

IASbaba's Prelims Current Affairs

21st November to 3th December 2015

Though the weightage of Current Affairs vary from year to year-it becomes imperative for us to strategize our preparation in such a manner that this unpredictability gets tamed at the right time, from our end. Right from the burning issues to the static part of the portion, a Civil Servant is supposed to understand the subjective realities of the country to which he belongs to- very well.

Current Events plays a key role in all the three stages of UPSC preparation, especially in the Mains and Interview. It covers a wide range of topics which overlaps with the CORE subjects like Geography, Polity, Economics, History and dynamic subjects like Environment, Science and Technology- making the section of 'Current Affairs' unputdownable for a serious aspirant.

Hence, the key here is substantiating the Core subjects with regular readings of the events taking place/in news. To make this process an easy one, we will be coming up with capsules of Pre-centric Coverage of the important events. We are sure that this will complement your preparation and push you towards your goals.

Best

IASbaba

China's Tianhe-2 retained its position as World's most powerful Supercomputer

- **Tianhe-2**, the supercomputer of China, retained its numero uno position as the most powerful supercomputer in the world.
- Tianhe-2 means **Milky Way-2** and it led the list with a performance of 33.86 petaflop per seconds (quadrillions of calculations per second or Pflop/s) on the Linpack benchmark.

Think:

- How super computer is different from an ordinary computer?
- PARAM 8000 is considered as the first super computer of India developed by CDAC in 1990
- The latest machine in the series is called PARAM YUVA 2

Kosmos 2510, the first satellite of EKS (Tundra) system, launched by Russia

- Russia successfully launched the first satellite for its newest early warning system, named EKS or Integrated Space System. The satellite was officially named Kosmos 2510 (Tundra 11L).
- Satellite is designed to restore Moscow's capability to detect, track and identify worldwide missile launches from space.

Key highlights of the Tundra 11L satellite

- It was delivered into a highly elliptical geosynchronous orbit, called a Tundra orbit.
- It features two deployable solar arrays.
- It will detect missiles launched from the sea as well as from the U.S. territory.

What is EKS?

- EKS (Integrated Space System) is a replacement for the US-KMO and US-K satellites of the Oko programme.
- These satellites identify ballistic missile launches from outer space and complement early warning radars such as the Voronezh.
- There are six Tundra satellites planned to be launched until 2020.
- The next Tundra mission is scheduled for 2016.

Think

- Learn about various orbits like Polar, sun-synchronous and geo-synchronous
- LEO and MEO

WHO launched World Antibiotic Awareness Week with the theme Antibiotics: handle with care

- (WHO) launched the World Antibiotic Awareness Week with the theme **Antibiotics: handle with care.**
- The campaign is part of the WHO's recent efforts to fight against antibiotic resistance due to growing misuse.

What are Antibiotics?

- Antibiotics, also known as antibacterial, are types of medications that destroy or slow down the growth of bacteria in order to contain bacteria-caused illness.

How do Antibiotics work?

- Usually, antibiotics work in two ways-either they kill the bacteria, like Penicillin, by interfering with the formation of the bacterium's cell wall or its cell contents or stops bacteria from multiplying.

Think:

- An antigen is any substance that causes an immune system to produce antibodies against it.
- An antibody is also known as immunoglobulin is a large Y protein produced by plasma cells that is used by immune system to identify and neutralize pathogens such as bacteria and viruses
- Learn about the functions and significance of antibody and antigen

UN released report on impacts of Biodegradable plastics on marine environment

- The report is titled as Biodegradable Plastics and Marine Litter: Misconceptions, Concerns and Impacts on Marine Environments.
- As per the report, widespread adoption of products labelled biodegradable will not significantly decrease the volume of plastic entering the ocean or the physical and chemical risks that plastics pose to marine environment.

Think

- Biodegradation is slow or fast in ocean as compared to land?
- Types of biodegradable and non-biodegradable compounds
- What are oxo-degradable plastics?
- What are micro-plastics?
- Bioaccumulation

Delhi to host the first International Qawwali Festival 2016

The festival aims to reinforce a notion that music is not restricted to any borders.

