

Current Affairs: 23.12.2021

WINTER SESSION OF PARLIAMENT 2021

The winter session of Parliament ended. Both Houses were adjourned sine die a day ahead of schedule.

House output | A look at the Bills that were passed during the winter session

1	Farm Laws Repeal Bill, 2021	7	High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill, 2021
2	Dam Safety Bill, 2021	8	Delhi Special Police Establishment (Amendment) Bill, 2021
3	Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2021	9	Central Vigilance Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2021
4	Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2021	10	Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Amendment) Bill, 2021
5	National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research (Amendment) Bill, 2021	11	Election Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021
6	Appropriation (No.5) Bill, 2021		

About:

The session began with the suspension of 12 Opposition members in the Rajya Sabha and concluded with the passage of the controversial Election Laws (Amendment) Bill 2021, which seeks to link the electoral rolls with the Aadhaar database, despite strident protests by the Opposition. Productivity of the Lok Sabha was around 82% and that of the Rajya Sabha around 48%. During the session, 13 Bills (12 in the Lok Sabha and one in the Rajya Sabha) were

introduced, while 11 Bills were passed by both Houses of Parliament. The government had referred six Bills to parliamentary committees for closer scrutiny, including the Prohibition of Child Marriage (Amendment) Bill that seeks to override personal laws of different religions to increase the legal age of marriage for women from 18 to 21 years.

UNICORNS

Adding 33 'unicorns' in a single year has helped India displace the United Kingdom (U.K.) to be third in the list of countries that are home to such enterprises valued at more than \$1 billion each, according to a report by Hurun Research Institute.

About:

- The U.S. and northern neighbour China occupy the first two ranks. The top-two occupants are home to 74% of the unicorn universe.
- The U.S. added 254 unicorns and now totals 487 companies in the coveted list, while China added 74 to take its tally to 301 start-ups having a valuation of more than \$1 billion.
- The U.K. added only 15 unicorns to take its total to 39, and hence got displaced by India.
- India is in the midst of a start-up boom, more than doubling its unicorns to take its official tally of unicorns to 54, and overtake the U.K. to third place in the world.

Important Info :

- In business, a unicorn is a privately held startup company valued at over \$1 billion.
- The term was first popularised in 2013 by venture capitalist Aileen Lee, choosing the mythical animal to represent the statistical rarity of such successful ventures.

EXERCISE PRASTHAN

The security of the Offshore Development Area (ODA) in Krishna Godavari Basin on the East Coast of India was reviewed during exercise "Prasthan" conducted from 21 December to 22 December 21.



About:

The biannual exercise was coordinated and controlled by NOIC (APD) from Joint Operations Centre (JOC) Vizag under the aegis of Indian Navy.

Objective was to assess overall security architecture to provide support during an emergent situation at ODA and for the Oil

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Operators to validate their Standard Operating Procedures laid out for various contingencies related to ODA.

- Indian Naval Ships Kamorta, Tarmugli along with ISVs, T 36, T 38, T 39 and ICG ship Kanaklata Barua participated in the exercise along with MARCOS from INS Karna and naval helicopters from INS Dega.
- Oil Operators namely ONGC Ltd, Reliance Ltd & Vedanta Ltd, Coastal Police, Department of Port and Department of Fisheries also participated.

QUICK METHOD TO DRY 'SHEET RUBBER'

The Rubber Research Institute of India (RRII) has developed a method to dry sheet rubber in 24 hours in place of the traditional method that takes four to five days.

About:

- The conversion of raw latex into sheet rubber helps rubber farmers store the produce and sell according to the market situation as price fluctuation is a constant phenomenon.
- However, the traditional method of drying sheet rubber takes four to five days. The processing involves coagulation, sheeting and drying.
- The much quicker method of drying is done by replacing the conventional coagulant — diluted formic acid — with a mixture of the acid and alcohol and an improved sheeting process. In the new process, coagulation takes only about 30 minutes and the drying can be faster after loading the wet coagula in the smokehouse. Quick drying is achieved by increasing the effective surface area through additional rolling.

Important Info :

- Rubber Research Institute of India (RRII) under Rubber Board, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India is located at Kottayam, Kerala, India. It was established in 1955.

ALBINO INDIAN FLAP SHELL TURTLE



In the Sirnapalli forest in Telangana's Nizamabad, an international forest forensic investigator, had a chance encounter with the rarely found species of Albino Indian Flapshell turtle.

About:

The Indian flapshell turtle (*Lissemys punctata*) is a freshwater species of turtle found in South Asia. The "flap-shelled" name stems from the presence of femoral flaps located on the plastron. These flaps of skin cover the limbs when they retract into the shell. Its IUCN status is Vulnerable. These freshwater turtles are widespread across South Asian countries like Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. And while typical Indian flapshell turtles are dark green and brown, the example found recently has a decidedly more vibrant appearance. There were only two instances earlier of having 'recorded' the presence of albino version of this specie across India— once in Odisha and then in West Bengal. The Indian flapshell turtle's albino appearance is due to genetics. It is a congenital disorder and it is characterized by complete or partial absence of tyrosine pigment.

