

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS (OCTOBER 21, 2021)

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INDIAN POLITY, GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

1. KUSHINAGAR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

THE CONTEXT: Prime Minister inaugurated the Kushinagar International Airport in Uttar Pradesh, which will help connect key Buddhist pilgrimage sites. Kushinagar is an important Buddhist pilgrim destination and is believed to be the final resting place of the Gautam Buddha.

THE EXPLANATION:

- An inaugural flight of Sri Lankan Airlines landed at the airport earlier in the day, bringing a large contingent of Buddhist monks and Sri Lankan Ministers.
- Diplomats from 12 countries where Buddhism is practised, including Mongolia, Myanmar, Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Bhutan, Republic of Korea, Nepal and Japan, were also present.
- There is a special focus on the development of places associated with Lord Buddha through better connectivity, and the creation of facilities for devotees. Lumbini, the birthplace of Lord Buddha, is not far from here. Sarnath, where Lord Buddha gave the first sermon, is also within a radius of 100-250 km. Bodh Gaya, where Buddha attained enlightenment, is also a few hours away.
- On the sidelines of the Kushinagar airport inauguration, Mr Namal Rajapaksa (sports minister of Sri Lanka and

nephew of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and son of Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa) presented to Mr Modi a Sinhala-Tamil-English translation of the Bhagavad Gita.

SOURCE: [TH](#)

2. DRAFT POLICY CALLS FOR LINKING NATIONAL DATABASE OF PWD

THE CONTEXT: A national database of persons with disabilities (PwD) linking their Unique Disability Identity (UDID) numbers with welfare schemes and education and health services was among the proposals of the draft National Policy for PwD, 2021 was likely to be published next month.

THE EXPLANATION:

- The draft would be put in the public domain for comments after approval from Social Justice and Empowerment Minister. The last time such a policy was published was in 2006.
- The UDID project and a national database had been proposed in 2014 and implemented from 2016 in stages. 62.33 lakh UDID cards had been generated through the portal. However, no other services are offered through it.
- While online certification through the UDID portal was made mandatory on June 1, the policy suggests taking it forward by integrating services and schemes with the IDs.
- The portal would allow the PwD and stakeholders to monitor the progress of applications for various schemes, including the distribution of assistive devices.
- The policy called for increased funding and public-

private partnership in the disability sector.

SOURCE: [TH](#)

3. COVID-19 PANDEMIC FUELLED RISE IN CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ONLINE

THE CONTEXT: The Global Threat Assessment report 2021, by WeProtect Global Alliance, said COVID-19 had contributed to a significant spike in child sexual exploitation and abuse online.

THE EXPLANATION:

- protect Global Alliance is a global movement of more than 200 governments, private sector companies and civil society organisations working together to transform the global response to child sexual exploitation and abuse online.
- The rise in child 'self-generated' sexual material is another trend that challenges the existing response, with the Internet Watch Foundation observing a 77% increase in child 'self-generated' sexual material from 2019 to 2020.

SOURCE: [TH](#)

4. INDIA AT 71ST ON GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY INDEX 2021

THE CONTEXT: India is ranked at 71st position in the Global Food Security (GFS) Index 2021 of 113 countries, but the country lags behind its neighbours Pakistan and Sri Lanka in terms of food affordability.

THE EXPLANATION:

- The GFS Index was designed and constructed by London-based Economist Impact and is sponsored by CortevaAgriscience.
- The GFS Index measures the underlying drivers of food security in 113 countries, based on the factors of affordability, availability, quality and safety, and natural resources and resilience. It considers 58 unique food security indicators including income and economic inequality – calling attention to systemic gaps and actions needed to accelerate progress toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal of Zero Hunger by 2030.
- According to the report, India held 71st position with an overall score of 57.2 points on the GFS Index 2021 of 113 countries, fared better than Pakistan (75th position), Sri Lanka (77th Position), Nepal (79th position) and Bangladesh (84th position). But the country was way behind China (34th position).
- Ireland, Australia, the UK, Finland, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Canada, Japan, France and the US shared the top rank with the overall GFS score in the range of 77.8 and 80 points on the index.
- In the food affordability category, Pakistan (with 52.6 points) scored better than India (50.2 points). Sri Lanka was also better at 62.9 points on the GFS Index 2021.
- In case of availability of food, quality and safety as well as protecting natural resources for food production, India scored better than Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka on the GFS Index 2021, the report added.
- However, over the past 10 years, India's incremental gains in overall food security score were lagging behind that of Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh.
- India's score improved only by 2.7 points to 57.2 in

2021 from 54.5 in 2012 when compared with Pakistan by 9 points (to 54.7 in 2021 from 45.7 in 2012) while that of Nepal by 7 points (to 53.7 points in 2021 from 46.7 points in 2012) and Bangladesh by 4.7 points (to 49.1 in 2021 from 44.4 points in 2012).

