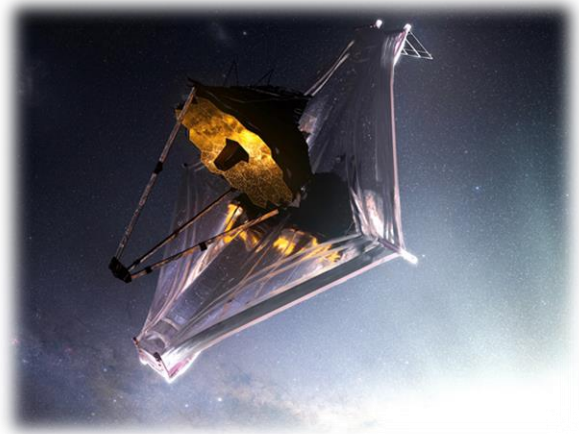


23rd December, 2021 Current Affairs

1. James Webb Space Telescope Mission:

Salient Points:

NASA is about to launch its much-awaited next-generation space telescope mission named “James Webb Space Telescope Mission”, as and when weather is clear. It will be launched on Ariane 5 rocket, operated by Arianespace.



About James Webb Space Telescope (JWST or Webb):

JWST has been in this works for decades. It has been developed by NASA, Canadian Space Agency (CSA) and the European Space Agency (ESA) jointly. As NASA's flagship astrophysics mission, it is planned to succeed the Hubble Space Telescope. It will be launched around December 25, 2021 during Ariane flight VA256. The primary mirror of JWST that is, Optical Telescope Element, made up of 18 hexagonal mirror segments. These segments are made up of gold-plated beryllium.

Aim of the Mission:

JWST mission will provide improved infrared resolution and sensitivity as compared to Hubble Space Telescope. It will enable a broad range of investigations in the fields of astronomy & cosmology, including observation of some of most distant events and objects in space, like formation of the first galaxies and detailed atmospheric characteristics of potentially habitable exoplanets.

Ariane flight VA256:

It is the 256th Ariane mission. This mission will launch the James Webb Space Telescope into space. Ariane 5 is a heavy lift two-stage rocket which includes two solid fuel boosters.

The rocket will be used in its ECA variant, which will have the highest payload mass capacity. The total launch mass of the vehicle is around 770,000 kg. Its only payload is the James Webb Space Telescope (JWST). This launch is one of the contributions of European Space Agency.

2. 'Anti-Doping Bill' has been introduced:

Recently, Sports Minister, Anurag Thakur has introduced "Anti-Doping Bill" in Lok Sabha.

**ANURAG THAKUR
INTRODUCES
ANTI-DOPING BILL**



Key Points of the bill:

- The bill is intended to provide statutory framework for the functioning of National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA).
- The Bill empowers NADA to conduct raids and strengthen measures of tackling drug abuse in India.
- It will also provide statutory framework for the operation National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) and other dope testing laboratories as well.
- It also provides for creation of a National Board for Anti-Doping in Sports for strengthening anti-doping activities in sport.

Power to NADA:

- The bill emphasizes on providing NADA with the powers of investigation, powers of inspection, sample collection and sharing & free flow of information, levying sanctions for Anti-Doping Rule Violations and disciplinary procedures to be adopted.
- The clause 19 of the bill provides NADA the power of "entry, search and seizure" by any person authorised by it, in order to determine if any anti-doping rule violation has been committed.
- However, the procedure to be adopted has to be in accordance with the provisions of Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.

Powers of NADA:

Earlier, NADA had no authority of conducting raids and the anti-doping appeal panel of NADA has held the same. Many former sports persons, head of National Sports Federations and experts have been calling for an anti-doping legislation to strengthen existing rules made under the WADA Anti-Doping Code.

Status of NDTL:

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has presently suspended the NDTL as it failed to meet technical requirements.

Background of the bill:

India has signed the **“United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation International Convention”** in 2005 against Doping in Sport and ratified it in November 2007. Following this, Indian Government had established the NDTL in 2008 and NADA in 2009. Both were established as societies under Societies Registration Act. With this bill, both the agencies will be dissolved and reconstituted.

Reconstitution of NADA:

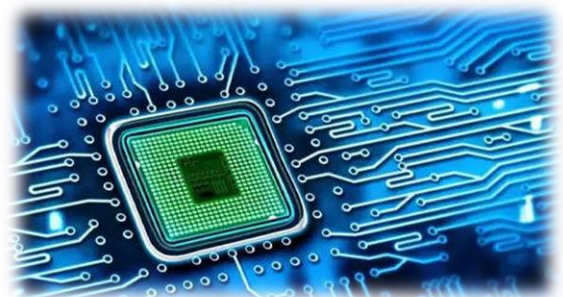
The NADA will be constituted as a body corporate, with same name. As previous, its head office will be remained in New Delhi. It will be headed by a Director General, who will be appointed by central government.

