

## Current Affairs Today – 15.05.2020

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### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: DAYS**

#### **International Day of Families**



- **The International Day of Families** is observed on the **15th of May every year**.
- The day aims to call attention to everything about and which revolves around families, society's basic unit.
- The day is celebrated since 1995 to celebrated the importance of families, people, societies and cultures around the world.
- This year the theme is **“Families in Development: Copenhagen & Beijing + 25”**.

#### **National Endangered Species Day**



- **National Endangered Species Day** is observed every year on the **third Friday of May**.
- National Endangered Species Day gives us the opportunity to increase our knowledge about wildlife and endangered species and take key steps to save them.
- To raise awareness about the importance of wildlife conservation and restoration efforts for all imperilled species. Endangered Species Act 1973, focuses on the protection of wildlife and threatened species.

### **CURRENT AFFAIRS: NATIONAL**

#### **Centre Sets up New Body to Promote Rice Exports**



- The agriculture ministry has come up with many **new initiatives** and step to cope up with the post-COVID-19 crisis. In this series, the center has set up a new body – **Rice Export Promotion Forum (REPF)** to give further impetus to rice exports, under the aegis of the **Agricultural and Processed Foods Export Promotion Development Authority (Apeda)**.

- **India**, the **second largest producer of rice in the world** and the only agri-commodity from India that maintained its competitiveness in the overseas market.
- As per reports, rice, both basmati and non-basmati variety, is the largest commodity in India's agri export basket which shipments stood at **\$7.77 billion in 2018-19**, with **basmati** exports at **\$4.72 billion** and **non-basmati** at **\$3.05 billion**. However, the final export figures for 2019-20 are yet to be released by Apeda.
- The new body will comprise representatives from the rice industry, exporters, and officials from Apeda, Commerce Ministry, Agriculture Ministry and Directors of Agriculture from major rice-producing states such as West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.
- India's production has been going up steadily over the past several years. From around **96 million tonnes in 2010-11**, rice production is seen touching a record **117.47 million tonnes in 2019-20**, per Second Advance Estimates.

#### About Agriculture Ministry

- Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Minister of Rural Development- Narendra Singh Tomar
- Constituency- Morena, Madhya Pradesh.

#### ICMR to participate in Global Solidarity Trial by WHO for COVID-19 treatment



- **Indian Council for Medical Research**, ICMR has fast tracked the roll out of **Global Solidarity Trial** launched by the **World Health Organization**, WHO to help in finding an effective treatment for Covid-19.
- Secretary, Department of Health Research and Director General of ICMR, Professor Dr. Balram Bhargava stated that the ICMR-National AIDS Research Institute, NARI is the national coordination site for the trial in India. He stated, four potential anti-viral agents, **Remdesivir, Chloroquine-Hydroxychloroquine, Lopinavir-Ritonavir** and **Lopinavir-Ritonavir with interferon** are to be evaluated in the trail.
- Global Solidarity Trial is an international clinical trial to compare four treatment options to assess their effectiveness against Covid-19. The trial aims to discover whether any of the drugs slow down the disease progression and improve survival rate.
- World Health Organization's representative in India, Dr. Henk Bakedam stated that WHO is extending the required support to conduct the trial as India plays a critical role in research as well as in manufacturing.
- Senior Scientist in National AIDS Research Institute, Dr. Sheela stated the required regulatory and ethical approvals have already been obtained and nine clinical trial sites have started to recruit patients in the trial.

#### About Indian Council for Medical Research:

- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Secretary & Director General: Dr. Balram Bhargava

#### About World Health Organization:

- Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland
- Director-General : Tedros Adhanom
- Deputy Director-General : Soumya Swaminathan

## CURRENT AFFAIRS: INTERNATIONAL

### International tourism may decline by 60-80% in 2020



- **International tourism** could shrink by **60-80 per cent** in **2020** due to the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in the **revenue loss of \$910 billion** to \$1.2 trillion and placing millions of livelihoods at risk, according to the **World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**.
- According to the **UN's specialised agency**, the pandemic has already caused a **22 per cent fall** in international tourist arrivals during the first quarter of 2020.
- This places millions of livelihoods at risk and threatens to roll back progress made in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- The world is facing an unprecedented health and economic crisis. Tourism has been hit hard, with millions of jobs at risk in one of the most labour-intensive sectors of the economy.

