



Current Affairs [PDF] - August 1-15, 2019

charu bhardwaj | bhardwajs.charu@gmail.com |

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News Headlines: August 1-15, 2019

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 1, 2019

India

- Lok Sabha passes bill to set up an Inter-State River Water Disputes Tribunal
- Lok Sabha passes bill for speedy eviction of unauthorised occupants from govt residences
- Parliament passes Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2019 that seeks to impose stricter penalties on violation of traffic rules
- Cabinet approves increasing number of judges in Supreme Court from 31 to 34 including CJI
- PM Modi chairs 30th interaction through 'PRAGATI' (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) platform
- QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) Best Student Cities Ranking 2019: Bengaluru No: 1 in India; London No: 1 in the world
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to re-name PGIMER & Dr RML Hospital, Delhi as 'Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Medical Sciences & Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi'
- DG of Civil Aviation Security Rakesh Asthana given additional charge of DG Narcotics Control Bureau
- Air Chief Marshal B. S. Dhanoa launches mobile game 'Indian Air Force: A cut Above' based on the missions of IAF
charu bhardwaj | bhardwajs.charu@gmail.com |
- National Bal Bhawan in New Delhi gets IAF pavilion with flight simulator
- India, UK launch Innovating for Clean Air (IfCA) initiative in Bengaluru

Economy & Corporate

- RBI allows domestic banks to directly sell their NPAs in manufacturing and infrastructure sectors to investors abroad as part of one-time settlement (OTS) exercises
- India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) to be converted into a Small Finance Bank (SFB)
- Cabinet clears introduction of Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2019 in Parliament, objectives: reducing the compliance burden of the registered Chit Funds Industry and protecting the interest of the Chit subscribers
- Output of eight core infrastructure industries grew by 0.2% in June
- Flipkart launches initiative 'Samarth' to bring Indian artisans, weavers and handicrafts makers on its platform
- Noted economist and former RBI Deputy Governor Subir Vithal Gokarn dies at the age of 60
- Cafe Coffee Day founder V. G. Siddhartha found dead on banks of Netravathi river in Karnataka

World

- President Ram Nath Kovind meets Gambia's President Adama Barrow in Banjul
- Russia launches Progress MS-12 cargo spacecraft to the International Space Station from Baikonur cosmodrome, Kazakhstan

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 2, 2019

India

- Parliament passes the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2019
- Indian Army delegation participates 92nd anniversary celebration of China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) at Nathu La
- First time after partition, 'Nagar Kirtan' carrying Guru Granth Sahib arrives from Nankana Sahib district of Pakistan's Punjab province to India
- UP: BJP expels its MLA Kuldeep Sengar
- 'Words From My Window – A Journal', written by Ruskin Bond, launched

NMC Bill

- Rajya Sabha passes the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill, 2019
- National Medical Commission to replace Medical Council of India (MCI)
- NMC to develop and regulate all aspects of medical education, profession and institutions in India
- Common final year MBBS exam be known as National Exit Test (NEXT) will serve as the entrance

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exam for PG medical courses and as a screening test for foreign medical graduates

IBC Bill

- Parliament passes Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill 2019
- Gives committee of creditors of a loan defaulting company explicit authority over the distribution of proceeds in the resolution process
- Fixes a firm timeline of 330 days for resolving cases referred to the IBC

KABIL

- Govt to set up JV firm Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) to ensure supply of strategic minerals
- KABIL will be JV of National Aluminium Company Ltd (Nalco), Hindustan Copper Ltd (HCL) and Mineral Exploration Company Ltd (MECL)

Economy & Corporate

- Parliament passes bill aimed at making India an international arbitration hub by providing facilities for settlement of commercial disputes
- Finance Ministry to conduct 1st National Time Release Study to enable faster movement of cargo across borders to benefit traders
- Girraj Prasad Gupta takes over as the Controller General of Accounts (CGA)
- Google announces doodle contest for Children's Day, winner to get Rs 5 lakh scholarship
- Japan's Aiwa re-enters Indian market with its range of TVs and audio products

World

- Mozambique govt, opposition Renamo sign historic peace pact
- S. Federal Reserve cuts benchmark lending rate for first time since 2008; it is now 2-2.25%, 25 basis points lower
- S. Fish and Wildlife Service restores Grizzly Bears to protected species list

Sports

- Kolkata-based East Bengal Football Club turns 100 years old
- Malcolm Nash, the first bowler (for Glamorgan in English Country Cricket) hit for six sixes (by Garfield Sobers) in an over in First Class Cricket (1968), dies in England at the age of 74
- India's Vidit Gujrathi wins Biel International Chess Festival tournament in Switzerland

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 3, 2019

India

- Lok Sabha passes Bill that ends automatic nomination of Congress President as trustee of Jallianwala Bagh Memorial trust
- Parliament passes Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill that allows Centre and states to designate individuals as terrorists and seize their properties
- Parliament passes the Repealing and Amending Bill, 2019 that repeals 58 obsolete laws
- Lok Sabha passes Dam Safety Bill, 2019 to set up institutional mechanism for inspection, operation & maintenance of specified dams
- SC orders day-to-day hearing of Ayodhya land dispute case from August 6
- 4th orbit raising manoeuvre of Chandrayaan-2 successful
- Delhi: Speaker Ram Niwas Goel disqualifies rebel AAP MLA Kapil Mishra
- World Breastfeeding Week from August 1 to 7, theme: 'Empower Parents, Enable Breastfeeding'

Economy & Corporate

- Country's Forex reserves decreased by USD 727 million to USD 429.649 billion for the week ended July 26
- Sovereign Gold Bonds 2019-20 (Series III) to be open for the period August 05 – 09, 2019; Issue Price to be Rs 3,499 per gram
- NHB to provide additional liquidity infusion facility of Rs 10,000 crore to HFCs

Wage Bill

- Parliament passes wage code bill providing minimum wages for workers
- The Code on Wages Bill, 2019 was passed in the Rajya Sabha 85-8, was passed in the Lok Sabha on

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July 30

- The Bill subsumes 4 labour laws — Minimum Wages Act, Payment of Wages Act, Payment of Bonus Act and Equal Remuneration Act

Magsaysay Award

- NDTV India's journalist Ravish Kumar among the five winners of this year's Ramon Magsaysay Award given in Philippines
- Other 4 winners: Ko Swe Win from Myanmar, Angkhana Neelapaijit from Thailand, Raymundo Pujante Cayabyab from Philippines and Kim Jong-Ki from South Korea

MGC

- 10th MGC (Mekong Ganga Cooperation) Ministerial meeting held in Bangkok
- MGC comprises India and 5 ASEAN countries, namely, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam
- MGC was launched in 2000 at Laos capital Vientiane

World

- President Ram Nath Kovind meets Guinea's President Alpha Conde in Conakry
- Madhumita Hazarika Bhagat appointed India's next High Commissioner to Cyprus
- US withdraws from the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with Russia

Japan Open Badminton Winners

- Japan's Kento Momota: Men's singles
- Japan's Akane Yamaguchi: Women's singles
- Indonesia's Marcus Fernaldi Gideon & Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo: Men's doubles
- South Korea's Kim So-yeong & Kong Hee-yong: Women's doubles
- China's Wang Yiliu & Huang Dongping: Mixed doubles

Sports

- Team Mahindra Adventure's driver Gaurav Gill wins 2000 km Dakshin Dare car rally

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 4, 2019

India

- J&K: After Amarnath Yatra, the 43-day-long 'Machail Mata Yatra' in Kishtwar district suspended due to security reasons
- ISRO to set up Space Situational Awareness Control Centre in Bengaluru to protect Indian satellites from space debris
- Centre approves Rs 4,900 crore project for interlinking of Kosi and Mechi rivers of Bihar
- Outlook Poshan Awards presented in New Delhi
- Giving voice sample to police is not a violation of a person's fundamental right to privacy: Supreme Court

Institutions Of Eminence

- UGC recommends 20 institutions for grant of Institutions of Eminence (IoE) status
- Public Institutions (10): IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi, IISC Bangalore, IIT Madras, IIT Kharagpur, Delhi University, University of Hyderabad, Jadavpur University, Kolkata, Anna University, Chennai and BHU, Varanasi
- Private Institutions (10): BITS Pilani (Rajasthan), Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Jio Institute (Reliance Foundation, Maharashtra), Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham (Bangalore), VIT Vellore (Tamil Nadu), Jamia Hamdard (New Delhi), Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (Bhubaneswar), O.P JINDAL University (Haryana), Shiv Nadar University (UP), Bharti (Satya Bharti Foundation), Delhi
- Selected institutions will enjoy complete academic and administrative autonomy
- Government will provide funding to public institutions with IoE tag
- Private institutions will not get financial support from govt. but will be entitled to more autonomy as a special category Deemed University

Economy & Corporate

- Parliament passes the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 2019 that

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increases the threshold of annual passenger traffic for major airports to over 35 lakh

- RBI bars NBFCs from charging pre-payment penalties or foreclosure charges from individual borrowers
- RBI tightens the fit-and-proper criteria for directors on the boards of PSBs, Centre's nominee director shall not be part of the nomination and remuneration committee (NRC)
- RBI slaps penalties on nine banks over delay in reporting of frauds
- India participates in 8th RCEP Inter-Sessional Ministerial Meeting in Beijing on August 2-3

World

- Indonesia: 4 killed due to a strong earthquake that hit off Java Island
- Sri Lanka: Gandhi Nagar model village built with Indian assistance inaugurated
- President Ram Nath Kovind receives the National Order of Merit, the Highest Award of Guinea, in Conakry
- Pakistan: 19th-century old Gurdwara Chowah Sahib in Jhelum City of Punjab province opened for pilgrims, 72 years after Partition
- Russia and the US terminate the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty that limited the use of medium-range (500-5500 km) missiles
- Women in Saudi Arabia can now travel abroad without a male guardian's permission
- Team of 5 Indian students wins World Schools Debating Championships 2019 held in Thailand

Sports

- Umakhanov Memorial International Boxing Tournament in Russia; India end with 6 medals including 2 gold: Lovlina Borgohain (women's 69 kg), Neeraj (men's 57 kg)

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 5, 2019

India

- ISRO releases first set of earth pictures captured by Chandrayaan 2
- DRDO successfully test-fires QRSAM (Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile) from Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur in Odisha

Economy & Corporate

- A law which allowed RBI to circulate Rs 1000 denomination notes to tide over the shortage of currency in the late 1990s scrapped

World

- Franky Zapata of France successfully crosses the English Channel on a hoverboard for the first time
- THAILAND OPEN BADMINTON WINNERS
- Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty: Men's Doubles
- Chou Tien-chen (Chinese Taipei): Men's Singles
- China's Chen Yufei: Women's Singles
- Japan's Shiho Tanaka & Koharu Yonemoto: Women's Doubles
- China's Wang Yilü & Huang Dongping: Mixed Doubles

Sports

- Vinesh Phogat wins gold in women's 53kg category at the Poland Open wrestling tournament in Warsaw
- Former English cricket commentator Anant Setalvad dies in Mumbai at the age of 84
- Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton (UK) wins Formula One Hungarian Grand Prix at Budapest followed by Max Verstappen (Netherlands) of Red Bull and Sebastian Vettel (Germany) Ferrari in 2nd and 3rd places respectively
- India (98/6 in 17.2 overs) beat West Indies (95/9 in 20) by four wickets in the first T20I at Lauderhill, USA, bowler Navdeep Saini (3/17) is Man of the Match in his debut match
- Lifetime Achievement Award of the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) presented to former Bengal captain Arun Lal in Kolkata

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 6, 2019

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**J&K**

- repeals Article 370 which grants special status to J&K; resolutions in this regard passed by Rajya Sabha
- Rajya Sabha passes the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Bill, 2019; makes J&K a Union Territory with legislature and Ladakh Union Territory without legislature

India

- The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Second Amendment) Bill 2019 having provisions of 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections of upper caste in the state passed by the Rajya Sabha
- Lok Sabha Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill to increase the number of Supreme Court judges from the present 30 to 33
- Lok Sabha passes The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019 to ban commercial surrogacy in the country
- Rajasthan Assembly passes anti-lynching bill; life imprisonment and a fine up to ₹5 lakh to convicts in cases of mob lynching involving the victim's death
- Rajasthan Assembly passes Bill making 'honour killing' punishable by death penalty or life imprisonment
- Congress MP from Assam, Bhubaneswar Kalita resigns from the membership of the Rajya Sabha
- Kerala: IAS officer Sriram Venkitaraman suspended from service for causing death of journalist in road accident in Thiruvananthapuram on August 3

Transgender Bill

- Lok Sabha passes the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019
- Seeks to prohibit discrimination against transgender persons, including in matters of employment
- Provides for giving certificates of identity to them

World

- Shah Rukh Khan to get 'Excellence in Cinema' honour at Indian Film Festival of Melbourne on August 8

Sports

- Australia (284, 487/7) defeat England (374, 146) by 251 runs in the first Test match of the Ashes Series at Edgbaston, Birmingham
- ATP Washington Open tennis: Australia's Nick Kyrgios beats Russia's Daniil Medvedev 7-6 (8/6), 7-6 (7/4) in final to win men's singles title
- San Jose WTA tennis: China's Zheng Saisai beats Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus in final 6-3, 7-6 (7/3) to win women's singles title
- Actor Aamir Khan launches Maharashtra government's Mission Shakti to train athletes from Chandrapur and Gadchiroli for international events like the Olympics
- India (167/5 in 20 overs) beat West Indies (98/4 in 15.3-reduced target 121 in 15.3) by 22 runs in 2nd T20I at Lauderhill, USA, Krunal Pandya (20 runs, 2/23) is Man of the Match

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 7, 2019**India**

- Lok Sabha passes the Jammu and Kashmir (Reorganisation) Bill, 2019 that bifurcates the state into 2 UTs of J&K and Ladakh
- Parliament adopts resolution revoking the special status given to J&K under Article 370 of the Constitution
- Parliament passes bill for speedy eviction of unauthorised occupants from govt. residential accommodations
- Rajya Sabha passes bill to declare four National Institutes of Design in AP, MP, Assam, and Haryana as institutions of national importance
- US special envoy to Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad meets External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in New Delhi; apprises him about progress in the Afghan peace process
- Eminent educationist Rajalakshmi Parthasarathy, founder of the Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan (PSBB) Group of Schools, dies in Chennai at 93

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- Researchers at IIT Guwahati develop hand-held diagnostic device to detect bacteria instantaneously without the need for lab tests
- Fifth earth bound orbit-raising manoeuvre for Chandrayaan-2 successfully performed
- 22nd National Conference on e-Governance 2019 to be held at Shillong on August 8-9, 2019, theme: "Digital India: Success to Excellence"
- Lok Sabha adjourned sine die

Economy & Corporate

- National Handloom Day to be celebrated on August 7
- MasterCard launches new online card payment feature Identity Check Express

Consumer Protection Bill

- Parliament passes Consumer Protection Bill 2019
- Replaces Consumer Protection Act, 1986
- Provides a mechanism for redressal of consumer complaints
- Strict penalties including jail term for adulteration and misleading ads
- Celebrities endorsing misleading ads are liable for fine.

World

- US labels China a currency manipulator after the country's central bank allowed the yuan to fall against the dollar
- Iran unveils 3 new air-to-air missiles named 'Yasin', 'Balaban' and 'Ghaem'
- Typhoon Francisco makes landfall in western Japan
- Toni Morrison, first black woman to win Nobel literature prize, dies at 88 in US

Sports

- International Army Scout Masters Competition in Jaisalmer from August 5 to 16

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 13, 2019

India

- Bar Council of India imposes 3-year moratorium on the opening of new institutions barring national law universities
- Chandrima Shaha elected as the first woman president of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA)
- Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan Ajay Bisaria returns to India, days after Islamabad expelled him

Sarabhai Centenary

- Year-long birth centenary celebration of ISRO founder Dr. Vikram Sarabhai started in Ahmedabad
- Exhibition 'Space on Wheels' held at Gujarat University Convention & Exhibition Center, in Ahmedabad
- Coffee Table book and a photo album of on life and work of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai unveiled by ISRO
- Centenary celebration to conclude at Thiruvananthapuram on August 12, 2020

National Youth Awards For 2016-17

- Awards conferred by Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports (I/C) Kiren Rijiju in New Delhi
- 20 individuals (aged between 15-29 years) and 3 organizations awarded
- Given for excellent work and contribution in different fields of development and social service

Economy & Corporate

- Reliance Jio enters into a long-term alliance with Microsoft to launch cloud data centres

World

- Hong Kong: Anti-China protests enter tenth week
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar meets Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing
- Alejandro Giammattei elected new President of Guatemala

Sports

- Indian women's football team given special third-placed trophy at the COTIF Cup in Valencia, Spain
- Wrestler and Commonwealth gold medallist Babita Phogat and her father Mahavir Singh Phogat

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join the BJP

- Virat Kohli (11,406 runs in 238 ODIs) becomes 2nd highest run-getter for India in ODIs behind Sachin Tendulkar (18,426 runs)
- Aishwarya Pissay is 1st Indian to claim a world title in motorsports, wins FIM World Cup in the women's category at Varpalota (Hungary)

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 14, 2019

India

- Sikkim: 10 out of 13 MLAs of Sikkim Democratic Front join BJP
- Organ Donation Day celebrated on August 13
- PM inaugurates Dynamic Facade Lighting of the Parliament House Estate

Watan Song

- Union Minister Prakash Javadekar releases patriotic song "Watan" produced by DD for Independence Day
- Sung by Javed Ali, penned by lyricist Alok Shrivastav and musically composed by Dushyant

Stubble Burning

- 41% reduction in stubble burning incidents in 2018 over 2016: Director General ICAR Dr. Trilochan Mohapatra
- Over 4500 villages of Haryana & Punjab declared as Zero Stubble Burning Villages

Economy & Corporate

- Consumer price index (CPI) based retail inflation eased marginally to 3.15 per cent in July
- On-lending by registered NBFCs (other than MFIs) towards agriculture, MSEs and housing sector up to prescribed limits will be treated as priority sector loans: RBI
- Housing finance companies (HFCs) will be treated as one of the categories of NBFCs for regulatory purposes and it will come under RBI's direct oversight
- High-speed locomotive, achieving a top speed of 180 km per hour, manufactured in Chittaranjan Locomotive Works, West Bengal
- Commerce and Industry Minister, Piyush Goyal led a high-power delegation of CMs of Haryana, Gujarat, UP and Goa to Vladivostok, Russia from August 11 to 13
- Bajaj Auto launches its new bike Pulsar 125 Neon with price starting at Rs 64,000
- Assam's Dikom Tea Estate brand fetches 'record' Rs 75,000 per kg

Financing NBFCs

- Centre has issued guidelines on operationalising Rs 1-lakh crore partial guarantee scheme
- PSBs can purchase high-rated pooled assets of financially sound non-banking finance companies NBFCs
- NBFCs came under stress following series of defaults by the group companies of IL&FS in September 2018

World

- August 13 observed as International Left-Handers Day

Sports

- 55th All India Basketball tournament for men: Indian Bank lifts the PSG Trophy defeating Indian Army 79-61 in the final at Coimbatore
- Women's T20 cricket to be part of Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games
- Legendary Indian sprinter P T Usha made a member of the Athletes Commission of the Asian Athletics Association

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 15, 2019

Gallantry Awards

- 132 personnel from armed forces and paramilitary forces win gallantry awards including 2 Kirti Chakras, 1 Vir Chakra and, 14 Shaurya Chakras, 8 Bar to Sena Medals (Gallantry), 90 Sena Medals (Gallantry), 5 Nao Sena Medals (Gallantry), 7 Vayu Sena Medals (Gallantry) and 5 Yudh Seva Medals.
- CRPF Deputy Commandant Harshpal Singh and Sapper Prakash Jadhav (Rashtriya Rifles)

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posthumously awarded Kirit Chakra

- Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman awarded Vir Chakra

India

- Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launches Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2019
- Railways Minister Piyush Goyal launches CORAS (Commando for Railway Security)
- Trinamool Congress MLA and former Kolkata mayor Sovan Chatterjee joins BJP
- Odisha abolishes practice of according 'Guard of Honour' to CM, Ministers
- Harshad Pandurang Thakur appointed as the Director of National Institute of Health and Family Welfare
- West Bengal govt. celebrates Kanyashree Diwas on August 14, Kanyashree scheme launched on 14 August 2013
- Punjab CM inaugurates in Jalandhar the 3rd phase of 'Jung-E-Azadi' memorial of victims of Jallianwala Bagh massacre
- Panchamirtham 'prasadam' at the Murugan temple in Palani (Tamil Nadu) granted Geographical Indication (GI) tag

Economy & Corporate

- Annual rate of inflation, based on monthly wholesale price index (WPI), dips to 1.08% for July 2019 (over July 2018)
- RBI asks banks not to count failed transactions, balance enquiry as 'free ATM transactions'
- 16 states sign MoUs with Textiles Ministry to implement Samarth – Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector (SCBTS)

World

- India contributes USD one million to the UN Special Purpose Trust Fund for the Resident Coordinator System

Sports

- Naval Tata Hockey Academy, Odisha inaugurated in Bhubaneswar
- Footballer Jose Luis Brown, who scored a goal in Argentina's 3-2 win in 1986 FIFA World Cup final against West Germany, dies at the age of 62

August 1, 2019

Cabinet approves ISRO Technical Liaison Unit at Moscow

Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved setting up of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Technical Liaison Unit (ITLU) at Moscow, Russia. It is mandated to collaborate with Space agencies and industries in Russia and neighbouring countries for mutually synergetic outcomes. It will enable effective technical coordination for timely interventions on diversified matters with Russia and neighbouring countries for realization of the programmatic targets of ISRO.

Note: This will be third such Technical Liaison Unit. Department of Space (Dos) already has instituted technical Liaison Units, namely ISRO Technical Liaison Units (ITLU) at Washington, United States and Paris, France with prime objective to liaise with various Government and space agencies in US and Europe, respectively

ISRO Technical Liaison Unit (ITLU) at Moscow

Implementation of ITLU Moscow office: It will be managed by ISRO Scientist/Engineer who will be designated as Counsellor (Space) on deputation. He/She will be deputed from ISRO and will be supported by staff locally sourced.

Liaison Officer: Will be deputed at ITLU from ISRO to provide technical information about developments in research and technology and inputs arising from their meetings with researchers, government agencies and industries in the respective countries.

Benefits: ISRO will be able to collaborate with Space agencies/industries in Russia and neighbouring countries for mutually synergetic outcomes. It will provide required technological support to ISRO's Gaganyaan programme which requires development of some of the key technologies and establishment of specialized facilities essential to support life in space. It will support ongoing bilateral programmes of

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cooperation in space technology and act on behalf of ISRO.

Significance

It is prudent for IRO to avail technical cooperation from International space agencies, who have already demonstrated their technical capabilities in specific areas keeping in view 15th August, 2022 timeline for realization of Gaganyaan human space programme,

Russia is one of the space faring nations, thus it is envisaged to collaborate with Russia extensively in various fields of relevance. They also support ongoing bilateral programmes of cooperation in space technology and act on behalf of ISRO on the matters referred.

ISRO's Gaganyaan programme (India's maiden human spaceflight programme) requires development of some of the key technologies and establishment of specialized facilities, which are essential to support life in space.

CCEA approves Nutrient Based Subsidy rates for P&K fertilizers

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister has approved proposal for fixation of Nutrient Based Subsidy Rates for Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) Fertilizers for the year 2019-20. This proposal was forwarded by Department of Fertilizers.

Nutrient Based Subsidy Rates 2019-20

Benefits: This will enable manufacturers and importers to formalize supply contracts for fertilizers and fertilizer inputs. It will make fertilizers available to farmers in year 2019-20.

Expenditure: The expected expenditure (during 2019-20 period) on releasing subsidy on P&K Fertilizers will be Rs. 22875.50 crore.

Background: Union Government makes available Urea and 21 grades of P&K fertilizers to farmers at subsidized prices through fertilizer manufacturers/importers. This subsidy on P&K fertilizers is governed by Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme.

About Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS)

Under it fixed amount of subsidy is decided by Government on annual basis and is provided on each grade of subsidized P&K fertilizers, except for Urea, based on the nutrient content present in them.

It was launched 2010. It is being implemented by Department of Fertilizers, under Ministry of Fertilizers.

Objectives: (i) Ensure sufficient quantity of P&K is available at farmer's disposal at statutory controlled prices. (ii) Ensure balanced use of fertilizers for improving agricultural productivity, promoting growth of indigenous fertilizers industry and also reducing burden of subsidy

Features: It is largely meant for secondary nutrients like N, P, S and K and micronutrients which are very important for crop growth and development. It is implemented with expectation that it will promote balanced fertilization of soil, which will lead to increased agricultural productivity and consequently better returns to the farmers.

Significance: In India, urea is the only controlled fertilizer and is sold at statutory notified uniform sale price. NBS allows manufacturers, marketers, and importers to fix Maximum Retail Price (MRP) of Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers at reasonable levels. This MRP is decided considering domestic and international prices of P&K fertilizers, inventory level in the country and the exchange rates.

IAF launches 3D mobile video game Indian Air Force: A cut Above

Indian Air Force (IAF) has launched 3D air-borne combat based mobile video game called 'Indian Air Force: A cut above'. It was launched by Air Chief Marshal B. S. Dhanoa at National Bal Bhawan, New Delhi. It is second such video game launched by IAF, earlier it had Guardians of the Skies' in 2014 and has got over a million downloads. It is similar to older Guardians of Skies game including controls and graphics, but has new storyline along with some gameplay changes.

Indian Air Force: A cut above

- It is aimed at making youth aware about IAF and encourage them to join the armed forces. It will also provide gamers virtual experience of airborne combats.
- It is available on both Android and iOS platforms (phones) and will engage audience above the age of 14.
- It has been developed by Delhi-based Threye Interactive, which earlier also had made similar game "Guardians of Skies" for IAF in 2014.



- It is themed on various aerial combats and missions, including airstrikes, undertaken by IAF. It has total of 10 missions, and each mission has further three sub-missions.
- Its various missions, include, airstrikes, air-to-air refuelling, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).
- It also has career navigator and augmented reality (AR) sections which will give a realistic feel of the IAF's assets to the user.
- It also features character sporting gunslinger moustache similar to that of Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman's, who was captured and later released by Pakistan after his aircraft was shot down in aerial dogfight which broke out in aftermath of February 2019 Balakot airstrikes.

Abhinandan Varthaman

He holds unique distinction of being only pilot in the world to have shot down an F-16 combat aircraft from his vintage MiG-21 Bison aircraft on February 27, 2019 during aerial conflict with Pakistan. He was held captive by Pakistani authorities on February 27, 2019 after his MiG 21 Bison went down during beyond visual range combat with Pakistani jets. He was taken into custody by the Pakistan Army when his parachute drifted and fell inside PoK. Later he was handed over to India.

22nd National Conference on e-Governance 2019 held in Shillong

The 22nd National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG) 2019 will be held in Shillong, capital of Meghalaya. This will be for first time this mega knowledge sharing event will be organized in the north-eastern region of the country.

22nd National Conference on e-Governance 2019

- **Organized by:** Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) in association with Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and Meghalaya State Government. It is being held in Shillong is part of the DARPG's 100 days initiatives.
- **Theme of the conference:** 'Digital India: Success to Excellence'. Besides there will be discussions held on five sub-themes in plenary sessions during conference. Four breakout sessions will be held on the sub-themes.
- **Purpose:** It will provide considerable momentum to e-Governance initiatives in North east region, providing opportunities to civil servants and others to showcase their successful interventions in improving end-to-end service deliver
- **Participation:** It will see participation of as many as 28 states and eight Union Territories and over 450 delegates.
- **Exhibition:** It will be also held on sidelines of this event to showcase India's achievements in the field of e-Governance, along with hall of fame/photo exhibition on the award winners.

India, UK launch Innovating for Clean Air initiative in Bengaluru

India and United Kingdom launched two-year joint initiative- Innovating for Clean Air (IfCA) in Bengaluru, capital of Karnataka. It is aimed at providing unique air quality measurement system by integrating satellite and sensor data and support India's transition to Electric Vehicles (EVs).

Innovating for Clean Air (IfCA)

- **Features:** It will identify innovations having potential to improve air quality and contribute to more detailed localised map of air quality of Bengaluru through unique combination of satellite and sensor data, including both on-the-ground and mobile data.
- It will identify relevant challenges around EV-charging infrastructure, integrating renewable energy and grid management to ensure sufficient, reliable and clean source of power.
- It will also facilitate opportunities for Indian and UK innovators to collaborate in developing long-lasting relationships to address these challenges.
- **Participating bodies in programme:** It is led by Innovate UK — part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and is funded by Newton Fund with matched resources from various key partners in Karnataka and India, like Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Enzen, Project Lithium, Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), C40 Cities and Clean Air Platform.
- Its other partners include Indian Institute for Information Technology Bangalore (IIIT-B), Citizens for Sustainability, World Resources Institute, Shakti Foundation, Shell Technology Centre, Global

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Business Inroads and India Smart Grid Forum.

RBI liberalises ECB norms by relaxing end-use restrictions

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has relaxed External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) norms for corporates, non-banking lenders by relaxing end-use restrictions with regard to working capital, general corporate purpose and repayment of rupee loans. This decision was taken after receiving feedback from stakeholders for easing liquidity in the domestic market.

Recent changes by RBI

- End-use stipulations for ECBs for both corporates as well as liquidity starved non-banking lenders has been liberalised
- Liberalisation will be applicable to ECBs taken for general corporate purpose loans, working capital or repayment of rupee loans.
- It allows eligible borrowers to raise ECBs from recognised lenders, except foreign branches and overseas subsidiaries of Indian banks, with minimum average maturity period of ten years for working capital purposes and general corporate purposes.
- It also allows ECBs to raise with minimum average maturity period of 7 years for repayment of rupee loans availed domestically for capital expenditure.
- It also permits borrowing for on-lending by NBFCs for above maturity and end-uses. It also permits borrowings for on-lending by NBFCs for repayment of rupee loans.
- It also allows corporate borrowers to avail ECBs for repaying rupee loans taken for Capital expenditures if they are into infrastructure building/ manufacturing and classified as Special Mention Account (SMA-2) or Non-Performing Asset (NPA), under any one-time settlement arrangement with lenders.

About External Commercial Borrowing (ECB)

It is instrument used in India to facilitate Indian companies to raise money outside the country in foreign currency. It may be commercial loans which can be in form of bank loans, bonds, securitized instruments, buyers' and supplier's credit availed from non-resident lenders with minimum average maturity of 3 years. In India, ECBs availed of by residents are governed by Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999 along with Foreign Exchange Management (Borrowing or Lending in Foreign Exchange) Regulations, 2000, as amended from time to time.

Special Note: It should be noted that **ECB is not Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)**. In case of FDI, **foreign money is only used to finance equity capital**. But in case of ECB **foreign money is used to finance any kind of funding other than equity**.

Samarth: Flipkart's initiative to bring Indigenous Artisans on platform

Indian e-commerce giant Flipkart launched **Samarth**, an initiative to bring Indian artisans, weavers, and makers of handicrafts to its platform. It was launched by Anurag Thakur, Minister of State, Finance and Corporate Affairs, along with Kalyan Krishnamurthy, CEO, Flipkart Group.

Walmart-owned Flipkart has partnered with 5 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to help artisans use online marketplace to sell their products.

About Samarth Initiative

It will support artisans, weavers and handicraft maker by on-boarding them and helping them in process of selling on internet.

In 1st phase of programme, Flipkart will have access to 35,000 artisans through partnerships with NGOs.

Support Provided: includes product cataloguing, account management, seller support, and warehousing support.

Flipkart is in discussions with 5-10 Indian States, including Himachal Pradesh, with regard to Samarth initiative. Company also plans to eventually sell these products in international market.

Significance:

This initiative could give indigenous communities and their products access to Flipkart's Indian customer base of over 150 million.

As per some estimates, Flipkart e-commerce will exceed \$100 billion by 2022 can potentially create 1 million-plus jobs in coming years.

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NOTE: Earlier, Amazon had partnered with Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) to sell products made by tribal communities which are now available on its global marketplace.

Rakesh Asthana given additional charge of DG Narcotics Control Bureau

Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) approved handing over of additional charge of post of Director General Narcotics Control Bureau to Director General of Civil Aviation Security (DG CAS) Rakesh Asthana. He is appointed for next 6 months or till a new incumbent is appointed.

NCB chief post was lying vacant since 4 July 2019 after then incumbent Abhay was appointed as Director of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy based in Hyderabad.

About Rakesh Asthana

Rakesh Asthana is 1984-batch IPS (Indian Police Service) officer of Gujarat cadre. He was 2nd in command in Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), was transferred as DG CAS after a bitter tug of war with then chief of CBI Alok Verma. Both officers had levelled allegations of corruption on each other after which they were sent on leave by Centre.

CBI had registered a complaint against Rakesh Asthana alleging corruption which he had strongly denied and claimed that he was booked because of a complaint he made against Alok Verma.

Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB)

It is a nodal intelligence and drug law enforcement agency of the country.

It was established in 1986 and is headquartered in New Delhi. It was founded to enable full implementation of **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985** and fight its violation by **Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1988**.

It functions under the aegis of **Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** and is responsible for fighting drug trafficking and abuse of illegal substances.

PM Modi chairs 30th interaction through PRAGATI platform

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired his 30th interaction through 'PRAGATI' (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation) platform. It is Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-based, multi-modal platforms.

Key Highlights of Interaction

Some of the issues discussed during PM Modi's 30th interaction through 'PRAGATI' platform included- Progress in resolution of grievances under **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U)** and directed all concerned officers to work diligently to achieve government's objective of providing **Housing for All by 2022**.

Progress made under **Ayushman Bharat scheme** (or Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana or National Health Protection Scheme) and called for dialogue with state governments to evolve best practices and further improvements in scheme. A study on positive impacts of scheme in aspirational districts could be undertaken.

Progress made by government under **Saugamya Bharat Abhiyan** (or Accessible India Campaign, a program to serve differently-able community of country) PM suggested of developing a mechanism to collect feedback from Divyangjan or persons with disability (PwD) on accessibility issues faced by them in public premises.

Progress made by 8 important infrastructure projects in Railway and Road sectors. These railways and road projects are spread over states such as Uttar Pradesh (UP), Madhya Pradesh (UP), Odisha, Himachal Pradesh (HP), Bihar, Gujarat and Maharashtra.

PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation)

It is a unique integrating, interactive multi-purpose and multi-modal platform which is aimed at addressing common man's grievances, and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of Central Government as well as projects flagged by State Governments.

It is an innovative project in **e-governance** initiative and **good governance**.

It uniquely **bundles 3 latest technologies**– (1) Digital data management, (2) Video-conferencing and (3) Geo-spatial technology.

3-Tier System: Platform offers unique combination in **Cooperative Federalism** as it brings Prime Minister

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Office (PMO), Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of States all on one stage.

Cabinet approves increasing strength of Supreme Court Judges

Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved increasing the number of judges in Supreme Court from the present 31 to 34 (i.e. by 10%), including Chief Justice of India (CJI). In this regard it has approved bill to amend **Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956**. At present, the full sanctioned strength of SC is 31 (including CJI). Once this bill gets parliamentary nod, the number of judges would go up to 34, including the CJI.

Background

This decision of Union Cabinet comes after Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi in letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi had requested to increase number of judges in the Supreme Court. CJI in his letter had urged to augment judge-strength in SC appropriately so that it can function more efficiently and effectively and go a long way to attain ultimate goal of rendering timely justice to litigant public. He also had mentioned that due to paucity of judges, the required number of Constitution Benches of SC were not being formed to decide important cases involving questions of law. According to written reply by Law Minister to Rajya Sabha there are total 11, 59,331 cases are pending in the Supreme court.

SC Composition: Constitutional and Statutory Provisions

The strength of Supreme Court is fixed by law made by Parliament as per **Article 124 (1)** of Constitution of India. Therefore, the strength can be increased by way of parliamentary legislation. In pursuance of this Parliament has enacted **Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956**, which originally provided for maximum of 10 judges (excluding the CJI). The law was last amended in 2009 to increase judges' strength from 25 to 30 (excluding the CJI).

One Nation-one Ration Card Scheme implemented on pilot basis

In a major boost to national food security Government of India launched One Nation-One Ration Card scheme on pilot basis **in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat**. The pilot project is effective from 1 August 2019. One Nation One Ration Card' scheme seeks to allow portability of food security benefits.

One Nation-One Ration Card scheme

Families who have food security cards can buy subsidized rice and wheat from any ration shop in these states but their ration cards should be linked with Aadhar Number to avail this service.

Implementation in Telangana & Andhra Pradesh: White Ration Card holders in Telangana have been getting portability facility which enables them to buy their subsidized rice and other food grains from any Fair Price Shop in state. Now under One Nation One Ration Card scheme which has come into force in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh same facility can be utilized anywhere in two states now through Point of State (PoS) machines.

Early Trial Run: In last week of July Telangana Civil Supplies Corporation conducted a trial run of project last week with consumers from Andhra Pradesh drawing their commodities from fair price shop in Hyderabad (Capital of Telangana). As per officials, 2.82 crore consumers had benefited with ration portability introduced in Telangana in 2018.

Way Ahead: More than 56 lakh beneficiaries covered under **National Food Security Act (NFSA)** in Telangana will be benefited from facility. Same will be case with consumers in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat which are identified for implementation of pilot project.

Centre is intended to extend programme to all states by August 2020 so that portability of food security card implemented.

August 2, 2019

IIT-KGP develops Hydro Thermal Carbonization technology for Waste Management

IIT-KGP (Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur) researchers develop new technology- Hydro Thermal Carbonization (HTC) for solid waste management. This Hydro Thermal Carbonization Technology can convert municipal solid waste to biofuel, soil amendment and absorbents.

About Hydro Thermal Carbonization (HTC)

Need: At present India has adopted waste incineration processes from developed nations which are primarily focused on treating drier waste content. These processes require high energy input to combust

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municipal solid waste generated in India which has high moisture content due to tropical weather, open collection systems and mixed waste thus by using existing processes, only 20-30% of organic fraction of municipal solid waste is being recycled to biofuel. This lack of India suited technology led to develop a technology which can address the challenge indigenously.

Process: Moisture in waste is used to the advantage of process which uses water for reaction. The biofuel generated as recovered output can help curb air pollution.

Benefits:

Technology can be used by civic bodies to effectively manage solid waste.

Once organic waste is entered into process, the outputs generated are all usable.

All outputs can be used for one purpose or the other, including the water which can be converted to biogas or methane.

1st time after Partition, 'Nagar Kirtan' arrives from Pakistan to India

For 1st time after Independence (1947), 'Nagar Kirtan' carrying Guru Granth Sahib which was taken out from Nankana Sahib district of Punjab province of Pakistan, arrived at Attari in Amritsar, India. *Nagar Kirtan is a religious procession.* It will culminate at Sultanpur Lodhi in Kapurthala district of Punjab in India after passing through various cities and towns.

This procession by devotees is to mark 550th birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev founder of Sikhism.

Key Highlights

Nagar Kirtan carrying holy Guru Granth Sahib, in which around 500 Sikh devotees participated crossed over to India from Pakistan through the land transit route of Attari border.

The event was organized by *Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee* (SGPC), an apex religious body of the Sikhs with support from both Indian and Pakistani authorities

The large parade of devotees followed religious procession from **Gurdwara Nankana Sahib** in Pakistan to Wagah border amid a thick security cover. Gurdwara Nankana Sahib is birthplace of Guru Nanak Dev.

Guru Nanak Dev

He was founder and 1st Guru of Sikhism. He was born in 1469, in village Talwandi now known as Nankana Sahib, is situated near city of Lahore in present day Pakistan.

Sikhs around world celebrate auspicious occasion of Guru Nanak Dev's birth on Pooranmashi (full moon) day in Lunar month of Katak (October-November), which falls on a different date every year.

550th birth anniversary celebrations of Baba Guru Nanak Dev

In November 2019, 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak will be celebrated. However, on November 2018 Central government decided to celebrate 550th birth anniversary of Shri Guru Nanak Dev at national and international level for a period of one year from November 2018 to November 2019.

Cabinet approves signing UN Convention on Mediation

Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved signing of United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA) resulting from mediation by India. It is scheduled to be signed in Singapore on 7th August, 2019 or at the United Nations.

UN Convention on International Settlement Agreement (UNISA)

It is also known as Singapore Convention on Mediation. It was adopted by UN General Assembly (UNGA) in December 2018.

It provides uniform framework for enforcement of international settlement agreements resulting from mediation and for allowing parties to invoke such agreements akin to framework that Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (New York, 1958) (New York Convention) provides for arbitral awards.

It defines two additional grounds upon which court may, on its own motion, refuse to grant relief. These grounds related to fact that dispute is not be capable of settlement by mediation or is contrary to public policy.

It ensures that settlement reached by parties becomes binding and enforceable in accordance with simplified and streamlined procedure.

It seeks to become essential instrument in facilitation of international trade and in promotion of

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mediation as alternative and effective method of resolving trade disputes. It also seeks to contribute to strengthening access to justice, and to the rule of law.

Benefits of signing for India

It will boost the confidence of investors. It will also provide positive signal to foreign investors about India's commitment to adhere to international practice on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

Girraj Prasad Gupta takes over as the Controller General of Accounts

Girraj Prasad Gupta took over as Controller General of Accounts (CGA), Department of Expenditure, Union Ministry of Finance with effect from 1 August 2019. He is 1983-batch Indian Civil Accounts Service (ICAS) Officer. He is highly credited for his work in development and implementation of Public Financial Management System (PFMS), a backbone IT infrastructure for Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and other financial management modules in Central Government.

Controller General of Accounts (CGA)

CGA is Principal Accounting Adviser to Government of India. It functions under Department of Expenditure, Union Ministry of Finance.

CGA heads the organisation and is responsible for administering this system.

It is responsible for establishing and maintaining a technically sound Management Accounting System.

CGA office prepares monthly as well as annual analysis of expenditure, revenues, borrowings and various fiscal indicators for Union Government. It prepares **Annual Appropriation Accounts (Civil)** and **Union Finance Accounts** which are submitted to Parliament under **Article 150 of Constitution**.

It is not a constitutional or statutory body.

India to conduct 1st National Time Release Study for faster movement of Cargo

Department of Revenue, under Union Ministry of Finance, is conducting India's 1st National Time Release Study (TRS) for enabling faster movement of cargo across borders to benefit traders. TRS is an internationally recognized tool advocated by Brussels based **World Customs Organization** (WCO) to measure efficiency and effectiveness of international trade flows.

National Time Release Study

It is an initiative for accountable governance that will measure rule based and procedural bottlenecks including physical touchpoints in clearance of goods, from time of arrival until physical release of cargo. It is part of India's strategic commitment to improve global trade will be conducted between 1- 7 August 2019. However, from now onwards exercise will be institutionalized on an annual basis, during same period every year.

Objective: To identify and address bottlenecks in trade flow process. To take corresponding policy and operational measures required to improve effectiveness and efficiency of border procedures, without compromising efficient trade control.

Expected Beneficiaries: will be export oriented industries and MSMEs (Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises) who will enjoy greater standardization of Indian processes with comparable international standards.

Process Followed:

Earlier individual customs formations had been independently conducting TRS studies at port level. However National TRS have evolved a uniform, multi-dimensional methodology which measures regulatory and logistics aspects of cargo clearance process and establishes average release time for goods. National TRS will have standardized operations and procedures across all ports and will also establish baseline performance measurement. Exercise will be conducted at same time across 15 ports including sea, air, land and dry ports which together accounts for 81% of total Bills of Entries for import and 67% of Shipping Bills for export filed within India.

Based on results of TRS, government agencies associated with cross border trade will be able to diagnose existing and potential bottlenecks which act as barriers to free flow of trade and thus enabling them to take remedial actions for reducing cargo release time. The initiative is on ground lead by **Central Board of Indirect Tax and Customs** (CBIC).

Benefits:



This initiative will help India maintain upward trajectory on **Ease of Doing Business** (EDB), particularly on Trading Across Borders indicator which measures efficiency of cross border trade ecosystem (i.e. time and cost associated with logistical process of exporting and importing goods every year). In 2018 India's ranking on indicator improved from 146 to 80.

Ravish Kumar wins 2019 Ramon Magsaysay Award

Indian journalist Ravish Kumar (44) of NDTV news channel was chosen for 2019 Ramon Magsaysay Award. He has been given this prestigious award in recognition for *harnessing journalism to give voice to voiceless*. He is among 5 individuals who were chosen for this year's award. The award will be presented to all recipients at a ceremony in Manila (Capital of Philippines) on 9 September 2019.

About Ravish Kumar

He is one of India's most influential TV journalists. He is also NDTV India's senior executive editor. His news show 'Prime Time' that is broadcasted on NDTV deals with real-life, under-reported problems of ordinary people.

He was chosen for Ramon Magsaysay Award, Asia's premier prize in recognition of his unfaltering commitment to a professional, ethical journalism of highest standards, his moral courage in standing up for truth, integrity, and independence as well as for his principled belief that it is in giving voice to voiceless, in speaking truth bravely yet soberly to power, that journalism fulfills its noblest aims to advance democracy.

charu bhardwaj | bhardwaj.charu@gmail.com |

2019 awardees—



About Ramon Magsaysay Award

- It is Asia's premier prize and highest honour. It is often regarded as region's equivalent of the Nobel Prize.
- It was established in 1957 by trustees of New York City (NYC) based Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Philippine government.
- It celebrates the memory and leadership example of the third Philippine president Ramon Magsaysay after whom the award is named
- It is awarded annually to individuals or organizations from Asia region for their altruistic, selfless and philanthropic service.
- It carries Medallion bearing likeness of the late President Ramon Magsaysay, cash prize and a certificate.
- In 2018, it was awarded to two Indians Bharat Vatwani and Sonam Wangchuk.

KABIL: Govt sets up Khanij Bidesh India Ltd to ensure supply of strategic minerals

Union Ministry of Mines has set up joint venture company namely Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) to ensure a consistent supply of critical and strategic minerals to Indian domestic market. This new

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company is mandated to ensure mineral security of the country and help in realizing the overall objective of import substitution.

About Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL)

Ownership: It is JV of National Aluminium Company Ltd (Nalco), Hindustan Copper Ltd (HCL) and Mineral Exploration Company Ltd (MECL). The equity participation between NALCO, HCL and MECL is in ratio of 40:30:30.

Functions: (i) It will carry out identification, acquisition, exploration, development, mining and processing of strategic minerals overseas for commercial use and meeting country's requirement of these minerals. (ii) Help in building partnerships with other mineral rich countries like Australia and those in South America and Africa, where Indian expertise in exploration and mineral processing will be mutually beneficial bringing about new economic opportunities.

Background

Strategic minerals play substantial role to play in development and security of the nation and play critical role in the development of the national economy. In India, there are twelve minerals identified as strategic minerals including Lithium, Cobalt, Tungsten, Vanadium, Nickel etc. India is having very low domestic resource bases of these strategic minerals and is highly dependent on imports to meet its supply demand. At present sourcing of strategic minerals is done by creating trading opportunities, G2G collaborations with producing countries or strategic acquisitions or investments in exploration and mining assets of these minerals in the source countries. However, it is major area of concern for India, since regular supply from foreign countries may be interrupted for obvious reasons such as changing the geopolitical situation or major foreign mineral producers forming cartels (similar to OPEC) to dictate the prices.

Way Ahead

In present geopolitical scenario, it is imperative on India to focus on adopting superior technology for recycling, exploring substitutes, retain and modernize stockpiling of strategic materials. It should also encourage R&D in this area. Moreover, supply of these strategic minerals should be secured through strategic acquisition of overseas mines by forming diplomatic ties and trade agreements to avoid supply disruptions.

Maharashtra: 1st state to adopt digital fingerprint and iris scanning system

Maharashtra became first state in the country to adopt an Automated Multi-modal Biometric Identification System (AMBIS) i.e. digital fingerprint and iris scanning system to help police investigations. This system will soon be replicated by police forces of other states in the country.

Automated Multi-modal Biometric Identification System (AMBIS)

Composition: AMBIS unit comprises computer terminal, camera, and iris, fingerprint, and palm scanners. It also includes portable system to dust off and capture fingerprints from crime scenes.

It can be integrated with facial recognition from CCTV cameras that enables police to cross-reference and apart from solving fresh crimes it can even put faces to criminals whose fingerprints have been captured on paper for more than decades.

AMBIS is updated version of **Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS)**, which has been used by Indian law enforcement agencies to search finger and palm prints. It will replace AFIS which has limited utility, providing only one-to-one fingerprint matches as compared multimodal matches possible with AMBIS.

It also matches standard requirements set by United States National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Implementation: Before its formal launch, system was introduced at selected Mumbai based police stations that have upgraded tech infrastructure like **Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and System (CCTNS)**. Now it will be rolled out in the 1,160 police stations, 7 police ranges, 10 central jails, 12 police training centres, and 4 fingerprint bureaus in Maharashtra.

Way forward: AMBIS adopted by Maharashtra Police will soon be replicated across country. State government is working with *National Crime Records Bureau* to create standards to be used by other state police forces.



Parliament passes Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2019

Parliament passed Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, 2019 to provide stricter punishments for child sex abuse. It was first passed by Rajya Sabha on July 24, 2019 and then by Lok Sabha on August 1, 2019. The Bill amends Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012 which provides legal framework to protect children from offences such as sexual assault, sexual harassment, and pornography.

Salient Features of Bill

Penetrative sexual assault: The bill increases minimum punishment for this offence from 7 years to 10 years. It also provides for with imprisonment between 20 years to life, with fine if person commits penetrative sexual assault on child below age of 16 years.

Aggravated penetrative sexual assault: The Bill adds two more grounds to definition of aggravated penetrative sexual assault. These include: (i) assault resulting in death of child and (ii) assault committed during natural calamity or in any similar situations of violence. It also increases minimum punishment from 10 years to 20 years, and maximum punishment to death penalty.

Aggravated sexual assault: The Bill adds two more offences to definition of aggravated sexual assault. These include: (i) assault committed during natural calamity and (ii) administering or help in administering any chemical substance or any hormone to child for the purpose of attaining early sexual maturity.

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Child Pornography: The Bill defines child pornography as any visual depiction of sexually explicit conduct that involves child such as photograph, video, digital or even computer generated image indistinguishable from actual child. It also enhances punishments for certain offences related to child pornography.

Storage of pornographic material: It increases punishment for storage of pornographic material with imprisonment between three to five years, or fine, or both. In addition, it also adds two other offences for storage of pornographic material involving children. These include: (i) transmitting, displaying, distributing such material except for the purpose of reporting it and (ii) failing to destroy or delete or report pornographic material involving child.

IMMUVAC , VPM1002: India's 1st large-scale trial of two new TB vaccines launched

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) launched India's first large-scale trial for two new tuberculosis (TB) vaccines named **IMMUVAC** and **VPM1002**. These vaccines aim to prevent infection (pre-exposure) or prevent primary progression or reactivation of latent TB infection (post-exposure), all of which have critical role to play in India's big fight against TB. Both vaccines have been manufactured by Indian pharmaceutical companies.

About Vaccines

- **Immuvac:** It is also known as mycobacterium indicus pranii (MIP). It has been manufactured by Ahmedabad based Cadila Pharmaceuticals,
- **VPM1002:** It is manufactured by Pune based Serum Institute of India.

Need for new vaccines

At present Bacille Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccine is widely used in routine **Expanded Programme of Immunisation** (EPI) across the world. However, this vaccine is over century old and provides poor protection against pulmonary disease in adolescents and adults.

About Trial

This will be first large preventive TB vaccine trial in the country involving more than 12,000 healthy household contacts of newly diagnosed TB patients from across six states of India. These six states including Delhi, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana and Karnataka with two thousand participants have enrolled for these trials. Depending on the results, ICMR will give recommendations to Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Tuberculosis (TB)

It is infectious disease which is caused by bacteria *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* (MTB).

Symptom: Early symptoms of TB include bad cough which may lasts for 3 weeks or even longer. It causes pain in chest and one might also end up coughing blood. It mainly affects lungs and can also infect other parts of body.

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TB in India: As per Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's 2018 annual report of Central TB division, the incidence of TB in India was nearly 2.8 million annually and incidence of **multidrug-resistant TB (MDR TB)** was 1,47,000 per year. India has highest share of global TB burden, contributing to 27% of total global burden. The total number of deaths because of TB in India was 4,23,000 and with incidence of HIV-TB was 87,000 per year. In this background, in 2017, Central government had committed to eliminate TB from the country by 2025.

August 3, 2019

1- 7 August: World Breastfeeding Week being celebrated

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is being observed throughout world from 1-7 August 2019 in more than 120 countries with **theme**– *Empower Parents, Enable Breastfeeding*. Focus of this year is on protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding.

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW)

Background: WBW was first inaugurated in 1991 and was 1st celebrated in 1992 by World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA).

As of 2019 it is now observed in over 120 countries by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO) and their partners including individuals, organizations, and governments. WABA was established on 1991 with goal to re-establish a global breastfeeding culture and provide support for breastfeeding everywhere.

charu bhardwaj | bhardwajs.charu@gmail.com |

Objectives:

To encourage parents to adopt breastfeeding

To create awareness among parents about breastfeeding

To create awareness about importance of initiation and exclusive breastfeeding, and adequate and appropriate complementary feeding

To provide advocacy material about importance of breastfeeding

Celebrations in India

This year **Food and Nutrition Board** under Union Ministry of Women and Child Development, is organizing a number of activities to celebrate WBW with focus on protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding.

Activities: such as Annaprashan Ceremony of babies at anganwadi centres by collecting beneficiaries from adjoining anganwadi centres and Quiz competition on **Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF)** are being conducted in 30 States and Union Territories (UT's) through 43 Community Food and Nutrition Extension Units of Food and Nutrition Board. Conference for lactating mothers and anganwadi workers are also being organized to create awareness about importance of breastfeeding.

This involves participation from State functionaries of Health Department, Home Science Colleges, Medical Institutes, Universities, Non-Governmental Organisation (NGOs) and other stakeholders.

Exhibitions will also be organized at grassroots level on nutrition, displaying low cost nutritious diets for infants and young children.

Awareness generation programmes on-

Healthy eating, importance of maintaining hygiene and sanitation will be held for pregnant and lactating mothers at village level through dance and drama, puppet shows, skits, films, slide shows, AV Spots and rallies.

Why is Breastfeeding important?

It promotes better health for both mothers as well as children.

It prevents infections such as diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections in early infancy and thus help in reducing infant mortality.

It decreases risk of mothers developing breast cancer, ovarian cancer, type 2 diabetes, and heart disease.

It protects infants from obesity-related illnesses, diabetes and increases IQ.

Significance

The important nutrition intervention through observance of week-long celebration of Breastfeeding will help in breaking vicious cycle of malnutrition and aid Government to achieve **National Nutrition Goals**

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and **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030**. As per World Health Organisation (WHO), increasing breastfeeding to near-international levels will help in saving more than 8 lakh lives every year, majority of it being children under 6 months.

Indus Valley inscriptions were written logographically: Research

A recent research paper has claimed that majority of Indus Valley inscriptions were written *logographically* (by using word signs) and not by using *phonograms* (speech sounds units). This paper titled *Interrogating Indus inscription to unravel their mechanism of meaning conveyance* was published in Palgrave Communications, a Nature group journal. It mainly focused on understanding how Indus inscriptions conveyed meanings, rather than on deciphering what they conveyed.

Indus Inscriptions

They were discovered from nearly 4,000 ancient inscribed objects, including seals, ivory rods, tablets, pottery shards, etc. They are one of most enigmatic legacies of Indus Valley civilization which have not been deciphered due to absence of bilingual texts, extreme brevity of inscriptions, and ignorance about language(s) encoded by Indus script.

Key Findings of Paper

Majority of the Indus Valley inscriptions were written logographically (by using word signs) and not by using phonograms (speech sounds units).

The inscriptions can be compared to structured messages found on stamps, coupons, tokens and currency coins of modern times.

It classifies signs into nine functional classes. Based on various archaeological evidence it claims that inscribed seals and tablets were used in some administrative operation that controlled the commercial transactions prevalent in the trade-savvy settlements of the ancient Indus valley Civilisation.

The popular hypothesis that Indus valley seals were inscribed with *Proto-Dravidian* or *Proto-Indo-European* names of seal-owners does not hold ground.

Though many ancient scripts use rebus principle methods (in which word-symbol sometimes gets used only for its sound value) to generate new words, but inscriptions found on Indus seals and tablets have not used rebus as mechanism to convey meaning.

Significance of this study: It could serve as basis in future for deciphering of Indus Valley script.

BIS to set up Pashmina Testing Centre in Leh

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has announced setting up Pashmina testing centre in Leh region of Jammu and Kashmir to check the quality of pashmina collected. It will be set up in partnership with lab of **Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC)**, Leh. The centre will have standards testing lab, machines and scientists to check the quality of pashmina collected. It also released BI Standards of Pashmina. BIS will also train the locals, with cooperation of LAHDC in marking of the standards to save the time and money.

About Pashmina

It is a fine type of Kashmiri wool (also known as 'cashmere' in the West). The word Pashmina in Kashmiri means 'Soft Gold'. It is used to make shawl, scarf and wrap or stole. This unique variety of wool is obtained from four distinct breeds of Cashmere goats namely Malra from Kargil area in Kashmir region, Changthangi (or Kashmir Pashmina goat) from Changthang Plateau in Kashmir region, Chegu from Himachal Pradesh and Chyangara (or Nepalese Pashmina goat) from Nepal. Kashmir Pashmina has been accorded Geographical indication (GI) tag under Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.

Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2019 passed by Lok Sabha

Lok Sabha passed Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2019 by a voice vote and amendments moved by members of opposition parties were also defeated. The bill ends automatic nomination of Congress President as trustee of Jallianwala Bagh Memorial trust. It was introduced in Lok Sabha by Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister of State for Culture on 8 July 2019 that.

Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2019

It amends **Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951** which provides for erection of a National Memorial in memory of those killed or wounded on 13 April 1919, in Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. It also

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creates a Trust to manage National Memorial.

Composition of Trustees: Under 1951 Act, Trustees of Memorial include- (1) Prime Minister as Chairperson, (2) President of Indian National Congress (INC), (3) Minister in-charge of Culture, (4) Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, (5) Governor of Punjab, (6) Chief Minister of Punjab and (7) 3 eminent persons nominated by central government.

Bill amends this composition of trustees provision to remove President of Indian National Congress as a Trustee. Amendment bill also clarifies that in case of no Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, then leader of single largest opposition party will be Trustee.

