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K Nagaraj Naidu named to lead UN bureaucracy for a year



- Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, K Nagaraj Naidu was named chef de cabinet by the incoming UN general assembly president, Maldivian foreign minister Abdulla Shahid.
- He was appointed for the duration of one-year tenure to lead the world body through its return to normalcy as countries strive to bring the pandemic under control.
- Naidu is India's deputy permanent representative to the UN, and he will be on loan from the Indian government to the United Nations for a position that is comparable to the Indian prime minister's principal secretary, who oversees the cabinet bureaucracy; also something like the chief of staff to the US president.

Auckland tops Global Liveability Index 2021



- New Zealand and Australian cities dominated the Global Liveability Index 2021 published by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- Auckland has been ranked the best on liveability rankings due to the ability of New Zealand city to contain Covid-19 faster.
- Japanese cities of Osaka and Tokyo grabbed second and fourth place and Adelaide, Australia spot 3rd place on EIU's Global Liveability Index 2021. living conditions remained worst in the Syrian capital Damascus

The top 10 most livable cities in the world

- ⇒ Auckland, New Zealand
- ⇒ Osaka, Japan
- ⇒ Adelaide, Australia
- ⇒ Wellington, New Zealand
- ⇒ Tokyo, Japan
- ⇒ Perth, Australia
- ⇒ Zurich, Switzerland
- ⇒ Geneva, Switzerland
- ⇒ Melbourne, Australia
- ⇒ Brisbane, Australia

The 10 least liveable cities in the world:

- ⇒ Damascus (Syria)
- ⇒ Lagos (Nigeria)
- ⇒ Port Moresby (Papua New Guinea)
- ⇒ Dhaka (Bangladesh)
- ⇒ Algiers (Algeria)
- ⇒ Tripoli (Libya)
- ⇒ Karachi (Pakistan)
- ⇒ Harare (Zimbabwe)
- ⇒ Douala (Cameroon)
- ⇒ Caracas (Venezuela)

Beed model of crop insurance



- Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray recently asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for state-wide implementation of the 'Beed model' of the crop insurance scheme Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY).
- The flagship central scheme PMFBY was launched in 2016 which insures farm losses against inclement weather events.
- Farmers pay 1.5-2% of the premium with the rest borne by the state and central governments.
- It is implemented by state agriculture departments as per central guidelines.
- Prior to 2020, the scheme was optional for farmers who did not have loans pending, but mandatory for loanee farmers.
- Since 2020, it has been optional for all farmers.
- However voices have been raised in Maharashtra about the need to change the scheme.
- Delay in claim settlement, failure to recognise localised weather events, alleged profiteering by insurance companies and stringent conditions for claims are among the concerns.
- The Beed model has been implemented by the state government in the drought-prone Marathwada region, by tweaking the guidelines for the district.
- The state-run Indian Agricultural Insurance Company implemented the scheme.
- Under the new guidelines, the insurance company provided a cover of 110% of the premium collected.
- If the compensation exceeded the cover provided, the state government would pay the bridge amount.

- If the compensation was less than the premium collected, the insurance company would keep 20% of the amount as handling charges and reimburse the rest to the state government.
- In a normal season where farmers report minimal losses, the state government is expected to get back money that can form a corpus to fund the scheme for the following year.
- Hence in this model, the profit of the company is expected to reduce and the state government would access another source of funds.

Gharial



- The Mahanadi Wildlife Division in Odisha recently announced a cash reward of Rs 1,000 for rescuing gharials and informing wildlife personnel.
- The state forest department has launched an awareness drive to save the crocodiles in five districts: Boudh, Angul, Cuttack, Sonepur and Nayagarh.
- Gharials, also called gavials, are a type of Asian crocodilian distinguished by their long, thin snouts.
- They live in clear freshwater river systems, congregating at river bends where the water is deeper.
- They are not well-suited for land.
- Gharials regulate their body temperature by basking in the sun to warm up or resting in shade or water to cool down.
- Once found from Pakistan to Myanmar, the reptile's range has shrunk to two countries – India and Nepal.
- In India, they are found in Girwa (Uttar Pradesh), Son (Madhya Pradesh), Ramganga (Uttarakhand), Gandak (Bihar), Chambal (Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan) and Mahanadi (Orissa) and along the Narayani River of Nepal.
- Male gharials sport a large growth on their snout called a ghara, the Hindi word for “mud pot”, which they use to vocalize and blow bubbles during mating displays.
- They are listed in schedule 1 of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and also described as critically endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- Their habitat is threatened because of human encroachment and fishing activities.
- Gharials do not stalk and lunge at prey like other crocodilians and their snouts contain sensory cells that can detect vibrations in the water.
- They are genetically weaker than salt water crocodiles and muggers.
- Protected areas of Gharial include- National Chambal Sanctuary – It is a tri-state protected area (Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh) for the protection of the Gharial and also the Endangered Ganges river dolphin and Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, UP

