

EVERYDAY CURRENT AFFAIRS-DECEMBER 3, 2021

NATIONAL

- **On December 2, the Rajya Sabha - passed the Dam Safety Bill, 2019, despite stiff opposition from members of various political parties including the DMK and the AIADMK.**
- ✓ The Bill seeks to set up an institutional mechanism for the safety of specified dams in the country
- ✓ The Rajya Sabha passed the bill with two official amendments through a voice vote.
 - ✓ One of the amendments relates to the change in the year mentioned in the bill title from 2019 to 2021.
- ✓ It was passed after Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat rejected the Opposition's charge that it was "unconstitutional" and "anti-federal".
- ✓ According to the Minister, the Bill is not intended to encroach upon states' rights on their waters, dam ownership or maintenance, but only seeks to ensure safety and prevent dam-related disasters.
- ✓ The proposed legislation provides for surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of the specified dams for the prevention of dam failure-related disasters
- ✓ The bill, aiming at creating four layers of monitoring, will pave the way for creation of a National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA).
 - ✓ This move is to ensure implementation of the policy, guidelines and standards evolved by the National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS).
 - ✓ The NDSA with 10 members nominated by the Central government and seven members from the states will have the power to impose penalties
- ✓ The bill also mandates state governments to set up a State Dam Safety Organisation (SDSO) within six months
 - ✓ The SDSO will be responsible for surveillance, inspections and monitoring the operation and maintenance of specified dams.

- ✓ Further, the bill mandates the states to constitute a state committee on dam safety.
 - ✓ The bill will now go back to the Lok Sabha as the Rajya Sabha has made amendments to it
 - ✓ The government decided way back in 1987 to draft India's first dam safety law.
 - ✓ It was introduced in the Lok Sabha for the first time in August 2010 but was withdrawn following several changes recommended by the standing committee where it was referred.
 - ✓ A modified bill was introduced subsequently introduced but it lapsed after the dissolution of the 15th Lok Sabha.
 - ✓ While introducing the Bill in the Lok Sabha in August 2019, Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat had said since 1947, around 40 dams had collapsed in India.
 - ✓ The Lok Sabha had passed the bill on 2 August 2019.
 - ✓ The Bill gains importance in the backdrop of the many lives lost earlier this year following a devastating glacier event and a dam collapse in Uttarakhand's Chamoli district.
 - ✓ According to 2019 data available with the National Register of Large Dams, there are currently 5,745 large dams in India, of which 293 are over 100 years old.
 - ✓ Besides, 1,041 dams are between 50 and 100 years old.
 - ✓ **The Tamil Nadu legislative assembly passed a unanimous resolution in June 2018, urging the Union government to take up the legislation on dam safety in its present form only after arriving at a consensus with the states.**
 - ✓ The contention was that the Bill contained clauses that violated the rights of Tamil Nadu, especially with respect to the dams, Mullaperiyar, Parambikulam, Thunakadavu and Peruvuripallam, located in Kerala, but owned, operated and maintained by the Tamil Nadu government.
 - ✓ The Bill provides for the constitution of the National Dam Safety Authority, which would also perform the role of the State Dam Safety Organisation, if a dam in one state is owned by another state
- **The Union territory of Puducherry - emerged as the best performing Union territory in the implementation of the Union government's flagship scheme, 'Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana' (ABPMJAY)**
- ✓ The territory won 'Ayushman Utkrishta Puraskaar' award for the best performing Union territory with the highest percentage of households with at least one Ayushman card.
 - ✓ Puducherry had 51% of households with at least one Ayushman card for the period from August 1, 2020 to August 31, 2021.
 - ✓ As on date, Puducherry has 86% of households with at least one Ayushman card
 - ✓ The Union government introduced the program in September 2018 to support the country's poor and vulnerable populations by covering their hospital expenses.