Tenure of Trustee: Act provides that 3 trustees nominated by central government will be trustees for a period of 5 years and will also be eligible for renomination.

Bill also allows central government to terminate term of a nominated trustee before expiry of period of his term without assigning any reason.

Parliament passes Repealing and Amending Bill, 2019

Parliament has passed Repealing and Amending Bill, 2019 that seeks to repeal certain enactments and to amend certain other enactments. The bill provides for repealing 58 old and obsolete laws which have no relevance at present and makes minor amendments to two other laws. It was introduced in Lok Sabha on 25 July 2019 by Union Minister of Law and Justice Ravi Shankar Prasad.

Repealing and Amending Bill, 2019

Repealing certain laws in whole: Bill repeals 68 laws that have been listed in 1st Schedule of Bill.

These include: (1) *Beedi Workers Welfare Fund Act, 1976* (2) *Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2001*.

Amendment of certain laws: Bill makes minor amendments to two Acts which relate to substitution of certain words. These two Acts are: (1) *Income Tax Act (IT), 1961* and (2) *India Institutes of Management (IIM) Act, 2017*.

NOTE: Since NDA government came to power for 1st term in 2014, it started identifying obsolete laws and has so far repealed 1,428 old and archaic central Acts and about 75 laws which Centre drafted for states in view of President rule have also been repealed till date. This periodic review of old laws is part of governance.

Parliament passes Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019

Parliament has passed Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019 to empower Central Government to designate an individual as a "terrorist". It was first passed by Lok Sabha on 24 July 2019 and later by Rajya Sabha on 2 August 2019.

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019

It seeks to empower Central Government to designate an individual "terrorist" if they are found committing, preparing for, promoting, or involved in an act of terror. Earlier, Central Government was having powers only to designate organisation as terrorist organisation.

Investigation by NIA: The Bill additionally empowers officers of **National Investigation Agency (NIA)**, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases. Earlier, officers of the rank of Deputy Superintendent or Assistant Commissioner of Police or above were empowered to conduct investigation of cases under the Act.

Seizure of property by NIA: It will be mandatory for officer of NIA conducting investigation related to terror cases to take approval Director General of NIA for seizure of such property.

Insertion to schedule of treaties: The parent Act defines terrorist acts to include acts committed within scope of any of treaties listed in its schedule. The Bill adds another treaty to this list-*International Convention for Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (2005)*.

Indian Army in partnership with EESL employs e-cars to combat pollution

Indian Army in partnership with Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) has launched ecological initiative of employing **E Cars** for use of its officials in New Delhi. Under this ecological initiative, first lot of 10 e-Cars was flagged off by Indian Army. Now, Indian Indian Army is planning to further increase number of E Cars in Delhi to ensure economy, efficiency and minimal emissions. The introduction of e-cars in Army was visualized on *World Environment Day* and in lines with government policies on environmental



protection.

About Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL)

It is a Super Energy Service Company (ESCO) that facilitates implementation of energy efficiency project. It functions under Union Ministry of Power. It was established in December 2009 and is headquartered in New Delhi.

It is a joint venture of NTPC Limited, Power Finance Corporation (PFC), Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) and POWERGRID Corporation of India Limited.

Functions: It leads market-related activities of the *National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE)*, one of the eight national missions under Prime Minister's National Action Plan on Climate Change. It also acts as the resource centre for capacity building of State DISCOMs.

It is also implementing the world's largest energy efficiency portfolio in country. This energy efficiency portfolio includes-

(1) *Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA)*: It is world's largest zero-subsidy domestic LED bulb programme.

(2) *Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP)*: It is world's largest street light replacement programme.

(3) *Agriculture Demand Side management (AgDSM)*: It world's largest Agricultural Demand Side Management programme.

NHB to provide Rs.10,000 cr liquidity infusion facility to HFCs

The housing sector regulator National Housing Bank (NHB) opened a liquidity infusion facility of Rs.10000 crore for Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) to improve liquidity in sector. The move is taken to unveil measures to boost lending and accelerate growth.

About Liquidity Infusion Facility

This decision by NHB to infuse an additional Rs.10000 crore into Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) would enable companies to provide individual loans for affordable housing. This new facility is over and above two existing refinance schemes of NHB.

Reason: This liquidity infusion move comes before the meeting of Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with heads of all public sector banks to review issues linked to credit growth against the backdrop of a slowdown in several sectors. These various key sectors of economy include medium and small industries (MSME), retail, automobiles, affordable housing, non-banking finance companies (NBFC), housing finance companies (HFCs) to boost growth.

Importance: This is an important measure to ease fund flow to housing sector and would serve as additional liquidity for individual housing loans in affordable segment.

National Housing Bank (NHB)

It was established in 1988, under **National Housing Bank Act, 1987**. It is an All India Financial Institution (AIFI).

Function: It is an apex agency that operates as a principal agency to promote housing finance institutions both at local as well as regional levels. It also provides financial and other support incidental to such institutions and for matters connected therewith.

10th Mekong Ganga Cooperation Ministerial meeting held in Bangkok

The 10th Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) Ministerial Meeting was held in Bangkok, Thailand. India was represented by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. During this meeting, new MGC Plan of Action 2019-2022 was adopted.

New MGC Plan of Action 2019-2022

It envisages project-based cooperation among member countries in various areas including tourism and culture, education, public health and traditional medicine, agriculture and allied sectors, transport and communication, MSMEs and water resources management.

About Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC)

It is sub-regional cooperation organisation comprising India and five ASEAN countries, namely, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam. It was launched in 2000 at Laos capital Vientiane. It takes its name from Ganga and Mekong, the two civilisational rivers in Southeast Asia.

Mandate: To facilitate closer contacts among people inhabiting these two (Ganga and Mekong) major

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civilisational river basins and enhancing cooperation in culture, tourism, education, transport and communications among member countries.

Note: Mekong River Basin countries are Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

August 4-5, 2019

QRSAM: successfully test-fired by DRDO

Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted two back-to-back flight tests of its state of the art **Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missiles (QRSAM)** from Integrated Test Range (ITR), Chandipur in Odisha. The test was conducted against live aerial targets.

Key Highlights of Test

Two missiles were tested against two live targets and met complete mission objectives of engaging targets.

Entire mission was captured by various *Electro Optical Tracking Systems (EOTS)*, *Radar Systems* and *Telemetry Systems*.

Systems have been tested in final configuration with RADAR (radio detection and ranging) mounted on a vehicle & missiles on launcher.

Systems are equipped with indigenously-developed Phased array radar, Inertial Navigation System, Data Link & RF seeker.

Test Result: Two missiles were tested for different altitude and conditions and test flights successfully demonstrated their high manoeuvring capabilities, aerodynamics, propulsion and structural performance.

About Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missiles (QRSAM)

It is a sophisticated *all-weather and all-terrain* missile.

Developed By: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for Indian army with search and track on move capability with very short reaction time.

Features:

QRSAM uses solid-fuel propellant.

Range: 25-30 km

It can be mounted on a truck and stored in a canister.

It is equipped with electronic counter measures against jamming by aircraft radars.

It has many state of the art technologies with which it can engage targets at different ranges and altitudes.

NOTE: 1st trial of QSRAM was conducted on 4 June 2017 and on 26 February 2019, two rounds of trials were successfully carried out on same day.

RBI tightens fit-and-proper criteria for directors on PSB boards

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has tightened fit-and-proper criteria for directors on boards of state-run Public Sector Banks (PSBs). In this regard, it has issued RBI ('Fit and Proper' Criteria for Elected Directors on the Boards of PSBs) Directions, 2019.

Purpose of directions is to determine 'fit and proper' status of person to be eligible to be elected as a director on PSBs. It has for the first time, laid down exhaustive list for the disqualification of directors. The revised norms are applicable only to PSBs and RBI in future may issue separate guidelines for private banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFcs).

Revised Fit & proper regime

Nomination and Remuneration Committee (NRC): PSBs are required to constitute NRC consisting of minimum of three non-executive directors from amongst board of directors. Centre's nominee director shall not be part of the NRC.

Criteria for Candidate: The candidate who wants to become elected director should be between 35-67 years old. Elected director shall hold office for a period of 3 years. Director post shall be eligible for re-election, provided that no director holds office for period not more than (exceeding) 6 years, whether served continuously/intermittently.

Exemptions: It bars candidate who is member of board of RBI, any rival bank, Financial Institution (FI), Insurance Company or NOFHC (non-operative financial holding company). It also bars candidate who is engaged in business of stock broking or partner of Chartered Accountant (CA) firm presently engaged as



Statutory Central Auditor of any nationalised bank or State Bank of India (SBI).

It bars members of Parliament (MPs), state legislatures (MLAs), and local governments from becoming members of PSB boards. It also exempts person involved in hire purchase, financing, money lending, investment, leasing and other para banking activities from appointment.

France's Franky Zapata successfully crosses English Channel on hoverboard for 1st time

France's Franky Zapata successfully crossed English Channel on a jet-powered hoverboard for 1st time. The journey took just over 20 minutes. The French inventor reached speeds of 110 mph to complete 22-mile journey on his flyboard. He took off from Sangatte, northern France and landed in St. Margarets Bay, near Dover in southeast England. This was his 2nd attempt after a failed attempt in July 2019.

About Franky Zapata

In July 2019, he captured world's imagination when he took to skies above Paris at Bastille Day parade with board that can reach an altitude of nearly 500 feet and speed of 87mph.

He has worked with United States (US) and French militaries.

Invention: In 2011 he invented **Flyboard**, a device that uses a water jet to propel rider through air behind a boat. He later invented **Flyboard Air**, a board powered by four turbo jet engines that allows a rider to fly through air untethered, using a computer to keep it stabilized.

World Record: In 2016, Zapata set a world record for farthest hoverboard flight after he flew Flyboard Air along the south coast of France for 2,252 meters (around 1.4 miles).

Significance: French military invested \$1.4 million to pay for tests of board as French special forces are interested in flying board for several uses such as a possible assault device.

About English Channel

It is also called as the '**Channel**'. In French, Channel is called **La Manche** (the sleeve).

It is narrow arm of Atlantic Ocean.

It is a water body that separates Southern England from northern France and links southern part of North Sea to Atlantic Ocean.

It is **busiest shipping area in world**.

Crossing of English Channel

Over the years English Channel has been crossed in many innovative ways such as by gondola, pedalo, hot air balloon, hovercraft, monoski, glider and parachute.

In July 1909, French aviator **Louis Blériot** made 1st airplane flight between continental Europe and Great Britain in a monoplane.

In 1875, **Captain Matthew Webb** (British marine) was 1st to swim from Dover to Calais, completing journey in 21 hours and 45 minutes.



ISRO sets up Space Situational Awareness Control Centre in Bengaluru

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) laid foundation stone for Space Situational Awareness Control Centre in Bengaluru, Karnataka to protect Indian satellites from space debris. It will facilitate intensified activities foreseen for Space Situational Awareness & Management (SSAM), in view of the increasing debris population and operational space assets.

About Space Situational Awareness Control Centre

- It will host range of activities related to protection of space assets of India from inactive satellites, pieces of orbiting objects, near earth asteroids as well as adverse space weather conditions.
- It will also assimilate tracking data of inactive satellites from indigenous observation facilities and with help of analysis generate useful information from fundamental observations.
- It will also enable research activities pertaining to active debris removal, space debris modelling and mitigation for sustainable use of space.

Background

Currently, ISRO has fleet of 50 functional satellites, including communication, navigation and surveillance satellites, in space. Till now, ISRO was dependent on North America Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) data for keeping track of space debris and monitoring our active and passive (dead) satellites. This global data is available in public domain and is not accurate as compared to accurate data provided

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by NORAD exclusively to members of its network (ISRO is not its member, so it can't access this data). Space Situational Awareness & Management (SSAM) has become internationally significant area due to rise of manmade space debris and increased collision threat with operational spacecraft. In this regard, ISRO has set up Directorate of Space Situational Awareness and Management aimed at protecting India's high-value space assets from space debris' collisions and close approach.

Tigers in India face lurking threat from Canine Distemper Virus

According to recent study published in *Threatened Taxa*, tigers face glooming threat from Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) transmitted from CDV-infected dogs living in and around wildlife sanctuaries. It has found that 86% of tested dogs around *Ranthambhore National Park* in Rajasthan carried CDV antibodies in their bloodstream. This finding points out that there is increased risk of disease transfer from the dogs to tigers and leopards that live in the park. In 2018, over 20 lions from *Gir Wildlife Sanctuary* had died due to canine distemper virus infection.

About Canine Distemper Virus

It is highly contagious viral disease that attacks gastrointestinal, respiratory, central nervous systems, immune system and other vital organs of wide variety of animal species, including dogs, coyotes, foxes, pandas and wolves. In most of the cases, this infection is fatal. It is also known as **hardpad disease**. It is considered dangerous virus and is blamed for wiping out 30% population of African lions in East African forests.

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Cause: It is caused by single-stranded RNA virus of family *Paramyxoviridae* (the same family of viruses that causes mumps, measles, and bronchiolitis in humans). This virus is similar to measles virus in humans and rinderpest virus which affects cattle.

Transmission: It is highly contagious via inhalation and can also be transmitted by shared food and water bowls and equipment.

Treatment/Diagnosis: There is no cure for canine distemper infection. Its treatment typically consists of supportive care and generic efforts to prevent infections.

Way Forward

As a precautionary measure, National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has prepared guideline to prevent the spillover of this viral disease to wild animals. Free-ranging and domestic dogs in the area around national parks should be vaccinated which will help to reduce chances of disease spillover to wildlife.

What is 'Machail Mata Yatra'?

After the suspension of annual Amarnath Yatra, 'Machail Mata Yatra' in Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was suspended due to security reasons. Concerned authorities have asked people not to start yatra and those on way to leave and go back. Yatra started on 25 July and was scheduled to end on 5 September.

Machail Mata Yatra

Machail Mata is a Goddess Durga (also known by name Kaali or Chandi) shrine which is popularly known as Machail Mata. It is located in Machail village, from where it derives its name, in Kishtwar District of Jammu region.

Machail Mata Sthan as shrine is popularly known for its landscape of unblemished beauty with hills, glaciers and tributaries of Chenab River (also called Chadrabhaga).

Paddar valley, is famous for its world-famous sapphire mines.

43-day-long Pilgrimage happens in month of August only every year. During yatra thousands of devotees from across India pay obeisance at holy shrine of goddess Durga which includes a trek of 30-km arduous route.

Terrorism: Kishtwar was declared terrorism-free over a decade ago but it was rattled by killing of state secretary of BJP Anil Parihar and his brother on 1 November 2018, followed by assassination of senior RSS leader Chanderkant Sharma and his security guard inside a health centre on 9 April 2019.

Centre approves Rs 4,900 crore Kosi-Mechi Interlinking project

Union Government has approved Rs 4,900 crore Kosi-Mechi Interlinking project for interlinking of Kosi and Mechi rivers of Bihar. This is the second major river interlinking project in the country to be approved

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by Central Government after the Ken-Betwa project in Madhya Pradesh. This approval comes after this project secured the last remaining mandatory technical-cum-administrative nod from Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

About Kosi-Mechi Interlinking project

It envisages diversion of part of surplus water of Kosi river through existing Hanuman Nagar barrage to Mechi River of Mahananda basin. Mechi River is important tributary of Mahananda river. Its basin is mostly deficient in providing adequate water for irrigation.

Benefits

It will give relieve large swathes of north Bihar (especially Seemanchal region) from menace of recurring floods. It will channel surplus water from Kosi River into Mahananda, thus optimizing redistribution of the surplus waters and providing it for irrigation of whopping 2.14 lakh hectares of command areas spread across the districts of Kishanganj, Araria, Purnia and Katihar in north Bihar.

It has the potential to usher in next green revolution in Seemanchal region. This project involves no displacement of population and there is no diversion of any forest land. Besides, no national park, wildlife sanctuary, eco-sensitive areas, etc. are present within 10 kilometer (km) radius of project.

National Project Status

Kosi-Mechi Interlinking project has not yet received coveted National Project Status. But on the lines of Ken-Betwa project in MP (India's first Interlinking of rivers project), this project also qualifies for a 'National Project' status because of number of reasons, including its huge flood management and irrigation potential.

Moreover, its entire command area is contiguous to international boundary (India-Nepal). National Project status for this project will mean that majority of funding support will be borne by Central Government instead of State Government.

GJ 357 d: NASA's TESS discovers 1st nearby super-earth

NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) mission has discovered **GJ 357 d**, a super-Earth planet located 31 light years away from our own solar system. Researchers claim that it is the first nearby "super-Earth" planet that could possibly support life as it orbit within its star's "habitable zone or Goldilocks Zone".

About GJ 357 d

It is super-Earth planet discovered in early 2019 by NASA's TESS. It is located GJ 357 planetary system which has diminutive M-type dwarf sun, about one-third the size of our own sun and harbour in three planets including GJ 357 d.

It is about 31 light-years away from our solar system. It orbits a star named GJ 357. It is 22% larger than Earth and orbits 11 times closer to its star than Mercury does to our sun. It has thick atmosphere and is thought to have surface temperatures up to 254 degrees Celsius. It may be receiving about the same amount of energy from its star as Mars does from the sun and it could be maintaining liquid water on its surface like Earth.

Significance of discovery: It will provide valuable information about this super-Earth planet and other large exoplanets outside our solar system. It has opened has door for astronomers to test theories and models about exoplanets.

Terminologies

Exoplanet: It is planet that orbits star outside of our own solar system.

Super Earth: It is extrasolar planet with mass higher than Earth's, but substantially below masses of the Solar System's ice giants, Uranus and Neptune. It only refers to mass of the planet, and does not imply anything about the habitability or surface conditions.

Vinesh Phogat wins Gold in 53kg in Poland Open Wrestling Tournament

Indian Wrestler Vinesh Phogat won gold in women's 53kg category at Poland Open wrestling tournament in Warsaw (capital of Poland). The 24 year old prevailed 3-2 over wrestler Roksana of Poland in final of competition. This is her 3rd consecutive gold in women's 53kg category after Spain and Turkey.

Key Highlights

She had earlier beaten Sofia Mattson of Sweden, Rio Olympics bronze medallist, in quarterfinals of this

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international tournament.

In July 2019 Vinesh Phogat, the top Indian woman wrestler had stood atop podium i.e. won gold at Grand Prix of Spain and at Yasar Dogu International at Istanbul in Turkey.

Since changing her weight category from 50 kg to 53 kg, she has continued her winning spree by winning a silver, a bronze, and three gold medals.

In September 2019 she will next represent India at **World Championships in Nursultan** in Kazakhstan that offers 6 Tokyo Olympic quotas in each weight category.

J&K Reorganisation Bill 2019 passed in Rajya Sabha

After passing a statutory resolution on scrapping special status to Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) by diluting Article 370, Rajya Sabha has now passed voting on J&K Reorganisation Bill 2019 which will effectively bifurcate state of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories – Jammu and Kashmir with a legislature and Ladakh without legislature. A statutory resolution on Article 370 and J&K reorganisation bill were passed by Rajya Sabha and will be put to vote in Lok Sabha next.

Jammu and Kashmir will also become largest union territory (UT) in India in terms of area once it is carved out while Ladakh, will be 2nd largest UT after it comes to force.

J&K Reorganisation Bill 2019

Assembly Seats: Bill that seeks for division of Jammu and Kashmir will lead to an increase number of seats in newly-constituted Assembly from 107 to 114 out of which 24 seats would be deemed to be vacant till time Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK) comes under jurisdiction of Indian state.

State assembly currently has 111 seats, of which 46 are in Kashmir Valley, 37 in Jammu and remaining 4 are in Ladakh division. After passing of reorganisation bill in Parliament, Ladakh will be a Union territory to be administered by Centre.

Assembly Tenure: With abrogation of Article 370, tenure of J&K state Assembly will now be 5 years as in other parts of state which till now had a special status with a 6-year tenure.

SC/ST Reservation: New Assembly shall have reservation for Scheduled Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribes (ST) as in other parts of state.

Reorganisation of Constituencies: Constituencies will be re-organised through a de-limitation exercise under 2002 Act of Parliament. For purpose of delimitation, 2011 census figures will be taken as benchmark.

Unicameral Polity: Bill also seeks to scrap state's legislative council to make J&K a unicameral polity. State will have a Chief Minister and a Lt Governor and all financial bills will need to cleared by Lt Governor.

What will Change after Scrapping of Article 370?

With abrogation of Article 370, Jammu and Kashmir will now have no separate flag or Constitution and tenure of state legislative assembly will be for a period of 5 years like any other state and 2 union territories in country.

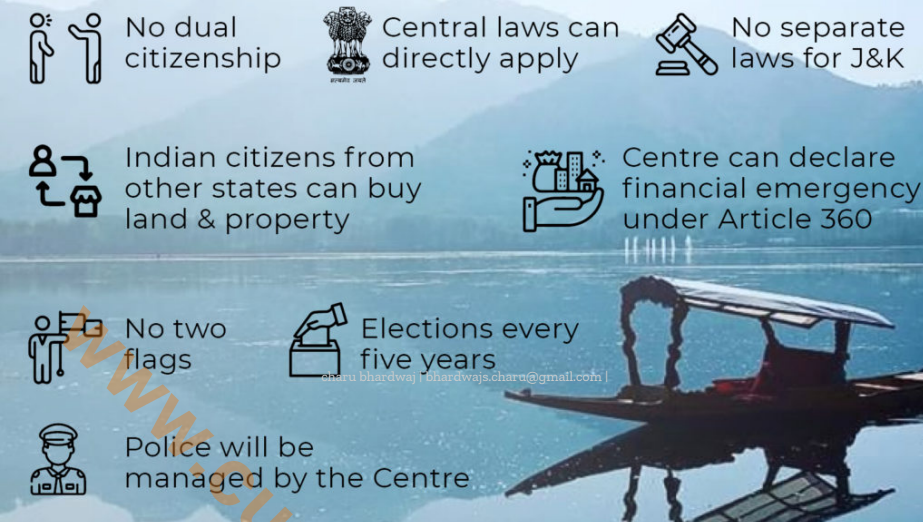
Indian Penal Code (IPC) will replace Ranbir Penal Code (RPC) to deal with criminal matters and Article 356, under which President's rule can be imposed in any state, will also be applicable in union territories (UTs) Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh with unprecedented decision of Centre.

With addition of two new UTs, total number of will go up to 9- J&K, Ladakh, Delhi, Puducherry, Diu and Daman, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Chandigarh, Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.



What may change for J&K

After Article 370 is revoked



Arun Lal awarded CAB's Lifetime Achievement Award

Former India cricketer and Bengal captain Arun Lal conferred with **Karthik Bose Lifetime Achievement** award of the Cricket Association of Bengal's (CAB's) in Kolkata. Former Bengal captain Raju Mukherjee was also considered for 2019 Lifetime Achievement but CAB eventually picked Lal.

About Arun Lal

The 63-year-old right-hander played 16 Test matches and 13 One-Day Internationals (ODIs) for India between 1982 and 1989.

He is known for his gritty determination both on and off field. He won his battle against jaw cancer and was coaching Bengal.

He played 6 seasons for Delhi before becoming a regular feature for Bengal.

CAB president Sourav Ganguly appointed him as a mentor of Bengal team last season.

Career Achievements

He was a major figure in Bengal's Ranji Trophy triumph in 1989 and was credited with instilling a positive attitude in state team's approach.

His highest Test score of 93 came at Eden Gardens (West Bengal), against West Indies in 1987. He has aggregate score of over 10,000 runs in 156 first-class matches.

August 6, 2019

Highlights: 2019 Thailand Open Badminton

The 2019 Thailand Open, a badminton tournament is officially named as **TOYOTA Thailand Open 2019**. It took place at Indoor Stadium Huamark in Bangkok in Thailand from 30 July to 4 August 2019. It had a total purse of \$350,000.

Tournament

The 2019 Thailand Open was 16th tournament of 2019 BWF World Tour. It was also part of Thailand Open international championships, which had been held since 1984.

Tournament was organized by Badminton Association of Thailand with sanction from Badminton World Federation (BWF).

Since 2018 as per new BWF events structure BWF has categorised Thailand Open as one of 7 **BWF World Tour Super 500** events.

BWF is international governing body for badminton sport. It is recognised by International Olympic Committee (IOC), which is a non-governmental sports organisation based in Lausanne, Switzerland.

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Thailand Open Badminton Winners

- **Men's Doubles:** Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty of India
- **Men's Singles:** Chou Tien-chen of Chinese Taipei
- **Women's Doubles:** Shiho Tanaka & Koharu Yonemoto of Japan
- **Women's Singles:** Chen Yufei of China
- **Mixed Doubles:** Huang Dongping & Wang Yiliu China

Maharashtra launches Mission Shakti sports initiative

Film Actor Aamir Khan launched Mission Shakti, a Maharashtra government's initiative to train athletes from tribal areas for international sports events such as Olympics. It will help Maharashtra government to hunt for talented athletes in remote areas of Chandrapur and Gadchiroli.

At the launch event Aamir Khan felicitated a team of tribal mountaineers who had recently scaled Mount Everest as part of '**Mission Shaurya**'.

Mission Shakti

It aims to groom tribal student for an Olympic medal by 2024.

The mission is directed towards **6 sporting disciplines** namely- archery, shooting, volleyball, swimming, weightlifting and gymnastics.

Implementation: For now the programme is being implemented in Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts and will be extended to rest of State soon. State government has set aside funds at district level to construct required facilities and a stadium such as mega sports complex is planned at Ballarpur in Chandrapur with a focus on 6 sports areas.

Significance:

It will speed up state governments programme to spot Olympic talent in remote tribal regions of State.

Through Mission Shakti, international-quality facilities will be provided with a view to increase our medal tally in Olympics.

With help of mission youth from Chandrapur and Gadchiroli, will get a chance to bring laurels to India.

Rajasthan Assembly passes Anti-Lynching Bill

Protection from Lynching Bill, 2019 was passed by Rajasthan Assembly by a voice vote. Bill was introduced by Shanti Dhariwal Parliamentary Affairs Minister in State Assembly on 30 July 2019.

With passage of Anti-Lynching Bill Rajasthan has become **2nd State after Manipur** to have a dedicated legislation that criminalises mob lynching as a special offence. Manipur Assembly had passed a similar Bill in December 2018.

Background

Since April 2017, Rajasthan has witnessed several incidents of mob lynching, when Haryana's dairy farmer Pehlu Khan was killed allegedly by a mob of cow vigilantes on Jaipur-Delhi national highway.

Features of Bill

Punishment: Bill makes Mob Lynching offence cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable offences. Life imprisonment and a fine up to Rs.5 lakh to convicts in cases of mob lynching involving victim's death. Bill makes **conspirators for lynching accountable**. It specifies punishment for-conspiracy/abetment/aides/attempts to lynch; for dissemination of offensive material; and for enforcing a hostile environment.

Nodal Officer: Bill provides for appointment of a nodal officer of rank of Inspector-General of Police (IGP) to prevent lynchings as well as establishment of relief camps in safe zones for victims.

Definition of lynching: Bill defines lynching as an act of violence, whether spontaneous/planned by a mob on the basis of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth, sexual orientation, language, dietary practices, ethnicity and political affiliation.

Criticism: Indian Penal Code (IPC) already have sufficient provisions to penalise offenders, while Bill had changed an important definition by describing just two persons as a mob, thus contradicts related provisions of IPC. Also, Supreme Court had recommended only to Parliament to enact such a law.

Arguments: The subject of Bill was part of concurrent list (both state and centre subjects) and thus State government has power to bring such legislation. Also, definition of mob as 2 or more persons is defended in context that 2 people had ability to grievously harm 3rd person.

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Significance: Bill could become a progressive law, which would promote social harmony.

Rajasthan Assembly passes Bills against honour killing

Rajasthan Assembly passes Bill against honour killing, titled **Rajasthan Prohibition of Interference with the Freedom of Matrimonial Alliances in the Name of Honour and Tradition Bill, 2019**. It makes honour killing punishable by death penalty or life imprisonment. This Bill was passed after making a few amendments on basis of suggestions given by some MLAs during discussion.

Chief Minister of Rajasthan Ashok Gehlot had announced enactment of laws against mob lynching and honour killing while replying to debate on State budget 2019-20 on July 16.

Background

In name of vindicating honour of family/caste/community, there has been increase in illegal intimidation by *self-appointed bodies* for bringing pressure against Sagotra marriages (Marriages within gotra)/inter-community/inter-caste/inter-religious marriages between two consenting adults.

In many cases such bodies tend towards incitement of violence and such newly-married couple or those person who desire of getting married are subjected to intimidation and violence even when such violence is an offence under **Indian Penal Code (IPC)**, it is necessary to prevent assemblies which take place to condemn such matrimonial alliances as also to punish such acts of violence and criminal intimidation severely.

Key Features of Bill

charu bhardwaj | bhardwaj.charu@gmail.com |

Punishment: Bill makes Honour Killing offence cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable offences. It has laid down death penalty/life sentence and a fine up to Rs.5 lakh for killing a couple or either of them on basis that their marriage had dishonoured or brought disrepute to caste/community/family.

Ostracisation: Bill holds accountable those who indulge in ostracisation of such a couple or their family. This also includes pressurising them to leave village or dispossessing them of their land or property or imposing a fine on them.

Definition of Unlawful Assembly: It is a congregation of people whose intention is to deliberate on, or condemning any marriage (not prohibited by law) on basis that such marriage has dishonoured caste/community tradition or has brought disrepute to all or any of persons forming part of assembly/family/people of locality concerned.

In Bill "assemble", "congregate" or "gather" includes acting in concert with use of any technological means/medium, since such proposed actions are propagated on social media.

Assembly Penalty: Members of such assembly shall be punishable with imprisonment between 6 months to 5 years and fine up to Rs.1 lakh. Endangering liberty of such a couple or their supporters shall be punished with 2-5 years and fine up to Rs 1 lakh. Bill also proposes punishment up to 7 years for criminal intimidation.

Punishment based on Level of Hurt:

For causing simple hurt- is 3-5 year imprisonment and fine up to Rs 2 lakh.

For causing grievous hurt- a minimum of 10 year imprisonment that may extend to life imprisonment, as well as fine up to Rs.3 lakh.

For causing death of such a couple/either of them- Convict may be punished with death, imprisonment for life, which shall mean imprisonment for remainder of that person's natural life and with fine up to Rs 5 lakh.

Lok Sabha passes The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019

Lok Sabha passed Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019 that aims to ban commercial surrogacy in India by a voice vote. The bill aims to ensure effective regulation of surrogacy, prohibit commercial surrogacy, and allow ethical surrogacy. It also seeks to prohibit exploitation of surrogate mothers and children born through surrogacy

Salient Features of Bill

Bans commercial surrogacy: It completely bans commercial surrogacy, including sale and purchase of human embryos and gametes, but allows ethical altruistic surrogacy for needy couples on fulfillment of stipulated conditions.



Definition of surrogacy: It has been defined as practice in which woman gives birth to child for intending couple with the intention to hand over the child to the intending couple after the birth.

Altruistic surrogacy: It is allowed and has been defined as surrogacy wherein only medical expenses and insurance coverage is provided by couple to surrogate mother during pregnancy and no other monetary consideration.

Permits Surrogacy: It permits surrogacy for intending couples who are suffering from proven infertility. It does not permit for commercial purposes, altruistic purpose, not for producing children for sale, prostitution or other forms of exploitation etc.

Regulatory bodies: It proposes to regulate surrogacy in the country by establishing **National Surrogacy Board** (NSB) at the central level and state surrogacy boards and appropriate authorities in the state and Union Territories. Functions of the NSB include, (i) advice central government on policy matters related to surrogacy; (ii) lay down code of conduct of surrogacy clinics and (iii) supervise functioning of SSBs.

Eligible couples for Surrogacy: It allows surrogacy for infertile married Indian couples only (married for at least 5 years). In this case, male must be between 26-55 years and female must be between 23-50 years and they should not have any surviving child (biological, adopted or surrogate).

Surrogate Mother: It allows only close relative of eligible intended couple to be surrogate mother, having been married, having child of her own and must be between 25 and 35 years. Besides, she can be surrogate mother only once in lifetime and cannot provide her own gametes for surrogacy. She must also possess certificate of medical and psychological fitness for surrogacy.

Exemptions: It allows surrogacy for only Indian citizens and bans foreigners, NRI and PIOs from opting for surrogacy in India. It also bans single parents and homosexuals and also couple who already have children from surrogacy.

Parentage and abortion of surrogate child: Child born out of surrogacy procedure will be deemed to be biological child of intended couple. In case of abortion of the surrogate child, there is mandatory requirement of written consent of surrogate mother and authorisation of the appropriate authority compliant with Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971. It gives surrogate mother option to withdraw from surrogacy before embryo is implanted in her womb.

Punishments: It has been prescribed for undertaking or advertising commercial surrogacy, exploiting the surrogate mother, abandoning, exploiting or disowning a surrogate child and selling or importing human embryo or gametes for surrogacy. Penalty for such offences is imprisonment up to 10 years and fine up to Rs. 10 lakh rupees. It also specifies range of offences and penalties for other contraventions of the provisions of the Bill.

Lok Sabha passes Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2019

Lok Sabha has passed Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill, 2019 to increase the number of Supreme Court judges from the present 30 to 33 (excluding Chief Justice of India). The Bill amends Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956. It helps to meet long standing demand of increasing strength of Supreme Court judges to resolve number of pending cases can be brought down substantially.

Salient features of Bill

The Bill to increase strength of Supreme Court judges by 10% i.e. to 33 from present 30 (excluding Chief Justice of India).

As of now full sanctioned strength of SC is 31 (including CJI). Once this bill gets in Rajya Sabha also and gets full parliamentary nod and presidential assent, the number of judges would go up to 34, including the CJI.

The purpose of increasing in number of judges is to allow Supreme Court to function more efficiently and effectively towards attaining the ultimate goal of rendering speedy justice to the litigants.

Background

The strength of Supreme Court is fixed by law enacted Parliament as per **Article 124 (1)** of Constitution of India. Therefore, strength of Supreme Court judges can be increased by way of parliamentary legislation. For this purpose Parliament has enacted *Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956*, which originally provided for maximum of 10 judges (excluding CJI). This number was increased to 13 by Supreme Court

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(Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 1960 and to 17 in 1977.

However till the end of 1979, the working strength of Supreme Court was restricted to 15 judges (excluding CJI) by cabinet. But the restriction was later withdrawn at request of CJI. In 1986, strength of Supreme Court was increased to 25, excluding CJI. Subsequently, Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 2009 further increased strength of Supreme Court judges from 25 to 30 (excluding CJI).

Lalit Kala Akademi celebrates 65th Foundation Day

Lalit Kala Akademi celebrated its 65th Foundation Day on August 5th, 2019. Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Culture & Tourism inaugurated the celebrations in New Delhi.

About Lalit Kala Akademi

It is also known as *National Academy of Art*. It is India's national academy of fine arts established by Central Government for promoting and propagating understanding of Indian art, within and outside country.

It is an autonomous organisation funded by Union Ministry of Culture. It is headquartered in New Delhi. It was established on 5 August 1954.

Objectives:

- (i) Promote and propagate understanding of Indian art, in and outside the country especially in the field of visual arts such as painting, sculpture and graphics etc.
- (ii) Preserve glorious traditions of the past and enrich them with the works of the modern artist.
- (iii) Promote cooperation among artists and art associations and development of such associations.
- (iv) Encourage, where necessary, the establishment of Regional Art Centers.
- (v) Publish and promote publication of literature on art including monographs, journals etc.

Govt releases Draft e-Commerce Guidelines for Consumer Protection 2019

Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (Department of Consumer Affairs) has published draft e-Commerce Guidelines for consumer protection 2019. These guidelines will be applicable on all business-to-consumer (B2C) e-commerce platforms.

Draft e-Commerce Guidelines for Consumer Protection 2019

- It aims to make e-commerce platforms and their sellers more transparent and accountable to consumers. It also seeks to curb sale of counterfeit products online and unfair trade practices by e-commerce companies
- It proposes series of consumer safeguards that forbid e-commerce companies from influencing pricing, adopting unfair promotion methods or misrepresenting the quality of goods and services.
- It also mandates e-commerce companies to protect personally-identifiable information of customers. In this case, data collection and storage and use should comply with provisions of **Information Technology (Amendment) Act, 2008**.
- It mandates e-commerce firms to self-declare compliance and also provide way for customers to contact them directly.
- It proposes to make mandatory for e-commerce entities to accept returns in event products delivered are defective, wrong or spurious or if they do not have characteristics or features advertised.
- It also mandates every e-commerce entity has to publish contact details of its grievance officer, who would have to address complaints within one month from the date of receipt.
- It makes mandatory for e-commerce platforms to declare all details about their sellers including address, website and email address.
- It also mandates them to display terms of contract with the seller relating to return, refund, exchange, warranty, delivery and mode of payments.

INTELIGHTS: India's 1st 3-D Smart Traffic Signal launched in Mohali

Mohali traffic police in Punjab have launched India's first wireless 3-D Smart Traffic Signal System called Intelights. It proposes a *Intelligent Traffic Timer Control* to regulate traffic signals with smart bird's eye view using wireless sensor system. It has been installed at traffic crossing near the Airport Road in Mohali on a pilot project basis.



Background

One of the major reasons for traffic congestion is inefficient working of traffic signal timers installed at intersections. Presently, timers of traffic lights display preset value which leads to waste of time. For instance, consider scenario in which traffic signal shows green light for '20 seconds' but there is no vehicle present at that particular intersection – thus leading to unnecessary waste of time.

About Intelights

It has been devised by students of Chandigarh university after three years of intensive research. It proposes a 360-degree solution to curb the rising problem of traffic congestion

Working: It uses dynamic signal control technology to adjust timers of red, yellow and green lights according to the traffic density at an intersection. It uses existing CCTV cameras to gather live traffic video feed, and automatically evaluates the traffic density using Artificial Intelligence (AI), and sets signal timers accordingly. This process is repeated for every cycle of traffic lights to keep traffic flowing smoothly.

August 7, 2019

Fact Box: Sushma Swaraj

Former Union External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, passed away after suffering a cardiac arrest in New Delhi. She was 67. She had started her political career under Janata Party and was elected to the Haryana assembly in 1977 and became a state minister at age 25.

About Sushma Swaraj

She was born on 14 February 1953 at Ambala Cantonment, Haryana. Her father Hardev Sharma was a prominent Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh member. She was lawyer by profession and had practiced in the Supreme Court. She had started her political career as active member of Jayaprakash Narayan's anti-Emergency movement and later she became a member of Bhartiya Janata Party. She was a seven-time Member of Parliament and a three-time MLA (representing Ambala Cantonment assembly seat from 1977 to 1982 and had won for first time at age of 25).

Many firsts to her credit: (i) Youngest Cabinet Minister (age) in Haryana Government in 1977, (ii) first woman Chief Minister of Delhi in 1998 (iii) first woman spokesperson for any national political party in the country and (iv) India's first full-time woman Foreign Minister.

Important offices held: She was External Affairs Minister (from 2014 to 2019), leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha (from 2009 to 2014), Minister for Information and Broadcasting in Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government (2000-2003), Minister of Health and Family Welfare (January 2003 to May 2004), Minister of Parliamentary Affairs (January 2003 to May 2004) and 5th Chief Minister of Delhi (from October 1998 to December 1998).

Tenure as External Affairs Minister: She was second Indian woman to become External Affairs Minister, after former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (However, it was not full-time portfolio).

Contributions: She had played key role in resolving the Doklam standoff with China in 2017 and in India approaching International Court of Justice (ICJ) challenging Pakistan military court's death sentence to Kulbhushan Jadhav. Through her extensive use of Twitter, she had earned reputation of easily-accessible External Affairs Minister. She took personal interest in resolving minor issues like issuance of visa to the needy and helped Indian diaspora in distress through her social media outreach.

Lok Sabha adjourned sine die

The 1st session of 17th Lok Sabha was adjourned sine die, a day ahead of scheduled conclusion, as 99% of government business has been completed. The announcement in this regard was made by Speaker Om Birla after adopting resolution and a Bill related to Jammu and Kashmir.

After 17th Lok Sabha elections, the Budget session of Lok Sabha which was scheduled to end on 26 July was extended till 7 August.

Key Highlights

Productive Session: In his parting address to the house, Speaker termed it the *most productive session since 1952*. In this session, House passed 35 Bills, surpassing previous record of Bills passed in 1952 session (in it 24 bills were passed in 67 sittings). This Budget session of Lok Sabha had 37 sittings and sat for 280 hours. The productivity of the House remained 125%. Also in order to make it more productive, Lower

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House sat for 75 hours late in evening.

Proceeding undertaken: During session, 35 bills were passed, total 183 starred questions were orally answered, 1,066 issues of urgent importance taken up, and 488 issues taken up under rule 377 (of Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha). As per rule 377 members are allowed to raise matters which are not points of order or which cannot be raised under any other rule.

Adjournment Sine Die

Its literal meaning in latin is *without day* i.e. without assigning a day for a further (or next) meeting or hearing. In terms of Legislative procedures it means **to adjourn an assembly for an indefinite period**.

Power of adjournment sine die lies with presiding officer of House. Also, presiding officer of a House can call a sitting of House before date/time to which it has been adjourned or at any time after House has been adjourned sine die.

7 August: National Handloom Day

Every year National Handloom Day is celebrated across India on 7 August 2019. The year 2019 marks 5th National Handloom Day. To mark the occasion, Union Minister of Textiles and Women and Child Development, Smriti Zubin Irani, will preside over a function at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi

National Handloom Day

Objective:

To honour handloom weavers in India.

To highlight India's handloom industry.

Focuses on: The contribution of handloom to socio economic development of India and to increase income of weavers.

National Handloom Day 2019

Main Event: of National Handloom Day will be held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha with prime objective behind holding is to empower women and girls. Bhubaneswar has been chosen as venue for main event due to its rich tradition of Handlooms and as more than 50% of total weavers population of India resides in Eastern and North Eastern Regions and most of them are women.

Activities Undertake across country will include-

Distribution of Pehchan Cards and Yarn Passbooks

Distribution of MUDRA loan which is a flagship scheme of Union Government extend affordable credit to micro and small enterprises (MSME).

Distribution of lighting units and certificates for construction of work sheds.

The day would be observed at Weavers' Service Centres in different States.

At 16 NIFT Campuses and Handloom Mela and exhibition, workshops, panel discussions, special stalls for handloom products at Gandhinagar and Kolkata NIFT campuses.

Live broadcast of discussion on Twitter from digital studio of IMG Reliance which will involve young designers and prominent personalities from handloom sector.

Symposium at Crafts Museum in New Delhi by Fashion Design Council of India with participants from Union Ministry of Textiles, master weavers, textile designers, fashion designers and textile experts.

Workshop through IGNOU or NIOS to impart information about educational opportunities to weave and their wards.

Background

In July 2015 Government of India declared 7 August as National Handloom Day with objective of generating awareness about importance of handloom industry to socio economic development of country.

Why 7 August? To commemorate Swadeshi Movement which was launched on 7 August 1905 in Calcutta Town Hall to protest against Bengal partition by British Government. Swadeshi Movement aimed at reviving domestic products and production processes.

1st National Handloom Day: It was inaugurated on 7 August 2015 by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, at centenary of Madras University in Chennai.

Lok Sabha passes Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019

Lok Sabha passed Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019 which seeks to prohibit

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discrimination against transgender persons, including in matters of employment. This bill that lays emphasis on educating, skilling and making transgenders employable was moved by Union Minister for State for Social Justice and Empowerment Kishan Pal Gurjar.

Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019

Defines Transgender: As a person or individual whose gender does not match gender assigned at birth. It includes trans-men and trans-women, persons with intersex variations (means a person who at birth shows variation in his/her primary sexual characteristics, external genitalia, chromosomes, or hormones from normative standard of male/female body), gender-queers, and persons with socio-cultural identities, such as kinnar and hijra.

Prohibit Discrimination: Bill prohibits discrimination against a transgender person, including denial of service or unfair treatment in relation to education, healthcare, employment, access to, or enjoyment of goods, facilities, opportunities available to public.

Right of residence: Bill provides every transgender person shall have a right to reside and be included in his household.

Employment: No government/private entity can discriminate against a transgender person in employment matters, including recruitment as well as promotion.

Education: Educational institutions funded or recognised by relevant government shall provide inclusive facilities for transgender persons without discrimination.

Health care: Government must provide health facilities to transgender persons including separate HIV surveillance centres, and sex reassignment surgeries.

Certificate of identity for a transgender person: Transgender person may make an application to District Magistrate (DM) for a certificate of identity, indicating gender as 'transgender'.

Offences and penalties: Bill imposes penalties for offences against transgender persons like bonded labour, denial of use of public places, removal from household & village and physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic abuse.

National Council for Transgender persons (NCT): NCT chaired by Union Minister for Social Justice, apart from redressing grievances of transgender person, will advise central government as well as monitor impact of policies with respect to transgender persons.

Way Ahead

As per 2011 census there are more than 4.80 lakh transgenders in country therefore even though maximum demands of the transgender community have been included in Bill but people's prejudice regarding transgenders needs to be changed.

Bangladesh- Russia signs uranium supply deal

Bangladesh signed deal with Russia for lifetime supply of uranium for its 2,400 MW Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant (RNPP) in Bangladesh. Under the deal, Russia will supply nuclear fuel needed for plant during its entire life cycle. RNPP will come into operation by 2022.

Key Highlights

Deal was signed in Dhaka (Bangladesh capital) between *Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission (BAEC)* and *Russian Nuclear Fuel Supply Company (TVEL)* Joint Stock Company, a Russian state-owned nuclear fuel firm. BAEC is tasked with implementing project.

It is a framework agreement that focuses on pricing methodology. Through this agreement, both countries will work to determine prices of nuclear fuel, considering volatile global market which is marked by continuous changes.

RNPP Project:

In 2017, two countries (Russia and Bangladesh) have also signed *spent fuel sent back* agreement for management of nuclear waste of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant (RNPP).

Work on these two units of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant (RNPP), each producing 1200 MW of electricity is scheduled to be completed in 2022 and 2024 respectively.

With power generation capacity of 1200 MW, each unit of power plant will have to reload one-third (33%) of total required nuclear fuel in every 18 months (1.5 years), and 1st, 2nd and 3rd reload will be provided by

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Russian firm free of cost.

RACE: Rajasthan's New Higher Education Model

State government of Rajasthan has launched a new higher education model titled- **Resource Assistance for Colleges with Excellence** or RACE, for distribution of faculties and movable assets among government colleges at district level so as to rationalise availability of resources.

Resource Assistance for Colleges with Excellence (RACE)

RACE model will create a pool for sharing of facilities which will benefit colleges that lack infrastructure.

Need: Even though sanctioned posts of teachers in government colleges are 6,500, at present the posts falls short by about 2,000 teachers. Therefore until additional posts are created and new appointments made, RACE is expected to help channelise resources and ensure quality education.

Working: Colleges in need will submit their requirement to nodal college in district, which will send teachers on deputation, if needed, and provide facilities like projectors, digital libraries, equipment and technicians.

Benefits:

With the adoption of this new model, all colleges would get equal opportunities for imparting quality education.

RACE will give autonomy to small colleges and help them find solutions to their problems at local level. It will also help colleges situated in small towns facing shortage of faculties and infrastructure.

United States designates China a 'Currency Manipulator'

United States has designated China a "currency manipulator", after country's central bank allowed Yuan (Chinese Currency) to fall against dollar. This move could escalate tense trade relations between two nations.

Key Highlights

Background

During US Presidential elections in 2016, US President Donald Trump had promised to label China as a currency manipulator, but it was on hold until now as US Department of Treasury kept country on its watch list, declining to take any step. But now US Treasury Department has announced and determined that China is a 'Currency Manipulator'.

US Arguments:

US accused China of manipulating its currency to gain unfair competitive advantage in international trade and that China still targets on continuing to receive hundreds of billions of dollars which it have been taking from US with unfair trade practices and currency manipulation.

Further US treasury department also alleged that China has a long history of facilitating an undervalued currency through sustained, large-scale intervention in FOREX market.

The Trigger: This recent action by US to designate China as a 'Currency Manipulator' came after China allowed its yuan to weaken past key 7-per-dollar level for the 1st time in more than a decade.

China Arguments:

As per Central Bank of China depreciation in its currency was due to effects of unilateralist and trade-protectionist measures and expectations for tariffs against China.

Way Ahead: US will now engage with *International Monetary Fund (IMF)* to eliminate unfair competitive advantage created by China's latest actions. This move could further escalate tense trade relations between two nations.

IIT Guwahati Researchers develop portable device to detect bacteria without lab tests

A team of researchers at Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati (IIT-G) has developed portable diagnostic device to detect bacteria without cell culture or microbiological assays. Researchers team work has been patented as well as published in July 2019 issue of Journal of Materials Chemistry of Royal Society of Chemistry.

Key Highlights

Function: This hand-held device is well equipped to detect bacteria instantaneously without need for lab tests. The device has a *bio-compatible sensor* that can also diagnose time-critical illnesses such as meningitis. These rapid detection kits are like those used for blood sugar monitoring or pregnancy

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detection.

Working Principle: It is **Organic Field Effect Transistor (OFET)–based Bacteria Sensor** (or Bacterial Diagnostic device) which has been shown to have ability to detect bacteria and distinguish between Gram positive bacteria (such as *S pneumoniae*) and Gram negative (such as the common *E. coli*) types. Currently detection of bacteria in body fluids is done in laboratories. OFET is an electronic device that works on principle that charges in vicinity of channels of certain semiconductors can induce a current in them. Therefore, charges on surface of bacterium, induces a current in OFET, which is registered and read.

OFET devices developed by IIT-G team consists of a unique and hybrid **tri-layer dielectric system** built on simple glass and flexible PET (a kind of plastic) substrates, and can operate at ultra-low operating voltages.

Need: Across the world bacterial infection is a common cause of morbidity and mortality and even despite development of a range of antibiotics, challenge continues to lie in diagnosing bacterial infection early on. Also,

Significance: Present techniques used are extremely time- consuming as cells derived from a patient are cultured or grown in laboratories to detect and microanalyse bacteria. However, this new portable device, can instantly detect charges on cell walls of bacteria.

Application: This research has enabled rapid detection of bacteria, which is not just important in healthcare but also in anti- bioterrorism measures as well as environmental monitoring.

Rajya Sabha passes National Institute of Design (Amendment) Bill, 2019

Rajya Sabha has passed National Institute of Design (Amendment) Bill, 2019. Now it has to be passed by Lok Sabha. The Bill seeks to amend *National Institute of Design Act, 2014*, which declares National Institute of Design (NID), Ahmedabad as an institution of national importance.

National Institute of Design (Amendment) Bill, 2019

It seeks to declare four National Institutes of Design (NID) in Andhra Pradesh (Amaravati), Assam (Jorhat), Madhya Pradesh (Bhopal) and Haryana (Kurukshetra) as institutions of national importance.

Currently, these institutes are registered as Societies under **Societies Registration Act, 1860** and do not have power to grant degrees or diplomas. Once these four institutions are declared of national importance, they will be granted the power to grant degrees and diplomas.

Significance of National Importance Tag

It will help to produce highly skilled manpower in design sector which in turn, will create job opportunities, both direct and indirect. It will also provide sustainable design interventions for handloom, crafts, rural technology, small, medium (SMEs) and large scale enterprises (LSEs); and outreach programmes for capacity, capability and institution building.

August 8, 2019

8 August: India observes 77th anniversary of Quit India movement

Every year 8 August is celebrated in India as August Kranti Din, in which tribute is paid to revolutionaries who sacrificed their lives in freedom struggle against rule. Also teachings given by Father of the Nation (Bapu), Mahatma Gandhi are remembered.

8 August 2019 is being observed as 77th anniversary of August Kranti Din, which is considered as one of important milestones in history of freedom struggle of our country.

August Kranti Din

Why 8 August? Every year 8 August is remembered as a conch shell of last battle for independence in Indian history. On this day in 1942, foundation of Quit India Movement, run by Mahatma Gandhi was laid, after which whole of India united against British and British rule had to kneel down. Since Independence, 8 August is known as Revolution Day and ground in Bombay where it was started by hoisting flag is known as Kranti Maidan.

77 years of Quit India Movement (or August Movement): When British did not fulfill their promise to liberate India even after taking help from India in 2nd world war and when Cripps Mission (March 1942) also failed, then On August 8, 1942 Mahatma Gandhi gave a clarion call to end the British rule and launched the Quit India Movement (or Bharat Chodo Andolan). The proposal for this movement was passed in Bombay session of All India Congress Committee on 08 August which paved way for a mass

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movement to attain independence. As Quit India Movement was launched in month of August, it is also known as August Movement or August Kranti.

On 8th August 1942, as a precursor to India's independence, Quit India Movement was launched at Mumbai's historic Gowalia Tank Maidan, now popularly known as August Kranti Maidan. Also Gandhiji gave the call to **Do or Die** in his Quit India speech delivered at Gowalia Tank Maida, which inspired thousands of party workers but also created a frenzy among British who rushed to imprison entire Congress leadership.

Only then Gandhiji was imprisoned at Aga Khan Palace in Pune and almost all leaders were arrested. In such a situation, young leader Aruna Asif Ali hoisted Quit India movement by hoisting tricolor at Gwalia Tank Ground in Mumbai on 9 August.

India contributes US\$ 5 million to UNRWA in support of Palestine refugees

India has contributed US \$5 million to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). The contribution was provided in support of UNRWA's core programmes and services, including education, health care, and relief and social services.

About UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA)

It is relief and human development agency of UN which supports more than 5 million registered Palestinian refugees, and their descendants. It is only UN agency dedicated to help refugees from specific region or conflict. It is separate from UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Founded: It was established December 1949 following 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict by UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 302 (IV).

Mandate: Its mandate is to contribute to welfare and human development of Palestine refugees, who had fled or were expelled from their homes during 1948 Palestine war as well during and following 1967 Six Day war.

Services: It originally offered services intended to provide jobs on public works projects and direct relief, but now it provides services like education, health care, and social services to population it supports. It also allows refugee status to be inherited by descendants. Currently, it serves about 5.3 million refugees scattered around Middle East.

Areas of Operation: It provides aid in 5 areas of operation viz. Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Gaza Strip and West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Whereas, UNHCR provides aid for Palestinian refugees outside these five areas.

Funded: It is funded by voluntary contributions from member states of UN. It also receives some funding from regular budget of UN (mostly used for international staffing costs). India has increased its annual financial contribution to UNRWA from US \$1.25 million in 2016 to US\$ 5 million in 2018 and 2019.

Parliament passes Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Amendment Bill, 2019

Parliament passed Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Amendment Bill, 2019 for speedy eviction of unauthorised occupants from government residential accommodations. The Bill amends Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act, 1971 which provides for eviction of unauthorised occupants from public premises in certain cases.

The bill provides for strict provisions to evict illegal occupants from government property allotted to government officials and members of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha.

Key Features of Bill

Residential accommodation: It has been defined as occupation of public premises by person on grant of license for such occupation. Such license must be given for fixed tenure or for period person holds office. Further, occupation must be allowed under rules made by Central, State/UT government, or a statutory authority (such as Parliament Secretariat, or Central Government Company or premises belonging to state government).

Notice for eviction: It adds detailed provision laying down procedure for eviction from residential accommodation. It empowers estate officer to issue written notice to person if he/she is in unauthorised occupation of residential accommodation within three working days. This means that the bill now enables estate officer to apply summary proceedings for evicting the unauthorised occupants after a three-day

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notice.

Order of eviction: After considering the cause shown and making any other inquiries, estate officer can give eviction order. If person fails to comply with order, then estate officer may evict such person from residential accommodation and take possession of it. For this purpose, estate officer can also use such force as required.

Also, estate officer now does not need to follow elaborate proceedings like serving notice, show cause, inquiry, rather he or she can initiate summary eviction proceedings.

Payment of damages: If any person in unauthorised occupation of residential accommodation challenges eviction order passed by estate officer in court, then he is required to pay damages charges for every month of such occupation or accommodation held during period of litigation.

Papua New Guinea has highest number of 'living' indigenous languages in world

Pacific island nation of Papua New Guinea, Country in Oceania has highest number of 'living' indigenous languages in world (840). *Living languages* stands for languages that are still being used and spoken by people. India stands fourth in list with 453 languages.

In 2016, **United Nation's Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues** (UNPFII) highlighted that 40% of estimated 6,700 languages spoken around world were in danger of disappearing.

Key Findings of Ethnologue

Ethnologue is a directory of languages which lists 7,111 living languages worldwide.

According to Ethnologue-

3,741 languages (over half total) which have fewer than 1,000 speakers.

Some language families are very diverse and have several languages under them, but are spoken by only a small percentage of population. For example, *Trans-New Guinea family*, which has 478 languages, accounts for just 0.05% of total language speakers.

Indo-European family has 445 languages including Spanish, English, German, Punjabi and Bengali and has highest percentage of speakers- 46.31%.

Most Indian languages are derivatives of languages that are spoken in other parts of Asia as well, for example- Sino-Tibetan languages are spoken across Northeast India, China, Bhutan, Nepal and other South East Asian countries. One of outliers to this trend is Andamanese language family, which is confined to India alone.

Greenberg's Diversity Index

As per Ethnologue, 'Greenberg's diversity index' is the probability that any two people of country selected at random would have different mother tongues.

Value ranges from: 0-1, where '0' indicates no diversity i.e. everyone has same mother tongue and '1' indicates total diversity i.e. no two people will have same mother tongue. Therefore higher diversity index would mean more languages spread across country.

Global Distribution of Languages

Most widely spoken languages worldwide: English, Chinese, Hindi, Arabic and Spanish are most widely spoken languages worldwide when only 1st-languages are considered. These 5 languages account for what is spoken by over 40% of people worldwide.

Number of Languages by Region– Asia (2303) and Africa (2140) account for highest number of indigenous languages (over 70% of total), Pacific (1322) and Americas (1058).

Widely English-speaking nations- United States (335 languages) and Australia (319) are among countries where highest number of languages are spoken this is because they have small and rapidly declining pockets of indigenous language speaking populations.

Languages in Decline

As per **UNESCO's 'Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger'**-

Since 1950 228 languages have become extinct.

About 10% of languages are classified 'vulnerable', while another 10% are 'critically endangered'.

In India, 5 languages have become extinct since 1950, while 42 are critically endangered.

Several languages are now "endangered" and in case of languages such as Tiniguan (Colombian origin),
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there is just a single native speaker left.

