

COVID- 19 NEWS**COVID-19 Emergency Response And Health Systems Preparedness Project**

India and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) signed a 500 million dollar “COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project” in New Delhi to strengthen its public health preparedness.

About:

- This will cover all States and Union Territories across the country and address the needs of infected people, at-risk populations, medical and emergency personnel and service providers, medical and testing facilities, and national and animal health agencies.
- It will help strengthen country's Integrated Disease Surveillance Program, revamp infectious disease hospitals and medical college hospitals.
- The project will be implemented by the National Health Mission (NHM), the National Center for Disease Control (NCDC) and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- The project is being financed by the World Bank and AIIB in the amount of \$1.5 billion, of which \$1.0 billion will be provided by World Bank and \$500 million will be provided by AIIB.
- This is the first ever health sector support from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to India.

Related Info :

- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia by investing in sustainable infrastructure and other productive sectors in Asia and beyond.
- Headquarters: Beijing.
- It began operations in: 2016.
- It has now grown to 102 approved members

hmAbs

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) through its New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI) programme has approved a project towards development of human monoclonal antibodies (hmAbs) that can neutralize SARS-CoV-2 in patients.

About:

- The project aims to generate hmAbs to SARS-CoV-2 from convalescent phase of COVID-19 patients and select high affinity and neutralizing antibodies.
- The project also aims to anticipate future adaptation of the virus and generate hmAbs clones that can neutralize the mutated virus so that could be readily used for combating future SARS-CoV infections.
- The project will be implemented by National Centre for Cell Science (NCCS), IIT-Indore and PredOmix Technologies Pvt. Ltd. with Bharat Biotech International Ltd. (BBIL) as the commercialization partner.

GEOGRAPHY- PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC**Luhman 16**

A group of international astrophysicists have identified cloud bands on the surface of Luhman 16A, one of a pair of binary brown dwarfs in the Vela constellation.

About:

- Luhman 16 is a binary star system, the third closest system to the Sun after Alpha Centauri and Barnard's star.
- At a distance of about 6.5 light years from the Sun, this pair of brown dwarfs referred to as Luhman 16A and Luhman 16B orbit each other, casting a dim light.
- In the newest study of Luhman 16, researchers have found the actual structure of the clouds — that they form bands over one of the pair (Luhman 16A) of brown dwarfs.
- Understanding the cloud system over a brown dwarf can shed light on the pressure, temperature and climate on the surface of the celestial body.

Brown dwarfs

- Brown dwarfs are also called failed stars, because their masses are intermediate to the largest planets and the smallest main sequence stars.
- Their masses being too small, they are unable to sustain fusion of their hydrogen to produce energy. It is believed that some of the more massive brown dwarfs fuse deuterium or lithium and glow faintly.

Hr 6819: Earth's Closest Black Hole Ever Discovered

Astronomers have spotted the closest black hole to Earth ever discovered. The black hole, at least 4.2 times the mass of the sun, is gravitationally bound to two stars in a so-called triple system, called HR 6819, roughly 1,000 light years from Earth.

About:

- HR 6819, also known as HD 167128 or QV Telescopii, is a triple star system in the southern constellation of Telescopium. It is 1,120 light years from the Sun.
- A May 2020 study reported it to contain a black hole, making it the closest known black hole, and the first one located in a stellar system visible to the naked eye.
- HR 6819 is a hierarchical triple containing a classical Be star in a wide orbit of unknown period, a B3 III star and a non-emitting (non-accreting) black hole, designated Ab.

GOVERNANCE- WELFARE SCHEMES, E-GOVERNANCE, SERVICES ETC.

'Pravasi Rahat Mitra' App

Uttar Pradesh Government has launched the 'Pravasi Rahat Mitra' App for migrant workers of state who are returning from different parts of country amidst lockdown.

About:

- The multipurpose App is aimed at providing benefits of government schemes to the migrant workers and it will also help in monitoring their health besides providing jobs and livelihood.
- The app has been developed by the State Revenue Department in collaboration with United Nation Development Programme.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Rashtriya chemicals fertilizers ltd. (RCF)

Rashtriya Chemicals Fertilizers Ltd, (RCF) registered an increase of 35.47 % in sale of its NPK fertilizers SUPHALA in the month of April, 2020 as compared to April, 2019.

