

16th – 22nd Nov Weekly Compilation

(The Hindu+ Indian Express + PIB + Other World Wide News)

❖ **Ramsar Sites**

(The Hindu)

Lonar and Soor Sarovar Ramsar Sites

Meteor Lake at Lonar, Maharashtra

- The Lonar Lake was created by the impact of a meteor 35,000 to 50,000 years ago.
- It is part of Lonar Wildlife Sanctuary which falls under the unified control of the Melghat Tiger Reserve (MTR).
- It is the second Ramsar site in Maharashtra after Nandur Madhmeshwar Bird Sanctuary in Nashik district.
- The water in the lake is highly saline and alkaline, containing special microorganisms like anaerobes, Cyanobacteria and phytoplankton.

Soor Sarovar, Agra

- It is also known as Keetham Lake situated within the Soor Sarovar Bird Sanctuary. This lake is situated alongside river Yamuna in Agra, Uttar Pradesh.
- The Soor Sarovar bird sanctuary covered an area of 7.97 sq km.
- It also has a Bear Rescue centre for rescued dancing bears.

With latest inclusions, the total number of Ramsar sites in India is 41, the highest in South Asia.

Ramsar Convention: It is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.

Montreux Record: It is a register of wetland sites on the List of Ramsar wetlands of international importance. It shows such sites where there has been or likely to be adverse ecological changes due to anthropogenic activities.

❖ Food Fortification

(Source: Financial Express)

FSSAI is considering making it mandatory to fortify edible oil with vitamins A and D so that people of India can have better nutrition and immunity.

Oil fortification

- Oil fortification, i.e. the process of adding micronutrients to edible oil to increase its nutritional value, is expected to achieve almost 99% penetration of the Indian population due to the widespread use of cooking oil.
- All kinds of edible oils (soybean, groundnut, cotton seed, mustard, etc.) can be fortified.

Need

- Multiple micronutrient deficiencies are rampant in India, and continue to be significant public health problems, which adversely impact the health and productivity of all the population groups.
- More than 57% of children suffer from vitamin A deficiency, which may be symptomatic or present at the sub-clinical level.
- In addition, a high proportion of pregnant women and their new-born suffer from Vitamin D deficiency.
- Since vitamin A and D are fat-soluble vitamins, fortification of edible oils and fats with vitamin A and D is a good strategy to address micronutrient malnutrition and fortified oil is known to provide 25%-30% of the recommended dietary allowances for vitamins A&D.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is an autonomous body established under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India.

- The FSSAI has been established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, which is a consolidating statute related to food safety and regulation in India.
- FSSAI is responsible for protecting and promoting public health through the regulation and supervision of food safety.

❖ 15th East Asia Summit

(Source: The Hindu)

India's External Affairs Minister has represented India at the 15th East Asia Summit (EAS). The summit was chaired by the Prime Minister of Vietnam.

East Asia Summit was established in 2005. It is a premier forum in the Asia-Pacific region dealing with issues relating to security and defence.

Members: It comprises the ten member states of the ASEAN countries along with 8 members Australia, China, Japan, India, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Russia and the United States. India is a founding member of the East Asia Summit.

There are six priority areas of regional cooperation within the framework of the EAS which are

- Environment and Energy
- Education
- Finance
- Global Health Issues and Pandemic Diseases
- Natural Disaster Management and
- ASEAN Connectivity.

The members of the EAS together represent 54% of the world population and account for 58% of the global GDP.

❖ **Best and Worst Sex Ratio** (Source: Indian Express)

Registrar General of India has released a report titled “vital statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System”.

Civil Registration System (CRS): It is the unified process of continuous, permanent, compulsory and universal recording of the vital events (births, deaths, stillbirths) and characteristics thereof.

Best Sex Ratio: Arunachal Pradesh recorded 1,084 females born per thousand males followed by Nagaland (965) Mizoram (964), Kerala (963) and Karnataka (957).

Worst Sex Ratio: The worst sex ratio was reported in Manipur (757), Lakshadweep (839) and Daman & Diu (877), Punjab (896) and Gujarat (896).