Think:

- Amir khusro dehlavi of chisti order of sufis is credited with fusing the Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Indian musical traditions to create qawwali as we know it today

IEP released Global Terrorism Index 2015

- Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) released Global Terrorism Index 2015.

Highlights of Global Terrorism Index 2015

- The top 5 countries that were worst effected by terrorism in 2014-Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan and Syria.
- The least affected countries in 2014-Japan, Malawi, Togo, Zambia among others.

Technology Acquisition & Development Fund under National Manufacturing Policy launched

- The TADF was launched by Minister of State for Commerce & Industry Nirmala Sitharaman.

Fund will facilitate acquisition of clean, green and energy efficient technologies.

- The scheme will be implemented through Global Innovation and Technology Alliance (GITA), a joint venture company. GITA was launched in 2007-08 by CII and Department of Science & Technology to stimulate private sector's investment in R&D.

About National Manufacturing Policy 2011

- Promoted by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP)
- Objectives of the Policy are to increase share of GDP in manufacturing to 25 percent
- Increase manufacturing sector growth to 12-14% in medium term to make it an engine of growth to create 100 million additional jobs by 2022

CCEA approved disinvestment of 10 percent paid up equity capital in Coal India Limited

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the disinvestment of 10 percent paid up equity capital of Coal India Limited (CIL).
- With this disinvestment in CIL, the Union Government is expecting to mop up around 20000 crore rupees

Think:

- Chotanagpur Plateau is known for rich iron and coal deposits in India
- **Disinvestment** policy of India and National Investment Fund (NIF)

India ratified Articles of Agreement of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a proposed international financial institution which is focused on supporting infrastructure construction in the Asia-Pacific region.
- The bank was proposed by China, and it is headquartered at Beijing

Union Cabinet approved setting up of National Resource Facility for Bio-medical Research

- Where: **Genome Valley, Hyderabad**
- Highlights: It will be India's first of its kind for quality laboratory animals for basic and applied biomedical research.
- It will be developed as a world-class facility for breeding and housing of animals such as primates, canines and other specialized models such as transgenic and knockout rodents required for testing of various R&D products

Think

- What are transgenic species?

Swati Dandekar appointed Executive Director to Asian Development Bank by Obama

- She was the first-ever Indian-American to be elected to lower House of Representatives in 2003.
- She was the first Indian-born American citizen to win a state legislature seat in the United States.

About Asian Development Bank

- The Asian Development Bank is an international organization that provides loans, grants, policy aid, technical assistance and equity investments to countries in Asia and the Pacific.

IASbaba Prelims Capsule-3

- It was established as a regional development bank on 22 August 1966 which is headquartered in **Manila, Philippines**
- From 31 members at its establishment, ADB now has 67 members, of which 48 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.

23rd APEC Economic Leaders Meeting Declaration Issued

- The leaders of the 23rd **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit** issued the 2015 Leaders Declaration at the end of the conclusion of summit in Manila, Philippines.
- The Declaration is titled ***Building Inclusive Economies, Building a Better World: A Vision for an Asia-Pacific Community***.

About Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)

- The founding members were: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and the United States.
- China, Hong Kong, China and Chinese Taipei joined in 1991. Mexico and Papua New Guinea followed in 1993. Chile acceded in 1994. And in 1998, Peru, Russia and Viet Nam joined, taking the full membership to 21.

Allahabad HC asked UP government to stop sale and use of Chinese manjha

- **What is Manjha**-Manjha is a highly abrasive type of **nylon** string that is used during flying kites.
- **Why ban**-Because people had received serious injuries caused by the razor-sharp nylon string coated with glass.
- The bench observed that this thread is very dangerous for both human and birds in the sky.

UNISDR released the report titled the Human Cost of Weather Related Disasters

- Top 5 countries hit by disasters-USA, China, India, Philippines, Indonesia
- Average of 335 weather related disasters were recorded per year between 2005 and 2014.
- It highlights that floods accounted for 47 percent of all weather-related disasters
- Storms were the deadliest type of weather-related disaster, accounting for 242000 deaths or 40 percent of the global weather-related deaths, with 89 percent of these deaths occurring in lower-income countries.
- Overall, heat waves accounted for 148000 out of the 164000 lives lost due to extreme temperatures, with 92 percent of deaths occurring in high-income countries.