- China's score improved by 9.6 points to 71.3 in 2021 from 61.7 in 2012.
- The findings of the GFS Index 2021 also showed that global food security has decreased for the second year in a row after seven years of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal of achieving zero hunger by 2030.
- In its global report, Economist Impact stated that the Index shows that to meet these present and emerging future challenges requires that investments in food security are sustained – from innovation in climate-resilient crop yields to investing in programs to assist the most vulnerable.

SOURCE: [IE](#)

ENVIRONMENT, GEOGRAPHY AND AGRICULTURE

5. MICRO SNAIL SPECIES DISCOVERED IN MEGHALAYA'S MAWSMAI CAVE

THE CONTEXT: A micro snail species named *Georissamawsmiensis* has recently been discovered from Mawsmai, a limestone cave in Meghalaya, 170 years after the last such discovery was made.

THE EXPLANATION:

- It was in 1851 that *Georissasaritta*, a member of the same genus as the latest find, was collected and described from the Musmai (Mawsmi today) valley near Cherrapunjee by WH Benson.
- The discovery this time has been reported in the *Journal of Conchology*.
- The Mawsmi cave is situated in the small village of Mawsmi, around four kilometres from Cherrapunjee (Sohra) in the East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.
- The term 'Mawsmi' means 'Oath Stone' in the Khasi language. The Khasi people use the local term 'Krem' for the cave.
- Mawsmi cave is located at an altitude of 1,195 metres above sea level and is indirectly influenced by the streams of the Kynshi river originating from the East Khasi Hills.

SOURCE: [DTE](#)

6. INDIA IS EXPORTING STRICTLY NON-GMO RICE TO WORLD

THE CONTEXT: There were media reports that food recalls linked to alleged GM rice from India. The government clarified that there is no commercial variety of GM rice in India, in fact, the commercial GM cultivation of rice is banned in India.

THE EXPLANATION:

- There is no question of the export of GM rice from India.
- A particular incident which is reported through Rapid Alert by EU, the GMO contamination is suspected to have been found in the rice flour which was processed in EU and they themselves are not sure of the exact source of contaminant.

- The broken white rice exported from India which is allegedly one of the possibilities has passed through many hands before reaching the actual processors in the EU.
- There is always a possibility of mixing or cross-contamination at every stage.
- Since there is no commercial variety of GM in India, proper testing was also done before the shipment of the consignment. The possibility of GMO contamination due to white rice exported by India is not possible.
- India is exporting strictly Non GMO rice to World.
- As reported in the same news item this could be the conspiracy to malign the image of India as a reliable supplier of quality rice to the world.
- The experts in India both from Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) and the Agricultural experts from IARI and other rice experts in India are, however, investigating the matter but re-confirming that the commercial GM variety of rice is not grown in India.

SOURCE: [SCROLL](#)

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INDIAN TEAM MEETS TALIBAN DEPUTY PM

THE CONTEXT: India joined a 10-nation statement recognising the new reality of the Taliban in power in Afghanistan at the Moscow format meeting, as Indian officials reportedly met Taliban Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Salam Hanafi and offered humanitarian aid to the regime in Kabul.

THE EXPLANATION:

- Government sources confirmed that the meeting had taken place, and India was considering a donation of a large consignment of wheat and other aid to Afghanistan.
- India was also a signatory to the joint statement issued by representatives of China, Iran, Russia, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan which called on the Taliban to keep their commitment to forming an “inclusive” government and ensuring that their territory is not used by terror groups to threaten the security of other countries, curb transnational drug routes and pursue “friendly relations” with neighbouring countries.

SOURCE: [TH](#)

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1. Consider the following pairs of places and associated important events in the life of the Gautama Buddha:

1. Kushinagar – Nirvana
2. Lumbini – Birth
3. Sarnath – Dhamma Chakra Pravartana
4. Bodh Gaya – Mahaparinirvana

Which of the above-given pairs are correctly matched?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 3 and 4 only
- d) 1 and 4 only

ANSWER FOR OCTOBER 20, 2021 PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

ANSWER: C

Explanation:

The World Economic Outlook (WEO) is an IMF report that provides analysis and forecasts of economic developments and policies in its member countries. The report encapsulates the state of the global economy and highlights risks and uncertainty that could threaten growth.