

Current Affairs January 2021

Kamdhenu Gau-Vigyan Prachar-Prasar Exam

For raising mass awareness about Indigenous Cows among young Students and every other citizen, RASTRIYA KAMDHENU AAYOG (RKA) has come out with a noble initiative of making Study materials about Cow Science available and conduct “Kamdhenu Gau-Vigyan Prachar-Prasar Examination”.

This will infuse the curiosity into all Indians about the cows, and make them aware of the unexplored potential and business opportunities a cow can offer, even after it stops giving milk.

Kamdhenu Gau-Vigyan Prachar-Prasar Exam will be an online exam to be conducted throughout the country on 25th February, 2021.

The Exam will be an annual event of the Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog in future.

Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog (RKA), a high-powered permanent body, has been constituted by the Government of India for the conservation, preservation, protection and development of cows and their progenies and for giving directions for the cattle development programmes.

Rewari-Madar section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has dedicated the 306-km New Rewari-New Madar section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC) to the nation.

The New Rewari - New Madar section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor is situated in Haryana (approx. 79 Km, in Mahendragarh and Rewari districts) and Rajasthan (approx. 227 Km, in Jaipur, Ajmer, Sikar, Nagaur and Alwar districts).

It consists of nine newly built DFC stations in which six are crossing stations viz. New Dabla, New Bhagega, New Sri Madhopur, New Pachar Malikpur, New Sakun and New Kishangarh while the other three in New Rewari, New Ateli and New Phulera are junction stations.

The opening of this stretch will benefit various industries in Rewari – Manesar, Narnaul, Phulera and Kishangarh areas of Rajasthan & Haryana and will also enable better usage of the container depot of CONCOR at Kathuwas.

This section will also ensure seamless connectivity with the western ports of Kandla, Pipavav, Mundhra, and Dahej situated in Gujarat.

With the inauguration of this section, seamless connectivity between the WDFC and EDFC will be achieved. Earlier the 351-km New Bhaupur- New Khurja section of the EDFC was dedicated to the nation by the Prime Minister on 29th December 2020.

World's first double stack long haul container train

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has flagged off world's first double-stack long haul container train by virtually inaugurating the Rewari-Madar section of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor.

It is the first double-stack long haul 1.5 km long container train to run on electric traction.

The corridor will be used for the exclusive operation of freight trains, which will run at a maximum speed of 100 km/hour.

The first train has been flagged off from New Ateli in Haryana to New Kishangarh in Rajasthan.

Double Stack Long Haul Container Train Operation will have an enhanced axle load of 25 tons.

It has been designed for DFCCIL by RDSO's wagon department. Trial runs of BLCS-A and BLCS-B wagon prototypes have been completed.

The design will maximize capacity utilization and uniform distributed and point loading.

These wagons on a long-haul double stack container train on the WDFC can carry four times in terms of container units compared to the current traffic on Indian Railways.

Earthquake Monitoring and Delineation of Subsurface Structures in Delhi Region

The National Capital Region of Delhi experienced 4 small earthquakes during April – August 2020, with the first event of magnitude 3.5 on 12 April 2020 in the northeastern boundary of NCT Delhi, during the prevailing lockdown time.

All these events were located by the National Seismological Network (NSN), being operated and maintained by National Seismological Centre (NCS), Ministry of Earth Sciences.

Subsequently, NCS initiated the Magneto-telluric (MT), a geophysical survey over the Delhi region. This survey is carried out in collaboration with Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), Dehradun.

Magneto-telluric (MT) is a geophysical method which uses natural time variation of the Earth's magnetic and electric fields to understand geological (underground) structure and processes.

These measurements are conducted across three major seismic sources, namely Mahendragarh-Dehradun Fault (MDF), Sohna Fault (SF) and Mathura Fault (MF).

These measurements will ascertain the presence of fluid, which generally enhances the possibility of triggering of earthquakes.

SC clarified the position of law on the interplay of vertical and horizontal reservations

The Supreme Court last month clarified the position of law on the interplay of vertical and horizontal reservations. The December 18 decision by a two-judge Bench in Saurav Yadav versus State of Uttar Pradesh dealt with issues arising from the way different classes of reservation were to be applied in the selection process to fill posts of constables in the state.

Reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes is referred to as vertical reservation. It applies separately for each of the groups specified under the law.

