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UPSC DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS  
MAY 21, 2020

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# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS – 21.05.20

## 1. A SCHEME FOR THE FARMERS

### What's in news?

In the line to help Agriculture and farmers, a new scheme was launched by a state government on 21<sup>st</sup> May, 2020.



### Key data's:

- **Scheme:** As per the election manifesto, a new scheme was introduced - **“Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana”** launched on May 21.
- **Why May 21?** This is martyrdom day of Rajiv Gandhi, former PM of India – was assassinated in Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu.
- **Launched by:** The scheme was launched by the **Chhattisgarh government** – previously the state cabinet was approved on May 14.
- **Objective:** The main objective of this scheme is *to encourage production of crops and to provide farmers the fair value of their produce.*
  - ✓ The scheme is also to ensure *“minimum income availability”* to farmers of the state through direct bank transfer (DBT) – as per their election manifesto.
  - ✓ Chhattisgarh is the first state of the country to provide financial relief of Rs 5,700 crore through DBT in bank accounts of farmers.
- **Allocated fund:** The state government has allocated the amount **Rs 5,756 crore** in the budget 2020-21 in order to benefit the farmers.
- **Instalments:** The money will be distributed in 4 instalments. As the first instalment, **Rs.1500 Cr** will be distributed among 18 lakh farmers – 80% of them are small and marginal farmers.
- **Crops covered:** The crops covered in this scheme – **Rice, Maize, Paddy, sugarcane** (Rabi crops).
- **Financial assistance:** To encourage the farmers to cultivate the crops, the amount and the respective criteria of the farmers;
  - ✓ **Rs. 10000/ acre** – for Rice an Maize farmers
  - ✓ **Rs. 13000 / acre** – for sugarcane farmers
  - ✓ The amount will be distribute depending on the quantity acquired through cooperative society.
- **Advantage:** The financial assistance to the farmers will increase their income which raise the demand of the individuals – which results in hike in state's economy.
- **Criticism:** The scheme was not covered the total no. of farmers (around 30 lakhs) – only covered about 19 lakh farmers.

### Data to know:

### National Commission on Farmers / Swaminathan Commission:

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- The commission chaired *Professor M.S. Swaminathan* formed on December 2004 and submitted its report on October 2006.
- It focused on causes of farmer's distresses and the rise in farmers' suicides.

## 2. STEPS TAKEN TO PROMOTE THEATRICAL CLASSES

### What's in news?

NSD has initiated few online courses during the COVID-19 lockdown.

### Key data's:

- The Ministry of Culture, was planning to promote theatre during this ongoing lockdown through virtual initiatives. Few of their steps were discussed here in this article.
- **Online courses:** As per the directions of the Cultural Ministry, the classes were suspended on March 13 and the online classes were started on March 28.
- **Classes covered:** Except practical session (like acting or model making for stage online), the theoretical classes were going online.
  - ✓ The classes covered the projects of *doing yoga poses, making stage lighting plans and practising the Stanislavski method of acting*.
- **Conducted by:** The online courses were conducted by '**National School of Drama (NSD)**' – as per the Ministry's direction.
- **Webinar series:** NSD also launched a '**theatre for all**' webinar series on few topics – like acting, sound and video technology for the stage and festival management for aspiring students and theatre enthusiast.
- **Online workshop:** An online workshop would be conducted in the month of June on two topics – "**on theatre appreciation and playwriting**"



### About National School of Drama (NSD):

- **Established in:** A theatre training institute was set up in 1959 by the *Sangeet Natak Akademi* – later in 1975, it became an *independent school*.
- **Ministry:** It comes under *Ministry of Culture*.
- **Autonomous organization:** In 1975, it was registered as an autonomous organization under the *Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860*, fully financed by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.
- **University status:** In 2005 it was granted deemed university status, but in 2011 it was revoked.
  - ✓ The revocation was requested by the NSD Society as it could undermine the professional training, autonomy, and flexibility required in the creative fields such as theatre.

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- **Regional Resource Centre (RRC):** The first RRC was opened at Bangalore in 1994 followed by Varanasi.
- **National Theatre Festival:** Also known as *Bharat Rang Mahotsav*, the annual theatre festival, established in 1999.
- It is acknowledged as the largest theatre festival of Asia.

## 3. ANTI-TERRORISM DAY

### What's in news?

Terrorism is the enemy of humanity and the biggest threat to global peace, so that Anti-terrorism day is celebrated in India.



### Key data's:

- **Date:** The Anti-terrorism day is being celebrated on May 21<sup>st</sup> annually.
- **Aim:** The day is being celebrated for following reasons;
  - ✓ *To promote and send out the message of global peace and non-violence.*
  - ✓ *To honour the sacrifices of thousands of soldiers who have, over the years, fought against terrorism.*
- **Why May 21?** The day marks the death anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi, former PM of India who was assassinated in 1991 at an election rally near Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu by a women suicide bomber from Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The year 2020 mark 29th death anniversary of Late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

### Anti-terror laws in India:

#### Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987:

- The act defines the 'terrorist act' and 'disruptive activities' – also put restrictions on the grant of bail.
- The law was lapsed in 1995.

#### Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA), 2002:

- As per this law, a suspect could be detained for up to 180 days by a special court.
- The law made the fundraising activity for terrorism is a "terrorist act".
- The law made a separate chapter to deal with terrorist organisations.

### Data to know:

#### Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavana award:

- **Instituted in:** The award was instituted by All India Congress Committee (AICC) of INC in 1992.