Registered Births: The number of registered births has increased to 2.33 crore in 2018 from 2.21 crore registered births in 2017.

Sex ratio at birth: It is ratio of number of females born per thousand males.

❖ RCEP

(Source: The Hindu)

Fifteen Asia-Pacific countries led by China have signed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

- **RCEP** is a trade bloc comprising ASEAN countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Laos and Vietnam) and China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.
- Its objective is to establish a modern, comprehensive and mutually beneficial economic partnership that will facilitate the expansion of regional trade and investment and contribute to global economic growth and development.
- The agreement allows for a common set of rules of origin to qualify for tariff reduction with other RCEP members. It also includes provisions on intellectual property, telecommunications, financial services, e-commerce and professional services.

Reasons for India not signing the agreement

Impact on Domestic industry: India was worried that RCEP could force it to cut duties on about 90% of the goods. Hence, India will be flooded with cheaper imported goods particularly from China and dairy products from Australia and New Zealand. This may have an impact on India's domestic industry.

Trade Deficit: India has massive trade deficits with almost all of the RCEP countries. Hence, given the export-import equation with the bloc, a free trade agreement with the grouping would have increased the trade deficit further.

Services sector: India had demanded that the RCEP participating countries should open up their services sector so that Indian professionals and workers can have easier entry into their market. However, the countries are very sensitive about protecting this sector and have not offered much liberalisation.

India had also asked for an **auto-trigger mechanism** to be institutionalised in the pact. This would serve as a kind of protective mechanism that a member country can invoke to safeguard in case of an unexpected flow of imports after RCEP comes into effect.

❖ 12th BRICS Summit

(The Hindu)

The Prime Minister of India has virtually attended the 12th BRICS Summit. The summit has been chaired by Russia. Theme of the summit **“Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth”**

- **BRICS** is the acronym coined for an association of five major emerging national economies; **Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.**
- The acronym “BRIC” was initially formulated in 2001 by economist Jim O’Neill. In 2010, South Africa was invited to join BRIC after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.
- The Chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S.
- BRICS brings together five major emerging economies comprising 41% of the world’s population, having 24% of the global GDP and around 17% of the share in world trade.

BRICS counter-terrorism Strategy: The strategy is based on the following principles:

- Full respect for the sovereignty of the participating countries and noninterference in their internal affairs.
- Commitment to the principles of international law and recognition of the central and coordinating role of the United Nations on the issues of peace and security.
- Recognition of the role of regional organizations in countering the threat of terrorism.
- Need for all States to refrain from organizing, facilitating, financing, encouraging or tolerating terrorist activities.
- Due consideration of national interests and priorities
- Adoption of a comprehensive approach to combating terrorism

❖ Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge

(Source: The Hindu)

Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs has launched Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge in 243 cities across the country

Aim: To ensure that no life of any sewer or septic tank cleaner is ever lost again owing to the issue of ‘hazardous cleaning and to promote mechanized cleaning of septic tanks.

Focus of the challenge: The Challenge will focus extensively on creating citizen awareness on this critical issue along with infrastructure creation for mechanized cleaning and capacity building of the workforce.

Under this challenge, actual on-ground assessment of participating cities will be conducted in May 2021 by an independent agency and results of the same will be declared on 15 August 2021.

❖ **Climate Transparency Report 2020**

Climate Transparency has released the report “Climate Transparency report, 2020” which was known as Brown to Green Report previously.

It provides the most comprehensive annual review of G20 countries climate action and their transition to a net-zero emissions economy.

Climate Transparency: It is a global partnership that brings together experts from research organisations and NGOs in the majority of the G20 countries. It’s mission is to encourage ambitious climate action in the G20 countries.

Highlights

- India is the only country on track among the G20 nations to meet its climate change mitigation commitments and is contributing its fair share to meet the goal of curbing global warming by 2 degrees Celsius.
- However, other nations and the European Union’s targets do not go far enough to curb global warming between 1.5 to 2 C
- China’s Greenhouse Gases(GHG) emissions also continue to be above the G20 average and are expected to peak by 2030. Further, US which formally exited the Paris Agreement has GHG emissions more than double the average of all G20 nations.
- Hence, the projected temperature increases under these commitments are now expected to be more than 2.7 C of warming by 2100.

❖ **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation**

(Source: Indian Express)

The 2020 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Virtual Summit was hosted by the Malaysian Prime Minister.

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a regional economic forum established in 1989 to leverage the growing interdependence of the Asia-Pacific. Its objective is to create greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional economic integration.

Members: 21 members Headquarters: Singapore. India is not a member of APEC.

❖ Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System

(Source: PIB)

Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) has been accepted as a component of the World Wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS) for operation in the Indian Ocean Region by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

This will enable merchant vessels to use IRNSS for obtaining position information similar to GPS and GLONASS to assist in the navigation of ships in ocean waters approximately up to 1500 km from Indian boundary.

IRNSS (NavIC) is an independent regional navigation satellite system developed by India. It is designed to provide accurate position information service to users in India as well as the region extending up to 1500 km from its boundary.

IRNSS will provide two types of services, namely, Standard Positioning Service (SPS) which is provided to all the users and Restricted Service (RS) which is an encrypted service provided only to the authorised users.

Applications: Terrestrial, Aerial and Marine Navigation, Disaster Management, Vehicle tracking and fleet management, Integration with mobile phones, Mapping.

❖ Draft Data Center Policy

(The Hindu)

Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) has released the Draft Data Centre Policy, 2020

Its objective is to make India a Global Data Centre hub, promote investment in the sector, propel digital economy growth, enable provisioning of trusted hosting infrastructure to fulfill the growing demand of the country and facilitate state of the art service delivery to citizens.

Features

- **Infrastructure Status:** Provide Infrastructure Status to the Data Centre Sector at par with other sectors like Railways, Roadways and Power.
- **Single Window Clearance:** A single-window, time-bound clearance system for all the approvals required to set up a data-centre park.
- **Incentivization Scheme:** Formulation of Data Centre Incentivization Scheme (DCIS) which will specify the intended beneficiaries, applicability criteria and fiscal and non-fiscal incentives for the sector.

- **Essential Service:** Data centers will be declared as an Essential Service under “The Essential Services Maintenance Act, 1968 (ESMA)” which means that there would be a continuity of services even during times of calamities or crisis.
- **Inter-Ministerial Empowered Committee (IMEC):** It would be set up under the Chairmanship of Secretary, MeitY with participation from various Central Ministries and State Governments to facilitate the implementation of various measures in the sector.
- **Data Centre Industry Council (DCIC):** An independent Data Centre Industry Council (DCIC) is proposed to be set up which would act as an interface between the sector and the Government.

Collaboration with the Ministry of Skills Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) and leading academic institutes to impart training to workforce on Data Centre, Digital and Cloud technologies, and facilitate sector linkages for such trained workforce

Data Centre: It is a dedicated secure space within a building where computing and networking equipment is concentrated for the purpose of collecting, storing, processing, distributing or allowing access to large amounts of data.

Data Centre Parks: These are specialized secure Data Zone located with the most conducive non-IT and IT infrastructure and regulatory environment for housing mix of small scale / large scale / clusters of Data Centers to serve the high needs of compute, storage, networking and provision of a wide range of data-related services.

❖ Global Strategy to Accelerate Elimination of Cervical Cancer

World Health Organization (WHO) has launched the Global Strategy to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer.

Objective: To accelerate the elimination of cervical cancer with the aim to reduce more than 40% of new cases and 5 million related deaths by 2050.

Targets: The strategy says that meeting the following targets by 2030 will place all countries on the path toward elimination:

- 90% of girls fully vaccinated with the HPV vaccine by 15 years of age
- 70% of women screened using a high-performance test by age 35 and again by 45
- 90% of women identified with cervical disease receive treatment (90% of women with pre cancer treatment and 90% of women with invasive cancer managed).