Urban Development Minister launched portal for small traders' e-lala

- The e-lala initiative is aimed at promoting the interests of 5.77 crore small businesses in the context of rapid expansion of e-commerce in the country.
- E-lala will enable physical stores to have their own online stores enabling them to retain their customer base besides additional source of growth in business.
- E-lala's distinctive features include a specialty corner promoting unique products associated with each city.

Two rivers turn blue in Meghalaya; high acid content doubted

- Two rivers in eastern Meghalaya have turned blue again apparently due to "high acid content", resulting in death of scores of fishes.
- The Lukha river in East Jaintia Hills district and certain sections of the the Myntdu river in West Jaintia Hills district have changed their colour

Think:

- NOX, SOX, constitute major components of acid rain
- Mawsynram receives highest rainfall in India followed by Chirapunji

27th ASEAN-India Summit held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

- **Theme of the summit:** Our People, Our Community, Our Vision.
- ASEAN Summit is held twice a year from Dec 2008
- In 2014, the chair was with Myanmar, hence the 24th and 25th ASEAN Summit was held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar in May and November. The theme was moving forward in Unity to a Peaceful and Prosperous Community.

China building world's largest animal cloning factory

Focus of the company

- It will mainly focus at cloning cattle, which would help China to keep up with Chinese demand of the meat.
- It hopes to produce around one lakh cow embryos annually, which would be five percent of the Chinese market for beef.
- Scientists at the plant also hope to clone champion race horse (hugely successful for polo ponies in South America) and sniffer dogs (capable of finding illegal drugs or people during natural disasters).

GRSE handed over ASW Corvette 'Kadmatt' to Indian Navy

- It is an Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette. Kadmatt built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE)

About ASW Kadmatt

- Its main role is to protect nation's maritime interests against possible submarine attack
- It is a potent platform for neutralising the enemy submarines using weapons like torpedoes, rocket launchers and helicopter.
- It has been built in the country with indigenously developed special grade high-tensile (DMR249A) steel produced by the Steel Authority of India.
- Its hull encompasses the bulk of sensors and weapon systems which are also indigenously manufactured.

Think:

- Vishakapatnam, Kolkatta, Kochi and Mumbai are the four major ship building centres in India

New species of tree frog Ghatixalus magnus discovered in Idukki district of Kerala

- The frog belongs to Rhacophorid tree frog of the genus Ghatixalus. It was named as Ghatixalus magnus due to its large size making it the biggest known tree frog from the Western Ghats.
- Beside Ghatixalus magnus, the team also rediscovered a species of bush frog, named Raorchestes flaviventris that had been evading for past 132 years.

India-Israel co-developed LRSAM missile successfully flight-tested

- The missile is co-developed by India and Israel. LRSAM is also called Barak 8 missile in Israel which in Hebrew language means Lightning.

About Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LRSAM)

- LRSAM or Barak 8 is an advanced long-range missile with air defence system.
- Its main features are long range, active radar seeker missile, vertical launch and multiple simultaneous engagements.
- It is capable to counter a wide variety of air-borne threats such as anti-ship missiles, aircraft, UAVs and drones as well as supersonic cruise missiles.

RBI granted in-principle approval to NPCI to function as the central unit for Bharat Bill Payment Systems

- The BBPS is an integrated bill payment system which will function as a tiered structure for operating the bill payment system in the country with a single brand image providing convenience of anytime anywhere bill payment to customers.

About National Payments Corporation of India

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) was incorporated in December 2008 and the Certificate of Commencement of Business was issued in April 2009.
- It has been incorporated as a Section 25 company under Companies Act.
- It is aimed to operate for the benefit of all the member banks and their customers.

Union Cabinet approved DTAC agreement with Japan

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 2 December 2015 approved signing and ratification of Protocol between India and Japan for amending the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC) in order to facilitate tax-related exchange of information.
- The protocol will facilitate exchange of information as per accepted international standards on tax matters, including bank information and information without domestic tax interest.

Think:

- Types of taxation in India.
- Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)

India, France launched International Solar Alliance

- The alliance was launched jointly by PM Narendra Modi and French President Francois Hollande during the United Nations climate change conference (COP21).
- It aims to bring 121 tropical countries together to tap solar energy.
- The alliance also invited all countries located fully or partly between the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn to join the group. It will function from the National Institute of Solar Energy in India, Gurgaon.

Think:

- Photoelectric effect ,Photovoltaic cells
- National Solar Mission aims to increase the solar power target to 1lakh MW by 2022

Union Government announced 10 New/Revised Schemes for Disabled Persons under the National Trust

- These schemes were launched under the National Trust for the welfare of persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities.

List of Schemes

1. DISHA: Early Intervention and School Readiness Scheme
2. VIKAAS: Day Care Scheme
3. SAMARTH: Respite Care Scheme
4. GHARAUNDA: Group Home for Adults Scheme
5. NIRAMAYA: Health Insurance Scheme
6. SAHYOGI: Caregiver training scheme
7. GYAN PRABHA: Educational support Scheme
8. PRERNA: Marketing Assistance Scheme
9. SAMBHAV: Aids and Assisted Devices Scheme
10. BADHTE KADAM: Awareness and Community Interaction Scheme

Union Government launched IPV injection as part of Global Polio Endgame Strategy

Main highlights of the Initiative

- The first phase this vaccine will be introduced in six states, viz Assam, Gujarat, Punjab, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.
- IPV injection will be given to children below one year of age along with the third dose of the Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) at the routine immunization sessions free of cost.
- New evidences now clearly show that IPV and OPV together will further strengthen the children's immune system and will provide double protection against polio.

Think:

- Mission Indradhanush
- India was officially declared polio free in 2014
- Difference between IPV and OPV

RBI permitted Foreign Portfolio Investors to buy Defaulted Bonds

- RBI permitted FPI's to buy fully or partly defaulted bonds in the repayment of principal on maturity or principal instalment in the case of amortising bond.
- The RBI granted the permission to the FPIs under sections 10(4) and 11(1) of the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999.

Bond Default Definition

- A bond default occurs when the issuer fails to make an interest or principal payment on its bonds within the specified period.
- Defaults typically occur when the bond issuer has run out of cash to pay its bondholders. Since defaulting on a bond severely restricts the issuer's ability to acquire financing in the future, a default is usually a last resort – and therefore a sign of severe financial distress.

Think:

- Differences between FII, FDI, FPI and finally Qualified foreign investors(QFI)
- Differences between shares, Bond, Debenture, Securities.

IMF approved China's Yuan as Elite Reserve Currency

- The action was taken after the executive board at IMF completed the regular five-yearly review of the basket of currencies that make up the Special Drawing Right (SDR).
- With this Yuan will be a freely usable currency and will be included in the SDR basket as a fifth currency, along with the US Dollar, Euro, Japanese Yen and British Pound.

What is a SDR?

- The special drawing rights (SDR) system was created by the IMF in 1969 to support the Bretton Woods fixed exchange rate system.
- The SDR is instead an international reserve asset which the IMF uses to supplement its member countries' reserves. The SDR's value is based on the basket of the four international currencies and SDRs can be exchanged for "freely usable" currencies.

Think:

- Reports released by IMF, World bank
- Types of currencies –Hard, Soft, Hot, Cheap, Heated currency

Jihadists target hotel in Mali, leave 27 dead

- Jihadist group Al Mourabitoun, allied to al Qaeda claimed responsibility.
- Attack in Bamako, Mali.
- UN peacekeepers & French troops worked with the Malian govt.

Think

- Location of Mali- Focus on the location of Sub-saharan countries.
- Rise of Jihadism in sub-saharan countries.

Smart city on 9000 acres pooled by farmers near Mumbai

- 11 villages join hands to create a modern township in Khalapur taluka of Raigad district.
- Land titles to remain in the name of owners.
- Pooled land will be first converted into non-agricultural zone & then a Special Purpose Vehicle will be promoted to build a smart-city.

Think

- What is SPV?
- What will happen to tribals living in the area?
- Farmers between Vijaywada & Guntur pooled 30000 acres of land to build the capital of Andhra Pradesh - Amaravathi
- How will it help the region? Jobs creation?

Home Ministry to build central database on terror funding

- Central database on terror funding by collating financial components of various terror attacks in the country in the past.
- The database will help the security apparatus establish a pattern for different terror groups and help in choking their source of funding.