International Year of Indigenous Languages

The year 2019 is designated as United Nations' International Year of Indigenous Languages. It aims to promote native tongues in 5 key areas-

1. Increasing understanding, reconciliation and international cooperation
2. Integration of indigenous languages into standard setting
3. Empowerment through capacity building.
4. Creation of favourable conditions for knowledge-sharing and dissemination of good practices with regards to indigenous languages
5. Growth and development via elaboration of new knowledge

ISRO institutes Vikram Sarabhai Journalism Award in Space

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has instituted two categories of awards in journalism- *Vikram Sarabhai Journalism Award in Space Science, Technology and Research*. These awards were instituted as part of centenary year celebrations of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, father of Indian space programme.

About Vikram Sarabhai Journalism Award in Space Science, Technology and Research

Objective: To recognize and reward journalists who have actively contributed towards the field of space science, applications, and research.

Eligibility: Its nominations are open to all Indians who have good experience in journalism. Articles published between 2019-2020 will be considered.

Category 1: Under it, two journalists or freelancers of print media will be awarded. It carries cash price of Rs 5,00,000, a medal and citation. Nominated candidates for category 1 will be judged on basis of articles/success stories published in English, Hindi or even Regional languages in popular Periodicals, Science magazines, or Journals in India during year 2019-2020.

Category 2: It carries cash prizes of Rs 3,00,000, 2,00,000 and 1,00,000 and citation each for journalists or freelancers of print media. It will be awarded to articles or success stories published in English, Hindi or Regional languages in popular news magazines or newspapers in India during 1 year (as indicated in proposal).

Government unveils draft Environmental and Social Management Framework

Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has unveiled draft Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) for coastal zone management. It was prepared by **Society for Integrated Coastal Management**, an MoEFCC-affiliated body as part of a World Bank-funded project.

About Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)

It lays out guidelines out for coastal States to adopt when they approve and regulate projects in coastal zones.

It seeks to assist Central Government in enhancing coastal resource efficiency and resilience, by building collective capacity (including communities and decentralised governance) for adopting and implementing integrated coastal management approaches

It proposes key activities for coastal zone development that consist of investments by States including mangrove afforestation/shelter beds, habitat conservation activities such as restoration of sea-grass meadows, rearing/rescue centres for turtles and other marine animals, creation of infrastructure for tourism, beach cleaning and development etc.

It also proposes undertaking livelihood improvement projects such as demonstration of salinity resistant agriculture, water harvesting and recharge/storage, community-based small-scale mariculture, aquaponics, and value addition to other livelihood activities.

Iran unveils 3 new Air-to-Air Missiles

Iran has unveiled three precision-guided air-to-air missiles dubbed as Yasin, Balaban and new series of Ghaem. These missiles were unveiled at the time when tensions between Iran and US and its allies are at its peak.

About Missiles

Yasin: It is smart, guided missile with folding wings that can be fired from a range of 50 kilometres of its target from manned or unmanned aircraft.



Balaban: It is guided by GPS and sensors. It is also equipped with folding wings and could be mounted under aircraft.

Ghaem: It is heat-seeking missile capable of hitting target within 50 centimetres of a target.

Background

Tensions between Iran and West have been rising since United States under Donald Trump administration had unilaterally pulled out of 2015 international nuclear agreement (signed between Iran and world powers) in 2018. After pulling out this nuclear deal US had re-imposed sanctions for stepping up campaign of maximum pressure on Iran. Since May 2019, numerous ships have been targeted in mysterious attacks, US military drone downed by Iran and UK oil tankers seized by Iran in the strategic waters of Strait of Hormuz, a vital corridor linking oil producing countries in Middle East to markets in Asia, Europe and North America.

Scientist discover way to turn cactus leaves in Biodegradable Plastics

Researcher from Mexico has discovered way to turn cactus leaves into non toxic and biodegradable material with similar properties to plastic. This innovation offers a promising solution to one of the world's biggest pollution conundrums caused by toxic and non-biodegradable plastics.

Process of turning cactus leaves into Plastic

The pulp of the prickly pear cactus is strained to obtain a juice. Then it is mixed with non-toxic additives and stretched to produce sheets that are coloured with pigments and folded to form different types of packaging materials. This material obtained is non-toxic, environment friendly and biodegradable.

Biodegradable plastic

It is plastic made from all-natural plant materials (including corn oil, orange peels, starch, and plants etc.). It can decompose naturally in the environment when microorganisms in the soil metabolize and break down the structure of biodegradable plastic.

India signs UN Convention on International Settlement Agreements

India signed United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA) also known as Singapore Convention on Mediation. It was signed by India's High Commissioner to Singapore Jawed Ashraf, representing Government of India (GoI). So far 46 countries have signed this international treaty on settlement agreements.

Benefits for India: It is particularly important for the growth of mediation in India and enhancing the ease of doing business in India particularly in the legal front. It will help to boost confidence of investors especially foreign investors investing in India. It will provide positive signal to foreign investors about India's commitment for adhering to international practice on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) or external dispute resolution (EDR).

About UN Convention on International Settlement Agreement (UNISA)

It is also known as **Singapore Convention on Mediation**. In December 2018 UN General Assembly (UNGA) adopted *The United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation*.

It provides uniform framework for enforcing international settlement agreements which results from mediation. It also provide efficient framework for allowing parties to invoke such agreements similar to framework that *New York Convention (or Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (New York, 1958))* provides for arbitral awards.

It defines 2 additional grounds upon which a court may, on its own motion, refuse to grant relief. Those 2 grounds relate to fact that a dispute would be contrary to public policy or would not be capable of settlement by mediation.

It ensures that parties reach a settlement that becomes binding and enforceable in accordance with simplified and streamlined procedure.

Significance: It aims to become essential instrument that facilitates international trade and in promotion of mediation as alternative and effective method of resolving trade disputes. It also seeks to contribute to strengthening access to justice, and to the rule of law.

Shah Rukh Khan awarded Excellence in Cinema award at Indian Film Festival of Melbourne

Indian Bollywood Superstar Shah Rukh Khan was felicitated with 'Excellence in Cinema' honour at Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) 2019. He was felicitated at iconic *Palais Theatre* in Melbourne, which is

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one of city's heritage landmarks.

Key Highlights

Shah Rukh Khan was also the chief guest at IIFM.

He was presented with the award by Linda Dessau, who is 1st female Governor of State of Victoria.

Festival paid tribute to actor's continuous contribution to cinema and popular culture in India with award.

Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM)

The festival will take place in between August 8 and August 15 and is organized by Victorian government, Australia.

The year 2019 marks 10th edition of the festival in the cultural city of Australia.

IIFM 2019 was celebrated with its central theme as "courage".

During the festival more than 60 films from all across India and subcontinent in over 22 languages will be screened.

RBI reduces repo rate by 35 basis points to 5.40%

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its third Bi-monthly Monetary Policy review for financial year 2019-20 has reduced its key policy rate (repo rate) by an unorthodox 35 basis points to 5.40%. This takes the benchmark lending rate to a nine-year low. It was overall fourth consecutive interest rate cut this year, bringing down repo rate (rate at which the RBI lends funds to banks) — by total of 110 basis points from 6.50%.

charu bhardwaj | bhardwaj.charu@gmail.com |

This decision was taken by RBI's six member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das. It also decided to maintain the 'accommodative' stance. All members of MPC voted to reduce the policy repo rate.

Key Policy Rates

- **Repo rate:** It was changed by unorthodox 35 basis points to 5.40% from earlier 5.75%. It is rate at which RBI lends to commercial banks generally against government securities.
- **Reverse Repo Rate:** It was revised to 5.15%. It is the rate at which banks lend funds to Central Bank.
- **Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) Rate:** It was reduced to 5.65%. It is very short term borrowing scheme for scheduled banks and is rate at which scheduled banks borrow funds overnight from RBI against government securities.
- **Bank Rate:** It was unchanged at 5.65%. It is rate charged by RBI for lending funds to commercial banks. It influences lending rates of commercial banks i.e. higher bank rate will lead to higher lending rates by banks.
- **Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR):** It was kept unchanged at 4%. It is amount of funds that banks have to keep with RBI, which uses it as tool to drain out excessive money from system.
- **Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR):** It was unchanged at 18.75%. It is amount that banks are required to maintain as stipulated proportion of their net demand and time liabilities (NDTL) in form of liquid assets such as cash, gold treasury bills, unencumbered securities and dated securities etc.

MPC Forecast

- **GDP growth forecast for 2019-20:** It has been lowered to 6.9% from 7% earlier
- **GDP growth forecast in first half of 2019-20:** It will be in the range of 5.8 to 6.6%
- **GDP growth forecast in 2nd half of 2019-20:** It will be in the range of 7.3% to 7.5%
- **Consumer price index (CPI)-based inflation forecast:** It is projected at 3.1% during July-September 2019 and at 3.5-3.7% in October-March 2019-20

About Monetary Policy Committee

It is a statutory body established under provisions of RBI act 1934. It is mandated to keep the inflation within targets set by government in consultation with RBI. It also accomplishes the task by making suitable changes to policy rate i.e. repo rate. Its meetings are held at least 4 times a year and publish its decisions after each such meeting.

Composition: It is executive body of 6 members. Of these, three members are from RBI while other three members are nominated by Union Government based on recommendations of a search cum selection committee consisting of Cabinet secretary (who is Chairperson), Governor of RBI, Secretary of Department of Economic Affairs (Ministry of Finance), and three experts in field of economics or banking

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who are nominated by central government.

MPC members: Shaktikanta Das, Ravindra Dholakia, Michael Debabrata Patra, Bibhu Prasad, Chetan Ghate and Pami Dua

August 9, 2019

NIDO and NISE to partner for skill development program

National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE), an autonomous institution of Ministry of New and Renewable (MNRE) signed an agreement with United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to initiate a skill development programme for different levels of beneficiaries in solar thermal energy sector.

Key Highlights of Agreement

NISE and UNIDO will engage national and international experts to bring best practices by developing specialized training material.

This agreement is part of ongoing **MNRE-GEF-UNIDO project** (Ministry of New and Renewable Energy – Global Environment Friendly – United Nations Industrial Development Organization) which is jointly implemented by UNIDO.

It is to support capacity building and skill development of technical manpower in Concentrated Solar-Thermal Energy Technologies (CST) which are being used to replace conventional fossil fuels such as diesel, coal, furnace oil etc. and save costs and emissions in industrial process heat applications.

About UNIDO

charu bhardwaj | bhardwaj.charu@gmail.com |

It is United Nations' specialized agency headquartered in Vienna, Austria.

It was established on 17 November 1966.

Its Parent organization is United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

It is a member of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

It promotes industrial development for reducing poverty, inclusive globalization as well as environmental sustainability.

Members States: 170. These members regularly discuss and decide UNIDO's guiding principles and policies in sessions of Policymaking Organs.

UNIDO Mission: is described in **Lima Declaration** (2013) adopted at 15th session of UNIDO General Conference. It is to promote and accelerate Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development (ISID) in Member States.

Mandate: UNIDO's mandate is completely recognized in **SDG-9** (Sustainable Development Goal): *Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.*

Manipur tops in Breastfeeding, Infant & Young Child Feeding Practices

Northeastern state of Manipur has topped rankings in Breastfeeding and Infant and Young Child Feeding Practices in India. The **report card on Breastfeeding** was released by Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Health and Family Welfare Minister. Union Health Minister also appealed influential personality on social media to spread message of benefits of breastfeeding to masses.

Key Highlights of Report Card

Low Performing State in country: Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar secured bottom positions in report card. Delhi, National capital of India is also among worst-performing States.

Breastfeeding report card has been developed by devising a composite score based on **3 indicators**–

1. Early initiation of breastfeeding
2. Exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months
3. Complimentary feeding at 6-8 months of child's age

Facts about Breastfeeding, Infant & Young Child Feeding Practices

As per **Convention on the Rights of the Child**, every infant and child has right to good nutrition.

World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for 1st 6 months and breastfeeding with home-made food for minimum 2 years.

Undernutrition is associated with 45% of child deaths.

In 2016, 155 million children under 5 year of age were estimated to be stunted (too short for age), 52 million were estimated to be wasted (too thin for height), and 41 million were overweight (or obese), globally.



Nearly 40% of infants 0–6 months old are exclusively breastfed.

Globally, few children receive nutritionally adequate and safe complementary foods.

In many countries less than a fourth (25%) of infants 6–23 months of age meet criteria of dietary diversity and feeding frequency that are appropriate for their age.

Benefits

Every year more than 820000 children's lives could be saved among children under 5 years, if all children 0–23 months were optimally breastfed.

Breastfeeding improves IQ, school attendance and is also associated with higher income in adult life.

Breastfeeding not only saves child from being malnourished but also saves mother from breast cancer and ovarian cancer.

Govt sanctions over 5,000 electric buses under Fame Phase-II

Centre Government has sanctioned 5595 electric buses in 64 cities for intracity and intercity operations under Phase-II of Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles (FAME-India) Scheme. As per Union Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, this move would give a further push to clean mobility in public transportation.

Key Highlights

Process Followed: Department of Heavy Industry (under Union Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises) had invited Expression of Interest (EoI) from more than million cities, smart cities, State/Union Territories (UTs), their capitals and even cities from special category states for submitting proposal for deploying electric buses on operational cost basis. Department received 86 proposals from 26 States/UTs for deployment of 14988 e-Buses. The proposals received were then evaluated as per EoI and on advice of Project Implementation and Sanctioning Committee (PISC) Government later sanctioned 5595 electric buses to 64 Cities.

Division of 5595 sanctioned electric buses: 5095 are sanctioned in 64 cities / State Transport Corporations (STCs) for intra-city operation, 400 electric buses for intercity operation and 100 electric buses to Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) for last mile connectivity.

Eligibility: For deployment of sanctioned electric buses on operational cost basis, each selected City or State Transport Corporation is required to initiate procurement process in a time bound manner. Also as per Expression of Interest (EoI), buses which satisfy required localization level and technical eligibility notified under phase II of FAME India scheme will be eligible for funding under it.

Saving during Contract Period: These buses are expected to run about 4 billion kilometers during their contract period and are also expected to save cumulatively nearly 1.2 billion liters of fuel over contract period, which will result into avoidance of 2.6 million tonnes of CO₂ emission.

About FAME-India Scheme

PHASE I: The Phase 1 of Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India (FAME-India) was launched in 2015 to promote manufacturing of electric and hybrid vehicle (EHVs) technology as well as to ensure sustainable growth of same.

PHASE II: Implementation of Phase-II of FAME-India Scheme was approved by Cabinet in February 2019 for promotion of Electric Mobility in the country. Fame Phase-II proposes to give a push to electric vehicles (EVs) in public transport and seeks to encourage adoption of EVs by way of demand aggregation (means total demand for final goods and services in an economy at a given time) and market creation.

Objective: To encourage faster adoption of EHVs by way of offering upfront incentives on purchase of electric vehicles and also by way of establishing a necessary charging Infrastructure for electric vehicles. The scheme will help in addressing the issue of environmental pollution and fuel security.

Information and Broadcasting Ministry launches e-version of Rozgar Samachar

Union Information & Broadcasting Ministry launched e-version of Rozgar Samachar, to spread awareness about job opportunities. This e-Journal is expected to meet emerging challenge of young readers switching to electronic modes of communication

About e-Rozgar Samachar

Objective:



To make aspirants aware of job opportunities in government sector including public sector enterprises (PSEs).

To provide information and guidance about admission as well as career opportunities in various disciplines by publishing career-oriented articles by experts.

Price: Journal is available for an annual subscription fee of Rs. 400. It has been priced at 75% of cost of its printed version.

Website: It can be accessed by visiting website www.employmentnews.gov.in and clicking on e-version tab.

Rozgar Samachar is basically a job journal that provides information related to job vacancies, job oriented training programmes, admission notices related to job oriented exams and results of recruitment exams for-

1. Ministries/Departments/Offices/Organizations/Autonomous bodies/ Societies/ PSUs of Central Government, State Government and UT Administrations.
2. Nationalised banks/ RRBs /UPSC/SSC/ Constitutional and Statutory bodies;and
3. Central/State Governments Universities/ Colleges/Institutes recognised by UGC/AICTE.

It also provides editorial content on socio-economic issues and career guidance that helps youth in broadening their horizons.

Significance: Job journal serves as a guide to youth, especially for those in rural areas, by helping them gain an understanding of job market and plethora of employment opportunities that otherwise go unnoticed. It educates young people to make an informed decision about their careers.

Background

Rozgar Samachar is corresponding Hindi version of Employment News (English) which is a flagship weekly job journal from Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. Employment News was launched in 1976 for providing information to unemployed and underemployed youth of country about available employment opportunities. Journal is published in English as Employment News), in Hindi as Rozgar Samachar) and in Urdu as Rozgar Samachar. It has a circulation of over 1 lakh copies per week and is available on every Saturday throughout length and breadth of India.

Besides fulfilling its social obligation for which journal was initially started, Employment News or Rozgar Samachar has been earning substantial profits regularly.

HRD Ministry launches Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha Drive

Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) launched **Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha drive** to create awareness about Water Conservation among all school students in the country. This mega drive is inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's impetus to Jal Sanchay as part of **Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA)**.

About Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha drive

It is a time bound campaign with a mission mode approach aimed at promoting water conservation activities for School Students.

It seeks to make students competent, conscientious and committed water citizens of nation by making water conservation essential for students so that they can understand importance of water and enabling them to participate in water conservation activities in their day to day lives

Implementing Agency: Department of School Education & Literacy, MHRD.

Five Major Objectives:

- (i) Educate students learn about conservation of water
- (ii) Sensitize Students about impact of scarcity of water
- (iii) Empower Students to learn to protect natural sources of water
- (iv) Help every Student to save at least 1 litre of water per day
- (v) Encourage Students towards judicious use and minimum wastage of water at home and school level.

Target:

- (i) One Student-One Day-Save One Litre Water.
- (ii) One Student-One Year- Save 365 Litres Water
- (iii) One Student-10 Years-Save 3650 Litres Water



DAC approves procurement of 2 BrahMos supersonic missile batteries for Navy

Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved procurement of indigenous Software Defined Radio (SDR Tactical) and Next Generation Maritime Mobile Coastal Batteries (NGMMCB-Long Range) for Indian Navy. This was the first DAC meeting chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh since assuming office. Both of these indigenously developed equipments are of latest generation and their procurement will give fillip to Make-in-India initiatives of the Government.

Procurement approved by DAC

Software Defined Radio (SDR Tactical): It is complex and state of art communication system indigenously designed and developed by DRDO, BEL and Weapons Electronics System Engineering Establishment (WESEE). It will enable information collaboration, sharing and situational awareness through high-speed data and secure voice communication with anti-jamming capability.

Next Generation Maritime Mobile Coastal Batteries (NGMMCB-Long Range): It has been developed and manufactured in India by Indo-Russia Joint Venture Company-BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited. It will be fitted with supersonic BrahMos surface-to-surface cruise missiles and will be deployed along the coast.

Amendments to Defence Procurement Procedure 2016

DAC also approved amendments to Defence Procurement Procedure 2016 to simplify processes under 'Make' category as well as 'Offsets'. This decision was taken as in continuity to focus on 'Ease of doing businesses in defence acquisition.

charu bhardwaj | bhardwaj.charu@gmail.com |

9 August: International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is globally observed every 9 August with aim to promote and protect rights of indigenous population. Observance of this day seeks to recognize the contributions and achievements of indigenous people to improve world issues such as environmental protection.

2019 Theme: 'Indigenous Languages'. It is dedicated to languages of indigenous peoples' in view of 2019 being marked as International Year of Indigenous Languages by United Nations (UN). It seeks to draw attention to critical loss of indigenous languages and urgent need to preserve, promote and revitalize them at both national and international levels.

Why it is important of preserve Indigenous Languages?

The large majority of languages spoken by indigenous peoples are in danger. It is estimated that, every 2 weeks, one indigenous language disappears, placing at risk respective indigenous cultures and knowledge systems. In response to threats to various indigenous languages, UN General Assembly (UNGA) had adopted **Resolution (A/RES/71/178)** on 'Rights of Indigenous Peoples', proclaiming 2019 as International Year of Indigenous Languages.

Background

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was pronounced by UNGA by adopting resolution 49/214 in December 1994.

Why August 9? This date marks the day on which 1st meeting of UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations of Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights was held in 1982.

Indigenous people: It is estimated that there around 370 million indigenous people in the world, living across 90 countries. They make up less than 5% of the world's population, but account for 15% of the poorest, making them most disadvantaged and vulnerable groups of people in world.. They speak overwhelming majority of the world's estimated 7,000 languages and represent 5,000 different cultures. These people are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained their unique social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of dominant societies in which they live. Indigenous peoples from around the world, despite having cultural differences, are facing common problems related to protection of their rights as distinct peoples and existence.

ADB to provide \$200 Million loan for improving road infrastructure in Maharashtra

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved US \$200 million loan for Road Infrastructure Improving project in Maharashtra's 34 districts for better connecting rural areas with markets and services. The proceeds of loan from ADB will be used for upgrading roads in rural areas of these districts to all-weather

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standards for boosting links between local residents and economic centres across the state.

ADB Project for improving road infrastructure

Its total cost is US \$296 million, of which State Government will provide US \$96 million. It will be implemented by ADB and Maharashtra Rural Road Development Association (MRRDA). It will be completed by end of September 2024. Its major components are developing road safety, road asset management, contract management, and climate resilient design.

Benefits of project: It will help to boost links between local residents, productive agricultural land and economic centers across the state. It will also help in improving farmers' access to markets, which in turn will help to boost agricultural productivity and incomes of farmers as well as promote investment in agribusiness and agriculture value chain infrastructure.

About Asian Development Bank (ADB)

It is multilateral lending agency and regional development bank. It was established in December 1966 and is headquartered in Manila, Philippines. It envisions inclusive, resilient, prosperous, and sustainable Asia and Pacific and aims towards sustaining efforts to eradicate extreme poverty in region. At present there are 68 member nation of ADB (including India) which includes 49 from Asia-Pacific region and 19 from outside. It is collectively owned by its member and is closely modeled on World Bank (WB). Its member countries have similar weighted voting system and votes are distributed in proportion with member's capital subscriptions to bank.

charu bhardwaj | bhardwajs.charu@gmail.com |

Bharat Ratna 2019 Awards presented by President of India

President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, presented Bharat Ratna Awards to Nanaji Deshmukh (posthumously), Bhupendra Kumar Hazarika (posthumously) and Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Bharat Ratna 2019 Award Winners

Pranab Mukherjee: His life-long political career spanned about five decades. He was 13th President of India (from 2012 until 2017). He has also served as the Union Finance Minister from 2009 to 2012 under prime ministership of Manmohan Singh.

Bhupen Hazarika: He was a legendary Assamese singer-composer who died in 2011. He was most popular in Bengal and Bangladesh and was responsible for introducing culture and folk music of Assam and northeast India to Hindi cinema. He is popularly known as *Sudhakantha*, meaning the nightingale.

Nanaji Deshmukh: He had been a member of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). He is credited with bolstering Jana Sangh in Uttar Pradesh (UP). As a social activist, he laid emphasis on education. He established 1st Saraswati Shishu Mandir at Gorakhpur in 1950. He has been honoured with Padma Vibhushan earlier.

NOTE: Other Presidents, who had been conferred Bharat Ratna earlier are- Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Rajendra Prasad, Zakir Hussain, A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, Dr. V V Giri.

About Bharat Ratna

It is highest civilian award of Republic of India. It was instituted in 2 January 1954.

First recipients of Bharat Ratna award (1954)- C. Rajagopalachari, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and C. V. Raman.

Bharat Ratna recipients rank 7th in order of precedence of Republic of India.

Criteria: Bharat Ratna award is conferred in recognition of exceptional service/performance of highest order in any field of human endeavor. Till 2011 the award was originally limited to achievements in fields of arts, literature, science, and public services which was then changed. Also, original statutes did not provide for posthumous awards but were amended in 1955 to permit them.

Eligibility: It is conferred without distinction of race, occupation, position, or sex. Although usually Bharat Ratna is conferred on India-born citizens, but it has been awarded to one naturalised citizen (Mother Teresa) and to 2 non-Indians (former South African President Nelson Mandela and Pakistan national Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan).

Award Process: There is no formal nomination process. The recommendations for award can only be made by the Prime Minister to President.

Limits: Maximum of 3 nominees can be awarded per year.

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Medal: Bharat Ratna recipients receive a certificate signed by President and a medal. Medal is in shape of a peepal leaf rimmed in platinum. The sun burst design with rays spreading out, made of platinum, is embossed on obverse side of medal. The words 'Bharat Ratna', in Devanagari Script, is inscribed on obverse side. In centre of reverse side of medal A State Emblem of India is placed in centre of reverse side with national motto, 'Satyamev Jayate' (Truth alone triumphs) in Devanagari Script. There is no monetary grant associated with award.



RE-INVEST 2019: MNRE organises curtain raiser ceremony

Union Ministry of New & Renewable Energy organised Curtain Raiser ceremony for 3rd Edition of Global Renewable Energy Investors' Meet and Expo (RE-INVEST 2019). RE-INVEST 2019 is scheduled to be held in 30th October to 2nd November 2019 in India. It is coinciding with Second Assembly of International Solar Alliance (ISA).

RE-INVEST 2019

Its objective is to attract the right investments in renewable energy (RE) and present India's RE story to the world. It aims at building upon success of RE-INVEST 2015 to accelerate worldwide effort to scale up renewable energy and connect global investment community with Indian energy stakeholders.

2nd Global RE-INVEST: It was held in October, 2018. It had seen 45 in-depth sessions featuring 220 speakers and also saw animated exchanges on various topics which brainstormed on expanding India's RE market in the face of aggressive global competition.

Background

India is among countries with largest production of energy from renewable sources. As of June 2019, India has installed renewable energy capacity of 80.47 GW, of which solar comprises 29.55 GW and wind comprises 36.37 GW. Biomass and small hydro power constitute 9.81 GW and 4.6 GW respectively. Thus, India offers one of largest investment opportunities in the renewable space. To tap this investment potential, Union Government has allowed 100% FDI under automatic route for projects of renewable power generation and distribution.

August 10, 2019

National Film Awards 2019

National Film Awards 2019 awards were announced by Rahul Rawail, head of Jury for feature films. The year 2019 marks 66th edition of National Film awards. Usually recipients of annual National Film Awards are announced in month of April and presentation takes place on May 3 every year but it was delayed this time owing to the 17th Lok Sabha polls.

National film awards are given in 31 categories. 419 films competed for 2019 award. In this year's award a

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new category called Award for **Most Film Friendly State** was instituted which was won by **Uttarakhand**.

66th National Film Awards Winners

Best Feature Film: 'Hellaro' (Gujarati)

Best Non Feature Film: Son Rise by Vibha Bakshi and The Secret Life of Frogs by Ajay and Vijay Bedi

Best Actor: Ayushmann Khurrana ('Andhadhun') & Vicky Kaushal ('Uri')

Best Actress: Keerthy Suresh for 'Mahanati' (Telugu)

Best Supporting Actress: Surekha Sikri for 'Badhaai Ho'

Best Supporting Actor: Swanand Kirkire for 'Chumbak' (Marathi)

Best Director: Aditya Dhar for- 'Uri: The Surgical Strike'

Best Popular Film providing wholesome entertainment: 'Badhaai Ho'

Best film on social issues: 'Padman'

Best Film on Environment Conservation/Preservation: 'Paani' (Marathi)

Best Film for National Integration – Ondalla Eradalla (Kannada)

Best Educational Film: Sarala Virala

Best Cinematography – Olu (Malayalam) to MJ Radhakrishnan

Best Children's Film: 'Sarkari Hiriya Prathamika Shale Kasargodu' (Kannada)

Best Child artist: P V Rohith (Kannada), Sameep Singh (Punjabi), Talha Arshad Reshi (Urdu) and Shrinivas Pokale (Marathi)

Best Debut Film of a Director: Naal (Marathi)

Best Choreography: 'Ghoomer' in 'Padmavaat'

Best Editing: 'Nathicharami' (Kannada)

Best Special Effects: KGF

Special Jury Award: Award shared by Sruthi Hariharan, Joju George for Joseph, Savithri for Sudani From Nigeria, Chandrachud Rai

Best Regional films

Best Rajasthani Film: Turtle

Best Tamil Film: Baaram

Best Marathi Film: Bhonga

Best Hindi Film: Andhadhun

Best Urdu Film: Hamid

Best Telugu Film: Mahanati

Best Assamese Film: Bulbul Can Sing

Best Punjabi Film: Harjeeta

Music

Best Lyrics: Nathichirami (Kannada)

Best Music Direction (Songs): Sanjay Leela Bhansali for Padmaavat

Best Music Direction (Background score): Uri

Best Sound Design: Uri

Best Female playback Singer: Bindhu Malini for Mayavi Manave from Nathichirami (Kannada)

Best Male Playback Singer: Arijit Singh for 'Binte Dil' in 'Padmavaat'

Production

Best Make-Up artist– Awe

Best Production Design: Kammara Sambhavam (Malayalam)

Best Costume: Mahanati

Screenplay

Best Original Screenplay: 'Chi Arjun La Sow' (Telugu)

Best Adapted Screenplay: Andhadhun

Best Dialogues: Tariq



10 August: World Biofuel Day

Every year 10 August is observed as World Biofuel Day with aim to create awareness about importance of non-fossil fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels. It is being observed by Union Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas since 2015.

On 10th August 2019, Petroleum & Natural Gas Ministry will organize World Biofuel Day at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi.

World Biofuel Day

Theme 2019: 'Production of Biodiesel from Used Cooking Oil (UCO)'

Objective: To create awareness about importance of non-fossil fuels (or environment-friendly fuels) as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels and to highlight various efforts made by Government of India in biofuel sector.

Highlights of World Biofuel Day 2019

To facilitate production of Biodiesel from Used Cooking Oil (UCO), Oil Marketing Companies shall float an Expression of Interest (EOI) for procurement of Biodiesel from Used Cooking Oil across 100 cities. Objective behind inviting this EOI is to encourage applicants to set up Biodiesel producing plants from UCO, processing plants and further utilizing existing potential of UCO based Bio-diesel in India.

On this occasion, **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** shall release a sticker on RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil) and a mobile app to facilitate collection of UCO.

Interactive sessions on **2nd Generation Ethanol & Biodiesel** from UCO will also be held, which will focus on issues and hurdles being faced by sector and dwell on how to overcome these hurdles for effective implementation of blending program across India.

What are Biofuels?

They are environment friendly fuels which are derived from renewable bio-mass resources. Biofuels utilization would address global concerns about suppression of carbon emissions.

Being eco-friendly they provide a strategic advantage to promote sustainable development. They also supplement conventional energy sources in meeting rapidly increasing demand for transportation fuels.

Benefits: Biofuels use can reduce import dependency on crude oil, cleaner environment, additional income to farmers and employment generation in rural areas. Biofuels programme is also in synergy with Union Government's initiatives for Make in India, Swachh Bharat and enhancing farmers' income.

Benefits of transformation of UCO:

It will help bring health benefits as there would be no recycling of UCO, infrastructural investment in rural areas, employment generation and cleaner environment with reduced carbon footprint.

The role of biodiesel is not just to replace fossil fuel but to help form a balanced policy. Biofuels are environment-friendly, and their use would address global concerns about the suppression of carbon emissions.

Important Biofuel categories in India

Bioethanol : Ethanol produced from biomass such as sugar containing materials, starch containing materials and cellulosic materials.

Biodiesel : a methyl or ethyl ester of fatty acids produced from non-edible vegetable oils, acid oil, used cooking oil/animal fat and bio-oil.

Advanced biofuels : Fuels which are-

produced from lignocellulosic, non-food crops (i.e. grasses, algae), or industrial waste and residue streams having low CO₂ emission/high GHG reduction and do not compete with food crops for land use. For instance- Fuels like Second Generation (2G) Ethanol, Drop-in fuels, algae based 3G biofuels, bio-CNG, bio-methanol, Di Methyl Ether (DME) bio-hydrogen, drop in fuels with MSW as the source / feedstock material

Drop-in fuels : Any liquid fuel produced from Biomass, agri-residues, wastes such as Municipal Solid Wastes (MSW), Plastic wastes, Industrial wastes etc .

Bio-CNG: it is a purified form of bio-Gas whose energy potential and composition is similar to that of fossil based natural gas.

NITI Aayog launches 4th edition of Women Transforming India Awards

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NITI Aayog launched fourth edition of Women Transforming India (WTI) Awards. Nominations for the awards will be opened immediately after the launch. The **theme** for this year's award is '**Women and Entrepreneurship**', in continuation of the theme for WTI Awards 2018. WhatsApp has collaborated with NITI Aayog for WTI Awards 2019 and will be providing support amounting to US \$100,000 to award winners. Nominations for the awards will be opened immediately after the launch

About Women Transforming India (WTI) Award

It is being organized annually by NITI Aayog in collaboration with United Nations to recognize women entrepreneurs from across India. It has been launched under Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP). It aims to recognise and celebrate stories of exemplary women from all over India.

Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)

It is initiative of NITI Aayog to promote and support aspiring as well as established women entrepreneurs in India. It aims to assist and handhold these women entrepreneurs in their journey from starting to scaling up and expanding their ventures.

Objectives:

- (i) To transform the entrepreneurial ecosystem for women entrepreneurs in the country.
- (ii) To become one-stop resource centre for Indian women entrepreneurs.
- (iii) Provide single platform for meeting and working in collaboration for various stakeholders in the entrepreneurial space.

charu bhardwaj | bhardwajs.charu@gmail.com |

Partner Organisations of WEP: It has more than 5,000 women entrepreneurs registered on its platform, more than 30 partners and, has committed funding of more than US\$10mn for these startups. Google, UN India Business Forum, SIDBI, NIC, NASSCOM, CRISIL, WEE Foundation, SEWA bank, MannDeshi Foundation etc. are the partners.

4th edition of National Entrepreneurship Awards 2019

Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) announced fourth edition of National Entrepreneurship Awards, 2019 with aim to honour outstanding young 1st generation entrepreneurs as well as ecosystem builders for their exceptional contribution in entrepreneurship development. They will reward the most innovative, inspiring and accomplished micro entrepreneurs to scale up their business.

About National Entrepreneurship Awards

These annual awards have been instituted by MSDE to honour outstanding young first generation entrepreneurs and ecosystem builders for their exceptional contribution in entrepreneurship development. The awards seek to instill and entrench entrepreneurial attitude among the future generations and the Youth of India.

Categories: There are a total of 45 specially designed awards to be bestowed – 39 *Enterprise Awards* and 6 *Awards for Entrepreneurship Ecosystem Builders*.

Eligibility: To be eligible for these awards, the nominee (entrepreneur) must be (i) under the age of 40 years; (ii) first-generation entrepreneurs; (iii) hold 51% or more equity and ownership of business and women entrants individually or collectively owning 75% or more of the enterprise.

Cash prize: Winners will be presented with Trophy, Certificate and Cash Prize of Rs. 5 lakh (enterprises/ individuals) and ₹Rs. 10 lakh (organizations/ institutes).

HarmonyOS: Huawei launches its own Operating System

Chinese telecom giant Huawei launched its own operating system called **HarmonyOS** or **HongMeng** in Chinese. It was revealed by Richard Yu, head of Huawei's consumer business at a press conference in Dongguan.

This unveiling comes at a time when telecom giant is facing threat of losing access to Google's Android platform, amid escalating U.S.-China trade tensions, although Huawei has reportedly been working on its own operating system since 2012.

About HarmonyOS

HarmonyOS is future oriented and designed to be more smooth and secure, and is completely different from Android and iOS.

The first version of this operating system would launch in late 2019 in its smart screen products and would later be expanded to across a range of smart devices, including wearable technology, over next 3

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years.

Backup Plan: Although Huawei had no plan to launch a smartphone with HarmonyOS but the company has a backup plan ready i.e. if in future Huawei would cannot use Android then the company can immediately switch to HarmonyOS. This is because without access to full version of Android/other popular services offered by Google (including applications available on Google Play store), Huawei may face trouble in convincing its consumers outside China to buy its phones.

Importance: This highly anticipated operating system is considered crucial for Huawei's survival as it confronts a looming White House ban on U.S. companies that are selling technology products to Huawei, which could possibly remove Huawei's access to Android.

Background

In May 2019 Huawei was swept into deepening trade war between China and US which has seen punitive tariffs slapped on billions of dollars of two-way trade.

US President Donald Trump amid suspicions that Chinese telecom giant Huawei which is considered world leader in superfast fifth-generation (5G) equipment and is also world's number 2 smartphone producer, provides a backdoor for Chinese intelligence services, blacklisted the company. However firm denies US accusations.

Blacklisting of Huawei by US, has resulted into restrictions on American companies which are theoretically no longer allowed to sell technology products to firm, however a 3-month exemption period (which ends in second week of August), was granted by US before measure came into force.

Ban could prevent Chinese tech firm from getting hold of key hardware and software which includes smartphone chips and elements of Google Android operating system (OS), which equips vast majority of smartphones in world, including those of Huawei.

Inter-State portability of ration cards launched in 4 states

Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution launched inter-State portability of ration cards i.e. public distribution in four adjoining states in two clusters (i.e. pairing two states) -Andhra Pradesh and Telangana & Gujarat and Maharashtra. It has been launched in a bid to implement major plan to roll out 'One Nation, One Ration Card' by June 2020.

Inter-State portability of ration cards

The inter-state portability of ration cards is undertaken pairing two States each viz Telangana and Andhra Pradesh & Maharashtra and Gujarat. Under this mechanism, beneficiary from one state will be able to avail entitled subsidised foodgrains under Food Security Act from ration shops/Public Distribution System (PDS)/Fair Price Shops (FPSs) in any other paired state.

This means beneficiaries living in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh can buy their quota of ration PDS (ration shops), in either of the two States. Similar will be the in case of Maharashtra and Gujarat. In these four states, both intra-state and inter-state portability of ration card has been implemented successfully.

The intra-state and inter-state portability of ration card holders is achieved through installation of electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) devices FPSs, supported by the biometric/Aadhaar authentication

Future Implementation

Seven States, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tripura, at present are testing intra-portability of ration cards, which means beneficiaries can lift their quota of ration from any PDS located within a State. Gradually, inter-state portability of ration cards will be implemented in these seven states. By January 2020, these 11 states will be formed as one grid where ration cards will be made portable i.e. beneficiaries can buy ration from any one of these states.

Food Subsidy

At present, Central Government as per **National Food Security Act** supplies 5 kg of subsidised foodgrain to each person per month to over 81 crore people via 5,00,000 ration shops (PDS) in the country. The foodgrain is supplied to beneficiaries via ration shops at highly subsidised rate of Rs.3/kg for rice, ₹Rs. 2/kg for wheat and Rs. 1/kg for coarse grains.

Shillong Declaration on e-Governance adopted at NCeG 2019

The 22nd National Conference on e-Governance (NCeG) 2019 successfully concluded at Shillong, capital of Meghalaya with the adoption of '**Shillong Declaration**' on e-Governance.

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About Conference

It was organized by Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DAPRG), Ministry of Personnel and Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), in collaboration with Government of Meghalaya organized from 8-9 August 2019. Its theme was "Digital India: Success to Excellence". On sidelines of this conference, an exhibition was also organized during the event to showcase India's achievements in the field of e-Governance.

Shillong Declaration calls for

- Improving citizen's experience with Government services by promoting timely implementation of *India Enterprise Architecture (IndEA)* and implementing single sign-on for interoperability and
- integration among e-Government applications throughout the country
- Consolidating plethora of successful State level e-Governance projects and domain-based projects with focus to replicate them as common application software.
- Taking steps to further improve connectivity in North Eastern (NE) States of India by addressing issues of telecommunications connectivity at grassroot level and formulating and implementing comprehensive telecom development plan.
- Taking steps for enhancing activities of Electronics Sector Skill Council in NE States and explore possibility for opening an electronics skill center in Shillong.
- Promoting use of e-Office and moving towards less paper state secretariats in NE States and in District level offices.
- Improving quality of delivery of e-Services in North East to fulfil vision of improved citizen experience
- Developing India as global cloud hub and facilitate development of Government applications and databases on Cloud by default
- Adopting emerging technologies for finding e-Governance solutions
- Promoting Digital India Projects with focus on Smart Villages and Smart Cities through Startups and Smart Entrepreneurship.

ROTAVAC Vaccine to be expand to entire country

Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has decided to expand Rotavirus vaccine to the entire country from September 2019. It will provide Rotavirus vaccine to every child across all 36 states/UTs by September, 2019. This decision was taken as per an ambitious plan of Health Ministry under the 100-days agenda of the newly elected government.

Background

Out of all the causes of diarrhoea in India, rotavirus is a leading cause of diarrhoea in children less than 5 years of age. In India, every year there are 37 diarrheal deaths out of every 1000 children. It is estimated that rotavirus cause around 8 lakh hospitalizations; 32 lakh outpatient visits and estimated 78 thousand deaths annually in India.

Rotavirus diarrhoea presents in similar manner like any other diarrhoea but can easily prevented through rotavirus vaccination. Other diarrhoea can be prevented through general measures such as safe water and safe food consumption, good hygiene, frequent hand washing, exclusive breastfeeding as well as vitamin A supplementation.

About Rotavac

It is India's first indigenously developed vaccine for rotavirus infections. It has been developed by the Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech Limited.

It was introduced in 2016 in phased manner, beginning with 4 states initially. At present, Rotavirus vaccine is now available in 28 States/UTs.

It was included in *Universal Immunization Programme (UIP)* based on recommendation of expert committee *National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI)*.

UIP: 3 doses of rotavirus vaccine are provided along with other vaccines, free of cost under UIP at one and half month, two and half month, and three and half month of age of child.

WHO Pre-qualification: In January 2018, World Health Organisation (WHO) had prequalified Rotavac vaccine i.e. it can be sold internationally to several countries in Africa and South America.

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Gagandeep Kang: She had played key role development of Rotavac and for this she awarded Fellowship of the Royal Society (FRS), United Kingdom in April 2019, making her first Indian woman to be awarded this highest scientific recognition.

BCCI agrees to come under NADA

Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) agreed to come under the ambit of the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA). In this regard, BCCI has given in writing that it will adhere to anti-doping policy of NADA. Till now, Sweden-based International Dope Testing Management (IDTM) was collecting cricketers' samples on behalf of BCCI and submitting them to the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL).

Implication of this decision: NADA will now collect samples of all cricketers during domestic tournaments, bilateral series etc. It can also collect samples of all domestic and international cricketers in Indian Premier League (IPL) since it domestic event of BCCI. Thus, all Indian cricketers will now be governed by same rules and processes as other sportspersons in terms of doping testing including out-of-competition testing.

About National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA)

It is national organisation which is responsible for promoting, monitoring and coordinating doping control program in sports in all its forms in India.

It was established as registered society under **Societies Registration Act of 1890** in 2005 with mandate for dope free sports in India.

charu bhardwaj | bhardwaj.charu@gmail.com |

Primary objectives: To implement anti-doping rules as per World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) code, promote education and research, regulate dope control programme and create awareness about doping as well as its ill effects.

Primary functions:

- (i) Implement anti doping code to achieve compliance by all sports organizations in the Country.
- (ii) Coordinate dope testing program through all participating stakeholders.
- (iii) Promote anti doping research and education to inculcate the value of dope free sports.
- (iv) Adopt best practice standards and quality systems to enable effective implementation and continual improvement of the program.

Virasat-e-Khalsa set to enter Asia Book of Records

Virasat-e-Khalsa museum located in Anandpur Sahib town in Punjab is set to find a place in Asia Book of Records for becoming *most visited museum in Asian sub-continent on a single day*. Museum witnessed a record footfall of 20,569 visitors on a single day on 20 March 2019.

Key Highlights

Asia Book of Records confirmed that record of '*maximum footfall in a museum in a day*' set by museum will feature in next edition of Asia Book of Records.

This would be 3rd entry for museum in record books. Prior to this, Virasat-e-Khalsa made it to Limca Book of Records in February 2019 edition and India Book of Records and both had listed 'Virasat-e-Khalsa' as country's top-ranked museum in terms of number of visitors.

Museum has been conferred an award by Punjab Energy Development Agency in a State-level energy conservation competition, for cutting down electricity consumption.

About Virasat-e-Khalsa

It was built to commemorate the rich history and culture of Punjab and Sikhism. It inaugurated in November 2011. In a short span of eight years, more than 10 million visitors have visited museum so far. It celebrates 500 years of Sikh history and 300th anniversary of birth of Khalsa, based on scriptures written by **Guru Gobind Singh**, 10th and last human Sikh guru.

August 11, 2019

Govt. signs Memorandum of Settlement with National Liberation Front of Twipra

A peace agreement was signed between Government of India, State government of Tripura and Tripura's banned insurgency group National Liberation Front of Twipra led by Sabir Kumar Debbarma (NLFT-SD). As per the agreement NLFT-SD has agreed to abjure path of violence and join mainstream.

A Memorandum of Settlement was also signed in this regard between, Centre, State Government of Tripura and NLFT-SD with group also being agreed to surrender its 88 cadres with their weapons.

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Key Highlights

National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) has been banned under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) since 1997. The group has been involved in violence, operating from their camps across international border.

NLFT-SD: The insurgent group has been responsible for violent activities during period 2005-2015 including 317 insurgency incidents in which 28 security forces and 62 civilians lost their lives. In 2015, peace talks with NLFT were initiated and since 2016 there has been no violence by NLFT.

The surrendered cadres will be given surrender benefits as per **Scheme for Surrender-cum-Rehabilitation of Militants in the North-East**, 2018 of Ministry of Home Affairs.

State Government of Tripura will help surrendered cadres in recruitment, housing, and education. Also, centre will consider proposals of Tripura State Government regarding economic development of tribal areas of Tripura.

All about PM Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana

Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has rolled out registration for the PM Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana to provide old age pension cover to farmers. It is new Central Sector Scheme envisioned with an aim to improve life of small and marginal farmers of the country. It is first of its kind pension coverage scheme since independence that has been envisioned for farmers.

Key Features of Scheme

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Intended Beneficiaries: It is voluntary and contributory for small and marginal farmer in entry age group of 18 to 40 years and whose cultivable land is 2 hectares or less.

Benefits: Beneficiaries on attaining the age of 60 years will get monthly fixed pension of Rs. 3000.

Contributions: Beneficiary farmers are required to make monthly contribution of Rs.55 to Rs.200, depending on their age of entry, in Pension Fund till they reach the retirement date i.e. the age of 60 years. Central Government will also equal contribute as contributed by the eligible farmer to Pension Fund. Farmers can opt to allow his/her monthly contribution to this scheme to be made from his benefits drawn from PM-KISAN Scheme directly. Spouse of farmer is also eligible to get separate pension of Rs.3000 upon making separate contributions to this pension fund.

Implementing agency: Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) will be Pension Fund Manager and also responsible for Pension pay out to farmers.

Transferability: In case of death of beneficiary farmer before retirement date, the spouse may continue in scheme by paying remaining contributions till remaining age of the deceased farmer. If spouse does not wish to continue, then total contribution made by farmer along with interest will be paid to spouse. If there is no spouse, then total contribution along with interest will be paid to nominee. If the farmer dies after retirement date, the spouse will receive 50% of fixed pension as Family Pension. After death of both the farmer and the spouse, accumulated corpus will be credited back to Pension Fund.

Exit: The beneficiary farmers may opt voluntarily to exit from this scheme after minimum period of 5 years of regular contributions. On exit, their entire contribution will be returned by LIC with interest equivalent to prevailing saving bank rates.

August 12, 2019

Defence Minister approves Child Care Leave for Male Service Personnel

Defence minister Rajnath Singh has approved extension of benefits of Child Care Leave (CCL) to single male service personnel as well as certain relaxations of CCL provisions in case of women officers of defence forces. Currently Child Care Leave (CCL) is granted only to women officers in defence forces. This decision is in line with a recent *Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT)* order which extended similar benefits of CCL to civilian employees.

Child Care Leave-

CCL in Defence Forces:

Single male service personnel as well as woman officers will be able to avail CCL in respect of child with 40% disability and would be availed without any restriction of age limit of child.

Minimum period of CCL that can be availed in each spell has been reduced to 5 days from earlier limit of 15 days.

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**CCL to Civilian Employees**

DoPT has made following amendments to allow CCL to civilian employees –

CCL granted to woman employees has now been extended to single male government servants also.

Age limit of 22 years prescribed earlier in case of a child with 40 % disability has been removed for purpose of availing CCL.

Minimum period of CCL that can be availed at a time has been reduced to 5 days instead of 15 days.

Northeast States crowds list of states with most Dense Tree, Forest Cover

According to recent information provided by Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to Parliament, Northeast crowds list of states with most dense tree and forest cover in the country. It was based on assessment of forest and tree cover are done by Forest Survey of India (FSI), whose findings are published in **India State of Forest Report (ISFR)**. The last report was published in 2017.

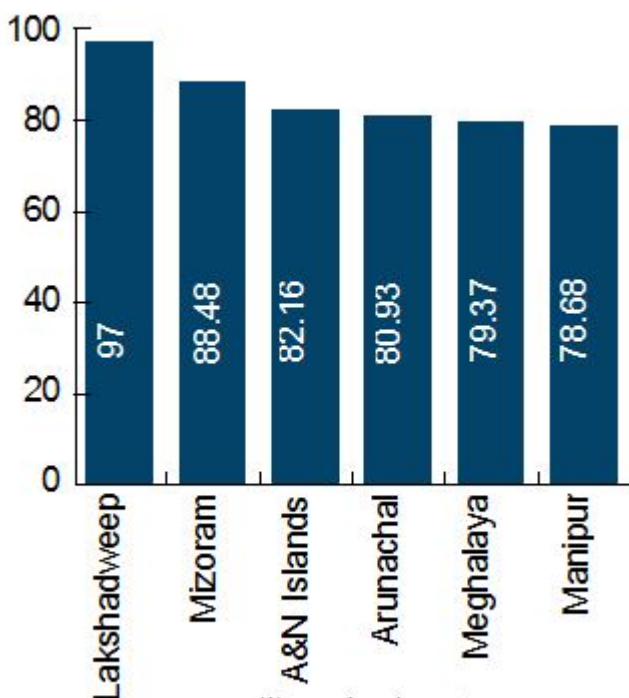
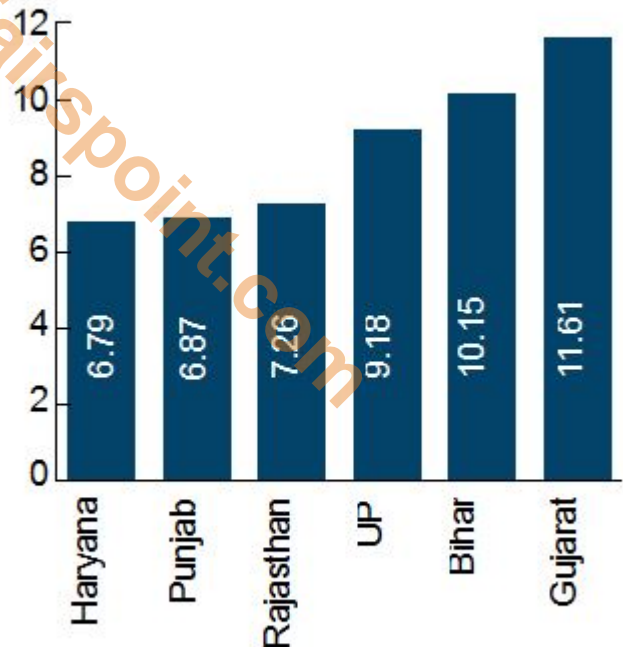
Key Findings of Report

Total forest cover: Quarter of India's geographical area (24.49 %) is under forest and tree cover.

Lowest forest and tree cover: It is in Haryana, at 6.79 % of its geographical area, followed by Punjab (6.87 %), Rajasthan (7.26%).

Highest forest and tree cover: Union Territory of Lakshadweep has 97% of its geographical area of total 30 square km under forest and tree cover. Among six states with highest forest and tree cover, four are in Northeast India viz. Mizoram (88.84%), Arunachal Pradesh (80.93%), Meghalaya (79.37%) and Manipur (78.68%). Goa and Kerala are two other states which have more than 50 % of their geographical area under forest and tree cover.

Highest forest and tree cover (In terms of area): Madhya Pradesh with total 85,487 sq km has highest tree and forest cover in India in terms of geographical area.

TOP SIX**BOTTOM SIX**

Tree plus forest cover as a percentage of geographical area
Source: Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change

Exhibition on 'DAE Technologies' held in New Delhi

Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) is organizing exhibition on '**DAE Technologies: Empowering India through Technology**' at New Moti Bagh recreation club, New Delhi. It was inaugurated by Shri Rakesh Gupta, Chairman of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). The 2-day exhibition on DAE's spin-off technologies for Non-Power Applications (NPAs) is open to public for 11-12 August 2019.

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Exhibition Highlights

Exhibition is covering technologies developed by the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Raja Ramanna Centre for Advance Technology (RRCAT), Indore and other Units of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), which are useful for common man in day-to-day life such as in field of health, agriculture, water, food security and environment.

Details of exhibits:-

Health: In health sector there are 3 segments including-

- (i) Development of Radio Pharmaceuticals
- (ii) Production & Distribution
- (iii) Its implementation for diagnosis and therapeutic application.

Devices on display– Medical devices for **Tele-ECG** (a convenient tool to distinguish individuals with suspected heart diseases), **Bhabhatron**– A Radiation tele-therapy machine, screening of TB (Tuberculosis) and Cancer.

Agriculture: DAE has developed 44 high yielding varieties (HYV) seed by inducing mutation to suit local weather conditions across country. DAE encourages organic farming and has also developed technologies of fertilizer production from bio-sludge. Disease resistant, low maturity period and high yielding crops have been well accepted by farmers. Rural technologies are also being made available to rural youth through **AKRUTI (Advanced Knowledge and Rural Technology Implementation initiative) programme**.

Water: DAE has developed technologies for clean water to fulfill departmental requirements and as spin-off developed many techniques which finds applications in ultra-filtration membrane, RO membrane, multistage flash evaporation and water hydrology based on radiotracers.

Environment: DAE technologies are finding lot of applications for Swatch Bharat Mission where bio-methanization and Urban Sludge Hygienization technologies are being deployed across country.

Nisargruna plant is a bio- Methanization plant for digesting kitchen food waste and green vegetable wastes from agriculture markets to Methane gas which can be used for cooking or generating electricity or even for running biogas vehicles. This plant can digest animal waste from slaughter house also.

Book chronicling Vice President Naidu's 2 years in office released

The book titled '**Listening, Learning and Leading**', based on M. Venkaiah Naidu's two years in office as Vice President of India was launched by Union Minister for Home Affairs, Amit Shah in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. The function was hosted by Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar.

About 'Listening, Learning, and Leading' Book

The book captures glimpses of Vice President's 330 public engagements across all states and Union Territories of the country during last two year period.

As of now, Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu has delivered 61 convocation addresses, interacted with students on 35 occasions, delivered 25 special lectures and visited 97 scientific and technological research institutions throughout length and breadth of country.

The book chronicling M K Naidu's two years in office contains Naidu's important diplomatic engagements, including his visits to 19 countries, in 4 continents.

It showcases his achievements as *Rajya Sabha Chairman* and initiatives taken by him to enhance effectiveness and promote efficiency of Upper House.

He is 1st Indian vice-president to visit Panama, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Malta.

Lessons Life Taught Me, Unknowingly: Anupam Kher's Autobiography released

Veteran actor Anupam Kher's autobiography titled "**Lessons Life Taught Me, Unknowingly**" was launched at a special event at *Consulate General of India* in New York. It was unveiled by Rishi Kapoor, along with wife Neetu Kapoor and cast of NBC's show *New Amsterdam*.

About 'Lessons Life Taught Me, Unknowingly'

The autobiography of *Padma Bhushan awardee* gives a detailed account of his failures, rejections and lessons learnt in his life and in a career spanning 500 films.

The autobiography shares incidents from Kher's life that shaped his career and is an exciting account as it does not talk about his successes.



The book was released in India on 5 August and will be released in US on 15 October 2019.

Ultimate Table Tennis Title: Chennai Lions beats Dabang Delhi in final

Chennai Lions glided away to one-sided victory over Dabang Delhi in final to win Ultimate Table Tennis (UTT) crown. Chennai Lions led by Sharath Kamal defeated Sathiyani-led Dabang Delhi with 8-1 in final to lift **UTT Season 3 Trophy**.

Key Highlights

In front of a packed house, Sharath Kamal-spearheaded Lions defeated defending champions Dabang Delhi to lift the trophy and brought league to an end.

Lions' foreign imports namely Petrissa Solja of Germany and Tiago Apolonia (World No. 71) of Portugal proved to be stars of grand finale.

Pair of Sharath Kamal and Petrissa Solja defeated Delhi's Sathiyani and Scozs in thumping fashion.

Solja defeated Scozs with 2-1, while Apolonia wiped out Sathiyani with 3-0 followed by another 3-0 victory for Lions.

Final Results of UTT Season 03

Women's Singles: Petrissa Solja bt Bernadette Szocs (2-1)

Men's Singles: Tiago Apolonia bt Sathiyani G. (3-0)

Mixed Doubles Men: Sharath Kamal/Petrissa Solja bt Sathiyani G/Bernadette Szocs 3-0 (11-7, 11-2, 11-3).

LEAGUE AWARDS:

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Super Server of League – Jon Persson (Dabang Delhi)

Standout Player of League– Sutirtha Mukherjee (U Mumba Tt)- She Didn't Lose Single Match Throughout the League.

Most Valuable Player of League (Female)– Doo Hoi Kem (U Mumba Tt)

Most Valuable Player Of The League (Male)– Sathiyani Gnansekaran

The Ultimate One– Petrissa Solja (Chennai Lions)

About Ultimate Table Tennis

UTT is India's first-ever professional table tennis league. The inaugural Ultimate Table Tennis was held from 13 to 20 July 2017.

UTT aims to benefit development of Indian players by allowing them to play alongside some of world's best players.

Franchises are club-based instead of city-based and each franchise is a combination of overseas and Indian players. It includes 4 men and 4 women, along with 1 Indian and 1 international coach each.

Apart from foreign players, coaches from abroad would also be part of league, with each team having an international coach apart from 1 Indian.

The year 2019 was the 3rd season of Ultimate Table Tennis.

Hyderabad Open BWF Tour Super 100 tournament concludes

The 26-year-old Sourabh Verma claimed men's singles title in final over **Loh Kean Yew** of Singapore in summit clash at Hyderabad Open BWF Tour Super 100 tournament held at Gachibowli Indoor Stadium in Hyderabad. He entered the finale after registering a straight-game win over Malaysia's Iskandar Zulkarnain earlier in semifinals.

