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SAKSHAM campaign



- The Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry launched month-long mass awareness campaign 'SAKSHAM' to spread awareness about green and clean energy.
- The pan-India campaign will focus on adoption of cleaner fuels. The Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Tarun Kapoor launched the campaign in New Delhi.
- The campaign will spread awareness about seven key drivers, they include moving towards a gas-based economy, cleaner use of fossil fuels, greater reliance on domestic sources to drive bio-fuels and increased use of electric vehicles.

Sulawesi island



- Sulawesi also known as Celebes, is one of the four Greater Sunda Islands
- It is governed by Indonesia
- The world's eleventh-largest island, it is situated east of Borneo, west of the Maluku Islands, and south of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago
- Within Indonesia, only Sumatra, Borneo and Papua are larger in territory, and only Java and Sumatra have larger populations.
- The landmass of Sulawesi includes four peninsulas: the northern Minahasa Peninsula; the East Peninsula; the South Peninsula; and the Southeast Peninsula
- Three gulfs separate these peninsulas: the Gulf of Tomini between the northern Minahasa and East peninsulas; the Tolo Gulf between the East and Southeast peninsulas; and the Bone Gulf between the South and Southeast peninsulas
- The Strait of Makassar runs along the western side of the island and separates the island from Borneo
- A powerful 6.2-magnitude earthquake on 15 January 2021 resulted in at least 67 deaths.
- The epic-center of the earthquake was six kilometers (3.7 miles) northeast of the city of Majene, at a depth of 10 kilometers

Indo Nepal Rail connectivity gets a vital boost



- The section Jayanagar-Kurtha, 34.90 Km is a part of Jaynagar-Bijalpura-Bardibas rail (68.72 KM) project which has entirely been funded by Government of India.
- As first phase of this project, the rail line from Jayanagar in Madhubani district, Bihar has been connected to Kurtha in Nepal and will be extended up to Bijalpura by March 2021.
- Jayanagar is 4 Km from the India-Nepal border. This route has Janakpur, the famous pilgrim centre in Nepal which is 29 Kms from Jayanagar.
- This project is being undertaken by IRCON and all rail engineering and infrastructure works are complete.
- This will be the first Broad Gauge passenger rail service in Nepal. Prior to this till 2014 a narrow gauge service was running between Jayanagar and Janakpur operated by Nepal.
- Indian Railways is extending full cooperation to Nepal in running the BG service by sharing the know-how and operations and maintenance processes with Nepal Railway Company as well as imparting training to officials from Nepal.

Common Service Centre 2.0



- Based on the assessment of the CSC scheme, the Government launched the CSC 2.0 scheme in 2015 to expand the outreach of CSCs to all Gram Panchayats across the country.
- Under CSC 2.0 scheme, at least one CSC will be set up in each of the 2.5 lakh GPs across the country by 2019.
- CSCs functioning under the existing scheme will also be strengthened and integrated with additional 1.5 lakh CSCs across the country.
- It is envisaged as a service/transaction oriented model with a large bouquet of services made available at the CSCs for delivering to the citizens.
- Common Service Centres (CSCs) are kiosk/delivery outlets at the Gram Panchayat and ADC village level by which Govt. services are being delivered to the citizens along with B2C services.

The CSC 2.0 envisages four core components:

- I. The CSC network
- II. CSC Connect services portal/Apna CSC Portal
- III. State/UT-level help Desk
- IV. Services offered through MMPs

RBI open to proposals on creation of bad bank: Shaktikanta Das



- A bad bank buys the bad loans and other illiquid holdings of other banks and financial institutions, which clears their balance sheet
- A bad bank is technically an asset reconstruction company that buys bad loans(NPAs) from the commercial banks at a discount and tries to recover the money from the defaulter by providing a systematic solution over a period of time.
- The idea of a bad bank seeks to reduce the NPAs in the banking sector and then revive lending and credit growth. However, the feasibility of such a bank is highly debated among various economists.