Horizontal reservation refers to the equal opportunity provided to other categories of beneficiaries such as women, veterans, the transgender community, and individuals with disabilities, cutting through the vertical categories.

The horizontal quota is applied separately to each vertical category, and not across the board.

The interlocking of the two types of reservation throws up a host of questions on how certain groups are to be identified. For example would an SC woman be put in the category of women or SC?

10 crows found dead in Sonbhadra

At least 10 crows were found dead near a concrete plant in Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh. While post-mortem examinations of the carcasses are being conducted in the district, the samples will be sent to Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh for bird flu test.

Avian influenza or bird flu is a highly contagious viral disease caused by Influenza Type A viruses which generally affects poultry birds such as chickens and turkeys.

There are many strains of the virus – some of them are mild and may merely cause a low egg production or other mild symptoms among chickens, while others are severe and lethal.

Wild aquatic birds such as ducks and geese are the natural reservoir of Influenza A viruses and the central players in the ecology of these viruses.

It was in 1997 when humans are first known to have contracted bird flu following an outbreak in a live bird market of Hong Kong. It was the H5N1 strain of the virus.

Subsequently, several other strains of the virus such as H5N2 and H9N2 spread from animals to humans, thus becoming a global public health concern.

CEPI centralised network lab at DBT-THSTI Faridabad

Dr Harsh Vardhan, Minister for Science & Technology, Health & Family Welfare and Earth Sciences inaugurated one of the seven labs of the world called as the centralised network lab of Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) established at Translational Health Science & Technology Institute (THSTI), Faridabad, through the virtual platform in New Delhi.

The CEPI centralized laboratory at DBT-THSTI Faridabad is first of its kind in India and one of the seven in the world.

THSTI is an institute of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT). This is the only laboratory of such kind in India and is also accredited by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) (ISO 17025:2017).

CEPI is an innovative partnership between public, private, philanthropic, and civil organizations, launched at Davos in 2017, to develop vaccines to stop future epidemics.

The Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India is implementing the Ind-CEPI mission titled 'India Centric Epidemic Preparedness through Rapid Vaccine Development: Supporting Indian Vaccine Development Aligned with the Global Initiative of the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)'.

Ind-CEPI Mission aims to strengthen the development of vaccines for the diseases of epidemic potential in India as well as build coordinated preparedness in the Indian public health system and vaccine industry to address existing and emergent infectious threats in India.

Govt organises webinars to promote quality, productivity in Indian industry

To promote quality and productivity in the Indian Industry, a series of sector-specific webinars will be held between 4 January and 2 March. Titled as 'Udyog Manthan', the initiative will identify challenges, opportunities; draw upon solutions and best practices.

Udyog Manthan is a marathon of focused sector-specific webinars for promoting Quality and Productivity in Indian Industry.

The webinar series comprising 45 sessions will cover various major sectors in manufacturing and services.

Participants will include representatives from industry, testing and standardization bodies. The discussions will be live streamed on YouTube for all those interested in following the sessions.

BRO DG briefs Jitendra Singh on road, bridge projects in J&K, northeast

Union minister Jitendra Singh was briefed by Border Road Organisation (BRO) Director General Lt Gen Rajeev Chaudhry on various ongoing and proposed road and bridge projects in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast.

The proposed Chattergala tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir will connect district Kathua with district Doda enroute the new Highway via Basohli-Bani through Chattergalla to touch Bhaderwah and Doda.

This is going to be a historic landmark project providing all-weather alternate road connectivity between the two distant regions and reducing the travel time from Doda to Lakhanpur on the Punjab border to just around four hours.

It is going to be a 6.8 Km long tunnel. The tunnel is likely to take about 4 years for completion after the execution work starts and its construction cost is around Rs. 3,000 crore.

Signing of Memorandum of Cooperation with Japan on 'Specified Skilled Worker'

The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of a memorandum of cooperation between India and Japan, on a basic framework for partnership for proper operation of the system pertaining to "specified skilled worker".

The MOC would set an institutional mechanism for partnership and cooperation between India and Japan on sending and accepting skilled Indian workers, who have qualified the required skill and Japanese language test, to work in fourteen specified sectors in Japan.

These Indian workers would be granted a new status of residence of "Specified Skilled Worker" by the Government of Japan.

Implementation Strategy: Under this MOC, a Joint Working Group will be set up to follow up the implementation of this MOC.

Major Impact: It would enhance people-to -people contacts, foster mobility of workers and skilled professionals from India to Japan.