



EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS—JANUARY 15, 2021

NATIONAL

- On January 15, the Government of India - is to launch the third phase of the flagship scheme, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.
- ✓ The third Phase is to be implemented by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- ✓ Under the third phase of the scheme, 729 Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra are to be established and more than 200 ITIs are to be set up under the Skill India mission.



Features of PMKVY 3.0

-  Cross utilisation of existing infrastructure for establishment of skilling centres
-  Introduction of significant reforms in the assessment ecosystem
-  Creation of a pool of certified trainers through direct funding for the Training of Trainers Program (ToT)



- ✓ Under the scheme, more than 1 lakh candidates will be trained for a period of one year with an investment of Rs. 950 crores.

- ✓ The phase 2 of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana was launched in 2015.
 - ✓ It focused on providing short term candidates to dropouts and unemployed as per the National Skills Qualification Framework, focusing on entrepreneurship, soft skills and digital literacy.
 - ✓ Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana was launched as National Skill Development Mission in 2010.
 - ✓ It integrates three institutions - Prime Minister National Council on skill development, National Skill Development Corporation and National Skill Development co-ordination board
 - ✓ The main focus of the first phase was to provide training to class 10 and class 12 dropouts.
 - ✓ National Skill Development Corporation operating under Ministry of skill development and Entrepreneurship implements Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas yojana
 - ✓ It has set up a target of providing skills to 50 crore people by 2022.
- **The Union Home Minister Amit Shah - recently launched the “Single Window Clearance System” for coal mines.**



- ✓ It is an online platform launched to obtain all the required clearances for smooth operationalisation of coal mines through a single portal.
- ✓ The single Window Clearance System will help an entity to get all the required 19 major approvals in one place.
- ✓ This is one of the major steps in coal sector reforms of Government of India.
- ✓ The government has recently offered 50 coal blocks to private companies for commercial mining on revenue sharing basis.
- ✓ Further, Coal Bed Methane extraction rights are to be auctioned from Coal India’s coal mines.
- ✓ The majority of the coal bed methane reserves are found in the Gondwana sediments of eastern India
- ✓ The coal reforms, meant to reduce coal imports in the country, were aimed at making India self-reliant in coal sector.

- ✓ India is the fourth largest producer of coal in the world and the second largest importer of coal in the world.
- ✓ The coal imports stood at 23% between 2009 and 2014
- ✓ In 1973, the coal sector was nationalized, putting an end to the domestic coal mining by public sector companies.
- ✓ Introduction of commercial mining of coal is meant to help increasing the coal production and bridge the supply gap.

INTERNATIONAL

- **Pope Francis - recently changed the Church laws to allow more responsibilities, activities and roles to women during Mass.**



- ✓ The Pope has amended the Code of Canon Law to allow women to serve in Altar
- ✓ The law that defines proceedings during Mass and in Altar is called Code of Canon Law.
- ✓ However, still, women are not permitted to become priests under the existing laws
- ✓ Henceforth, women can read the Gospel and serve at the Altar as ministers, which were previously reserved only to men.
- ✓ Women are also allowed to play the role of Lectors and Acolytes.
- ✓ Lectors are persons who read lessons in a church service, while an Acolyte is a person assisting the celebrant in a religious service or procession.
- ✓ The Code of Canon Law is the code of ecclesiastical laws that govern the Catholic Church.
- ✓ It is the fundamental laws of Latin Church.
- ✓ Also called the Johanno-Pauline Code, 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, 1917, promulgated by Benedict XV, was the first Law.
- ✓ Only those who are baptized in the Catholic Church are bound by the laws.
- ✓ Baptism is the Christian religious rite of sprinkling water to a person's forehead symbolizing purification and admission to the Christian Church.

INDIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES

- **The Union Cabinet - recently approved India-UAE Memorandum of Understanding for Scientific and Technical Cooperation.**
- ✓ The MoU facilitates sharing of technical and scientific knowledge between the countries
- ✓ It will also allow sharing of the information of data from satellites, radar, tide gauges and meteorological stations.
- ✓ The agreement intends to further share knowledge of operational products for 'real-time' seismological and oceanic services and deploy meteorological observation networks
- ✓ This includes study of seismic activities that has potential to generate Tsunami waves in Oman sea and Arabian sea
- ✓ Both the countries will also support 'Tsunami Early Warning Centre' designed for Tsunami forecasting operations with their expertise
- ✓ Further, research scholars, scientists, specialists, etc. will be exchanged to share their experiences