VERNACULAR INNOVATION PROGRAM (VIP)



Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog has come up with a first of its kind Vernacular Innovation Program (VIP), which will enable innovators and entrepreneurs in India to have access to the innovation ecosystem in 22 scheduled languages by the Government of India.

About:

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To build the necessary capacity for the VIP, AIM has identified and will be training a Vernacular Task Force (VTF) in each of the 22 scheduled languages. Each task force comprises of vernacular language teachers, subject experts, technical writers, and the leadership of regional Atal Incubation Centers (AICs). To get the program rolling, AIM NITI Aayog is launching a train-the-trainer program where it will collaborate with the Design Department of IIT Delhi to coach the VTF in design thinking and entrepreneurship and the adaptation of these subjects in the 22 languages and cultures. Furthermore, industry mentors have joined hands to lend design thinking expertise, and CSR sponsors have agreed to generously support the program. Upon training the task force over the period of December 2021 to April 2022, the ecosystem will be opened to vernacular innovators.

Need of this platform

- According to the 2011 census, only 10.4% of Indians speak English, most as their second, third, or fourth language. Not surprisingly, only 0.02% of Indians spoke English as their first language.
- Thus, India should create equal opportunity for the vernacular innovators who represent the staggering 90% of our population.

LOCAL BRAND NAMDAPHA GOODNESS



North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Society (NERCRMS), Meghalaya in collaboration with Changlang Community Resource Management Society (CCRMS), Arunachal Pradesh launched Local Brand Namdapha Goodness in Changlang, Arunachal Pradesh.

About:

It is named after iconic Namdapha National Park located in the Changlang district, Namdapha. This initiative is to boost the sale

of locally produced goods of the CBO members and to generate sustainable employment opportunities among the village communities and unemployed youths through the manufacturing, marketing and distribution related activities. Currently, a variety of products including edibles such as banana chips; spices such as ginger and turmeric powder, bakery items, locally spun clothes and sanitary napkins is being marketed under the brand. North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Society (NERCRMS) is a registered society under the aegis of North Eastern Council (NEC) and Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER), Govt. of India.

PRALAY



Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted maiden flight test of indigenously developed surface-to-surface missile 'Pralay', from Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha on December 22, 2021.

About:

The Missile is powered with solid propellant rocket motor and many new technologies. The missile has a range of 150-500 kilometre and can

be launched from a mobile launcher. The missile guidance system includes state-of-the-art navigation system and integrated avionics.

SPICES STATISTICS AT A GLANCE 2021



Union Minister for Agriculture released the book 'Spices Statistics at a Glance 2021' on 21st December, 2021.

About:

The book is published by the Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development (DASD), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, the nodal agency for collection and compilation of area and

production estimates of spices at National level. The book highlights the growth achieved in spices sector during the last seven years from 2014-15 to 2020-21 in the

country.

- Spices production in the Country grew from 67.64 lakh tonnes in 2014-15 to 106.79 lakh tonnes in 2020-21 with an annual growth rate 7.9%, following an increase in area from 32.24 lakh hectare to 45.28 lakh hectare.
- Among the major spices, Cumin (14.8%), Garlic (14.7%), Ginger (7.5%), Fennel (6.8%), Coriander (6.2%), fenugreek (5.8%), Red chilli (4.2%) and Turmeric (1.3 %), show significant growth rate in production.
- Spices export grew from 8.94 lakh tonnes worth Rs 14900 crores to 16 lakh tonnes valued at Rs 29535 crores (US\$ 3.98 billion) during the above period, logging an annual growth rate of 9.8% in terms of volume and 10.5% in terms of value. The export of spices contributes 41% of the total export earnings from all horticulture crops in the country and it ranks fourth among agricultural commodities, falling behind only the marine products, non-basmati rice and basmati rice.

MSP FOR COPRA

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has given its approval for the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for copra for 2022 season.

About:

Copra refers to the dried coconut kernels from which coconut oil is expelled. The MSP for Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of milling copra has been increased to Rs 10,590/- per quintal for 2022 season from Rs. 10,335/- per quintal in 2021 and the MSP for ball copra has been increased to Rs. 11,000/- per quintal for 2022 season from Rs. 10,600/- per quintal in 2021. This is to ensure a return of 51.85 percent for milling copra and 57.73 percent for ball copra over the all India weighted average cost of production. The increase in MSP for copra for 2022 season is in line with the principle of fixing the MSP at a level of at least 1.5 times the all India weighted average cost of production as announced by the Government in the Budget 2018-19. The decision is based on recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). The National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited and National Cooperative Consumer Federation of India Limited will continue to act as Central Nodal Agencies to undertake price support operations at the MSP in the coconut growing States.