Top seeded Indian women's doubles pair of Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy however lost an opportunity to register a maiden women's doubles title by losing to Korean combination of Baek Ha Na and Jung Kyung Eun (with 17-21 17-21) in the summit clash.

Hyderabad Open (badminton) 2019

The 2019 Hyderabad Open, officially titled **IDBI Federal Life Insurance Hyderabad Open 2019** was a badminton tournament held from 6-11 August 2019 at G. M. C. Balayogi SATS Indoor Stadium in Hyderabad, India.

Tournament had a total purse of \$75,000 and was organized by the Badminton Association of India and sanctioned by the BWF (The Badminton World Federation).

It was 5th Super 100 tournament of **2019 BWF World Tour**. It is also part of Hyderabad Open championships, which had been held since 2018.

**Highlights: Hyderabad Open Badminton 2019****Men's Singles Title:** Sourabh Verma**Women's Singles Title:** Singapore's Yeo Jia Min**Women's Doubles Title:** South Korea's Baek Ha Na and Jung Kyung Eun**Men's Doubles Title:** Indonesia's Muhammad Shohibul Fikri & Bagas Maulana**Mixed Doubles Title:** Malaysia's Hoo Pang Ron & Cheah Yee See**About Sourabh Verma**

Sourabh Verma, reigning national champion from Madhya Pradesh, who had won Slovenia International in May 2019 outwitted **World No. 44** Kean Yew (with 21-13 14-21 21-16) in a 52-minute final clash.

Besides winning the Slovenia Open, he has reached semifinals at US Open and quarterfinals at Canada Open.

In 2018 Sourabh had won Dutch Open Super 100 and Russian Open Super 100 titles.

He will next be playing Chinese Taipei Open (Super 300) and Vietnam Open (Super 100) in September 2019.

He doesn't have any financial support or sponsor and has been playing tournaments on his own.

Kajin Sara Lake set to be world's highest lake

Newly discovered Kajin Sara lake in Nepal is likely to set a new record of being the world's highest lake. It is located at Singarkharka area of Chame rural municipality in Manang district of Nepal.

Kajin Sara lake

It is called **Singar** locally. It was discovered about a few months ago by team of mountaineers. As per measurement of lake taken by this team, it is located at an altitude of 5,200 metres. This measurement is yet to be officially verified. It is estimated to be 1,500-metre-long and 600-metre-wide.

It is said to have formed out of the water melted from the Himalayas. Once its location and measurement is officially verified, it will be the world's highest lake if its altitude of 5000-plus metres.

Current world's highest lake: It is Tilicho Lake, situated at an altitude of 4,919 metres in Nepal. It is 4 km long, 1.2 km wide and around 200 metres deep.

Indian Army launches 'Mission Reach Out' in Jammu

Indian Army has launched Mission Reach Out in Jammu to ensure basic essential services and necessities are available in region after the abrogation of Article 370 provisions and reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir. In this regard, high level "Mission Reach Out" conference was held in the Nagrota Military Station to review the prevalent situation in the region.

Highlights of Conference

It was chaired by White Knight Corps Commander Lt Gen Paramjit Singh and was attended by Jammu Divisional Commissioner Sanjeev Verma, members of civil administration, representatives of J&K Police, CRPF, BSF and intelligence agencies.

It was aimed at bringing absolute synergy between Indian Army, civil administration and other security establishments in maintaining peace, harmony and conducive environment in J&K. It also discussed prevailing security scenario and preparedness of security agencies and civil administration.

About Mission Reach Out

Under it, Indian Army has undertaken numerous initiatives such as providing mobile medical care units with essential medicines and lady medical officers, providing water in locations where supply is disrupted. It also has supplied essentials, including rations, assistance in transportation of patients to hospitals. It also helped in facilitating people to speak to their near and dear ones through army exchange and create safe environment for banks, ATMs, and hospitals to function.

August 13, 2019**Chandrima Shaha: 1st woman President of Indian National Science Academy (INSA)**

Renowned biologist Chandrima Shaha became first woman to get elected as President of Indian National Science Academy (INSA). She will head INSA from 2020 to 2022 after taking over as president from incumbent Ajay K. Sood. She was formerly Director of the National Institute of Immunology, Delhi.

About Chandrima Shaha

She is currently professor of Eminence at National Institute of Immunology (NII). She is the former Director of NII. She was Vice President (International) of Indian National Science Academy (2016-2018).

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She is elected fellow of the World Academy of Sciences. Before becoming biologist, she was cricketer and also had worked commentator for All India Radio. As biologist, her key research focused on understanding cell death pathways.

About Indian National Science Academy (INSA)

- It is the apex body of Indian scientists representing all branches of science and technology. It promotes science and its use in India.
- It was originally established in 1935 and was then known as National Institute of Sciences of India until the present name was adopted in 1970.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi. Union Government in 1945 had recognised it as the premier scientific society representing all branches of science in India.

12 August: International Youth Day

The International Youth Day is observed every year across world on 12 August to bring youth issues to attention of international community and celebrate the potential of youth as partners in today's global society.

The day draws attention to given set of cultural and legal issues surrounding youth and also seeks to highlight role played by young women and men as essential partners in change and provide opportunity to raise awareness about challenges and problems being faced by world's youth.

International Youth Day 2019

charu bhardwaj | bhardwaj.charu@gmail.com |

Theme for this year is '**Transforming education**'. It seeks to highlight efforts to make education more accessible and inclusive for all youth, including efforts by youth themselves. It supports Goal 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG) i.e. to ensure equitable quality and inclusive education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Background

International Youth Day (IYD) was proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) by adopting **resolution 54/120** in December 1999. It was instituted by UNGA based on the recommendation of World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth held in Lisbon (Portugal) from 8 to 12 August 1998. This day was observed for first time on 12 August, 2000.

Bar Council of India imposes 3-year moratorium on opening of new law colleges

Bar Council of India (BCI), the apex bar body has imposed 3 year moratorium on opening of new institutions except for national law universities (NLUs), if proposed by a state. This decision has been taken to curb mushrooming of law colleges in the country and laying stress on improvement of standard of existing institutions. BCI can only approves or gives recognition to LLB degree and LLM and Ph.D degrees are not under its control.

BCI observations

BCI noted that there is no dearth of advocates and existing institutions are sufficient to produce required number of law graduates annually. It also held that the ones without any proper infrastructure or faculty will be closed down in the next three years. It said that there is urgent need to improve standard of teaching and it will train law teachers in the country. BCI has also requested state governments and universities to stop unfair means as well as to fill up vacancies of law teachers in all colleges/universities within 4 months period.

About Bar Council of India (BCI)

It is statutory body established by Parliament under the **Advocates Act, 1961**. It is mandated to regulate and represent Indian bar.

Functions:

It performs regulatory function by prescribing standards of professional conduct and etiquette and by exercising disciplinary jurisdiction over the bar.

It sets standards for legal education in the country and grants recognition to Universities whose degree in law will serve as qualification for enrolment as advocate.

It also performs representative functions by protecting rights, interests and privileges of advocates as well as provides financial assistance for organising welfare schemes for advocates.

Aishwarya Pissay: 1st Indian to claim a World Title in Motorsports

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Aishwarya Pissay became first Indian to claim a world title in motorsports by winning **FIM World Cup** (Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme) in women's category after the final round of the championship at Varpalota in Hungary. She also finished 2nd in FIM Junior category.

Key Highlights

The 23-year old from Bengaluru won the 1st round in Dubai and was placed 3rd (Portugal), 5th (Spain) and 4th (Hungary) in subsequent outings.

She finally finished with a tally of 65 points, just 4 points ahead of Rita Vieira of Portugal in final overall standings for women and made history by becoming the first Indian to win a world title in motor sports.

She was placed 2nd in junior category with 46 points, behind championship winner Tomas de Gavardo of Chile with 60 points.

Going into Hungarian Baja, Aishwarya with 52 points and Vieira with 45 points were top contenders for World Cup. The 4th-place finish earned Aishwarya 13 points while Vieira, who was placed 3rd, garnered 16.

ISRO launched programmes to commemorate birth centenary of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched a year-long programmes and functions from 12 August 2019 to commemorate birth centenary of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, founder and eminent space scientist of ISRO. Dr. Vikram Sarabhai is also known as father of Indian Space Program. Starting from 12 August the centenary celebration programmes were organized across 100 selected cities all over India and the yearlong centenary celebration will conclude at Thiruvananthapuram on August 12, 2020.

Key Highlights

As Ahmedabad city is birth place of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, inaugural function was organized at Gujarat University convention Hall in Ahmedabad which was attended by a host of dignitaries from Indian Space Research Organization- Department of Space (DOS) and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).

Commemorative coins were unveiled during inaugural ceremony.

Unique "Space on Wheels" exhibition inside bus was also held at Gujarat University Convention & Exhibition Center, in Ahmedabad.

ISRO also unveiled a Coffee Table book and a photo album of on life and work of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai.

About Dr. Vikram Sarabhai:

He was born in Ahmedabad in 1919 and earned his doctorate at Cambridge.

He founded Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad in 1947.

He is known as father of India's space program.

After launch of Russia's Sputnik, he managed to convince Indian government on need for India, a developing country, to have its own space program.

In 1962, he established Indian National Committee for Space Research, which was later renamed as Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).

He helped set up *Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station* in Thiruvananthapuram, with its maiden flight in 1963.

He had worked on *Aryabhata*, India's first satellite, but he never lived to see its launch in 1975, which happened 4 years after his death.

Awards and Honours:

He received Padma Bhushan (1966) and was conferred Padma Vibhushan (1972) posthumously.

In 1973, a crater on moon was named after him.

Lander of Chandrayaan-2, India's 2nd mission to moon, is named 'Vikram' to honour late Dr Vikram Sarabhai. This is naming of lander is part of the centenary celebrations of Vikram Sarabhai.

August 14, 2019

Stubble Burning Incidents declines 41% in UP, Punjab, Haryana: Govt

According to Union Government there has been a 41% reduction in stubble burning incidents in 2018 as compared to 2016. Recently, Secretary of Department of Agricultural Research and Education and Director General, ICAR Dr. Trilochan Mohapatra highlighted considerable reduction in crop residue burning incidents in 2018 through various government efforts under *Central Sector Scheme (CSS)* on '**Promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for In-Situ Management of Crop Residue in the State of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh & NCT of Delhi**'.

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Key Features of Scheme

Area Coverage: This Central Sector Scheme was launched by Union Government for period from 2018-19 to 2019-20 to tackle air pollution and to subsidize machinery required for in-situ management of crop residue in States of Punjab, Haryana, UP and NCT of Delhi.

Fund Utilization: The scheme had a total of Rs.1151.80 Crores. Within 1 year of its implementation and utilizing an amount of Rs.500 crore, **Happy Seeder** (which is a tractor-mounted device has the capability to cut and lift the previous crop (ex- rice straw) and sow a new (wheat) crop in its place) or **Zero Tillage Technology** was adopted in 8 lakh hectares of land in North- Western States of India. Under the scheme, financial assistance @50% of cost is provided to farmers for purchase of in-situ crop residue management machines on individual ownership basis and financial assistance @ 80% of project cost is provided for establishment of Custom Hiring Centres of in-situ crop residue management machinery.

Data Gathered: Under the scheme paddy residue burning events have reduced by 15% and 41% in 2018 as compared to that in 2017 and 2016, respectively in state of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh (UP) & NCT of Delhi as per satellite data.

Achievement: More than 4500 villages of Punjab and Haryana were declared as **Zero Stubble Burning Villages** during 2018 as not a single crop burning incident was reported from these villages.

During 2018-19, funds were released to state governments of Punjab, Haryana and UP, for distribution of in-situ crop residue management machinery to farmers on subsidy, establishing Custom Hiring Centres (CHCs) of in-situ crop residue management machinery as well as for creating awareness among farmers by undertaking Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities.

Implementing Agency: Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is implementing scheme by 60 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) of Punjab (22), Haryana (14), NCT of Delhi (1) and UP (23).

Awareness campaigns and Kisan Mela: Awareness campaigns were conducted all across States by organizing 1000s of demonstrations, putting up hoardings, banners and wall paintings. Neary 700 awareness programs at village levels, 200 Kisan Ghostis and Field days, 86 Kisan Melas and 250 schools and colleges were sensitized in collaboration with State departments and agricultural universities.

During 1 year period over 2 lakh stakeholders were sensitized, more than 400 hands-on training were organized and 18,000 farmers, tractor owner and machine operators were trained.

Other Government Initiatives:

In addition to above Scheme, separate funds are being allocated to States for crop residue management under *Sub-Mission on Agriculture Mechanization* by Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers Welfare under Ministry of Agriculture and farmers Welfare.

State Governments have also been directed that for demonstration of straw management machinery at farmers' fields an amount of Rs.4000/ Hectare shall be used from funds available for demonstration of machines under Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization.

Govt. not to allow knee implants cost rise beyond 10% in a year

Government has notified that ceiling price of orthopaedic knee implants will be monitored to ensure that their cost does not increase beyond 10% in a given year.

Background

Earlier on 16 August 2017, **National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)** notified ceiling price of orthopaedic knee implants by invoking extraordinary powers, in public interest, under **Para 19 of Drugs Prices Control Order (DPCO) 2013**, for a period of 1 year. Subsequently a notification was issued dated 13 August 2018, the applicability of ceiling prices fixed for orthopaedic knee implants was extended for another 1 year period i.e. up to 15 August 2019.

This led to the reduction in cost of knee implants significantly, up to 69%, resulting in a notional saving of Rs.1500 crore per annum to consumers.

Recent Development

At a meeting held on 8 August 2019, NPPA reviewed the sales of knee implants matter and noted that there has been an increased access due to knee implants becoming affordable. As per data submitted by manufacturers and importers, during period of July 2018 to June 2019, an increase of 30% in sales of knee

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implants was reported.

Though the medical industry has requested for a 20% (10% for year 2018 and 10% for 2019) increase in price of knee implants, government decided to further monitor price increase of knee implants as per **para 20 of Drugs Prices Control Order (DPCO) 2013** that restricts price increase beyond 10% in a given year which shall be subject to a review after 1 year period.

About Knee Implant:

It is a non-scheduled medical device or drug for which Drugs Prices Control Order (DPCO), 2013 allows an annual increase upto 10% of MRP (Maximum retail price). However this was not permitted in 2018.

What is National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority?

NPPA is independent body of experts that controls prices of pharmaceutical drugs in India. It is government regulatory agency formed on 29 August 1997.

It functions under *Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers* to implement and enforce provisions of Drugs Prices Control Order (DPCO) for regulating medicine prices in accordance with powers delegated to it.

DPCO is an order issued by government under '**Essential Commodities Act**' which enables it to fix prices of some essential bulk drugs as well as their formulations.

13 August: Organ Donation Day

Every year 13 August is observed as Organ donation day, to create awareness about organ donation and to remove the myths about organ donation from people's mind. Organ donation day urges people of all communities to come forth and donate organs to save precious lives.

Organ Donation Day

Background: Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare launched 6th World and 1st ever Indian Organ Donation Day and Organ Donation Congress in 2010 in New Delhi.

Organ Donor: As per National Health Portal guidelines, anyone can be an organ donor irrespective of age, caste, religion and community. A donor can initiate to donate organs such as heart, kidneys, liver, intestine, lungs and pancreas after his/her death. Later these organs can be transplanted into another person who is in urgent need of an organ.

Legal status of organ donation in India: Organ donations are legal by Indian law and for this purpose Government of India has enacted *Transplantation of Human Organs Act (THOA)*, 1994, which permits organ donation, and legitimizes concept of 'brain death'.

Significance

As per National Health Portal, there is a huge number of population which dies due to organ failure in India with almost 500,000 people dying due to non-availability of organs. Organ donation can be life-changing for many and this practice can give a new life to the ones in need.

The Organ donation day strives to motivate people to donate their healthy and precious organs after death to save lives. The day tries to spread information and make people aware about organ donation and also attempts to eliminate myths and fears people have in their mind about organ donation.

High Level Committee recommends CSR expenditure to be made tax deductible

High Level Committee (HLC) on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) constituted by Ministry of Corporate Affairs recommended making CSR expenditure tax deductible and to make compliance violations as a civil offence that attracts penalties. Corporate Affairs Secretary Injeti Srinivas presented the **Report of the High Level Committee on CSR** to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

High Level Committee on CSR was constituted in October 2018 under Chairmanship of Secretary (Ministry of Corporate Affairs) to review existing CSR framework and make recommendations on strengthening CSR ecosystem, including implementation, monitoring and evaluation of outcomes.

Key Recommendations of Committee

Make CSR expenditure tax deductible.

Allow carry-forward of unspent balance for a period of 3-5 years.

Allow CSR in social benefit bonds.

Promote social impact companies.

Third party assessment of major CSR projects.

Align **Schedule 7 of Companies Act** (which outlines the kinds of activities that qualify as CSR) with United

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Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Companies that have a CSR-prescribed amount less than Rs.50 lakh may be exempted from constituting a CSR Committee.

Violation of CSR compliance may be made a civil offence and shifted to penalty regime.

It also recommends registration of implementation agencies on **Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) portal**.

Balancing priorities: Report recommends balancing local area preferences with national priorities when it comes to CSR. It also suggests introducing impact assessment studies for CSR obligations of Rs.5 crore or more.

Develop **CSR exchange portal** to connect contributors, beneficiaries and agencies.

Committee report emphasizes on not treating CSR as a means of resource gap funding for government schemes.

Prakash Javadekar releases patriotic song Watan for Independence Day

Union Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar released a patriotic song titled **Watan** in New Delhi to mark the occasion of Independence Day 2019. The special song has been created by public service broadcaster **Doordarshan** (DD) and **Prasar Bharati** for Independence Day.

About Watan Song

It pays tribute to New India, to the bravery and valour of armed forces and to martyrs of country. The song will add colour and fervour to celebrations of 73rd Independence Day of India.

The song highlights several path-breaking initiatives of government such as vision and determination behind recent successful launch of Chandrayaan 2, India's second lunar exploration mission.

It has been sung by famous Bollywood singer Javed Ali and has been penned by lyricist Alok Shrivastav and music composed by Dushyant.

Song is being broadcasted by all stations and kendras of Akashvani and Doordarshan.

Copyright Free: It has been made free of copyright by Doordarshan and Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting for all FM stations, entertainment, news TV channels, social media and all other communication platforms to ensure that more citizens of country enjoy and share song.

PM inaugurates Dynamic Facade Lighting in Parliament House

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Dynamic Facade Lighting of Parliament House Estate in presence of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, and Union Ministers including Hardeep Puri and Jitendra Singh.

About Dynamic Facade Lighting

Work of dynamic facade lighting was initiated on 20 July 2019 by Central Public Works Department (CPWD) and completed in just 22 days.

Power Efficient: As many as 875 energy-efficient LED (light-emitting diode) lights have been installed in Parliament Complex. These are power efficient and uses only one-fifth (20%) of electricity as compared to other types of lights. These long-lasting, excellent intensity LED bulbs are capable of creating over 16 million colour combinations.

Areas Included: The dynamic facade lighting includes Parliament House, Parliament Library Building and Parliament House Annexe buildings and the power consumption in these buildings will be about 26 KW, 15 KW and 12 KW respectively.

Cost Recovery: Considering expenditure involved in traditional temporary illumination (of 10-15 days), the cost of installing permanent dynamic LED facade lighting (available for all 365 days) is recoverable in 8.2 years.

Innovative Lightning: The LED lighting is programmable and electronically controlled through computers. Dynamic lighting system through intermittent multi-colour lights creates an aura and enhances grandeur of Parliament House. The innovative and inspirational lighting has been executed on lines of surrounding areas of Parliament House Estate.

These beautiful lights will illuminate beautiful Parliament building all round year would enhance the beauty and visibility of the Parliament building. Prior to this, such lightings were installed in North Block and South Block.



Assam's Dikom Tea Estate brand fetches 'record' Rs.75,000/kg

A rare variety of tea named '**Golden Butterfly**' from Upper Assam's Dikom Tea Estate set a new record on as it was auctioned for Rs.75,000 per kg at Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC). It broke the record for highest price fetched by a tea at a public auction for 3rd time in a fortnight.

Key Highlights

The exceptionally rare and special tea was sold through J Thomas and Company and was purchased by city-based Assam Tea Traders, one of the oldest tea shops.

Judging Criteria: An exotic tea is judged by its taste, aroma and colour. This 'Golden Butterfly' tea is characterised by extremely mellow and sweet caramel flavour.

Guwahati Tea Auction Centre: It is emerging as a centre for showcasing high-priced Assam speciality tea. In the tea sector GTAC has created an image of a place where records are meant to be broken.

In July 2019, GTAC witnessed two big records, when orthodox variety '**Maijan Golden Tips**', a hand-rolled and sun dried speciality tea fetched a price of Rs.70,501/kg and another specialty orthodox tea variety, named '**Manohari Gold**' (from Manohari Gold Estate in Dibrugarh), was sold at Rs.50,000/Kg. GTAC is providing an opportunity to sellers who want to sell their tea at remunerative prices.

About 'Golden Butterfly' Tea

Unique: Golden Butterfly is made of tea buds and not tea leaves. It is the bud which lends tea liquor a full-bodied, bright-yellowish colour, unlike usual leaf-based tea from Assam which gives brew a black colour.

Naming: Buds are plucked from bushes in evening, when swarms of butterflies descend on them to rest. Hence, the name *Butterfly*.

It reflects the meticulous care and attention to crop husbandry in Dikom's tea plantations. This surreal experience, of walking along rows of tea bushes teeming with butterflies, is out of the world.

Unlike Golden Butterfly, 'Maijan Golden Tips' and 'Manohari Gold' are made from buds plucked early in morning before sun alters aroma and flavour.

Tamil Nadu becomes 5th State to Declare a State Butterfly

Tamil Nadu has officially declared **Tamil Yeoman** (*Cirrochroa thais*) as the state butterfly to symbolise its rich natural and cultural heritage. This move aimed at boosting conservation efforts of attractive insects. It will also help channelising government funds towards a particular environmental cause.

With this, Tamil Nadu became *fifth Indian state to declare its state butterfly*. Maharashtra was 1st state to officially declare **Blue Mormon** (*Papilio polymnestor*) as its state butterfly, way back in 2015 followed by Uttarakhand (Common peacock), Karnataka (Southern bird wings) and Kerala (Malabar banded peacock).

About Tamil Yeoman

Its scientific name is *Cirrochroa thais*. It is locally known as Tamil Maravan, which means 'Tamilian Warrior'. It belongs to the family of brush-footed butterflies or the Nymphalid.

Unique Features: It is usually sized between 60 and 75mm and has natural zigzag patterns near its bright orange-coloured wings with dark brown highlights at the border of its wings. It is fast and fly straight with few wing beats and long glide.

Habitat: It is endemic to Western Ghats. It is mostly found in moist deciduous, evergreen forests and along water streams.

Why State Butterfly of Tamil Nadu? This southern state has total of 32 species of butterflies endemic to the state. Tamil Yeoman was chosen as state butterfly for its cultural identity linking the state through its name and its abundance in hilly areas.

Environment Significance of Butterflies

They are great bio-indicators of ecosystem as they are highly sensitive to environmental conditions such as sunlight, temperature, humidity and rainfall patterns. Their presence, patterns and migration assist in mapping climatic health of region. They are most studied insect group across the world.

Other official State Species of Tamil Nadu

State animal: Nilgiri Tahr

State bird: Emerald Dove

State Tree: Palm Tree

State flower: Gloriosa



State fruit: Jack fruit

August 15, 2019

India contributes \$1 million to UN Special Purpose Trust Fund

India has contributed \$1 million to United Nation Special Purpose Trust Fund (SPTF) for Resident Coordinator System showing India's willingness and happiness to tangibly contribute to reform of UN Development system.

What is Special Purpose Trust Fund?

SPTF is a specific fund housed within United Nation Secretariat (one of 6 major organs of United Nations) established to receive, consolidate, manage and account for all contributions as well as financial transactions of new *Resident Coordinator (RC) system* in a transparent and effective way. **UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG)** launched an open data portal to support UN Resident Coordinators in coordinating assets at country level. Till date, 38 Member States and 19 entities have contributed to RC System SPTF, which are displayed on portal.

SPTF web portal, displays in real-time all commitments, contributions and expenditures recorded for fund. The portal aims to enhance effective coordination of UN's work in more than 160 countries in support of SDGs and is part of wider UN reform efforts on development, management, peace and security.

Funding sources include 3 areas:

Voluntary contributions made by Member States

Doubling of cost-sharing amounts from UN entities who are members of UN's development system

1% levy applied to contributions for UN development-related activities earmarked to a single agency, single programme/project.

What is UN Resident Coordinator system?

It encompasses all organizations of UN system that deals with operational activities for development, irrespective of their formal presence in country. RC system aims to bring together different UN agencies to improve efficiency and effectiveness of operational activities at country level.

Naval Tata Hockey Academy inaugurated in Bhubaneswar

Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik inaugurated **Naval Tata Hockey Academy (NTHA)**, a high-performance centre for hockey at *Kalinga Stadium* in Bhubaneswar, Odisha for grooming best hockey talent in State. Academy is named in honour of **Naval H. Tata** to commemorate his contribution to hockey in India as well as his achievements as a sports administrator.

The academy was opened as part of three-pronged **Tata Odisha Hockey Programme**, a joint initiative of Tata Steel, Tata Trusts and Government of Odisha to nurture sports talent in State. As per Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), State Government of Odisha will facilitate infrastructural support and Tata Trust will provide coaching and technical support.

Key Highlights

Currently, 24 junior girls including 18 from Odisha have been identified to join High-Performance Centre (HPC). HPC will accommodate another 6 girls to complete 1st batch and will also add 30 boys in coming years.

Initially Tata Trust conducted a talent scouting program in Bhubaneswar, Sundargarh, Deogarh and Dhenkanal in Odisha and Simdega district in Jharkhand. Around 350 talents were shortlisted, out of whom 24 have been enrolled in HPC.

State government sports hostels in Bhubaneswar, Rourkela and Sundargarh will become **Regional Development Centres (RDCs)** and experts engaged by Tata Trusts and Tata Steel will work with these RDCs to further enhance their efficiency and excellence.

Initially 10 to 12 **grassroots centres** will also be established in Sundargarh and Sambalpur districts and then talents explored from these grassroots centres will be recommended for admission into sports hostels.

The Grassroots centres and RDCs will ensure a continuous flow of talent into NTHA and government will help develop infrastructure in these regions to improve quality of hockey players being fed into RDCs and NTHA.



Why Bhubaneswar? Bhubaneswar is fast emerging as sports capital of India. Therefore with establishment of NTHA, youth from State will get best-in-class training on artificial turf from an early age which will enable players to compete on par with their international counterparts.

Dual benefit of promoting sports: It raises standard of Indian sports as well as promoting livelihood opportunities among those living in underdeveloped regions of country.

CORAS: Railway Ministry launches Commando for Railway Security

Union Ministry of Railways launched CORAS (Commando for Railway Security) of Indian Railways. It is separate Commando Unit of Railway Protection Force (RPF). It has been carved out from motivated and willing young staff of Railway Protection Force (RPF) and Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF).

About Commando for Railway Security (CORAS)

Vision Statement of CORAS: (i) Develop world level capabilities of specialized responder for any situation pertaining to damage, disturbance, disruption of train/railway operations, attack/hijack/ hostage, disaster situations in railway areas. (ii) Providing fool proof security to Indian Railways and its users by following doctrine of graded response, minimum effective force.

CORAS commandoes: The average age of CORAS commandoes will be between 30-35 years. These CORAS commandos will be posted in Left Wing Extremism (LWE)/Insurgency/Terrorism affected Railway areas where providing security to passengers and railway network is of utmost priority.

Harshad Pandurang Thakur appointed as Director of NIHF

Harshad Pandurang Thakur was appointed as Director of National Institute of Health and Family Welfare. Decision in this regard was taken by Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He was appointed on direct recruitment basis for period of five years. Prior to this appointment, he was professor at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai.

About National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHF)

It is autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It acts as apex technical institute as well as think tank for the promotion of health and family welfare programmes in the country.

It was established in 1977 by merger of National Institute of Family Planning (NIFP) and National Institute of Health Administration and Education (NIHAE). It is headquartered in New Delhi.

It addresses wide range of issues on health and family welfare from variety of perspectives through epidemiology, community health administration, departments of communication, education and training, management sciences, medical care and hospital administration, population genetics and human development, planning and evaluation, reproductive bio-Medicine, statistics and demography and social sciences.

Researchers develop process to get bone implant material from eggshells

Researchers from Indian Institute of Technology-Hyderabad (IIT-H) and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar National Institute of Technology, Jalandhar, have developed process of synthesizing bone implant materials from eggshells. Through this process bone substitute materials such as tricalcium phosphate, a commonly-used bone substitute material can be produced from natural sources.

Background: In modern medicine, missing and damaged bones are replaced with bone from either the patient or a donor or by using artificial materials containing calcium, such as Plaster of Paris, and more recently, phosphate compounds like hydroxyapatite and calcium phosphate, which are produced by using harmful chemicals.

About new process

Pure and thermally stable tricalcium phosphate nanopowder (powder a hundred thousand times smaller than the width of a single human hair) was synthesised from eggshells. It was obtained by using milling process called 'ball milling' to produce these activated calcium phosphate powders.

Why Eggshells? They are made of largely of minerals (95.1%) including calcium along with small amounts of proteins and water. Calcium is main mineral component of bone substitute materials.

Benefits of this process: Eggshell waste can help to replace commercially available tricalcium phosphate (produced by using harmful chemicals) and has capability to develop implantable biomaterial for tissue regeneration. Moreover, eggshells are inexpensive and can be obtained in unlimited quantities. Nioceramics made from eggshells exhibit greater biocompatibility than other synthetic powders due to

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presence of additional bioactive elemental ions.

Punjab CM dedicates 3rd phase of 'Jung-E-Azadi' memorial to victims of Jallianwala Bagh massacre

On the occasion of **73rd Independence Day**, Chief Minister of Punjab Amarinder Singh dedicated 3rd phase of 'Jung-E-Azadi' memorial to people who were killed in Jallianwala Bagh massacre and unsung heroes who were incarcerated in Andaman Cellular jail during freedom struggle.

On the occasion, Punjab's chief minister also digitally launched number of other projects for Jalandhar district, as part of Rs.450 crore worth of development and welfare projects inaugurated across state.

About 'Jung-E-Azadi' Memorial

It is a memorial and museum being built in Kartarpur, near Jalandhar city of Punjab. It is built in memory of sacrifices and contribution made by community of Punjabi's in Indian independence movement.

On 19 October 2014, Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal laid foundation stone of Jang-e-Azadi memorial, and actual work started on 26 March 2015 which still continues.

Significance: The memorial would go a long way in spreading awareness among younger generations about glorious past of India as well as sacrifices made by numerous people who fought to free Indians from British rule.

The 1st and 2nd phase of memorial had been constructed at a cost of Rs.290 crore and Rs.20 crore was dedicated by CM to 3rd phase of Jung-E-Azadi memorial.

Initiatives by Punjab Government:

charu bhardwaj | bhardwajs.charu@gmail.com |

Punjab government's '**Connect with Your Roots**' programme, helps youth visiting as part of programme to personally see rich cultural legacy of state at Jung-E-Azadi Memorial, Partition Museum, Amritsar and Virasat-E-Khalsa, Sri Anandpur Sahib and many more.

While underlining the need to connect youth with glorious legacy of national freedom struggle and to imbue youth with a spirit of nationalism and patriotism, Punjab CM also acknowledged that maximum schools students could be brought to Jung-E-Azadi memorial so that they could be properly educated and sensitised about nation's journey to independence.

SAMARTH Scheme: 16 states ink MoU with Textiles Ministry

16 states out of 18 selected states have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Union Ministry of Textiles for skilling about 4 lakh workers as part of Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector (SAMARTH).

16 states that have signed MoUs include Arunachal Pradesh, Kerala, Mizoram, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Tripura, Karnataka, Manipur, Haryana, Meghalaya, Jharkhand and Uttarakhand. Jammu & Kashmir and Odisha earlier had agreed to be on board, but did not sign MoU.

Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector (SAMARTH)

It is skill development scheme of Union Ministry of Textiles, covering the entire value chain of the textile sector excluding Spinning & Weaving in organized Sector. It was approved by Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) in December 2017.

Objectives:

- (i) Provide demand driven, placement oriented NSQF (National Skills Qualification Framework) Compliant skilling programme to incentivize organized textile and related sectors excluding Spinning and Weaving.
- (ii) Promote skilling and skill up-gradation in the traditional sectors of handlooms, handicrafts, sericulture and jute.
- (iii) Provide Sustainable livelihood to all sections of the society across the country

Implementation Target: Train 10 lakh persons (9 lakh in organised and 1 lakh in traditional sector) over period of 3 years (2017-20) with budgetary outlay of Rs. 1300 crore.

Features: Under it, skill gap and skilling requirements will be assessed and skills will be imparted accordingly. In addition to domain specific hard skills, 30 hours of soft skills will be also provided. Trainees will be assessed and certified by accredited Assessment Agency. It provides placement guarantee of 70% successful trainees (for courses in organised sector, all 70% have to be placed in wage employment, in courses of traditional sector, atleast 50% are to be placed in wage employment). It also makes mandatory

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for post placement tracking.

Tamil Nadu's Panchamirtham prasadam granted GI tag

The famous Palani panchamirtham, given as 'prasadam' at Murugan temple in Palani, Tamil Nadu has been granted Geographical Indication (GI) tag. This is first temple 'prasadam' from Tamil Nadu that has been bestowed with coveted GI tag. It takes total number of such indigenous products from Tamil Nadu that have been accorded GI tag to 29.

About Panchamirtham

It is an 'abhishega prasadam' (food that is a religious offering), which is served in a semi-solid state. In Tamil, term 'pancha' means five and 'amirtham' means delicacy.

It is combination of five natural substances —jaggery, banana, cow ghee, honey and cardamom. Besides, these five basic ingredients, dates and diamond sugar candies are also added for flavour.

It is sweet in taste. It one of main offerings for Lord Dhandayuthapani Swamy, the presiding deity of Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swamy Temple, situated on Palani Hills.

It is prepared naturally without addition of any artificial ingredients and preservatives or any chemical process. No water is added during preparation of panchamirtham. This gives it its classic semi-solid consistency and taste.

The geographical area for production of Palani Panchamirtham is not just Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swamy temple, but entire Palani town in Dindigul district of Tamil Nadu.

About Geographical Indication

It defines goods as originating in territory of a country or a region or locality in that territory, provided a given quality reputation or other characteristics of the product are attributable to its geographical origin.

The product to acquire GI tag has to indicate that it is of particular origin and has certain unique quality or reputation or some other characteristics, which is essentially attributable to its geographical origin.

In India, GI tag is given by the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, who is Registrar of Geographical Indications (under Union ministry of commerce & industry) under statutory provisions of Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection Act), 1999.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. The 52nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM-52) has taken place in which city?

- [A] Jakarta
- [B] Kuala Lumpur
- [C] Nay Pyi Taw
- [D] Bangkok

Correct Answer: D [Bangkok]

Notes:

The 52nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM-52) has recently taken place in Bangkok, Thailand from July 29 to Aug 3. The annual meeting opened with a call from the host Thailand for deeper integration to expand trade and bolster prosperity in the region amid rising global challenges. The meeting takes place in the shadow of rising security tension on the Korean Peninsula, China's aggressive territorial claims in the South China Sea and the US-China trade war. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) is seeking to boost its own voice as a global player. It also plays host to a series of foreign ministers from key strategic and dialogue partners, including US, China and Russia.

2. Which former Indian Cricketer has been honoured with Bharat Gaurav Award?

- [A] Sunil Gavaskar
- [B] Kapil Dev
- [C] Ajit Wadekar
- [D] Anil Kumble

Correct Answer: B [Kapil Dev]

Notes:

On August 1, East Bengal club has officially started the centenary celebrations on its foundation day with a glittering ceremony at the Netaji Indoor Stadium. On this occasion, the iconic football club awarded its highest honour – Bharat Gaurav – to India's first cricket World Cup-winning captain Kapil Dev. Kapil is

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no stranger to football as he had donned the club's colours in an exhibition match against Mohun Bagan in 1992. Kapil is no stranger to football as he had donned the club's colours in an exhibition match against Mohun Bagan in 1992.

3. Who has become the first cricketer to reach 1000 runs, 100 wickets in T20Is?

- [A] Jasprit Bumrah
- [B] Shakib al Hasan
- [C] Shahid Afridi
- [D] Ellyse Perry

Correct Answer: D [Ellyse Perry]

Notes:

Australian all-rounder Ellyse Perry has become the first cricketer of either gender to reach the rare milestone of scoring 1000 runs and taking 100 wickets in T20 international cricket. She achieved the feat run in the multi-format 2019 Ashes series where Australia beat England by 7 wickets in Hove. Former Pakistani all-rounder Shahid Afridi (1416 runs and 98 wickets) currently stands closest to achieving the feat, while Bangladesh's Shakib al Hasan, with 1471 runs and 88 wickets, stands next in line to join Perry.

4. Which city has been named world's best student city in the QS Best Student Cities Ranking?

- [A] Paris
- [B] Tokyo
- [C] Melbourne
- [D] London

charu bhardwaj | bhardwajs.charu@gmail.com |

Correct Answer: D [London]

Notes:

The 'QS Best Student Cities Ranking' has been compiled by global education consultancy QS Quacquarelli Symonds. London has been named as the world's best city for students for the second consecutive year, followed by Tokyo and Melbourne. According to the rankings, India's best student city is Bengaluru (81st), followed by Mumbai (85th), Delhi at 113 and Chennai at 115, out of a total of 120 cities in the list. The ranking highlighted each city's performance across six categories – the number of top-ranked universities; the proportion of a city's population made up of students; quality of life on offer; job opportunities available after graduation; affordability; and the feedback of the students themselves.

5. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of World Day Against Trafficking in Persons?

- [A] Human Trafficking: call your government to action
- [B] Act to protect and assist trafficked persons
- [C] Unite to eradicate human trafficking
- [D] Protect rights of human trafficking victims

Correct Answer: A [Human Trafficking: call your government to action]

Notes:

The World Day Against Trafficking in Persons is observed every year on July 30 to raise awareness of the situation of victims of human trafficking and for the promotion and protection of their rights. Human trafficking is a global problem and no country is immune to it. Millions of victims fall into the hands of traffickers, lured by fake promises and deceit. Hence, the 2019 theme "Human Trafficking: call your government to action" is focusing on highlighting the importance of Government action in the interest of victims of trafficking. But the call to action is not only to Governments, we encourage everyone to take action to prevent this heinous crime.

6. Who won the IBC 2019 International Honour for Excellence ?

- [A] Christopher Nolan
- [B] Quentin Tarantino
- [C] Andy Serkis
- [D] David Fincher

Correct Answer: C [Andy Serkis]

Notes:

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Actor-filmmaker Andy Serkis has won the IBC 2019 International Honour for Excellence and will be given the honour at the International Broadcasting Convention (IBC) awards ceremony on September 15 in Amsterdam. Serkis is best known for his mastery in motion capture techniques courtesy films like "The Lord of the Rings" and "Planet of the Apes" trilogy.

7. The Innovation for Clean Air (IfCA) has been launched by India & which country in Bengaluru?

- [A] UK
- [B] France
- [C] Belgium
- [D] South Africa

Correct Answer: A [UK]

Notes:

India and the United Kingdom (UK) have launched a two-year joint initiative – Innovating for Clean Air (IfCA) in Bengaluru. The aim of the initiative is to provide a unique measurement system for air quality by integrating satellite and sensor data and extending support to India's transition to electric vehicles. The UK-India joint initiative is expected to provide stakeholders of the two countries opportunities to test interventions related to air quality and Electric Vehicle (EV) integration. The programme is being led by Innovate UK, a wing of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), and is funded by the Newton Fund along with various partners from Karnataka and India. The key partners for the programme are the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Enzen, Project Lithium, Confederation of Indian Industry, C40 Cities and Clean Air Platform.

8. Which union ministry has launched the Atal Community Innovation Centre (ACIC) in New Delhi?

- [A] Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
- [B] Ministry of Home Affairs
- [C] Ministry of Finance
- [D] Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Correct Answer: A [Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas]

Notes:

Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan has recently launched Atal Community Innovation Centre (ACIC) in New Delhi to encourage the spirit of innovation at the community level. The aim of the initiative is to encourage the spirit of innovation through solution-driven design thinking to serve society. The ACIC is a new initiative of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) to support community innovation drive in the country. It will provide a platform in many of the rural, tribal areas and Tier-II and -III cities and unserved regions to have access to latest technologies for innovation and to ideate and create prototypes for innovation.

9. The National Security Guard (NSG) works under which union ministry?

- [A] Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
- [B] Ministry of Home Affairs
- [C] Ministry of Law and Justice
- [D] Ministry of Defence

Correct Answer: B [Ministry of Home Affairs]

Notes:

S S Deswal, a 1984 batch IPS officer of Haryana cadre, has been given the additional charge of the counter-terror force National Security Guard (NSG). He succeeded Sudeep Lakhtaki and will hold the post in an additional capacity till a successor or regular DG is appointed. Deswal, the chief of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) force, is Lakhtakia's batchmate but his cadre is Haryana. The NSG is a counter terrorism unit under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). It is also known as the 'black cats' & was raised in 1984 for combating terrorist activities with a view to protect states against internal disturbances. The NSG DG post is occupied by an IPS officer.

10. Which technical giant has partnered with Apollo Hospitals to fight cardiovascular diseases?

- [A] Facebook



- [B] Infosys
- [C] Microsoft
- [D] Wipro

Correct Answer: C [Microsoft]

Notes:

Microsoft India has partnered with Apollo Hospitals to set up a National Clinical Coordination Committee (NCCC), which will guide the two entities on all cardiology and cardiovascular related Artificial Intelligence (AI) projects. It will also provide clinical insights on developing clinical algorithms and treatment guidelines based on the inferences of national, multi-centre prospective study. The committee will work for the AI-powered Cardiovascular Disease Risk Score API. It will have members drawn from Apollo Hospitals, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi; and King George's Medical University, Lucknow. Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) are the biggest cause of mortality in India with nearly 25% of mortalities – amongst the age group of 25 to 69 years.

11. Which Indian personality has been honoured with the prestigious 2019 Ramon Magsaysay Award?

- [A] K Sivan
- [B] Anna Hazare
- [C] Ravish Kumar
- [D] Mary Kom

Correct Answer: C [Ravish Kumar]

Notes:

NDTV India's senior executive editor, Ravish Kumar has been honoured with the prestigious 2019 Ramon Magsaysay Award for his 'ethical journalism'. Kumar has won the honour for his news show, Prime Time, which deals with real-life & under-reported problems of ordinary people. He is among five individuals who were declared winners of the award. The four other winners of the 2019 Ramon Magsaysay Award are Ko Swe Win from Myanmar, Angkhana Neelapaijit from Thailand, Raymundo Pujante Cayabyab from Philippines and Kim Jong-Ki from South Korea. The Ramon Magsaysay Award is the highest honour given to Asian individuals and organisations and often referred to as the Asian version of the Nobel Prize.

12. The Union Government has set up KABIL for what purpose?

- [A] To support women entrepreneurship
- [B] To provide free education
- [C] To ensure supply of critical Minerals
- [D] To promote digitization

Correct Answer: C [To ensure supply of critical Minerals]

Notes:

The joint venture company namely Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) has been set up with the participation of three Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) to ensure a consistent supply of critical and strategic minerals to Indian domestic market. These CPSEs are National Aluminium Company Ltd. (NALCO), Hindustan Copper Ltd. (HCL) and Mineral Exploration Company Ltd. (MECL). The newly setup company will ensure supply of Lithium and Cobalt which is available in less quantity in the country. It will help in building partnerships with other mineral rich countries like Australia and those in Africa and South America, where Indian expertise in exploration and mineral processing will be mutually beneficial bringing about new economic opportunities. The equity participation between NALCO, HCL and MECL is in the ratio of 40:30:30.

13. On pilot basis, the One Nation-one Ration Card scheme has been implemented in which states?

- [A] Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat
- [B] Rajasthan Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat
- [C] Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat
- [D] Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana

Correct Answer: C [Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat]

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**Notes:**

In a major boost to national food security, the Government of India (GoI) has launched the One Nation-One Ration Card scheme on a pilot basis in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat from 1st August 2019. Families who have food security cards can buy subsidized rice and wheat from any ration shop in these states. Their ration cards should be linked with Aadhar Number to avail this service. The white Ration Card holders in Telangana have been getting the portability facility, enabling them to buy their subsidized rice and other food grains from any Fair Price Shop in the state. The same facility can be utilized anywhere in Andhra Pradesh now through PoS machines under the One Nation One Ration Card scheme which has come into force in the two states. The Centre is intended to extend the programme to all states by August 2020 so that the portability of the food security card implemented.

14. Which state government has launched 'Save Green, Stay Clean' campaign?

- [A] West Bengal
- [B] Punjab
- [C] Himachal Pradesh
- [D] Haryana

Correct Answer: A [West Bengal]

Notes:

In Kolkata, the West Bengal Government has launched an awareness campaign – Save Green, Stay Clean – for preserving the greenery and keeping the environment clean. The State Government will distribute more than 1 lakhs saplings throughout the state for spreading of greenery.

15. Which state / UT has announced free electricity for people using up to 200 units under a domestic connection?

- [A] Andhra Pradesh
- [B] Maharashtra
- [C] Madhya Pradesh
- [D] Delhi

Correct Answer: D [Delhi]

Notes:

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has recently announced free electricity for people consuming up to 200 units under a domestic connection. The decision, which came into effect from August 1, has been taken barely 6 months before Delhi Assembly elections due in February 2020. The people who consume up to 200 units will not have to pay electricity bills. Those consuming 201-400 units of electricity will get about 50% subsidy.

16. Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar is associated to which sports?

- [A] Shooting
- [B] Boxing
- [C] Wrestling
- [D] Badminton

Correct Answer: A [Shooting]

Notes:

In Shooting, Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar from Madhya Pradesh clinched a yellow metal in Men's Rifle 3 Positions (3P) at 12th Sardar Sajjan Singh Sethi Memorial Masters competition in New Delhi. In the finals, Aishwary posted a comfortable victory with a score of 459.9 and a classy 10.7 in the end. Meanwhile, multiple International Shooting Sport Federation medallist and India's most accomplished 3P shooter Sanjeev Rajput, had to be satisfied with a silver, finishing with a score of 455.5, a clear 4.4 behind Aishwary. India international Parul Kumar settled for the bronze.

17. Who is the author of the book "Tools and Weapons: The Promise and The Peril of the Digital Age"?

- [A] Sundar Pichai
- [B] Brad Smith



[C] Satya Nadella

[D] Jeff Bezos

Correct Answer: B [Brad Smith]

Notes:

The book "Tools and Weapons: The Promise and The Peril of the Digital Age" has been co-authored by Microsoft President Brad Smith & Carol Ann Browne, and will release on September 11. The book will provide a behind-the-scenes look at the multinational technology company and tell some of the biggest stories to hit the tech industry in the past decade. The book comes at a time when the company finds itself in the middle of some of the thorniest emerging issues of our time. These include privacy, cybercrime and cyberwar, social media, the moral conundrums of AI, big tech's relationship to inequality and the challenges for democracy, far and near.

18. The Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM) is located in which city?

[A] Jaipur

[B] Bhopal

[C] Dehradun

[D] Delhi

Correct Answer: B [Bhopal]

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Notes:

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has released a study titled "Economic Valuation of Tiger Reserves in India: A Value+ Approach". The study is authored by the Centre for Ecological Services Management at the Indian Institute of Forest Management (Bhopal). It estimates the economic valuation of Bandipur Tiger Reserve and 9 other tiger reserves in the country. The purpose behind the report is to enhance tiger conservation by highlighting the holistic economic benefits of protected areas. The researchers used an array of methods to determine the economic, scientific, educational, cultural and recreational services of tiger parks. The reserves surveyed are Melghat Tiger Reserve (Maharashtra), Nagarjunasagar Srisailem (Andhra Pradesh), Anamalai (Tamil Nadu), Bandipur (Karnataka), Dudhwa (Uttar Pradesh), Pakke (Arunachal Pradesh), Palamau (Jharkhand), Panna (Madhya Pradesh), Simlipal (Odisha), and Valmiki (Bihar). Founded in 1982, the IIFM is a premier national level institute engaged in education, research, training and consultancy in the area of Forest, Environment and Natural Resources Management and allied sectors.

19. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of World Breastfeeding Week (WBW)?

[A] Breastfeeding and Work: Let's Make It Work!

[B] Sustaining Breastfeeding Together

[C] Breastfeeding: Foundation of Life

[D] Empower Parents, Enable Breastfeeding

Correct Answer: D [Empower Parents, Enable Breastfeeding]

Notes:

The World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is an annual celebration which is being held every year from 1 to 7 August in more than 120 countries. The purpose of WBW is to create awareness among the parents about breastfeeding and to encourage parents to adopt breastfeeding. The week also create awareness about the importance of initiation and exclusive breastfeeding, and adequate and appropriate complementary feeding. It provides advocacy material about the importance of breastfeeding. The 2019 theme is "Empower Parents, Enable Breastfeeding". The focus this year is on protection, promotion, and support of breastfeeding.

20. Which union ministry is conducting India's first national Time Release Study (TRS)?

[A] Ministry of Home Affairs

[B] Ministry of Finance

[C] Ministry of Corporate Affairs

[D] Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

Correct Answer: B [Ministry of Finance]

Notes:

The Department of Revenue under the Ministry of Finance is conducting India's first national Time Release Study (TRS).
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Release Study (TRS) between 1st – 7th August to enable faster movement of cargo across borders to benefit traders. The exercise will be institutionalized on an annual basis, during the same period every year hereafter. The TRS is an internationally recognized tool advocated by World Customs Organization (WCO) to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of international trade flows. This initiative will be conducted at the same time across 15 ports including sea, air, land and dry ports which cumulatively account for 81% of total Bills of Entries for import and 67% of Shipping Bills for export filed within India. The national TRS will establish baseline performance measurement and have standardized operations and procedures across all ports. Based on the results of the TRS, government agencies associated with cross border trade will be able to diagnose existing and potential bottlenecks which act as barriers to the free flow of trade, and take remedial actions for reducing the cargo release time. The initiative is on ground lead by the Central Board of Indirect Tax and Customs.

21. Which Indian personality has been honoured with the highest award of Republic of Guinea "National order of Merit"?

- [A] Rajnath Singh
- [B] Ram Nath Kovind
- [C] Narendra Modi
- [D] Subrahmanyam Jaishankar

Correct Answer: B [Ram Nath Kovind]

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Notes:

President Ram Nath Kovind has been awarded the National order of Merit by the President of Guinea for his exceptional contribution to the advancement of overall relations and development of mutual cooperation between India and Guinea and for promoting friendship and partnership between the people of both the countries. This is the highest award of Republic of Guinea. Beside this, 3 MoUs were signed between the two countries viz. Cooperation in the Field of Traditional System of Medicine, e-Vidhyabharati – e-Aarogya Bharati Network Project and Renewal Energy. President Kovind also announced a new Line of Credit of US\$ 170 million for Water Supply Project of Conakry city. Both countries also agreed on the need for reform of the UN Security Council to make it reflective of contemporary realities.

22. Which country has officially withdrawn from Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF)?

- [A] France
- [B] Germany
- [C] United States
- [D] UK

Correct Answer: C [United States]

Notes:

The United States has officially withdrawn from Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with Russia. The INF Treaty is a Cold War-era missile treaty that was signed by then US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987. The treaty banned both countries from deploying land-launched cruise missiles in the 500- to 5,500-km range. It was a key to ending the arms race between the (then) two super powers and helped protect the U.S.'s NATO allies in Europe from Soviet missile attacks. The reasons for withdrawal are as follows: the Trump and Obama administrations have repeatedly alleged that Russia was violating the treaty by fielding a ground-based cruise missile – the Novator 9M729 ("SSC-8" in NATO terminology) that could strike Europe at a short notice, an allegation that Russia has repeatedly denied.

23. Which state government has launched Vhali Dikri Yojna for the welfare of girl child?

- [A] Gujarat
- [B] Madhya Pradesh
- [C] Rajasthan
- [D] Chhattisgarh

Correct Answer: A [Gujarat]

Notes:

On August 3, Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani launched the 'Vhali Dikri Yojna' in Rajkot for the



welfare of girl child. It is a statewide cash incentive scheme for every girl child born in Gujarat, with a view to raising the female birthrate at par with male to achieve gender equality. According to scheme, the State Government will pay Rs. 4,000 to every girl child at the time of admission to Standard 4th, Rs. 6,000 at the time of taking admission to Standard IX, Rs. 1-lakh at the time of taking admission for higher education at the age of 18 and another Rs. 1-lakh at the time of marriage. Approx, Rs.133-crore has been allocated for this scheme.

24. Which bank has become the first Indian bank to link up with China's National Advance Payment System (CNAPS)?

- [A] BoB
- [B] ICICI
- [C] SBI
- [D] PNB

Correct Answer: C [SBI]

Notes:

The State Bank of India's (SBI) Shanghai branch has become the first Indian bank to link up with China's National Advance Payment System (CNAPS). After being a member of the CNAPS, SBI Shanghai can also offer real time transfer of local funds within China by routing them through the PBOC. It eliminates the need of tie up and maintenance of accounts with multiple Banks for fund transfer. The CNAPS provides real-time settlement services for all payments cleared in mainland China, as well as in all clearing banks in offshore yuan centers, such as Hong Kong. The CNAPS system is complemented by its international counterpart, the CIPS (China International Payments System or Cross-Border Inter-Bank Payment System), launched in 2015 with the aim of boosting international use of the Chinese currency, yuan. The CNAP was launched in 2008 by People's Bank of China (PBOC).

25. Devadas Kanakala, who passed away recently, was the veteran actor of which regional cinema?

- [A] Tamil
- [B] Telugu
- [C] Malayalam
- [D] Kannada

Correct Answer: B [Telugu]

Notes:

Devadas Kanakala (75), the veteran Telugu actor, has passed away in Hyderabad on August 3, 2019. Hailed from Yanam (neighbouring East Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh) in Pondicherry, Kanakala began his career about five decades ago. He acted in about 100 films and would be best remembered for 'O Seetha Katha', 'Siri Sirmuvva', 'Gorintaku' and 'Gang Leader'. He was also well-known to have trained South Indian megastars – Rajinikanth, Chiranjeevi and Rajendra Prasad – through his film institute.

26. Which Indian-origin personality has been crowned Miss England 2019?

- [A] Swati Sharma
- [B] Roshni Rai
- [C] Bhasha Mukherjee
- [D] Sweta Singh

Correct Answer: C [Bhasha Mukherjee]

Notes:

A 23-year-old Indian-origin doctor, Bhasha Mukherjee has been crowned Miss England after fending off competition from dozens of other models. She holds two different medical degrees & has an IQ of 146, which makes her officially a 'genius'. Mukherjee speaks five languages – English, Bengali, Hindi, German and French -and has a Bachelor's degree in medicine and surgery from the University of Nottingham. As winner of Miss England, she will be entered into the Miss World contest and will also bag a holiday to Mauritius.

27. The Census 2021 will be conducted in how many scheduled languages?

- [A] 16
- [B] 18



[C] 22

[D] 20

Correct Answer: B [18]**Notes:**

The 16th edition of Census 2021 will be conducted in 18 languages out of the 22 scheduled languages, while Census 2011 was in 16 of the 18 scheduled languages declared at that time. It also will introduce a code directory to streamline the process. Importantly, the latest census, as per the existing plan, will not collect caste data. The option of "Other" under the gender category is now "Third Gender". It will be conducted in two phases: the houselisting phase with 34 parameters from April 2020 to September 2020 and the population enumeration phase with 28 parameters from February 9 2021 to February 28 2021. The decennial exercise would involve 31 lakh trained enumerators, with data collected digitally using Android based mobile phones. The Census data would be available by the year 2024-25 as the entire process would be conducted digitally and data crunching would be quicker.

28. As per which article of the constitution, Supreme Court has ruled that a judicial magistrate has power to direct accused to give voice samples?

[A] Article 144

[B] Article 141

[C] Article 142

[D] Article 143

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Correct Answer: C [Article 142]**Notes:**

In a landmark judgment, the Supreme Court has recently held that a judicial magistrate can order an accused to give his voice samples even against his consent in the course of a criminal investigation. This judgment was rendered by a Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and comprising Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna. The bench dealt with the issues, including that whether in the absence of any provision in the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPc), can a magistrate authorise the investigating agency to record the voice sample of the person accused of an offence. The CJI pointed out that the Supreme Court has issued this order under Article 142 of the Constitution following the interpretation of all the pertinent laws.

29. As per which committee's report, UGC has recommended 20 institutions for Institutes of Eminence (IoE)?

[A] Ambika Soni committee

[B] N S Vishwanathan committee

[C] N Gopalaswami committee

[D] Viral Acharya committee

Correct Answer: C [N Gopalaswami committee]**Notes:**

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has recommended the grant of the Institute of Eminence (IoE) status to 20 institutions such as IITs Madras and Kharagpur, Delhi University, University of Hyderabad, Amritha Vishwa Vidyapeetham and VIT. The recommendations are based on the reports of the Empowered Expert Committee (EEC) under the chairmanship of N Gopalaswami. The aim of Institute of Eminence (IoE) scheme is to develop 20 world-class institutions which would put India on the global education map. Those selected will be given greater autonomy and freedom to decide fees, course durations and governance structures. The public institutions will also receive a government grant of Rs 1,000 crore, while the private institutions will not get any funding under the scheme.

30. The researchers at which IIT has developed Hydro Thermal Carbonization (HTC) technology for solid waste management?

[A] IIT Kanpur

[B] IIT Kharagpur

[C] IIT Madras

[D] IIT Delhi



Correct Answer: B [IIT Kharagpur]

Notes:

A research team at IIT Kharagpur has developed a technology which can generate energy from solid waste with high moisture content. The new technology – Hydro Thermal Carbonization (HTC) – can convert municipal solid waste to biofuel, soil amendment and absorbents. The technology converts organic fraction of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) into Hydrochar by using a batch reactor. The moisture in the waste is used to the advantage of the process which uses water for the reaction. The process has increased the resource recovery yield to 50-65% of urban organic waste. The key to the success of the technology lies in designing a proper industrial-scale HTC reactor with improved heat integration system.