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- **On January 12, the External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar – delivered his first address at the United Nations Security Council on a open debate**



- ✓ The Minister spoke about the topic 'Threats to International Peace and security caused by terrorist acts: International cooperation in combating terrorism 20 years after the adoption of resolution 1373'
- ✓ During his address, the minister proposed eight-point action plan in order to combat the menace of terrorism.
- ✓ He stressed that the link between terrorism and transnational organised crime must be fully recognised and "addressed vigorously".
- ✓ Further, he asserted that there are no good and bad terrorists and urged the council members to stand united in the fight against terrorism

- ✓ The Minister gave a call to all the member nations to fulfill the obligations enshrined in the international counter-terrorism instruments
 - ✓ He called for enhanced United Nations coordination with FATF for checking the financial aid to terrorist organisations.
 - ✓ Dr Jaishankar also pointed out that some nations lack legal and operational frameworks and technical expertise to detect, investigate and prosecute terrorist financing cases.
 - ✓ Further, he called for a relook at the functioning of the various committees and asked for greater transparency, accountability and effectiveness.
 - ✓ The incumbent President, Tunisia chaired the United Nations Security Council open debate
 - ✓ The UNSC is made of five permanent members and ten non-permanent members.
 - ✓ The five permanent members are China, UK, France, Russia and USA.
 - ✓ The ten non-permanent members are India, Estonia, Kenya, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Vietnam and Tunisia.
- **The fourth edition of ‘One Planet Summit’ for biodiversity - was held on January 11, 2021.**



- ✓ The summit was organized by France, in cooperation with the United Nations and the World Bank
- ✓ Theme 2021 - “Let’s act together for nature!”
- ✓ The summit aims to advance the protection of nature and focused on biodiversity to mobilize commitments to protect the ecosystems and make links to human health.
- ✓ It seeks to promote worldwide ecological transformation
- ✓ Biodiversity represents the natural capital of the world, yet exploitation, pollution and climate change are bringing irreversible damage to ecosystems.
- ✓ The summit will measure environmental and climate protection combined with innovation and economy.
- ✓ The first ever One planet Summit was held in 2017, in which twelve international commitments were adopted

- ✓ It was organised two years after the historic Paris Agreement.

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- **NASA - is to 'ignite' the most powerful rocket ship in the world called the "Space Launch System" (SLS) on January 17, 2021 for the first time.**



- ✓ The SLS will be used for non-commercial human space flight of NASA
- ✓ It will serve as the centerpiece of NASA's Artemis program, a crewed mission to land "the first woman and next man" on the moon.
- ✓ However, during this first ignition, only the liquid fuel engines at the core of the rocket will be tested
- ✓ Once the core is test-fired, it will become the most powerful rocket ever ignited on Earth.
- ✓ When compared to Saturn V that carried Astronauts to the moon in 1960s and 1970s, SLS is more powerful
- ✓ It can produce 15% more thrust during liftoff and ascent.
- ✓ The SLS will generate 39.1 mega Newtons of thrust at launch, which is the highest thrust level ever achieved.
- ✓ The SLS is 98 metres tall, whereas Saturn V was 110 metre tall.
- ✓ It has capacity to carry more than twenty-seven tonnes and is to be hauled into the Lower Earth Orbit through four RS-25 engines.
- ✓ The future version of SLS is called Block-2 cargo.
- ✓ The vehicle called 'Starship' being built by SpaceX is capable of producing 66.7 Mega Newtons of thrust.
- ✓ When launched, the 'Starship' will be hailed as the most powerful rocket in the world.

DEFENCE

- **The Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment - recently developed the Retractable Landing Gear System for Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, TAPAS.**



- ✓ The system is meant to absorb and dissipate the landing impact load to safeguard the aircraft, apart from supporting it during ground manoeuvrings
- ✓ It consists of a hydrogas shock strut (combining nitrogen with hydraulic fluid) integrated with wheel and brake system to absorb the impact load
- ✓ The main purpose of Landing Gear systems in drones is to facilitate safe take-off and landing of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.
- ✓ TAPAS refer to 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 for the use of Indian Navy.
- ✓ The first flight of TAPAS was launched in 2016.
- ✓ The Unmanned Aerial Vehicles are important for search and strike missions.
- ✓ Israel and US are the global leaders of UAV technology.
- ✓ The Heron UAV fleet of India was procured from Israel.
- ✓ The Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment functions under the DRDO