Kumbhalgarh



- "Kumbhal fort" is a Mewar fortress on the westerly range of Aravalli Hills, in the Rajsamand district near Udaipur of Rajasthan state in western India
- It is a World Heritage Site included in Hill Forts of Rajasthan.
- Built during the course of the 15th century by Rana Kumbha. Occupied until the late 19th century, the fort is now open to the public and is spectacularly lit for a few minutes each evening
- Kumbhalgarh is situated 82 km northwest of Udaipur by road
- It was the most important fort in Mewar after Chittorgarh Fort.
- In 2013, at the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Kumbhalgarh Fort, along with five other forts of Rajasthan, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site under the group Hill Forts of Rajasthan.
- The fort is among the largest fort complexes in the world, and the second largest fort in India after Chittor Fort.

Important structures in the fort

- Lakhola Tank is the most notable tank inside the fort

Hindu Temple,

- I. A Ganesh temple built on a 12 ft (3.7 m) platform and is considered the earliest of all temples built inside the fort
- II. Neel Kanth Mahadeva temple is located on the eastern side of the fort built during 1458 CE. The central shrine of Shiva is approached through a rectangular enclosure and through a structure supported by 24 huge pillars

- III. The idol of Shiva is made of black stone and is depicted with 12 hands
- IV. The inscriptions indicate that the temple was renovated by Rana Sanga.

Jain Temple

- I. Parsva Natha temple (built during 1513), Jain temple on the eastern side and Bawan Jain temples and Golera Jain temple are the major Jain temples in the fort
- II. Mataji temple, also called Kheda Devi temple is located on the southern side of Neela Kanth temple
- III. Mamdeo temple, Pital Shah Jain temple and Surya Mandir (Sun temple) are the other major temples inside the fort.

Furfura pilgrimage site



- Furfura Sharif (also known as Furfura, Phurphura, Furfura Darbar Sharif) is a village in Jangipara community development block of Srirampore subdivision in Hooghly District in the Indian state of West Bengal.
- It is a holy place for Bengali Muslims.

Fruit flies evolve in response to environment



- A study of fruit flies bred in the lab shows that they may actually evolve to modulate their reproductive traits based on the extent of competitiveness of their competing males.
- This study of 150 generations of fruit flies, spanning about six years, shows how the environment can influence evolution of reproductive traits.
- Over several generations, males actually evolve to modulate their reproductive investment based on their perception of the number and quality of the competition.
- The flies are maintained on a 14-day life cycle every generation. Therefore, one generation corresponds to 14 days, and 150 generations corresponds to 2,100 days, which is approximately six years

Exotic food exchange in the second millennium BCE



- Trade flourished long before the Silk Routes were established
- The 'Silk Route' that connects Chinese and Central Asian regions with Southern Asian and West Asian regions of the world
- The proteome analysis tells us the entire set of proteins expressed in the cells of the material.

- The Indus Valley Civilisation, around 2600 BCE, is well documented for its urbanisation in the cities of Mohenjo- Daro and Harappa in what is now in Pakistan, then Northwest India region, where introduction of written texts, agriculture, water management, astronomy and philosophy, were practised.
- More on this can be had by accessing the site: . In agriculture, we note millet, rice, wheat, grasses were produced.
- In technology, water management was practised. In business, trade between this region and Central Asia, Mesopotamia, and the Southern Levant was practised.
- All this was happening long before the Silk Routes were established.

Vaccine optimism and the scientific uncertainty link (16th Jan) Written by Rajib Dasgupta and Rama V. Baru

- India is now embarking on the world's largest COVID-19 vaccination programme, on January 16, 2021.
- This represents the forging of a novel public-private collaboration wherein the vaccine supply is under the responsibility of Indian pharma companies and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for the implementation of the vaccination programme.
- Two vaccines (Covishield and Covaxin) have been granted permission for restricted use in an emergency situation subject to certain regulatory conditions.
- Traditional clinical trials follow a straightforward but mandatory three-step approach: designing, conducting and analysing the collected data, according to a pre-specified analysis plan.
- An adaptation is referred to a change made to the trial procedure, such as eligibility criteria, study dose, treatment duration or study endpoints, and/or statistical procedures such as randomisation, study design, study hypothesis or statistical analysis plan, while a clinical trial is at the design stage.
- There are some key regulatory concerns and the challenge of communicating them to the users and beneficiaries of research including policymakers.
- Given the conditions under which the vaccines are being rolled out may well added to scepticism

- In addition, there is a need for imaginative social and behavioural research that takes on board the scientific uncertainties and helps to build trust in the health service system and the community.