- ✓ The scheme seeks to provide a health cover of ₹5 lakh per family per year for hospitalization.
- ✓ The initiative was launched in August 2019 by the Puducherry state health department (SHA)
- **Meta, formerly Facebook - announced a string of crucial safety initiatives for India, targeted at women safety on November 3**
- ✓ Meta announced the launch of StopNCII.org to combat the usage of non-consensual intimate images, a Safety Hub for Women in Hindi and 11 other Indian languages
- ✓ The Hub will enable more women users in India to access information about tools and resources
 - ✓ It can help the women users to make the most of their social media experience, while staying safe online.
 - ✓ The Women's Safety Hub will be launched in Hindi and 11 other Indian languages including Marathi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bengali, Odia, Assamese, Kannada and Malayalam to enable easy access
 - ✓ It includes specific resources for women leaders, journalists and survivors of abuse.
 - ✓ Additionally, it also contains video-on-demand safety trainings in all languages.
- ✓ The first-of-its-kind platform, StopNCII.org, has partnered with global organisations to support the victims of non-consensual intimate images.
 - ✓ In India, the platform has partnered with organisations such as Social Media Matters, Centre for Social Research, and Red Dot Foundation.
 - ✓ The platform is launched in partnership with UK Revenge Porn Helpline
 - ✓ It builds on Meta's NCII Pilot, an emergency programme that allows potential victims to proactively hash their intimate images so they can't be distributed on its platforms.
- ✓ It had also appointed two Indians, journalist Bishakha Datta and Centre for Social Research's Jyoti Vadhera, to Meta's now 14-member Global Women's Safety Expert Advisers.
 - ✓ Meta's Global Women's Safety Expert Advisors comprises other non-profit leaders, activists, and academic experts from different parts of the world
 - ✓ The Group consults Meta in the development of new policies, products and programmes to better support women on its apps.
- ✓ Meta also released a discussion paper on the impact of social media on women titled 'Connect, Collaborate and Create: Women and Social Media during the Pandemic', which focuses on a sharp gender imbalance in social media usage.
- ✓ According to the report, only 33% of women in India use social media, as against 67% men.
- ✓ According to Meta, it has invested nearly \$5 billion in India so far to work on safety initiatives and updates on its platforms.

- ✓ Meta is also an investor in social commerce unicorn Meesho, which has been providing women means of earning by letting them resell the start-up's products within their networks.
- **India - will have nine new nuclear power reactors by 2024 and a new nuclear project that will come up 150 km away from New Delhi in the Gorakhpur area of Haryana**
 - ✓ This was announced by the government in Rajya Sabha on November 3.
 - ✓ In addition, 12 more nuclear reactors with a capacity for 9000 MW have been accorded administrative approval and financial sanction, as per minister of state in the PMO Jitendra Singh
 - ✓ The present nuclear power capacity of 6780 MW is expected to increase to 22480 MW by 2031.
 - ✓ According to the Minister, a bulk approval of 10 indigenous reactors was done in a single Cabinet decision, which is a record in itself and has never happened in the history of independent India.

INTERNATIONAL

- **China - has decided to suspend the construction of hybrid energy systems in Sri Lanka by Chinese firm Sino Soar Hybrid Technology**
 - ✓ These systems were to be constructed in three northern islands located close to India.
 - ✓ India had reportedly lodged a protest with Sri Lanka in January this year after the Chinese firm got the contract.
 - ✓ Sri Lanka had recently awarded a contract to a Chinese firm for the development of East Container Terminal at the Colombo port.
 - ✓ Sri Lanka had first committed the project to India and Japan.

AWARDS

- **Legendary Indian long jumper Anju Bobby George - has been bestowed with the Woman of the Year Award by World Athletics for grooming young girls to take up sports**



- ✓ Anju is the only Indian to have won a medal in the World Championships with a long jump bronze in the 2003 edition at Paris
- ✓ She was named for the award in the world body's annual awards night held virtually on December 1
- ✓ She is the first Indian to be honoured by the sport's world body during its annual awards function.
- ✓ The award is given to recognise a woman who has dedicated her life to the sport of athletics.
- ✓ Anju is the second recipient of the prestigious award, which was started in 2019, after Ethiopia's double Olympic champion Derartu Tulu.
- ✓ Sprint legend PT Usha was honoured by the world athletics body with the Veteran Pin in 2019, in recognition of her contribution to the growth of sport.
- ✓ Hailing from Kerala, Anju is India's only medallist at the World Athletics Championships (Paris, 2003), a gold medallist in the IAAF World Athletics Finals (Monaco, 2005).
- ✓ She finished sixth in the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens with a personal best leap of 6.83m, but was elevated to fifth place in 2007 when the United States of America's Marion Jones was disqualified for a doping offence.
- ✓ Last year, Anju was elected as senior vice-president of the Athletics Federation of India, the highest post occupied by a woman in its history.
- ✓ She was recently made a member of the Executive Committee of the Indian Olympic Association as Athletes Commission representative.
- ✓ Currently, Anju is the Chairperson of TOPS (Target Olympic Podium Scheme) and also the Executive member of Khelo India project.
- ✓ In 2016 she opened a training academy for young girls, which has already helped to produce a World U-20 medallist
- ✓ Promising long jumper Shaili Singh, who was spotted and mentored by Anju and trained under her husband Robert Bobby George, recently won silver medal in the World U-20 Athletics Championships.
- ✓ Anju was awarded the Arjuna award in 2002, Padma Shri in 2004 and Khel Ratna in 2003.
- ✓ In 2021, she won the BBC lifetime achievement award in the category of Best Athlete
- ✓ Olympic champions Elaine Thompson-Herah of Jamaica and Karsten Warholm of Norway were named the World Athletes of the Year at the awards night.
- ✓ The awards were earlier known as World Athletics Gala Awards.