About National Board for Anti-Doping in Sport:

The proposed bill is also intended to establish a National Board for Anti-Doping in Sport, comprising of a chairperson and two other members, who will be appointed by central government.

3. Scheme for setting up Semiconductor Fab Units in India:

Recently, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has notified a semiconductor policy in order to boost the electronics manufacturing ecosystem in India.



Key Points:

- The semiconductor policy was approved by Cabinet recently, in line with the National Policy on Electronics 2019 (NPE 2019).
- This policy was launched by Government, with the goal of attracting big investments to set up Semiconductor Fabs in India.
- The Policy also seeks to make India a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM).
- According to government's notification, establishment of semiconductor fabs in India will be supported by purchase preference in procurement of electronic products under Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India) Order 2017.

Government's financial assistance:

- The Government had announced a Rs. 76,000 crore package in December 2021, to incentivise companies for establishing chip manufacturing and design facilities across India.
- For the implementation of policy, the government will provide financial support of around 50% of the project cost to set up two semiconductor and two display fabs in India.
- The application window for this scheme will open on January 1, 2022, for 45 days.
- The Government will provide support on a pari-passu basis for six years, under the scheme.
- The tenure of actual fiscal support outflow is extendable on the basis of approval of Minister of Electronics and Information Technology.
- The 5% of the scheme outlay will be used to meet the R&D (research and development), skill development and training requirements for developing the semiconductor ecosystem in India.

Government's infrastructure assistance:

- The Government will provide additional infrastructure support under the Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters (EMC 2.0) Scheme.
- The Government will also support for R&D, skill development and training, besides the support offered by state government.

4. Report of World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on Rule Violations:

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) has recently published its report on “Rule Violations”.

Salient points of the report:

- Number of offenders in India increased in 2019, it made India among top-three of world’s biggest doping violators.
- Bodybuilding, weightlifting and athletics have contributed majorly to India’s embarrassing record.
- In 2019, 152 Anti-doping Rule Violations (ADRVs), accounting for 17% of world’s total, were reported in India.
- Out of total offenders, maximum dope offenders reported from bodybuilding (57).
- Among Olympic sports, weightlifting leads with 25 ADRVs. It is followed by athletics (20) and wrestling (10).
- Boxing and judo reported four ADRVs, each.
- Four cricketers also committed ADRVs in 2019.



Global Scenario:

Russia has topped the list across the globe with 167 ADRVs. Russia is followed by Italy with 157 ADRVs. Brazil with 78 ADRVs is at fourth position and Iran with 70 ADRVs is at fifth position.

About ADRVs in Russia:

Russia was banned from sending its national team in Tokyo Olympics as it did not comply with international anti-doping rules. Consequently, it has now been ranked at top position in violators’ list. Russia has reported more cases as compared to 2018.

About 2018 report:

In 2018 WADA report, India was placed at 4th position, with 107 ADRVs. It was left Russia with 144 ADRVs, Italy with 132 ADRVs and France with 114 ADRVs.

About the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA):

WADA is a foundation which was established by International Olympic Committee. It is headquartered in Canada for promoting, coordinating, and monitoring the fight against drugs in sports. The main activities of the foundation include scientific research, development of anti-doping capacities, education, and monitoring of the World Anti-Doping Code.

5. What are the amendments proposed in Maharashtra's Shakti Bill?

Recently, Maharashtra State Home Minister, Dilip Walse Patil has presented a report on Shakti Bill in the State Assembly.



Salient Points:

- The report was prepared by a joint committee, during 13 meetings.
- The committee submitted the amendments to the original Bill, which was sent to the joint committee in budget session.
- The bill is likely to be passed in winter session 2021.
- Shakti Criminal Laws (Maharashtra Amendment) Bill, 2020.
- It is a bill related to crimes against women and children.
- The bill has recommended capital punishment for rape cases.
- It also recommends a time-limit of 30 days for completing the probe since the day of registration of complaint.
- The amendment has put onus on social media platforms and companies providing Internet data to share data for police investigation.

What if probe is not completed within 30 days?

The Amendment bill provided that, probe in such crime cases should also completed within 30 days. In case, it does not complete, 30 more days will be provided, after hearing the reasons from Special Inspector General or Police Commissioner.

What punishment is provided for social media and Mobile data providers?

Amendment bill also have the provision for punishment for social media platforms and mobile data providers in case they fail to share data within seven days, when demanded by investigating officers in rape cases. It will invite three months of jail or a fine of Rs. 25 lakh.

