

NEWS TODAY

DATA SHARING GIVEN HIGHEST ATTENTION BY GOVERNMENT: DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DST) SECRETARY AT STS FORUM

- He underlined the increasing attention given by India to sharing of scientific data as was evident from **India's National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (INDSAP)**.
 - > INDSAP aims to **increase the accessibility and easier sharing of non-sensitive data** amongst the registered users and their availability for scientific, economic and social developmental purposes.
 - > **It helps in** maximizing use of government owned data, avoid duplication of data collection, better integration of data sets, identification of ownership, better decision-making etc.
- He also **highlighted India's active S&T collaboration, with over 40 countries**, for development and for addressing challenges of health, water, energy, environment, climate change, communication, and natural disasters.
 - > **India is part of major multilateral and regional S&T platforms** and groupings such as EU, BRICS, ASEAN, G20, UN etc as well as **international mega-science projects** such as International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER), Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) etc.
 - > Coalitions for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, International Solar Alliance and Mission Innovation are **India's global initiatives in the management of disasters and clean energy**.

ABOUT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN SOCIETY (STS) FORUM

- It aims to provide a mechanism for open discussions on an informal basis, and to build a human network that would resolve the new types of problems stemming from the application of science and technology.
- Science and Technology Ministers' Roundtable is held along with the STS forum every year.



GOVERNMENT SEEKS LEGAL STATUS FOR ELEPHANT RESERVES

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has **proposed an amendment to the Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972** to accord legal status to elephant reserves and corridors on the lines of tiger reserves.
 - > Elephant reserves or corridors **not covered under WPA or under the Environment Protection Act and are out of the purview of any National Board of Wildlife (NBWL)**.
 - > Therefore, such lands are at **risk of being diverted for mines, polluting industries, etc.**
- Under WPA, **state forest departments have to prepare a tiger reserve management plan** with an adequate number of forest staff and strategies in place to protect tigers.
 - > It also says that **no mining or industrial activity will be allowed in the vicinity of the reserves** and that their boundaries cannot be changed without approval from NBWL.
 - > It also **gives legal status to the National Tiger Conservation Authority**, the regulatory body for tiger reserves.
- India has more than **60 % of Asian elephants (IUCN status: Endangered) population** with Karnataka having the highest number of wild elephants.

REGIONAL RURAL BANKS (RRBs) INCUR NET LOSS OF 2206 CR IN FY20

- Data was recently published by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). As on March 31, 2020, there were 45 RRBs functioning in 685 districts of 26 states and 3 UTs.
- RRBs were set up as **state-sponsored, regionally based and rural oriented institutions** under the Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976. RRBs are **regulated by Reserve Bank of India and are supervised by NABARD**.
 - > RRBs are **jointly owned by the Centre, the state government concerned and sponsor banks** with the issued capital shared in the **proportion of 50%, 15% and 35%, respectively**.
- **The mandate of RRBs is to:**
 - > **Serve the credit needs** of the small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, socio-economically weaker section of population **for development** of agriculture, trade, commerce, industry and other productive activities.
 - > **Reduce regional imbalances** and increase rural employment generation activities.
 - > Develop such measures which could **restrict the outflow of rural deposits to urban areas**.
- **Issues faced by RRBs:** inadequate finance, High overdues and poor loan recovery, lack of technology, procedural rigidities etc.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE RELEASED DRAFT FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS (AMENDMENT) BILL 2020

- Draft bill seeks to amend Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 to **revamp Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) functioning** by giving it more powers, enhancing penalties imposed for violations and simplifying processes.
 - > **Issues in FSSAI functioning:** Licensing and registration framework was not being followed, shortage of food testing laboratories, shortage of manpower etc.
- **Key amendments:**
 - > Jurisdiction of FSSAI extended to **include animal feed**. So far, FSSI had powers on food industry.
 - Feed means any **substance that satisfies nutritional requirements of animals**.
 - > **Enhanced penalties for violations**, including manufacture and sale of unsafe food, adulteration of food causing death, carrying out business without licence and repeat offences.
 - > **It would specify standards for food contact material**, which would mean specifying standards for food packaging material.
 - > Proposal to appoint a **chief executive officer at FSSAI as member secretary to oversee functions**. So far, the role had not been defined.
 - > **Changes in definition of proprietary food**, which means an article of food for which standards have not been specified but is not unsafe.