#### About UNWTO

- HQ- Madrid, Spain.
- UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili

### Deforestation rate globally declined between 2015 and 2020



- The rate of forest loss in **2015-2020** declined to an estimated **10 million hectares (mha)**, down from **12 million hectares (mha)** in **2010-2015**, according to the Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020 (FRA 2020).
- The FRA 2020 was released by the **United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**.
- The world lost 178 mha of forest since 1990, an area the size of Libya.
- However, the rate of net forest loss decreased substantially during 1990–2020 due to a reduction in deforestation in some countries, plus increases in forest area in others through afforestation and the natural expansion of forests.
- The rate of net forest loss declined from 7.8 mha per year in the decade 1990–2000 to 5.2 mha per year in 2000–2010 and 4.7 mha per year in 2010–2020.
- Among the world's regions, **Africa** had the **largest annual rate** of net forest loss in 2010–2020, at 3.9 mha, followed by South America, at 2.6 mha.
- On the other hand, **Asia** had the **highest net gain of forest area** in 2010–2020, followed by Oceania and Europe.
- However, both Europe and Asia recorded substantially lower rates of net gain in 2010–2020 than in 2000–2010.
- Oceania experienced net losses of forest area in the decades 1990–2000 and 2000–2010.

- The world's total forest area was 4.06 billion hectares (bha), which was 31 per cent of the total land area. This area was equivalent to 0.52 ha per person.
- 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 area of naturally regenerating forests worldwide decreased since 1990, but the area of planted forests increased by 123 mha. The rate of increase in the area of planted forest slowed in the last ten years.
- Plantation forests cover about 131 mha — three per cent of the global forest area and 45 per cent of the total area of planted forests.
- The **highest per cent of plantation forests** were in **South America** while the lowest were in Europe.
- There are an estimated 726 mha of forests in protected areas worldwide. South America had the highest share of forests in protected areas, at 31 per cent.
- The area of forest in protected areas globally increased by 191 mha since 1990, but the rate of annual increase slowed in 2010–2020.

#### About UNFAO

- HQ- Rome, Italy.
- Head- Qu Dongyu

### CURRENT AFFAIRS: STATES

#### West Bengal govt launches scheme to utilise 50,000-acre barren land in six districts



- The **West Bengal government** launched a scheme to utilise **50,000 acres of barren land** in six districts for income-generating activities like **horticulture and pisciculture**.
- Government had been working on the '**Matir Smristi**' scheme, which will benefit around 2.5 lakh people in rural Bengal.
- There is at least 50,000 acre of barren land in Bankura, Birbhum, Purulia, Jhargram, West Burdwan and West Midnapore districts, which cannot produce anything naturally nor can the farmers cultivate on the strip.
- Work has been initiated in 6,500 acre of land at the micro level. This is an environment-friendly scheme.
- Farmers will be involved in constituting cooperative societies, which will get financial support from the cooperative banks.
- Preference would be given to locals for carrying out the project in which "lakhs of women self-help groups" will be involved.
- The state government will provide ad hoc bonus of **Rs 4,200 for 2020-21**, an increase of **Rs 200** over the last year's figure, the salary ceiling for eligibility has been increased from Rs 30,000 to Rs 34,250.
- The festival advance is raised from **Rs 8,000 in 2019-20** to **Rs 10,000** and the salary ceiling for eligibility **from Rs 34,250 to Rs 41,100**.

