counting and Manned Aircrafts for aerial counts are employed.
 - ✓ Of this, the manned aircrafts for aerial counts is highly expensive, while the manual counting might be erroneous.
 - ✓ Also, such methods are hindered by poor visibility and are highly challenging.
 - ✓ The population of elephants in India is 27,312.
 - ✓ The Indian Elephants are one of the three subspecies of Asian elephants.
 - ✓ In 1986, the Asian elephants were listed as “Endangered” in IUCN Red List.
 - ✓ They have been listed under CITES Appendix I.
 - ✓ India launched Project Elephant in 1992 to provide financial and technical support of wildlife management efforts.
 - ✓ The project aims to increase the life of the elephants in their natural habitats by protecting their habitats and migration corridors.
 - ✓ There are 138 elephant corridors in India, that aim to reduce animal fatalities due to accidents
 - ✓ Of these, 28 are interstate and seventeen are international state corridors.
 - ✓ The Elephant corridors are narrow strips of land that connects two large habitats of elephants.

DEFENCE

- **Union minister of health and family welfare, science and technology and earth sciences, Dr. Harsh Vardhan – dedicated a new coastal research vessel ‘Sagar Anveshika’ to the nation in Chennai on January 9**
- ✓ The new coastal research vessel (CRV) will basically help scientists improve weather forecast, study pollution and climate change
- ✓ Also used for shallow water operations, it has sophisticated systems like CTD winch, oceanographic winch, dedicated wet and dry labs with latest scientific equipment for analysis and preservation of samples and data on board
- ✓ The new CRV is operated and maintained by National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)
- ✓ **During the ceremony, the Union Minister said that the country will launch a manned submersible, called Samudrayaan, in the next four years**
- ✓ It will have the capability to carry three researchers to a depth of 6,000m into the ocean for a duration of 16 hours to carry out studies
- ✓ Of 200 countries, only two or three countries such as Japan and the USA have the capability to develop this.



- ✓ CRV Sagar Anveshika, with 43m length and 2.5m draft, is equipped with advanced scientific and navigational equipment to collect oceanographic and atmospheric data for performing studies
- ✓ The vessel will also assist in technology demonstration and deployments within the exclusive economic zone of India.
- ✓ The ship, which could carry 20 people including eight scientists for 15 days, has already undertaken more than 12 scientific cruises since delivery.
- ✓ With this, NIOT has two additions - Sagar Tara and Sagar Anveshika - apart from the 100m long Sagar Nidhi, which can go upto Antarctic waters

ECONOMY

- **The Reserve Bank of India - recently formed an advisory council under former Deputy Governor N S Vishwanathan to advise the Director of the central bank on supervisory colleges.**

- ✓ The council will identify areas where upskilling and building are required in supervisory colleges.
- ✓ It will also plan and develop curricula of all programmes and benchmark the programmes with international standards and best practices.
- ✓ The council will develop appropriate teaching methods.
- ✓ The Reserve Bank of India Supervisory Colleges were introduced to reinforce supervisory skills among its regulatory bodies and to monitor Indian banks abroad.
- ✓ The Supervisory colleges were established for six banks which have significant international presence
- ✓ It includes State Bank of India, ICICI Bank, Bank of Baroda, Axis Bank, Bank of India and Punjab National Bank.
- ✓ The main objectives of Supervisory colleges are to improve understanding of risk profile of the banking group, to enhance information exchange and cooperation among supervisors and facilitate effective supervision of internationally active banks.
- ✓ The banking supervision is needed to ensure safety of the banking system and to reduce their risk taking.
- ✓ India launched the Supervisory colleges after the PMC Bank scam to prevent such scenarios in the future.
- **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.
- ✓ The Central Bank has constituted an advisory council under the chairmanship of B P Kanungo.
- ✓ The advisory council will basically govern the funds, while the funds will be administered and managed by RBI.
- ✓ The fund is to be operational for a period of two years, 2021 and 2022.
- ✓ The fund has a corpus of 345 crore of rupees.
- ✓ Of this, 250 crore will be contributed by RBI and 95 crore of rupees by card networks operating in India.
- ✓ 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 are the primary targets of the scheme
- ✓ By 2021, there will be more than five million active Point-of-sale facilities
- ✓ 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 World Bank - recently released the Global Economic Prospects report.**
- ✓ According to the report the Indian economy is to contract by 9.6% in 2020-21.
- ✓ The Indian economy is to recover 5.4% in 2021-22.
- ✓ The contraction in Indian economy will be mainly due to sharp decline in household spending and private investment.
- ✓ The informal sector that accounts to four fifth of employment in the country has been badly affected under the pandemic situation.
- ✓ On the other hand, the world economy is to expand by 4% in 2021.
- ✓ According to World Bank, India is facing its first technical recessionary phase.
- ✓ When the GDP growth is negative for two consecutive quarters or more than the period it is called technical recessionary phase.
- ✓ In India, the Gross Domestic Product declined by 23.9% between April and June quarter.
- ✓ The Gross Domestic Product growth rate contracted by 7.5 % during the July and September quarter.
- ✓ This shows that the GDP growth of India has been negative for two consecutive quarters.
- ✓ According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, more than 50 lakh salaried persons lost their jobs during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- ✓ The Asian Development Bank predicted that India's growth will contract by 9% in 2020-21.