NARCO ANALYSIS TEST CANNOT BE FORCIBLY CONDUCTED ON AN INDIVIDUAL: SUPREME COURT (SC)

- Recently, **UP government (In Hathras case) has reportedly ordered to conduct polygraphic and narco analysis test** on the accused and victim's relatives.
- In 2010, a **SC judgment (in Selvi versus State of Karnataka) made following observations** regarding involuntary administration of narco analysis, polygraph examination and the Brain Electrical Activation Profile test:
 - > Compulsory administration of the techniques like narco analysis tests **constitutes 'cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment' in the context of Article 21.**
 - > **No person who is a victim of an offence can be compelled** to undergo any of the tests in question.
 - > Forceful subjection to such tests **will amount to an unwarranted intrusion into personal liberty.**
 - > **Consequences of such tests on individuals from weaker sections** of society who are unaware of their fundamental rights and unable to afford legal advice can be devastating.
 - > **Voluntary administration** of such techniques in the context of criminal justice **is permissible.**
- Judgment also reproduced 'Guidelines for the Administration of Polygraph Test on an Accused'** and stated similar safeguards should be adopted for conducting the tests like Narco analysis technique etc.

- **Narco-analysis is a controlled administration of intravenous hypnotic medications** called truth drugs on a suspect to procure vital information.
- polygraph, popularly referred to as a lie detector, is an instrument that **measures and records several physiological indices** such as blood pressure, pulse, respiration and breathing rhythms and skin conductivity while a suspect is asked a series of questions.
- **Brain-mapping is a comprehensive analysis of brainwave frequency bandwidths.** In this test, forensic experts apply unique neuroscience techniques to find out if a suspect's brain recognises things from a crime scene which an innocent person's brain will have no knowledge of.

ALSO IN NEWS

<p>Bilateral Netting law becomes operational from October 1, 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Centre has operationalised all the provisions of the Bilateral Netting of Qualified Financial Contracts Act. Bilateral Netting enables counterparties in financial contract to offset claims against each other to determine single net payment obligation due from one counterparty to other. It is expected to help banks optimally utilise capital and increase credit limits so as to enhance liquidity in the economy.
<p>India PV EDGE 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a global symposium to catalyze cutting-edge PV (Photovoltaics) manufacturing in India. It is organized by NITI Aayog, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, and Invest India. Solar PV manufacturing is one of the strategic sectors announced by the Indian government as part of the post-COVID Aatmanirbhar Bharat recovery initiative. India has become the third-largest solar capacity country in the world and set an ambitious target of 450 GW of renewable capacity by 2030, comprising 300 GW of solar capacity.
<p>Herd Immunity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recently, Union Health Minister cautioned that India is far from having achieved any kind of herd immunity. Herd immunity (or community immunity) occurs when a high percentage of the community is immune to a disease (through vaccination and/or prior illness), making the spread of this disease from person to person unlikely. Even individuals not vaccinated (such as newborns) are offered some protection because the disease has little opportunity to spread within the community.
<p>Kamchatka Peninsula</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An ecological disaster of sorts is unfolding on a black volcanic beach of the Kamchatka Peninsula. Peninsula lies in far eastern Russia, lying between the Sea of Okhotsk on the west and the Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea on the east. It hosts a number of volcanos and is a UNESCO world heritage site.
<p>Madhuca diplostemon (family Sapotaceae)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a tree species that, long believed extinct, has been rediscovered after a gap of more than 180 years from a sacred grove in Kollam district (Kerala). It is a threatened species of the Western Ghats whose specimen was first collected in 1835.
<p>Plastic-eating enzyme "cocktail"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientists who re-engineered the plastic-eating enzyme PETase have now created an enzyme cocktail which can digest plastic up to six times faster. PETase breaks down polyethylene terephthalate (PET) back into its building blocks, creating an opportunity to recycle plastic infinitely and reduce plastic pollution and the greenhouse gases driving climate change. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > PET is the most common thermoplastic, used to make single-use drinks bottles, clothing and carpets and it takes hundreds of years to break down in the environment, but PETase can shorten this time to days.
<p>Shaurya Missile</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> India successfully test fired its indigenously developed nuclear capable hypersonic missile 'Shaurya' with a strike range of around 1,000 km. Shaurya is a canister-based system, which means that it is stored and operated from specially designed compartments. Shaurya is a land-based parallel of the submarine launched K-15 missile. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > The K family of missiles are primarily Submarine Launched Ballistic Missiles, which have been indigenously developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation and are named after Dr Kalam.

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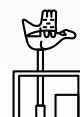
HYDERABAD



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