

NEWS TODAY

INDIA-CENTRAL ASIA VIRTUAL SUMMIT

- India hosted the **first India-Central Asia Summit** in virtual format which was attended by **Presidents of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan**.
 - It coincided with the 30th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Central Asian countries.
- Key outcomes of the summit**
 - Agreed to **institutionalize the Summit mechanism to hold it every 2 years**.
 - India-Central Asia Secretariat in New Delhi** would be set up to support the new mechanism.
 - Setup **Joint Working Groups on Afghanistan** and use of Chabahar Port.
 - Further cooperation** in areas of trade and connectivity, development cooperation, defence and security and cultural contacts through:
 - Showcasing of **Buddhist exhibitions**
 - Joint **counter-terrorism** exercises.
- Importance of CA for India**
 - Endowed with **commercially viable quantities** of minerals like coal, gas, **uranium** etc.
 - Acts as a **buffer to contain fallout of fundamentalism**, insulate India from narco-terrorism.
 - Increased importance with the **Taliban takeover of Afghanistan**.
 - Geostrategic** importance as it lies at the **crossroads of Russia, the Middle East, South Asia and the Far East**.



Initiatives to engage with Central Asia

- India's **Connect Central Asia (CAA) policy of 2012** is a broad-based framework involving political, economic, security and cultural connections.
- India-Central Asia Dialogue initiated in 2019.
- India extended a **\$1b Line of Credit for socio-economic development of the region**.
- India-Central Asia Business Council (ICABC)** was established in 2020.
- India is part of the **Turkmenistan -Afghanistan-Pakistan -India (TAPI) pipeline**.
- International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) agreement**.
- Ashgabat Agreement**.

CLIMATE CHANGE WILL FORCE TRANSBOUNDARY FISH STOCKS TO MOVE FROM HABITATS, MIGRATION PATHS: REPORT

- A recent report has attempted to assess **impact of climate change on transboundary stocks** of fisheries operating within **exclusive economic zones (EEZ)**.
- Key Highlights of study:**
 - By 2030, **23% of transboundary stocks will have shifted** and 78% of the world's EEZs will have experienced at least one shifting stock.
 - By 2100, total of **45% of stocks will shift globally** and 81% of EEZs waters will have **at least one shifting stock**.
- Concerns associated with shifting stocks:**
 - Will impact fish **catchability**, fisheries **production**, and **dependent livelihoods and economies**.
 - Will **compromise SDGs**, such as **Goals 14- life below water**.
 - Will challenge the effectiveness of **current governance and fisheries management frameworks**.
 - Damage the livelihoods of communities**.
- Other climate change impacts on fisheries:** Impacts fish diversity, distribution; Shortage of dissolved oxygen; lower fish production etc.
- Measures needed:**
 - National alignment of the climate change agenda** to the SDGs is needed.
 - Enabling national legal and policy-making frameworks** are crucial for climate change adaptation.
 - Building resilience through collective action** with cooperation and coordination of climate related policies and actions.
 - Relook international fisheries agreements**.

Shared stocks

- The concept of **shared stocks** was developed following the **ratification of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** and the **claiming of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs)** by Coastal States.
- As per **Food and Agriculture Organization**, shared stocks can be classified into four **non-exclusive categories**:
 - Transboundary stocks**, which cross neighbouring EEZs;
 - Straddling stocks that**, in addition to neighbouring EEZs, also visit the adjacent **high seas** (i.e., areas beyond national jurisdiction);
 - Highly migratory stocks**, that **migrate across vast oceanic regions** including both the high seas and EEZs; and
 - Discrete stocks** that are only present on the high seas.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURE FOR SUMMER CAMPAIGN 2021-22

- The conference highlighted that **Summer crops** which gives **fast cash to the farmers** and is also known as **gap-filler between two chief crops**, Kharif and Rabi.
 - **Zaid or summer crops** are cultivated between the **months of March and June**.
 - They require **warm, dry weather** as a vital growth period and **longer day length for flowering**.
- Trend of area coverage under Zaid/summer:**
 - In 2021, **Pulses** has **highest area** under cultivation followed by **Coarse/Nutri-Cereals and Oilseeds**.
- Limitations of summer crops:**
 - Growing season is **short** (March-May);
 - **Less moisture demanding** crops only;
 - Grown in **assured irrigation** facilities;
 - **Stray & wild animals** cause damage;
 - **Inadequate thrust** on summer season area coverage;
 - **Season specific varieties needed**.
- Existing supportive programs for summer crops:**
 - **Targeting Rice Fallow Areas (TRFA)** program to promote Pulses & Oilseeds.
 - **Intercropping** in Oilpalm (NFSM - OilSeeds & Oil Palm) plantation.
 - Intercropping in **Sugarcane** (NFSM - Pulses) – Spring planting (March-April).
 - **Summer vegetables** under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture.