EAGLE ACT



- Democrat Representative Zoe Lofgren and Republican John Curtis, introduced the Equal Access to Green cards for Legal Employment (EAGLE) Act of 2021 in the House of Representatives.
- The bipartisan act seeks to phase out the seven per cent per-country limit on employment-based immigrant visas and raises the per-country limit on family-sponsored visas from seven per cent to 15 per cent.
- It provides for a nine-year period for the elimination of this limit.
- The seven per cent limit was introduced in the mid-20th century, which has led countries with relatively small populations to be allocated the same number of visas as a relatively large-population country.
- It will “benefit the US economy by allowing American employers to focus on hiring immigrants based on their merit, not their birthplace”.
- The bill will be advantageous for Indian job-seekers who currently rely on temporary visas or await green cards to work in the US.

FASTLY



- On 8 June 2021, Fastly reported problems with their CDN service which caused many major websites, such as Reddit, gov.uk, Twitch, Spotify and Amazon, along with major news sources such as The New York Times, The Guardian, CNN and the BBC, to become unavailable
- Fastly is an American cloud computing services provider.
- It describes its network as an ‘edge cloud platform’, which is designed to help developers extend their core cloud infrastructure to the edge of the network, closer to users.
- The Fastly edge cloud platform includes their content delivery network (CDN), image optimization, video and streaming, cloud security, and load balancing services.
- A content delivery network is an arrangement that allows customer websites to store data such as images and videos on various mirror servers across countries so that the data is closer to users, and thus shows up faster.
- Customers rely on Fastly and its rivals to host and protect their website data from denial-of-service attacks and disruption from spikes in traffic.

CIBER-2



- The Cosmic Infrared Background Experiment-2 (CIBER-2) was launched by NASA on June 6, 2021 from the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, USA.
- The aim of this mission is to count the number of stars that exist in the Universe.
- The experiment is measuring a mysterious glow of infrared light that fills our skies called the cosmic infrared background, which is emitted by some of the most common stars.
- While this is not the first time that such a mission has been undertaken, the CIBER-2 instrument has been improved upon to see if any stars had been undercounted in the previous counting attempts.
- The European Space Agency (ESA) infrared space observatory Herschel also counted the number of galaxies in infrared and measured their luminosity previously.

CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ TERMINUS (CSMT) RAILWAY STATION



- The Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Ltd (IRSDC), which is the nodal agency for station redevelopment in India, has shortlisted nine bidders for the redevelopment of the iconic Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT) railway station in Mumbai.
- Located at the heart of Mumbai, the CSMT railway station is a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- Its construction had begun in 1878 and was completed in 10 years. Back then, it was known as Victoria Terminus (VT) railway station.
- It was designed by British architect FW Stevens.
- The architecture of the building is an example of the Indo-Saracenic style, which is a mixture of the Victorian Gothic Revival style and the traditional Indian style.
- The Victorian Gothic Revival influence comes from the architecture of the St Pancras railway station in London.
- The station also houses Central Railway headquarters

PAKKE TIGER RESERVE



- More than 200 contingency workers of the Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh went on an indefinite strike over non-payment of wages since December 2020.
- Pakke Tiger Reserve, also known as Pakhui Tiger Reserve, is a Project Tiger reserve.
- It is located in the Pakke Kessang district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- Towards the south and south-east, the sanctuary adjoins Nameri National Park of Assam.
- To the east lies the Pakke River and to the west, the park is bounded by the Bhareli or Kameng River.
- It falls within the Eastern Himalaya Biodiversity Hotspot.

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