31. Kanti Bhatt, who passed away recently, was the veteran personality of which field?

- [A] Journalism
- [B] Politics
- [C] Sports
- [D] Arts

Correct Answer: A [Journalism]

Notes:

Kanti Bhatt (88), the veteran Gujarati journalist, author and columnist, has passed away in Mumbai. He was born on 15th July 1931 in Sachra village in erstwhile Bhavnagar state of Gujarat. He started his journalism career in the late 1960s as a financial journalist in Mumbai. He also worked as journalist, writer, columnist and editor in various Gujarati publications like Chitrallekha, Mumbai Samachar, Janshakti, Sandesh, Yuva Darshan, Jansatta, Vyapar and Abhiyan. Bhatt was also the founding editor of one of the leading Gujarati magazines 'Abhiyan', which he launched with his wife Sheela, also a veteran journalist and member of the Editors Guild of India.

32. Anant Setalvad, who passed away recently, was the veteran personality of which sports?

- [A] Badminton
- [B] Hockey
- [C] Boxing
- [D] Cricket

Correct Answer: D [Cricket]

Notes:

Anant Setalvad (84), yesteryear cricket commentator, has passed away in Mumbai on August 4, 2019. His pleasant baritone voice distinguished him from other cricket commentators from the mid 1960s through to the 1980s. Regarded as a giant in cricket commentary on All India Radio (AIR), Anant shared the microphone with Vijay Merchant, Pearson Surita, Raju Bharatan, Balu Alaganan and Suresh Saraiya. He was commentator for AIR in Ranji Trophy and other BCCI tournaments and also for Test matches. He was on the AIR panel for the 1969 India-Australia Test match in Mumbai and also in the panel for the 1973 Test against the Tony Lewis led England at the CCI.

33. Satwiksairaj Rankireddy is associated to which sports?

- [A] Badminton
- [B] Tennis
- [C] Wrestling
- [D] Boxing

Correct Answer: A [Badminton]

Notes:

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have become the first Indian pair to win a BWF Super 500 badminton tournament. They beat World champions Li Jun Hui and Liu Yu Chen of China in the summit clash of Thailand Open 21-19, 18-21, 21-18 in Bangkok to win the men's doubles category.

34. ISRO has decided to setup Space Situational Awareness Control Centre in which city?

- [A] Kochi
- [B] Bengaluru



[C] Hyderabad

[D] Raipur

Correct Answer: B [Bengaluru]

Notes:

ISRO Chief, K Sivan has recently laid the foundation stone for Space Situational Awareness Control Centre (SSACC) at Peenya, Bengaluru. The aim of the control center is to monitor and protect high value space assets from space debris has been laid. The control centre will boost activities forecast for Space Situational Awareness and Management (SSAM), which has now considered a globally essential area because of the ever-growing man created space detritus figure and the multiple collision threat with functional satellites and space vehicles. This step will secure India's expensive and strategically important satellites and future spacecraft from space detritus such as dead satellite remains, parts of orbiting bodies, near-earth asteroids and extreme weather situations. It would assimilate the tracking data of dead satellites from indigenous observation facilities produce important data from bare observations by inspection. It will also permit research activities to find solutions for space debris, space debris modelling and reduction.

35. India's first large-scale trial for VPM1002 & Immuvac is related to which disease?

[A] AIDS

[B] Malaria

[C] TB

[D] Polio

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Correct Answer: C [TB]

Notes:

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has launched India's first large-scale trial for two new TB vaccines – VPM1002 and Immuvac. The initiative would enroll 12,000 healthy household contacts of a patient whose sputum has tested positive for TB and are therefore at high risk of contracting the disease. VPM1002 is produced by the Serum Institute of India (Pune) & Immuvac is manufactured by Cadila Pharmaceuticals. These anti-Tuberculosis vaccines aim to prevent infection (pre-exposure) or prevent primary progression or reactivation of latent TB infection (post-exposure). According to the Global TB Report 2017 issued by the World Health Organization (WHO), India has the highest number of TB cases in the world.

36. On which date, the 2019 UN International Day of Friendship is celebrated recently?

[A] July 24

[B] July 26

[C] July 30

[D] July 27

Correct Answer: C [July 30]

Notes:

The UN International Day of Friendship is celebrated across the globe every year on July 30 to observe the importance of friendship in promoting peace in many cultures. The day is based on the recognition of the relevance and importance of friendship as a noble and valuable sentiment in the lives of human beings around the world. However, India celebrates Friendship Day on the first Sunday of August.

37. Which state has become the India's first state to adopt a digital fingerprint and iris scanning system?

[A] Chhattisgarh

[B] Maharashtra

[C] Rajasthan

[D] Odisha

Correct Answer: B [Maharashtra]

Notes:

Maharashtra has become the India's first state to adopt a digital fingerprint and iris scanning system – Automated Multi-modal Biometric Identification System (AMBIS) – to aid police investigations. This system will soon be replicated by other state police forces across the country. An AMBIS unit consists of



a computer terminal, a camera, and iris, fingerprint, and palm scanners. It also includes a portable system to dust off and capture fingerprints from crime scenes. With the integration of the system with facial recognition from CCTV cameras, AMBIS enables the police to cross-reference and put faces to criminals whose fingerprints have been captured on paper over the decades, apart from solving fresh crimes. This new system has replaced the Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS), which has been used by Indian law enforcement agencies to search finger and palm prints.

38. The Union Government has approved Rs 4,900 crore Kosi-Mechi Interlinking project. Mechi is an important tributary of which river basin?

- [A] Ganga
- [B] Mahananda
- [C] Brahmaputra
- [D] Yamuna

Correct Answer: B [Mahananda]

Notes:

The Union Government has approved Rs 4,900 crore Kosi-Mechi Interlinking project for interlinking of Kosi and Mechi rivers of Bihar. This is the second major river interlinking project in the country to be approved after the Ken-Betwa project in Madhya Pradesh. The ambitious Kosi-Mechi project is unique in many ways. It will not only prevent recurring floods in north Bihar but also provide irrigation for a whopping over 2.14 lakh hectares of cultivable land in Araria, Purnea, Kishanganj and Katihar districts, collectively called Seemanchal region. This approval comes after this project secured the last remaining mandatory technical-cum-administrative nod from Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). Mechi is an important tributary of Mahananda river.

39. Which Bollywood actor to be felicitated with 'Excellence in Cinema' award by Victorian Government?

- [A] Priyanka Chopra
- [B] Shekhar Kapoor
- [C] Shahrukh Khan
- [D] Deepika Padukone

Correct Answer: C [Shahrukh Khan]

Notes:

Superstar Shah Rukh Khan will be felicitated with 'Excellence in Cinema' honour at the awards night of Indian Film Festival of Melbourne (IFFM) on August 8. The festival would pay tribute to the actor's continuous contribution to cinema and popular culture in India with the award. Shah Rukh is the chief guest at the festival. He will be presented the award by Linda Dessau, who is the first female Governor of the State of Victoria. Helmed by the Victorian government of Australia, the IFFM is back for its 10th edition in the cultural city and will celebrate "courage" as its central theme in 2019. The felicitation will take place at the iconic Palais Theatre in Melbourne, which is one of the city's heritage landmarks.

40. Naaz Joshi, who won the Miss World Diversity 2019 title, is from which country?

- [A] Mauritius
- [B] Indonesia
- [C] India
- [D] Thailand

Correct Answer: C [India]

Notes:

India's transsexual woman Naaz Joshi has been crowned Miss World Diversity 2019 at Port Louis in Mauritius on August 3. She has made the country proud with a third successive victory in the beauty pageant Miss World Diversity. Apart from the Miss World Diversity title, Naaz also bagged the Best Project, Miss Congeniality, Miss People's Choice Ambassador and Best National Costume titles. She was the first transgender in the world to win a coveted international crown against natural born females in 2017.

41. The census of elephants is undertaken at the national level once in how many years?

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- [A] 4
- [B] 5
- [C] 8
- [D] 10

Correct Answer: B [5]

Notes:

According to the revised state-wise wild elephant population estimate based on the 2017 census, jumbo population across the country stood at 29,964 against 29,576 recorded as the mean figure in 2012. The South Region accounted for 14,612 followed by North East with 10,139 elephants. Among the South Indian states, Karnataka leads the table with 6,049 elephants followed by Kerala. The tiger population across the country is estimated at 2,967 as per the 2018 census. The census of tigers is undertaken at the national level once every 4 years and that of elephants at every 5 years. As per the India State of Forest Report 2017, there has been an increase of 6,778 kilometers of forest cover at the national level as compared to the assessment of 2015. The increase in forest cover is attributed to plantation and conservation activities both within and outside Recorded forest areas.

42. The United States has designated which country as currency manipulator?

- [A] Myanmar
- [B] South Korea
- [C] China
- [D] North Korea

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Correct Answer: C [China]

Notes:

The United States has designated China a "currency manipulator", following the devaluation of the Yuan. The move could escalate the tense trade relations between the two nations. The US action came after China allowed its yuan to weaken past the key seven-per-dollar level for the first time in more than a decade. This decision will engage with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to eliminate the unfair competitive advantage created by China's latest actions. The decision to label China as a currency manipulator for the first time since 1994 comes just 4 months after the U.S. Treasury passed on an opportunity to make such a formal designation as part of its semiannual currency report. The Treasury uses three criteria to apply the designation: actively intervening in their currency markets, having large trade surpluses with the U.S., and having large overall current-account surpluses.

43. Which Indian cricketer has been chosen as the July's PCA player of the month?

- [A] Cheteshwar Pujara
- [B] Shikhar Dhawan
- [C] Ajinkya Rahane
- [D] R Ashwin

Correct Answer: D [R Ashwin]

Notes:

India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin has been chosen as the Professional Cricketers Association's (PCA) Player for the month of July 2019 for his consistent performances in the county championships. Ashwin signed with Nottinghamshire for six County Championship matches as practice for India's World Test Championship fixture against West Indies that gets underway later this month. In three matches, he took 23 wickets at 19.91 and scored 197 runs at 39.40.

44. Which union ministry has organized the 2nd All India Annual Conference of IIS Officers?

- [A] Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- [B] Ministry of Communications
- [C] Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- [D] Ministry of Information & Broadcasting

Correct Answer: D [Ministry of Information & Broadcasting]

Notes:

On 5th August 2019, the 2nd All India Annual Conference of Indian Information Service (IIS) Officers was held in New Delhi. MORE EBOOKS AT @Aj_ebooks



organized at Pravasi Bhartiya Kendra in New Delhi. The Conference was organized with a view to attain greater integration of all Media Units under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting in order to further amplify government communication. A Performance Review of Media Units under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MoI&B) was also conducted during the day-long meeting. The Conference was attended by Senior IIS Officers from all across the country, along with officials of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Prasar Bharati and Indian Institute of Mass Communication.

45. Which Indian cricketer has been conferred with Karthik Bose Lifetime Achievement award?

- [A] Bishan Singh Bedi
- [B] Arun Lal
- [C] Farokh Engineer
- [D] Syed Kirmani

Correct Answer: B [Arun Lal]

Notes:

Former Indian opener and Bengal captain, Arun Lal has been conferred with Karthik Bose Lifetime Achievement award of the Cricket Association of Bengal's (CAB's) in Kolkata. He played 16 Test matches and 13 One-Day Internationals (ODIs) for India between 1982 and 1989. He played six seasons for Delhi before becoming a regular feature for Bengal and was a major figure in Bengal's Ranji Trophy triumph in 1989. He was credited with instilling a positive attitude in the team's approach.

46. The ScooNews Global Educators Fest (SGEF) is being held in which city?

- [A] New Delhi
- [B] Kanpur
- [C] Udaipur
- [D] Ranchi

Correct Answer: C [Udaipur]

Notes:

The 3rd edition of India's largest education brainstorming event "SooNews Global Educators Fest (SGEF-2019)" is being held in Udaipur, Rajasthan on August 09-10. It will bring together over 500 educators to discuss the way towards establishing India as the next global education powerhouse. The theme for the fest is 'Education for Sustainability: Moving on from conformity to creativity'. The fest will provide an excellent platform for individuals and organizations contributing to the cause of education, schools as well as start-ups to debate on innovation with industry leaders on Industry-Academia partnerships, showcase their products among peers and network with like-minded people. Celebrity educator Anand Kumar of Super 30, Sonam Wangchuk of 3 Idiots Fame and various others will speak on key issues concerning Education in the new world.

47. Which state government has launched Mission Shakti sports initiative?

- [A] Gujarat
- [B] Maharashtra
- [C] Madhya pradesh
- [D] Jharkhand

Correct Answer: B [Maharashtra]

Notes:

Bollywood actor Aamir Khan has launched a Maharashtra government's initiative "Mission Shakti" at the function in Ballarpur to train athletes from Chandrapur and Gadchiroli for international events like the Olympics. The aim of Mission Shakti is to groom tribal student for an Olympic medal by 2024. The mission is directed towards six sporting disciplines – archery, shooting, volleyball, swimming, weightlifting and gymnastics. The actor also felicitated a team of tribal mountaineers who had recently scaled Mount Everest as part of 'Mission Shaurya'.

48. Which Indian wrestler bagged gold in women's 53kg category of the 2019 Poland Open wrestling tournament?

- [A] Sakshi Malik
- [B] Babita Kumari



[C] Vinesh Phogat

[D] Kavita Devi

Correct Answer: C [Vinesh Phogat]

Notes:

Star India grappler Vinesh Phogat has bagged gold in women's 53kg category of the Poland Open wrestling tournament in Warsaw on 4th August 2019. She prevailed 3-2 over local wrestler Roksana in the final of the competition. This was her third consecutive gold in the 53 kg category after winning Gold at Grand Prix of Spain and at the Yasar Dogu International at Istanbul, Turkey last month.

49. Which space agency has discovered first nearby super-earth planet GJ357d?

[A] NASA

[B] Roscosmos

[C] CNES

[D] ISRO

Correct Answer: A [NASA]

Notes:

The NASA scientists have characterized the first potentially habitable world outside our own solar system that may be suitable for life. The super-earth planet — named GJ 357 d — was spotted by NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) mission. It is estimated that planet is about six times the size of our planet and located a mere 31 light-years away. The planet orbits a dwarf star in the Hydra constellation and may have the right conditions to support liquid water as it lies within its star's habitable zone. It may be noted that a super-Earth is an extrasolar planet with a mass higher than Earth's, but substantially below those of the Solar System's ice giants, Uranus and Neptune.

50. India's first 3-D Smart Traffic Signal 'Intelights' has launched in which city?

[A] Lucknow

[B] Indore

[C] Jaipur

[D] Mohali

Correct Answer: D [Mohali]

Notes:

In a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country, Mohali traffic police have launched 3-D Smart Traffic Signal devised by the students of a Chandigarh university. The wireless system, called 'Intelights', has been installed at the traffic crossing near the Airport Road, on a pilot project basis, and will regulate traffic signals with a smart bird's eye view wireless sensor system. Intelights proposes a 360-degree solution to curb the rising problem of traffic congestion. One of the major reasons for traffic congestion is the inefficient working of traffic signal timers installed at intersections. Presently, the timers of traffic lights display a preset value which leads to waste of time. For instance, consider a scenario where green light of '20 seconds' is displayed but there is no vehicle present at that particular intersection – thus leading to unnecessary waste of time. To tackle this issue, 'Intelights' proposes an Intelligent Traffic Timer Control; which uses dynamic signal control technology to adjust the timers of red, yellow and green lights according to the traffic density at an intersection. The system uses existing CCTV cameras to gather live traffic video feed, and automatically evaluates the traffic density using Artificial Intelligence, and sets the signal timers accordingly. This process is repeated for every cycle of traffic lights to keep traffic flowing smoothly.

51. The researchers at which IIT have developed portable device to detect bacteria without cell culture or microbiological assays?

[A] IIT Kharagpur

[B] IIT Bombay

[C] IIT Guwahati

[D] IIT Madras

Correct Answer: C [IIT Guwahati]

Notes:

The researchers at IIT Guwahati have developed a low-cost portable device to detect bacteria without



cell culture or microbiological assays. The hand-held device with bio-compatible sensor can also diagnose time-critical illnesses such as meningitis. The bacterial infection is a common cause of morbidity and mortality across the world. Despite the development of a range of antibiotics, the challenge continues to lie in diagnosing bacterial infection early on. The present techniques are extremely time – consuming. Presently, cells derived from a patient are cultured or grown in laboratories to detect and micro-analyse bacteria. However, the new portable device can instantly detect the charges on the cell walls of bacteria. The rapid detection kits are like those used for blood sugar monitoring. The research has enabled rapid detection of bacteria, which is not just important in healthcare but also in anti- bioterrorism measures and environmental monitoring. The team work has been recently patented & published in the July 2019 issue of 'Journal of Materials Chemistry of the Royal Society of Chemistry'.

52. Jay Om Prakash, who passed away recently, was the veteran personality of which field?

- [A] Photography
- [B] Film Industry
- [C] Journalism
- [D] Sports

Correct Answer: B [Film Industry]

Notes:

Jay Om Prakash (93), the veteran filmmaker and Hrithik Roshan's maternal grandfather, has passed away in Mumbai, Maharashtra on August 7, 2019. He is best known for his collaboration with two of Bollywood biggest superstars — the late Rajesh Khanna and Jeetendra. He had a strong penchant for beginning his film titles with the letter 'A'. With Khanna, he made films such as "Aap Ki Kasam" (1974) and "Aakhir Kyon?" (1985). His collaboration with Jeetendra yielded five big hits — "Apnapan" (1977), "Aasha" (1980), "Apna Bana Lo" (1982), "Arpan" (1983) and "Aadmi Khilona Hai" (1993).

53. The 5th edition of International Army Scout Masters Competition has started in which military station?

- [A] Jaisalmer
- [B] Gwalior
- [C] Dehradun
- [D] Agra

Correct Answer: A [Jaisalmer]

Notes:

The 5th edition of International Army Scout Masters Competition 2019 has started at Jaisalmer military station in Rajasthan from August 5 to 16. The purpose of the International Army Games (IAG) is to foster military co-operation between the participating nations, develop trust between the armies for the sake of establishing a peaceful society, improving professional training and sharing of best practices being followed by participating nations. The teams from 8 countries viz. India, China, Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Sudan are participating in the competition. The competition consists of 5 stages wherein Navigation Skills, Endurance, Marksmanship and Team spirit will be evaluated by a panel of international judges, arbitrators, and referees.

54. Nobel laureate Toni Morrison has passed away. She was from which country?

- [A] Germany
- [B] United Kingdom
- [C] France
- [D] United States

Correct Answer: D [United States]

Notes:

Nobel Prize-winning US author Toni Morrison (88) has passed away in New York, United States on 5th August 2019. She is the first African-American woman to win a Nobel Prize in Literature for her novels depicting the struggles of black Americans living in a white society ridden with racial discrimination. She won the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for fiction for "Beloved" that told the story of a runaway female slave and was made into a film starring Oprah Winfrey in 1998. In 2012, President Barack Obama presented her with the highest civilian honor – Presidential Medal of Freedom.

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55. Which city has been chosen as the venue for the main event of the 5th National Handloom Day (NHD)?

- [A] Patna
- [B] Udaipur
- [C] Bhubaneswar
- [D] Amravati

Correct Answer: C [Bhubaneswar]

Notes:

In India, the 5th edition of National Handloom Day (NHD) has celebrated on 7th August 2019 to honour the handloom weavers in the country and also highlight India's handloom industry. The day seeks to focus on the contribution of handloom to the socio economic development of India and also to increase the income of weavers. This year, Bhubaneswar has been chosen as the venue for the main event due to its rich tradition of Handlooms. The prime objective of holding the NHD in Bhubaneswar is to empower women and girls. The day was chosen as the National Handloom Day (NHD) to commemorate the Swadeshi Movement which was launched on 7th August 1905 in Calcutta Town Hall to protest against the partition of Bengal by the British Government. The movement had aimed at reviving domestic products and production processes.

56. Which union ministry has unveiled draft e-commerce norms for consumer protection?

- [A] Ministry of Coal
- [B] Ministry of Railways
- [C] Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- [D] Ministry of Consumer Affairs

Correct Answer: D [Ministry of Consumer Affairs]

Notes:

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution has released the draft "e-commerce guidelines for consumer protection 2019" to protect the interest of online shoppers. The draft stated that an e-commerce entity such as Amazon and Flipkart cannot directly or indirectly influence the price of the goods or services. It added that every e-commerce entity needs to publish the name & contact details of the grievance officer on their website along with the mechanism by which users can lodge their complaints. As per the draft, e-commerce platforms cannot falsely represent themselves as consumers or post reviews about goods & services in their name. The platforms are also required to display terms of contract with the seller relating to return, refund, exchange, warranty, delivery and mode of payments. The draft is open for stakeholder comments for 45 days or till September 16, 2019.

57. Which state government has launched a new higher education model "RACE"?

- [A] Rajasthan
- [B] Punjab
- [C] Madhya Pradesh
- [D] Odisha

Correct Answer: A [Rajasthan]

Notes:

The Rajasthan government has launched a new higher education model titled "Resource Assistance for Colleges with Excellence (RACE)" for distribution of faculties and movable assets among the government colleges at the district level to rationalize the availability of resources. The new model will create a pool for sharing of facilities which will benefit the colleges lacking infrastructure. The colleges in need will have to submit their requirement to the nodal college in the district that will send the teachers on deputation (if needed) and provide the facilities such as projectors, digital libraries, equipment and technicians.

58. Urkund software, which is in news recently, is related to which field?

- [A] Insurance
- [B] Education
- [C] Digital Banking



[D] Share Market

Correct Answer: B [Education]**Notes:**

According to the University Grants Commission (UGC), all universities in India – public and private – will get final subscription to access the Swedish anti-plagiarism software Urkund from September 1, 2019. The Urkund software was chosen through a global tender process. As part of the exercise to prevent plagiarism in the coming years, the software will be provided free of cost anti-plagiarism software to all 900 universities, including private players. It will be available to teachers, students, researchers & everyone. The Union Government also notified the UGC (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2018 to prescribe the graded punishment for plagiarism. Beside this, a UGC committee on improving research culture, headed by former Indian Institute of Science (IIS) director P. Balaram, noted that Indian academics have contributed 35% of all articles published in about 11,000 fake journals between 2010 and 2014. Most of these articles were in fake engineering journals, followed by articles in fake journals of bio-medicine and social sciences.

59. Which zone of Indian railways has introduced a new Biometric Token System (BTS)?

[A] North Western Railway

[B] Western Railways

[C] East Central Railway

[D] South Western Railway

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Correct Answer: B [Western Railways]**Notes:**

The Western and Central Railways have introduced a new Biometric Token System (BTS) by which passengers travelling in the general coach, where seats are not reserved, are given a token roughly 3 hours before the train's departure. These tokens are issued on a first-come, first-served basis after accepting biometric information of individual passengers. The tokens carry a serial number on them, which governs the order in which passengers will board the train. The use of biometrics cuts out the touts and helps genuine passengers. It would provide relief to passengers and prevent jumping of queue. The system is also cost-effective, as an average of Rs 20 was spent on each train.

60. Which state /UT government has launched a project titled 'Oral History Programme'?

[A] Kerala

[B] Tamil Nadu

[C] Rajasthan

[D] Delhi

Correct Answer: D [Delhi]**Notes:**

The Delhi government has launched a project titled 'Oral History Programme' that seeks to record oral histories of the city as told by its senior citizens. The project is an attempt to democratise knowledge by recording stories told by hundred of common people in Delhi from different strata of society over the next two years. It is undertaken by Delhi Archives in collaboration with Ambedkar University. It aims to document the history of the city from the perspective of its inhabitants. The project will enable a richer representation of the city than allowed by official records and written documents. The Oral History programme is actually reviving a 3-decade old project of the Delhi Archives. In the 1980s, the official repository of the city's records began an oral history programme that interviewed eminent personalities, including Gulzarilal Nanda, who served as the acting prime minister of the country twice, and Sushila Nayyar, a close aide of Mahatma Gandhi. But the project was stopped after 56 eminent people were interviewed.

61. Noted educationalist Rajalakshmi Parthasarathy has passed away. She was from which state?

[A] Telangana

[B] Karnataka

[C] Kerala

[D] Tamil Nadu

Correct Answer: D [Tamil Nadu]

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**Notes:**

Rajalakshmi Parthasarathy (93), Acclaimed educationist, journalist and patron of the arts, has passed away in Chennai, Tamil Nadu on 5th August 2019. Parthasarathy founded the Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan Group of Schools driven by her desire "to Indianise school education". She was popularly known as Rashmi or 'Mrs YGP'. In 2010, she received the Padma Shri for her contribution to literature and education. She also worked in 'The Hindu' and had written regularly for its Sport & Pastime magazine.

62. The United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA) is also named as _____?

- [A] Singapore Convention on Mediation
- [B] Australia Convention on Mediation
- [C] Mexico Convention on Mediation
- [D] South Africa Convention on Mediation

Correct Answer: A [Singapore Convention on Mediation]

Notes:

India has recently signed the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA) to boost the confidence of foreign investors. It was signed by India's High Commissioner to Singapore Jawed Ashraf, who was representing the Government of India (GoI). The purpose of the convention is to strengthen the international dispute resolution framework, and in turn help ease trade and commerce among countries. It will enable the enforcement of mediated settlement agreements amongst signatory countries. So far, the treaty named Singapore Convention on Mediation (SCM) has signed by 46 countries including the United States, China, and India. The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted the Convention on 20th December 2018 during its 73rd session. The Convention has opened for signature by all States in Singapore on 7th August 2019, and thereafter at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

63. The scientists of which country have created the world's thinnest gold?

- [A] United States
- [B] Britain
- [C] France
- [D] Germany

Correct Answer: B [Britain]

Notes:

The researchers at the University of Leeds in Britain have created a new form of gold which is 0.47 nanometres thick – one million times thinner than a human finger nail. They claimed that it is the world's thinnest-ever unsupported gold. The researchers named their created precious metal as "golden algae" because of its greenish hue under water and the similarities between its shape and that of an algae's. The Golden Algae is regarded as 2D because it consists of just two layers of atoms sitting on top of one another, so there are no "bulk" atoms hidden beneath the surface. According to researchers, the Golden Algae could have wide-scale applications in the medical device and electronics industries. It could also be used as a catalyst to speed up chemical reactions in a range of industrial processes.

64. Who has taken charge as the new CMD of Power Grid Corporation of India?

- [A] Amrita Singh
- [B] Ravi P Singh
- [C] Kandikuppa Sreekant
- [D] Pradeep L Kaul

Correct Answer: C [Kandikuppa Sreekant]

Notes:

Kandikuppa Sreekant has taken charge as the new Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Power Grid Corporation of India. He shall be on post till 31st December 2023 i.e. the date of his superannuation or until further orders, whichever is earlier. Prior to this post, he was serving as the director (finance) of Power Grid. POWERGRID is an Indian state-owned electric utilities company headquartered in Gurugram. It transmits about 50% of the total power generated in India on its transmission network.

65. According to Ethnologue, which country has the highest number of 'living' indigenous

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languages in the world?

- [A] United States
- [B] Australia
- [C] India
- [D] Papua New Guinea

Correct Answer: D [Papua New Guinea]

Notes:

Ethnologue (a directory of languages) lists 7,111 living languages worldwide (languages that are still being used and spoken by people). According to it, Pacific island nation of Papua New Guinea (PNG) has the highest number of 'living' indigenous languages in the world (840), while India stands 4th with 453. Interestingly, the U.S. (335 languages) and Australia (319), widely English-speaking nations, are among the countries where the highest number of languages are spoken. Among regions, Asia (2303) and Africa (2140) account for the highest number of indigenous languages (over 70% of the total). The United Nations has designated Year 2019 as International Year of Indigenous Languages to promote native tongues in five key areas viz. creation of favourable conditions for knowledge-sharing and dissemination of good practices with regards to indigenous languages.

66. Which Indian Grandmaster has won the 2019 Belt and Road China Hunan International chess tournament?

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- [A] Parimarjan Negi
- [B] Surya Shekhar Ganguly
- [C] Pentala Harikrishna
- [D] Krishnan Sasikiran

Correct Answer: B [Surya Shekhar Ganguly]

Notes:

Indian Grandmaster Surya Shekhar Ganguly from Kolkata has won the 2019 Belt and Road China Hunan International chess tournament. Ganguly left behind a strong field to win the 9-round Open tournament played in a Swiss League format. He registered 5 wins and 4 draws to emerge the sole leader with 7 points. He not only collected 27.5 Elo points but pocketed \$50,000 (Rs 35.6 lakh) as well.

67. RBI has cut the policy repo rate by how much basis points in its 3rd bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement for FY 20?

- [A] 25
- [B] 35
- [C] 10
- [D] 45

Correct Answer: B [35]

Notes:

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recently announced its 3rd bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement for FY 20 (2019-20). In it, RBI reduced the policy repo rate under the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) by 35 basis points (bps) from 5.75% to 5.40% with immediate effect. Consequently, the reverse repo rate under the LAF stands revised to 5.15%, and the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 5.65%. This is the 4th straight time that the RBI has cut interest rates. The move is said to give a fillip to the economy. The MPC, headed by Shaktikanta Das, also cut GDP growth target to 6.9% from 7% for the ongoing financial year.

68. The Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) has been funded by which international organisation?

- [A] IMF
- [B] World Bank
- [C] AIIB
- [D] ADB

Correct Answer: B [World Bank]

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**Notes:**

For Integrated coastal zone management (ICZM), the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has launched a draft titled 'Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF)', which is a part of a World Bank-funded project. The draft plan will dictate how prospective infrastructure projects situated along the coast ought to be assessed before they can apply for clearance. The document lays out guidelines out for coastal States to adopt when they approve and regulate projects in coastal zones. The document was prepared by the Society for Integrated Coastal Management, a Ministry-affiliated body. So far three coastal States, namely Gujarat, Odisha and West Bengal, have prepared ICZM Plans with support from the World Bank. Such plans would be prepared for the selected coastal stretches in other States/UT.

69. Which organisation has announced Vikram Sarabhai Journalism Award?

- [A] ISRO
- [B] DRDO
- [C] BARC
- [D] VSSC

Correct Answer: A [ISRO]

Notes:

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced its "Vikram Sarabhai Journalism Award in Space Science, Technology and Research" to recognize and reward journalists who have actively contributed towards the field of space science, applications, and research. Basically, the awards are part of the centenary year celebrations of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, father of Indian space programme. The nominations are open to all Indians who have a good experience in journalism. The articles published from 2019 to 2020 will be considered. The names of the selected candidates will be announced on August 1st, 2020. There are two categories of awards, wherein the first category holds a cash price of Rs 5,00,000, a medal and citation and two journalists or freelancers of print media will be awarded. On the other hand, the second category of the award holds 3 cash prizes of Rs 3,00,000, 2,00,000 and 1,00,000 and citation each for journalists or freelancers of print media.

70. Where the headquarters of United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is located?

- [A] Berlin
- [B] New York
- [C] Paris
- [D] Vienna

Correct Answer: D [Vienna]

Notes:

The National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) of India has recently signed an agreement with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) to initiate a skill development programme for different levels of beneficiaries in the solar thermal energy sector. Both the organizations will engage national and international experts to bring the best practices by developing specialized training material. The agreement is part of the ongoing MNRE-GEF-UNIDO project implemented jointly by UNIDO and to support capacity building and skill development of technical manpower in the Concentrated Solar Thermal Energy Technologies (CST) which are being used to replace conventional fossil fuels e.g. coal, diesel, furnace oil etc. and save costs and emissions in the industrial process heat applications. The headquarters of UNIDO is in Vienna, Austria.

71. Which state has topped the rankings in Health Ministry report card on "Breastfeeding & Infant & Child feeding Practices"?

- [A] Kerala
- [B] Odisha
- [C] Manipur
- [D] Tamil Nadu

Correct Answer: C [Manipur]

Notes:

The Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan has recently released a report card



on "Breastfeeding & Infant & Child feeding Practices" with data from the State and UTs on 8th August in New Delhi. In it, Manipur has topped the rankings in the Breastfeeding report card in the country. National capital Delhi is also among the worst-performing States. It has been developed by devising a composite score based on three indicators namely early initiation of breastfeeding, exclusive breastfeeding for six months and complimentary feeding at 6-8 months of child's age. Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Bihar are at the bottom positions in the report card.

72. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of World Tribal Day (WTD)?

- [A] Indigenous People
- [B] Indigenous Regions
- [C] Indigenous Cultures
- [D] Indigenous Languages

Correct Answer: D [Indigenous Languages]

Notes:

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (or World Tribal Day) is observed on August 9 to front-up and protect the rights of the world's indigenous population. The 2019 theme is 'Indigenous Languages'. It was reported in the year 2016 that about 2680 indigenous languages were in danger and on the verge of getting extinct. To safeguard the loss of these indigenous languages, the United Nations (UN) has designated 2019 to be the International Year of Indigenous Languages. This will help in persuading, convincing and creating awareness to people about the Indigenous Languages.

73. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of 22nd National Conference on e-Governance?

- [A] Technology for accelerating Development
- [B] Digital Connectivity to the last mile
- [C] Digital Transformation
- [D] Digital India: Success to Excellence

Correct Answer: D [Digital India: Success to Excellence]

Notes:

In Meghalaya, the 22nd National Conference on e-Governance 2019 was held at Shillong on August 8-9, 2019 with theme "Digital India: Success to Excellence". It was inaugurated by Union minister Dr Jitendra Singh and Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma. The Conference is a part of the DARPG's 100 days initiatives in the new Government. This is the first time the event was organized in North-Eastern region of the country. This Conference provides a platform to disseminate knowledge on effective methods of designing and implementing sustainable e-Governance initiatives to provide end-to-end Digital Services, exchange experiences in solving problems, mitigating risks, resolving issues and planning for success. A total of 28 states and all the Union Territories (UTs) participated in the Conference.

74. The Kerala Government has signed MoU with which organisation to develop Space Park?

- [A] ISRO
- [B] DRDO
- [C] VSSC
- [D] BARC

Correct Answer: C [VSSC]

Notes:

The Kerala government has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) to support its efforts in promoting Space Technology vertical in the State. The agreement will facilitate VSSC to support the Kerala's project to set up India's first state-of-the-art Space Systems Park at Knowledge City in Thiruvananthapuram to attract global start-ups in the space sector and make it a major manufacturing hub for space-related technology, research and development. Through the MOU, VSSC will support Kerala Space Park in the technical and leadership responsibility and promote the SMEs, startups and other partner entities in developing products and services for the Space Industry. The MOU also states VSSC's interest in providing opportunities for companies operating out of the Space Park to participate in its procurement process.

75. The Lahore-Attari Samjhauta Express train service was started in which year?

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- [A] 1984
- [B] 1981
- [C] 1976
- [D] 1978

Correct Answer: C [1976]

Notes:

On 8 August 2019, Pakistan suspended the Lahore-Attari Samjhauta Express train service following the revocation of Article 370 in Jammu And Kashmir (J&K). Though, Indian Railways has clarified that the train has not been suspended & will run normally. The Samjhauta Express (also called the Friendship Express) consists of 6 sleeper coaches and an AC three-tier coach. The train service was started on 22nd July 1976, under the Shimla Agreement that settled the 1971 war between the two nations. On the Indian side, the train runs from Delhi to Attari and from Lahore to Wagah on the Pakistan side. The word Samjhauta means "agreement" in both Hindi and Urdu.

76. Who is the head of the RBI task force on Offshore Rupee Markets?

- [A] M K Jain
- [B] Usha Thorat
- [C] B P Kanungo
- [D] N S Vishwanathan

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Correct Answer: B [Usha Thorat]

Notes:

The RBI task force on Offshore Rupee Markets (ORM), headed by Usha Thorat, has suggested liberal currency market for offshore users. The panel recommended that onshore market hours may be suitably extended to match the flexibility provided by the offshore markets (or NDF markets). This is aimed at incentivizing non-residents to hedge in the onshore market. The Thorat panel suggested that banks may be allowed to freely offer prices to non-residents at all times, out of their Indian books, either by a domestic sales team, or by using staff located at overseas branches. It recommended that non-deliverable rupee derivatives (with settlement in foreign currency) may be allowed to be traded in the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC), and IFSC Banking Units may be allowed to deal in such derivatives with a distinct foreign currency-Indian rupee (INR) position limit.

77. Who has been appointed as the green ambassador of Manipur?

- [A] Dingko Singh
- [B] Mirabai Chanu
- [C] Mary Kom
- [D] Valentina Elangbam

Correct Answer: D [Valentina Elangbam]

Notes:

The Manipur government has appointed a 9-year-old girl Valentina Elangbam as the State's green ambassador after a video of her crying over felled trees goes viral. Hence, the state government issued an order in recognition of her immense love and affection for trees and for generating mass awareness on conservation of the environment for a period of one year from the date of issuing the order. Valentina is a Class V student of Amutombi Divine Life English School in Kakching town. She had planted the saplings of two Gulmohar (royal poinciana) trees by the side of a river when she was in Class I. However, in a rude shock to her, the trees were recently cut down as part of a road expansion project. Then, a video of the crying child over the trees was shared on Facebook by her uncle.

78. Which union ministry has launched 'Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha' drive?

- [A] Ministry of Human Resource Development
- [B] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- [C] Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- [D] Ministry of Jal Shakti

Correct Answer: A [Ministry of Human Resource Development]

Notes:

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Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' has launched 'Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha' drive on 9th August 2019 to create awareness about Water Conservation among all school students across country. One of the objectives of this mega drive is to encourage students towards judicious use and minimum wastage of water at home and school level. It is a time bound campaign with a mission mode approach. This concept of water conservation is essential for students so that they can understand the importance of water and how it is shaping their lives meaningfully, thereby enabling them to participate in water conservation activities in their day to day lives.

79. Which state has won the most film-friendly state award at 2018 National Film awards?

- [A] Kerala
- [B] Uttarakhand
- [C] Tamil Nadu
- [D] Odisha

Correct Answer: B [Uttarakhand]

Notes:

Uttarakhand has won the most film-friendly state award at the 66th National Film awards 2018. This is the first time that this category has been added to the list of National Awards. A panel consists of Rahul Rawail, Utpal Borpujari and A S Kanak announced the award. The Uttarakhand government has provided various subsidies to encourage more filmmakers to shoot films in the state. Bollywood film Kedarnath, directed by Abhishek Kapoor, was shot in the state.

80. Which movie has won the Best Feature Film award at the 2018 National Film awards?

- [A] Hellaro
- [B] Andhadhun
- [C] Chumbak
- [D] Padman

Correct Answer: A [Hellaro]

Notes:

Hellaro (Gujarati) has won the Best Feature Film award at the 66th National Film awards for year 2018. While, Ayushmann Khurrana and Vicky Kaushal share the Best Actor Award for Andhadhun and Uri: The Surgical Strikes, respectively. Keerthi Suresh bagged Best Actress award for Mahanati. 'Uri' director Aditya Dhar won in the Best Director category, and Sudhakar Reddy Yakanthi won for Best Debut Film of a director. Surekha Sikri's performance in 'Badhaai Ho' won her the award for Best Supporting Actress, while lyricist-actor Swanand Kirkire bagged the award for Best Supporting Actor for Marathi film 'Chumbak'. 'Badhaai Ho' also won the Award for a Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment, and Akshay Kumar's 'Padman' was awarded the Best Film on a Social Issue.

81. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of World Biofuel Day (WBD)?

- [A] Production of Biodiesel from Used Cooking Oil (UCO)
- [B] Promote Green Fuels & Save Earth
- [C] End use of Fossil Fuels
- [D] Save Green Planet

Correct Answer: A [Production of Biodiesel from Used Cooking Oil (UCO)]

Notes:

The World Biofuel Day (WBD) is observed every year on 10th of August to create awareness about the importance of non-fossil fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels. The day also highlights the various efforts made by Government in the biofuel sector. The 2019 theme of Biofuel day is 'Production of Biodiesel from Used Cooking Oil (UCO)'. Biofuels have the benefits of reduction of import dependence, cleaner environment, additional income to farmers and employment generation.

82. Which state government has announced to waive loans taken by tribals from money-lenders?

- [A] Rajasthan
- [B] Chhattisgarh
- [C] Tripura
- [D] Madhya Pradesh



Correct Answer: D [Madhya Pradesh]

Notes:

On the occasion of World Tribal Day (WTD-2019), the Madhya Pradesh government has announced that loans taken by tribals from money-lenders would be waived in all tribal blocks of the state. The government will also provide debit cards to tribals through which they can withdraw up to Rs 10,000 from ATMs. The facility to withdraw money from ATMs will be provided at weekly markets. The decision is expected to benefit 1.5 crore tribals. Chief Minister Kamal Nath has also said that the government will also ensure that tribals get back valuables like jewelery and land pledged as collateral for the loan. Now, money-lenders will have to obtain a license from the government for working in tribal areas. The state government has also announced that forest villages would be converted into 'revenue villages' for administrative convenience. The Scheduled Tribes (STs) department would be renamed as Tribal Development Department as per tribals' demand.

83. Which state government has announced Mukhyamantri Madad Yojna for tribals?

- [A] Punjab
- [B] Odisha
- [C] Madhya Pradesh
- [D] Kerala

Correct Answer: C [Madhya Pradesh]

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Notes:

The Madhya Pradesh government has recently 'Mukhyamantri Madad Yojna' for providing assistance to tribal families on child birth and death of a family member. Upon the birth of a boy or a girl, the family will get 50 kg of rice or wheat. In the event of death in the family, 100 kg of rice or wheat and utensils for cooking food would be given. Beside this, 40 new Eklavya schools would be set up in tribal areas to provide quality education. For preserving tribal history, a museum with estimated cost of Rs 500 crore will be set up at Jabalpur in the memory of Raja Shankarshah and Raja Raghunath Shah.

84. Who is the new prosecution director of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) ?

- [A] T S Das
- [B] Sudha Rani Relangi
- [C] Om Prakash Verma
- [D] Raj Mehra

Correct Answer: B [Sudha Rani Relangi]

Notes:

Sudha Rani Relangi, who is currently serving as Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Law and Justice, has been appointed as new director of prosecution in the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for a period of two years. The post had been lying vacant since the last Director of Prosecution OP Verma completed his term on 24th December 2018.

85. The researchers at which IIT have designed a system to recycle urine?

- [A] IIT Bombay
- [B] IIT Indore
- [C] IIT Kanpur
- [D] IIT Madras

Correct Answer: D [IIT Madras]

Notes:

The researchers at IIT Madras have designed a system titled 'Project Water Chakra' to recycle human urine. The project won the Indian Innovation Growth Programme 2.0 award in July 2019. The researchers have retrofitted urinals on the campus to collect urine i.e. then processed into several useful materials for use in manufacturing. The concentrated urine is stored for 3 days to allow the urea to get converted to ammonia. By a process of steam distillation, the ammonia is segregated and this commercial grade liquid can be used to make cleaning products, such as detergents or in rubber manufacturing. Then, to precipitate phosphorus through struvite process, magnesium is added to the rest of the liquid. Hence, through electrochemical process we can recover 90% of water and it can be used for gardening purposes and flushing.

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86. Which IIT with Harvard University studied mercury accumulation in fish?

- [A] IIT Madras
- [B] IIT Delhi
- [C] IIT Bombay
- [D] IIT Hyderabad

Correct Answer: D [IIT Hyderabad]

Notes:

According to a study conducted by researchers from Harvard University and IIT Hyderabad, climate change and overfishing are resulting in an increase of a toxin called methylmercury (MeHg) in the ocean's fishes like Atlantic cod, Atlantic bluefin tuna. These fishes are widely consumed by humans. The researchers pointed 3 factors that result in mercury accumulation in fish – overfishing (which leads to dietary changes among marine animals), variations in the temperature of the sea water (which leads to changes in fish metabolism that gears towards survival rather than growth) and changes in the amounts of mercury found in sea water as a result of pollution. Methylmercury can cause severe damage to the nervous system in humans. It occurs in sea, ocean and river water after mercury emitted from various polluting sources. The study showed warming of seas due to climate change leading to rise in toxin levels in fishes.

87. India has recently submitted proposals to boost to protection status of 5 wildlife species at CITES. Where is the headquarters of CITES?

- [A] Washington
- [B] New York
- [C] Paris
- [D] Berlin

Correct Answer: A [Washington]

Notes:

India has recently submitted proposals regarding changes to the listing of five wildlife species viz. smooth-coated otter, small-clawed otter, Indian star tortoise, Tokay gecko, wedgefish and Indian rosewood in the CITES secretariat meeting in Geneva, Switzerland. The species are facing two threats: loss of habitat to agriculture and illegal harvesting for the pet trade. Hence, India seeks to boost the protection of all the 5 wildlife species as they are facing a high risk of international trade. India is among the parties proposing the re-listing of the species from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I. The CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species on Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international treaty to ensure that trade in wild animals and plants do not threaten their survival. The headquarters of CITES is at Washington DC.

88. The Khadi and Village Industry Commission (KVIC) has launched a Leather Mission from which district of Rajasthan?

- [A] Hanumangarh
- [B] Ajmer
- [C] Sirohi
- [D] Jhalawar

Correct Answer: C [Sirohi]

Notes:

On the occasion of World Tribal Day (WTD-2019), the Khadi and Village Industry Commission (KVIC) has launched a new programme 'Leather Mission' from the tribal-dominated village of Chandala in Sirohi district of Rajasthan. Under this new programme, KVIC will give Leather Kits to the leather artisans across the nation. It will not only increase their incomes manifold but will also inspire the traditional leather artisans who had migrated to other jobs from their traditional skill to adopt this vocation again. The KVIC has also distributed approx 50 leather kits and 350 Bee-Boxes with live bee colonies under the programmes like Leather Mission, Kumhar Sashaktikaran Mission and Honey Mission.

89. Which country has recently designated India in its list of major illegal drug producing & transit countries?

- [A] United States



- [B] China
- [C] Iran
- [D] Pakistan

Correct Answer: A [United States]

Notes:

US President Donald Trump has designated India among the over 20 major drug transit or illicit drug-producing countries. The other countries identified in the list are Afghanistan, The Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Burma, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Panama, Peru and Venezuela. The reasons why these countries are on the US list is the combination of geographic, commercial, and economic factors that allow drugs to transit or be produced, even if a government has engaged in robust and diligent narcotics control measures.

90. India's first clinical ecotoxicology facility has launched in which city?

- [A] Delhi
- [B] Lucknow
- [C] Bombay
- [D] Chennai

Correct Answer: A [Delhi]

Notes:

In Delhi, India's first clinical ecotoxicology facility has launched in AIIMS to investigate increasing cases of diseases resulting from exposure to environmental toxins contaminating water, food and air. This newly launched clinic will be the nodal point for leading research in clinical ecotoxicology in the country. It will provide diagnostic consultation & research services to all the clinical departments dealing with diseases due to ecotoxicity. The patients visiting OPDs will be referred to the clinic for counselling and further diagnostics. According to the Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health, contaminated water, air and soil are responsible for about 9 million early deaths. About 92% of these deaths due to environmental toxicity occur in the low-income and middle-income countries, which include India.

91. Which Indian wrestler won gold in the 65kg category at 2019 Tbilisi Grand Prix Wrestling tournament?

- [A] Sushil Kumar
- [B] Bajrang Punia
- [C] Yogeshwar Dutt
- [D] Pawan Kumar

Correct Answer: B [Bajrang Punia]

Notes:

Bajrang Punia won gold in the 65 Kilogram category at Tbilisi Grand Prix Wrestling tournament. In the 65kg final of the men's free style competition, Punia prevailed 2-0 over Iran's Peiman Bibyani in the capital city of Georgia. It is 4th gold of the season for the Asian Games champion Bajrang after standing atop the podium at Dan Kolov, Asian Championship and Ali Aliev tournament.

92. Which Indian sportsperson has won the men's title at the 2019 Hyderabad Open badminton championship?

- [A] B. Sai Praneeth
- [B] Parupalli Kashyap
- [C] Srikanth Kidambi
- [D] Sourabh Verma

Correct Answer: D [Sourabh Verma]

Notes:

In Badminton, Sourabh Verma from Madhya Pradesh clinched the Men's Singles title in the 2019 Hyderabad Open championship at the Gachibowli Indoor Stadium. He defeated Loh Kean Yew of Singapore 21-13, 14-21, 21-16 in the thrilling summit clash that lasted 52 minutes. Earlier, in May 2019, Sourabh had won the Slovenian International title. He had also won two Super 100 titles at the Dutch

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Open and Russian Open last year.

93. Which Indian Armed force has launched "Mission Reach Out" in Jammu?

- [A] Indian Air Force
- [B] Indian Navy
- [C] Indian Army
- [D] Indian Coast Guard

Correct Answer: C [Indian Army]

Notes:

The Indian Army has launched "Mission Reach Out" in Jammu to ensure availability of basic necessities & essential services in the region post the abrogation of the provisions of Article 370 and reorganization of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Regarding to this issue, a high level "Mission Reach Out" conference was held in the Nagrota Military Station to review the prevalent situation in the region. It was chaired by White Knight Corps Commander Lt Gen Paramjit Singh. The numerous initiatives undertaken by the Army under 'Mission Reach Out' are as follows: mobile medical care units with essential medicines and lady medical officers (wherever necessary), providing water in locations where the supply was disrupted, provision of essentials (including rations), assistance in transportation of patients to hospitals, facilitating people to speak to their near and dear ones through Army exchange and creating a safe environment for ATMs, banks and hospitals to function.

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94. Which Indian journalist has won the 2019 Prem Bhatia Award for political reporting?

- [A] Rajdeep Sardesai
- [B] Ravish Kumar
- [C] Barkha Dutt
- [D] Prannoy Roy

Correct Answer: A [Rajdeep Sardesai]

Notes:

Veteran journalist and consulting editor at India Today TV, Rajdeep Sardesai has been conferred with the prestigious 2019 Prem Bhatia Award for Outstanding Political Reporting on 11th August at the India International Centre in New Delhi. He won the award for his commentary on 2019 General Elections. The award is given in memory of veteran journalist Prem Bhatia who died in 1995. It carries a prize of Rs 2 lakh.

95. Who is set to be the first woman president of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA)?

- [A] Aditi Pant
- [B] Chandrima Shaha
- [C] Asima Chatterjee
- [D] Sulochana Gadgil

Correct Answer: B [Chandrima Shaha]

Notes:

Dr. Chandrima Shaha is set to be the first woman president of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA). She is currently Professor of Eminence at the National Institute of Immunology (NII) of Delhi. As a biologist, Ms. Shaha has focussed on apoptosis (or programmed cell death). Her laboratory uses the uni-cellular leishmania parasite as a model to understand the conditions under which cells respond to their environment and kill themselves, if need be.

96. India's first health-focused credit card has been launched by which bank?

- [A] HDFC Bank
- [B] RBL Bank
- [C] ICICI Bank
- [D] Axis Bank

Correct Answer: B [RBL Bank]

Notes:

India's first health-focused credit card has been launched by RBL Bank and digital healthcare platform

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Practo. The co-branded health credit card is powered by Mastercard and is available on both Practo and RBL mobile apps and websites. It offers benefits like unlimited and round-the-clock online consultations with experienced and qualified doctors, one free full body health check-up. In addition, the card also offers two complimentary domestic airport lounge accesses every quarter. Beside this, users can also use the card to earn points that can be redeemed for availing Practo services like ordering medicine, tests and online consultations. Currently, Practo is the only platform in the country that lets patients manage their healthcare needs end-to-end.

97. Which museum has become the most visited museum in the Asian sub-continent?

- [A] Victoria Memorial
- [B] Napier Museum
- [C] Albert Hall Museum
- [D] Virasat-e-Khalsa

Correct Answer: D [Virasat-e-Khalsa]

Notes:

Virasat-e-Khalsa, the pioneer museum depicting 550 years' history and culture of Punjab and Sikhism, has scripted new chapter in its rising glory by becoming the most visited museum in the Asian sub-continent on a single day. The museum had witnessed a record footfall of 20,569 visitors on a single day on March 20. Hence, the "Asia Book of Records" had confirmed the record of "maximum footfall in a museum in a day" in the name of Virasat-e-Khalsa, which would feature in the next edition of the Asia Book of Records. Earlier, the museum was listed in the "Limca Book of Records-February 2019 Edition" and "India Book of Records-2020 Edition". The museum was built by Punjab Government and was inaugurated in November 2011. The iconic museum stands out in terms of popularity, visitor footfall, architecture, grandeur and aesthetics; as also in its use of technology, infrastructure and world class standards of maintenance and upkeep.

98. Reliance Jio has partnered with which tech company to offer cloud infra for businesses?

- [A] Microsoft
- [B] Amazon
- [C] Infosys
- [D] Facebook

Correct Answer: A [Microsoft]

Notes:

Reliance Jio has partnered with Microsoft to accelerate digital transformation in India. Under the deal, Microsoft will bring in the Azure Cloud on Jio Network targetting the enterprise and business users seeking a technological shift. Jio is the subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL). The aim of both the companies is to enhance the adoption of leading technologies like data analytics, AI, cognitive services, blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), and edge computing among Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to make them ready to compete and grow.

99. What is the theme of the 2019 edition of International Youth Day (IYD)?

- [A] Safe Spaces for Youth
- [B] Youth Building Peace
- [C] Transforming education
- [D] Youth and Mental Health

Correct Answer: C [Transforming education]

Notes:

The International Youth Day (IYD) is observed every year on 12th of August to raise awareness of challenges and problems facing the world's youth. The day reiterate our pledge to make education inclusive, equitable & relevant to the changing dynamics of 21st century to prepare our youths to be future ready. The 2019 theme "Transforming education" highlights efforts to make education more relevant, equitable and inclusive for all youth, including efforts by youth themselves.

100. Which cricket board has launched transgender and gender diverse policy?

- [A] Australia
- [B] West Indies



- [C] England
- [D] New Zealand

Correct Answer: A [Australia]

Notes:

In a path-breaking move, Cricket Australia has recently launched new transgender inclusive policy to ensure transgender and gender-diverse people can take part in the game at the highest level in Australia. The move aligns in accordance with the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) gender recognition policy and gender diversity guidelines. The policy sets out a testosterone limit for transgender and gender-diverse players who want to play for state and national women's teams. To be eligible for elite women's teams, the players must show a testosterone concentration of less than 10 nanomoles per litre over at least 12 months. They must also be able to demonstrate their elected gender is consistent with how they are living their lives on a daily basis. The guidelines cover everything from victimisation to privacy and providing suitable facilities, as well as the collection of personal information.

101. Aishwarya Pissay, who has become the first Indian to claim a world title in motorsports, is from which city?

- [A] Bengaluru
- [B] Delhi
- [C] Chennai
- [D] Kolkata

Correct Answer: A [Bengaluru]

Notes:

Aishwarya Pissay from Bengaluru has created history by becoming the first Indian to claim a world title in motorsports. She annexed the FIM World Cup (Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme) in the women's category after the final round of the championship at Varpalota in Hungary. She won the first round in Dubai and was placed third (Portugal), fifth (Spain) and fourth (Hungary) in the subsequent outings. Pissay finished with a tally of 65 points, just four ahead of Portugal's Rita Vieira in the final overall standings for women. Aishwarya also finished 2nd in the FIM Junior category with 46 points, behind championship winner Tomas de Gavardo (60) of Chile.

102. Which state has become the first state in India to implement the National Policy on Biofuels?

- [A] Jharkhand
- [B] Uttar Pradesh
- [C] Punjab
- [D] Rajasthan

Correct Answer: D [Rajasthan]

Notes:

On the occasion of the World Biofuel Day (WBD-2019), the Rajasthan government released biofuel rules-2019 & became the first State in India to implement the National Policy on Biofuels, which was unveiled by the Government of India (GoI) in May 2019. The desert State will put emphasis on increasing production of oilseeds and establish a Centre for Excellence in Udaipur to promote research in the fields of alternative fuels and energy resources. Further, there would be emphasis on biofuel advertisements by the state government to create awareness about the same. The women's Self-Help Groups (SHGs) will be created by the State Rural Livelihood Development Council to encourage the use of biofuels. Apart from this, a biodiesel plant of the capacity of 8 tonnes a day has already been installed in the State with the financial assistance of the Indian Railways. Biodiesel is an alternative fuel which can be used in place of fossil fuels. It is manufactured from vegetable oils, recycled grease, algae, and animal fat.

103. Holmberg 15A, which is in news recently, is associated to which field?

- [A] War Exercise
- [B] Black Hole
- [C] Environmental Pact
- [D] Banking term

Correct Answer: B [Black Hole]

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**Notes:**

Astronomers at the Max Planck Institute of Germany have recently discovered a new black hole named Holmberg 15A that is clocking in at 40 billion times the mass of the Sun. The black hole is supergiant elliptical galaxy i.e. around 700 million light-years away from Earth and resides right at the centre of the Abell 85 galaxy cluster. It is to be noted that the Holmberg 15A is one of the biggest black holes that's ever been spotted by keeping track on the movement of stars around it. Black holes are a region of space-time exhibiting gravitational acceleration so strong that nothing—no particles or even electromagnetic radiation such as light—can escape from it.

104. Which state government has created world record by planting 22-cr saplings in a day?

- [A] Rajasthan
- [B] Uttar Pradesh
- [C] Maharashtra
- [D] Madhya Pradesh

Correct Answer: B [Uttar Pradesh]

Notes:

To mark the 77th anniversary of Quit India movement, the Uttar Pradesh has created a world record by planting more than 22-cr saplings in a day at 12.2 lakh locations in the state. For this noble cause, the state government launched a mega afforestation drive 'Vriksharopan Mahakumbh' with target to plant 22 cr saplings in a day. The previous record of planting 30,000 saplings was created by Savitribai Phule Pune University of Maharashtra in June 2019.

105. The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has reduced the minimum period of Child Care Leave (CCL) from 15 days to _____?

- [A] 12
- [B] 10
- [C] 5
- [D] 8

Correct Answer: C [5]

Notes:

The Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved the extension of benefits of Child Care Leave (CCL) to single male service personnel and certain relaxations of CCL provisions in case of women officers of defence forces. The decision is taken in line with a recent Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) order extending similar benefits of CCL to civilian employees. Presently, CCL is granted to women officers in defence forces. Recently, DoPT has made certain amendments for grant of CCL to civilian employees, whereby the CCL granted to woman employees till now has been extended to single male government servants also. Further, single male service personnel and women officers of defence forces will also be able to avail CCL in respect of child with 40% disability without any restriction of age limit of the child. The minimum period of CCL that can be availed at a time has been reduced to 5 days instead of 15.

106. Who is slated to be felicitated with the 2019 Charlie Chaplin Award by the British Academy's Los Angeles branch?

- [A] Albert Broccoli
- [B] Jane Fonda
- [C] Steve Coogan
- [D] Jackie Chan

Correct Answer: C [Steve Coogan]

Notes:

Actor Steve Coogan will be felicitated with the Charlie Chaplin Award for Excellence in Comedy by the British Academy's Los Angeles branch. The award recognizes the talents whose popularity and cultural impact exemplifies the uniquely transcendent quality of excellent comedy. Apart from Coogan, Jane Fonda will receive the Stanley Kubrick Britannia Award for Excellence in Film, and Jackie Chan will receive the Albert R. Broccoli Britannia Award for Worldwide Contribution to Entertainment. The 2019 Britannia Awards will be held on October 25 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

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107. Who is the author of the book 'Sridevi: Girl Woman Superstar'?

- [A] Akshat Verma
- [B] Satyarth Nayak
- [C] Juhi Chaturvedi
- [D] Gazal Dhaliwal

Correct Answer: B [Satyarth Nayak]

Notes:

The book titled 'Sridevi: Girl Woman Superstar' has been written by author-screenwriter Satyarth Nayak & will be launched on Sridevi's 56th birth anniversary. It recounts the life and times of the iconic actor who changed how women stars were perceived in the male-dominated film industry. It will not only chronicle Sridevi's journey and successes in the Indian film industry but also her innings after her big screen comeback in 2012 with "English Vinglish". As per author, the book will explore deep into Sridevi's iconic body of work in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kannada cinema. The book will be published under the Ebury Press imprint of Penguin Random House in October 2019 and is available for pre-order on e-commerce websites.

108. The patriotic song 'Watan', which has been produced by Doordarshan, is sung by which singer?

- [A] Javed Ali
- [B] Atif Aslam
- [C] Abhijeet Bhattacharya
- [D] Kavita Krishnamurthy

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Correct Answer: A [Javed Ali]

Notes:

To mark the occasion of 73rd Independence Day 2019, the Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar launched a patriotic song 'Watan' in New Delhi. The special song, which has been produced by Doordarshan, pays a tribute to New India. The video of the song highlights several path-breaking initiatives of the government viz. National War Memorial, Statue of Unity and Chandrayaan 2. The song also pays tribute to the bravery and valour of the armed forces and the martyrs of the country. The song has been sung by famous Bollywood singer Javed Ali. It has been penned by lyricist Alok Shrivastav and music composed by Dushyant.

109. Which airline is set to become the first Indian airline to fly over the North Pole?

- [A] Jet Airways
- [B] Air India
- [C] SpiceJet
- [D] IndiGo

Correct Answer: B [Air India]

Notes:

On the occasion of 73rd Independence Day 2019, National carrier Air India will become the first Indian airline to fly over the North Pole. Its Delhi-San Francisco flight will take the route saving 2,000 to 7,000 kg of fuel and reducing the carbon emissions by 6,000 to 21,000 kg, per flight. It will fly over Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, the Arctic Ocean, Canada, and then enter the United States. Therefore, this new route will bring down the distance travelled from 12,000 km to 8,000 km approximately & will also reduce flight time on an average by 30 minutes. The inaugural passenger flight to San Francisco will be piloted by Captain Rajneesh Sharma and Captain Digvijay Singh on August 15. Because of India's geographic position, Air India will also become the only airline in the world to take all the three routes — the Atlantic, Pacific and Polar.

110. Newly-Discovered Kajin Sara Lake is located in which country?

- [A] Bangladesh
- [B] Nepal
- [C] Bhutan
- [D] India



Correct Answer: B [Nepal]

Notes:

A newly-discovered Kajin Sara lake in Manang district of Nepal is expected to set a new world record of being the world's highest lake. It is located at an altitude of 5,200m, which is yet to be officially verified. Currently, Tilicho lake in Nepal holds the title, which is situated at an altitude of 4,919m in the Himalyan nation. Tilicho lake is 4 km long, 1.2 km wide and around 200m deep.

111. Which union ministry has launched Swaccha Survakshan Grameen?

- [A] Ministry of Rural Development
- [B] Ministry of Jal Shakti
- [C] Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare
- [D] Ministry of Panchayati Raj

Correct Answer: B [Ministry of Jal Shakti]

Notes:

In New Delhi, the Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat launched the India's largest sanitation survey – Swachh Survekshan Grameen-2019. The aim of this 45-day long survey is to engage rural communities in improvement of the sanitation status of their districts and states through intensive campaign. The survey will take place in 18 thousand villages of 698 districts. Swachhata activities have also been planned at around 87 thousand public places where community meetings will be organized. People can also directly give their feedback through the mobile app. Under the 2nd edition of Swachh Survekshan Grameen, districts and states will be ranked on data collected from citizen feedback, direct observation and service-level progress.

112. The famous 'Panchamirtham' of Palani temple has recently got GI tag. The temple is located in which state?

- [A] Andhra Pradesh
- [B] Karnataka
- [C] Tamil Nadu
- [D] Kerala

Correct Answer: C [Tamil Nadu]

Notes:

The famous Panchamritham, an offering of the Palani Dandayuthaswamy temple, has been granted the Geographical Identity (GI) tag. This is the first time a temple 'prasadam' from Tamil Nadu has been conferred with the GI tag. The unique panchamirtham of Palani temple is prepared using 5 natural substances — banana, jaggery, cow ghee, forest honey and cardamom. The panchamirtham is an 'abhishega prasadam' (food that is a religious offering), which is served in a semi-solid state. It is sweet in taste and one of the main offerings for Lord Dhandayuthapani Swamy, the presiding deity of Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swamy Temple, situated on Palani Hills. The quality of the Panchamritham is being monitored by the Central Research Institute of Food Technology in Mysore. It is also noteworthy that Palani temple is one of the six Kartikeya temples in Tamil Nadu that have special associations with the life of Lord Subramanya or Karthikeya.

113. The researchers at which IIT have developed low-cost blood test device?

- [A] IIT Kanpur
- [B] IIT Kharagpur
- [C] IIT Bombay
- [D] IIT Delhi

Correct Answer: B [IIT Kharagpur]

Notes:

The researchers from IIT Kharagpur have developed a low-cost diagnostic device which can perform various pathological tests by using blood taken from a finger prick. The device requires only a paper strip based kit integrated with a smartphone to enable analytics and readout functions and an LED light for imaging. The key aspect of the kit is operational simplicity and extremely low running cost. The kit is developed by a research team led by Prof Suman Chakraborty.



114. Who has become the first Indian chef to receive French honour?

- [A] Sanjeev Kapoor
- [B] Ranveer Brar
- [C] Vikas Khanna
- [D] Priyam Chatterjee

Correct Answer: D [Priyam Chatterjee]

Notes:

Priyam Chatterjee has become the first Indian chef to be awarded the 'Chevalier de l'Ordre du Mérite Agricole' by the Government of France. The award recognises his contribution towards reinventing the gastronomic scene in India. Chatterjee is best known for revisiting the traditional dishes from his native state of West Bengal and giving it a French twist. He is currently the head chef at Jaan Restaurant Yacht in France.

115. Which organisation has launched a special drive code named 'Operation Number Plate'?

- [A] NSG
- [B] BSF
- [C] CRPF
- [D] RPF

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Correct Answer: D [RPF]

Notes:

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) of Indian Railways has launched a special drive code named 'Operation Number Plate' to ensure safety of passengers. The purpose of the special drive is to identify vehicles parked in the premises of Indian Railways and at several 'No Parking' zones for beyond the stipulated time or longer duration.

116. Who has been elected as the new President of Guatemala?

- [A] Mariano Rivera Paz
- [B] Jimmy Morales
- [C] Alejandro Giammattei
- [D] Alejandro Maldonado

Correct Answer: C [Alejandro Giammattei]

Notes:

Alejandro Giammattei has become the newly elected President of Guatemala, after winning the second round of the 2019 presidential election. He tried 3 times previously to become president before succeeding on his 4th attempt. He campaigned on a promise to fight crime and build a permanent political force with a deep love for God, family and Guatemala with his Vamos political party. He cites Mahatma Gandhi as his most admired world figure.

117. As per Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY), a monthly pension of how much amount will be provided to eligible farmers on attaining the age of 60?

- [A] Rs 5000
- [B] Rs 6000
- [C] Rs 3000
- [D] Rs 4000

Correct Answer: C [Rs 3000]

Notes:

The Union Government has recently started registration for the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY) with an aim to improve the life of Small and Marginal Farmers of the country. This scheme for farmers has been announced in the Union Budget 2019-20. The scheme is voluntary and contributory for farmers in the entry age group of 18 to 40 years and a monthly pension of Rs. 3000/- will be provided to them on attaining the age of 60 years. The farmers will have to make a monthly contribution of Rs.55 to Rs.200, depending on their age of entry, in the Pension Fund till they reach the retirement date i.e. the age of 60 years. The Central Government will also make an equal contribution of

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the same amount in the pension fund. The spouse is also eligible to get a separate pension of Rs.3000/- upon making separate contributions to the Fund. The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) shall be the Pension Fund Manager and responsible for Pension pay out. The PM-KMY will be implemented across the country, including Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

118. On which date, the 2019 edition of World Elephant Day (WED) is observed recently?

- [A] August 11
- [B] August 12
- [C] August 14
- [D] August 13

Correct Answer: B [August 12]

Notes:

The World Elephant Day (WED) is observed every year on 12th of August to raise awareness of the worsening plight of Asian and African elephants. The day also observed to bring the world together to help protect & honour these gentle giants and to spread awareness about the critical threats they are facing. Elephant is also the National Heritage Animal of India. However, the state of this majestic animal is becoming pitiable due to man's conflict with the wild. African elephants are listed as "Vulnerable" and Asian elephants as "Endangered" on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species. Their numbers are dwindling as poachers target them for their ivory. Habitat loss is another reason for their dwindling numbers.

charu bhardwaj | bhardwajs.charu@gmail.com |

119. On which date, the 2019 edition of World Organ Donation Day (WODD) is observed recently?

- [A] August 12
- [B] August 13
- [C] August 14
- [D] August 15

Correct Answer: B [August 13]

Notes:

The World Organ Donation Day (WODD) is observed every year on 13th of August to raise awareness about organ donation. This day strives to motivate people to donate their healthy and precious organs after death to save lives. It attempts to eliminate the myths and fears people have in their mind about organ donation. Organ donation can be life-changing for many. This practice can give a new life to the ones in need because one organ donor can save up to 8 lives. A donor can initiate to donate organs like heart, liver, intestine, kidneys, lungs and pancreas after his or her death. Later these organs can be transplanted into another person who is in urgent requirement. As per the national guidelines, anyone can be an organ donor irrespective of age, caste, religion and community.

120. Who is the head of high level committee on CSR, which recommended CSR expenditure to be made tax deductible expenditure?

- [A] Injeti Srinivas
- [B] Nripendra Misra
- [C] Pramod Kumar Misra
- [D] Bhaskar Khulbe

Correct Answer: A [Injeti Srinivas]

Notes:

The High Level Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), headed by Corporate Affairs Secretary Injeti Srinivas, has recently submitted its report to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The main recommendations include making CSR expenditure tax deductible, allowing the carry-forward of unspent balance for a period of 3-5 years, and aligning Schedule 7 of the Companies Act (which outlines the kinds of activities that qualify as CSR) with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Committee has also recommended that companies having CSR-prescribed amount below Rs 50 lakh may be exempted from constituting a CSR Committee. It also suggested that violation of CSR compliance may be made a civil offence and shifted to the penalty regime.

121. The researchers at which IIT have developed bone substitutes from eggshells?

- [A] IIT Madras



- [B] IIT Delhi
- [C] IIT Bombay
- [D] IIT Hyderabad

Correct Answer: D [IIT Hyderabad]

Notes:

The researchers at IIT Hyderabad and BR Ambedkar National Institute of Technology (NIT) of Jalandhar have developed a process by which bone implant materials can be synthesized from waste egg shells. They seek to produce bone substitute materials such as – Tri-Calcium phosphate (TCP) without the use of toxic chemicals. The natural source of choice of the IIT-Hyderabad researchers is egg shells. Eggshells are made up largely of calcium (95.1%) along with small amounts of proteins and water. In modern medicine, damaged and missing bones are replaced with bone from either patient or donor, or by using artificial materials containing calcium, such as Plaster of Paris, and phosphate compounds like hydroxyapatite and calcium phosphate. TCP is a commonly-used bone substitute material from natural sources.

charu bhardwaj | bhardwajs.charu@gmail.com |

www.currentaffairspoint.com



Current Affairs [PDF] - August 16-31, 2019

Padmaja mahapatra | mahapatrapadmaja28@gmail.com |

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- PM announces Jal Jeevan Mission to bring piped water to households
- PM announces the creation of post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) for better coordination among Army, Navy and IAF
- 'Kashmir's Untold Story: Declassified', book by Iqbal Chand Malhotra and Maroof Raza, to release in September
- Tamil Nadu: Vellore district to be trifurcated; Ranipet, Tirupattur to become new districts
- ISRO Chairman K Sivan given Dr A. P. J. Abdul Kalam Award by Tamil Nadu govt.
- AP launches Village Volunteers system aimed at providing govt. services at doorsteps of people
- Vidya Sinha, actress known for 'Rajinigandha' and 'Chhoti Si Baat', dies at 71 in Mumbai

Vyas Samman

- President awards the certificate of honour and Maharshi Badrayan Vyas Samman for 2019
- Scholars of Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Pali, Prakrit, Classical Kannada, Classical Telugu, Classical Malayalam and Classical Odiya honoured

Economy & Corporate

- India's exports rise by 2.25% to 26.33 billion US dollar in July. Imports decline by 10.43% to 39.76 billion US dollar

World

- Gibraltar releases Iranian oil tanker Grace 1 that was detained on July 4 for allegedly transporting crude oil to Syria
- Nepal's veteran Journalist Madan Mani Dixit passes away at 96

Sports

- India (255/4 in 32.3) clinch 3-match ODI series against West Indies (240/7 in 35) 2-0 with a six-wicket win in the rain-curtailed final match at Port of Spain
- Pakistan's umpire Aleem Dar equals West Indian Steve Bucknor's world record of officiating in 128 Test matches
- Indian Army wins 5th International Army Scout Masters competition in Jaisalmer
- Wrestler Deepak Punia gold in 86-kg men's freestyle in Junior World Championship at Tallinn, Estonia

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 17, 2019**India**

- Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Medical Sciences inaugurated at Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in New Delhi
- 9-Day National Tribal Festival 'Aadi Mahotsav' to be organised at Leh-Ladakh from August 17
- SC clears Chardham highway project, connecting four holy places in Uttarakhand through 900-km all-weather roads
- India suspends weekly Thar Link Express which connects Jodhpur in Rajasthan to Karachi in Pakistan
- UP Govt. to open residential schools in the name of ex-PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee in all 18 divisions of the state
- The Hindu Playwright Award 2019 awarded in Chennai to V. Balakrishnan for his play 'Sordid'

Economy & Corporate

- India's foreign exchange reserves at new life-time high of \$430.57 bn in the week to August 9
- Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS): RBI allows banks to accept gold deposits from customers
- WTO's dispute settlement to set up panel to review India's support measures for the sugar sector
- Tirur betel leaf from Kerala, Tawlhlohpuan fabric and Mizo Puanchei shawl/textile from Mizoram granted Geographical Indication (GI) tag
- Norms for shares with differential voting rights relaxed to enable promoters of Indian companies to

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retain control of their companies

World

- The U.N. Security Council holds a behind-the-doors meeting to discuss the situation in Jammu & Kashmir
- Instagram now allows users to flag false content to stop misinformation
- Japan's new emperor Naruhito expresses 'deep remorse' for his country's aggression during Second World War

Sports

- Ravi Shastri re-appointed head coach of the Indian men's cricket team till 2021
- Wrestler Bajrang Punia nominated for Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award
- India's Anjum Moudgil wins women's air rifle gold in the World Police and Fire Games in Chengdu, China
- Former batsman VB Chandrasekhar, who played 7 ODIs for India, dies at the age of 57 in Chennai
- Liverpool defeat Chelsea 5-4 on penalties in final to win the UEFA Super Cup football tournament in Istanbul

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 18, 2019

India

- Bhutan: PM meets King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and Lotay Tshering in Thimphu
- Bhutan: PM Modi inaugurates 720 MW Mangdechhu hydroelectric power plant
- Stamps launched to commemorate five decades of India-Bhutan Hydropower cooperation
- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurates the Presidential Guest House named Jal Kiran at Raj Bhavan in Mumbai
- The International Conference on Journey of Teacher Education: Local to Global held in New Delhi
- 7th All India Meet of State Legal Services Authorities in Nagpur on August 17-18.
- Parsi New Year 'Navroz' celebrated on August 17
- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu embarks on a three-nation visit to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia
- Noted social worker and Padma Shri awardee Damodar Ganesh Bapat dies in Chhattisgarh at the age of 84
- One of the founding anchors of DD News and Nari Shakti awardee Neelum Sharma dies in New Delhi at the age of 50
- CCMB, Hyderabad scientist K. Thangaraj bags J C Bose Fellowship

Economy & Corporate

- Defence Minister approves the setting up of a Committee to review the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2016 and Defence Procurement Manual (DPM) 2009
- RuPay Card launched in Bhutan

World

- 28th Ministerial meeting of BASIC countries on Climate Change held in Sao Paulo, Brazil on August 14-16
- 'Easy Rider' star and writer Peter Fonda dies at the age of 79 in Los Angeles

Arjuna Awards

- **Khel Ratna:** Bajrang Punia (wrestling), Deepa Malik (para-athletics)
- **Arjuna Award (19):** Tajinder Pal Singh Toor (athletics), Mohammed Anas Yahya (athletics), S Bhaskaran (body building), Sonia Lather (boxing), Ravindra Jadeja (cricket), Chinglensana Singh Kangjam (hockey), Ajay Thakur (kabaddi), Gaurav Singh Gill (motor sports), Pramod Bhagat (para sports-badminton), Anjum Moudgil (shooting), Harmeet Rajul Desai (table tennis), Pooja Dhanda (wrestling), Fouaad Mirza (equestrian), Gurpreet Singh Sandhu (football), Poonam Yadav (cricket), Swapna Burman (athletics), Sundar Singh Gurjar (para sports-athletics), Bhamidipati Sai Praneeth (badminton), Simran Singh Shergill .
- **Dronacharya Award (regular category):** Vimal Kumar (badminton), Sandeep Gupta (table tennis), Mohinder Singh Dhillon (athletics)

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- **Dronacharya Award (lifetime category):** Mezban Patel (hockey), Rambir Singh Khokar (kabaddi), Sanjay Bhardwaj (cricket).
- **Dhyan Chand Award:** Manuel Fredricks (hockey), Arup Basak (table tennis), Manoj Kumar (wrestling), Nitten Kirrtane (tennis), C Lalremsanga (archery).

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 19, 2019

India

- President inaugurates the underground Bunker Museum at Raj Bhavan in Mumbai

Economy & Corporate

- First Central Institute of Chemical Engineering & Technology to be set up in Gujarat

World

- Sudan: Main opposition coalition and the ruling military council agree on transition to a civilian-led government
- World Skills International Competition at Kazan, Russia from August 22 to 27
- 'Roger Rabbit' creator animator Richard Williams dies at 86 in London

Sports

- DDCA to name stand after Virat Kohli at Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium in Delhi
- Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) beat Army XI 5-0 to win Bangalore Cup All India Hockey Tournament

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 20, 2019

India

- Former PM Manmohan Singh elected unopposed to Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan
- Veteran music composer Khayyam (Mohammed Zahur Hashmi) passes away at 92 in Mumbai; was recipient of Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and Padma Bhushan
- Bihar: 3-time Congress Chief Minister Jagannath Mishra dies in New Delhi at the age of 82
- Railways' 2nd double-decker UDAY Express to run between Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada
- First UDAY (Utkrisht Double Decker Air Conditioned Yatri) Express started between Coimbatore and Bangalore in June 2018
- All personnel working in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) will now retire at a uniform age of 60 years

Economy & Corporate

- India's foodgrains production at 284.95 million tonnes (MT) in 2018-19 crop year (July-June).
- Hero Electric launches 2 new e-scooters — Optima ER and Nyx ER (extended range) priced at Rs 68000 plus

World

- Pakistan: Term of Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa extended for another 3 years from November
- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu meets Lithuanian PM Saulius Skvernelis in Vilnius
- World Photography Day celebrated on August 19
- World Humanitarian Day observed on August 19 to pay tribute to aid workers who risk their lives in humanitarian service; 2019 WHD campaign: #WomenHumanitarians

Sports

- Russia's Daniil Medvedev beats David Goffin of Belgium 7-6 (7/3), 6-4 in final to win men's singles title at ATP Cincinnati Masters tennis
- Madison Keys of US beats Russia's Svetlana Kuznetsova 7-5, 7-6 (7/5) in final to win women's singles title at WTA Cincinnati tennis

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 21, 2019

India

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh holds telephonic talk with his US counterpart Mark T Esper
- DRDO transfers the design of Mobile Metallic Ramp (MMR) to the Indian Army
- Chandrayaan-2 precisely inserted in defined lunar orbit

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- Birth anniversary of late Rajiv Gandhi celebrated as 'Sadbhavna Diwas'
- Punjab govt. launches 'Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana' health insurance scheme for the poor

Economy & Corporate

- 9th Session of India-Kenya Joint Trade Committee Held in New Delhi
- India's e-tourist visa fee based on tourist footfall; higher in peak season, less during lean period
- TVS Srichakra launches premium tyres brand 'TVS Eurogrip'
- TikTok to start move on safe use of user-created content platforms

World

- EAM S. Jaishankar meets Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka
- Italian PM Giuseppe Conte to step down

Sports

- Sreesanth's ban for 2013 IPL spot fixing to end in August 2020, says BCCI Ombudsman

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 22, 2019

India

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah chairs the 24th Meeting of the Western Zonal Council at Panaji, Goa; attended by CMs and administrators of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu
Padmaja mahapatra | mahapatrapadmaja28@gmail.com |
- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu returns from his visit to three Baltic countries — Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia
- Parliaments — Lithuanian: Seimas, Latvia: Saeima, Estonia: Riigikogu
- Capitals — Lithuania: Vilnius, Estonia: Tallinn, Latvia: Riga
- Ajay Kumar Bhalla, currently serving as OSD in home ministry, appointed as the new Home Secretary
- The Diary of Manu Gandhi (1943-44), edited and translated by Tridip Suhrud, released in New Delhi
- Manu Gandhi (Mridula) was a grandniece of Mahatma Gandhi
- ISRO releases first Moon image captured by Chandrayaan-2

Economy & Corporate

- Sabka Vishwas – Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme notified; to be operationalized from September 1
- Power Minister R. K. Singh approves proposal to declare ocean energy as Renewable Energy
- Environment Ministry to waive off lease rent of Rs. 30,000 per Mega Watt for wind power projects
- Government to launch e-commerce marketing platform Bharatcraft portal: Union Minister Nitin Gadkari
- Akshay Kumar 4th on Forbes magazine's World's Highest-Paid Actors Of 2019 list topped by Dwayne 'Rock' Johnson
- Akshay Kumar earned \$65 million between June 1, 2018, and June 1, 2019; Dwayne Johnson had \$89.4 million
- Amazon India announces launch of Amazon Fresh store with 2-hour delivery in Bengaluru

World

- Statue of Unity at Kevadia in Gujarat, Mumbai's Soho House among Time's 100 greatest places in the world
- PM Modi reaches Paris on the first leg of his 3-nation tour to France, UAE and Bahrain
- External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his Nepali counterpart Pradeep Kumar Gyawali co-chair the 5th round of Indo-Nepal Joint Commission meeting
- IMF executive board recommends scrapping age limit of 65 years for Bulgaria's Kristalina Georgieva to become its new Managing Director
- Abdalla Hamdok takes charge as Sudan's new Prime Minister in the capital Khartoum
- US approves possible USD 8 billion sale of F-16 fighter jets to Taiwan
- Iran unveils its new home-grown air defence system Bavar-373

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- UN observes International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism on August 21
- UN observes International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief on August 22

Sports

- 'Fit India Movement' to be launched by PM Modi on August 29.; advisory committee under the chairmanship of sports minister Kiren Rijiju formed
- Vikram Rathour is new batting coach of India's men's cricket team, Bharath Arun and R Sridhar retained as bowling and fielding coaches respectively

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 24, 2019

India

- First World Youth Conference on Kindness organised in New Delhi by the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development
- IAF's Mi-17 helicopter that crashed in Budgam in J&K on Feb 27 was hit by an Indian missile
- Navy court martial punishes 3 officers in INS Betwa accident case of December 5, 2016 in Mumbai dockyard
- France: PM Modi inaugurates memorial for victims of two Air India crashes (1950 and 1966) at the foothills of Mont Blanc mountain Padmaja mahapatra | mahapatrapadmaja28@gmail.com |
- France: Director General, UNESCO, Irina Bokova calls on PM Modi at UNESCO Headquarters, in Paris
- ANUBHAV Awards, given by the Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare, presented in New Delhi by Union Minister Jitendra Singh
- Smart Policing Awards, instituted by FICCI, presented by Union Minister Jitendra Singh at Homeland Security 2019 Conference, in New Delhi
- Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani gives away Poshan Abhiyaan Awards for 2018-19 in Delhi
- Union Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurates the renovated National Food Laboratory (NFL) at Ghaziabad (UP)
- Delhi: Lieutenant Governor launches 'QR Code Scheme' on Himmat Plus app for women's safety
- NITI Aayog releases Report on the Composite Water Management Index 2.0; Gujarat ranked No: 1 for 2017-18

Economy & Corporate

- Foreign exchange reserves fell USD 70.8 million to USD 430.501 billion in the week to August 16
- to provide an additional Rs 20,000-crore liquidity support to housing finance companies (HFCs) at enhancing their lending capacity
- will infuse Rs 70,000 crore in public sector banks: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman
- Higher income tax surcharge on those earning more than Rs 2 crore a year withdrawn for foreign and domestic equity market investors
- IRCTC to bring back service charge on online ticket booking from September 1
- Moody's lowers India's GDP growth forecast for 2019 calendar year to 6.2% from 6.8%
- Union Minister for Textiles Smriti Irani launches Project SU.RE (sustainable resolution), a sustainable fashion project, in Mumbai

World

- India's Vishnu P R, CEO of 'Change Can Change Climate Change (C5) Foundation', among 100 selected to participate in first Youth Climate Summit at UN on September 21
- Pakistan blacklisted by Asia-Pacific Group of FATF for its failure to comply with terror funding standards
- China to impose additional 10 per cent tariffs on USD 75 billion worth of US exports
- US toymaker Hasbro to acquire cartoon series 'Peppa Pig' owner studio Entertainment One for USD 4 billion

**Sports**

- World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) suspends accreditation of India's National Dope Testing Laboratory for six months

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 25, 2019**India**

- Former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley dies at the age of 66 in New Delhi

Economy & Corporate

- SEBI announces reward of Rs 1 crore to insider trading informants
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched RuPay card in Abu Dhabi, UAE
- South Korean automaker Kia Motors launches SUV Seltos from ₹69 lakh

World

- PM Modi meets his Bahraini counterpart Prince Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa in Manama
- UAE honours PM Modi with its highest civilian award 'Order of Zayed' in Abu Dhabi
- UAE: PM Modi and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan jointly released a commemorative stamp of Mahatma Gandhi
- Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro authorises the use of the military to battle Amazon rainforest fires
- Scarlett Johansson tops the Forbes' list of highest paid female actors in the world
- Russia launches an unmanned rocket carrying a life-size humanoid robot FEDOR (Final Experimental Demonstration Object Research) to the International Space Station
- David Koch of Koch Industries, world's eleventh richest man, dies at the age of 79 in US

Sports

- Badminton World Championship in Basel (Switzerland): India's B. Sai Praneeth wins bronze in men's singles after losing to Kento Momota of Japan in semifinal 13-21, 8-21
- Gokulam Kerala FC win Durand Cup football tournament by beating Mohun Bagan in final 2-1 at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata
- Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju unveils Nestle Milo's as title sponsor for the National inter-district junior athletics meet (NIDJAM) to be held November 24 to 26 in Andhra Pradesh

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 26, 2019**India**

- PM Modi announces celebration of September as a month of nutrition in his Mann Ki Baat programme
- Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa to attend 2019 Indo-Pacific Chiefs of Defence (CHOD) Conference in Bangkok whose theme is: "Collaboration in a free and Open Indo – Pacific"
- Prabhakar Singh, Director General, CPWD chosen for 'Eminent Engineer Award- 2019' by the Institution of Engineers (India)

Economy & Corporate

- CVC constitutes Advisory Board for Banking Frauds (ABBF) headed by former Vigilance Commissioner T. M. Bhasin to examine bank frauds above Rs. 50 crores

World

- PM Modi launches USD 4.2 million redevelopment project of 200-year-old Shreenathji (Sri Krishna) temple in the Bahraini capital Manama
- PM Modi conferred the King Hamad Order of the Renaissance by Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa in capital Manama

BWF World Championship Winners

- PV Sindhu became the first Indian to win gold at Badminton World Championships when she defeated Japan's Nozomi Okuhara in the women's singles final 21-7, 21-7 at in Basel Switzerland
- Other winners: Men's Singles: Japan's Kento Momota, Men's Doubles title: Indonesia's Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan, Women's Doubles: Japan's Mayu Matsumoto & Wakana Nagahara, Mixed Doubles: China's Zheng Siwei & Huang Yaorong

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**Sports**

- Robin Singh (men's) and Varsha Namdev Bhawari (women's) win races at 'IDBI Federal Life Insurance Mumbai Half Marathon'
- England defeat Australia by one wicket to win third test at Leeds, Headingley; Ashes series level at 1-1

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 27, 2019**India**

- Community Radio Sammelan will be held in New Delhi on August 27-29, theme: 'Community Radio for SDGs'
- Govt reiterates its commitment to provide Wi-Fi in all villages through GramNet on 36th Foundation Day celebrations of C-DOT
- HRD Ministry launches National Digital Library of India under its National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT)
- Tamil Nadu govt. launches "Kalvi Tholaikkatchi" (Education TV) channel for school students
- Tamil Nadu govt. launches 40 'Ammam' Patrol Vehicles for security of women and children in public places.

Economy & Corporate

- RBI approves the transfer of record Rs 1.76 lakh crore dividend and surplus reserves to the government
- RBI announces modalities for 2% interest subvention for farmers engaged in fisheries
- Tech firm Atos, C-DAC ink pact for collaboration on quantum computing, AI in India
- Google launches Nest Hub, its smart speaker with screen, in India for Rs 9,999.
- Amazon India launches Military Veterans Employment programme
- Hero Electric launches e-scooter Dash at Rs 62,000

World

- PM Modi addresses the session on 'Biodiversity, Oceans, Climate' at the G7 Summit, in Biarritz, France
- PM Modi meets Senegal President Macky Sall on the sidelines of the G-7 Summit at Biarritz, France
- EAM S. Jaishankar meets his Hungarian counterpart Peter Szijarto in Budapest
- Daily bus service launched between Kathmandu in Nepal and Siliguri in West Bengal
- Pakistan-China aerial exercise codenamed Shaheen taking place in China's Hotan City
- G7 to provide USD 22 million for fire-fighting aircraft for Amazon
- Indonesia to set up its new capital on Borneo island
- Leonardo DiCaprio's NGO Earth Alliance pledges USD five million for Amazon rainforest
- Martin Scorsese selected for Kirk Douglas Award by Santa Barbara International Film Festival

Sports

- India win first Test against West Indies at North Sound, Antigua by 318 runs

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 28, 2019**India**

- India will aim to convert degraded land of nearly 50 lakh hectares to fertile land by 2030: Prakash Javadekar
- India's first woman DGP Kanchan Chaudhary, the inspiration behind 'Udaan' TV serial, dies at 72 in Mumbai
- Goa liberation naval war hero and Kirti Chakra awardee, Commander Noel Kelman, dies at 92

Economy & Corporate

- NOC Online Application Processing System (NOAPS) launched to seek approval for construction around protected monuments in six states
- Price of Suvidha sanitary napkins sold at Jan Aushadhi Kendras cut to Rs. 1
- Indian Institute of Petroleum, Dehradun sets up plant to turn plastic waste into diesel
- ONGC CMD Shashi Shanker honoured with the Distinguished Fellowship of the Institute of

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**Directors (IOD)**

- Girls from Amity International School in Noida girls develop Maitri mobile app that connects children at orphanages with senior citizens in old-age homes

World

- Indian Ambassador to Madagascar unveils commemorative plaque of Mahatma Gandhi road in Antananarivo
- Unmanned spacecraft carrying Russia's first humanoid robot Fedor into orbit docked at the International Space Station
- Brazil rejects G7's \$20 mn aid to fight Amazon forest fires

Sports

- DDCA to rename Delhi's Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium as Arun Jaitley Stadium
- Former French footballer Eric Cantona wins UEFA President's Award

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 29, 2019

- HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal launches integrated web portal for school education 'Shagun'
- India launches world's first facial biometric data-based identity document (ID) for seafarers
- India Meteorological Department (IMD) hands over Kochi Cyclone Detection Radar (CDR) building to Indian Navy
- Cabinet approves setting up of an international Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure in New Delhi
- Kalinga-FCC Awards for Excellence in Journalism for 2019 presented in New Delhi
- CCEA approves establishment of 75 additional Government Medical Colleges by 2021-22
- 12th India Security Summit on the theme "Towards New National Cyber Security Strategy" held in New Delhi
- Kerala first, Madhya Pradesh last on the India Child Well-Being Index of World Vision India and IFMR LEAD

Economy & Corporate

- 100% FDI under automatic route in coal mining and sale of coal as also associated infrastructure activity allowed
- 26% FDI permitted in digital media on the lines of print media
- FDI in single-brand retail trading (SBRT): Definition of 30% local sourcing norm relaxed and online sales permitted without prior opening of brick and mortar stores
- 100% FDI under automatic route allowed in contract manufacturing
- India Ratings and Research revises downward GDP growth forecast for 2019-20 to 6.7% from 7.3%
- Renault launches seven-seater Triber in India, prices start at Rs 4.95 lakh
- Harman introduces Infinity brand audio products in India
- Bimal Jalan Committee, set up to review RBI's economic capital framework, suggests periodic review of the framework after every five years
- Harley-Davidson introduces its first BS-VI certified motorcycle 'Street 750' priced at ₹47 lakh

World

- India win four medals including one gold at WorldSkills competition in Kazan, Russia
- EAM S. Jaishankar unveils statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the Indian embassy in Moscow
- Pavan Kapoor appointed as India's Ambassador to UAE
- US opens a diplomatic mission for Venezuela in Bogota, Colombia
- 'Virgin' to be removed from marriage certificates in Bangladesh
- Former Volkswagen Chairman Ferdinand Piech dies at the age of 82

Sports

- V K Vismaya wins gold in women's 400 m at Josef Seckr Memorial (MJS) athletics in Czech Republic

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 30, 2019**India**

- 'Angikaar campaign' launched to enrol PMAY (urban) beneficiaries in other central welfare schemes

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- Centre approves setting up of Gorewada International Zoo in Nagpur district of Maharashtra
- 26th Mela of Ladakhi-Kisan-Jawan-Vigyan Mela inaugurated in Leh by Defence Minister
- Delhi govt. to provide free rides for women in city buses; availing women govt. employees will have to forego transport allowance
- Uttarakhand to set up Special Tiger Force for Corbett Tiger Reserve
- Tokyo first, Mumbai 45th on the Safe Cities Index (SCI) of Economist Intelligence Unit

Economy & Corporate

- RBI asks banks to extend PoS (point of sale) cash withdrawal facility
- Gross NPA ratio of banks declines to 9.1% in FY19 from 11.2 percent a year before: RBI
- Bank notes in circulation in the economy increased 17% in FY19 to Rs 21.1 trillion: RBI
- Bank frauds rose 15% in 2018-19, pegs amount at Rs 71,543 crore: RBI
- Asian Development Bank President Takehiko Nakao meets PM Modi in New Delhi
- Govt extends tenure of CBDT Chairman Pramod Chandra Mody by 1 year
- Lakshmi Vilas Bank MD & CEO Parthasarathi Mukherjee announces resignation
- ICRA terminates employment of MD and Group CEO Naresh Takkar
- Board of fraud-hit CG Power & Industrial Solutions sacks founder Gautam Thapar as Chairman
- Total horticulture production estimated to be over 313 million tonnes in 2018-19

World

- Pakistan test-fires nuclear-capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile 'Ghaznavi' with a range of up to 290 kms
- International Day Against Nuclear Tests observed on August 29

National Sports Awards

- **Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Awards 2018:** won by Aparna Kumar, Manikandan K. and Late Dipankar Ghosh for Land Adventure; Prabhat Raju Koli for Water Adventure; Rameshwer Jangra for Air Adventure and Wangchuk Sherpa for Life Time Achievement
- **Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar for 2019:**
 - Gagan Narang Sports Promotion Foundation and GoSports Foundation for 'Identification and Nurturing of Budding and Young Talent'
 - Rayalaseema Development Trust for 'Sports for Development'

Sports

- Saidan Secondary School of Mizoram wins Under-14 boys Subroto Cup football tournament
- PM launches 'Fit India' Movement' on National Sports Day August 29 — the birth anniversary of hockey legend Dhyan Chand
- Elavenil Valarivan wins gold medal in the women's 10m Air Rifle event at the ISSF World Cup

Current Affairs – News Headlines: August 31, 2019

India

- SC collegium recommends to Centre 4 names for elevation as apex court judges: Punjab and Haryana HC CJ Justice Krishna Murari, Rajasthan HC CJ S. Ravindra Bhat, Himachal Pradesh HC CJ V. Ramasubramanian and Kerala HC CJ Hrishikesh Roy
- PM Modi releases 12 commemorative postal stamps to honour eminent scholars, practitioners and Great Master Healers of AYUSH Systems
- PM Modi launches ten AYUSH Health and Wellness Centres located in Haryana
- Former Cabinet Secretary PK Sinha appointed as OSD in the PMO; Principal Secretary Nripendra Misra stepped down from his post
- Foreigners visiting India can avail treatment, except organ transplant, without obtaining medical visa: Govt.
- PM addresses the Malayala Manorama News Conclave 2019 in Kochi via video conferencing
- Himachal Pradesh Assembly passes bill against religious conversion by use of force, inducement and fraudulent means
- West Bengal assembly passes bill against mob assault and incidents of lynching

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- Haryana govt. launches poor family welfare scheme 'Mukhya Mantri Parivar Samridhi Yojna'; grant of Rs 6,000 per year to families having an annual income below Rs 1.80 lakh
- Mosquito Terminator train flagged off at New Delhi Railway Station

Psb Merger

- Government announces merger of 10 public sector banks (PSBs) into four banks
- Total number of PSBs to come down to 12 from 24 banks
- Punjab National Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank will be merged into one entity making its 2nd largest PSB after SBI
- Canara Bank and Syndicate Bank will be merged to become fourth largest PSB
- Union Bank of India, Andhra Bank and Corporation Bank will be merged to make fifth largest PSB
- Indian Bank will merge with Allahabad Bank to become 7th largest PSB
- Bank of India, Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, UCO Bank, Bank of Maharashtra and Punjab & Sindh Bank will continue to operate on their own

Economy & Corporate

- India's GDP growth slumps to 7-yr low of 5% in April-June quarter
- India's foreign exchange reserves at \$ 429.050 billion in the week to August 23
- Finance Minister announces upfront capital infusions of Rs 55250 crore into 10 public sector banks: PNB- Rs 16000 crore, Union Bank-Rs 11700 crore, Bank of Baroda-Rs 7000 crore, Canara Bank-Rs 6500 crore and Indian Bank-Rs 2500 crore.
- Fiscal deficit as a percentage of full year estimate stood at 77.8% in April-July 2019-20
- CBDT notifies creation of special cell to address grievances of startups with relation to angel tax and other tax-related issues
- 2% TDS on cash withdrawals of over Rs 1 crore from September 1
- Government e Marketplace (GeM) signs MoU with SIDBI to ensure timely payments for MSMEs selling products on GeM

World

- External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar calls on President of the European Parliament David Maria Sassoli in Brussels
- President Donald Trump establishes the US military's Space Command
- International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances observed on August 30
- US: Hurricane Dorian strengthens to a Category 2 storm

Sports

- ISSF World Cup in Rio de Janeiro: Abhishek Verma and Saurabh Chaudhary win gold and bronze respectively in men's 10m air pistol event
- ISSF World Cup in Rio de Janeiro: Sanjeev Rajput wins silver in the men's 50m rifle 3 positions.

August 16, 2019

PM announces Jal Jeevan Mission Scheme for households

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the government will launch a Jal Jeevan Mission to bring piped water to households. The announcement was made during his 6th Independence Day (August 15) address from Red Fort.

About Jal Jeevan Mission

Concerned Authority: Under Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

Need: Half of country's households do not have access to piped water. Therefore, there is a need to quadruple water conservation efforts in next 5 years as to what was done in the last 70 years.

Cost: Both centre and states will work towards achieving Jal Jeevan Mission's objective. The expenditure on scheme would cost around more than Rs.3.5 lakh crore in coming years.

Objective: It seeks to converge with other Central and State Government Schemes to achieve its objectives of sustainable water supply management across India.

Focus Areas: JJM will focus on integrated demand and supply-side management of water at local level, including creation of local infrastructure for source sustainability such as groundwater recharge,

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rainwater harvesting, and management of household wastewater for reuse in agriculture.

People's Mission: Just like Swachhta Mission it would be a people's mission. It is a movement towards water conservation that will take place at grassroots level and will integrate people from all walks of life.

Other Efforts by Government

Government has resolved to provide piped water to all households by 2024 and for this purpose it has clubbed all erstwhile water related ministries under one new Jal Shakti Ministry.

In July 2019, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced that government has identified 1592 Blocks (spread across 256 districts) which are critical and over exploited, for Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA).

Banks not to charge for failed transactions, balance enquiry: RBI

Every month banks provide certain number of free transactions at ATMs to their customers and exceeding which charges are imposed. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked banks not to count failed transactions at ATMs due to technical reasons as part of 'free ATM transactions' permitted every month.

Circular issued by RBI

The central bank has issued a circular in this regard which comes after it came to RBI's notice that transactions that have failed due to technical reasons or even non-availability of currency in ATMs are also included in number of free ATM transactions.

RBI clarified that transactions which fail on account of technical reasons such as non-availability of cash, hardware and software issues and any other reason which is attributable to bank, should not be counted as valid ATM transactions for customer and therefore, no charges shall be levied.

Besides these, if the ATM is used for *non-cash withdrawal transactions* such as balance enquiry, cheque book request, payment of taxes, funds transfer, etc. which constitute 'on-us' transactions (i.e. when a card is used at an ATM of same bank which has issued card) should also not be part of number of free ATM transactions facility given to a customer.

Tamil Nadu honours ISRO Chief with Dr A. P. J. Abdul Kalam Award

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman Kailasavadivoo Sivan, was awarded Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Award by Tamil Nadu government. He was awarded in recognition of his stellar work in promotion of science and technology.

About K. Sivan

Education: He is a native of Kanniyakumari district of Tamil Nadu. The 62-year-old space scientist got a Bachelor's degree in engineering from Madras Institute of Technology in 1980. Completing his Master's degree in aerospace engineering from Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru, he later joined ISRO.

He is known popularly known as '**Rocket Man**'.

He has served as director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre and Liquid Propulsion Centre. He was chief architect of SITARA, a 6D trajectory simulation software.

He has worked on design and development of ISRO's launch vehicles and has huge contribution towards end to end mission planning, design, and mission integration and analysis.

Under his leadership—

Historical achievement of most successful GSLV flight with indigenous cryogenic stage was made.

ISRO successfully launched its Chandrayaan-2 mission, India's 2nd mission to the moon.

Awards: He is recipient of several awards including Dr Vikram Sarabhai Research Award (1999).

About Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Award

Following the death of former President A P J Abdul Kalam in 2015, former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, late J Jayalalithaa, had then announced an award in his name. She had also announced Dr Kalam's birthday (October 15) to be observed as-Youth Renaissance Day.

The Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Award is conferred upon those who work for promoting scientific growth, humanities and students' welfare. The awardees should hail from Tamil Nadu.

Prize: It carries 8 gm gold medal, Rs.5 lakh in cash and a citation. It is given on Independence Day every year.

First Recipient: 1st Kalam award was presented by Jayalalithaa in 2015 to ISRO scientist N Valarmathi.

AP launches 'Village Volunteers System' on Independence Day

Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh YS Jagan Mohan Reddy launched his government's flagship programme

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called 'Village Volunteers System' aimed at providing government services at doorsteps of people. The announcement in this regard was made during CM's Independence Day address in Vijayawada.

About Village Volunteers System

The scheme would be officially launched on 2 October 2019, which also marks 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

It is aimed at providing governance services at doorsteps of people. Basic idea behind implementing scheme is to infuse confidence among people in government and to see that their basic needs are met at their door-steps.

Village secretariats would be set up in each village to deliver governance to people in 72 hours. These Village secretariats would also be launched from 2 October by making volunteers a bridge between government and people of state.

Volunteers: The scheme will involve more than 2.8 lakh volunteers. Under it, 1 volunteer will cover 50 families in each village. Identity cards will be given to each volunteer and they would get an allowance of Rs.5000 per month.

Telephone No.: Toll-free telephone number **1902** would be set up at call centre in Chief Minister Office (CMO) to receive grievances of people.

Volunteers will 1st identify beneficiaries, get to know their problems, and then describe and outline schemes being provided by government for them.

Significance: The scheme will be able to reach poorest of poor and make all villages self-sufficient.

President awards certificate of honour and Maharshi Badrayan Vyas Samman for 2019

President of India Ramnath Kovind awarded Maharshi Badrayan Vyas Samman to following scholars of Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Pali, Prakrit, Classical Kannada, Classical Telugu, Classical Malayalam and Classical Odiya for year 2019: –

Maharshi Badrayan Vyas Samman Awardees

SANSKRIT: (1) Dr. Ashok thapliyal; (2) Prof. Sujata Tripathi; (3) Dr. Sanju Mishra; (4) Dr. Abhijit Hanmant Joshi; (5) Dr. Sharachchandra Dwivedi

PALI: Anoma Shriram Sakhare

PRAKRIT: Ashish Kumar Jain

ARABIC: Dr. Fauzan Ahmad

PERSIAN: (1) ER.M. Shahbaz Alam

CLASSICAL KANNADA: (1) G B Harisha; (2) S. Karthik; (3) Dr. M. Byrappa

CLASSICAL TELUGU: (1) Dr. Addanki Srinivas; (2) Dr. V. Triveni; (3) Dr. DK Prabhakar

CLASSICAL MALAYALAM: (1) Dr. Rajeev RR; (2) Shri Santhosh Thottingal

CLASSICAL ODIA: Dr. Subrat Kumar Prusty

In addition to this President also awarded **certificate of honor** to following scholars of Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic, Pali, Prakrit, Classical Kannada, Classical Telugu, Classical Malayalam and Classical Odiya for year 2019.

List of Awardees of Certificate of Honor –

SANSKRIT: (1) Sripada Satyanarayanamurthy; (2) Rajendra Nath Sarma; (3) Prof. Ramji Thakur; (4) Prof. Chand Kiran Saluja; (5) Dr. Shri Krishan Sharma; (6) Dr. V. Ramakrishna Bhatt; (7) Vidwan Janardana Hegde; (8) Dr. Kala acharya; (9) Prof. (Dr.) Harekrishna Satapathy; (10) Pandit Satya Dev Sharma; (11) Banwari Lal Gaur; (12) Dr. VS Karunakaran; (13) Prof. Yugal Kishor Mishra; (14) Pandit Manudev Bhattacharya; (15) Subuddhi Charan Goswami

PALI: Dr. Uma Shankar Vyas

PRAKRIT: Kamal Chand Sogani

ARABIC: (1) Faizanullah Farooqi; (2) Mohammad iqbal Husain; (3) Dr Mohd. Samiullah Khan

PERSIAN: (1) Dr. Iraq Raza Zaidi; (2) Chander Shekhar (3) Mohammad sidiq Niazmand

CLASSICAL KANNADA: Shri Hampa Nagarajaiah

CLASSICAL TELUGU: Ravva Srihari

CLASSICAL MALAYALAM: Dr. CP Achuthan Unny

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CLASSICAL ODIA: Dr. Antaryami mishra

About Maharshi Badrayan Vyas Samman

The awards are annually conferred on the Independence Day. They were instituted in 2002 by Union Ministry of Human Resource Development.

It is awarded to young scholars between 30 to 45 years of age. It carries a cash prize of Rs. 1 lakh.

These awards conferred to recognise contribution of scholars in the field of nine languages viz. Sanskrit, Prakrit, Persian, Pali, Arabic, Classical Oriya, Classical Kannada, Classical Malayalam and Classical Telugu.

Certificate of Honour

It was introduced in 1958 to honour scholars of Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic languages and later in 1996 it was extended to cover Prakrit and Pali as well.

It is awarded to scholars aged 60 years and above. It carries a cash prize of Rs. 5,00,000.

NOTE Exemptions: These awards are not given posthumously and to scholars who have been awarded earlier, or who are convicted in criminal case or against whom criminal case is pending in court.

Tamil Nadu govt announces trifurcation of Vellore district

Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Edappadi K Palaniswami announced that Vellore district of state would be trifurcated into **Vellore, Ranipet and Tirupattur districts**. Vellore will be headquarters of these 2 new districts. With creation of two more districts the total number of districts in state would become 37.

The Chief Minister also announced that starting from 2019, November 1 would be celebrated as **Tamil Nadu Day** to commemorate state's creation day. Tamil Nadu was created on November 1, 1956.

Key Highlights

In any state the idea behind creating new districts is, generally, that it is expected to make governance easier or sometimes, decision is driven by local demands. In this case, people had been demanding carving out of new districts from Vellore district, which has 13 assembly segments.

Vellore District: It was created in 1989 by bifurcating North Arcot district into Vellore and Tiruvannamalai districts. It is one of the largest districts in state by area and has 13 Assembly constituencies. It is divided between 3 Lok Sabha constituencies- Vellore, Tiruvannamalai and Arakkonam.

Other District Division: In 2018 Tamil Nadu state government had carved out Kallakurichi district from Villupuram district. . In July 2019, TN govt announced its decision to carve out Tenkasi district from Tirunelveli district and Chengalpet district from Kancheepuram district.

District in India

In India larger states have a higher number of districts such as Uttar Pradesh leads the count with 75 district, followed by Madhya Pradesh (52), while smallest state, Goa (2), has lowest number.

However, *number of districts in a state is not always a function of area of state (or of its population)*. For example, Andhra Pradesh is 7th largest state by area in the country but has among smallest counts of districts at 13. As such, it has only 1 district for every 12,000 sq-km, which is largest average size for a district in any Indian state.

India win historic gold at 2019 Junior Track World Cycling Championship

Indian men's cyclist team created history by clinching the Team Sprint gold medal at World Junior Track Cycling Championships in Frankfurt, Germany. The team comprised of Esow Alben, Ronaldo Singh, James Singh and Rojit Singh. This is India's 1st-ever gold in a global cycling competition.

Key Highlights

This is India's historic 1st gold win at a world cycling event, senior or junior.

In first round of men's team sprint, India clocked fastest time at 44.764 seconds, beating China's time of 46.248s.

To claim the top honours, Indian cyclist team defeated Australia in final, clocking 44.681 seconds in gold medal race. Great Britain took bronze home.

Currently, the *Indian men's junior team* is **ranked No. 2**, behind Malaysia

In individual **Men's Keirin Event** at World Junior Track Cycling Championships in Frankfurt, Esow Alben of India won bronze medal by finishing behind Greece's Konstantinos Livanos who won gold and Australia's Sam Gallagher who won silver.

Esow Alben: At present, Esow Alben, the cycling star from Andaman and Nicobar Islands is top-ranked

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junior cyclist in world in sprint and keirin events. In 2018, he had become 1st Indian to win a medal at the Junior Track Cycling World Championships when he won silver in men's Keirin event.

August 17, 2019

GI Tag accorded to three new products

Geographical Indications Registry under Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has accorded Geographical Indication (GI) tag to Tirur betel leaf from Kerala, Tawlhlohpuan fabric and Mizo Puanchei shawl/textile from Mizoram. GI product is recognised as originating from specific geographical origin possessing qualities or reputation related to its origin. This tag is exclusive and similar item originating from different location is not allowed to use it.

Key Facts

Tirur betel Leaf (Kerala): It is mainly cultivated in Tirur, Tanur, Tirurangadi, Kuttippuram, Malappuram and Vengara block panchayaths of Malappuram District of Kerala. It is valued both for its mild stimulant action and medicinal properties. Though it is commonly used for making pan masala for chewing, it has many medicinal, industrial and cultural usages. It is considered as a remedy for bad breath and digestive disorders.

Tawlhlohpuan (Mizoram): It is compactly woven fabric from Mizoram. It is known for warp yarns, warping, weaving and intricate designs that are made by hand. It holds high significance in Mizo society. It is produced throughout Mizoram, especially in Aizawl and Thenzawl town which are main centres of production.

Mizo Puanchei (Mizoram): It is colourful Mizo shawl considered essential by most women from State and common costume in Mizo festive dances and official ceremonies. It is made by weavers by inserting designs and motifs by using supplementary yarns while weaving to create this beautiful and alluring textile.

National Tribal Festival 'Aadi Mahotsav' being organised at Leh-Ladakh

In a bid to give a fillip to tribal economy in Ladakh, **Aadi Mahotsav** or **National Tribal Festival** will be organised at Polo Ground, Leh-Ladakh. It is a 9 day festival that will start from 17 August till 25 August 2019. The event will be inaugurated by Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Satya Pal Malik. Until 2018 Ladakh did not figure on list of places where Aadi Mahotsav is held every year.

About Aadi Mahotsav

It is a **joint initiative** of Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs and Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED). TRIFED will essentially play role of a Service provider & Market Developer.

Theme of festival: A celebration of the spirit of Tribal Craft, Culture and Commerce.

It is 1st such event in Ladakh since central government announced decision to make Ladakh a Union Territory. At present Ladakh is a part of Jammu and Kashmir and new UT will come into effect on 31 October 2019.

It is aimed at scaling up business opportunities for tribals. Changes in Union Territory status of Ladakh has provided an opportunity to scale up business opportunities for tribals in Ladakh.

Significance: Aadi Mahotsav in Leh, Ladakh by showcasing tribal culture, cuisine, art, craft, and herbal medicines will help spread these in other parts of country and provide opportunities to tribals for economic growth and prosperity.

Participants: About 160 tribal artisans from more than 20 states across India will participate and showcase their craft. Major attraction of event will be:

Tribal textiles from- Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, West Bengal

Tribal jewellery from- Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and the Northeast

Art and craft from- Gond and Warli art, metal craft from Chhattisgarh and black pottery from Manipur

Ladakh Tribals: In Ladakh tribals make up 70% of population. Ladakh is known for pashmina shawls and apricots and the Idea behind event is to provide tribal cultivators with a big market across India. Through a collaboration of TRIFED and online marketplace Amazon, these products will be sold in 190 countries across the world.

e-transactions: At Aadi Mahotsav, an effort will be made to take tribal commerce to next level of digital

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and electronic transactions. For the 1st time, tribal artisans will be accepting payment through major credit/debit cards for which point of sale machines have been provided at each stall. At the event will two reputed local cultural troupes will present Ladakhi folk dances.

Over the next 10 days, a **Van Dhan camp** will be organized in Ladakh. Village-level groups of tribal artisans will be formed under **Van Dhan scheme** which seeks to improve tribal incomes through value addition of their products.

NOTE: Van Dhan scheme was launched in 2018. Government has set a target of setting up 600 Van Dhan by September 2019 and total 5,000 in the next 5 years. Under it a group of 20 tribal artisans is trained and provided with working capital to add value to products, which they collect from jungle, at each Van Dhan Kendra.

SC clears Chardham highway project connecting 4 holy places in Uttarakhand

Supreme Court has cleared decks for Chardham highway project, which will connect four holy places of Uttarakhand through 900 km all-weather roads. The apex court had also directed Union Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF) to form high-powered committee by 22 August 2019 so as to look into environmental concerns.

High-Powered Committee

A Supreme Court bench comprising of Justices Rohinton Fali Nariman and Surya Kant modified an earlier order of National Green Tribunal by constituting a fresh high-powered committee to look into environmental concern.

Supreme Court added representatives from Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Physical Research Laboratory under government's space department and Ministry of Defence to new high powered committee and asked committee to submit its recommendations within 4 months.

As per SC, committee shall hold quarterly meetings thereafter to ensure compliance and may suggest any further measure after each review meeting.

It shall consider cumulative and independent impact of Chardham project on entire Himalayan valleys.

Committee will also suggest areas in which afforestation should be taken and kind of saplings to be planted. SC directed that in case of non-survival of any sapling, further plantation should be done and compensatory afforestation should be 10 times number of trees cut.

About Char Dham Highway

It is a proposed two-lane (in each direction) express National Highway in state of Uttarakhand. The two lane highway will have a minimum width of 10 metre.

The proposed *Char Dham Expressway National Highway project* will connect 4 holy places in Uttarakhand states viz.- Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri

Project includes 900 km national highways which will connect whole of Uttarakhand state.

India's forex reserves at new life-time high of \$430.57 bn

According to latest Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves surged to new life-time high of US \$430.572 billion in week to August 9, 2019. It was on account of rise in foreign currency assets, the major component of the overall reserves. In the previous reporting week ended on August 2, 2019 forex reserves had declined by US \$697.2 million to US \$428.952 billion.

Various components of Forex reserves (in reporting week)

Foreign currency assets (FCA): It increased by US \$15.2 million to US \$398.739 billion.

It is expressed in dollar terms and includes effect of depreciation/appreciation of non-US currency units (US Dollar) like euro, pound and yen held in reserves.

Gold reserves: It surged by US \$1.591 billion to US \$26.754 billion.

Special drawing rights (SDR) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF): Increased US \$6.7 million to US \$1.441 billion.

Reserve position with IMF: It rose by US \$7 million to US \$3.636 billion.

PRETOMANID: US FDA approves new drug for drug-resistant TB

United States (US) Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved new drug-Pretomanid for treating drug-resistant strain of Tuberculosis (TB). Pretomanid is novel compound developed by New York-based non-profit organisation TB Alliance. It is used alongside two other antibiotics (bedaquiline and linezolid) to

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treat extremely drug-resistant strain of tuberculosis. This three-drug regimen is collectively known as BPAL regimen and it can cure highly drug-resistant strains of tuberculosis by drastically shortening treatment period.

Significance of BPAL regimen

Before FDA approval to this combination therapy, the most common treatment used for extremely drug resistance tuberculosis required patients to take around 30 pills day plus sometimes daily injections for at least 18 months. This new treatment lowers that dose to 5 pills/day over 6 months for most patients. This treatment regimen had achieved 90% success rate during six months of treatment and six months of post-treatment follow-ups after it was tested on 109 patients at three sites in South Africa.

India suspends Thar Link Express

India suspended weekly Jodhpur-Munabao Thar Link Express amid the ongoing tension with Pakistan over the Kashmir issue. This move comes days after India cancelled Samjhauta Express from its side after Pakistan had announced suspension of all train services to India.

About Thar Express

It is Indian portion of international passenger train operated weekly (every Saturday morning) by Indian Railway using its own coaches and locomotives, between Jodhpur and Munabao in India. Passengers from Munabao (Rajasthan) after clearing customs are transported to across border to Zero Point station where Thar Express takes passengers to Karachi, Pakistan via Munabao (India)-Khokhrapar (Pakistan's Sindh province) border crossing. It carries only passengers and not goods.

Background: The agreement to link two countries by rail service through Munabao-Khokhrapar link was signed in 2006 with aim to facilitate people-to-people contact. It was revived after gap 41 years after Munabao-Khokhrapar rail link was destroyed during 1965 war between two countries. This agreement was extended in 2018 for three years till January 31, 2021. According to estimates, over 4 lakh passengers from both countries have taken train in the past 13 years.

About Samjhauta Express

It is another passenger train running between India and Pakistan. It runs from Delhi to Attari on Indian side and from Lahore to Wagah on the Pakistan side. Its service was started in 1976 following Shimla Agreement.

Vice President embarks on 3-nation visit to Lithuania, Latvia & Estonia

Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu has embarked on a 3-nation visit to Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. He is accompanied by a high-level delegation. This visit will be Vice President's 1st ever high level visit (from India) to 3 Baltic countries.

Key Highlights of Visit

Objective of Vice President's visit to 3 Baltics countries is to advance India's outreach to important countries in region. It takes place in context of increasing political engagement, as well as intensified trade and commercial ties.

The cutting edge technology and innovation ecosystems of Baltic countries complement India's huge market and appetite for these technologies.

It will also provide an opportunity to brief Baltic countries and get their views on enhanced opportunities for cooperation, thus further strengthening India's existing friendly ties. The visit is significant as Baltic countries and India have historical connect and common linguistic roots.

Lithuania: M V Naidu will be visiting Lithuania from 17-19 August, during which he will have a detailed bilateral meeting with President Gitanas Nausėda. He will also meet Viktoras Pranckietis, Speaker of **Seimas** (Lithuanian Parliament).

Latvia: The vice president will visit Latvia from August 19-20 where he will have bilateral meeting with President Egils Levits. He will also meet Prime Minister Krisjanis Karins and Inese Libina-Egnere, the Acting Speaker of the Saeima (Latvian Parliament). He will also attend a business forum co-organised by Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and **ASSOCHAM** (Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India).

Estonia: Vice president will visit Estonia from August 20-21. Here he will meet President Kersti Kaljulaid, Juri Ratas, Prime Minister of Estonia and Henn Polluaas, President of **Riigikogu** (Estonian Parliament). As a

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special privilege, Naidu will also address Estonian Head of Mission's conference on India's role in Indo-Pacific region and address an India-Estonia business forum led by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) from Indian side.

BCCI retains Ravi Shastri as team India's head coach till 2021

Ravi Shastri has been re-appointed head coach of Indian men's cricket team till 2021 by Kapil Dev-led Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC). The CAC unanimously felt that incumbent's communication skills and understanding of team issues stood out. Ravi had the public backing of captain Virat Kohli even before the short-listing was initiated.

Key Highlights

Cricket Advisory Committee: The 3-member CAC headed by Kapil Dev comprised of former India coach Anshuman Gaekwad and ex women's captain Shantha Rangaswamy.

Reappointment Period: Ravi Shastri is reappointment for a 2-year period. His tenure will end with T20 World Cup 2021 in India. This will be his 4th stint with national team. Earlier, he has briefly served as Cricket Manager (2007 tour of Bangladesh), Team Director (2014-2016) and head coach (2017-2019). Ravi has played 150 ODIs and 80 Tests. He was contracted till World Cup 2019 in England, but he was given a 45-day extension till end of ongoing West Indies tour, where visitors have won both T20 and ODI series.

Others who applied: Apart from Shastri, former New Zealand coach (and Kings XI Punjab coach) Mike Hesson, former Australia all-rounder and Sri Lanka coach Tom Moody, former India teammates Robin Singh and Lalchand Rajput also applied for post. Former West Indies and Afghanistan coach Phil Simmons pulled out of race, citing personal reasons.

Indian Team Under Ravi Shastri

On Shastri's watch, India have won 11 out of 21 Tests (with a success rate of 52.38%), 43 out of 60 ODIs (success rate of 71.67%) and 25 T20 Internationals out of 36 (success rate of 69.44%).

Ravi Shastri's record since his comeback in 2017 has been very impressive, having guided Indian team to its maiden Test series win on Australian soil in 2018.

The only blip could be fact that in 2015 World Cup in Australia (when Ravi was Team Director) and last edition in UK, Indian team couldn't go beyond semi-finals.

40 Indian Origin Youth take part in 54th Know India Programme

40 Indian Origin youth have taken part in 54th Edition of Know India (KIP) Programme. This edition is scheduled from 1st August to 25th August, 2019. Punjab and Haryana are partner states for this edition. These 40 participants are from 9 countries, namely Fiji (7), Trinidad & Tobago (7), Mauritius (7), Guyana (6), Suriname (5), Myanmar (3), South Africa (2), Israel (2) and Reunion Island (1) out of which 26 are female and 14 are male.

About Know India Programme (KIP)

It is important initiative of Union Government aimed to engage and make students and young professionals of India Diaspora in age group of 18-30 years. It was launched in 2004. It is 25-day orientation programme organized by Union Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in partnership with one or two States including visit to States for 10 days. It seeks to give sense of connect to Indian origin youth with their motherland and motivate and inspire them by the transformation taking place in India.

Objective of KIP: (i) Give Indian origin youth exposure to various aspects of contemporary India's forms of art, heritage and culture. (ii) Promote awareness on different facets of life in India and the progress made by country in various fields such as industry, education, science and technology, information & communication technology (ICT), climate and power and renewable energy etc.

Selection of Participants: They are selected on basis of nominations recommended by the Indian Missions or Posts abroad.

Implementation Status: Since 2004, MEA has conducted 53 editions of KIP with participation of 1821 Overseas Indian youth.

Government relaxes norms for shares with differential voting rights

Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has amended provisions relating to issue of shares with



Differential Voting Rights (DVRs) provisions under Companies Act. This move is aimed at enabling promoters of Indian companies to retain control of their companies in their pursuit for growth and creation of long-term value for shareholders, even as they raise equity capital from global investors.

Key changes made are

The existing cap of 26 % of total post issue paid up equity share capital raised to 74 % of total voting power in respect of shares with DVRs of a company.

The earlier requirement of distributable profits for 3 years for a company to be eligible to issue shares with DVR now has been removed.

Alongside above two changes, time period within which Employee Stock Options (ESOPs) can be issued by Startups recognized by Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT) to promoters or Directors holding more than 10% of equity shares, has been increased from current 5 years to 10 years from date of their incorporation.

Background

Promoters/founders who are instrumental in starting up company often lose control of firm when they dilute their stakes to raise multiple rounds of funding. Differential Voting Rights do not follow common rule of one share-one vote. DVRs enable promoters to retain control over company even after many new investors come in, by allowing shares with superior voting rights or lower or fractional voting rights to public investors.

Padmaja mahapatra | mahapatrapadmaja28@gmail.com |

August 18-19, 2019

International Conference on Teacher Education by NCTE held in New Delhi

A two-day International Conference titled '**Journey of Teacher Education: Local to Global**' was inaugurated by Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Union Minister of Human Resource Development (HRD) in New Delhi. The two-day event is organized by **National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE)** as part of silver jubilee (25 years) celebration of its establishment in 1995.

Key Highlights

Conference Objective: To bring our school education system in alignment with global trends.

It provides a platform to renowned academicians, educationist, thinkers, administrators and practitioners to brainstorm various challenges, issue and solutions for existing teacher education system in India.

40 renowned experts from India and abroad will deliberate upon key areas such as-

- Present scenario of teacher education in Indian context.
- Innovations in teaching practices.
- Integration of information and communications technology (ICT) in teaching.
- Inclusive education in teaching-learning environment.
- Internationalization of teacher education.

Upcoming Government Initiative in Education Field:

On 22 August 2019, HRD Ministry would be launching a mission called **NISHTHA** (*National Initiative on School Teachers Head Holistic Advancement*). It is world's biggest project for teacher training through which more than 42 lakh teachers will be trained.

About National Council of Teacher Education (NCTE)

It was established on 17 August 1995.

It was tasked to achieve planned and coordinated development of teacher education system throughout India and to maintain norms and standards therein.

It serves as an *advisory body to Central and State Governments* for ensuring maintenance of standards and quality in Teacher Education.

Mandate: NCTE covers entire gamut of Teacher Education programmes. It includes research and training of persons to equip them to teach (at stages of pre-primary, primary, secondary and senior secondary schools) as well as distance education courses, part-time education, non-formal education and adult education.

At present, teacher education institutions in country offers 17 Teacher Education programmes recognized by NCTE for prospective school teachers.



Two new species of Freshwater Fish found

Scientists of **Zoological Survey of India (ZSI)** have discovered 2 new species of freshwater fish from north-eastern and northern parts of country. Both fish are hill stream fauna, measures less than 7 centimetres (cm) and are equipped with special morphological features to suit rapid water flow.

Key Findings

Both species of fish were discovered from remote areas of country. As **Glyptothorax gopii** was discovered from Mizoram's Champai district near India-Myanmar border and **Garra simbalbaraensis** has been found from Himachal Pradesh's Sirmour district.

As per the experts, origin or evolution of fishes in Himalayas and north-eastern parts of India is probably the consequence or after-effects of orogenic events or geological movement at various stages in Himalayas' uplift.

Glyptothorax gopii

It is a new species of catfish found in *Kaladan river* of Mizoram.

Features: It measures 63 mm standard length without caudal fin (tail fin). It is dark brown on its dorsal surface and its ventral (pelvic) surface is of a yellowish-light brown.

It has been named to celebrate contribution of eminent taxonomist K.C. Gopi.

What makes it distinct from other species of genus Glyptothorax? It has an axe-shaped anterior nuchal plate (bone below dorsal fin) which is unique to it.

The elliptical thoracic adhesive apparatus and plicae (folds of tissue) present on ventral surfaces of pectoral-fin spine help fish cling to rocks.

Garra simbalbaraensis:

It was found in *Simbalbara river* of Himachal Pradesh.

Features: It measures 69 mm standard length without caudal fin (tail fin) and has a yellowish-grey colour fading ventrally (towards lower surface).

It takes its name from Simbalbara river.

It has a prominent unilobed and rounded proboscis with tubercles that help fish in manoeuvrability (movement or series of moves requiring skill and care).

Species of genus Gara has an evolved disc to attach to rocky surfaces.

Selection Committee recommendations for National Sports Awards 2019

Unlike in past, **Ministry of Sports** for year 2019 had formed a single selection committee for evaluating and deciding on all awards including both performance and coaching. The final list of sportsperson for annual sports awards for 2019 across various disciplines and achievements was recently released.

This 12-member selection committee was headed by **Justice Mukundakam Sharma** (retired Supreme Court judge) and members included- Mary Kom, Bhaichung Bhutia, Anjum Chopra, Anju Bobby George and Kamlesh Mehta besides representatives from Sports Authority of India and sports ministry.

The final recommendations by the 12-member selection committee include a massive 19-member list for Arjuna Awards and 6 for Dronacharya Award for coaching- 3 each in regular and lifetime categories.

Awards are presented every year on 29 August, observed as National Sports Day (Major Dhyan Chand's birthday).

List of Sports-persons nominated for various awards

Here's the complete list of recommendations forwarded by selection committee for 2019 sporting awards.

Khel Ratna

Bajrang Punia (wrestling), Deepa Malik (para-athletics)

It is given for most spectacular and outstanding performance by a sportsperson over a period of 4 years immediately preceding year (the year before) during which sportsperson is awarded.

It includes a medal, a certificate, ceremonial dress and cash prize of ₹7.50 lakh.

Arjuna Award

It was started in 1961. It carries a scroll, a bronze statue of Arjuna and cash prize of Rs.500,000.

19 sportsperson Nominated: Ravindra Jadeja (cricket), Chinglensana Singh Kangujam (hockey), Ajay Thakur (kabaddi), Tajinder Pal Singh Toor (athletics), Mohammed Anas Yahiya (athletics), Sundar Singh Gurjar (para sports-athletics), S Bhaskaran (body building), Sonia Lather (boxing), Gaurav Singh Gill

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(motor sports), Bhamidipati Sai Praneeth (badminton), Pramod Bhagat (para sports-badminton), Anjum Moudgil (shooting), Harmeet Rajul Desai (table tennis), Pooja Dhanda (wrestling), Fouaad Mirza (equestrian), Gurpreet Singh Sandhu (football), Poonam Yadav (cricket), Simran Singh Shergill (polo), Swapna Burman (athletics).

Dronacharya Award (regular category):

Coach: Vimal Kumar (badminton), Sandeep Gupta (table tennis) and Mohinder Singh Dhillon (athletics)

Dronacharya Award (Lifetime Category):

Coach: Mezban Patel (hockey), Rambir Singh Khokar (kabaddi) and Sanjay Bhardwaj (cricket)

Dhyan Chand Award:

Manuel Fredricks (hockey), Arup Basak (table tennis), Manoj Kumar (wrestling), Nitten Kirrtane (tennis) and C Lalremsanga (archery).

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy

Punjab University, Chandigarh – Overall winner university

Guru Nanak Dev University (Amritsar)- 1st runner up

Punjabi University (Patiala) – 2nd runner up

1st Central Institute of Chemical Engineering & Technology to be set up in Gujarat

India's first Central Institute of Chemical Engineering and Technology (CICET) will be set up in Gujarat to give boost to the chemical industry. It was announced by Union Minister of State (MoS) for Chemical and Fertilizers. He also announced that Central Government is also planning to set up Plastic Waste Management Centre in Ahmedabad to find out solutions to systematic segregation and recycling of plastic waste.

About CCICET

It will come up either at Ahmedabad or Surat. It will facilitate chemical industry with research and innovations. It will specially cater chemical industries located in Gujarat's Vapi, Ankleshwar and Vatva in Valsad, Bharuch and Ahmedabad districts.

17 August: Parsi New Year Navroz celebrated

Parsi New Year, also known as Navroz or Jamshedi Navroz, is celebrated every year on August 17 to mark the beginning of the new Iranian calendar. In Persian, Nav means new and Roz means day and together translating to 'new day'. It is celebrated for health, wealth, prosperity and productivity. The central feature of this festive day is visiting Fire Temple and offering prayers to deities Khorshed and Meher, who are considered the presiding deities of sun and moon respectively.

Background

Jamshedi Navroz got its name from legendary King of Persia – Jamshed, who is said to have introduced solar calculation in Parsi Calendar. In Iran and other parts, Zoroastrians celebrate Persian New Year using Fasli/Bastnai calendar according to which this day falls on moment of Vernal Equinox and marks beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere, mostly falls on March 21st every year. However, Parsis in India follow Shahenshahi calendar (which does not account for leap years) and hence Persian New Year in India is celebrated mostly on August 17th, approximately 150-200 days after its original day of vernal equinox (Spring Equinox). Celebrations of Jamshedi Navroz or Parsi New Year are similar to Nowruz spring festival where people celebrate commencement of New Year amidst exchange of gifts, donations, new clothes, house cleaning and lots of fun and frolic.

Zoroastrians

Parsis (are also known as Zoroastrians) as they follow Zoroastrianism, one of the oldest known monotheistic religions founded by Prophet Zarathustra or Zoroaster (Greek) in Pre-Islam era of ancient Iran approximately 3500 years ago in 650 BC. After the invasion of Islamic armies in 7th Century, Zoroastrians fled Persia and mainly dwelled in India.

India is home to the largest group of Parsis from around the world where the community has been a significant part of the economic and industrial growth of the country and lives in harmony with various other religions like Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians and many more.

28th BASIC Ministerial meeting on Climate Change held in Brazil

BASIC countries (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) held their 28th Ministerial meeting on Climate Change in Brasilia, Brazil.

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Change recently in Sao Paulo, Brazil. It was held in the run-up to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Conference of Parties (COP-25) meet scheduled to be held in December 2019. In this meeting, India was represented by Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar.

Key highlights of meeting

BASIC countries expressed concern about climate change and its adverse effects and reaffirmed their commitment to successful implementation of UNFCCC, its Kyoto Protocol and its Paris Agreement, based on recognition of the needs and special circumstances of developing countries and in accordance with principles of Equity and Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC) in light of different national circumstances.

They jointly urged developed countries to fulfill their climate finance commitments of mobilizing \$100 billion annually by 2020 for developing countries. They called for responsible, comprehensive, urgent and ambitious actions against climate change, including in the urban environment.

They reiterated to work together ahead of the United Nations Session on Climate Change and the next Conference of Parties (CoP25) in Chile. It was also decided that China will host the next meeting of the BASIC Ministers.

About BASIC

It is geopolitical alliance (bloc) of four advanced developing countries – Brazil, South Africa, India and China. It was established by agreement in 2009. These four countries collectively account for one-third of world's geographical area and nearly 40% of world's population.

BASIC countries broadly have common position on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and raising the massive funds that are needed to fight climate change. Since 2009, they have cooperated in international climate negotiations, reflecting their aspiration to have a larger say in global politics.

Mandate: These four countries as single bloc are committed to act jointly at Copenhagen climate summit, including possible united walk-out if their common minimum position was not met by the developed nations. They are collectively working to define common position on emission reductions and climate aid money and try to convince other countries to sign up to Copenhagen Accord.

President inaugurates underground Bunker Museum at Raj Bhavan Mumbai

President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated underground '**Bunker Museum**' at the Raj Bhavan (official residence of the Governor of Maharashtra) in state capital Mumbai. The 15,000 square feet museum has virtual reality (VR) booths in which visitors can time travel to 19th century. It will be opened for general public with online booking facility later this year.

Background

Recent Discovery: The bunker was discovered by Maharashtra Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao last year, along with two identical cannons, atop foothills of Raj Bhavan, which is situated at the tip of south Mumbai. The twin cannons (1.15 metre in diameter and 4.7 metre in length) were found covered in mud 25 metres apart from each other.

History: It was created in 19th century to fire cannons at approaching enemy ships. It is believed to have been asset of battery stationed near coast to defend Bombay Castle from naval attacks. It resembles fort and is made up of 13 rooms, which can be accessed by passing through 20-foot-tall gate. The rooms bear names such as Gun Shell, Shell Store, Cartridge Store, Pump, Central Artillery Store, Shell Lift and Workshop. Its underground passage has proper drainage system and inlets for fresh air and light.

Restoration: As part of it, structural audit of bunker was conducted and structural strengthening was carried out later. It was developed for adaptive reuse as museum without changing its original features. The museum incorporates virtual reality on themes of cannon-firing experience, history of Raj Bhavan and glimpse of the forts of Maharashtra.

MoHUA organises National Workshop on Sustainable Sanitation

Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) organized a one day National Workshop Cum Exhibition on Sustainable Sanitation at Vigyan Bhawan on 19 August 2019. The Chief Guest of event was Thawar Chand Gehlot, Union Minister, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJ&E). It is being organized as part of year long celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.



Key Highlights of Workshop

Objective behind organising workshop on sustainable sanitation- To bring together relevant stakeholders to strategize on mitigating risks associated with manual entry into sewers or septic tanks in a systematic manner, and help eliminate such incidents and fatalities.

Participants: More than 800 representatives participated in workshop including Principal Secretaries (UD) and Mission Directors of AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) and Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) in States/Union Territories and Municipal Commissioners of 500 cities with population of 1 lakh and above, heads of Parastatal bodies, officials from MoHUA as well as MoSJ&E and development partners.

Focuses on: Discussing social & legal issues and technological & managerial interventions with regard to human entry into sewers and septic tanks.

Key Discussions:

- Workshop saw discussions and presentation of best practices on Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) based biomethanation under **Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT)** initiative of Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoP&NG) and cotreatment of organic fraction of MSW with sludge.
- Workshop will showcase best practices on Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of sewerage system such as co-treatment of septage, faecal sludge management with mechanical cleaning of septic tanks, mechanical cleaning of sewers. It showcased latest equipment and machinery for cleaning of sewers and septic tanks in exhibition.
- Roles and responsibilities of **Emergency Response Sanitation Unit (ERSU)**, a proposed unit to systematise human entry into sewer or septic tanks in a professional, well trained, motivated and appropriately equipped manner.
- **Wastewater and stormwater management** including rainwater harvesting in line with Government's focus on water conservation through Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA).

Ministry also released a **Manual on Stormwater Drainage Systems, 2019, Advisory on ERSU** and **Directory of Sewer and Septic Cleaning Equipment** prepared by technical experts from Central Public Health and Environmental Engineering Organisation (CPHEEO).

Way Forward

This day long interaction among stakeholders on sustainable sanitation is expected to culminate into a comprehensive roadmap for ensuring sustainable sanitation in urban areas. Also, in coming days, State/UT and ULB level representatives will organize similar workshops in their respective areas to further disseminate information and insights on this crucial subject thereby lending a new dimension to the issue of safe and sustainable sanitation.

ICMR finalizes India's first National Essential Diagnostics List

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has finalized India's first National Essential Diagnostics List (NEDL). With this, India has become the first country to compile such list that will provide guidance to government for deciding kind of diagnostic tests that different healthcare facilities in villages and remote areas require.

About National Essential Diagnostics List (NEDL)

Objective: It aims to bridge current regulatory system's gap that do not cover all medical devices and in-vitro diagnostic device (IVD). It is meant for facilities from village till the district level.

Significance: It builds upon Free Diagnostics Service Initiative and other diagnostics initiatives of Union Health Ministry to provide an expanded basket of tests at different levels of the public health system. Its implementation will enable improved health care services delivery through evidence-based care, effective assessment of disease burden, disease trends, surveillance, and outbreak identification and effective utilisation of public health facilities etc.

It also encompasses tests relevant for new programmes such as Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. In addition to tests, it also has recommended corresponding IVD products.



Note: WHO released first edition of essential diagnostics list (EDL) in May 2018. It acts as reference point for development of national EDL. However, India's diagnostics list (NEDL) has been customised and prepared as per landscape of India's health care priorities

Present Scenario

In India, current diagnostics system (medical devices and in vitro diagnostics) is equipped to manage only the few notified devices. It follows regulatory framework based on drug regulations under Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945. Whereas, diagnostics are regulated under regulatory provisions of Medical Device Rules, 2017.

New Committee to review Defence Procurement Procedure to strengthen 'Make in India'

Rajnath Singh, Union Minister of Defence has approved setting up of a Committee to review **Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2016** and **Defence Procurement Manual (DPM) 2009** as DPP 2016 and DPM 2009 have been due for revision for a while.

Key Highlights about Committee

The 12-member committee will be set up under *Chairmanship of Director General (Acquisition)*. Apart from DG (Acq) the 11 other members who part of this high-level committee should not be below rank of Joint Secretary or Major General equivalent.

Committee will revise and align procedures with aim of ensuring seamless flow from asset acquisition to life cycle support. Aligning procedures will not only ensure seamless flow from asset acquisition to life cycle support but also strengthen **Make in India** initiative of Government of India.

Term: It has 6 months to submit its recommendations.

Terms of reference of Committee

- To revise procedures as given in DPP 2016 and DPM 2009 for removing procedural bottlenecks and hasten defence acquisition.
- To align and standardise provisions in DPP 2016 and DPM 2009 (wherever applicable), for optimising life cycle support for equipment.
- To simplify policy and procedures for facilitating greater participation of Indian Industry and develop robust Defence Industrial base.
- Wherever applicable, examine and incorporate new concepts, for instance life cycle costing, performance based logistics, life cycle support, codification & standardisation, lease contracting and Information and Communication Technology (ICT).
- Include provisions to promote Indian start-ups and research & development (R&D).
- Any other aspect which will contribute towards refining acquisition process and support the Make in India initiative.

August 20, 2019

All CAPF personnel will now retire at a uniform age of 60 years: Govt

As per a recent order issued by Union Home Ministry, all Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) personnel will now retire at a uniform age of 60 years instead of 57 years for certain rank of officials. All these forces come under ambit of Union Home Ministry and are deployed across India to render a variety of internal security duties including border guarding, counterterrorism, anti-Naxal operations, and maintenance of law and order.

Home Ministry Order

The order issued by Home Ministry has corrected anomaly where CAPF personnel between ranks of Constable to Commandant in 4 forces- Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Force (BSF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) superannuated at age of 57, instead of 60. While officers from rank of Deputy Inspector General upto top-most rank of Director General in these 4 forces retired after attaining age of 60.

Present Scenario:

Those personnel who have retired at 57 years in between court order and Home Ministry directive will now have two options-

1. either to join service after returning all pensionary benefits (or)
2. straightaway get all pension benefits as due to them as on completion of 60 years of service.

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While those CAPF personnel who had retired and approached court for clarification or were granted stay will be deemed as 'not superannuated' and will continue their service till 60 years of age.

Background

According to existing policy, all personnel in Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and Assam Rifles (AR) retire at age of 60. However, in CRPF, ITBP, SSB and BSF personnel from ranks of constable to commandant retire at age of 57, while those above them superannuate at age of 60.

Delhi HC Order: This development of uniform age pertains to a January order given by High Court of Delhi, where it had called current policy of different age of superannuation in these 4 forces (CRPF, BSF, ITBP, SSB) as '*discriminatory and unconstitutional*' and said such difference creates two classes in uniformed forces. Recent order issued by Home Ministry direct all forces to comply with court order and amend provisions of rules.

NOTE

Five forces namely, CISF, CRPF, BSF, ITBP and SSB which come under Union Home Ministry were earlier considered paramilitary forces, but from March 2011 have been reclassified as **Central Armed Police Forces** to avoid confusion.

Also '**Paramilitary forces**' in India has not been defined officially or in any acts, however they are currently used to refer-

1. Assam Rifles (AR): It under administrative control of Ministry of Home Affairs but operational control under Indian Army.
2. Special Frontier Force (SFF)

Iceland holds funeral for Okjokull: 1st glacier lost to climate change

As the world recently marked warmest July ever on record, Iceland held funeral for Okjokull glacier, country's 1st glacier lost to climate change. Nation commemorated the once huge Okjokull glacier with plaque. The commemoration ceremony was also attended by Prime Minister of Iceland Katrin Jakobsdottir.

Key Highlights

People in Iceland gathered together to commemorate loss of glacier Okjokull, which was officially declared dead in 2014 at age of 700.

People who attended ceremony walked up volcano northeast of capital Reykjavik to lay a plaque which carries a letter to future and warns action is needed to prevent climate change.

First monument to a lost glacier: A bronze plaque was mounted on a bare rock in a ceremony on barren terrain once covered by Okjokull glacier in western Iceland. **Plaque** is also labelled '**415 ppm CO₂**', which refers to record level of carbon dioxide measured in atmosphere last May. This monument acknowledges that we know what is happening and what needs to be done.

About Okjokull glacier

Okjokull is 1st Icelandic glacier to lose its status as glacier and in next 200 years countries all main glaciers are expected to follow same path.

The glacier was officially declared dead by Icelandic Meteorological Office (IMO) when it was no longer thick enough to move.

Concern: Iceland has marked its 1st-ever loss of a glacier to climate change as Okjokull which was once was glacier has been reduced to a small patch of ice atop a volcano. Scientists warn that hundreds of other ice sheets on subarctic island risk same fate.

Iceland loses about 11 billion tonnes of ice/year. Scientists fear that all of island country's 400-plus glaciers will be gone by 2200.

2nd UDAY Express to run between Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada

Indian Railways' 2nd **UDAY (Utkrisht Double Decker Air Conditioned Yatri) Express** will run between Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada to cater to busy route in East Coast Railway zone (ECoR), one of 18 railway zones of Indian Railways. The 1st double-decker UDAY Express started service between Coimbatore and Bangalore in June 2018. Another Uday Express is proposed between Bangalore City and Chennai Central.

About UDAY Express

It is a specially-designed double decker air conditioned train with chair car coaches which is primarily

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allocated to routes with heavy passenger traffic. It is equipped with WiFi facility, have striking interiors, cushioned seating, and display screens.

2nd Uday Express:

Train consists of 9 double-decker coaches and 2 power cars.

This new UDAY Express will boast several modern features such as cushioned seating, LED screen in pantry-cum-dining area for entertainment of passengers, automatic food and beverages vending machine, smoke detection alarm system, modular bio-toilets among others.

Passenger Capacity– It will have a carrying capacity of 50 passengers on upper deck, 48 on lower deck and 22 on ends.

Coaches: Out of 8 coaches, 3 coaches will have dining facilities with a seating capacity of 104 passengers each and other 5 coaches will be without dining area with seating capacity of 120 passengers.

Schedule: Departure time of train number 22701 Visakhapatnam-Vijayawada Uday Express from Visakhapatnam is 05:45 am and it will reach Vijayawada at 11:15 am. On its return journey, train number 22702 will leave Vijayawada at 5:30 pm and reach Visakhapatnam at 10:55 pm.

Train Stoppages between Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada: Duvvada, Anakapalle, Tuni, Samarlakota, Rajamahendravaram, and Eluru.

Date of introduction of train has not been decided yet.

Bangalore Cup Hockey: Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) beat Army XI

Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) beat Army XI with 5-0 to win **Dolo-650 Bangalore Cup All India Hockey Tournament 2019** held at the Field Marshal KM Cariappa Hockey Arena, Bengaluru, Karnataka. The year 2019 marks the 4th edition of Bangalore Cup Invitation. Previous edition of tournament was held in 2017 in which ONGC won and South Central Railway ended as runners-up.

Key Highlights

This win was IOCL's 2nd title in a fortnight as they had earlier won Bangalore Super Division.

Sumit Kumar (20th minute), Gurjinder Singh (24th), Yuvraj Walmiki (35th), Dharamvir Singh (37th) and Talwinder Singh (52nd) scored for winners.

Cash Prize: IOCL walked away with cash prize of Rs.4,00,000. Runners-up Army XI were awarded Rs.2,00,000.

Best player of Tournament: Affan Yousaf of IOCL

Highest scorer: Fellow striker Talwinder Singh (seven goals)

Highlights: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bhutan

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on a two-day visit to neighbouring country Bhutan to explore ways to further strengthen and diversify bilateral partnership across several sectors. This is PM Modi's 2nd visit to Bhutan and 1st since his re-election in May 2019. On reaching Thimphu (Capital of Bhutan), he was welcomed by Lotay Tshering, Prime Minister of Bhutan and received a Guard of Honour.

Key Highlights of Visit

Sapling planted at Bhutan's historic Simtoka Dzong

PM Modi planted a Cypress tree sapling at historic Simtoka Dzong in Thimphu in presence of his Bhutanese counterpart Lotay Tshering. **Simtoka Dzong** is one of the oldest fortress in Himalayan nation. It was built-in 1629 by *Shabdrung Namgyal*, a Tibetan Buddhist lama who is regarded as unifier of Bhutan as a nation-state. Simtoka Dzong functions as a monastic and administrative centre.

720 MW Mangdechhu hydroelectric power plant inaugurated

This hydroelectric plant is touted as a **Bhutan-India friendship project**. It is a 720MW run-of-river power plant built on Mangdechhu River in Trongsa Dzongkhag district of central Bhutan. It was developed by Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project Authority (MHPA). MHPA was jointly constituted by Indian and Bhutanese governments.

It is one of the major projects under Bhutan's initiative to generate 10,000 MW hydropower by 2020 with support from Indian government. Most of the electricity generated by Rs 4,500-crore hydroelectric plant will meet energy requirements of Bhutan and surplus electricity will be exported to India. Stamps were also launched to commemorate 5 decades of India-Bhutan Hydropower cooperation.

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**RuPay Card launched**

PM Modi launched RuPay Card in Bhutan by making a purchase at Simtokha Dzong, one of the oldest dzongs in Bhutan. India announced that an additional \$100 million will be available to Bhutan under **SAARC currency swap framework** to meet foreign exchange requirement.

Two countries signed 10 MoUs

India and Bhutan signed 10 Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) to diversify the friendship in fields of space research, aviation, IT, power, education, science, technology and legal education.

Some of key MoU are:

1. Power Purchase Agreement between PTC India Limited (PTC), the leading provider of power trading solutions in India and Druk Green Power Corporation Limited (DGPC) in Bhutan for Sale and Purchase of **Mangdechhu Power**.
2. MoU between Bhutan's Department of Information Technology and Telecom (DITT) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on establishment of **SATCOM Network** for utilization of South Asia Satellite (also known as GSAT-9).
3. MoU between Bhutan's Air Accident Investigation Unit (AAIU) and India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau on cooperation on Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation.
4. MoU for interconnection between National Knowledge Network (NKN) of India and Druk Research and Education Network (DREN) of Bhutan.

Government releases Draft National Resource Efficiency Policy

Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) recently released Draft National Resource Efficiency Policy, 2019. It has invited comments and suggestions from stakeholders including public/private organizations, experts and concerned citizens on the draft policy.

Features of Draft National Resource Efficiency Policy (NREP)

It envisions future with environmentally sustainable and equitable economic growth, resource security, healthy environment (air, water and land), and restored ecosystems with rich ecology and biodiversity.

It is Guided by Principles of-

- (i) reduction in primary resource consumption to 'sustainable' levels, in keeping with achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and staying within planetary boundaries.
- (ii) creation of higher value with less material through resource efficient and circular approaches (aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources).
- (iii) material security and creation of employment opportunities and business models beneficial to cause of environment protection and restoration.
- (iv) waste minimization

It provides overarching collaborative framework for resource efficiency across all sectors in the country, covering both biotic and abiotic resources and life cycle stages and aspires for cross-sectoral stakeholder partnerships for cause of resource efficiency for sustainable development.

Background

Natural resources form backbone of any economic development. India, as one of fastest growing economies with GDP at US \$2.6 trillion has increased its material consumption to six times, from 1.18 billion tonnes (BT) in 1970 to 7 BT in 2015. It is expected to increase further to provide for increasing population, rapid urbanization and growing aspirations. Thus, enhancing resource efficiency and promoting use of secondary raw materials has emerged as strategy for ensuring that potential trade-off between growth, environmental well-being and resource constraints can be minimized.

India biggest emitter of sulphur dioxide: Report

According to recently released report by Greenpeace India, India is the largest emitter of sulphur dioxide (SO₂) in the world. The findings of report were based on data obtained from NASA's Ozone Monitoring Instrument (OMI) satellite.

Findings of Report

Indian Scenario: It is largest emitter of SO₂ in the world, with more than 15% of all anthropogenic SO₂ hotspots detected by NASA OMI satellite. Most all of these anthropogenic emissions in India are because of coal-burning. This is because majority of coal-based power plants in India lack flue-gas desulphurisation

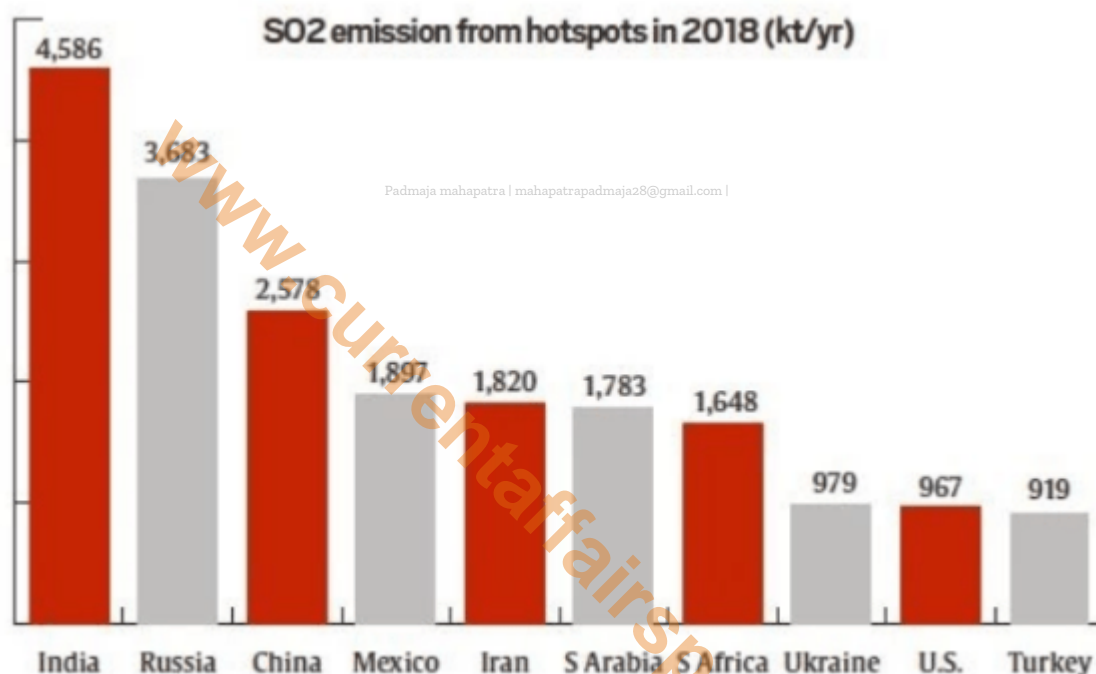
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(FGD) technology to reduce air pollution. Singrauli, Neyveli, Jharsuguda, Talcher, Korba, Chennai, Kutch, Ramagundam, Chandrapur and Koradi thermal power plants/clusters are major emission hotspots in India

Government Measures: Union Environment Ministry for the first time had SO₂ emission limits for coal-fired power plants in December 2015 to combat pollution levels. But the deadline for installation of flue-gas desulphurisation (FGD) in power plants was extended from 2017 to 2022.

Global scenario: Largest SO₂ emission hotspots have been found in Russia, South Africa, Iran, Saudi Arabia, India, Mexico, United Arab Emirates, Turkey and Serbia. Of world's major emitters, China and United States (US) have been able to reduce emissions rapidly by switching to clean energy sources and enforcement for SO₂ control. Emissions of air pollutants from power plants and other industries continue to increase in India, Iran and Saudi Arabia. In Russia, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey, emissions are currently not increasing — however, there is not lot of progress in tackling them either.



MoU on Maldivian Civil Servants training and Capacity Building operationalised

The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Maldives on Training and Capacity Building Programme for Maldivian Civil Servants became operational. This comes following discussions between senior officials of National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) from India and Maldives Civil Service Commission at Male (capital of Maldives)

Background

The MoU was signed between National Center for Good Governance, India and the Civil Services Commission of Maldives during official state visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in June 2019. It had envisaged capacity building activities for 1000 Civil Servants of Maldives at NCGG, India over the next 5 years.

Under, NCGG was designated nodal institution for designing customised training modules and its implementation taking into account requirements of Maldives's Civil Service Commission.

The subject matter of training programs includes public administration, public policy and governance, e-governance and service delivery, information technology, urban development and planning, ethics in administration and challenges in implementation of SDGs.

PM Modi's visit to Maldives

It was his first foreign visit after assuming office for second term. He had emphasised India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and assured India's full support to Maldives in realising its aspirations for broad based socio-economic development and strengthening of democratic and independent institutions.



19 August: World Humanitarian Day

The World Humanitarian Day is observed every year on August 19 across the world to pay tribute to aid workers who risk their lives in humanitarian service.

Purpose of this day: (i) Provide opportunity to celebrate spirit that inspires humanitarian work around globe. (ii) Pay tribute to aid workers who risk their lives in humanitarian service and (iii) Rally support for people affected by crisis around the world.

2019 WHD theme campaign: #WomenHumanitarians. It seeks to honour work of women in crises throughout the world. Women humanitarians make up large number of those who risk their own lives to save others. They are often first to respond and the last to leave and dedicate their lives to helping people affected by crises.

World Humanitarian Day

It was proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) by passing resolution A/63/L.49 in 2008. It was sponsored by Sweden and was passed by UNGA on Strengthening of Coordination of Emergency Assistance of UN. Since 2009, this day is observed annually by humanitarian community across the world to ensure safety and security of humanitarian aid workers and for their well-being, survival and dignity of people affected by crisis.

Why August 19? The day marks death of then Special Representative of Secretary-General to Iraq, Sérgio Vieira de Mello and 21 of his colleagues who were killed in bombing in Baghdad, Iraq on August 19, 2003.

NASA takes first high-resolution measurements of Interplanetary Shock

NASA's Magnetospheric Multiscale (MMS) mission took first high-resolution measurements of an interplanetary shock. These shocks are made of particles and electromagnetic waves launched by Sun. These interplanetary shocks provide ideal test beds for learning about larger universal phenomena.

About Interplanetary shocks

They are type of collisionless shock — ones where particles transfer energy through electromagnetic fields instead of directly bouncing into one another. These collisionless shocks are found throughout the universe, including in supernovae, black holes and distant stars. These shocks are made of particles and electromagnetic waves launched by the Sun, which continually releases streams of charged particles called solar wind.

About Magnetospheric Multiscale (MMS) mission

It is NASA's robotic space mission launched in March 2015 to study Earth's magnetosphere. It consists of constellation of four identical spacecraft that orbit/fly in tetrahedral formation around Earth through dynamic magnetic system surrounding our planet to study Magnetic reconnection. It is also designed to gather information about microphysics of energetic particle turbulence and acceleration, processes that occur in many astrophysical plasmas.

Records: In November 2016, it had set Guinness world record for highest altitude fix of Global Positioning System (GPS) signal at 70000 kilometers above the surface of the Earth. It also had achieved closest flying separation of multi-spacecraft formation with only 7.2 km between the four satellites.

Magnetic reconnection: It is phenomenon unique to plasma i.e. mix of negatively and positively charged particles that make up stars, fill space and account for an estimated 99% of the observable universe.

August 21, 2019

DRDO transfers design of Mobile Metallic Ramp (MMR) to Indian Army

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) transferred the design of Mobile Metallic Ramp (MMR) to Indian Army. The designs of were handed over by Chairman of DRDO Dr G Satheesh Reddy to Vice Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Devraj Anbu at an event held at DRDO Bhawan in New Delhi.

About Mobile Metallic Ramp (MMR)

Developed by: MMR has been designed and developed by Centre for Fire, Explosive and Environment Safety (CFEES), DRDO's premier research laboratory.

It has a load bearing capacity of 70 metric ton (MT).

It has been designed and developed on requirements projected by Army for reducing Strategic Mobility time of mobilising Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFVs).

Significance: As MMR is portable, modular in design, which can be easily assembled or disassembled thus

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it will provide strategic mobility for Armoured and Mechanised units and formations of Army.

About Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

It is an government agency which is under the administrative control of *Union Ministry of Defence*.

It was founded in 1958 and is headquartered in New Delhi.

It is charged with military's research and development.

With a network of 52 laboratories, which are engaged in developing defence technologies covering various fields, DRDO is India's largest and most diverse research organisation.

Sadbhavna Diwas: Birth anniversary of late Rajiv Gandhi celebrated

Every year 20 August is celebrated as **Sadbhavna Diwas** or **Communal Harmony Day** to commemorate birth anniversary of late Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India. This day is observed to encourage national integration, peace, affection and communal harmony among Indian people of all religions.

On this observance, close family members and senior Congress party members pay homage to his memory and legacy by laying down wreaths and garlands on **Veer Bhoomi**, where he was cremated.

About Sadbhavna Diwas

20 August 2019 marks **75th birth anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi**. On occasion of Sadbhavna Diwas 2019- Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi inaugurated an exhibition dedicated to Rajiv Gandhi titled '*Memories and Archives of Rajiv Gandhi*'.

Rahul Gandhi inaugurates *Rajiv Gandhi Socio-Technical, Knowledge, Innovation and Learning Lab*.

Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavna Award

In 1992, a year after Rajiv Gandhi's assassination the All India Congress Committee (AICC) of Indian National Congress (INC) instituted Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavna award in memory of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

This award is presented every year to those who have devoted their life in understanding and promoting social harmony. It constitutes a citation and cash Prize of Rs 10 Lakh.

About Rajiv Gandhi

He became the youngest ever prime minister of India at the age of 40. He took over as 6th prime minister after his mother and the prime minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her bodyguard in 1984.

He was assassinated by a Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) suicide bomber in May 1991, during an election rally in Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu.

His death anniversary is observed as **Anti-Terrorism Day**.

Punjab govt. launches 'Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana' health insurance scheme

State government of Punjab launched a mega health insurance scheme title 'Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana' (MGSSBY) for poor by clubbing Centre's Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) plan with its own. The PMJAY was unveiled in September 2018 by the Centre and kept on hold so far by Punjab government.

The scheme was launched by Punjab's Chief Minister Amarinder Singh to mark *75th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi*. With launch of this scheme, Punjab has become 1st state to offer medical insurance for such a large proportion of its population.

About Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana

It incorporates Ayushman Bharat or Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY), Centre's health insurance scheme for poor. By clubbing Centre's Ayushman Bharat plan with its MGSSBY, it is expected to benefit 46 lakh families covering 76% of state's population.

Going by last Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC), Ayushman Bharat or PMJAY would have covered 14.86 lakh families in Punjab. Now the Punjab scheme has extended this to cover 31 lakh more families, taking total beneficiary to nearly 46 lakh families.

Salient Features

Insurance Coverage: Like PMJAY, this Punjab government's scheme will also provide cashless health insurance cover of Rs.5 lakh/year.

First Beneficiary: 11 people from Mohali district were handed over their e-cards, becoming the 1st beneficiaries of scheme.

Cost Ratio: Centre and state government will bear the cost of annual premium for 14.86 lakh families in

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ratio of 60:40 and for remaining beneficiaries the state government will bear entire expense. The Punjab government will shell out Rs.276 crore, or 83% of annual premium of Rs.333 crore and Centre will pay the remaining Rs.57 crore.

Implementation: There are 1,396 treatment packages under the scheme, which will be implemented through more than 450 empanelled hospitals, including 200 government hospitals.

Surgical packages under scheme also include pre-hospitalisation expenses for 3 days and for a 15-day post-hospitalisation period.

Significance: Scheme would be extend to over 76% of its population, in sharp contrast to 12% that would have been covered under Centre's PMJAY. Similar schemes in other states cover only up to a mere 30% of their population.

National Conference of Tourism Ministers concludes

The one-day National Conference of Tourism Ministers organized by Union Ministry of Tourism was concluded successfully in New Delhi. It was inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Tourism & Culture (Independent Charge) Prahlad Singh Patel and was attended by State Tourism Ministers of 19 States, Secretaries of Tourism and senior officials from States and Union Territories (UTs). Participants deliberated on various issues related to development and promotion of Tourism.

Key Highlights of Conference

Tourism Minister handed over 3 new Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) and 5 new Letters of Intent (LoIs) to prospective Monument Mitras at conference.

Presentations were given by State Governments of Kerala and Sikkim showcasing their best practices in tourism sector.

Tourism Minister urged all states and UTs-

For better coordination between Centre and States to increase number of tourists in India and to make concerted efforts to realise Prime Minister's dream of doubling tourists, both foreign and domestic over next 5 years.

To follow norms of UNESCO while making proposals for Heritage site of their sites with help of ASI.

To focus on adventure tourism to attract more tourists in this sector as India has great potential in its natural sites

Various Initiatives Launched-

Incredible India Portal: At the conference Hindi version of new Incredible India portal was launched by Tourism Minister. The Arabic, Chinese and Spanish versions of new Incredible India website will be launched in September 2019. The new Incredible India website was launched on 14 June 2018 and since then the website has attracted 85,84,928 total visitors including 65,31,722 Unique Visitors (as on 31 July 2019).

Incredible India Tourist Facilitator Certification (IITFC) portal: This IITFC Programme is a digital initiative of Union Ministry of Tourism for citizens of India to become a part of booming Tourism Industry. IITFC is an online programme where anyone can learn about tourism at their own time, pace, path and space. The successful completion of this programme would enable learner to become a Certified Tourist Facilitator of Union Ministry of Tourism.

Discussions were held with States and UTs to get their inputs and feedback on following areas-

1. Developing an all-encompassing One Stop Solution including information on tourism related services through a web based application and a Grievance Redressal Mechanism through Twitter and Tourist-Helpline
2. Adoption of Adventure Tourism and Bed & Breakfast or Homestay Scheme Guidelines by States or Uts
3. Status of projects sanctioned under Swadesh Darshan & PRASHAD (Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive) Schemes and implementation of Public Financial Management System (PFMS).

High-Level Meeting held between Indian and Sri Lankan Coast Guards

The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) held a High-Level Meeting (HLM) with Sri Lanka Coast Guard at Coast
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Guard Headquarters in New Delhi to discuss issues of mutual safety and security. The Indian side was led by K Natarajan, Director General, Coast Guard while Sri Lankan delegation was headed by Rear Admiral Samantha Wimalathunge. A four member delegation of Sri Lanka Coast Guard is on an official visit to India from 19–23 August 2019.

Highlights of High-Level Meeting

HLM took place under provisions of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between two sides (India-Sri Lanka) for establishment of a collaborative relationship to combat transnational illegal activities at sea and develop regional co-operation.

Both sides agreed to strengthen co-operation in addressing a spectrum of maritime issues concerning safety and security.

Both sides discussed and agreed to continue capacity building of Sri Lanka Coast Guard by Indian Coast Guard, training of Sri Lanka Coast Guard personnel and mutual co-operation in multilateral forums.

Recent Developments: Apprehension of 2 fishing boats involved in drug trafficking by Sri Lanka based on information exchange undertaken by Indian Coast Guard invoking MoU was recognised as an important enabler for pursuing further collaborative response to emerging situations at sea.

India to offer e-Tourist Visa fee based on tourist footfall

India will introduce a flexible e-tourist visa regime for more than 160 countries based on tourist footfall. As per this the e-tourist visa fee would be higher for peak season of July to March and a considerably lower fee during lean period of April to June. The objective behind the move is to encourage foreign tourists to visit India.

Both the Union Home Ministry and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) have given approval to the flexible e-tourist visa regime.

Key Highlights

Fee for e-visa with a validity of 30 days to 5 years ranges between \$10 and \$80.

There will be **no visa fee** for tourists from belonging to **Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC)**, which consists of 14 Pacific Island nations namely- Cook Islands, Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Niue Island, Samoa, Fiji, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Tonga. Visa fee will also be exempted for tourist from Mauritius, Uruguay, Myanmar, Indonesia, Jamaica, Seychelles and South Africa and Argentina.

Tourists from all countries to which India has extended e-visa facility will pay \$10 for 30 day e-visa during lean season and will have to pay \$25 during peak period. Tourists from these nations will have to pay \$40 for 1-year e-visa and \$80 for 5-year e-visa validity.

For Sri Lanka, Japan and Singapore, the 30-day lean period visa fee is suggested to cost \$10, and for peak season 30-day visa and for 1-year and 5-year e-visa fee is \$25.

US test-fires Medium-Range Cruise Missile after exiting INF treaty

The United States Department of Defense (DoD) announced successful testing of a medium-range ground-launched cruise missile, just weeks after withdrawing from Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, a Cold War-era pact with Russia eliminating that class of nuclear-capable weapons.

Key Highlights

The missile was launched from US Navy-controlled San Nicolas Island off the coast of Los Angeles in California.

The test cruise missile exited its ground mobile launcher and accurately impacted its target after more than 500 kilometers (310 miles) of flight. INF treaty banned development of missiles with a range of 500-5,500 kilometres.

The missile tested was a version of nuclear-capable *Tomahawk cruise missile*. The ground-launched version of Tomahawk was removed from service after INF Treaty was ratified.

Although the missile was described as 'conventionally configured' by US, which means it is not nuclear-equipped, but the launch was a sign of US increasing its nuclear war-fighting capabilities in wake of the collapse of INF Treaty on 2 August 2019.

Data collected and lessons learned from this test will inform DoDs development of future intermediate-range capabilities.



The 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty banned all land-based missiles, conventional and nuclear, that could travel between 500 and 5,500 kilometers. It worked towards abolishing a class of nuclear arms being deployed by United States and the then-Soviet Union that left Europe most threatened.

Concern:

Many fear that the end of INF, which US accused Russia of having violated in recent years, will lead to a new and dangerous nuclear arms race.

In early August 2019 US Secretary of Defense Mark Esper highlighted that since US is no longer bound by INF therefore it had already begun work to develop mobile, conventional, ground-launched cruise and ballistic missile systems.

Defence secretary stressed that US was not embarking on a new arms race as currently US don't have plans to build nuclear-tipped INF-range weapons. However US would like to deploy new intermediate-range missiles in Asia, a move that would likely anger China, which was not party to the INF.

Which five new Fish species discovered are in Arunachal Pradesh?

A fisheries and aquatic ecology research team from zoology department of Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU) discovered 5 species of fish from various districts of Arunachal Pradesh. The team was led by RGU Professor DN Das. Details of discovery have been published in various journals of international repute.

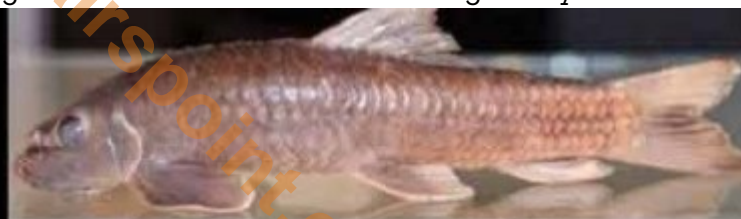
Majority of water bodies in remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh are still not easily accessible to researchers due to a difficult terrain which includes rain forests, steep hills besides communication problems. Researchers are however optimistic that meticulous exploration may result in more discoveries of new fish species from state in future.

Newly-Discovered Fish Species

1. **Mystus prabini**– found in Sinkin and Dibang rivers in Lower Dibang Valley district
2. **Exostoma kottelati**– found in Ranga river in Lower Subansiri district
3. **Creteuchiloglanis tawangensis**– found in Tawangchu river in Tawang district
4. **Garra ranganensis**– found in Ranga river
5. **Physoschistura harkishorei**– found in Dibang and Lohit rivers in Lower Dibang Valley district



Mystus prabini



Garra ranganensis



Exostoma kottelati



Creteuchiloglanis tawangensis



Physoschistura harkishorei

August 22, 2019

Defence Minister approves reform of Army headquarters

Union Minister of Defence Rajnath Singh has approved certain decisions regarding re-organisation of

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Army Headquarters. This approval for restructuring of Army headquarters was part of four studies conducted by Army for a leaner and more efficient force.

Key Decisions Taken

Defence Minister approved setting up separate bodies to probe allegations of wrongdoings against officials with an aim to enhance transparency and put in place a more stringent mechanism to look into corruption and human rights violations in armed forces. These **Two Special Vigilance Cells** approved by Defence Minister were part of the military reforms.

1. FOR CORRUPTION: A separate Vigilance Cell under COAS with Tri-Services representation

At present, the vigilance function for Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) is through multiple agencies and there is no single point interface. As per restructuring of Army headquarters an independent vigilance cell will be made functional under COAS and accordingly, ADG (Vigilance) will be placed directly under COAS for this purpose. It will have 3 Colonel-level officers including one each from Indian Army, Indian Air Force (IAF) and Indian Navy. This will be done within existing posts at Army headquarters.

2. FOR HUMAN RIGHT VIOLATIONS: An umbrella organisation under VCOAS for enhanced focus on human rights issues

It has been decided to set up a special **Human Rights Section** headed by ADG (Major General rank officer) directly under Vice Chief of the Army Staff (VCOAS) for giving high priority to observance of human rights convention as well as values. This Human Right section will be *nodal point for examining any Human Rights violation reports*. Further, to enhance transparency and ensure best of investigative expertise is available to section, a Police officer of SSP or SP rank will be taken on deputation.

Re-location of 206 Army Officers from AHQ to Formations/Units of Field Army

Defence Ministry felt that combat worthy officers who are serving in Army Headquarters should be in field units. 206 officers in total will be optimized from AHQ and who will be then be made available additionally to Formations/Units of Field Army. Among those who will be moving out of AHQ include 186 Lieutenant Colonels, 9 Colonels, 8 Brigadiers and 3 Major Generals.

Idea behind re-locating Army Officers is to enhance leadership in field areas and enhance its operations in forward areas as number is nearly 20% of strength of these officers in Army Headquarters. Currently, the number of officers till rank of Colonel at Army Headquarters is around 1,000 to 1,100.

Reason: Less number of fighting officers on front to lead soldiers had been a long standing demand of Army. Field units had been operating with only 50% requirement of officers. Even though around 25 officers are considered ideal, the field units have been functioning with only 10-12 officers.

It is the officers who lead men in combat therefore having more of them with field units will definitely enhance operational capabilities.

Rajiv Gauba appointed next Cabinet Secretary for two years

The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved appointment of Rajiv Gauba, as India's new Cabinet Secretary for a tenure of two years. His term will start from 30 August 2019 or until further orders, whichever is earlier.

Key Highlights

Rajiv Gauba will initially join the Cabinet Secretariat as *Officer on Special Duty* from date of his assumption of charge till he takes over as Cabinet Secretary- the most powerful position in country's civil service.

He will take over charge of country's top bureaucratic from incumbent *Pradeep Kumar Sinha*, a 1977 batch Uttar Pradesh-cadre IAS officer.

While the position of Cabinet Secretary is for 2 years period but under present rules of service, there is an enabling provision of an extension, granting 4 years of tenure.

About Rajiv Gauba

He is 1982 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Jharkhand cadre. He is currently serving as secretary in ministry of home affairs. He replaced Rajiv Mehrishi as the union home secretary.

He was born in Punjab in 1958, and is a physics graduate from Patna University.

Career: He was chief secretary of Jharkhand for 15 months before joining urban development ministry on 1 April 2016. He also served as collector and district magistrate of Nalanda, Muzaffarpur and Gaya districts in undivided state of Bihar.