- This increase in **bonus and festival advance**, and also the eligibility will benefit over 10 lakh government employees and employees of panchayat and municipal bodies, university and school staff. The total financial implication will be about **Rs 400 crore**.

### About West Bengal

- Capital– Kolkata.
- CM- Mamta Banerjee
- Governor– Jagdeep Dhankhar.

### Gujarat CM announces Aatmanirbhar Gujarat Sahay Yojana



- In **Gujarat**, Chief Minister **Vijay Rupani** announced **Aatmanirbhar Gujarat Sahay Yojana**. The scheme for small shop keepers and self-employed hit by the lockdown.
- Under the scheme, **one lakh rupees collateral free loan** will be given at **two per cent** for the beneficiaries for three years.
- CM Vijay Rupani stated the beneficiaries will have to make only one application to avail the loan from state and District Cooperative Banks and credit agencies.
- They won't have to pay any installment during the moratorium period for the first six months. He stated the State Government will pay the rest six per cent interest to the banks. There won't be any processing fees for the loans. Over 10 lakh self-employed people, small traders shop keepers will be benefited from the scheme.
- Meanwhile, the CM has also requested the centre to initiate the procurement of cotton through CCI at the minimum support price.

### About Gujarat :

- Capital: Gandhinagar
- Chief minister: Vijay Rupani
- Governor: Acharya Devvrat

## CURRENT AFFAIRS: BANKING AND FINANCE

### Federal Bank, MoneyGram tie up for direct-to-bank account credit service



- **MoneyGram Payment Systems** has tied up with **Federal Bank** to offer a cost-effective **direct-to-bank account** credit option for customers in India.
- Through this partnership, millions will be able to receive deposits directly in their bank accounts without leaving the confines of their homes, which is imperative in the current situation.



- Private sector Federal Bank has an over **15 per cent** share of the country's remittance market and expects that the tie-up with MoneyGram will give the business a further boost.
- According to the World Bank, **India** remains the **world's top recipient of remittances** and is estimated to have received **more than \$82 billion** in remittances in 2019.

#### About Federal Bank

- MD & CEO- Shyam Srinivasan
- Headquarters- Aluva, Kerala
- Tagline- Your Perfect Banking Partner

#### About MoneyGram Payment System

- Chairman & CEO- Alex Holmes

### World Bank gives \$1 billion as social security fund for India



- The **World Bank** has approved **one billion dollar package** for India's urban poor and migrant workers during the coronavirus crisis.
- It will leverage the **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana** to help protect the poor and vulnerable, stated World Bank's Country Director for India Junaid Ahmad.
- The social protection package is in addition to the previous package of one billion dollars allocated to India for COVID-19 emergency response and health systems.
- Ahmad stated the new funding will ensure that migrants are supported in various states. It will ensure portability so that benefits move with the workers.
- It will provide a safety net to workers in the informal sector. Nearly 90 per cent of workers are in the unorganised sector, he stated.
- The funding will underpin support to state governments who will use local administrations, self-help groups and ASHA workers to ensure that safety net is delivered to these citizens.

#### About world bank:

- Headquarters: Washington, D.C., United States
- President: David Malpass
- MD and CFO : Anshula Kant

### CURRENT AFFAIRS: BUSINESS AND ECONOMY

### IBM ties up with Intellect Design Arena to launch cloud services for banks, financial institutions



- Banking and insurance products company **Intellect Design Arena Ltd** and **IBM** have collaborated to launch the Intellect **iTurmeric FinCloud** on IBM's public cloud.
- iTurmeric FinCloud — a Cloud-ready, API-first, microservices-based platform — enables banks and financial institutions to progressively modernise while ensuring business continuity without the risk of rip and replacement, He declined to give any numbers citing the quiet period before the financial results are announced.
- IBM is one of the first independent software vendors and Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) providers to on-board Intellect's offerings to the IBM financial services-ready public cloud, says a joint press release.
- By offering iTurmeric FinCloud on IBM financial services-ready public cloud, Intellect extends its presence in advanced and emerging economies by offering financial institutions innovative cloud-based solutions to accelerate their digital transformation journey, added Jain.

