

May - 18

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ India participated in a meeting of foreign ministers of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) via video conference.
 - It was convened by the current chair, Russia.
- ❖ Recently, Indian Army has proposed 3 years of voluntary Tour of Duty (ToD) for civilians on a trial basis - a shift from the concept of permanent service/job towards internship/temporary experience.
 - The Army plans to take civilians to serve in the force as both officers and Other Ranks.
- ❖ Rebooting the Economy through Science, Technology, and Research Translations (RESTART)' is a digital conference organized National Technology Day.
 - It was organized by the Technology Development Board (TDB), an autonomous organization of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) along with, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- ❖ The New Development Bank of BRICS will be providing USD 1 billion loan to India to fight COVID-19 pandemic as an 'Emergency Assistance Program Loan'.
- ❖ Jammu and Kashmir and Haryana government have geared up to provide tap water connections to all the rural households in the area by December 2022, which is ahead of the national goal by 2024-25.
 - Both the States presented their plan to the Department of Drinking water & Sanitation of the Jal Shakti Ministry.
- ❖ India attended the 32nd Commonwealth Health Ministers Meeting through video conferencing.
 - Theme is “Delivering a coordinated Commonwealth COVID-19 response”.
- ❖ The United Nations recently released the World Economic Situation and Prospects Report, 2020.

NATIONAL

Direct seeding of rice

- ❖ The farmers of Punjab and Haryana are being encouraged to adopt “direct seeding of rice” due to shortage of labourers.
- ❖ In this method, there is no nursery preparation.



- ❖ Instead, the seeds are directly drilled into the field with the help of a power tractor.
- ❖ It helps in saving water up to 25%.
- ❖ It enhances fertilizer use and system productivity.
- ❖ There is minimal disturbance to soil structure.

India's Atma nirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan

- ❖ India's package is not entirely a government spending.
- ❖ The package includes spending of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- ❖ It ranks behind the stimulus packages announced by the US, Japan, Sweden, Australia and Germany in terms of spending percentage of the GDP.
- ❖ However, in terms of the value, India's package ranks at 19th position.
- ❖ Smaller economies such as Belgium and Luxembourg have spent fifth of their GDP at 20.7% and 19.2%, respectively.
- ❖ The ranks have been decided after analyzing the data compiled in 'COVID-19 Economic Stimulus Index (CESI)' by economist Ceyhun Elgin.
- ❖ Rs 20 lakh crore worth coronavirus stimulus package is higher than the GDP of a few economies such as Greece, New Zealand, Vietnam, Portugal, and Romania.
- ❖ India's stimulus value is almost equal to Pakistan's GDP of USD 284 billion.
- ❖ The package is the fifth-largest among the G-20 countries in terms of spending in relation to GDP.

Country	Package Details	Value in terms of GDP
Japan	USD 1.1 trillion recovery package	21.1% of its GDP
United States (US)	USD 2.7 trillion packages (largest in pure dollar terms)	13% of its GDP
Sweden	-	12% of its GDP
Australia	-	10.8% of its GDP
Germany	USD 815 billion package	10.7% of its GDP
India	USD 265 billion (Rs 20 lakh crore)	10% of its GDP
France	-	9.3% of GDP
Spain	€200 billion	7.3% of GDP
Italy	Approx. USD 815 billion package	5.7% of GDP
UK	£1.25 billion	5% of GDP



INTERNATIONAL

Global Solidarity Trial of COVID-19

- ❖ The Indian Council for Medical Research is to participate in this trial.
- ❖ ICMR-National AIDS Research Institute (NARI) is the name of the national coordination site for the Solidarity trial in India.
- ❖ The Gujarat Hospitals from four major cities are to participate in the trial.
- ❖ This includes Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Surat and Rajkot.
- ❖ The WHO has launched four mega trials to test the efficiency and accuracy of four treatments.
- ❖ The treatments are as follows
 - Hydroxychloroquine
 - Remdesivir
 - Lopinavir-Ritonavir
 - Lopinavir-Ritonavir along with Interferon.
- ❖ Lopinavir and Ritonavir are currently being used to treat HIV infections.
- ❖ Remdesivir has still not be approved anywhere in the world.
- ❖ Remdesivir drug blocked Ebola virus in Rhesus monkeys.

Taiwan - China Dispute

- ❖ The Chinese civil war forced the defeated Kuomintang, or Nationalist, to flee to the Taiwan island in 1949.
- ❖ While Taiwan is self-governed and de facto independent, it has never formally declared independence from the mainland China.
- ❖ It is known as the “one country, two systems” formula.
- ❖ To this date, Taiwan is not a part of the WHO.
- ❖ Taiwan is a member of the World Trade Organization, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and Asian Development Bank under various names.
- ❖ India has refused to endorse the “one-China” policy since 2010.
- ❖ Although they do not have formal diplomatic ties, Taiwan and India have been cooperating in various fields.



ECONOMY

PM-KISAN scheme

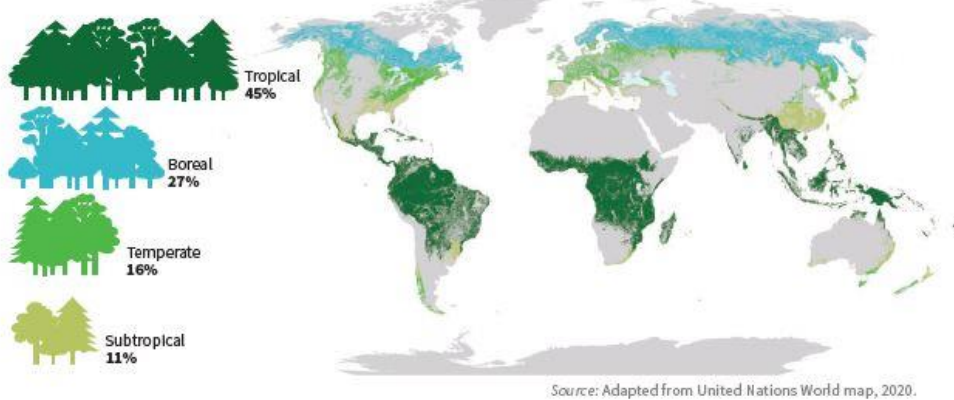
- ❖ The Agriculture Ministry released Rs 18,517 crores under PM-KISAN scheme.
- ❖ The funds were released as a part of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana.
- ❖ The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana was launched on 24th February, 2019.
- ❖ Under the scheme, all the small and marginal farmers are to be provided with income support of Rs 6,000 per year in three installments.

ENVIRONMENT

Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020

- ❖ It has been released by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- ❖ It has examined the status of forests in more than 236 countries and territories between the period 1990 and 2020.
- ❖ The world lost 178 million hectare of forest since 1990, an area the size of Libya.
- ❖ Africa had the largest annual rate of net forest loss in 2010–2020 followed by South America.

Proportion and distribution of global forest area by climatic domain, 2020



Top five countries for forest area, 2020 (million ha)



- ❖ On the other hand, Asia had the highest net gain of forest area in 2010–2020, followed by Oceania and Europe.
- ❖ The world’s total forest area was 4.06 billion hectares (bha), which was 31 per cent of the total land area.
- ❖ The largest proportion of the world’s forests were tropical (45 per cent), followed by boreal, temperate and subtropical.
- ❖ More than 54 per cent of the world’s forests were in only five countries — the Russian Federation, Brazil, Canada, the United States of America and China.
- ❖ The highest per cent of plantation forests were in South America while the lowest were in Europe.

