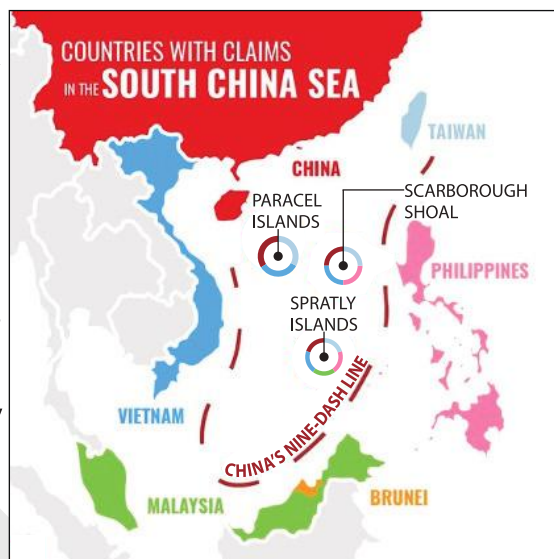


NEWS TODAY

ASEAN STATES WARN OF SOUTH CHINA SEA (SCS) TENSIONS

- Vietnam and Philippines warned of **growing insecurity in Southeast Asia** at online summit of ASEAN.
- China has been **pushing its presence in Exclusive Economic Zones** of other countries while claimants are preoccupied tackling COVID-19 pandemic.
 - > In April 2020, China declared creation of **new administrative districts on islands** of SCS to which Vietnam and Philippines also have competing claims.
 - > SCS has **overlapping territorial claims** by **Philippines, Vietnam, China, Brunei, Taiwan and Malaysia**.
 - ⇒ **China claims more than 80% of SCS** and “**nine-dash line**” is a geographical marker used to assert its claim.
- **Importance of SCS**
 - > **Strategic importance** as it connects Indian ocean with Pacific ocean and country controlling this maritime route will have natural military advantages.
 - > **One-third of world's shipping pass through here**, carrying over \$3 trillion in trade each year.
 - ⇒ Nearly \$200 billion worth of **Indian trade also passes through SCS**.
 - > It has **proven oil reserves of around 7.7 billion barrels**.
 - ⇒ India's ONGC Videsh limited is also **involved in off-shore exploration in SCS belonging to Vietnam**.
 - > It accounts for **10% of the world's fisheries**, making it a key source of food for hundreds of millions of people.



STATES SEEK LOANS WORTH ₹91,699 CR TO HELP POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANIES (DISCOMS) CLEAR DUES

- Requests for loans came after centre announced that under Atmanirbhar package **Power Finance Corporation (PFC) and Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) will offer ₹90,000 crore in soft loans** to Discoms.
 - > This was done to **address unprecedented cash flow problem** accentuated by demand reduction in power sector.
 - ⇒ Reduction in demand happened **in industrial and commercial sector where higher tariffs are applied**.
 - > Discom payables to power generation and transmission companies nationwide presently stood at ₹94,000 crore.
- These were in the form of **soft loans to be given by PFC and REC** at low interest rates (between 8.5- 9 %), repayable over 10 years with a two-year moratorium.
 - > These loans were to be **guaranteed by state governments**.
 - > Also, part of loans was **conditional on loss reduction and performance improvement**.
- However, **state governments are reluctant to guarantee loans** given to discoms because:
 - > They do not want to take **liability of paying back these loans** that are offered to Discoms.
 - > Additional liabilities will put **pressure on the balance sheets of State governments**.
 - > They are already **struggling with held up GST disbursements and lower revenue** due to COVID-19 lockdowns.

FINDINGS OF FIRST EVER NATION-WIDE SURVEY ON RURAL HEALTHCARE BY CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH

- **Key findings**
 - > **Delivery of primary health care in rural India includes few qualified providers** with an MBBS degree (8%), non-MBBS providers including AYUSH providers (24%) and with other or no medical qualifications (68%).
 - ⇒ **Private sector accounts for 86%** of health care providers.
 - > For majority of rural households, **informal providers are the only option** that is locally available.
 - > **There is variation in quality across states & within states**. With better socio economic status, quality of informal providers increases.
 - ⇒ E.g. medical knowledge of informal providers in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka is higher than that of fully trained doctors in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
 - > There is **no correlation between average local availability of healthcare providers and state health indicators**, such as child mortality.
- Findings are in line with **World Health Organization's 2016 report** on 'The Health Workforce in India', which had also found that 57.3% people practising allopathic medicine in India did not have a medical qualification.
- Also, according to Indian Medical Association that there are **more than 10 lakh such quacks operating in India**.