#### About IBM:

- CEO: Arvind Krishna
- Headquarters: New York, United States

### Global economy could witness losses worth up to USD 8.8 trillion due to COVID-19: ADB



- The **global economy** is expected to suffer **USD 5.8-8.8 trillion** in losses due to the coronavirus pandemic, Asian Development Bank (ADB) stated.
- Of this, the impact on south Asian gross domestic product (GDP) will be to the tune of USD 142-218 billion.
- The global economy could suffer between USD 5.8 trillion and USD 8.8 trillion in losses - equivalent to **6.4 per cent to 9.7 per cent of the global GDP** - as a result of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, ADB stated in a new report subsequent to its economic outlook released in early April.
- The GDP in south Asia will also be lower by **3.9-6.0 per cent**, mainly reflecting the tight restrictions in place in countries like Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, ADB stated in its updated assessment of the Potential Economic Impact of COVID-19.
- The Manila-headquartered multi-lateral funding agency stated that the economic losses in Asia and the Pacific region could range from USD 1.7 trillion under a short containment scenario of three months to USD 2.5 trillion under a long containment scenario of 6 months, with the region accounting for about 30 per cent of the overall decline in global output.
- The People's Republic of China (PRC) could suffer losses between USD 1.1 trillion and USD 1.6 trillion.
- In the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2020 published on April 3, the agency had estimated COVID-19's global cost to range from USD 2 trillion to USD 4.1 trillion.

#### About Asian Development Bank:

- Headquarters: Mandaluyong, Philippines
- President: Masatsugu Asakawa

### CURRENT AFFAIRS: APPOINTMENTS AND RESIGNATION

#### V Vidyavathi Appointed as Director General of Archaeological Survey of India

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- **The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** got a new **Director General** with the appointment of IAS officer **V. Vidyavathi**.
- She will be serving in the rank of Additional Secretary to the Government of India.

#### Recent News

- Director General of **Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC)** – **Rajendra Kumar**
- Director General of **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** – **Shiv Das Meena** of the Tamil Nadu cadre.

### CURRENT AFFAIRS: AWARDS AND HONOURS

**Lieutenant Commander Akshay Kumar was awarded the Vice Admiral G.M. Hiranandani Memorial Rolling Trophy for the year 2020**



- Lieutenant Commander **Akshay Kumar** of the Anti-Submarine Warfare School of the Southern Naval Command in Kochi was awarded the **Vice Admiral G.M. Hiranandani Memorial Rolling Trophy for the year 2020** by **Vice Admiral A.K. Chawla**, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the SNC, at a ceremony held at the Maritime Warfare Centre (Kochi).
- This trophy was instituted in 2013 for the officer performing best in tactics during the year-long warfare specialisation course.
- Lieutenant Commander **Anshu Bhau** and Lieutenant Commander **Kuldeep Tyagi** were awarded book prizes for standing second and third.
- Book prizes were also awarded to Lieutenant Commander **Abhinav Suri**, Lieutenant Commander **Kuldeep Yadav** and Lieutenant Commander **Sangram Krshirsagar** for their performance during the Combined Phase of the Warfare Specialisation Course conducted at Maritime Warfare Centre (Kochi). In addition, Lieutenant Commander **Mohit Kumar** was commended for his performance in the **oral board**.

#### About Indian Navy

- Chief of the Naval Staff -Admiral Karambir Singh.
- Vice Chief of the Naval Staff– Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar Chawla.

### CURRENT AFFAIRS: SUMMITS AND CONFERENCE

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## Dr Harsh Vardhan participates in 32nd Commonwealth Health Ministers' meeting through video conference



- Health Minister **Dr Harsh Vardhan** participated in the **32nd Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meeting** through Video conference. He highlighted the timely, graded and pro-active measures taken by India towards COVID-19 management.
- Dr Harsh Vardhan stated, India has been the first country to urge consolidated global action to fight the challenge of COVID-19. India took all necessary and timely steps including surveillance at points of entry, evacuation of our nationals abroad, surveillance in community through disease surveillance network and community involvement as part of its management efforts.
- He stated, government has announced an economic package of more than 265 billion US Dollars to support economic recovery as well to support vulnerable segments of population.
- Dr Harsh Vardhan stated, India has provided essential medicines such as Hydroxychloroquine to almost 100 needy countries, extending solidarity and support during this time of crisis. He stated, it is important to work on the causes of the pandemic and discover drugs and vaccine to control transmission and prevent recurrence.

## Piyush Goyal participates in virtual session of G20 trade ministers



- Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal attended a video conference meeting of commerce ministers of **G-20 countries**.
- The trade and investment ministers of the G20 countries participated in the extraordinary video conference. The meeting was called to discuss ways to minimise disruption to trade and global supply chains which have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- On March 30, G20 trade ministers convened for the first video conference dedicated to COVID-19. They pledged efforts to maintain supply chains unimpeded during the pandemic.
- Trade ministers from the G20 major economies had agreed to take immediate measures for facilitating trade in essential goods, besides incentivising additional production of equipment and drugs to battle the coronavirus crisis.

### About G20 countries :

- The G20 (or Group of Twenty) is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union (EU).

- Founded in 1999 with the aim to discuss policy pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability, the G20 has expanded its agenda since 2008 and heads of government or heads of state, as well as finance ministers and foreign ministers, have periodically conferred at summits ever since.
- Chairman: King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud (2020)

## CURRENT AFFAIRS: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

### Researchers at CSIRO develops 'heat resistant' corals to fight bleaching



- The team included researchers from **CSIRO, Australia's national science agency**, the **Australian Institute of Marine Science (AIMS)** and the **University of Melbourne** has successfully developed a potential agent that could help coral reefs increase their heat tolerance, as per the report by Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO).
- **Coral reefs** came under threat and started vanishing due to repercussions climate change and global warming.
- Climate change has reduced coral cover, and surviving corals are under increasing pressure as water temperatures rise and the frequency and severity of coral bleaching events increase.
- Buerger explained that the team made the coral more tolerant of temperature-induced bleaching by bolstering the heat tolerance of its microalgal symbionts—tiny cells of algae that live inside the coral tissue.
- The research team made the microalgae heat resistant by isolating it and culturing using a technique called “directed evolution” in the specialist symbiont lab at AIMS. Then the cultured microalgae were exposed to warmer temperatures over a period of four years to see if they survive hotter conditions.
- Once the microalgae were reintroduced into coral larvae, the newly established coral-algal symbiosis was more heat tolerant compared to the original one.

## CURRENT AFFAIRS: OBITUARY

### PK actor Sai Gundewar passes away



- **Bollywood actor Sai Gundewar**, who has worked in a couple of movies including Aamir Khan-starrer PK, Saif Ali Khan's Bazaar and Rock On, **passed away** after a prolonged battle with brain cancer.
- Sai was seen in many TV shows before the popular film PK. In 2010, he participated in MTV Splitsvilla. Then he was seen in the Indian version of American reality show, Survivor in 2011. He also starred in Salman Khan and Katrina Kaif's film Yuvvraaj. Also, he was also a co-founder of Foodizm - a healthy meal delivery service in Mumbai.

### National Professor Anisuzzaman passes away in Dhaka

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- Noted literary **personality**, **educationist** and **national Professor Anisuzzaman** passed away in Dhaka after a brief illness. He was 83.
- He was a reputed scholar and leading intellectual of Bangladesh who made great contribution in the field of Bangla language and literature. Prof. Anisuzzaman was a liberation war fighter. He also participated in the language movement against Pakistan. The multi faceted Prof. Anisuzzaman was the President of Bangla Academy since 2012.
- In his illustrious life as educationist, academic, author and social activist Prof. Anisuzzamn received many awards including the Ekushey Padak in 1985. Rabindra Bharti conferred an honorary D.Lit on him in 2005. He was awarded Padma Bhushan by the government of India in 2014.

### Former Astros legend Bob Watson passes away



- Former **American baseball player** and Houston **Astros legend Bob Watson** passed away in Houston at the age of 74.
- After being signed by Houston as a 19-year-old free agent in 1965, Watson made his Major League debut with Astros in 1966 and went on to become one of the finest players in franchise history.
- During his long career in Houston, which would span parts of 14 seasons (1966-79), Watson, nicknamed The Bull, was a two-time All-Star (1973, 1975), hitting over .300 four times and reaching 100 RBI in a season twice while hitting in the middle of the Astros lineup in the pitcher-friendly Astrodome.

### DAILY CA 14<sup>th</sup> MAY

- Govt announces collateral free loan worth **3 lakh crore rupees** benefiting 45 lakh MSMEs
- **25%** cut in TDS and TCS rates till 31st of March 2021; Last date for filing of Income Tax return extended till Nov 30
- Tourism Ministry organizes 18th webinar titled '**Odisha-India's Best kept secret**'
- ICCR Releases New Song '**United We Fight**' To Strengthen India's Fight Against COVID-19
- Israel Names Street After **Rabindranath Tagore** On The Poet's 159th Birthday
- CDC of the US commits **\$3.6 million** to India
- Finance Minister announces liquidity support for stressed NBFCs
- PSBs disburse loans worth **Rs 5.95 lakh crore** in last 2 months
- India's growth rate projected to slow to **1.2%** in 2020: UN report

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- **Uttarakhand** CM launches portal **HOPE** to help unemployed youth get jobs
- **Madhya Pradesh** government to pay for education of poor children from Class 1 to PhD
- **Haryana** gears up to provide tap connections to all rural households by December, 2022
- TVS Group, Sundaram Med, **IIT-M** develop low-cost, automated respiratory assists
- GI tag for Jharkhand's **Sohrai Khovar** painting, Telangana's Telia Rumal
- NRAI nominates **Anjum Moudgil** for Khel Ratna, **Jaspal** for Dronacharya Award
- India to participate in SCO foreign ministers' **virtual meet on coronavirus**
- India up at **74th place** on WEF's global energy transition index
- Child, maternal malnutrition leads to **68%** of under-five deaths: Lancet study

## DAILY CA 15<sup>th</sup> MAY

- **International Day of Families- 15<sup>th</sup> may**
- National Endangered Species Day – Third Friday of may
- Centre Sets up **New Body** to Promote Rice Exports
- ICMR to participate in **Global Solidarity Trial** by WHO for COVID-19 treatment
- International tourism may decline by **60-80%** in 2020
- Deforestation rate globally declined between 2015 and 2020
- West Bengal govt launches scheme to utilise **50,000-acre barren** land in six districts
- Gujarat CM announces **Aatmanirbhar Gujarat Sahay Yojana**
- **Federal Bank, MoneyGram** tie up for direct-to-bank account credit service
- World Bank gives **\$1 billion** as social security fund for India
- **IBM** ties up with **Intellect Design Arena** to launch cloud services for banks, financial institutions
- Global economy could witness losses worth up to USD 8.8 trillion due to COVID-19: ADB
- **V Vidyavathi** Appointed as **Director General of Archaeological Survey of India**
- Lieutenant Commander **Akshay Kumar** was awarded the Vice Admiral **G.M. Hiranandani Memorial Rolling Trophy** for the year 2020
- **Dr Harsh Vardhan** participates in **32nd Commonwealth Health Ministers' meeting** through video conference
- **Piyush Goyal** participates in virtual session of **G20 trade ministers**

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