RANKINGS

- **Tamil Nadu – was ranked ninth in terms of urban unemployment in the January-March quarter of 2020-21, as per the quarterly bulletin of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)**

J&K TOPS LIST

- J&K and Ladakh had an unemployment rate of 17.6%, followed by U'khand, Kerala, Odisha, Rajasthan
- Gujarat had lowest urban unemployment rate at 3.8%, followed by West Bengal
- Overall rate was high at 22.9% in 15-29 age group across all states

- ✓ Urban unemployment rates in all age groups in at least 11 states remained in double digits, while it remained high among 15-to-29-year olds across all states
- ✓ The overall urban unemployment rate hit 22.9% in the January-March quarter of 2020-21
- ✓ In the October-December quarter, 12 states reported double-digit urban unemployment rates
- ✓ The combined Union territories of J&K and Ladakh had the maximum unemployment rate of 17.6% in this quarter
- ✓ It was followed by Uttarakhand, Kerala, Odisha, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.
- ✓ Gujarat had the lowest urban unemployment rate at 3.8% in the March 2021 quarter, followed by West Bengal with 4.8%.
- ✓ The PLFS was launched by the National Statistical Office (NSO) to estimate the employment and unemployment indicators (worker population ratio, labour force participation rate, unemployment rate) in the short time interval of three months for urban areas only in the current weekly status (CWS).

INTERNATIONAL DAY

- **International Day of Persons with Disabilities - December 3**



- ✓ The day is observed by the United Nations and several other organisations to promote the rights and well-being of people with disabilities at every level of society and development
- ✓ Theme 2021 - “Leadership and participation of persons with disabilities toward an inclusive, accessible and sustainable post-COVID-19 world”
- ✓ The annual observance of this day began in 1992 after it was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 47/3.
- ✓ In 2006, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) was also adopted.
- ✓ It aims at working towards creating equal opportunities for persons with disabilities through the implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.
- ✓ Nearly one billion people out of the total population i.e, 7 billion or approximately 15% of the world’s population, live with some form of disability.
- ✓ 80% of the total disabled population lives in developing countries, while more than 100 million disabled persons are kids.

GENOME SEQUENCING – A REPORT

ALL ABOUT GENOME SEQUENCING

Genome is the genetic fingerprint of an organism. Each kind of virus contains unique RNA sequences* built of bases A, G, C, and U. This is converted into complementary DNA (C-DNA), which have bases A, C, T, and G. Each C-DNA contains millions of these bases. Sequencing is decoding the order of the bases to understand the genetic fingerprint and see if one is different from another.

STEPS

Sample processing | The sample is drawn, and an RT-PCR test is done for confirmation of Covid-19. **

Conversion | RNA is converted to complementary-DNA (DNA synthesized from a single-stranded RNA)

Shearing | C-DNA is chemically sliced for machines to read

Coding | C-DNA fragments are tagged

Sequencing | The tagged C-DNAs are put in a sequencer that identifies the order of the As, Cs, Ts, and Gs

Analysis | Viral sequences are compared with the original sequence of SARS Cov2 using special computational tools. If the sequence of a sample is different from the original, it is deemed a variant.

Time taken for sequencing:
5 to 7 days

(**TN draws samples from clusters in gathering, workplaces and educational institutions)