Booby trap



- A booby trap is a device or setup that is intended to kill, harm, or surprise a human being or an animal.
 - It is triggered by the presence or actions of the victim and sometimes has some form of bait designed to lure the victim towards it.
- The trap may be set to act upon trespassers that enter restricted areas, and it can be triggered when the victim performs an action (e.g., opening a door, picking something up, or switching something on).
 - It can also be triggered by vehicles driving along a road, as in the case of improvised explosive devices (IEDs).
 - Booby traps should not be confused with mantraps which are designed to catch a person.
 - Lethal booby traps are often used in warfare, particularly guerrilla warfare, and traps designed to cause injury or pain are also sometimes used by criminals wanting to protect drugs or other illicit property, and by some owners of legal property who wish to protect it from theft. Booby traps which merely cause discomfort or embarrassment are a popular form of practical joke.

Double ignominy (16th Jan)

- Outgoing U.S. President Donald Trump has entered the record books for being the only American President to be impeached twice.
- The moment of ignominy came after the House of Representatives passed a motion of impeachment against him, this time for “incitement of insurrection,” following the assault on the U.S. Capitol building on January 6 by a violent pro-Trump mob.
- His first impeachment, in September 2019, was for “abuse of power” and “obstruction of justice” over his dealings with Ukraine and attempts by Congress to investigate the same
- Given the tight timeline leading up to the inauguration of Democratic President-elect Joe Biden on January 20, it might be that the Senate does not have the opportunity to conduct a full trial based on the article of impeachment sent to it by the House, before Mr. Trump demits office.
- Nevertheless, Senate Democrats have vowed to carry out the trial even after the fact, including not only a vote on convicting him for high crimes and misdemeanours but also potentially on barring him from running again.

Glucose addiction can foment tumours



- Breast cancer is the top cause of cancer-related deaths in Indian women and is the most prevalent type of cancer in women.
- Worldwide statistics show that about two million new cases were detected in 2018.
- Researchers studying cancer metabolism have often noted that tumour cells are addicted to glucose.
- Once glucose enters the cell, it quickly gets fed to pathways and is utilised to multiply and grow.
- In contrast, normal cells primarily use glucose for energy production.
- This reprogramming of glucose metabolism by cancer cells often alters the response to drugs used in cancer treatment.
- An international team has discovered the conflicting roles of two genes in regulating glucose utilisation by breast cancer cells.
- They revealed that the CBX2 gene promotes glucose uptake and consumption by breast cancer cells whereas CBX7, a sister gene, does the opposite.

Gujarat rivers remain highly polluted



- The unchecked flow of untreated industrial effluent into rivers in Gujarat has led to increasing pollution in the Sabarmati, Mahisagar, Narmada, Vishwamitri and Bhadar.
- According to data from the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF), the Sabarmati is among the most polluted rivers in the country.
- He said that both treated and untreated effluent is released into the estuary of the Mahisagar and Gulf of Cambay, flouting the guidelines of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
- As per the official parameters, if the chemical oxygen demand (COD), which indicates organic pollutant load, is higher than 250 mg per litre, then it should not be released into the rivers.

Migratory birds flock to Punjab wetland



- Winter migratory water birds using the central Asian flyway have started making a beeline to Punjab's Harike wetland,
- Birds such as the Eurasian coot, greylag goose, bar-headed goose, gadwall and the northern shoveler are the prominent ones that could be sighted at Harike.
- Among others species, common pochard, spot-billed duck, little cormorant, pied avocet, great cormorant, ferruginous pochard and common teal have been spotted.

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