Rajasthan becomes the 5th State to complete Urban Local Bodies (ULB) reforms

NATIONAL NEWS

National Marine Turtle Action Plan launched.

- The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has released 'Marine Mega Fauna Stranding Guidelines' and 'National Marine Turtle Action Plan' in New Delhi on 28TH January 2021.
- India has rich marine biodiversity along a vast coastline of over 7,500 km.
- The plan has two sections:
    - methods and means to promote inter-sectoral motion for conservation
    - guide to improve coordination amongst the government, civil society and all relevant stakeholders in the conservation of marine turtles

Rajasthan becomes the 5th State to complete Urban Local Bodies (ULB) reforms

- Rajasthan has become the 5thState in the country to successfully undertake Urban Local Bodies (ULB) reforms stipulated by the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance
- Due to this achievement the state has become eligible for additional reform linked borrowing of Rs.2,731 crore
- Also, the State has been granted permission by the Department of Expenditure to mobilise additional financial resources of Rs.2,731crore through Open Market Borrowings.
- Four other States which have completed ULB reforms are Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur and Telangana
- The four citizen centric areas identified for reforms are:
    - Implementation of One Nation One Ration Card System
    - Ease of doing business reform
    - Urban Local body/ utility reforms
    - Power Sector reforms.

CSIR celebrates 20 years of India's Traditional Knowledge Digital Library

- The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has launched a new campaign of highlighting 80 success stories from the organization as it is set to turn 80 years old in 2022.

This campaign was launched recently as CSIR's Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL) completes two decades of safeguarding India's Traditional Knowledge.

- CSIR jointly with Department of Indian Systems of Medicine & Homeopathy (ISM&H), now Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) developed the Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL).
- This initiative was a started to thwart misappropriation of India's valuable traditional knowledge, based on learnings from the patent battles with international patent offices over the grant of intellectual property rights on turmeric, neem, basmati rice and other such ancient knowledge and practices of the country.
- TKDL database contains more than 3.9 lakh formulations/ practices from the Indian systems of medicine (Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Sowa Rigpa) and Yoga.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Russia and USA sign the New START Treaty Extension

- Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) was a bilateral treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms.
- The treaty was signed on 31 July 1991 and entered into force on 5 December 1994.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the law 'on the ratification of the extension of the deal between Russia and the USA

Agreement for financial support to STARS project signed between DEA and World Bank

- Agreement for the financial support of the implementation of Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States (STARS) project of Ministry of Education was signed between Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) and World Bank along with Ministry of Education.
- The total project cost of STARS project is Rs 5718 crore with the financial support of World Bank amounting to US $ 500 million (approximately Rs. 3700 crore) and rest coming as State share from the participating States, over a period of 5 years.
- STARS project would be implemented as a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme under Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSEL), MOE.
- The project covers 6 States viz Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Odisha.
- The identified States will be supported for various interventions for improving the quality of education.

BUSINESS NEWS

Index of Eight Core Industries

- The Office of The Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has released the Index of Eight Core Industries for the Month of December, 2020.
- The combined Index of Eight Core Industries stood at 133.8 in December,2020, which declined by 1.3 (provisional) per cent as compared to the Index of December, 2019.Its cumulative growth during April to December, 2020-21 has been (-) 10.1%.
- The Eight core industries are: Coal, Crude oil, Natural Gas, Petroleum Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement and Electricity.
- The individual growth of the eight core industries in December 2020 in comparison to December 2019 is:
    - Coal – increased by 2.2%
    - Crude Oil – decreased by 3.6%
    - Natural Gas – decreased by 7.2%
    - Petroleum Refinery Products – decreased by 2.8%
    - Fertilizers – decreased by 2.9%
    - Steel – decreased by 2.7%
    - Cement – decreased by 9.7%
    - Electricity – increased by 4.2%

CCI approves acquisition of Indo Gulf Fertilisers by Indorama India Private Limited.

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approves acquisition of Indo Gulf Fertilisers by Indorama India Private Limited (IIPL) under Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002, on 29th January, 2021.
- IIPL is principally engaged in manufacture, trading and sale of fertilisers, primarily, phosphatic fertilisers and speciality plant nutrients.
- GIL is engaged in production of viscose staple fibre, chloralkali, fertiliser (through Target Business), textiles and insulators. It is also engaged in producing cement and providing financial services through its subsidiaries.
- The proposed combination relates to the acquisition by IIPL of Indo Gulf Fertilizers “Target Business” - principally engaged in manufacture, trade and sale of urea, customised fertilisers, agri-inputs, crop protection, plant and soil health products and specialty fertilizers.

AWARDS & PRIZES

Alert Being Awards

- The fourth edition of “Alert Being Awards” by ALERT, a voluntary non-profit organisation working to ensure “Right to life” a reality in India, was given to Leo Akash Raj.
- He was awarded for providing medication and nutritious food and helped over 350 pregnant

HIV positive women, differently abled, widows and those from the economically weaker section.

- The “Alert Being Icon award” was given to the Oscar Award-won music director, A.R. Rahman and the Alert Being Icon Award for an Organisation was given to Biocon Foundation founded by Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw.