

21 Dec 2020: PIB Summary & Analysis

India-Vietnam Leaders' Virtual Summit

Context:

The Prime Minister of India held a virtual summit with his Vietnamese counterpart.

Details:

- During the summit, the leaders exchanged views on wide-ranging bilateral, regional and global issues and set forth a Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity and People to guide the future development of India - Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
 - Both Prime Ministers expressed satisfaction over the successful implementation of the High Speed Guard Boat (HSGB) Manufacturing Project for Vietnam Border Guard Command under the US\$ 100 million Defence Line of Credit extended by the Government of India to Vietnam, and the handing over of completed HSGB to Vietnam, launch of HSGBs manufactured in India and the keel laying of HSGBs manufactured in Vietnam.
 - MoUs were signed in the domains of defence industry cooperation, UN Peacekeeping, atomic energy, petroleum, clean energy and health.
 - Also announced was the launch of a bilateral project for Encyclopaedia on India - Vietnam Civilizational and Cultural Interactions.
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India-Japan SAMVAD Conference

Context:

The sixth India-Japan SAMVAD Conference was held.

About the India-Japan SAMVAD Conference:

- This Samvad Conference revolves around the need to build the future of Asia on the positive influence of traditions of non-violence and democracy in Asia.
- The first conference, Samvad-I, was held in New Delhi in 2015, at Bodh Gaya.
 - During Samvad I, leading scholars, religious leaders, academics, and political personalities had exchanged views on conflict avoidance and environmental consciousness.
- During this edition, Mr Modi proposed to create a library of traditional Buddhist literature and scriptures, adding that India would be happy to host the facility and provide appropriate resources for it.
- He also said that governments must keep “humanism” at the core of its policies.
- Prime Minister Modi also hailed the forum for the great work it has done to promote the ideas and ideals of Lord Buddha, especially among the youth.

Also read: [Buddha – Life & Teachings](#)

COVID-19 Update

Context:

India suspends all flights to and from United Kingdom.

Details:

- Considering the emerging [Covid-19](#) situation in the UK, GOI has decided that all flights to and from the UK will be suspended till 31st December 2020.
- However, this restriction shall not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by DGCA.

- Airlines operating flights to India from other countries shall not board any passenger travelling from UK to India and shall ensure that no passenger coming from UK is boarded in a flight for any destination in India either directly or indirectly.
 - As a measure of precaution, passengers arriving from the UK in all transit flights (flights that have taken off or flights which are reaching India before 22nd December 2020 at 23.59 hrs) should be subject to mandatory RT-PCR test at the arrival port in India.
 - The decision has been taken due to the spread of the new strain of the coronavirus.
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UDAN Scheme

Context:

New route under UDAN scheme flagged off, Belgaum – Surat – Kishangarh.

For more on [UDAN – regional connectivity scheme](#), click on the linked article.

Leopards in India

Context:

60 percent rise in the leopard population across the country.

Details:

- India now has 12,852 leopards as compared to the previous estimate of 7910 conducted in 2014.
- This is an increase of over 60%.
- The states of Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra recorded the highest leopard estimates at 3,421, 1,783 and 1,690 respectively.
- India's world record tiger survey also estimated the population of leopards and the tiger range was found home to 12,852 leopards.
- They occur in prey rich protected areas as well as multi-use forests.
- A total of 5,240 adult individual leopards were identified in a total of 51,337 leopard photographs using pattern recognition software. Statistical analysis estimates the leopard population at - 12,800 leopards within the tiger's range.
- It is probable that the number of leopards is more since only tiger range areas were sampled.
 - Other leopard occupied areas such as non-forested habitats (coffee and tea plantations and other land uses from where leopards are known to occur), higher elevations in the Himalayas, arid landscapes and majority of North East landscape were not sampled.

About leopards in India:

- The Indian leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*) is a leopard subspecies widely distributed on the Indian subcontinent.
 - It is listed as vulnerable on the [IUCN Red List](#).
 - Its populations have declined following habitat loss and fragmentation, poaching for the illegal trade of skins and body parts, and persecution due to conflict situations.
 - The Indian leopard is distributed in India, Nepal, Bhutan and parts of Pakistan. There are occasional sightings in Bangladesh.
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JSA II: Catch the Rain

Context:

"JSA II: Catch the Rain" Awareness Generation Campaign launched.

About the campaign:

- The [National Water Mission](#) launched the "Jal Shakti Abhiyan II: Catch the Rain" awareness campaign to promote rainwater harvesting.

- The National Water Mission initiated the campaign in collaboration with Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) under the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.
 - As a preparatory phase of JSA-II, the Ministry has involved NYKS for undertaking "Catch the Rain" awareness campaign to cover 623 districts.
 - This campaign will run from December 2020 to March 2021.
 - NYKS will undertake this awareness building campaign through various IEC activities which will include conducting education and motivational programmes and mass awareness campaigns.
 - During this period, NYKS teams will also meet the district administrations, line departments and water agencies, hold meetings with pradhans, local influencers and volunteers to further the cause and also prepare plans for the water conservation to be taken up in the next phase of the campaign.
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Dhokra Art

Context:

Dhokra decorative pieces added to the Tribes India collection.

About Dhokra art:

- Dhokra is a non-ferrous metal casting style which uses the lost-wax technique.
- This style of metal casting has been in vogue in all parts of India for centuries.
- The dhokra products reflect the simplicity and motifs of tribal and folk life.
- They are popular both in India and abroad.
- Dhokra art is basically metal figurines made from chiefly bronze and copper.
- While Dhokra art originated in West Bengal, over time the tribes moved to Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Chhattisgarh as well as places like Kerala and Rajasthan. Hence, the art has now spread all over India.

Also read: [Tribes India Marketplace](#)

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

Context:

Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) identifies new routes for RO-RO, RO-PAX & Ferry Services.

Details:

- MoPSW has identified domestic locations namely Hazira, Okha, Somnath Temple, DIU, PIPAVAV, Dahej, Mumbai/JNPT, Jamnagar, Kochi, Ghogha, Goa, Mundra and Mandvi and 6 International routes, connecting 4 international destinations namely Chattogram (Bangladesh), Seychelles (East Africa) Madagascar (East Africa) and Jaffna (Sri Lanka) from major Indian coastal port towns for the commencement of ferry services through inland waterways.
- The Sagarmala programme is the flagship programme of the Ministry to promote port-led development in the country through harnessing India's 7,500 Km long coastline and potentially navigable waterways.
- The Ministry is keen to facilitate companies to operate RO-RO, RO-PAX and Ferry services on various routes across the nation and provide the required support to make the project operational.
- MoPSW had recently successfully implemented one such ferry route by deploying RO-PAX vessel ferry service between Hazira and Ghogha. Read more about this in [PIB dated Nov 8, 2020](#).
- To replicate the success of the above business model, MoPSW is encouraging the private operators to identify the routes, which offer potential to commence the RO-RO, RO-PAX ferry service based on localized demand to promote a supplementary and sustainable mode of the transportation through coastal/inland water.

- This is expected to, apart from providing a relatively clean mode of transport, also help in providing a boost to the tourism sector, create jobs in the coastal regions, save time & cost for commuters and decongest roads and rail networks.
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Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020

Context:

Union Ministry of Power has promulgated rules laying down the rights of power consumers in the country.

Details:

- The Ministry announced the notification of the Electricity (Rights of Consumers) Rules, 2020.
 - These rules provide for rights of consumers and obligations of distribution licensees, release of new connection and modification in existing connection, metering arrangement, billing and payment, among others.
 - An automatic compensation mechanism will be put in place. It will include no supply to a consumer beyond a particular duration and certain number of interruptions in supply, which will be specified by the regulatory commission.
 - Reliability of supply:
 - The distribution licensee shall supply 24x7 power to all consumers. However, the commission may specify lower hours of supply for some categories of consumers like agriculture.
 - This relaxation has been allowed since pumps do not need to be run 24x7 for supplying water to fields.
 - The rules stated it is the duty of every distribution licensee to supply electricity on request made by an owner or occupier of any premises in line with the provisions of the Act.
 - A new connection has to be given within a maximum time period of seven days in metro cities, 15 days in other municipal areas, and 30 days in rural areas.
 - It is the right of consumer to have minimum standards of service for supply of electricity from the distribution licensee.
 - Rules regarding metering:
 - No connection shall be given without a meter
 - Meter shall be the smart pre-payment meter or pre-payment meter
 - Provision of testing of meters
 - Provisions for replacement of defective or burnt or stolen meters specified
 - Consumer as prosumer
 - While the prosumers will maintain consumer status and have the same rights as the general consumer, they will also have right to set up Renewable Energy (RE) generation unit including roof top solar photovoltaic (PV) systems – either by himself or through a service provider.
 - The consumer grievance redressal has been made easy by making it multi-layered and the number of consumer's representatives have been increased from one to four.
 - Maximum timeline of 45 days is specified for grievance redressal.
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