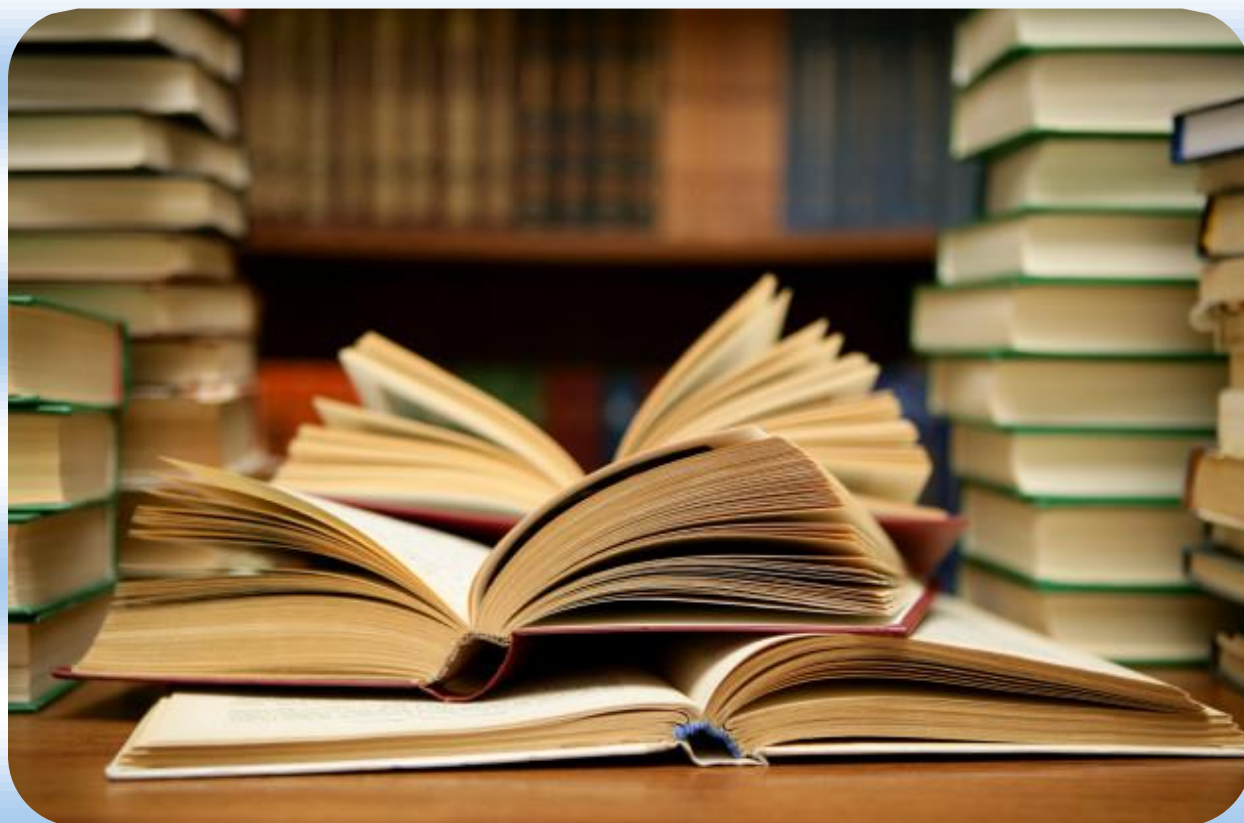


LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTER, NOIDA

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



FEBRUARY-2022

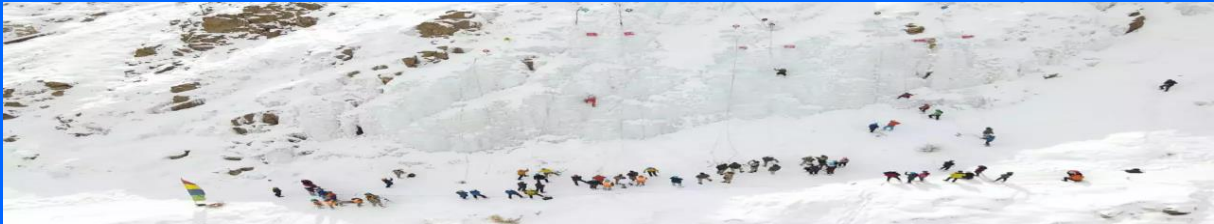
NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

Watts on the moon challenge- Phase 2

The Watts on the Moon challenge seeks to attract innovative engineering approaches to integrating power transmission and energy storage in order to enable missions operating in the extreme cold vacuum of the lunar surface. Successful demonstrations from this challenge will complement ongoing NASA investments in lunar surface power generation. Under the Artemis program, NASA plans to return to the Moon using innovative technologies to explore more of the lunar surface than ever before and applying what we learn to take the next giant leap—sending astronauts to Mars.

