

KSG:NEWSPAPER CRUX

25TH JULY, 2021

NEWSPAPER HIGHLIGHT

- A study of over 16,000 gut microbiome profiles collected over a period of 14 years from baboons in Kenya's Amboseli National Park found that many of the gut bacteria are heritable. This heritability is not a constant but changes over time, seasons and with age. While genes played a significantly smaller role than the environment, the study, published in Science, also found that several traits that were heritable in baboons were also heritable in humans.
- It is a puzzle how newborn mammals can make visual sense of the world around them, even though they have not seen anything earlier. An article published in Science draws attention to waves of dreamlike activity that emanate from the neonatal retina before they open their eyes. This activity disappears soon after birth. The waves mimic the activity that would occur if the animal was moving forward in the environment.
- Scientists for the first time have spotted a moon forming region around a planet beyond our solar system a Jupiter like world surrounded by a disc of gas and dust massive enough that it could spawn three moons the size of the one orbiting Earth.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 15% of the world's population, or about 785 million people, are mentally disabled - with dementia, memory loss, anxiety and stress related disorders, Alzheimer's disease and similar disabilities. In India, a recent study reported.
- There is no immediate threat of the Taliban moving towards Kashmir, but there is apprehension that the Afghan situation could embolden Pakistan based terror groups operating in Kashmir, a defence official said.
- India lodged a strong protest over drone activities by Pakistan authorities in Jammu areas, during a sector commander level meeting between the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Pakistan Rangers.

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

1. Amid the Pegasus Controversy, it was reported that the Union Government's expenditure on the National Security Council secretariat (NSCS) increased ten fold in 2017-18 to Rs 333 crores from Rs 33 cr. in 2016-17.
2. NSC of India is a three-tiered organization that oversees political, economic, energy and security issues of strategic concern. The National Security Advisor (NSA) presides over the NSC, and is also the primary advisor to the prime minister. The current National Security Advisor is Ajit Doval.
3. It was formed in 1999, where all aspects of national security are deliberated upon. NSC comprises the three tier structure- Strategic Policy Group (SPG), the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and the National Security Council Secretariat.

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

1. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare highlighted various measures to address the challenges posed by Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in the country.
2. Antimicrobial resistance is the resistance acquired by any microorganism (bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasite, etc.) against antimicrobial drugs (such as antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals, antimalarials, and anthelmintics) that are used to treat infections.
3. Measures Taken to Address AMR: National Programme on AMR containment: Launched in 2012. AMR Surveillance Network has been strengthened by establishing labs in State Medical College. National Action Plan on AMR: It focuses on One Health approach and was launched in April 2017 with the aim of involving various stakeholder ministries/departments.
4. Other measures are-AMR Surveillance and Research Network (AMRSN) and AMR Research & International Collaboration.

SECRECY OF VOTES

1. The Supreme Court of India held that in any election, be it to Parliament or State legislature, the maintenance of secrecy of voting is "a must". It reiterated its 2013 judgement in the People's Union for Civil Liberties case.
2. Highlights of the Latest Judgement: Part of Fundamental Right: The secrecy is a part of the fundamental right of freedom of expression. The confidentiality of choice strengthened democracy.
3. Part of Basic Structure: Democracy and free elections were a part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution.
4. The two main key components that came out of the Supreme Court judgment are: **Right to vote also includes a right not to vote i.e right to reject. Right to secrecy is an integral part of a free and fair election.**

2021 INVESTMENT CLIMATE IN INDIA

1. The US State Department released a report titled '2021 Investment Climate Statements: India'. The report lauded the structural economic reforms carried by the Government of India, in the wake of economic slowdown and Covid-19 pandemic.
2. However, the report asserts that India remains a challenging place to do business. Earlier, the UK India Business Council (UKIBC) emphasized that some of the reforms under the Atmanirbhar Bharat programme could have negative consequences for the UK and all multinational companies.
3. Recent Economic Reforms: Privatization: In February 2021, the Government of India announced plans to raise \$2.4 billion through an ambitious privatization program that would dramatically reduce the government's role in the economy.