OBITUARY

- **The 93-year old Congress veteran, former Union Minister and four-time Chief Minister of Gujarat, Madhavsinh Solanki – passed away at his residence in Gandhinagar on January 9**
- ✓ A Journalist-turned-politician, Solanki was a master strategist whose famous “KHAM” formula of social engineering ensured a landslide victory for Congress in 1985.
- ✓ The idea of a powerful social alliance of the Kshatriyas, Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims (KHAM) helped to ensure Congress victories for two decades.

RICH LIFE

➤ Solanki had been the longest serving Gujarat CM before the Narendra Modi era

➤ Solanki is credited with introducing the mid-day meal scheme which was later adopted in primary schools in the entire country, and for offering free education to girls in Gujarat

➤ He became the external affairs minister in June 1991

➤ He also served for two terms as Rajya Sabha member



Madhavsinh Solanki (second from R) was 93

- ✓ Under his leadership, the Congress party had won 149 out of the 182 seats in the state elections held in 1985, a record-of-sorts which still remains unbroken.
- ✓ Born in a modest family in Piludra village in Bharuch district, Solanki started his career as a journalist.
- ✓ He was first elected as an MLA from then Bombay state in 1957 when Gujarat and Maharashtra were not separated.
- ✓ He became an MLA of the Gujarat assembly in 1960, after the two states were separated.
- ✓ In 1975, Solanki became the president of the Gujarat Congress unit
- ✓ He became the chief minister in December 1976, but his tenure lasted only till 1977.
- ✓ However, Solanki again became the Chief Minister of the state in 1980.
- ✓ In 1985, he had to resign as Chief Minister following the anti-reservation riots in the State.
- ✓ He served as a Union Minister in the Rajiv Gandhi and the P.V. Narasimha Rao governments at the Centre.
- ✓ He was External Affairs Minister from June 1991 to March 1992, but had to resign following a controversy over his meeting with the Foreign Minister of Switzerland in Davos.

SPORTS

- **The Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Kiren Rijju - recently launched the Assam Rifles Public School as a Khelo India Sports School.**
- ✓ The Shillong-based Assam Rifles Public School will be the first Khelo India Sports School in the North East
- ✓ The main objective of Khelo India Sports School is to integrate sports with education.
- ✓ This will help in identification and upliftment of talent from the North Eastern regions, tribal areas and rural areas
- ✓ The Centre will bear all the expenses of the students in Khelo India Sports School.
- ✓ Currently, there are nine Khelo India Sports Schools in India.
- ✓ Out of nine schools, five are managed by Paramilitary and Defence forces.
- ✓ The Assam Rifles Public School had a good track record in sports and academics, sufficient space to develop sports facilities, adequate lodging and boarding.
- ✓ The Khelo India was launched in 2018 to improve sports culture in the country.
- ✓ The ambitious central scheme was launched by consolidating the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan, National Sports Talent Search System and Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme.