



## CURRENT AFFAIRS

### MyBookMyFriendcampaign launched by HRD Minister on World Book Day

The **World Book Day** the Union Minister of Human Resource and Development, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched **#MyBookMyFriendcampaign** in his social media along with the video message saying that when you open a book you open a new world and he said that books are the best friends of a person which inspires and provides a way of thinking and guide in difficult times.

World Book Day is celebrated in the lock down and he asked the students to read books of their interest in addition to the subject books and share about the book they are reading with him in the social media using #MyBookMyFriend.

Union Ministers on his social media to join the #MyBookMyFriend campaign along with prominent personalities from various parts of the nation to join this campaign to inspire all the people. He mentioned that the campaign will run for the next seven days for the people to join the campaign.

### UNCTAD predicted \$3.4 trillion debt for developing countries in 2020-2021; Global Debt Deal required

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) report titled "**From the Great Lockdown to the Great Meltdown: Developing Country Debt in the Time of Covid-19**", developing countries' repayments on their public external debt will increase between \$2.6 trillion and \$3.4 trillion in 2020 and 2021 amid COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Automatic temporary standstills:** Under this, facilitation of effective response is required to tackle Covid-19 through increased health and social expenditure for all crisis-stricken developing countries. It also calls for post-crisis economic recovery along sustainable growth, fiscal and trade balance trajectories.
- **Debt relief and programmes restructuring:** To reassess longer-term developing country debt sustainability on a case-by-case basis. Also, measures to write-off debts need to be more systematic, transparent and coordinated. Already Debt repayment worth **\$215 million** owed by 25 poorest developing nations was cancelled by the International

Monetary Fund (IMF) in April 2020. Leaders of G20, too, announced suspension of debt repayments from 73 poor countries for the period from May to December 2020.

- **Safeguarding future dealing:** Both developing country debtors as well as developed nations' creditors should make it a priority to safeguard and promote future mutual dealing for timely implementation of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development goals (SDGs).

## Largest hole in ozone layer is closed now

Scientists from **Copernicus European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF)** reported that the largest hole in the Ozone layer spreading over 1 million square kilometers above the Arctic has closed due to unusual atmospheric conditions.

- The largest hole in the Ozone layer spreading over 1 million square kilometres above the Arctic has closed due to unusual atmospheric conditions.
- The hole was first identified by scientists in March earlier this year. Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) and Copernicus Atmospheric Monitoring Services (CAMS) by the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) confirmed the development.
- The unprecedented 2020 northern hemisphere OzoneHole has come to an end. The #PolarVortex split, allowing ozone-rich air into the Arctic, closely matching last week's forecast from the CopernicusAtmosphere Monitoring Service."
- But, the closing of the hole has nothing to do too with the reduction in levels of pollution amid lockdown. It's because of the polar vortex, high-altitude currents that are responsible for bringing cold air to polar regions.
- Such holes in the ozone layer are quite common above the Antarctic at the South Pole especially during July to September but, the ozone layer hole above the Arctic at this time was unusual.
- The ozone layer works as a protective shield as it prevents Sun's ultraviolet rays-- which can cause skin cancer-- from entering Earth. The hole above the arctic circle could have posed severe damage to humans if it has increased to populated areas.

## CSIR begins anti-leprosy drug trial

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has started the trial of **Mycobacterium w (Mw)**, an anti-leprosy drug. The information was passed by the Director of CSIR Shekhar Mande.

M. w is an attenuated strain of Mycobacterium w, a non-pathogenic, rapidly growing, atypical mycobacterium, with non-specific immunopotentiating properties. In addition to sharing a

number of common B and T cell determinants with *Mycobacterium leprae* and *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, Mw also shares an immunogenic determinant with prostate-specific antigen (PSA). In vivo and in vitro studies have shown that heat-killed Mw can induce significant T-cell responses. It may induce host T-cell responses against tumor cells expressing PSA.

CSIR has been granted approval to conduct the trial from the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI). The trial has begun.

CSIR is also trying phytopharmaceuticals and approaching the Drug Controller General of India for approval. Phytopharmaceuticals are some extracts from plants.