About:

- Rashtriya Chemicals Fertilizers Ltd. (RCF) is a "Mini Ratna" PSU under the administrative control of Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India.
- It manufactures Urea, Complex Fertilizers, Bio-fertilizers, Micro-nutrients, water soluble fertilizers, soil conditioners and a wide range of Industrial Chemicals.
- The company is a household name in rural India with brands "Ujjwala" (Urea) and "Suphala" (Complex Fertilizers) which carry high brand equity.

INR-USD (Rupee-Dollar) Futures And Options Contracts

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman launched INR-USD (Rupee-Dollar) Futures and Options contracts on the two International Exchanges, BSE's India INX and NSE's NSE-IFSC, at GIFT International Financial Services Centre in Gandhinagar.

About:

- Over the last decade, a significant market share in financial services related to India has moved to other international financial centres. Bringing this business to India is clearly beneficial in terms of economic activity and employment gains for India.
- The launch of INR-USD contracts at the exchanges in GIFT-IFSC is a step in this direction.
- This will be available 22 hours across all time zones for all global participants from GIFT IFSC.
- Given the world class business environment and competitive tax regime at GIFT-IFSC, it is expected that trading of INR-USD contracts may bring volumes to India. This would also bring larger global participation in India through IFSC and connect India's IFSC globally.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY**Shekatkar Committee**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal for the abolition of 9,304 posts in the Military Engineering Service (MES) out of the total 13,157 vacancies of the basic and industrial staff.

About:

- This is in line with the recommendations of the Lt. Gen. D.B. Shekatkar (Retd.) Committee.
- The 11-member committee, appointed by the late Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar in 2016, had made about 99 recommendations, from optimising defence budget to the need for a Chief of the Defence Staff.
- These recommendations, if implemented over the next five years, can result in savings of up to ₹25,000 crore in defence expenditure. Of these, the first batch of 65 recommendations pertaining to the Army were approved in August 2017.
- One of the recommendations was to restructure the civilian workforce so that the work of the MES could be partly done by departmentally employed staff and other works could be outsourced. It was aimed at making the MES an effective organisation with a leaner workforce.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. Sustainable development does not end sustainability of environment and resource system; it also requires sustainability of economic and social systems. Explain.

Ans

Sustainable Development is a model by which the present generation's needs are fulfilled alongside integrity for sustaining future generations needs is not compromised. This requires human development such that sustainability of natural ecosystem is maintained by its preservation and reforming economic and social systems that depend upon it.

Sustainability of Environment

- Reducing overexploitation of natural resources like forest and water, allowing for nature for their regeneration. E.g.: Ban on sand mining in mangroves in India.
- Reducing pollution that disturbs ecosystem and its components inhibiting its regenerative capacity like lowering greenhouse gas emissions through Paris Goals.
- Conservation and Preservation techniques on lines of biodiversity conservation so that ecosystem services are continuously provided, like National Parks, Biodiversity Hotspots.

Need for sustainability of Economic and Social Systems

- Social issues like poverty, inequality, inaccessibility to clean water etc. breeds ground for conflicts resulting in challenges to progress made in environmental conservation, for example taking away of forest rights from tribals lead them into illegal activities like poaching by threatening their traditional livelihoods.
- Rising population, individualistic and consumerist attitude requires more resource consumption per capita, more wastage leading again pressure on natural resources.
- Sustainable Development requires human development should balance with environmental concerns, reforms need to be made in the present socio-economic systems so as they remain harmonious in long term, example SDG goals.

Some Steps for sustainable Economic and Social Systems

- Agenda in UN-Habitat for making sustainable cities
- Lower dependence on fossil-based fuels and increasing renewable energy usage like solar based.
- Lowering wastage, waste-to-energy generation, Circular Economy approach etc.
- Reducing inequalities- income, gender etc. Participatory models for decision making by involving locals.