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Combat Vehicles Research and Development Establishment (CVRDE)



- CVRDE has indigenously designed and developed Three Ton Retractable Landing Gear (RLG) Systems for Tapas UAV.
- The design, development and testing of this gear system is carried out in co-ordination with CEMILAC and DGAQA for certification.
- The tricycle nose wheel type multidisciplinary, hydro-electro-mechanical system is now being manufactured by an Industry at Coimbatore.
- First set of Retractable Landing Gear system developed by industry was handed over by Director CVRDE, Chennai to the Director, ADE Bengaluru.
- CVRDE has also designed and developed One Ton Retractable Landing Gear System for a different class of UAV known as SWIFT.
- This system is designed and developed for accommodating the Landing Gears within the constrained bay volume.
- It is manufactured with the help of Indian industry with due inspection and certification of CEMILAC and DGAQA.
- This system was also handed over to ADE, Bengaluru.

Govt notifies rules for renewal of International Driving License while traveling abroad



- Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued a notification to facilitate the issuance of International Driving Permit (IDP) for Indian citizens whose IDP has expired while they are abroad. There was no mechanism for its renewal while citizens were abroad and their IDP expired.

- After this amendment, Indian citizens can apply for renewal through Indian Embassies and Missions abroad, from where these applications will move to the VAHAN portal in India, to be considered by the concerned Road Transport Officers (RTOs).
- The International Driving Permit will be couriered to the citizen at his or her address abroad by the respective RTOs. The Ministry said that the notification also removes the conditions of a Medical Certificate and a valid visa at the time of making the request for the IDP in India. The idea is that a citizen who has a valid driving licence should not have a requirement for another medical certificate.

Riverine wetlands in Pune increasingly flourishing with invasive weeds: Study



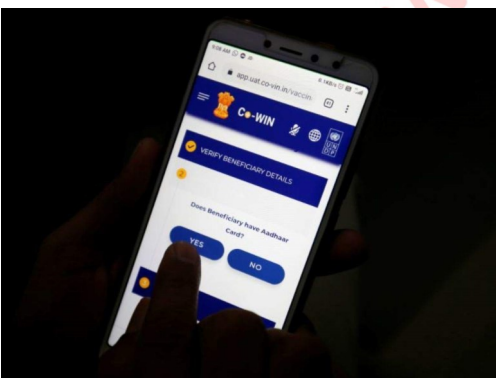
- Botanists Savita and Sanjaykumar Rahangdale have said that riverine wetlands within city limits of Pune have been found to be increasingly flourishing with invasive weeds, like hyacinth.
- "In the last decade...these invasive weeds have captured and expanded their area.
- This is mainly due to the rising pollution levels in...rivers," Sanjaykumar said. The duo conducted a nine year-long study

DRDO develops space heating device for soldiers at high altitude



- DRDO develops space heating device for soldiers at high altitude DRDO has developed Himtapak, a space heating device for Indian Army personnel posted in eastern Ladakh, Siachen and other high altitude areas.
- Dr Rajeev Varshney, Director of the Defence Institute of Physiology and Allied Sciences, said, "It (the device) will ensure that there are no deaths of jawans due to backblast and carbon monoxide poisoning."

CoWIN platform shall form foundation of COVID-19 vaccination drive: Govt



- The government on Sunday said that the digital platform CoWIN shall form the foundation of COVID-19 vaccination drive in India.
- The platform's components will be portable and the process shall be built on an approach that the vaccine is available anytime and anywhere

Kerala govt to set up Kalaripayattu Academy to boost martial art form



- The Kerala government is setting up a Kalaripayattu Academy in order to give a boost to the martial art form.
- According to the state Tourism Department, the 3,500 square feet gallery, where Kalari Asans (gurus) will conduct classes, is expected to be completed in two months. Kerala CM is scheduled to release the academy's syllabus on January 16.

Single Window Clearance System' for coal mines



- Home Minister will launch the 'Single Window Clearance System', an online platform to obtain clearances for smooth operationalisation of coal mines

Felled by fire



- A review of Indian hospital fires published in the Journal of Clinical Anesthesia identified higher oxygen availability in intensive care facilities as the likely primary cause, with motors and electrical units in the room providing the ignition, and plastics fuelling it
- It is worth considering, therefore, whether hospitals have been audited with such factors in mind, and to evaluate national building safety codes against international practice.
- Oxygen monitors for hospital rooms, to ensure that the ambient level is within safe norms — set at a maximum of 23.5% by the U.S. National Fire Protection Association — could help avert an accident. Locating electrical equipment for air-conditioners with sparking potential away from oxygen saturated areas may also reduce the risk.
- As the health sector expands, it is essential that all new infrastructure conforms to rigorous safety standards, a small premium to stop disasters such as the Bhandara carnage.
- The Centre should also create a public platform for insights gained from inquiries into hospital fires to be shared.
- Hospitals should mandatorily hold regular safety and evacuation drills which are key to saving lives when disaster strikes.