Ladakh Ice Wall Climbing Competition

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) organised an ice wall climbing competition in Ladakh on Sunday for the first time ever. The event, organised by the North-West Frontier ITBP, witnessed the participation of more than a hundred climbers from 13 teams.



Who was Narsinh Mehta?

Recently, researchers of Bhakta Kavi Narsinh Mehta University (BKNMU), Junagadh, discovered a new species of spider and named it Narsinhmehtai in honour of Narsinh Mehta, the 15th century poet who was a devotee of Lord Krishna, and 'to put his name on global map.' However, members of Nagar sub-caste group of Brahmin community, in which Mehta was born, and admirers of the poet objected to the nomenclature, arguing the bard was already a global name and that there was no need to associate his name with a spider.



Study of 'Kombai' Dog

Tamil Nadu's Kombai dogs are likely to get the national attention as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research-National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (ICAR-NBAGR) has launched a study of the breed under a project to document the indigenous dog breeds. "ICAR has already registered the Rajapalayam and Chippiparai dogs of Tamil Nadu and the Mudhol Hound of Karnataka.

National Polio Immunization Drive, 2022

Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Dr Mansukh Mandavia on Saturday launched the National Polio Immunization Drive for 2022 by administering polio drops to children below five years of age in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare today. Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya said, "India's strategic fight against polio is a success story of India's public health policy against vaccine-preventable diseases.

MSME-Technology Centres

Ease of Doing Business for MSMEs: Only five technology centres (TC) out of 15 proposed under the Technology Centre Systems Programme (TCSP) of the government, which was launched in January 2015, have been completed so far, according to the government data. The programme with a total cost of Rs 2,200 crore including Rs 20 crore assistance from the World Bank was scheduled to end by 2020-21.

Palk Bay Dugong Reserve

CHENNAI: The State government on Wednesday began work to form India's first Dugong Conservation Reserve in the Palk Bay region. Financial support was extended to prepare a detailed project report (DPR) and baseline field studies. Dugongs are endangered species protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.

Immigration Visa Foreigners Registration Tracking Scheme

The Centre has approved continuation of the Immigration Visa Foreigners Registration Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme for a period of five years from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2026 with an outlay of ₹1,364.88 crore.



Bhasha Certificate Selfie Campaign

The Ministry of Education has launched Bhasha Sangam mobile app with the aim of starting the Bhasha Certificate Selfie initiative. The 'Bhasha Certificate Selfie' initiative is encouraging people to upload their selfies with the certificate from their social media accounts using the hashtag #BhashaCertificateSelfie. Using the app, people can learn 100+ sentences of daily use in as many as 22 scheduled Indian languages. The initiative, under the aegis of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat will aim to ensure that people acquire basic conversational skills in Indian languages.

Elevation of Union Law Secretary as HC Judge

IN OCTOBER 2019, Anoop Kumar Mendiratta was picked from a pool of 60 candidates to become the first serving judge to be appointed Union Law Secretary. On Friday, he became the first Union Law Secretary to be appointed as a High Court judge. The former district and sessions judge at the Karkardooma courts in the capital will now take his seat in the Delhi High Court, with a tenure of over three years.



India's first e-waste eco-park

The Delhi government will build India's first electronic waste eco-park in the national capital which will include dismantling, segregating, refurbishing, storage, testing, plastic recycling and precious metal extraction facilities, deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said on Thursday. The Delhi government will build India's first electronic waste eco-park in the national capital which will include dismantling, segregating, refurbishing, storage, testing, plastic recycling and precious metal extraction facilities, deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said on Thursday.