Category	Area under cultivation
Pulses	Green gram> Black gram > other pulses.
Coarse/Nuri-cereals	Maize> Bajra> Jowar> Ragi.
Oilseeds	Groundnut > Sesamum > Sunflower

MINISTER OF POWER AND NEW AND RENEWABLE ENERGY DISCUSSES DRAFT POLICY ON ENERGY STORAGE SYSTEM (ESS)

- Objective of the policy is to **promote the creation of storage systems on a large scale across the value chain of the electricity sector** viz. at generation, transmission, and distribution levels throughout the country.
- Key highlights of the draft policy include**
 - ESS shall be an **integral part of the power system under Electricity Act**.
 - People may be free to set up standalone ESS.
 - Developer shall be **granted inter-state transmission connectivity** allowing them to sell or purchase power from any part of country.
 - Quantum of ESS included with Round-The-Clock Renewable Energy shall be **counted as Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) for storage**.
 - **Transmission cost for renewable energy shall be waived** both at time of charging as well as at time of selling the stored RE.
 - **Importance of ESS:** Secure India's energy needs; Reduce import bill on batteries as well as on fuel; Promoting clean energy and assist in achieving INDC targets.
 - **Challenges:** Providing financial viability of project; Technological challenges; Enabling infrastructural issues like land acquisition; Low mineral reserve of Lithium, cobalt etc.
 - Earlier, Government launched **National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage** to promote ESS.

SWACHHATA START-UP CHALLENGE AND GREYWATER MANAGEMENT UNDER SWACHH BHARAT MISSION

- Swachhata Start-Up Challenge was launched by **Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs** in collaboration with AFD (Agence Française de Développement) to **nurture the evolving ecosystem of the Indian waste sector**.
 - Challenge is open to **start-ups registered in India and French actors collaborating with an Indian start-up**.
 - Solutions are invited across four thematic areas - **social inclusion, zero dump (solid waste management), plastic waste management and transparency through digital enablement**.
- Recently, Haryana stepped up **ODF+ activities with greywater management** by adopting waste stabilization pond, construction of community leach pits etc.
- Greywater is wastewater** being discharged from a house including water from showers, bathtubs, sinks, kitchen, dishwashers and washing machines.
 - It makes **50% to 80% of the wastewater** from a household.
- Principles of Greywater management:**
 - **Reduce:** Judicious use of fresh water which will result in generation of minimum quantity of Greywater.
 - **Reuse:** Using Greywater for purposes such as kitchen garden, vehicle washing, toilet flushing etc.
 - **Recharge:** Recharge of ground water with Greywater by adopting technologies such as soakage pit, leach pit etc.



Energy storage systems

- **Energy storage systems** are devices that **enable energy from renewables like solar and wind to be stored and then released when customers need power most**.
- **Key grid energy storage technologies** - Batteries, pumped hydroelectric storage, compressed air energy storage, Thermal storage, hydrogen, flywheels.

INDIA CALLS FOR GREATER URGENCY IN TRADE NEGOTIATIONS WITH EUROPEAN UNION (EU)

- On **India-EU negotiations for trade and investment agreements**, India's External Affairs Minister cited the need to **"harmonise and prioritise"** their demands and some non-trade issues.
- Indian and French foreign ministers in a virtual conversation focused on **cooperation within Indo-Pacific region on a wide range of issues**, including Covid-19 vaccines, regulations for blue economy, connectivity projects etc.
 - > They also highlighted proposal for India and EU to create an **"Indo-Pacific campus on health"** to foster exchanges in training, innovation, and cooperation on pharmaceutical products.
- India-EU Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement talks had begun in 2007 but were in deadlock since 2013.** Recently, **talks were resumed after an eight-year deadlock.**

Concerns in INDIA-EU BTIA

India's demands	EU's demands
Data secure status (important for India's IT sector); Ease norms on temporary movement of skilled workers, relaxation of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) and Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) norms etc.	Significant duty cuts in automobiles, tax reduction on wines, spirits etc, a strong intellectual property regime, relaxation in India's data localisation norms, protection to all its items with Geographical Indication etc.

ALSO IN NEWS



Corruption Perception Index

- It was released by **Transparency International**.
- India ranked at **85th among 180 countries with a score of 40**. (Ranked 86th last year).
- Report said while **India's score has remained stagnant** over past decade, some mechanisms that could help reign in corruption are weakening.
- Denmark, New Zealand and Finland** have topped index jointly.
- Index** ranks countries by their **perceived levels of public sector corruption** according to experts and business people.
 - > It uses a **scale of 0** (highly corrupt) **to 100** (very clean.)



