

New study ranks Delhi as world's most polluted capital



- Delhi has been ranked as the world's most polluted capital in a new report that placed India as having the third worst air quality out of 106 countries in 2020.
- The World Air Quality report by Swiss technology company IQ Air, released, mentions that 22 of the top 30 most polluted cities globally are in India.
- Major sources of India's air pollution include transportation, biomass burning for cooking, electricity generation, industry, construction, waste burning, and episodic agricultural burning
- "Delhi, the world's second most populous city, is located south east of India's agricultural breadbasket, where open burning is common. It is estimated that as much as 20% to 40% of Delhi's air pollution originates from Punjab farm fires.

Anti-defection law



- In 1985 the Tenth Schedule, popularly known as the anti-defection law, was added to the Constitution.
- But its enactment was catalysed by the political instability after the general elections of 1967
- This was the time when multiple state governments were toppled after MLAs changed their political loyalties.
- The purpose of the 1985 Constitution Amendment was to bring stability to governments by deterring MPs and MLAs from changing their political parties on whose ticket they were elected.
- The penalty for shifting political loyalties is the loss of parliamentary membership and a bar on becoming a minister.
- The law specifies the circumstances under which changing of political parties by MPs invite action under the law.
- The law covers three types of scenarios with respect to an MP switching parties.
- The first is when a member elected on the ticket of a political party "voluntarily gives up" membership of such a party or votes in the House contrary to the wishes of the party.

- The second possibility is when an MP who has won his or her seat as an independent candidate after the election joins a political party. In both these instances, the MP lose the seat in the House on changing or joining) a party.
- The third scenario relates to nominated MPs .In their case, the law specifies that within six months of being nominated to the House, they can choose to join a political party.
- The time is given so that if a nominated MP is not a member of a political party, they can decide to join one if they want.
- But if they don't join a political party during the first six months of their tenure, and join a party thereafter, then they lose their seat in Parliament.

India Chem 2021



- The largest event of Chemicals and Petrochemical Industry in India, in its 11th edition i.e. India Chem 2021 is schedule to be held from 17-19 March 2021 at Hotel Taj Palace, New Delhi.
- India Chem 2021 will be jointly organized by the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals, Government of India and FICCI.
- The Indian chemical industry is at the threshold of rapid growth and Government of India is keen to provide an atmosphere of support and encouragement under “Make in India” initiative to leverage the existing potential and opportunities.
- The most important objective behind organizing the India Chem series is to highlight the investment possibilities in the country's chemical industry and give a fillip to "Make in India" initiative of the Government of India.
- Leading company and buyers from all over the world predominantly from Iran, China, Japan, United Kingdom, Spain, USA, Germany, Italy, Brazil, Turkey and South East Asian countries are participating as exhibitors, delegates and visitors.
- The theme of India Chem 2021 will be ‘Towards a Self-reliant Chemicals and Petrochemicals Industry’ and it will give an opportunity for the global chemicals and petrochemicals industry to better understand the opportunities that exist in the Indian market.

Agro Processing Clusters (APC)



- The scheme aims at development of modern infrastructure and common facilities to encourage group of entrepreneurs to set up food processing units based on cluster approach by linking groups of producers/ farmers to the processors and markets through well-equipped supply chain with modern infrastructure
- Each agro processing clusters under the scheme have two basic components i.e. Basic Enabling Infrastructure (roads, water supply, power supply, drainage, ETP etc.), Core Infrastructure/ Common facilities (ware houses, cold storages, IQF, tetra pack, sorting, grading etc) and at least 5 food processing units with a minimum investment of Rs. 25 crore.
- The units are set up simultaneous along with creation of common infrastructure.
- At least 10 acres of land is required to be arranged either by purchase or on lease for at least 50 years for setting up of Agro Processing Cluster.
- To view Indicative list of identified agri-horti production clusters (fruits & vegetables) ([Click Here](#)) and visit Geo-Sampada on spread & depth of agri-resources ([Click Here](#)).
- Agro processing clusters set up by Project Execution Agency (PEA)/ Organisation such as Govt./ PSUs/ Joint Ventures/ NGOs/ Cooperatives/ SHGs/ FPOs/ Private Sector/ individuals etc. and are eligible for financial assistance subject to terms and conditions under the scheme guidelines.
- The Project Execution Agency (PEA) which is responsible for overall implementation of the projects undertakes various activities including formulation of the Detailed Project Report (DPR), procurement/ purchase of land, arranging finance, creating infrastructure, ensuring external infrastructure linkages for the project etc.
- PEA may sell/ lease plots in agro-processing cluster to other food processing units but the common facilities in the cluster cannot be sold or leased out.

The Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum



- The Sixth India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Women's Forum meeting was held virtually on 16th March, 2021.
- Led by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, the event witnessed participation of Ministers and officials responsible for Women Affairs of IBSA Countries.

- The India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Trilateral Cooperation Forum is a unique platform which brings together India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents.
- All three partners are developing pluralistic, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious nations.
- IBSA is committed to inclusive sustainable development, in pursuit of the well-being for their citizens and those from the other developing nations.
- The principles, norms and values underpinning the IBSA Dialogue Forum are participatory democracy, respect for human rights, the Rule of Law and the strengthening of multilateralism.
- IBSA lays efforts in the South-South cooperation beyond the conventional areas of exchange of experts and training.
- The Forum discussed key issues that contribute towards the transformation of women's lives; by highlighting initiatives, policies and best practices for gender inclusive economy for transformation as well as for elimination of gender based discrimination and violence against women, which in the coming time will help not only in understanding each others' systems and programmes but will also carve a strategic roadmap to promote gender equality agenda for achieving sustainable development goals.
- The Forum emphasized on the necessity to raise voice on various multilateral fora to highlight the development priorities of the associate countries and emphasized how gender equality makes sound economic sense.
- The participating countries also lauded the efforts of Government of India in helping out other countries to overcome the challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic by way of providing vaccines, masks, sanitizers, PPE Kits etc.
- The Forum has resolve to carry forth its vision to ensure improving the status and condition of women by addressing structural and institutional barriers as well as strengthening gender mainstreaming.

Italy joins International Solar Alliance under the amended ISA Framework Agreement



- Italy has signed the International Solar Alliance under the amended ISA Framework Agreement.
 - The amendments to the Framework Agreement of the ISA entered into force, opening its Membership to all Member States of the UN.
- The International Solar Alliance was launched jointly by the Indian Prime Minister and the French President during the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP21, in Paris. It aims to contribute to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement through rapid and massive deployment of solar energy.

Anangpal II



- Anangpal II, popularly known as Anangpal Tomar , belonged to the Tomar dynasty that ruled parts of present-day Delhi and Haryana between the 8th and 12th centuries; their rule is attested by multiple inscriptions and coins
- Anangpal II was instrumental in populating Indraprastha and giving it its present name, Delhi
- The region was in ruins when he ascended the throne in the 11th century; it was he who built Lal Kot fort and Anang Tal Baoli.
- The most reliable evidence about the early history of Delhi is inscribed on the iron pillar of Masjid Quwaatul Islam, adjacent to the Qutab Minar.
- He wrote: "According to this inscription, Anangpal of the Tomar Rajputs founded Delhi between 1053 and 1109 AD.
- It refers to Delhi as Delhi, a name that has endured...its long history."
- Anangpal Tomar II was succeeded by his grandson Prithviraj Chauhan.
- The Delhi Sultanate was established in 1192 after Prithviraj Chauhan's defeat in the Battle of Tarain (present-day Haryana) by the Ghurid forces.

Independent Environment Regulator



- The Supreme Court asked the government to explain why it had not set up an “independent environment regulator” to oversee green clearances.
- In Lafarge Mining Case order, the court had explained the need for an independent regulatory mechanism, saying the “identification of an area as forest area is solely based on the declaration to be filed by the user agency [project proponent].
- The project proponent under the existing dispensation is required to undertake EIA by an expert body/institution”.
- The green bench of the Supreme Court has been dealing with forest-related issues for almost two decades.
- The bench has experienced major problems with the way environment and forest clearances are granted.
- It has had to deal with poor Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) reports and bad decisions of the Forest Advisory Committee which recommends diversion of forestland for developmental projects.

- It has found conflict of interest in the way an EIA report is prepared and forest area is identified, demarcated and finally diverted for non-forest uses.
- the lack of credibility of the EIA process, leading to reports that are often produced with the help of dubious expertise and manipulated data.
- In most cases, the proponents also ignore the views of communities that would be displaced, and are ill-equipped to assess the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services such as clean air, water and farm productivity.

Mullaperiyar dam issue

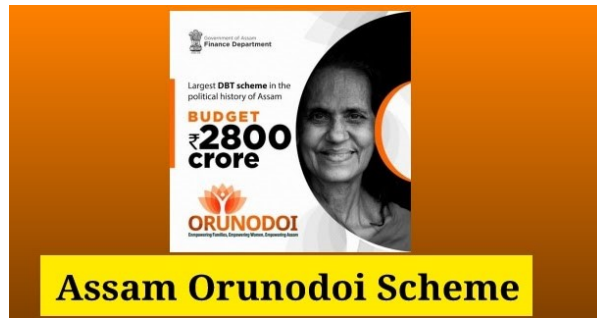


- The Supreme Court has issued a warning to Tamil Nadu in the Mullaperiyar case.
- Dam is a masonry gravity dam on the Periyar River in the Indian state of Kerala
- It is located 881 m (2,890 ft) above mean sea level, on the Cardamom Hills of the Western Ghats in Thekkady, Idukki District of Kerala.
- It has a height of 53.6 m (176 ft) from the foundation, and a length of 365.7 m (1,200 ft)
- It was constructed between 1887 and 1895 by John Pennycuik and also reached an agreement to divert water eastwards to the Madras Presidency area (present-day Tamil Nadu).
- The Periyar National Park in Thekkady is located around the dam's reservoir.
- The dam is built at the confluence of Mullayar and Periyar rivers.
- The dam is located in Kerala on the river Periyar, but is operated and maintained by the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu.
- Although the Periyar River has a total catchment area of 5398 km² with 114 km² downstream from the dam in Tamil Nadu, the catchment area of the Mullaperiyar Dam itself lies entirely in Kerala and thus not an inter-State river.

What is the issue ?

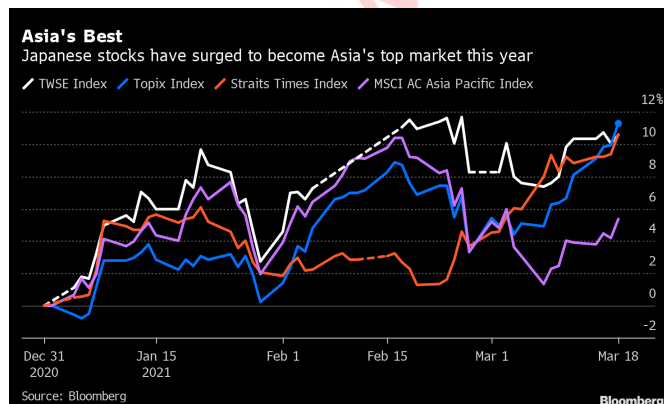
- Lease agreement was renewed in the 1970s by both Tamil Nadu and Kerala Giving the former rights to the land and water from the dam by Kerala Authority to develop hydropower projects at the site.
- Kerala would receive rent from Tamil Nadu.
- The first cracks in this agreement surfaced in 1979 when a minor earthquake had resulted in cracks in the dam.
- The Central Water Commission recommended lowering the water stored in the dam's reservoir to 136 feet from 142 feet.
- If definitive measures were implemented, only then could the Tamil Nadu administration raise water levels to the dam's full capacity of 152 feet.

Orunodoi scheme



- Through Orunodoi — announced in the 2020-21 Budget — a monthly assistance of Rs 830 is transferred to women members of marginalised families of Assam
- On account of being a DBT, or a Direct Benefit Transfer scheme, the money is credited directly to the bank account of the woman head of a family because they are “primary caretakers of the household”
- The scheme gives “a choice to the poor and needy households on how they want to spend their money”
- The applicant, a woman, has to be a permanent resident of Assam, whose composite household income should be less than Rs 2 lakh per annum
- Families with specially-abled members and divorced/widowed/separated /unmarried women are prioritised
- Poorer families, those without National Food Security Act (NFSA) or ration cards, are also given priority. Families without any women members, MPs, MLAs (former and current), members of Panchayati Raj institutions and urban local bodies, government officials and employees of cooperative societies are excluded from the scheme
- Families owning four-wheelers, mechanised boats, tractors or refrigerators, ACs and washing machines, or more than 15 bighas of agricultural land, are not eligible either.
- To facilitate the process, four Orunodoi ‘Sahayaks’ were appointed in each district.

Japan overtakes Taiwan as best performing Asia stock market in 2021



- Japan's Topix index became the best-performing share market in Asia in 2021 as its gains were lifted to 11% by a rally in stocks on Thursday.
- Topix surpassed the 10.6% return from Taiwan's equity benchmark to achieve the feat.
- Japan's Topix index also closed above the 2,000 point level for the first time since May 1991.

7,000 new startups founded in India in 2020



- A new report by Bain and Company found that venture capital (VC) investments in India touched \$10 billion during 2020, and 7,000 new startups were founded despite the pandemic.
- It reported that consumer tech, Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), and fintech attracted 75% of the total VC funding last year, and that the number of VC deals rose by 7% in 2020.

In world's first, thieves in UK to wear GPS tags to control crimes



- In a first such experiment across the world, thieves and robbers in UK will be made to wear GPS tags to control crimes.
- Under the new rules, convicts who've been jailed for a year or more will be tied up with GPS tags on release.
- This will allow authorities to track their movements 24/7 and stop them from recommitting offences.

Wikipedia to make Google, Amazon, Apple, others pay for content



- Wikipedia has announced the launch of a commercial product, Wikimedia Enterprise, for the sale and delivery of Wikipedia's content to Big Tech such as Google, Amazon and Apple.
- AI-based assistants such as Google Assistant, Siri and Alexa rely on Wikipedia for answering user queries.
- The product will deliver real-time information, instead of the current model of updating data fortnightly.