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"Be with Yoga, Be at Home"



- The Ministry of Ayush is organising various activities in the run up to the International Day of Yoga, 2021.
- One among these is a series of five webinars that the Ministry is organising under the broad theme of “Be with Yoga, Be at Home” in collaboration with five renowned organisations of the country who will present one webinar each on a particular topic of importance in the current scenario.
- The first among the series will be held on Monday, 24 May by The Art of Living on “Finding inner strength amidst outer crisis.”
- This series of five insightful webinars is aimed to remind to the wider audience about the issues that have become extremely important in the present context

WHITEFLIES



- Researchers have found that the host range of all of the invasive whiteflies was increasing due to their polyphagous nature (ability to feed on various kinds of food) and prolific breeding.
- Whiteflies are Hemipterans that typically feed on the undersides of plant leaves.
- They comprise the family Aleyrodidae, the only family in the superfamily Aleyrodoidea.
- In warm or tropical climates and especially in greenhouses, whiteflies present major problems in crop protection.
- Whiteflies are one of the top ten devastating pests in the world that damage more than 2000 plant species and also function as vectors for some 200-plant viruses.
- Cotton is one of the worst hit crops by these. Bt cotton is not resistant against white flies.
- Other invasive whiteflies were also found to expand their host range on valuable plants species, especially coconut, banana, mango, sapota, guava, cashew, oil palm, and ornamental plants such as bottle palm, false bird of paradise, butterfly palm and important medicinal plants.
- The whiteflies are difficult to control by using synthetic insecticides, and hence currently naturally occurring insect predators, parasitoids and entomopathogenic fungi (fungi that can kill insects) are being used.

YUAN LONGPING



- Yuan Longping, a Chinese agricultural scientist whose breakthroughs in hybrid rice brought food security to China and transformed agriculture worldwide, died aged 9
- Yuan is celebrated in China as the “father of hybrid rice” for his contributions to agriculture.
- In 1970s, he developed “the first hybrid rice combination called Nan-you No. 2 which, due to heterosis — a phenomenon in which the progeny of two distinctly different parents grow faster, yield more, and resist stress better than either parent.
- Farmers around the world have benefitted from his techniques as hybrid rice spread throughout Asia, Africa and the Americas.

GUANTANAMO BAY DETENTION CAMP



- The administration of US President Joe Biden declared its intention to shut down the Guantanamo Bay detention camp.
- The Guantanamo Bay detention camp is a United States military prison.
- It is located within Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, also referred to as Guantánamo, GTMO, and "Gitmo", on the coast of Guantánamo Bay in Cuba.
- As of January 2021, 731 of the 780 people detained were transferred, 40 remain and 9 died while in custody.
- The camp was established by US President George W. Bush's administration in 2002 during the War on Terror following the September 11, 2001 attacks.
- Indefinite detention without trial as well as torture led the operations of this camp to be considered a major breach of human rights by Amnesty International.

ONE STOP CENTRE SCHEME (OSCs)



- One Stop Centre Scheme (OSCs) being implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development has provided assistance to over 3 lakh women so far.
- The scheme is being implemented across the country since 1st April, 2015 through State Governments/ Union Territory (UT) Administrations.

- It's objective is to provide integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence and in distress, both in private and public spaces, under one roof and facilitate immediate, emergency and non-emergency access to a range of services including police, medical, legal aid and counseling, psychological support to fight against any forms of violence against women.
- Till date, 701 OSCs in 35 States/UTs have been operationalised.
- The responsibility of appointment/ recruitment/ selection of empanelled agencies/ individuals to provide legal counselling/ Medical aid/ psycho-social counselling etc. lies with the district administration of the respective States/ UTs.

