

## DRONE DELIVERY OF COVID-19 VACCINES



- Drone use Permission to Telangana Government for Experimental delivery of Covid-19 Vaccines.
- Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) have granted conditional exemption for drone deployment to the Government of Telangana.
- The drone usage permission has been granted for conducting experimental delivery of Covid-19 vaccines within Visual Line of Sight (VLOS) Range using drones.
- The permission exemption is valid for a period of one year or until further orders.
- Earlier this month, similar permission was granted to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for conducting feasibility study of Covid-19 vaccine delivery using drones in collaboration with IIT Kanpur.

The grant of these permissions is intended to achieve the dual objectives of faster vaccine delivery & improved healthcare access by:

- Ensuring primary healthcare delivery at the citizen's doorstep
- Limiting human exposure to COVID congested or COVID prone areas through aerial delivery
- Ensuring access to health care to the last mile, especially in remote areas
- Possible integration into the middle mile of medical logistics for long range drones
- Improving medical supply chain, especially with a third vaccine expected to be commissioned and millions of doses to be transported across India

## Oxygen from Sterlite Copper



- The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed Vedanta Limited to operate its oxygen production units at the Sterlite Copper plant in Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu.
- The Vedanta Limited plant has two oxygen production units lying idle, with a combined capacity of 1,050 tonnes.

- The oxygen from these units is meant to feed the furnaces of the copper-melting plant.
- These facilities suck in air from the atmosphere, which is processed so that the oxygen-rich fraction of the air is absorbed in the final process.
- The oxygen produced at Sterlite's units is crude oxygen.

## Lag B'Omer Festival



- Many people died in a stampede as tens of thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jews gathered in northern Israel to celebrate the annual Lag B'Omer festival.
- Lag B'Omer is an annual Jewish festival observed during the Hebrew month of Iyar.
- It is celebrated on the 33rd day of the Omer, the 49-day period between Passover and Shavuot.
- Lag B'Omer is the only day during the 49-day period when celebration is permitted.
- Hence, it is common for Jews to schedule weddings on this day every year.
- Young boys, who have reached the age of three, are also traditionally brought here for their first hair cut.
- To mark the occasion, tens of thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jewish pilgrims make their way to the base of Mount Meron every year, to pay their respects to Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, a second century sage and mystic, who is believed to have died on this day.
- The Rabbi's tomb is a much revered holy site in Israel.

## Napoleon Bonaparte's DNA to be auctioned on 200th death anniversary



- Napoleon Bonaparte's DNA to be auctioned on 200th death anniversary
- Private collectors will be able to buy some of French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte's DNA when a bloodied cloth that covered his body during an autopsy will be auctioned on his 200th death anniversary.
- The cloth is part of 360 objects belonging to Napoleon, including a lock of hair and stockings, that will be put on sale by auction house Osenat.

## US formally starts withdrawing American troops from Afghanistan



- The final phase of US troop withdrawal from Afghanistan formally began on Saturday.
- US President Joe Biden had announced last month that the withdrawal of the remaining 2,500 American forces would be completed by September 11.
- The US is estimated to have spent more than \$2 trillion in Afghanistan in the past two decades, according to a Brown University project.

## World's heaviest mango weighing 4.25 kg found in Colombia,



- Colombian farmers, Germán Orlando Novoa Barrera and Reina Maria Marroquín, managed to break a record after growing the world's heaviest mango in Guayatá, Colombia.
- The mango weighed in at 4.25 kilograms and was certified as an official Guinness World Records title.
- The previous record was held by a mango found in the Philippines that weighed 3.435 kilograms in 2009.

## New type of pumpkin toadlet with glowing bones discovered



- A team of scientists has discovered a new type of pumpkin toadlet.
- The thumbnail-size amphibian, which lives in Brazil's Atlantic Forest, has bones that glow under fluorescent light and is highly poisonous.
- "The best moment to be a scientist is when you are looking at something new and you are the only person who knows," a team member said.

## Chandro Tomar aka 'Shooter Dadi'



- Chandro Tomar aka 'Shooter Dadi' passed away at the age of 89 due to Covid-19 on Friday, 30 April 2021 .
- One of the oldest female sharpshooters, Chandro was already 60-plus when she picked up the gun for the first time and went on to win many national competitions, even inspiring a Bollywood movie on her.
- Shooter Dadi also won many awards in the senior citizen category including Stri Shakti Sanman presented by the President of India himself.

## Attorney General of India



- Former Attorney General (AG) Soli Sorabjee recently passed away.
- The office of Attorney General of India is established under Article 76 of the Constitution.
- India's Attorney General (AG) is a member of the Union Executive.
- He is the country's top law enforcement official.
- The Constitution does not specify the length of the office's term.
- The Constitution does not specify the procedures or grounds for the suspension of the AG.
- He/she serves at the pleasure of the President (may be removed by the President at any time).
- The Solicitor General of India and the Additional Solicitor General of India support the Attorney General in carrying out his official duties.
- It is the Advocate General's Corresponding Office in the United States.

### Conditions for appointment-

- He must meet the qualifications for appointment as a Supreme Court Judge.
- He should be a citizen of India.
- He must have served as a judge in the High Court of any Indian state for five years or as an advocate for ten years.
- In the President's view, he might even be an eminent jurist.

### Powers and Functions-

- In legal matters referred to him, the Attorney General is required to provide advice to the Government of India.
- He also carries out other legal responsibilities that the President has delegated to him.

- The Attorney General has the right of audience in all Indian courts, as well as the right to engage in, but no Right to vote in Parliamentary proceedings.
- The Attorney General represents the Government of India in all Supreme Court cases (including suits, appeals, and other proceedings) in which the Government of India is involved.
- He also represents the Indian government in any Supreme Court referral made by the President under Article 143 of the Constitution.
- Although the Attorney General may accept briefs, he or she cannot represent the government in court.
- He cannot represent a defendant in a criminal case while still serving as a director of a corporation without the approval of the government.
- Two Solicitor Generals and four Additional Solicitor Generals support the Attorney General.

## P-8I PATROL AIRCRAFT



- The U.S. State Department on Friday approved the proposed sale of six P-8I patrol aircraft and related equipment to India, a deal estimated to cost \$2.42 billion.
- In November 2019, the Defence Acquisition Council, chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, approved the procurement of the long-range maritime surveillance aircraft manufactured by Boeing.
- The original proposal was for 10 more aircraft but was cut down to six due to budgetary constraints as well as because the Navy had adopted some fleet rationalisation measures and was considering long-endurance unmanned platforms.
- The possible sale comes through the Foreign Military Sale route and requires that the U.S. Congress be notified.
- With India having signed the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) foundational agreement with the U.S., the six aircraft will come fitted with encrypted systems.
- These systems were replaced with commercial off-the-shelf systems in the earlier deals.
- The P-8I is based on the Boeing 737 commercial aircraft and India was its first international customer.

## PUTOLA NACH



- The COVID-19 pandemic has provided an Assam-based trust the opportunity to focus on a near-forgotten form of string puppetry called Putola Nach.
- The string puppetry of Assam is called Putala Nach and is performed in three areas with distinct characteristics.
- These areas are Barpeta-Nalbari in western Assam, Kalaigaon in northern Assam and Majuli “island” in eastern Assam.
- The Ramayana, either in its entirety or by episodes, is performed, as well as scenes from the Mahabharata.
- The puppeteers are happy to add dialogues or chants taken from bhaona, the local traditional theatre.

## VORUKH



- Kyrgyzstan said at least 31 people have been killed in heavy clashes at its disputed border with Tajikistan, as officials from the two ex-Soviet countries met in a bid to defuse tensions
- More than a third of the two impoverished, mountainous countries' border is disputed, with the area surrounding the Vorukh, where recent conflict erupted, a regular flashpoint over territorial claims and access to water.
- Vorukh is a jamoat in northern Tajikistan. It is an exclave surrounded by Kyrgyzstan that forms part of the city of Isfara in Sughd Region.
- The location of the border of the enclave is disputed by the Tajik and Kyrgyz governments.
- In April and May 2021 the region once again brought tensions between the two countries - at least 31 people were killed in an ongoing fighting.

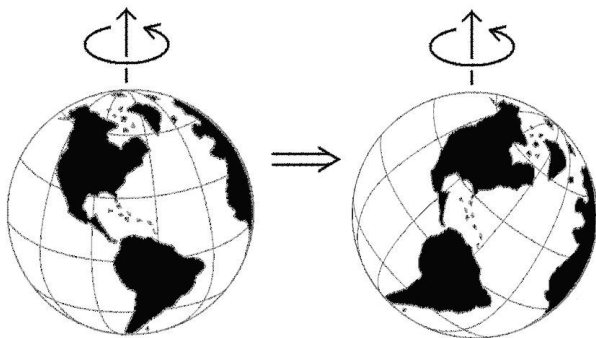
## XYLOPHIS DEEPAKI



- Herpetologist Deepak Veerappan has a snake named after him.
- In the first four months of 2021, the Western Ghats presented new butterflies, frogs, fruit flies, and even a freshwater crab.

- Joining the list is a tiny snake of just 20 cm length with iridescent scales - *Xylophis deepaki*, first stumbled upon in a coconut plantation in Kanyakumari, is now reported to be an endemic species of Tamil Nadu and has been sighted in a few locations in the southern part of the Western Ghats.
- The species is named in honour of Indian herpetologist Deepak Veerappan for his contribution in erecting a new subfamily *Xylophiinae* to accommodate wood snakes.
- The team suggests the common name Deepak's wood snake.
- Wood snakes
- Wood snakes are harmless, sub-fossorial and often found while digging soil in farms and under the logs in the Western Ghat forests.
- They feed on earthworms and possibly other invertebrates.
- Interestingly, their close relatives are found in northeast India and Southeast Asia and are known to be arboreal.

## POLAR WANDER



- Global warming and melting glaciers could have redistributed the global water fronts to such an extent that they have redefined the 'polar wander' or the drifting of the Earth's axis, finds a study published in *Geophysical Research Letters*.
- Polar wander is the motion of a pole in relation to some reference frame.
- It can be used, for example, to measure the degree to which Earth's magnetic poles have been observed to move relative to the Earth's rotation axis.
- True polar wander represents the shift in the geographical poles relative to Earth's surface, after accounting for the motion of the tectonic plates.
- This motion is caused by the rearrangement of the mantle and the crust in order to align the maximum inertia with the current rotation axis.
- This is the situation with the lowest kinetic energy for the given, unchanging, angular momentum of the earth, and is attained as kinetic energy is dissipated due to the non-rigidity of the earth.

# STATE DISASTER RESPONSE FUND (SDRF)

**48** MONTH OF TRANSFORMING INDIA

**Saaf Niyat Sahi Vikas**

**Standing With Farmers in Times of Need**

- Relief to farmers in distress given in case of 33% and more damage to the crop; earlier it was for 50%
- For food grains damaged due to excessive rainfall, full minimum support price to be paid
- Families of the deceased persons to be given an assistance of Rs.4 lakhs, up from Rs.2.5 lakhs
- 82% rise in provision under SDRF\*\* during 2015-20, as compared to 2010-15. It went up to Rs. 61,220 crores from Rs. 33,580.93 crore

\*\*State Disaster Relief Fund

- As a special dispensation, the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance at the recommendation of Ministry of Home Affairs has released in advance of the normal schedule the 1st instalment of the Central Share of the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for the year 2021-22 to all the States. An amount of Rs.8873.6 crore has been released to the States.
- Normally, the first instalment of SDRF is released in the month of June as per the recommendations of the Finance Commission.
- However, in relaxation of normal procedure, not only has the release of SDRF been advanced, the amount has also been released without waiting for the utilization certificate of the amount provided to the States in the last financial year.
- Up to 50% of the amount released i.e. Rs.4436.8 crore can be used by the States for COVID-19 containment measures. The funds from SDRF may be used by the States for various measures related to containment of COVID-19.
- The State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), constituted under Section 48 (1) (a) of the Disaster Management Act, 2005, is the primary fund available with State Governments for responses to notified disasters.
- The Central Government contributes 75% of SDRF allocation for general category States/UTs and 90% for special category States/UTs (NE States, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir).



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