Think

- India's counter-terrorism set-up.

Cochin Shipyard to build secret vessel for DRDO

- DRDO & Cochin Shipyards to build a 'technology demonstration vessel'.
- It would have an array of sensors & radars to track flight of long-range missiles.

Think

- DRDO jointly works with which other organisations/countries?
- INS Vikrant

ISRO working on 4-D, 5-D imaging technology

- 4-D & 5-D is a part of ISRO's engagement with 'hyperspectral imaging', which is emerging area in Geographic Information System (GIS).
- Healthcare & Prevention of diseases can be better addressed if all the relevant data & analysis are provided in GIS maps through an institutionalized arrangement involving govt agencies.

Think

- What is hyperspectral imaging & its applications?
- [Bharat Maps – Multi-layer GIS platform](#).
- ISRO's recent missions.

[SC seeks Centre's view on Governor's removal](#)

- The Supreme Court has sought a response from the Centre, the Madhya Pradesh government and the State's Governor, Ram Naresh Yadav, on a plea seeking the removal of the Governor owing to his alleged involvement in the multi-crore Vyapam scam, which is currently being probed by the CBI.
- As per **Article 155 and Article 156 of the Constitution**, a Governor of a state is an appointee of the President, and he or she holds office "during the pleasure of the President".
- If a Governor continues to enjoy the "pleasure of the President", he or she can be in office for a term of five years.
- Because the President is bound to act on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers under Article 74 of the Constitution, in effect it is the central government that appoints and removes the Governors.
- The President is advised by the Prime Minister of the country, who decides the dismissal of the Governor of a state, usually on the grounds of gross delinquency namely corruption, bribery and violation of the Constitution.
- No provision of impeachment, unlike the President.

Think

- Powers of Governor
- Constitutional provisions
- Differences and similarities in the power and function of President and Governor

[ASEAN to ease travel,mobility of labour](#)

- Kuala Lumpur declaration on the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).
- AEC will transform the ASEAN economy into a region with free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labour and freer flow of capital.

THE WAY FORWARD

Kuala Lumpur accord stresses on strengthening political, economic and socio-cultural fronts



The combined GDP of ASEAN may grow from **US\$2.6 trillion** to **US\$4.7 trillion** by 2020

WHAT DOES THE DECLARATION IMPLY

- **Ease of Intra-Asean travel and doing business**
- **Mobility of skilled labour and talents**
- **Wider choices**
- **Better quality of prod-**

ucts and services

- **Equitable access to global opportunities**
- **Increased economic opportunities and access to quality jobs**

Think

- How will the AEC change the global landscape?
- How will it affect the individuals, creation of jobs?
- Member countries of ASEAN

[Interceptor missile engages simulated targets over sea](#)

- The interceptor, known as **Advanced Air Defence (AAD)** missile is a ballistic missile defence system.
- Test fired from Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast.
- India plans to deploy a two-tiered ballistic missile defence system to protect important cities and vital installations from enemy attack.
- DRDO conducted 11 interceptor missile tests, 8 of them in endo-atmosphere & 3 in exo-atmosphere.

Think

- India's Missile Defence Programs
- Types of Missiles

India, Malaysia vow to strengthen defence ties

- Both Countries have agreed to strengthen their defence cooperation, including improved maritime security and disaster response in the region.
- Have agreed to upgrade the joint exercises & set up the SU-30 forum.

Think

- Su-30 forum (Russian Sukhoi jet) - a joint platform that will exchange information on training, maintenance and technical support of the fleet.
- India's other joint defence exercises.
- [Article](#)

Bad debts of banks at unacceptable level

- NPA's of the Indian banks are at unacceptable level.
- Sectors which are undergoing maximum stress are iron & steel, textiles, mining (including coal), aviation, power, sugar, aluminium & construction.
- NPA's in education sector has been rising sharply

Think

- Difference between Non Performing Assets & Stressed Assets.
- Reasons for occurrence of NPA.
- Problems caused by NPA.
- How Bankruptcy bill will help, if passed?