ECONOMY

- **The Reserve Bank of India - recently released the 22nd edition of financial stability report for December 2020.**
- ✓ The report is released twice in a year
- ✓ As per the report, the Gross non-performing assets (NPA) ratio of the scheduled commercial banks is to increase to 13.5% by September 2021.
- ✓ According to the July 2020 financial stability report prediction GNPA was to increase from 8.5 % in March 2020 to 12.5% by March 2021.
- ✓ The loans to corporate have grown to multi quarter high of 5.65 % in March 2020 quarter.
- ✓ The GNPA's are the summation of all the loans that are classified as non-performing asset under RBI guidelines.
- ✓ The NNPA deducts the provisions made by the banks from the gross GNPA, giving the exact value of the non-performing assets.

- ✓ The RBI Financial Stability Report is released by the Financial Stability and Development Council.
- ✓ The idea of the council was mooted by Raghuram Rajan Committee in 2008.
- ✓ The Union Finance Minister is the chairperson of the Financial Stability and Development Council.
- ✓ The other members include RBI Governor and other senior officials of RBI.

AWARDS

- **The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare – recently presented the Kayakalp awards for the year 2019-20**



- ✓ The awards are presented annually to the health facilities with the highest standards of sanitation, cleanliness, infection control and hygiene.
- ✓ It was to be conferred to District Hospitals, Sub-divisional hospitals, Community Health Centres, Primary Health Centres and Health & Wellness Centres in public healthcare system
- ✓ Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and family Welfare inaugurated the 5th National Kayakalp Awards along with Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey through a video conference
- ✓ AIIMS Bhubaneswar has received the best central government hospital under Category B of the Kayakalp Awards for cleanliness for the third consecutive time.
- ✓ The hospital will receive Rs. 2 crore as the award
- ✓ Earlier, it had received the Rs. 1 crore award in 2018 and 2019 becoming the second cleanliest hospital in the country.
- ✓ Category B refers to the hospitals with less than thousand beds.
- ✓ The Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) was awarded the second prize under the Kayakalp Awards scheme.
- ✓ JIPMER received the prize under the Group A Central facilities category, which refers to hospitals having more than thousand beds.
- ✓ Earlier, it had received second place in 2018-19 and third place in 2017-18.

- ✓ The Rairangpur Sub Divisional Hospital of Mayurbhanj district was ranked as the best Sub-divisional hospital community health centre category.
- ✓ Rani Durgavati Hospital received the award for the fourth time consecutively.
- ✓ The Kayakalp award ranks the health facilities based on the parameters of Waste Management, Hospital Upkeep, Sanitation and Hygiene, Infection Control, hygiene promotion and support services
- ✓ The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India launched a National Initiative 'Kayakalp' on 15th May 2015 to ensure hygiene, sanitation and cleanliness in Public Health Facilities in India
- ✓ The scheme has also been internationally applauded during 72nd World Health Assembly, held on 20-28th May 2019.
- ✓ It is also duly recognized in Global Baseline Report 2019 published by WHO, UNICEF and JMP
- ✓ Swachh Swasth Sarvatra scheme, which was linked with the awards, was launched in 2016.
- ✓ The main objective of Swachh Swasth Sarvatra is to strengthen community health centres in open defecation blocks, especially in the region of those Public Health Centres or hospitals that have received the Kayakalp Awards.

RANKINGS

- **Japan – was ranked as the top performer at the Henley Passport Index, released by the International air Transport Association.**



- ✓ The index is released based on the number of destinations the holders can access without visa among the ranked 227 countries
- ✓ Japanese citizens can travel to 191 countries and secured the topmost spot
- ✓ Singapore was in second position with a score of 190.
- ✓ South Korea and Germany were at third position with a score of 189
- ✓ **India ranked 85th in the Henley Passport Index, with a score of 58**
- ✓ The countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria were at the bottommost ranking of the index with a score of 26, 28 and 29
- ✓ Nepal, ranked at rank 104 and Pakistan at 107 continue to be the “Worst passports to hold” category.
- ✓ Pakistan had a visa-free access to 32 countries and Nepal had a score of 38 countries.
- ✓ Over the past sixteen years, the top positions of Henley Passport Index were taken by the European Union countries, USA and UK.
- ✓ However, this year, the Asia Pacific countries have become the top performers.
- ✓ The Passport Index includes World Openness score, Visa-free scores and Global mobility scores.
- ✓ There are 58 destinations in the world that does not require prior visa, which includes 20 in Africa and 11 in Asia.