Union Bank MSME RuPay Credit Card

Union Bank of India (UBI), in association with National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), on Friday launched 'Union MSME RuPay Credit Card' for meeting business related operational expenses of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). This Card comes with interest free credit up to 50 days. "The dedicated card for MSMEs is available to eligible borrowers of Union Bank of India...The Card also offers EMI facility to the customers on their business-related purchases," the public sector bank said in a statement.

IATA Pay Platform

Global banking group Standard Chartered on Thursday said it has partnered with the International Air Transport Association (IATA) to launch a payment platform for airline industry in India. In addition to existing payment options such as credit cards, IATA Pay will be a new payment option that enables participating airlines to offer instant payment options such as UPI Scan and Pay and UPI Collect (Request to Pay), Standard Chartered said in a statement.

India's FDI Inflow in April-Dec 2021

Foreign direct investment (FDI) equity inflows into India contracted by 16 per cent to USD 43.17 billion during the April-December 2021 period, according to data from the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). The inflows had stood at USD 51.47 billion during the corresponding period of the previous year. The total FDI inflows (which includes equity inflows, re-invested earnings and other capital) aggregated at USD 60.34 billion during the nine month period of the current fiscal year as against USD 67.5 billion in the year-ago period.

First Plant-Derived COVID Vaccine

The world's first plant-derived Covid-19 vaccine was cleared for use in Canada, creating a novel immunization to combat the virus from a unit of Mitsubishi Chemical Holdings Corp. and Philip Morris International. The vaccine named Covifenz was jointly developed by Medicago Inc., a biopharma company owned by Mitsubishi Chemical and Philip Morris and based in Quebec City, and GlaxoSmithKline Plc.

Indian Railway's First Solar Power Plant?

Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) has successfully commissioned a 1.7-megawatt solar photovoltaic plant at Bina in Madhya Pradesh for the Indian Railways. The plant will directly feed power to traction systems of Indian Railways. The move to create a solar plant was taken after Indian Railways decided to be self-reliant for its energy needs and solarise railway stations by utilizing its vacant lands for Renewable Energy (RE) projects. The Ministry of Railways has decided to install solar power plants on its vacant unused lands on mega scale.



Chandrayaan-2: Detection of Solar Proton Events

A Large Area Soft X-ray Spectrometer (CLASS), a payload on-board Chandrayaan-2 Orbiter, has detected solar proton events which significantly increase the radiation exposure to humans in space, the Indian Space Research Organisation has said. The instrument on January 18 also recorded coronal mass ejections (CMEs), a powerful stream of ionised material and magnetic fields, which reach the Earth a few days later, leading to geomagnetic storms and lighting up the polar sky with auroras, the ISRO said on Wednesday.



Ombudsperson App for MGNREGA

Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Giriraj Singh launched Ombudsperson App for Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. Addressing the launching event the Minister said that the Ombudsperson App is a step towards e-governance, this will be helpful in ensuring transparency and accountability. Expressing concern over the appointments of Ombudspersons, Giriraj Singh said that the appointment of Ombudsperson has not yet been made in many districts. It has also come to notice that persons belonging to political parties were appointed. The Minister also requested all the States/UTs to cooperate with the central government in making MNREGA more transparent by using the Ombudsperson App.

New Asteroid with Three Moons

We are generally comfortable with the idea of planets revolving around stars or satellites of individual planets. But many of us are yet to wrap our heads around an asteroid having its own moons. But one of the millions of asteroids in our solar system has now got the recognition of being an asteroid with three very own satellites. The asteroid is named 130 Elektra or just Elektra.



National Policy Guidelines on Bio-Medical Innovation and Entrepreneurship

New Delhi [India], February 24 (ANI): Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Mansukh Mandaviya on Thursday launched the “ICMR/DHR Policy on Biomedical Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Medical Professionals, scientists and technologists at Medical, Dental, Para-Medical Institutes and said that the time has come for India to demonstrate its strength through research and innovative initiatives in the health sector.



Moody's India Growth Forecast- Update

Moody's Investors Service on Thursday upgraded its financial year 2022-2023 (FY23) growth forecast for the Indian economy to 8.4 per cent from the earlier estimated 7.9 per cent as the country moves to normalcy, post the removal Covid-19 restrictions. However, it cautioned that high oil prices and supply distortions could drag the growth down.