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- **Why the award?** The award was instituted *in memory of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi*.
- **For whom?** The award is presented annually to those who have devoted their life in understanding and promoting social harmony.
- **What it have?** The award consist a citation and cash Prize of Rs 10 Lakh.

## Financial Action Task Force (FATF):

- **Established in:** An inter-governmental organisation set up in 1989.
- **Purpose:** The organization established to develop policies to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.
- **Membership:** India got FATF membership in 2010 on the assurance that it would make suitable amendments in the Act by March 2012.

## 4. SOLARISATION OF KONARK SUN TEMPLE

### What's in news?

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has taken up the complete solarisation of Konark Sun Temple and Konark town in Odisha.



### Key data's:

- The Government of India launched the scheme with an objective to take forward Prime Minister (Narendra Modi)'s vision to develop the historical Sun temple town of Konark in Odisha as 'Surya Nagri', to convey a message of synergy between the modern use of solar energy and the ancient Sun Temple and the importance of promoting solar energy.
- The scheme envisages the setting up of a 10 MW grid connected solar project and various solar off-grid applications like solar trees, solar drinking water kiosks, off-grid solar power plants with battery storage, etc, with a 100 per cent Central Financial Assistance of around ₹25 crore.
- The project will be implemented by Odisha Renewable Energy Development Agency. The Scheme will meet all the energy requirements of Konark town.

### Konark Temple

- Konark was built by King Narasimhadeva I of the Ganga Dynasty (1238-1264AD) in the 13th century and is located in Eastern Odisha near the sacred city of Puri.
- The temple is designed in the shape of a colossal chariot. It is dedicated to the sun God.
- There are two rows of 12 wheels on each side of the Konark sun temple.
- The seven horses are said to symbolize the seven days of the week.

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- The temple was used as a navigational point by European sailors. They referred to it as the 'Black Pagoda' due to its dark colour and its magnetic power that drew ships into the shore and caused shipwrecks.
- It is the culmination of Odisha temple architecture.
- It was declared a UNESCO world heritage site in 1984.

### 5. AGAPPE CHITRA MAGNA

#### What's in news?

The Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST) has commercially launched Agappe Chitra Magna, a magnetic nanoparticle-based RNA extraction kit it has developed along with Agappe Diagnostics Ltd, a Kochi-based invitro diagnostics manufacturing company



#### Key data's:

- Chitra Magna is an innovative RNA extraction kit developed by the SCTIMST, the technology for which had been transferred to Agappe Diagnostics last month.

#### Working:

- It uses an innovative technology for isolating RNA using magnetic nanoparticles to capture the RNA from the patient sample and is very sensitive.
- The magnetic nanoparticle beads bind to the viral RNA and, when exposed to a magnetic field, give a highly purified and concentrated RNA.
- As the sensitivity of the detection method is dependent on getting an adequate quantity of viral RNA, this innovation enhances the chances of identifying positive cases.
- The kit, which can be used for RNA extraction for RT-LAMP, RT-qPCR, RT-PCR and other isothermal and PCR-based protocols for the detection of SARS-CoV-2, had been validated by the National Institute of Virology, following which the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) had given the go ahead for its commercial production.

#### Significance:

- The indigenously developed and manufactured RNA extraction kit would reduce the nation's dependence on imported kits which are expensive and bring down the cost of COVID-19 testing.

#### RNA virus:

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- SARS-COV-2, the causative virus of Covid-19 pandemic, is an RNA virus- a long single-stranded polymeric substance present in all living cells that carries the genetic information of the organism necessary for life.
- One of the critical steps in detecting this virus is by confirming the presence of the RNA of the virus in the sample taken from the throat or nose.

## 6. COIR GEO TEXTILES

### What's in news?

Coir Geo textiles gets nod for Rural Road Construction



### Key data's:

- Coir Geo textiles, a permeable fabric, natural, strong, highly durable, resistant to rots, moulds and moisture, free from any microbial attack, has finally been accepted as a good material for rural road construction.
- Coir Geo textiles will be used for construction of rural roads under the PMGSY-III.
- Coir is a 100% natural fiber, obtained from a renewable source – the coconut husk.

### Significance:

- The decision opens up a huge market potential for Coir Geo-textiles in the Country and will be a boon to the Covid-19 hit Coir Industry.

### Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):

- As per the PMGSY new technology guidelines for road construction, 15% length in each batch of proposals, is to be constructed using new technologies.
- Out of this 5% roads are to be constructed using IRC accredited technology. The IRC has now accredited coir Geo textiles for construction of rural roads.
- As per these instructions, 5% length of the rural roads under PMGSY-III will be constructed using Coir Geo textiles.
- Accordingly 164 Kms of road will be constructed using coir geo textiles in Andhra Pradesh, 151 kms in Gujarat, 71 kms in Kerala , 328 kms in Maharashtra, 470 kms in Odisha, 369 kms TN and 121 kms in Telengana.
- Thus 1674 km road will be constructed using Coir Geo textiles in 07 states for which there will be a requirement of One Crore Sq. mtrs of coir Geo-textiles, estimated cost of which would come to Rs.70 Crore.

### Geo Textiles:

- These are synthetic including polyester and polypropylene or man-made materials that have varying degrees of permeability.
- Permeability means their surfaces have very small openings that allow liquid or gases to pass through.

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- It has the ability to separate, filter, reinforce, protect and drain when used in association with soils.
- It drains areas where water pools while keeping soil in place.
- It serves as effective filters, catching some materials to prevent drains from clogging.
- It reinforces earthen structures like drains by holding layers in place.
- It protects against erosion in places like roads and beaches.
- These functions make Geo Textile fabrics useful in many industries, especially construction and civil engineering.