India, Singapore enter into strategic tie-up

- India & Singapore have signed a joint declaration which envisages Strategic Partnership which aims at broadening engagement in existing areas of cooperation.
- It aims to catalyze political, defence and security cooperation to economic, cultural and people-to-people contacts.
- Agreements were signed for collaboration in urban planning and wastewater management and to extend long-term loan of Indian artefacts to the Asian Civilisations Museum of Singapore and for cooperation in the fields of arts, museums, archives and monuments.

Think

- India-Singapore Relations

Smoke at Panchachuli peak, poachers on the hunt for musk deer

- Poachers set fire to the forests here in a bid to trap and capture **musk deer**, the state animal of Uttarakhand
- The deer is on brink of extinction & **listed as endangered** by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.
- The **white-bellied musk deer is a high-altitude animal**, which roams in dense Himalayan forests at over 3,500 metres above sea level.
- At the onset of winter, the deer descends in search of food, when their habitat is covered in snow.
- The male species secretes a waxy substance in the abdomen called musk, which the deer use to separate territories by smell and attract females.
- This musk is used in perfumes and medicines

Think

- Other endangered species in India.

Government mulls Europe-style water law to save resource

- Government plans to come out with a new draft National Water Framework Bill - on the lines of the one in effect in Europe - and improvising on the existing draft law of 2013.
- The new draft will keep the 'right to water' clause as a key provision of the legislation.
- Water is primarily being managed by the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Environment Protection Act, 1986
- Water is a state subject.
- To improve upon the existing draft bill, the ministry examine the European Water Framework Directive (WFD) which governs water resources in 28 member countries of the EU.

Think

- [India's water crisis – Causes & Cures](#)

WII initiates study on Climate Change in Bhagirathi region

- The National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE) is one of the eight National missions which form the core of India's first National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).
- It was launched in 2008 & is headed by Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change.

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- Wildlife Institute of India (WII) is a taskforce of NMSHE on micro flora & fauna.
- It will assess & monitor climate change effects on wildlife species and ecosystems for developing adaptation and mitigation strategies in the Indian Himalayan Region (IHR).
- After Bhagarathi in Uttarakhand, the same team will study the Teesta region of Sikkim of Eastern Himalaya.

Think

- The nature of ecosystem under study?
- NAPCC

Roll out of BS-VI fuel compliant four-wheelers to be advanced by two years

- The road transport ministry has decided to advance the roll-out of BS-VI fuel compliant four-wheelers by two years from 2023 to 2021.
- India had enforced Bharat stage III norms across the country since October 2010. In 13 major cities, Bharat stage IV emission norms were put in place since April 2010.
- Currently, BS-IV petrol and diesel are being supplied in whole of Northern India covering Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi and parts of Rajasthan and western UP.
- Shifting directly from BS-IV to BS-VI, skipping BS-V.

Think

- Pressure on auto-firms & oil-companies due to skipping of BS-V stage.
- Features of Bharat Norms
- [Article](#)

5 vulture species spotted at 1 spot in Bhavnagar

- White-rumped vulture, Indian vulture, Himalayan Griffon vulture, Eurasian Griffon vulture and Egyptian vulture were spotted at one place.
- The white-rumped vulture and Indian vulture, are critically endangered species.
- The Himalayan Griffon is a winter visitor to Saurashtra.
- Veterinary use of the non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) diclofenac is a major cause of the drastic vulture decline.

Gujarat's controversial labour laws bill gets Presidential assent

- President Pranab Mukherjee has given assent to the contentious Labour Laws Bill of Gujarat, which has provisions to ban strikes in public utility services for up to one year.
- Not all State laws are sent to the President for assent.

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- It is done only when a law runs counter to the Central government laws, deviates from the national policies and its legal and constitutional validity can be challenged.
- Opposition called the bill – anti-labour & pro-private industries.

Think

- President's Veto Power (Absolute, Suspensive, Pocket)

China hosts first BRICS media summit

- An alternative media platform for emerging economies (BRICS)
- The initiative follows the formation of the New Development Bank, which is playing its part in evolving a new global financial architecture sensitised to meet the needs of the developing world.
- Xinhua News agency is the initiator of the project.
- The Hindu group of publications, the Brazil Communication Company, Russia Today International News Agency, and South Africa's Independent Media are collaborators.

Think

- What is BRICS?
- Potential powerful economic bloc like EU?
- What makes BRICS powerful?

Modi launches International Solar Alliance

- The alliance (ISA) was launched in Paris at the CoP21 Climate Conference.
- This international alliance brings together developing and developed countries to expand energy access, accelerate solar power deployment, and stimulate economic development.
- The alliance will function from the National Institute of Solar Energy in India, Gurgaon.
- It seeks to share collective ambitions to reduce the cost of finance and technology that is needed to deploy solar power widely.
- The tasks the ISA would pursue are, cooperation in training, building institutions, regulatory issues, common standards, and investment including joint ventures.

Think

- How will this alliance help to cut emissions (INDCs) & to what extent?

China's Renminbi will be the fifth currency in the IMF's Reserve Currency basket

- From October 1, 2016, the RMB will join the US Dollar, Euro, UK Pound and Japanese Yen in the SDR basket.

SDR

- It was created by IMF in 1969 to boost global liquidity as the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates unravelled.
- SDR is neither a currency nor a claim on the IMF.
- It gives IMF member countries the right to obtain any of the currencies in the basket to meet balance-of-payments needs.
- SDR interest rate is determined as a weighted average of the interest rates on short-term financial instruments in the markets of the currencies in the SDR basket.

HOW WILL WEIGHTS CHANGE AFTER INCLUSION OF THE RENMINBI?

	WEIGHTAGE	
	2010	2016
US Dollar	41.9	41.73
Euro	37.4	30.93
Chinese Renminbi	N.A.	10.92
Japanese Yen	9.4	8.33
British Pound	11.3	8.09
Total	100	100

Think

- How will it impact other currencies in the basket?
- Will it impact India & other countries?

India re-elected as member of International Maritime Council

- India was elected to the IMO council under Category 'B' at the 29th session of the Assembly of the IMO held recently in London.
- India ranks amongst the top twenty ship owning countries of the world in terms of Gross Tonnage as well as Deadweight.
- IMO Council consists of 40 member countries who are elected by the IMO Assembly.

Think

- [Article](#)

India successfully test-fires Prithvi II missile

- The missile test was carried out from a mobile launcher from launch complex of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur.
- Prithvi-II is indigenously developed nuclear capable surface-to-surface missile with a strike range of 350 km.
- It is the first missile to be developed by DRDO under India's prestigious IGMDP (Integrated Guided Missile Development Program).

BetiBachao scheme: Govt to bring in women volunteers

- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme will involve women community workers in a bid to improve the child sex ratio in the 100 gender-critical districts of the country.
- This decision is driven by the success of a pilot project in Pali district of Rajasthan in 2011, where women volunteers proved instrumental in improving child-sex ratio, reducing school dropouts etc.

Objectives of the scheme:

- Prevent gender biased sex selective elimination
- Ensure survival & protection of the girl child
- Ensure education of the girl child

Think

- Why was Pali chosen for the pilot project?
- Project implementation at (National, State, block, village level).
- Other welfare schemes for girls. (Sukanya Samridhi Account etc).
- Use this as Value Add information for subjective answers on Women Issues (Mains)

Sign language gets status of separate language in MP

- Sign language will be recognised as a separate language in Madhya Pradesh.
- 10 industrial training institutes will be set up at divisional headquarters to give vocational training to the hearing and speech impaired in the next one year.
- The state will bear the fee of hearing and speech impaired students in professional courses.
- MP first state in the country to do so in sign language.

UN appreciates fisheries project in Sindhudurg

- UN has tweeted about the success story of a fisheries project undertaken in Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra.
- A new square mesh net was introduced in the district to ensure juvenile fish did not get stuck in the net.
- Earlier diamond shaped nets were used.
- The project has led to better income for the fisherman & the saving of diesel used by the fishing boats by decreasing the dragging.
- This project is a partnership between the Maharashtra govt& UNDP.
- The partnership is supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Think

- Location of Sindhudurg, Konkan region of Maharashtra.
- Biodiversity of Sindhudurg.
- What is GEF?
- Read these articles
- [Article](#)
- [Article](#)

Trivia

- First tourism district of the state.
- 2nd district in India to achieve 100% literacy.