RBI: Amendments in Payments Systems Rules

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday issued amended Payments and Settlement Systems Regulations that allows companies wanting to run payment businesses to seek licenses from the regulator. The licensing application should include process flow of the operator, technology platform to be used, security features and inter-operability with other payment system operators. As per the rules payment system, operators will be required to furnish all information and documents ..

J&K FDI Policy

In a first, the Lieutenant Governor's administration on Wednesday approved a policy on foreign direct investment (FDI) for J&K with a minimum of 51% foreign stake. L-G Manoj Sinha, who headed a meeting of the Administrative Council (AC) in Jammu, gave his nod for the Policy for Promotion of Foreign Investment in the industrial sector in J&K. "The new policy is based on the guiding framework on FDI issued by the Government of India through the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and will be valid for the next 10 years," a government spokesman said.

Delhi: Baba Saheb Musical Show

A 100-feet-wide stage with a 40-feet wide revolving platform, lasers, about 20-feet high bust of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and over 150 artistes — these were only a handful of the standouts at the first show of 'Babasaheb: The Grand Musical', organised by the Delhi government at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium on Friday.



India's Aid to Afghanistan

In a signal of its commitment to Afghan people, India on Tuesday set aside in its budget for 2022-23 an amount of Rs 200 crore as development assistance to Afghanistan besides allocating Rs 100 crore for the Chabahar port project. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman allocated a total of Rs 17,250 crore to the Ministry of External Affairs in the Union Budget for the next fiscal out of which Rs 6,292 crore is for development assistance to countries in India's neighbourhood as well as in Africa and Latin America.

FSSAI Health Star Rating

NEW DELHI : Packaged food products in India will soon be labelled with an official health star rating (HSR), a top official at Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) said. This move follows a report by the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIM-A) on the impact of front-of-the-pack labelling for packaged and processed foods. The study endorsed the HSR format as the best suited to Indians in helping to choose healthier packaged food items under a new policy on Front of Packaging Labelling (FoPL).

INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

U.S. Report on Sea Level Rise

Sea level rise is accelerating rapidly and U.S. coasts could on average see another foot of water by 2050, according to a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration report released Tuesday. "The United States is expected to experience as much sea level rise in 30 years as we saw over the span of the entire last century," Rick Spinrad, the NOAA administrator, said.



China's Record Launch of 22 Satellites

China's new Long March-8 rocket placed 22 satellites in space on Sunday, setting a domestic record for the most spacecraft launched by a single rocket. The rocket blasted off at 11:06 a.m. (Beijing Time) at the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in the southern Hainan Province before sending the satellites into pre-set orbits, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.



World's largest plane 'Mriya'

(CNN) — The world's largest plane, the Antonov AN-225, has been destroyed during the Russian invasion of Ukraine, according to Ukrainian officials, generating alarm and sadness among the aviation world in which it occupies almost cult status.



SWIFT Ban on Russia

The European Union, US, UK and allies have agreed to exclude a number of Russian banks from Swift, an international payment system used by thousands of financial institutions. The move aims to hit the country's banking network and its access to funds via Swift, which is pivotal for the smooth transaction of money worldwide. Swift is the global financial artery that allows the smooth and rapid transfer of money across borders.

Nepal: Approval of US Aid Grant

Nepal's parliament has approved a contentious \$500m US grant, despite street protests and opposition from the Communist parties. Nepal signed the US government's Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) pact in 2017 to fund infrastructure projects but its ratification had been in limbo because of divisions within political parties, including the ruling coalition. Major opposition came from Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba's coalition partners including Maoist politicians – seen as traditionally close to China – who said it undermined Nepal's sovereignty.

North Korea's New Ballistic Missile

North Korea has conducted more missile tests to advance its weapons programme, which it says is necessary to defend itself against a possible US invasion. Already in January, tests have been carried out on hypersonic as well as short-range, intermediate-range and long-range ballistic missiles.



India-Nepal Task Force for Hydropower Project

India and Nepal on Thursday agreed to form a joint task force on a proposal to construct a hydropower project from investments of the two neighbouring countries. The task force will have maximum three members from both the countries.