Anticipatory Bail:

Previous version of the Bill had removed the provision of anticipatory bail for individuals accused of assault on women. But, under the new bill, this provision has abolished.

Punishment for sexual assault:

The Bill also provides for imprisonment of one year to three years and Rs. 1 lakh fine for those who make false complaints of sexual assault.

6. What are the features of UNSC resolution on Afghan assistance?

Recently, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has passed a resolution unanimously to permit exemptions in sanctions against the Taliban.

Features of the resolution:

- The exemptions is targeted to facilitate delivery of humanitarian aid to Afghanistan.
- It covers urgent humanitarian assistance and other activities, to support basic human needs in Afghanistan.



- Prima facie it will benefit poor or at-risk populations or otherwise relieve human suffering.

Some of the assistance and activities include:

- Shelter and settlement assistance
- Food security
- Education
- Livelihood support
- Energy and Water
- Sanitation and Health including COVID-related assistance
- Nutrition, and Hygiene

About UNSC resolution 2615:

- The UNSC resolution mandates a review of the exemptions every six months.
- It also encourages the assistance providers to try and ensure that benefits do not flow to entities designated on 1988 Sanctions List.
- It further requests an Emergency Relief Coordinator to give summary to UNSC every six months on the delivery of assistance.
- It asked all parties to respect human rights and observe international humanitarian law.

India has voted in Favour:

India has supported the UNSC resolution to grant exemption from sanctions, in the light that, half population of Afghanistan are facing acute food insecurity. India's permanent representative to UN, T.S. Tirumurti noted that, assistance should be distributed impartially. It should be based on principles of neutrality, impartiality and independence. He also noted that, assistance should be approachable to all irrespective of ethnicity, religion or political belief and should reach most vulnerable including women, children & minorities first.

About the United Nations Security Council (UNSC):

- UNSC is one among the six principal organs of United Nations (UN). It is charged with ensuring international peace and security.
- The body also recommends admission of new UN members to the UN General Assembly, besides approving any changes to the UN Charter.

- It is empowered with establishing peacekeeping operations, authorizing military action and enacting international sanctions.

7. What are the reasons for Unnatural Death of Elephants in India?

According to data given by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, 600 elephants have died due to electrocution across India, in between 2009 and 2019.

Key Points:

- Out of total deaths, 116 occur in Karnataka, 117 in Odisha while 105 in Assam.
- Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura and Maharashtra are the only states with zero such deaths.

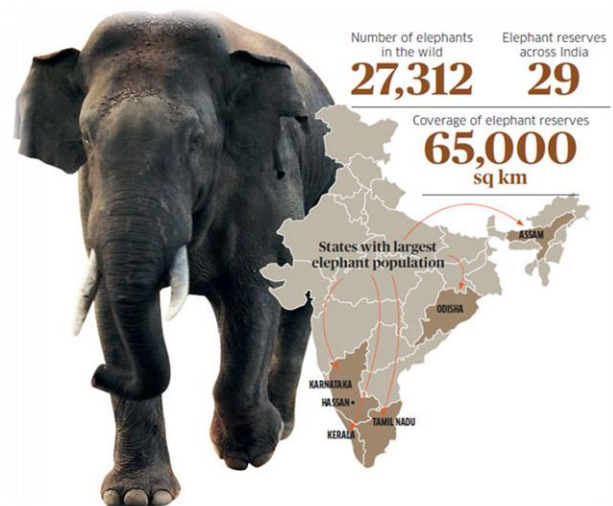
Deaths in Karnataka:

- Karnataka have been reporting most of the unnatural deaths of elephants for the last few years. Though, the number have come down annually. But 5-6 cases of deaths of jumbos are due to electrocution.
- In June 2021 Four jumbos were died in Kodagu, while in October 2020, two male elephants died in Bannerghatta National Park Bengaluru, due to electrocution.
- Elephants die when they come in contact with electric fence lines put up by private landowners.

Government's project to save Elephants:

Government has been providing financial and technical support under the scheme called "Project Elephant" to the elephant range states and union territories.

About Project Elephant:



Project Elephant was launched in 1992 for providing the financial and technical support to wildlife management efforts taken by states for the protection of wild Asian Elephants. It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS). **Scheme is being implemented with following objectives:**

1. For protecting elephants, their habitat & corridors.
2. Addressing issues of man-animal conflict.
3. Welfare of captive elephants.

Implementation of the scheme:

Project Elephant is being mainly implemented across 16 States and UTs.

Those states are:

Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Kerala, Karnataka, Nagaland, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Uttarakhand, Tripura, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.

Ex-gratia relief:

The scheme also has provided ex-gratia relief in case of human death or injury, damage to property and crop loss.

Asian Elephants: Protection Status

IUCN Red List: Endangered category.