VARIABLE DEARNESS ALLOWANCE (VDA) HIKED FOR WORKERS IN CENTRAL SPHERE



- Central government has notified and revised the rate of Variable Dearness Allowance (VDA) with a view to provide relief to different category of workers engaged in various scheduled employments in the central sphere.
- Labour and Employment Minister Santosh Gangwar said that this will benefit about one 1.5 crore workers. The hike will be effective from 1st of April of the last month.
- The VDA is revised on the basis of average Consumer Price Index for industrial workers (CPI-IW) a price index compiled by Labour Bureau.
- Ministry of Labour and Employment said that the rates fixed for scheduled employment in Central sphere are applicable to the establishments under the authority of Central Government, Railway Administration, Mines, Oil fields, major ports or any corporation established by the Central Government.
- These rates are equally applicable to contract and casual employees and workers.

New York's 'Vax and Scratch' programme:



- It is a new vaccination programme that will provide free lottery tickets to those individuals over the age of 18 years who choose to get vaccinated from one of the ten state-run sites.
- Under the programme, lottery tickets that are otherwise sold for \$20 by retailers across the state, will be given free of cost to those above the age of 18.

Volcano in Indonesia spews out Blue Lava - Kawah Ijen Volcano



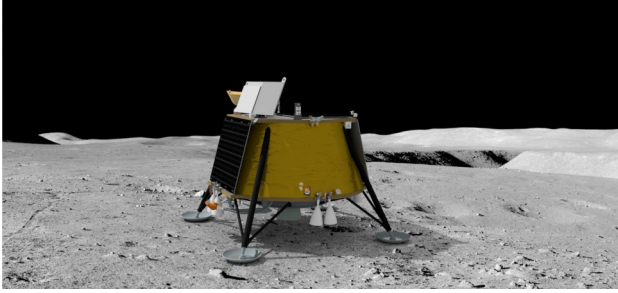
- Kawah Ijen Volcano has the world's largest highly acidic lake that is famous for its extraordinary and diverse shades of water.
- The Kawah Ijen volcano complex comprises a lot of composite volcanoes sitting on the border between Banyuwangi Regency and Bondowoso Regency of East Java.
- As far as blue flames are concerned, those are ignited sulfuric gas emerging from the volcanic cracks.
- When the temperature goes up to 600 °C, the blue flames erupt from the volcano and they can go up to 16 ft high!
- This particular phenomenon makes this one of the largest blue flame regions in the world.
- Besides, the same thing can also be witnessed in Dallol mountain in Ethiopia.

19-yr-old makes system to provide cool air in a gap of 100 secs to PPE wearers



- Mumbai's 19-year-old Nihaal Singh Adarsh has developed a compact ventilation system called 'Cov-Tech' that provides fresh air to PPE wearers in a gap of just 100 seconds.
- The product can be worn around the waist like a belt and it comes with a lithium-ion battery which lasts for 6 to 8 hours.
- The product costs ₹5,499 per piece.
- The device takes the surrounding air, filters it and pushes it into the PPE suit by creating steady air flow inside.
- The design serves two purposes. First it keeps the health workers well-ventilated, while preventing bodily discomfort and second it keeps them safe from various fungal infections.
- The system comes with a lithium-ion battery which lasts for 6 to 8 hours.
- The first batch of the product is already out, with around 30-40 units which will be delivered as trial units to doctors/NGOs across the country.

SpaceX to launch Firefly's Blue Ghost lander to Moon in 2023



- Firefly Aerospace has selected Elon Musk's SpaceX to launch its Blue Ghost lunar lander to Moon in 2023 on a Falcon 9 rocket.
- While SpaceX has never sent Falcon 9 on a lunar mission, the rocket's high performance permits a lunar transit using less fuel, Firefly Aerospace executive said. Blue Ghost will also carry 10 payloads on behalf of NASA

Don't kiss chickens: US health body warns people amid Salmonella outbreak



- Amid Salmonella outbreak in some states in the US, CDC urged people to not kiss or snuggle chickens or ducks "as this can spread germs to your mouth and make you sick".
 - It warned that backyard poultry can carry Salmonella germs even if they look healthy and clean.
 - Most people infected with Salmonella develop diarrhoea, fever, and stomach pain.
 - Salmonella is the type of bacteria that's the most frequently reported cause of food-related illness in the United States.
- You can't see, smell, or taste it. Illness from these bacteria is officially called salmonellosis.
 - It can cause an upset stomach, diarrhea, fever, and pain and cramping in your belly.

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