NASHA MukT Bharat Annual Action Plan (2020-21) for 272 Most Affected Districts Launched

- It was launched by **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE)** on World Drug Day (26th June).
 - > MoSJE is **nodal agency for Drug Demand Reduction** in India.
- **Annual Action Plan:**
 - > It **focuses on 272 most affected districts**
 - > **Three-pronged attack will be launched** combining efforts of Narcotics Bureau, Outreach/Awareness by Social Justice and Treatment through Health Dept.
 - > **Components of Action Plan:**
 - ⇒ Awareness generation;
 - ⇒ Focus on Higher Educational institutions;
 - ⇒ Community outreach and identification of dependent population;
 - ⇒ Focus on Treatment facilities in Hospital;
 - ⇒ Capacity Building for Service Provider.
- In related news, **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime also released World Drug Report 2020**.
 - > Report provides information and analysis to support the international community on drug policies issues.
 - > **Key highlight of report**
 - ⇒ **Effects of COVID-19:** COVID 19 could result in reductions in drug-related budgets of the governments; overall increase in drug use, with a shift towards cheaper and more harmful drugs.
 - ⇒ In 2018, estimated 269 million drug users **represented 5.3% of global population** aged 15-64.
 - ⇒ Drug use is **higher in urban areas than in rural areas** and is more widespread in developed countries than in developing countries.

UNICEF RELEASED REPORT "LIVES UPENDED- HOW COVID-19 THREATENS THE FUTURES OF 600 MILLION SOUTH ASIAN CHILDREN".

• Impact of COVID 19 on South Asian Children

- > **South Asian children living in poverty could grow** to more than 360 million within six months.
- > Immunization, nutrition and other vital **health services have been severely disrupted**.
- > Over **430 million children and youth deprived** of several months of schooling.
- > Only **1 in 4 young people is estimated to gain secondary-level skills** necessary for success in global economy.

• Suggestions

- > **Universal income transfers directed at most vulnerable** along with essential nutrition services and other social protection measures.
- > **Continue (or resume) life-saving vaccination interventions** to respond to outbreaks of measles, cholera, and other diseases etc.
- > **Scale up provision of remote learning/home learning options**, including no-tech and low-tech solutions.
- > **Protect children against violence** by keeping phone helplines open and referral networks etc.
- > Fostering a **broad partnership embracing public and private sectors** including religious leaders and community-based organizations etc.

ALSO IN NEWS

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|--|---|
| <p>MSME will be known as Udyam</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has come out with a consolidated notification in the form of guidelines for classification and registration of MSMEs. • As per notification, MSME will now be known as Udyam, as this is more closer to the word Enterprise. Accordingly, the registration process will be known Udyam Registration. • Also, Udyam Registration can be filed online based on self-declaration with no requirement to upload documents, papers, certificates or proof. |
| <p>Aatma Nirbhar Uttar Pradesh Rojgar Abhiyan</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is undertaken as part of Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan. • It is a 125-day campaign to provide employment to migrant workers and others in Uttar Pradesh, who lost their jobs during COVID-19 pandemic. • It is focused on providing jobs, promoting local entrepreneurship and creating partnerships with industrial associations and other organisations. • Uttar Pradesh has seen arrival of over 30 lakh migrant labourers following COVID-19 lockdown. |
| <p>FICCI Suggests Five-Point Action Plan for Industry</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the wake of India-China stand-off, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has suggested a five-point 'PEACE' action plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Productivity: Raising productivity by setting benchmarks > Efficiency: Work with local and state governments to improve efficiency through reforms to improve ease of doing business. > Alternates: Industry should look at alternate sources of supply from other countries. > Competitiveness: By Innovation and value-addition. > Exports: Focus on exports by exploring new markets, new products and services. |
| <p>Money Laundering and the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) report by Financial Action Task Force (FATF)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Described IWT as a "global threat", which has links with other organised crimes like modern slavery, drug trafficking and arms trade. > Proceeds of IWT are around \$23 billion per year globally. > Suggested that money laundering laws should be applied to wildlife trade. • FATF is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 to combat money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system. |
| <p>Nanozymes</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently, scientists from Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru have developed nanozymes. • Nanozymes are nanomaterials that display enzyme-like characteristics. • They can disintegrate the cell membranes of a range of diseases causing bacteria. • It is believed to act in battle against antibiotic resistance. |
| <p>Anthropause</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a term coined by UK researchers, to refer to coronavirus-induced lockdown period and its impact on other species. • Researchers believe studying this period will provide valuable insights into the relationship between human-wildlife interactions in the 21st century. |
| <p>Maareech</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is indigenously developed Torpedo Decoy System inducted by Indian navy recently. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Torpedos are underwater weapons for naval platforms such as submarines, surface vessels, aircraft and helicopters. • It will boost Anti-Submarine Warfare capability of the Indian Navy. • It is designed & developed by DRDO labs and Bharat Electronics Limited would undertake the production of this decoy system. |
| <p>Bandar Abbas port, Iran</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INS Jalashwa departed from this port bringing back stranded citizens from Iran under operation Samudra Setu. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Operation Samudra Setu was launched by Indian Navy as a part of national effort to repatriate Indian citizens from overseas. • This port is strategically located at Strait of Hormuz (connecting Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman). |

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