America COMPETES Act

- United States unveiled **America Creating Opportunities for Manufacturing, Pre-Eminence in Technology, and Economic Strength Act**, or the **America COMPETES Act of 2022**.
- It proposes **procedures for foreign nationals** with an **ownership interest in a start-up entity** to self-petition **for classification as a W-1 non-immigrant**.
- It is expected to **open more opportunities in the US for Indian talent**, and for skilled workers.



Strategic disinvestment

- Air India strategic disinvestment** transaction has been completed as it formally became part of Tata Group, its founder.
- Strategic disinvestment** refers to the **sale of substantial portion of** the Government shareholding of a central public sector enterprise (CPSE) of **upto 50%, or such higher percentage, along with transfer of management control**.



Conditional Market Authorization (CMA)

- Drugs Controller General of India has granted **conditional market authorization of Covaxin and Covishield vaccines** for the country's adult population.
- CMA is a **new category of market authorization** that has emerged during the COVID19.
- It approves **medicine that addresses unmet medical needs of patients** on the basis of less comprehensive data than normally required.
- These vaccines will be **available for private hospitals** and private clinics to procure against required documentation and payment.
- However, **they will still not be available in regular pharmacies**.



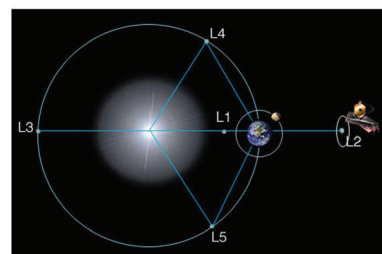
Decentralised applications (dApps)




- dApps are programmes that allow people to **interact with one another without the need for third parties**.
 - > For instance, when real-estate transfer moves to dApps, it will only involve the seller and the buyer, obviating the need for a middleman and their commissions.
- Characteristics of dApps:**
 - > **Exist and run on a blockchain network** powered by smart contracts.
 - > **Higher computing power** than regular apps.
 - > **Less vulnerable to cyber-attacks** due to the security of the blockchain.



James Webb space telescope

- It is **World's most advanced telescope**, and has been successfully parked in its orbit at the **second Lagrange point (L2)**.
 - > The Lagrange Point 2 is one of the five points in Space where gravity of Sun and Earth-Moon system balance each other.
- About the telescope**
 - > It is an **orbiting infrared observatory**. It will **complement discoveries of Hubble space telescope** of NASA, with longer wavelength coverage and improved sensitivity.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It will study every phase in the history of Universe, ranging from Big Bang to the evolution of our Solar System. ➤ It is an international collaboration between NASA, European Space Agency, and Canadian Space Agency.
 <p>Jeevan Raksha Padak</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President approved conferment of Jeevan Raksha Padak Series of Awards-2021. • The awards are given to a person for meritorious act of human nature in saving the life of a person. • The award is given in three categories, namely, Sarvottam Jeevan Raksha Padak, Uttam Jeevan Raksha Padak and Jeevan Raksha Padak. • Persons of all walks of life are eligible for these awards. The award can also be conferred posthumously. • Instituted in 1961, award is presented in the form of a medallion and a certificate signed by the Union Home Minister and monetary allowance.
 <p>India's Women Freedom fighters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book on India's Women Unsung Heroes of Freedom Struggle released as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. • Key women leaders highlighted - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Rani Abakka, Queen of Ullal, Karnataka fought and defeated Portuguese in 16th century. ➤ Velu Nachiyar, queen of Sivaganga was first Indian queen to wage war against British East India Company. ➤ Gulab Kaur- abandoned her hopes of a life abroad to fight for and mobilise Indians against British Raj. ➤ Matangini Hazra - brave freedom fighter from Bengal. ➤ Subhadra Kumari Chauhan- one of greatest Hindi poets, also a prominent figure in the freedom movement. ➤ Durgawati Devi provided safe passage to Bhagat Singh after the killing of John Saunders.
 <p>Nordic Clinker boats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNESCO has added Nordic "clinker boats" to its list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. ➤ Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden jointly sought the UNESCO designation. • About Clinker boats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nordic clinker boats are small, open, wooden boats. ➤ For almost two millennia, the people of the Nordic region have been building clinker boats using the basic techniques i.e using thin planks which are fastened together with metal rivets, treenails or rope. ➤ A symbol of common Nordic coastal heritage, clinker boats were traditionally used for fishing and to transport materials and people.



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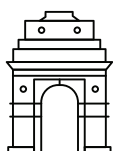
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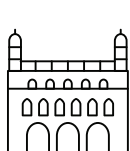
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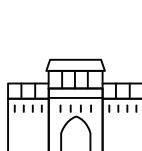
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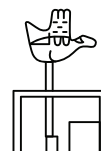
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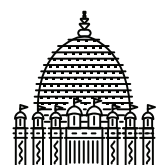
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