The front seat in electric mobility



- The progression to electric vehicles is important for India because such vehicles are sustainable and profitable in the long term.
- Reducing dependence on crude oil will save the government money, reduce carbon emissions, and build domestic energy independence.

- Besides being an economically and environmentally viable option, India's transition to electric vehicles will allow us to fine-tune our infrastructure.
- This will also influence India's foreign policy as our energy security dependence will shift from West Asia to Latin America.
- India imported 228.6 MT of crude oil worth \$120 billion in 2018–19, which made it the third-largest oil importer in the world in terms of value.
- Under the 'Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles' and its updated (Fame 2) version
- The government has allocated \$1.3 billion in incentives for electric buses, three-wheelers and four-wheelers to be used for commercial purposes till 2022, and earmarked another \$135 million for charging stations
- Besides these incentives, a proposal for a \$4.6 billion subsidy for battery makers has also been proposed by the NITI Aayog.
- These policies are embedded with the vision to have 30% electric vehicles plying the roads by 2030.
- In September 2019, Japanese automobile major Suzuki Motor formed a consortium with Japanese automotive component manufacturer Denso and multinational conglomerate Toshiba to set up a manufacturing unit in Gujarat to venture into the production of lithium-ion batteries and electrodes.
- Developing domestic battery manufacturing capacity may fundamentally change India's relationship with resource-rich Latin America as the government plans to buy overseas lithium reserves.
- Latin America's famous lithium triangle that encompasses lithium deposits under the salt flats of northwest Argentina, northern Chile, and southwest Bolivia holds about 80% of the explored lithium of the world.
- At present, India's lithium-ion battery demand is fulfilled by imports from China, Vietnam, and Hong Kong.
- In the last two years, India has had a growing appetite for lithium-ion batteries, and so, lithium imports have tripled from \$384 mn to \$1.2 bn.
- Interestingly, lithium is also used as a drug to treat bipolar disorder and is soon becoming the metal to treat a world polluted by excessive carbon emissions.

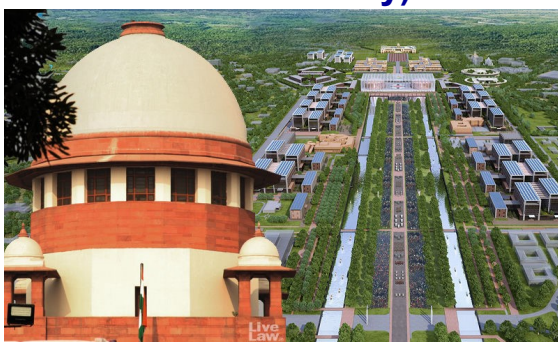
- Currently, India's biggest trading partners in Latin America are Brazil, Mexico, and Venezuela, and majority of trade is concentrated on crude oil which includes 14%-20% of India's total crude oil imports.

Arunachal harbours a vanadium source



- Arunachal Pradesh, considered a sleeping hydropower giant, is likely to become India's prime producer of vanadium, a high-value metal used in strengthening steel and titanium.
- Exploration being carried out by the Geological Survey of India (GSI) has placed the eastern Himalayan State on the vanadium map of the country
- India is a significant consumer of vanadium, but is not a primary producer of the strategic metal.
- It is recovered as a by-product from the slag collected from the processing of vanadiferous magnetite ores (iron ore)
- According to data provided by the GSI, India consumed 4% of about 84,000 tonnes of vanadium produced across the globe in 2017. China, which produces 57% of the world's vanadium, consumed 44% of the metal.
- Vanadium mineralisation in Arunachal Pradesh is geologically similar to the "stone coal" vanadium deposits of China hosted in carbonaceous shale.
- This high vanadium content is associated with graphite, with a fixed carbon content of up to 16%.
- The expected grade of vanadium mineralisation in Arunachal Pradesh is comparable to the important vanadium deposits of the world.
- The largest deposits are in China, followed by Russia and South Africa," the specialist said.

Central Vista, executive's caprice, and rule of law (Written by Suhrith Parthasarathy)



- The judgment delivered on January 5 in Rajeev Suri v. Delhi Development Authority, in which a 2:1 majority of the Court granted its imprimatur to the proposed redevelopment of the Central Vista in the national capital
- Court's refusal to acknowledge the existence of a right to public participation, a right, which ought to be seen as fundamental in a democracy, properly understood.
- What is more, a repudiation of basic environmental norms is condoned, because, according to the Court, "the principle of sustainable development and precautionary principle need to be understood in a proper context", one in which "competing public interests" must be harmonised and balanced.

- Two claims stand out: first, that the state had sanctioned an alteration to the existing land use permitted under law without sufficient public consultation; second, that the environmental clearance for the project is unreasoned, and was, in any event, obtained by illegitimately carving the project into two.
- Two, any civic participation can be productive only if complete information is placed in the public domain.

PM-KISAN scheme



- Centre paid ₹1,364 cr to undeserving beneficiaries under PM-KISAN: RTI data
 - PM Kisan is a Central Sector scheme with 100% funding from Government of India.
 - It has become operational from 1.12.2018.
- Under the scheme an income support of 6,000/- per year in three equal instalments will be provided to small and marginal farmer families having combined land holding/ownership of upto 2 hectares.
 - Definition of family for the scheme is husband, wife and minor children.
 - State Government and UT administration will identify the farmer families which are eligible for support as per scheme guidelines.
 - The fund will be directly transferred to the bank accounts of the beneficiaries.

The following categories of beneficiaries of higher economic status shall not be eligible for benefit under the scheme.

1. All Institutional Land holders.
2. Farmer families which belong to one or more of the following categories:.
 - ⇒ Former and present holders of constitutional posts
 - ⇒ Former and present Ministers/ State Ministers and former/present Members of Lok Sabha/ Rajya Sabha/ State Legislative Assemblies/ State Legislative Councils, former and present Mayors of Municipal Corporations, former and present Chairpersons of District Panchayats.
 - ⇒ All serving or retired officers and employees of Central/ State Government Ministries /Offices/Departments and its field units Central or State PSEs and Attached offices /Autonomous Institutions under Government as well as regular employees of the Local Bodies (Excluding Multi Tasking Staff /Class IV/Group D employees)
 - ⇒ All superannuated/retired pensioners whose monthly pension is Rs.10,000/-or more (Excluding Multi Tasking Staff / Class IV/Group D employees) of above category
 - ⇒ All Persons who paid Income Tax in last assessment year

⇒ Professionals like Doctors, Engineers, Lawyers, Chartered Accountants, and Architects registered with Professional bodies and carrying out profession by undertaking practices.

'Prarambh', the Startup India international summit



- Prime Minister called upon youngsters to attend 'Prarambh', the Startup India international summit
- Aiming to bring India's Entrepreneurial force onto the global map, The Department for Promotion of Industry, and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is hosting "Prarambh", the Startup India International Summit on January 15-16, 2021.
- The summit is expected to bring together top policy makers, industry, academia, investors, Startups and all stakeholders from across the globe and celebrate 5 years of launch of Startup India Initiative which has played a pivotal role in spurring the spirit of entrepreneurship in every corner of the country.
- In addition to deliberating on good practices from best of the ecosystems across the world, the sessions of the Summit are designed to showcase the spread and depth of entrepreneurship based on innovation in India.
- The idea is to attain attention of global capital for startups in India, mobilize domestic capital, provide opportunities for accessing international markets to our startups and evolve enabling policy provisions.

The main objectives of the Summit are given below:

- Encouraging and inspiring the youth for innovation and entrepreneurship
- Exchange knowledge on best practices on nurturing startup ecosystems
- Develop capacities of entrepreneurial ecosystem
- Mobilize global and domestic capital for investments into startups
- Provide opportunities to startups for entering domestic (private and public) and international markets
- Showcasing high-quality, high technology and frugal innovations from India
- Enable ease of doing business for startups and investors.
- The who's who of the Indian as well as global Startup ecosystem are making a beeline for this event.
- Please mark this date for a marathon of in-depth knowledge sessions and exchange of global ideas!

Startup India Initiative



- Startup India is a flagship initiative of the Government of India, intended to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and startups in the country that will drive sustainable economic growth and generate large-scale employment opportunities.
- The initiative aims to empower startups grow through innovation and design.
- The initiative not only brought a sharp focus on startups but catalysed the Indian startup ecosystem and accelerated Indian entrepreneurs building innovative solutions for Indian and global needs.
- Since the launch of the initiative, several programs have been undertaken to contribute to the Hon'ble Prime Minister's vision of transforming India into a country of job creators instead of job seekers.