Russian-Ukraine Crisis: India's Stand in UNSC Draft Resolution

Signaling a morose end to Pax Americana, Russian President Vladimir Putin early Thursday announced a military operation in Ukraine; with the Ukrainian foreign minister terming it a "full-scale invasion". US President Joe Biden has called Putin's move "an unprovoked and unjustified attack by Russian military forces" and said the "world will hold Russia accountable." The US & its allies over the past few days had responded to the imminent invasion of Ukraine by imposing sanctions.

Russia-Ukraine Invasion- Impact on India

Russian authorities have drawn up a "road map" that envisages restrictions on cryptocurrencies but not a complete ban as advocated by the central bank, according to a document seen by Reuters. Politicians have pressed for a change of tack by the central bank, which has proposed restricting cryptocurrency trading and mining because of concerns it may cause financial instability. Working group participants include the finance, economy, digital and interior ministries, the FSB security service, and the central bank.

What is a 'Megadrought'?

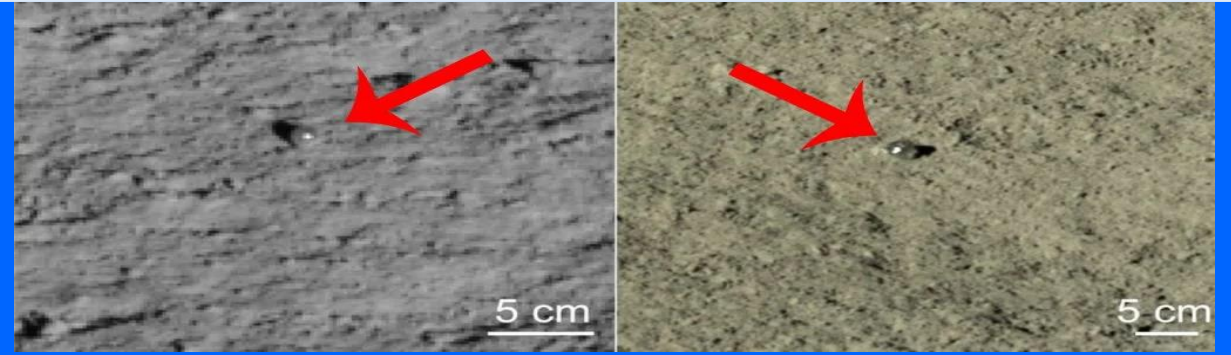
The American West has been locked in an extreme megadrought in the last two decades, experiencing what scientists believe are the driest 20 years in the region in at least 1,200 years. In a study published on February 14 in the journal, Nature Climate Change, researchers said human-caused climate change is the principal driver of the present condition and warned of even drier decades in the future. The researchers attributed 42 percent of the severity to higher temperatures as a direct result of greenhouse gas emissions trapping the heat in the atmosphere.

USCC International Intellectual Property Index

India has improved its overall IP score from 38.4 per cent to 38.6 per cent, and the country is ranked 43 out of 55 countries on the International Intellectual Property Index, according to an annual report compiled by the influential US Chambers of Commerce on Thursday. India's overall score has increased from 38.40 percent (19.20 out of 50) in the ninth edition to 38.64 percent (19.32 out of 50) in the 10th edition. This reflects a score increase on indicator 32, said the report Global Innovation Policy Center of the US Chambers of Commerce.

Glass spheres on the Moon

China's Yutu-2 mission has made another fascinating discovery on the far side of the Moon. Glistening amid the dry, gray dust, the rover's panoramic camera picked out two small intact spheres of translucent glass.



Nord Stream 2

Nord Stream 2 is a 1,200km pipeline under the Baltic Sea, which will take gas from the Russian coast near St Petersburg to Lubmin in Germany. It cost €10bn (£8.4bn) and was completed last September. The Russian state-owned energy giant Gazprom put up half of the cost and western energy firms such as Shell and ENGIE of France are paying the rest.



Jordan: Discovery of 9000-year-old Shrine

A team of Jordanian and French archaeologists says it found a nearly 9,000-year-old shrine at a remote Neolithic site in Jordan's eastern desert. The ritual complex was found in a Neolithic campsite near large structures known as "desert kites", or mass traps, that are believed to have been used to corral wild gazelles for slaughter.