He has been credited as being architect of labour reforms in Jharkhand and helping bring down violence in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected areas in mineral rich state.

He has also been credited by work done by him during his stint in ministry of environment and forests.

Teachers Training Programme 'NISHTHA' launched by HRD Ministry

Union Minister of Human Resources Development (HRD) Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched the Integrated Teachers' Training Programme, **NISHTHA** or **National Initiative for School Head's and Teachers' Holistic Advancement** in New Delhi. HRD Minister also launched NISHTHA initiative's Website, Training Modules, Primer Booklet and Mobile App built for purpose.

The Mobile App and Learning Management System (LMS) which will be used for registration of Resource Persons and Teachers, training gap and impact analysis, monitoring, mentoring and measuring progress online is based on MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) and have been developed by NCERT.

Key Features of NISHTHA

Objective: The Integrated Teachers' Training Programme aims to build capacities by training around 42 lakh teachers across country.

Purpose: In a bid to boost education and employment, HRD Ministry is focusing on reskilling teaching workforce. Integrated training will motivate and equip teachers to encourage and foster critical thinking in students, handle diverse situations and act as 1st level counsellors.

Participants: It covers all teachers and Heads of school at elementary level in all government school, faculty members of State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Block Resource Coordinators and Cluster Resource Coordinators as well as other educational departments of all States and Union Territories (UTs).

NISHTHA is *world's largest teachers' training programme of its kind*. It is first of its kind initiative wherein standardized training modules are developed at national level for all states and UTs.

Training Modules: for NISHTHA have been developed by consultative process involving suggestions from states and Union Territories (UTs) and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), School Principals and Non-Governmental Organizations, (NGOs) like Aurobindo Society, Kaivalya Foundation, Azim Premji Foundation and Tata Trust.

Conducting Training: The 33120 Key Resource Persons (KRPs) and State Resource Persons (SRP) identified by State and UTs will be conducting training directly. These KRPs will in turn be trained by 120 National Resource Persons identified from National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), CBSE, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), KVS, NVS, and NGOs.

Teacher Awareness and Skill Development:

Teachers will get awareness and develop their skills on various aspects related to Learning Outcomes, Learner-centered Pedagogy, Competency Based Learning and Testing, School Safety and Security, Inclusive Education and Personal-social qualities.

Teachers will also get awareness on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching-learning including Artificial Intelligence (AI), Health and well-being including yoga, Initiatives in School Education including library, kitchen garden, eco club, youth club, School Leadership qualities, Environmental Concerns, Pre-school, Pre-vocational Education and School Based Assessment in a joyful learning manner.

Significance: Teachers hold a pivotal position in society and help build character in students. Therefore, through this initiative, teachers at elementary level will be able to acquire scientific temperament and knowledge of other important educational aspects and transfer it to students.

Ajay Kumar appointed new Defence Secretary

The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved appointment of Ajay Kumar as Secretary, Union Ministry of Defence. He is currently serving as Secretary, Department of Defence Production, Union Ministry of Defence.

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**Key Highlights**

Ajay Kumar, Secretary, Defence Production, has been shifted as Defence Secretary but without 2 years' tenure.

He will take over charge from incumbent Sanjay Mitra, a 1982 batch West Bengal-cadre IAS officer upon completion of his term. Sanjay Mitra has served as Defence Secretary for more than 2 years and on completion of his 2-year tenure in June 2019, he was given 3 months' extension.

It seems that Union government has done away with 2-year tenure for Defence Secretary post. Along with posts of Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary, External Affairs Secretary, the Defence Secretary post was also a 2-year tenure one.

About Ajay Kumar

He is a 1985 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer belonging to Kerala cadre.

He was born on 2 October 1962 in Uttar Pradesh and is a Bachelor of Technology graduate in electrical engineering from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur.

He is 39th Defence Production Secretary of India.

Other ACC Appointments

Subash Chandra: He is 1986 batch Karnataka cadre IAS officer. He will replace Ajay Kumar as the new Defence Production Secretary of India. He is currently serving as Special Secretary, Union Ministry of Defence.

Brij Kumar Agarwal: He is a 1985 batch Himachal Pradesh cadre IAS officer. He has been appointed as new Secretary, Lokpal. His appointment as Secretary to Lokpal will be in rank and pay of Secretary to Government of India.

'SARAL'- State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index launched by Power Minister

RK Singh, Union Minister of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy (IC) launched **SARAL-State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index** during Review Planning and Monitoring (RPM) Meeting with States and State Power Utilities, held in New Delhi. SARAL evaluates Indian states based on their attractiveness for rooftop development. **Karnataka** has been placed at 1st rank in Index followed by Telangana, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh which got 2nd, 3rd and 4th rank respectively.

SARAL: State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index

It is the 1st of its kind index to provide a comprehensive overview of state-level measures adopted to facilitate rooftop solar deployment.

Designed by: The Index has been designed by Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in collaboration with Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (SSEF), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and Ernst & Young (EY).

5 key aspects captured by SARAL –

1. Robustness of Policy Framework
2. Consumer Experience
3. Implementation Environment
4. Business Ecosystem
5. Investment Climate

SARAL encourages each state to assess initiatives taken so far and to improve its solar rooftop ecosystem. This will help states to channelize investments and will create a more conducive environment for solar rooftop installations, encourage investment and will eventually lead to accelerated growth of sector.

Significance: Power Ministry has set a target to operationalize 175 giga watt (GW) of renewable energy capacity by 2022, of which 100 GW solar power to be operational by March 2022 and 40 GW (out of 100 GW) is expected to come from grid connected solar rooftops. Therefore, launching the Index would incentivise rooftop solar by creating healthy competition among States and all States would be encouraged to adopt best practices being followed by top-ranking States.

22 August: International Day for Victims of Acts of Violence based on Religion or Belief

On 22 August 2019 for the first time the world is observing '**International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief**' with aim to honour victims and survivors of heinous acts who often remain forgotten. The international Day comes right after **International Day of**

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Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism, which is observed on 21 August.

Background

Following an unprecedented rise of violence against religious communities and people belonging to religious minorities, **United Nation General Assembly** (UNGA) on 28 May 2019, adopted **resolution A/RES/73/296** designating 22 August as International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief. UNGA recognized the importance of providing victims of acts of violence based on religion or belief and members of their families with appropriate support and assistance in accordance with applicable law.

Significance: By proclaiming an International Day Commemorating Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, the UNGA recalled that States have primary responsibility to promote and protect human rights, including human rights of persons belonging to religious minorities as well as including their right to exercise their religion or belief freely.

CISF win 10 medals 'World Police and Fire Games' 2019 in China

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) sports personnel won 10 medals, at recently-concluded World Police and Fire Games 2019 (WPFPG-2019) held at Chengdu, China's southwestern Sichuan province.

Key Highlights

CISF sports personnel represented India in different sporting events held at WPFPG-2019.

10 medals won by CISF includes 5 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze medals.

CISF DG Rajesh Ranjan felicitated sports personnel for their performance.

CISF has a comprehensive sports facility that seeks to foster culture of sports in force. This also ensures fair and reasonable opportunities to talented sports personnel so that they can fully realise their potential and win laurels for organisation and country.

About World Police and Fire Games

It is a worldwide Olympic-style sporting event which is held every two years. The 2019 edition was held from 8-18 August 8 in Chengdu city, China.

In this Olympic-style competition, Athletes from more than 70 countries participated and competed in more than 60 sports.

Participants: include representative from law enforcement, fire-fighters and police officers from corrections, border protection, probation, customs and immigration. In WPFPG-2019 10,000 athletes participated.

WPFPG-2021: World Police and Fire Games 2021 will be held in Rotterdam, Netherlands. **WPFPG-2023** will be in Winnipeg, Canada.

Govt. opens up 137 Himalayan Peaks to foreign mountaineers and trekkers

It is an historic step towards promoting *adventure tourism* in the country. Government of India has allowed access to 137 mountain peaks to foreigners desirous of obtaining **Mountaineering Visa** ('MX') for mountaineering and trekking. These peaks are located in States of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim.

In recently concluded **National Tourism Conference**, New Delhi, in which Tourism Ministers from States/UTs participated, the Tourism Minister emphasized on utilizing the adventure tourism potential in Indian economy and the need for ensuring safety of those travellers going for adventure tourism.

Key Highlights

Out of 137 Mountain peaks, the highest number of 51 peaks have been opened to foreigners in Uttarakhand and 15 peaks of Jammu and Kashmir have also been included in list.

Current Scenario: Until now the foreigners have to seek permission from Defence Ministry and Home Ministry to climb these peaks. Now with government opening them up, foreigners can now directly apply to *Indian Mountaineering Foundation* for permits. This decision comes following a proposal from tourism ministry to Home Ministry for opening up mountaineering and trekking in all Himalayan states.

Rule to be followed:

Home ministry has clarified that for carrying satellite phones the expedition teams have to take prior permissions from department of telecommunication and all information gathered during journey have to be shared with locals formations.



The expedition team is not allowed to take any photos of any installations without consent and also will have to limit itself to approved routes.

Way Ahead

States must exercise utmost caution while registering adventure tourism operators and should ensure that **Indian Adventure Tourism Guidelines 2018** are followed by States. The Indian Adventure Tourism Guidelines 2018 cover land, air and water-based activities including mountaineering, trekking, paragliding, bungee jumping, river rafting, kayaking, scuba diving, snorkelling and many other sports.

BCCI awards title sponsorship rights to Paytm for 5 more years

Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has extended Paytm's association as title sponsor for Indian cricket team for all cricket matches, domestic and international, played in India for 5 more years. Paytm bagged the title sponsorship rights by signing the deal for Rs.326.80 crores which it will pay to BCCI over a period ranging between 2019 and 2023, starting October 2019.

Key Highlights

After opening of the bid documents by BCCI at its headquarter in Mumbai for next cycle- October 2019 to September 2023, **One 97 Communications Pvt. Ltd.**, the parent company of Paytm walked away with winning bid at Rs.3.80 crores/match.

This winning bid of Rs.3.80 crore/match is at 58% incremental value (in sponsorship amount), in comparison to previous per match value of Rs.2.4 crores. In October 2015, Paytm-the mobile payment and financial services platform had replaced Micromax with a bid of Rs. 2.42 crore/match.

Even though the men's international cricket in India is the drawing card for market, the BCCI offers an extension of sponsorship rights for domestic cricket and women's international games at no additional cost.

With India's men set to host at least 86 international matches in bilateral series over next 4 year period, Paytm will continue to be title sponsor for all major cricket tournaments in India.

August 23, 2019

Indian Railways to prohibit single-use plastic from October 2

In a move to curb use of plastics, Union Ministry of Railways has directed all regional offices to ensure complete removal of single-use plastics from all railways stations effective from 2 October 2019. The move is an effort by Indian Railways to shield the environment from menace of plastic.

Key Highlights

Indian Railways has directed all Railway units to enforce ban on single use plastic material, with less than 50 micron thickness, except where the thickness of such plastic sheets impair functionality of product. Emphasis is on making necessary arrangements to minimize generation of plastic waste, its eco- friendly disposal and to follow Plastic Waste Management rules.

Railway Ministry has also instructed its Railway units to administer a pledge on 2nd October 2019 to cut use of plastics and to adapt measures such as Information, Education & Communication (IEC) to create awareness among railway users.

Circular issued by Ministry of Railways in this regard states following instructions-

- Ban on single use plastic material
- Railways will work with vendors at all railway platforms to encourage all railway vendors to avoid use of plastic carry bags
- Railway employees should *reduce, reuse and refuse* plastic products and should use inexpensive reusable bags to reduce plastic footprint
- **IRCTC** (Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation) to implement return of plastic drinking water bottles as part of **Extended Producer Responsibility**- a strategy to add all of environmental costs associated with a product throughout product life cycle to market price of that product and Plastic Bottle crushing machines to be provided expeditiously for this purpose. In 1st phase 1,853 plastic water bottle crushing machines will be installed at 360 major stations.
- Ban will be strictly enforced on railway stations from 2nd October 2019 and other properties across country as part of **'Plastic Free Railway'**



Saudi Arabia: Travel abroad restriction on women lifted

In a landmark reform, Saudi Arabia has allowed women above 21 years of age to receive passports (issue or renew) and travel abroad without permission from a male guardian. Saudi Arabian Women have for long required permission from their male guardians (which includes husband, father and other male relatives) for these tasks. These restrictions have drawn international censure also.

Key Highlights

Saudi Arabia's Departments of Passport and Civil Status have begun enforcing amended *Travel Documents Law and regulations*, for the purpose of allowing women to travel abroad without permission.

In addition to this, mothers who have primary custody of their children can now also apply for passports and provide travel permission for their children.

This reform weakens the restrictive guardianship system that has long been a symbol of repression against women in Saudi Arabia.

Trigger: This reform comes after several high-profile attempts by Saudi Arabian women to escape alleged guardianship abuse were witnessed despite a string of reforms undertaken by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman regime.

Other reforms undertaken by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman includes-

A landmark decree in 2018 that overturned world's only ban on women drivers.

In early August 2019, Saudi women were also granted right same as men, to officially register childbirth, marriage and divorce as well as to be recognized as a guardian to children who are minors.

Reform comes as OPEC (Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries) petroleum producer stumbles from low oil prices and seeks to boost employment opportunities for women who are currently facing chronic joblessness.

'The Diary of Manu Gandhi' Book launched in New Delhi

The book **'The Diary of Manu Gandhi'** (1943-44), edited and translated by Tridip Suhrud, was launched by Prahlad Singh Patel, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Culture and Tourism, at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi. The book has been brought out on occasion of **150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi** by National Archives of India in collaboration with Oxford University Press.

Manu Gandhi (Mridula): She was a grand niece of Mahatma Gandhi, daughter of his Nephew Jaisukhlal Amritlal Gandhi, and stayed with M Gandhi till his assassination on 30 January 1948. She was an aide to Kasturba Gandhi (wife of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi) during her imprisonment in Aga Khan Palace in 1943.

About 'The Diary of Manu Gandhi'

The book was originally written in Gujarati and has been edited and translated by **Tridip Suhrud**, a well known scholar engaged in understanding Gandhian Intellectual tradition.

First volume of the diary covers period from 1943-1944 which includes a record of her life and times with Mahatma Gandhi. She had expressed the deep emotional bond she had developed with Gandhiji.

The book has been authenticated by M. Gandhi himself. The meticulous and intimate entries in Diary throws light on his life as a prisoner and his endeavour to establish possibility of collective non-violence.

It chronicles spiritual and educational pursuits of a woman who takes up writing as a mode of self-examination. Author has shared a moving portrait of Kasturba Gandhi's illness and death.

Significance: The publication of such books immensely benefit scholars interested in Gandhian studies and history of modern India at large. The book will be another milestone added to publications that have been brought out by National Archives of India from time to time.

About National Archives of India

It is an Attached Office under *Union Ministry of Culture*.

It was established as 'Imperial Record Department' on 11 March 1891 at Kolkata (then Calcutta).

Following the transfer of capital from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911, the present building of National Archives of India was constructed in 1926. The New Delhi's building was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. All records stored were completely transferred from Calcutta to New Delhi in 1937.

MoU signed between Indian Army and Tata Realty

In order to provide quality housing to army personnel, a historic milestone was reached with the signing

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of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between *Indian Army* and *Tata Realty & Housing*.

Key Highlights of MoU

It enables Indian Army's personnel to immediately take over dwelling units in 13 'Ready to Move in' projects of Tata Realty pan India spread in more than 10 cities such as Pune, Chennai, Bengaluru, Gurugram among others. These housing units are available at a discount ranging from 11% to 27%.

This MoU signals a new era for Army Welfare Housing Organization (AWHO), which has always endeavored to provide quality housing for personnel in Indian Army who are deployed in remote locations across country.

AWHO will now facilitate acquisition of homes from reputed private builders at discounted rather than building them for soldiers.

About Army Welfare Housing Organisation (AWHO)

It is a society formed in December 1978 with objective of constructing structurally sound, economically viable and functionally efficient dwelling units for serving or retired Army personnel and their widows in selected stations throughout India.

It comes under **Indian Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860**.

Function: To construct houses for desirous serving or retired members of Army and their widows on 'NO PROFIT NO LOSS' basis in selected popular stations.

Ex-officio chairman of AWHO: Adjutant-General of Indian Army (the senior administration officer who reports to Chief of Army Staff). AWHO's board of governors is entirely constituted of senior army officers. The Adjutant-General of the Indian Army is also the Colonel of Corps of Military Police.

Bavar-373: Iran's new home-grown air defence system unveiled

Iran unveiled its new home-grown air defence system called **Bavar-373** during a ceremony held on Iran's 'National Defence Industry Day'. Iran's President Hassan Rouhani has ordered to add Bavar-373 to country's missile defence network.

The unveiling takes place against a backdrop of rising tensions between Iran and United States (US) since US President Donald Trump's 2018 decision to unilaterally withdrew US from *Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action* also known *Iran nuclear deal* (2015) and reimposing sanctions on Iran.

About Bavar-373 Missile System

The word Bavar means 'believe' in Farsi. It is being touted as Islamic republic's 1st domestically produced long-range missile defence system.

Features–

It is a long-range mobile surface-to-air missile system.

Range: more than 200 kilometres (124 miles)

This long-range missile system is suited to Iran's geography.

It competes with Russia's S-300 and USA's *Patriot* systems. It is being touted as a system better than Russia's S-300 and close to S-400.

Background

Iran began making Bavar after the purchase of Russia's S-300 system was suspended in 2010 due to international sanctions imposed on it. However, in March 2016, Iran installed S-300 system following several years of delays, after the **JCPOA nuclear agreement** was reached between **Iran and the P5+1** (China France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) on 14 July 2015, which allowed lifting of international sanctions on Iran.

Government notifies Sabka Vishwas-Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme, 2019

Union Finance Ministry has notified Sabka Vishwas-Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme, 2019, a dispute resolution and amnesty scheme to reduce legacy service tax and central excise cases. It will become operational from September 1, 2019 four months till December 31, 2019. It can be availed by taxpayers for closing their pending disputes relating to legacy Service Tax and Central Excise cases that are now subsumed under Goods and Services Tax (GST) so they can focus on GST.

About Sabka Vishwas-Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme 2019

Objective: To free large number of small taxpayers of their pending disputes with the tax administration.

Two main components of Scheme:

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(i) Dispute resolution: It is aimed at liquidating legacy cases of Central Excise and Service Tax that have been subsumed in GST and are pending in litigation at various forums.

(ii) Amnesty component: It provides opportunity to taxpayers to pay outstanding tax and be free of any other consequence under law.

Relief: It provides substantial relief in tax dues for all categories of cases as well as full waiver of interest, fine or penalty. It also provides for complete amnesty from prosecution.

Background

This scheme was announced by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her Budget speech 2019 to free large number of small taxpayers of their pending disputes with the tax administration. More than Rs 3.75 lakh crore is blocked in excise and service tax litigations.

24th Meeting of Western Zonal Council held in Panaji

The 24th Meeting of Western Zonal Council held was held in Panaji, capital of Goa. It was chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Goa being host state, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant was its vice-chairman. It was attended by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani and representatives of Union Territories of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

About Zonal Councils

They are statutory bodies set up under **States Reorganization Act, 1956** (thus, they are not constitutional bodies unlike Interstate Council) to foster Inter-State co-operation and co-ordination among the States.

These councils are mandated to discuss and give recommendations on any matter of common interest in field of socio-economic planning, border disputes, linguistic minorities or inter-State transport etc.

They provide common meeting ground for States to promote and facilitate coordinated efforts for fostering economic and social development. They serve regional fora of cooperative endeavour for States linked with each other geographically, economically and culturally.

There are **total five councils** were created as per States Reorganization Act 1956.

1. **Northern Zonal Council:** Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, National Capital Territory of Delhi (UT) and Chandigarh (UT).
2. **Central Zonal Council:** Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.
3. **Eastern Zonal Council:** Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar and Jharkhand.
4. **Western Zonal Council:** Goa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and UTs of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli
5. **Southern Zonal Council:** Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry (UT).

Composition: All zonal councils are chaired Union Home Minister. Chief Ministers of States as Vice-Chairman of respective zone on rotational basis, each holding office for period of one year at time.

North Eastern Council

North Eastern States Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland and Sikkim are not included in above five Zonal Councils. Their special problems are looked after by North Eastern Council, set up under North Eastern Council Act, 1972. I

Composition: It is also chaired by Union Home Minister. Minister of Development of North East Region (DoNER) is its Vice Chairman. Governors and Chief Ministers of all these eight North Eastern States are its members.

Environment Ministry to relax lease rent on wind power projects

Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change (MoEFCC) has decided to waive off or relax mandatory charging of lease rent of Rs.30,000 per Mega Watt (MW) for wind power projects. This decision was taken in a review meeting chaired by Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar and further enhances government's commitment towards providing clean and green energy at cheaper rate.

Background

Centre government envisages towards meeting maximum energy requirement by tapping renewal energy resources and for achieving the target of clean energy in a time bound manner, various policies and regulations are being constantly updated by government.

At present, for establishing a wind power project over forest land, the existing procedure requires wind

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power companies to pay mandatory charges for compensatory afforestation as well as Net Present value (NPV). In addition to these mandatory charges, wind power companies had to pay additional lease rent of Rs.30,000 per MW. This additional cost is not mandatory for other renewable energy projects for instance solar power and hydel electric projects. Thereby, this additional cost for generation of clean energy by wind power, in turn escalate per unit cost of power at consumer level.

It is expected that this step to waive off lease rent of Rs.30,000 per Mega Watt for wind power projects will boost investment in wind power projects and will help in providing wind power at cheaper rate.

Significance

Promotions of such renewable energy projects strengthens Centre Government's commitments towards *International Agreements* including one of *National Commitment* pledged during *Paris climate conference* (COP21) in December 2015, which was to have 40% of power from renewable resources by 2030. Currently India has over achieved its target and is well on track to ensure that more than 50% of our installed capacity will come from renewable by 2030.

Bharatcraft portal: Government to launch e-commerce marketing platform

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has announced that Union Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) is planning to launch Bharatcraft portal, a desi version e-commerce marketing platform. It will be based on the lines of e-commerce behemoths such as Alibaba and Amazon. It will provide platform for MSMEs to market and sell their products and in turn boost the overall sector. It has potential to achieve revenues of around Rs 10 lakh crore in the 2-3 years.

Need for portal

MSME sector currently contributes nearly 29% to the manufacturing segment and 40% to the exports. It has potential to generate additional employment of 5 crore in the next five years. Union Government has set target to increase contribution of MSMEs in the manufacturing sector to 50% in the next five years.

Ocean Energy gets renewable energy Status

Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has approved proposal to declare ocean energy as Renewable Energy. It has clarified to all stakeholders that energy produced using various forms of ocean energy such as tidal, wave and ocean thermal energy conversion (OTEC) will be considered as Renewable Energy. The decision will give boost to ocean energy in the country. It will make ocean energy eligible for meeting the non-solar Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPO).

Background

Ocean energy is currently under-utilized and as on date, India does not have any installed ocean energy capacity. It is mostly exploited through a few technologies including wave, tidal, current energy and ocean thermal energy.

The total identified potential of tidal energy is about 12,455 mega watt (MW), with potential locations identified at Khambhat and Kutch regions of Gujarat and large backwaters where barrage technology could be used.

Preliminary estimates also have pegged total potential of wave energy in India along the country's coast to be about 40,000 MW. OTEC has theoretical potential of 180,000 MW, but it is subject to suitable technological evolution. Gulf of Kutch and Gulf of Cambay in Gujarat on west coast of the country also show potential for tidal energy production.

August 24, 2019

1st World Youth Conference on Kindness held in New Delhi

The first World Youth Conference for Kindness was recently held in New Delhi. It was inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind. It was organised by UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP).

About Conference

It was held in commemoration of 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi. It was aimed at providing youth with creative, effective methods of engaging and realising UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It sought inspiration from Gandhi's championing of non-violence. Its **theme** was 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Gandhi for the Contemporary World: Celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.' It saw participation of 60 international delegates, prominent artists, nobel laureates and over 1,000 youth

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from over 27 countries, each of whom work in the field of positive social change.

Project SU.RE: Sustainable fashion project launched in Mumbai

Union Minister for Textiles Smriti Zubin Irani launched Project SURE, a move towards sustainable fashion at Lakmé Fashion Winter/Festive 2019 held in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The project aims to move towards sustainable fashion that contributes to a clean environment.

About SURE project

SURE stands for '**Sustainable Resolution**'. It is first holistic effort by the apparel industry towards gradually introducing a broader framework for establishing critical sustainability goals for the industry.

Objective: It is commitment by India's apparel industry to set a sustainable pathway for Indian fashion industry. It also seeks to move apparel industry towards fashion that contributes to a clean environment.

Participating agencies: It was launched by Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI); United Nations in India; and IMG Reliance, the organizers of Lakme Fashion Week.

Features: This project is driven by leading industry association CMAI, along with leader in sustainable fashion IMG Reliance. It will help industry reduce its carbon emissions, increase resource efficiency, tackle waste and water management, and create positive social impact to achieve long-term sustainability targets.

Signatories: Top fashion and retail brands like Future Group, Aditya Birla Retail, Shoppers Stop, Arvind Brands, Max, Lifestyle, Raymond, House of Anita Dongre, Westside, Spykar, Levis, Bestsellers and Trends are signatories to the project. These signatory fashion and retail brands have pledged to source or utilise substantial portion of their total consumption using sustainable raw materials and processes by 2025.

Pakistan blacklisted by Asia-Pacific Group of FATF

The Asia Pacific Group (APG) of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has put Pakistan in *Enhanced Expedited Follow Up List (Blacklist)* for its failure to meet its standards. Decision in this regard was taken at FATF APG plenary meeting held in Canberra, Australia.

Reasons for blacklisting: FATF APG has found that Pakistan was non-compliant on 32 of 40 compliance parameters of terror financing and money laundering. On 11 effectiveness parameters of terror financing and money laundering, Pakistan was adjudged as low on 10. Moreover, Pakistan was not able to convince 41-member plenary to upgrade it on any parameter.

About Asia Pacific Group (APG)

It is Financial Action Task Force (FATF)-style regional body for Asia-Pacific region to develop policies to combat money laundering and terror financing. It is inter-governmental organisation founded in 1997 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Members: It consists of 41 member jurisdictions as its members. It also has number of observer jurisdictions and international/regional observer organisations.

Mandate: It is focused on ensuring that its members effectively implement international standards against money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing related to weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

FEDOR: Russia launches its 1st humanoid robot in space

Russia launched life-size humanoid robot called Fedor to International Space Station (ISS). It is the first ever life-size humanoid robot sent into space by Russia. It was launched onboard of unmanned Soyuz MS-14 rocket from Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

About Fedor

Fedor stands for Final Experimental Demonstration Object Research. It is also known as **Skybot F850**. It will spend 10 days learning to assist astronauts on the ISS. Its main purpose is to be used in operations that are dangerous for humans onboard spacecraft and in outer space. During its 10 days at ISS, it will learn new skills such as connecting and disconnecting electric cables, using standard items from screwdriver and spanner to a fire extinguisher.

Features:

It is size of human i.e. 1.80 metres (5 foot 11 inches) tall and weighs 160 kilograms.

It can emulate human body movements. This key skill will allow it to remotely help astronauts or even people on Earth to carry out tasks while humans are strapped into exoskeleton.

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Note: US space agency NASA had sent world's first humanoid robot **Robonaut 2 (R2)** to space in 2011 to work in hazardous environments.

Renovated National Food Laboratory inaugurated at Ghaziabad

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan inaugurated regulator Food Safety and Standard Authority of India's (FSSAI) National Food Laboratory (NFL) in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. It was inaugurated on the occasion of 13th anniversary of enactment of Food Safety and Standards Act, (FSSA) 2006.

About National Food Laboratory (NFL)

It has been established as a result of Public-Private-Partnership (PPP). It makes it first-of-its-kind in the food laboratory sector. It houses state-of-the-art collaborative training centres, namely Centre for Microbiological Analysis Training (C-MAT) and Food Safety Solution Centre (FSSC). It is equipped with latest technologies and facilities to conduct analysis as per global accreditation standards for testing and calibration.

Note: NFL is one of two premier referral laboratories under direct administrative control of FSSAI. The another laboratory located in Kolkata is also being upgraded. FSSAI will also be establishing NFLs at Mumbai and Chennai in the near future along the same lines.

WADA suspends accreditation of India's National Dope Testing Laboratory for 6 months

World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) suspended accreditation of National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) for six months. This suspension was imposed due to non-conformities with International Standard for Laboratories (ISL) by NDTL as identified during WADA site visit.

Reasons for Suspension

WADA had given repeated warnings to NDTL to upgrade its testing methods. Since 2011, lot of positive doping reports were reported out of NDTL in cases where Indian athletes were actually tested negative earlier by it. With rising trust issues, WADA had warned NDTL to improve its testing methods and types of equipment in September 2018.

But NDTL subsequently failed to meet standards, forcing WADA to recommend its suspension following its visit to the lab in May 2019. One of the key areas of concern for WADA was the 'Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometry', which differentiates the presence of a natural and synthetic substance in the body.

Impact of Suspension

This suspension (effective from 20 August 2019) prohibits NDTL from carrying out any anti-doping activities, including all analyses of urine and blood samples. Despite six-month suspension, NADA can still carry on sample collection but tests will have to be conducted at WADA-accredited labs outside India during this period. Moreover, samples collected previously by NDTL will have to be moved safely to an accredited lab.

About World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)

It is global Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) that aims at harmonizing anti-doping regulations in all sports and countries. It is collective initiative led by the International Olympic Committee.

It was established in 1999 in Lausanne Switzerland under so called Declaration of Lausanne. Its headquarters is in Montreal, Canada.

It is mandated to coordinate, promote and monitor the fight against drugs in sports.

ANUBHAV Awards 2019

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions Dr. Jitendra Singh presented ANUBHAV awards, 2019 in New Delhi. This was fourth annual award in the series.

About ANUBHAV awards

They are given by Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare. It seeks to encourage retiree to submit his valuable experience/ suggestions through write-ups.

Genesis: Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare had created Anubhav portal on the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015 with vision to preserve rich experience of retired official in digital form. It envisaged that their rich experience should be preserved for future generation to learn and explore knowledge on various aspects of governance, culture & development history of a particular region. As part of this initiative, an award scheme was introduced in 2016 to incentivize and encourage more retiring



employees to submit their write-ups. Since then, three annual awards ceremony have been organized.

Gujarat tops in Composite Water Management Index 2019

Gujarat topped in 2017-18 in the Composite Water Management Index (CWMI 2.0) report released by NITI Aayog. CWMI 2.0 ranked 25 States and 2 UTs for the reference year 2017-18 as against base year 2016-17. On an average, 80% of states assessed on CWMI 2.0 over the last three years have improved their water management scores, with average improvement of +5.2 points.

About Composite Water Management Index (CWMI)

It was launched by NITI Aayog in 2018 as an important tool to assess and improve the performance of States/ UTs in efficient management of water resources. It seeks to instill sense of cooperative and competitive federalism among the states. It is first ever attempt at of creating pan-India set of metrics that measured different dimensions of water management and use across the lifecycle of water.

It ranks states/UTs based on water data collection exercise conducted by NITI Aayog in partnership with Union Ministry of Jal Shakti, Union Ministry of Rural Development and all States/UTs.

Ranking of states/UTs is based on key 9 themes which are further subdivided into 28 indicators. The nine themes are-

- (i) Source augmentation and restoration of waterbodies (weightage:5%)
- (ii) Groundwater augmentation (15%)
- (iii) Major and medium irrigation-supply side management (15%)
- (iv) Watershed development-Supply side management (10%)
- (v) Participatory Irrigation practices- Demand Side Management (10%).
- (vi) Sustainable on-farm water use practices- Demand side management (10%).
- (vii) Rural drinking water (10%).
- (viii) Urban water supply and sanitation (10%) and Policy and Governance (15%).

CWMI 2.0 Rankings

Gujarat was ranked first in the reference year (2017-18), followed by Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

In North Eastern and Himalayan States: Himachal Pradesh was adjudged number 1 in 2017-18 followed by Uttarakhand, Tripura and Assam.

Union Territories: They have for first time submitted their data. Puducherry was declared as the top ranker.

Incremental change in index (over 2016-17 level): Haryana holds number one position in general States and Uttarakhand ranks at first position amongst North Eastern and Himalayan States.

August 25, 2019

2019 Durand Cup: Gokulam Kerala FC beats Mohun Bagan

Gokulam Kerala FC won Durand Cup 2019 football tournament by beating Mohun Bagan in final held at Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata. Gokulam Kerala FC beat Mohun Bagan with 2-1 as captain Marcus Joseph scored a goal in each half to lead his side to Durand Cup glory. This was Gokulam Kerala FC's debut season.

Key Highlights

With this win the Gokulam Kerala FC becomes 2nd club from Kerala to win the crown after 22 years. In 1997, the I.M. Vijayan-led **FC Kochin** was 1st Kerala club to claim title.

Marcus Joseph scored his 10th and 11th goal of tournament to help Gokulam Kerala FC win.

2019 Durand Cup's Award-

Golden Ball & Golden Boot awards won by Gokulam Kerala FC forward Marcus Joseph.

Golden Glove: Gokulam Kerala FC's goalkeeper CK Ubaid

About Durand Cup

Durand Cup or Durand Football Tournament is a football competition in India. It was founded in 1888 (131 years ago).

It is Asia's oldest football tournament and 3rd oldest football tournament in world.

It is co-hosted by Durand Football Tournament Society (DFTS) and Osians.

Durand Cup 2019 was 129th edition of Durand Cup.

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PM Modi Honoured with UAEs Highest Civilian Award 'Order Of Zayed'

Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi was honoured with prestigious '**Order of Zayed**', United Arab Emirates' (UAE) highest civilian award at a ceremony held in Abu Dhabi (UAE Capital) for PM's contribution in strengthening relations between India and UAE.

About Order of Zayed

The award in name of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, founding father of UAE.

This award acquires special significance as it was awarded to Prime Minister Modi in year of birth centenary of Sheikh Zayed.

However, UAE in April 2019 had announced to confer country's highest award on Modi. He was awarded as a mark of appreciation for his efforts to boost bilateral ties between two nations.

Other Awardees: It has earlier been bestowed on several world leaders which include Russian President Vladimir Putin, Queen Elizabeth II and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

India-UAE

UAE is India's 3rd-largest trade partner with an annual bilateral trade of about \$60 billion. It is also 4th-largest exporter of crude oil for India.

India and UAE enjoy warm, close and multi-faceted relations underpinned by cultural, religious and economic linkages.

Around 3.3 million-strong vibrant Indian community living in UAE nourishes vibrant people-to-people contacts between our two friendly countries.

BWF World Championship 2019: B. Sai Praneeth wins bronze in men's singles

India's B. Sai Praneeth settled for bronze after losing (13-21, 8-21) to Kento Momota of Japan in men's singles semifinal in BWF World Championships 2019 held at St. Jakobshalle in Basel in Switzerland. Kento Momota is world No.1 and defending champion of Badminton World Championship.

Key Highlights

Sai Praneeth, World No. 19, has ended a 36-year wait by becoming only 2nd Indian men's singles player since Prakash Padukone in 1983 to win a bronze medal at World Championships after he defeated world No.4 Jonatan Christie in quarter-final with 24-22, 21-14.

Badminton Association of India has announced a cash reward of Rs.5 lakh for B. Sai Praneeth for winning bronze in BWF World Championship,

About BWF World Championships

Badminton World Federation (BWF) sanctions this badminton tournament.

It was founded in 1977 and is also known as **World Badminton Championships**.

It offers most ranking points, together with Summer Olympic Games.

Winners of tournament are crowned as 'World Champions' and awarded gold medals.

The tournament does not offer any prize money.

2019 BWF World Championships

The badminton tournament was held from 19 to 25 August at St. Jakobshalle in Basel in Switzerland.

Total Competitors in tournament- 359

Nations Participated– 45

Host– Basel. It was chosen to be host of 2019 edition of championships over 2020 Summer Olympics host city, Tokyo (Japan). This bid was approved by Badminton World Federation during a council meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

August 26, 2019

Celebrate September as Month of Nutrition: PM Modi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced to celebrate September 2019 as a **month of nutrition**. The announcement was made in his latest *Mann Ki Baat* programe in which he laid emphasis on creating awareness to fight malnutrition among children, particularly girl child.

Key Highlights

The month of September will be celebrated as '**Poshan Abhiyaan**' across India.

Due to lack of awareness, both poor and affluent families are affected by malnutrition, therefore, PM urged countrymen to get connected with and get information about this initiative, add some new features to



'Poshan Abhiyaan' by contributing to it.

In 2018, Gujarat Government launched a pilot project called **Poshan Abhiyan** which is a statewide mission to eradicate malnutrition among children.

Chief Minister of Gujarat Vijay Rupani had also launched **PURNA project** or **Prevention of under Nutrition and Reduction of Nutritional Anaemia among Adolescent Girls**, to eliminate malnutrition among girls in age group of 14 to 18 years.

State Government had allocated Rs.270 crore for this pilot project. Now, the awareness campaign during September will further boost Poshan Abhiyan in state.

Prabhakar Singh, DG, CPWD chosen for Eminent Engineer Award- 2019

Prabhakar Singh, Director General, Central Public Works Department (CPWD) has been chosen for elite and prestigious **Eminent Engineer Award** for Year 2019 by **Institution of Engineers (India)**. He is chosen for his distinguished and exemplary Service in field of Engineering and Technology. The award shall be conferred to him on **Engineers Day** observed on 15 September 2019 in New Delhi.

About Prabhakar Singh

He is an IIT Graduate and MBA from one of Premier Business Institute of India.

His enormous contributions and dedicated service to nation as an eminent technocrat has been instrumental in transforming Central Public Works Department (CPWD), premier engineering organisation of central government.

Padmaja mahapatra | mahapatrapadmaja28@gmail.com |

About Institution of Engineers (India)

It is the national organization of engineers in India. It was established on 13 September 1920 in Kolkata (West Bengal).

It is acclaimed to have pioneered non-formal education in engineering.

It has over 1 million members in 15 engineering disciplines in 114 centers or chapters in India and overseas. With this many participants it is world's largest multi-disciplinary engineering professional society in engineering and technology world.

PM Modi launches \$4.2 million redevelopment project of temple in Bahrain

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched \$4.2 million redevelopment project of 200-year-old Shreenathji or Lord Sri Krishna temple in Manama, capital of Bahrain, during his two-day visit to Gulf nation. This is 1st ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Bahrain.

Key Highlights

PM Modi unveiled the plaque in temple premises, thus officially launching redevelopment project of iconic temple. The redevelopment for Shreenathji (Shree Krishna) temple in Manama will kick off in late 2019.

Facelift:

The \$4.2 million redevelopment project announced will be on a piece of land measuring 16,500 square feet and new 4-floor structure covering 45,000 square feet will have an overall height of 30 meters.

The renovated structure of temple will have a knowledge centre and a museum.

Significance: The redevelopment undertaken will highlight the heritage and 200-year-old legacy of temple as well as the new iconic complex will also house sanctum sanctorum and prayer halls. Facilities for traditional Hindu marriage ceremonies and other rituals will be there which will help promote Bahrain as a wedding destination and boosting tourism.

About Shreenathji Temple

This Sri Krishna Temple located in Manama is the *oldest temple in region*.

It is estimated to have been established around 1817. It was built by *Thathai Bhatia Hindu community*, and is still being managed by them.

PM Modi conferred King Hamad Order of the Renaissance by Bahrain

Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi has been conferred **King Hamad Order of the Renaissance** by Bahrain's King Hamad bin Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa in Manama, capital of Bahrain. He was conferred this prestigious honour in recognition of his efforts to strengthen bilateral relations with Bahrain, the key Gulf nation. As of now, it is overall the 7th international award conferred on PM Modi since he assumed office in 2014 (List Below).

Key Highlights

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PM Modi is the 1st Indian prime minister to visit Bahrain.

The King of Bahrain bestowed Bahrain Order, the First Class on PM Modi in recognition of his efforts to strengthen bilateral relations with Kingdom of Bahrain.

Global awards conferred on PM Modi since 2014

1. **Amir Amanullah Khan Award**– highest civilian award of Afghanistan
2. **Order of King Abdulaziz Sash**- highest civilian honour of Saudi Arabia
3. **Grand Collar of the State of Palestine**-highest honour of Palestine, given to foreign dignitaries
4. **Seoul Peace Prize**– by Seoul Peace Prize Foundation of South Korea.
5. **Champions of the Earth award** – United Nations's highest environmental honour, awarded by UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme)
6. **Order of Zayed**– highest civil honour of UAE.

BWF World Championships 2019: PV Sindhu became 1st Indian to win gold

PV Sindhu became 1st Indian to win a Badminton World Championships gold by beating familiar rival **Nozomi Okuhara** of Japan. Sindhu crushed Okuhara with 21-7, 21-7 in just 38 minutes in a one-sided final held at St. Jakobshalle in Basel, Switzerland. Sindhu's gold is second medal that India won at BWF World Championships in 2019 edition with Sai Praneeth winning a bronze in men's singles category.

Key Highlights

The 2019 edition was 16th match between Sindhu and Okuhara. Last time Sindhu and Okuhara met in finals of World Championships in 2017. In this encounter which lasted for nearly 2 hours and involved a 73-shot rally, Okuhara emerged victorious in end. Sindhu now leads 9-7 head-to-head, including 3 victories in last 5 meetings between duo before recent clash.

Sindhu is also 2nd women shuttler to have 5 medals and 3rd to have medals in all three colours.

This is P V Sindhu's 5th medal at World Championships. Her full set of medals at World Championships include- 2 bronze (in 2013 and 2014 edition), 2 silver (she won in last two editions) and 1 gold

Badminton Association of India has announced a cash reward of ₹20 lakh for Sindhu.

Other BWF World Championship Winners

Men's Singles: Japan's Kento Momota

Men's Doubles: Indonesia's Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan,

Women's Doubles: Japan's Mayu Matsumoto & Wakana Nagahara

Mixed Doubles: China's Zheng Siwei & Huang Yaqiong



7 new species of water treaders belonging to genus Mesovelgia discovered

Scientists from Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have discovered seven new species of water treaders

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belonging to genus *Mesovelgia*. Water treaders are semi-aquatic insects that can walk or run on surface of water. These new discoveries include *Mesovelgia andamana* is from Andaman Islands, *M. isiasi* and *M. bispinosa* are from Meghalaya, *M. tenuia* and *M. occulta* from Tamil Nadu and *M. dilatata* and *M. brevia* live both in Meghalaya and Tamil Nadu.

About new species

The newly described species belong to genus *Mesovelgia*. Their size ranges from 1.5 mm to 4.5 mm. They are equipped with hydrophobic setae (bristles) on their legs. The combination of water surface tension and hydrophobic setae prevents them from sinking. They are hemimetabolous insects i.e. they do not have larval stage i.e., they go from egg to nymph to adult. They are pale green with silver-white wings with black veins on basal half which make them stand out over green mat of aquatic weeds. They are found on freshwater bodies such as lakes, pools, streams, ponds, rocks with moss and sometimes on estuaries.

Akademik Lomonosov: Russia launches world's first floating nuclear reactor

Russia launched world's first floating nuclear reactor called Akademik Lomonosov, sending it on epic journey across the Arctic. It was launched and loaded with nuclear fuel from Arctic port of Murmansk for its 5,000 kilometre voyage to Pevek in northeastern Siberia. On arriving in Pevek, it will replace local nuclear plant and closed coal plant. It will go in full operations by end 2019 and it will mainly serve region's oil platforms in Arctic. One of its targets is also to power Chaun-Bilibin mining complex in Chukotka region, which also includes gold mine.

About Akademik Lomonosov

It was constructed by Russian state nuclear power firm Rosatom. It has been named after Russian Academician and scientist Mikhail Lomonosov. It follows examples of nuclear submarines, aircraft carriers and icebreakers which have long used nuclear power, and are intended for isolated areas with little infrastructure.

Features: It is 144 metres long and 30 metres wide. It has displacement capacity of 21,500 tonnes and can carry crew of total 69 people. It has latest security systems and Russia claims that it is one of safest nuclear installations in the world.

Power generation: It is fitted with 2 modified KLT-40 naval propulsion nuclear reactors (each of 35 MW capacity) together providing up to 70 MW of electricity and 300 MW of heat. It will be primarily used to power oil rigs in untapped Arctic region's remote areas where Russia is pushing to drill for oil and gas since global warming and melting ice has made earlier ice covered Northeast Passage (connecting Atlantic Ocean to Pacific along Russia's northern coast) more accessible.

Concerns

Environmentalists and critics have dubbed Akademik Lomonosov's as 'nuclear Titanic' or 'Chernobyl on ice' citing to previous Russian and Soviet nuclear accidents (1986 Chernobyl disaster). They have warned that Akademik Lomonosov's mission increases risk of polluting pristine Arctic – a remote, sparsely-populated region with no big clean-up facilities.

2019 Indo Pacific Chiefs of Defence Conference to be held in Thailand

The 2019 Indo Pacific Chiefs of Defence (CHOD) Conference will be held in Thailand's capital city Bangkok. In this conference, India will be represented by Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) and Chief of the Air Staff- Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa.

2019 CHOD Conference

Theme for conference: "Collaboration in a free and Open Indo – Pacific".

It will see participation of Chiefs of Defence of more than 33 countries.

It will provide perspectives on common challenges faced by attending nations and elicit open discussions on the same.

Significance for India: The participation of Indian Chairman COSC will provide further impetus towards increasing defence cooperation with Thailand. It will also pave way for greater interaction and cooperation in future.

India-Thailand defence relations

It has gained momentum consequent to India's Look/ Act East Policy along with overall improvement in relations at political, economic and cultural levels. Military Cooperation has been nominated by Joint

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Working Group on Security Cooperation both countries (initiated in May 2003). It has been one of the seven primary areas of focus to strengthen cooperation between countries. This was re-enforced in joint statement issued during Thai Prime Minister's official visit to India in January 2012. Both countries also have commemorated 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations in 2017. Such cooperation and visits will contribute towards India being natural partner of Thailand for regional collaborative security initiatives.

CVC constitutes Advisory Board for Banking Frauds

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has constituted Advisory Board for Banking Frauds (ABBF) to examine bank fraud over Rs 50 crore and recommend action. It is reconstituted and rejigged version of erstwhile Advisory Board on Bank, Commercial and Financial Frauds.

About Advisory Board for Banking Frauds (ABBF)

Composition: Former Vigilance Commissioner T M Bhasin will be Chairman of this four member body. Its members include Madhusudan Prasad (former Urban Development Secretary), D K Pathak (former Director General of Border Security Force) and Suresh N Patel (former MD and CEO of Andhra Bank). The tenure of Chairman and members will be for period of two years from August 21, 2019.

Genesis: It has been established by CVC in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) based on consultation (recommendation) of YM Malegam Expert committee on Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) and frauds constituted by RBI.

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Functions: It will conduct first level of examination in all major fraud cases before recommendations or references are made to investigative agencies such as Central Board of Investigation (CBI) by the respective public sector banks (PSBs). Individual PSBs will refer all large fraud cases above Rs, 50 crore to ABBF and on receipt of recommendation from it, the concerned bank will take further action. It will also periodically carry out frauds analysis in financial system and give inputs for policy formulation related to the fraud to the RBI.

Jurisdiction: It will be confined to cases involving officers of General Manager cadre and above in respect of allegation of fraud in lending case.

HQ and Services: It will be headquartered in Delhi. RBI will provide required secretarial services, analytical and logistic support along with the necessary funding to the board.

Background

Central Government already has issued 'framework for timely detection, reporting, and investigation relating to large-value bank frauds' to PSBs in a bid to check incidences of bank fraud. This framework makes it clear that all accounts exceeding Rs. 50 crore, if classified as NPA, should be examined by banks from angle of possible fraud, and report be placed before bank's Committee for Review of NPAs based on findings of the investigation. Examination of wilful default will be initiated immediately upon reporting fraud to the RBI. Moreover, report on borrower will be sought from Central Economic Intelligence Bureau in case account turns NPA.

Note: NPAs and frauds are considered consequence of each other, but they are different. The distinction between NPA and bank fraud is that fraud is a criminal offence, an NPA is a loan or advance wherein interest or instalments of principal remain overdue for over 90 days.

Government to prepare roadmap for distribution of fortified rice

Union Government has decided to prepare detailed roadmap for nationwide distribution of fortified rice through ration shops. Instructions also have been given to Department of Food and Public Distribution to implement distribution fortified rice. Decision in this regard was taken in meeting between Union Food minister Ram Vilas Paswan reviewed and NITI Aayog vice chairman Rajiv Kumar for reviewing progress of rice distribution

Pilot Scheme: Fortification of Rice and its Distribution under Public Distribution System

Union Government (Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution) in February 2019 had approved centre-sponsored pilot scheme on "Fortification of Rice and its Distribution under Public Distribution System". This Pilot Scheme was approved for period of three year beginning 2019-20.

Under this scheme rice is fortified with Iron, Vitamin B-12 and Folic Acid. Currently, it focuses on 15 districts preferably 1 district per State during initial phase of implementation. The operational

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responsibility for implementation of this pilot scheme is of states which fortifies rice for distribution through Public Distribution System (PDS).

August 27, 2019

7th Community Radio Sammelan held in New Delhi

The 7th Community Radio Sammelan was held at Dr. BR Ambedkar Bhawan, New Delhi from 27th to 29th August, 2019. It was organized by Ministry of Information & Broadcasting. The theme of this year's sammelan was 'Community Radio for SDGs'.

Highlights of 7th Community Radio Sammelan

It had witnessed participation of all operational Community Radio Stations across the country. It discussed experiences and possibilities of programming for raising awareness on sustainable development goals in a better manner. It also witnessed discussion on various flagship schemes of government such as Jal Shakti Abhiyaan and efforts for disaster risk reduction. Discussions on research, production, broadcasting, dissemination of social welfare messages through social media and content management for community radio stations was also discussed.

HRD Ministry launches National Digital Library of India

Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) has launched National Digital Library of India project under its **National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology** (NMEICT). The project seeks to develop framework of virtual repository of learning resources with a single-window search facility.

About National Digital Library of India project

Objective: To make quality digital educational resources available to all citizens of the country to empower, inspire and encourage learning.

Implementing agency: It has been developed by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur.

Features:

It is a single window platform that collects and collates metadata from premier learning institutions in India and abroad, as well as other relevant sources. It is digital repository containing textbooks, articles, videos, audio books, lectures, simulations, fiction and all other kinds of learning media. It is a 24x7 knowledge resource platform that is accessible to anyone with internet access.

It can hold content of any language and provides learning and research interface support for leading Indian languages. As of now, it has more than 3 crore digital resources available in over 200 languages. Its contents cover almost all major domains of education and all major levels of learners.

It has more than 50 lakh registered students and about 20 lakh active users. It allows users to access digital library anytime and anywhere absolutely free of cost. It has been integrated with **UMANG App** and users can register through www.ndl.gov.in or through the mobile app.

Amazon India launches Military Veterans Employment programme

Amazon India has launched a Military Veterans Employment programme in country. This initiative of e-commerce giant will create employment opportunities for military veterans as well as their spouses across company's sort centres, delivery centres and fulfilment centres in India.

About Military Veterans Employment programme

Partnership: Amazon India is partnering with office of **Director-General of Resettlement (DGR)**, an Inter Service organization functioning directly under Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (Ministry of Defence) and **Army Welfare Placement Organisation (AWPO)** to create continued work opportunities for military families across India. AWPO is a non-profit organization which helps in placement of ex-servicemen, widows, children of widows and dependents of serving or retired servicemen.

A *Memorandum of Understanding* (MoU) signed between Amazon India and DGR is in final stages of approval and participation of Amazon in all upcoming job fairs across India has been approved by DGR.

Over the years, Amazon India has hired military veterans into various roles across company such as customer fulfilment, transportation, security operations and facilities management..

With two pilot programmes underway, Amazon India seeks to scale Military Veterans Employment programme as well as extending company's engagement to hire remarkable talent from Indian Army, Indian Air force (IAF), Indian Navy and Police families in future.

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Globally, Amazon has more than 17,500 military veterans and spouses actively engaged in programme.

MoU signed for enhanced outreach on HIV/AIDS Prevention

Department of Social Justice (DSJE), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for enhanced outreach On HIV/AIDS Prevention.

Key Highlights of MoU

Inclusion of target groups of NACO and *National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction* (NAPDDR) in the programmes of NACO and NAPDDR for awareness generation.

Enhance linkages and effective co-ordination between Integrated rehabilitation center for Addicts (IRCA) supported by DSJE and *Injecting Drug Users Targeted Intervention* (IDUs-TI) supported by NACO.

Create awareness and educate people about ill-effects of drugs abuse on individual, family, workplace and society at large. Create awareness to reduce stigmatization of and discrimination against, individuals and groups dependent on drugs in order to integrate them back into the society;

Develop human resources and build capacity to strengthen service delivery mechanisms for effective drug addiction treatment.

Develop welfare scheme aimed at empowerment and social inclusion of Transgender which face extreme social alienation and enhance their vulnerability to drug abuse and HIV.

Address HIV transmission risks among all substance users through preventive risk reduction messaging on STI/HIV and linkages with *Integrated Testing and Counseling Centre* (ITCC) and other services.

Work towards empowerment of vulnerable and discriminated groups like victims of HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, female sex workers, transgender and persons engaged in begging by nurturing supportive and congenial environment promoting human development that safeguards human rights of all, provides social protection and rendering psycho-social care.

Include transgender and female sex workers as target group for social defence and drug addicts as target group for NACO.

Reduce incidence of social stigma and discrimination against victims of drug abuse and Children and People Living with HIV/AIDS through programme education setting.

About National AIDS Control Organization (NACO)

It is division of Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It is mandated to provide leadership to HIV/AIDS control programme in India through 35 HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Societies. It was constituted to implement India's first National AIDS Control Programme (1992-1999) launched in 1992.

Kalvi Tholaikkatchi: Tamil Nadu Govt launches education TV channel for school students

Tamil Nadu Government launched its exclusive education TV channel named Kalvi Tholaikkatchi (Education TV). It is an initiative of the School Education Department aimed at benefiting students of classes I to XII.

Kalvi Tholaikkatchi TV channel

It will telecast programmes from 6 am to 9.30 pm every day. Its programmes will be based on board exam preparation for students, employment news and opportunities for the youth and career-guidance information.

Its content has been prepared by group of 25 teachers. Its programmes will also have guest speakers like authors and subject experts. *State Council for Educational Research and Training* (SCERT) also has contributed for content development of this channel.

To make available this channel, Tamil Nadu government has reportedly fixed cable TV connections in all government schools with high school and higher secondary classes. Soon, cable connections will be installed at primary and middle schools as well for its full coverage.

CoP18 of CITES held in Geneva

The **18th Conference of the Parties (CoP18)** of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was recently held in Geneva, Switzerland.

Highlights of COP18 CITES

Smooth-coated otter (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) was moved from CITES Appendix II to CITES Appendix I, giving it highest level of international protection from commercial trade. **Indian star tortoise** was also

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moved to CITES Appendix I. **Tokay gecko** (Gekko gecko) will be included in CITES Appendix II.

The proposal to prohibit commercial international trade in species of otter native to the subcontinent and some other parts of Asia was put by India, Nepal, and Bangladesh.

Smooth-coated otter: It is considered to be facing high risk of extinction and is detrimentally affected by international trade, as well as habitat loss and degradation and persecution associated with conflict with people (and fisheries). Its numbers in wild has fallen by at least 30% over the past 30 years.

About Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

It is an international agreement aimed at ensuring that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival. Its text was agreed in Washington, DC, in 1973 (So it is also referred to as Washington Convention) and entered into force in 1975. It now has 183 parties. It is legally binding on Parties i.e. they are committed to implementing it. However, it does not take place of national laws of parties, but obliges them to adopt their own domestic legislation to implement its goals. It is administered through United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). Its secretariat is located in Geneva, capital of Switzerland.

CITES Appendix: It classifies plants and animals according to three categories, or appendices, based on level of threats faced by them. CITES also restricts trade in items made from such plants and animals, such as food, medicine, clothing, and souvenirs etc.

Appendix I: It includes species threatened with extinction. CITES completely bans commercial trade in specimens of these species. But is permitted only in exceptional circumstances.

Appendix II: It provides a lower level of protection.

Appendix III: It contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade.

India, Nepal launch Kathmandu-Siliguri bus service

India and Nepal have launched Nepal's capital Kathmandu and Siliguri in West Bengal. The first bus service on this route was flagged off by Nepal's Minister for Physical Infrastructure and Transportation Raghubir Mahaseth and Indian Ambassador Manjeev Singh Puri from Kathmandu. It is overall 11th route for bus service between Nepal and India, of the total 13 routes that have been approved for operating regular bus services between the two countries.

Kathmandu-Siliguri bus service

It will operate on a daily basis. On this 650 kilometre long route, 44-seater air conditioned deluxe bus will be operating and cover this distance in 18 hours. The bus will leave Kathmandu daily at 3 P.M. and reach Siliguri via Kakarvitta-Panitanki border next day at around 9 A.M.

Significance: The direct bus service will benefit visitors of two countries and also help to expand trade links and connectivity. It will further strengthen people-to-people links between the two countries.

Shaheen VIII: Pakistan-China aerial exercise held in China's Hotan City

Pakistan and China are conducting joint bilateral aerial exercise Shaheen VIII (Eagle VIII) in Chinese city of Hotan, close to the Indian border near Ladakh. It was eight edition of this aerial exercise, which is conducted annually by India's two neighbours since 2011.

About Shaheen VIII

The air to air war games as part of this exercise are aimed to develop mechanism for interoperability of both countries' air forces. It is touted as means to enhance close relations between the all-weather allies. In this edition of exercise, Pakistan is participating with its JF-17 fighter aircraft while China is taking part with their J-10 and J-11 fighters.

August 28, 2019

Govt. launches NOC Online Application Processing System (NOAPS)

Union Ministry of Tourism launched the integrated NOC (No Objection Certificate) Online Application Processing System for National Monuments Authority (NMA) to seek approval for construction around protected monuments in 6 states.

About NOC Online Application Processing System

Background: In order to automate process of granting NOC for construction-related work in prohibited and regulated areas, National Monuments Authority (NMA) designed, developed and implemented a web-

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enabled software application dubbed as 'NOC Online Application Processing System' (NOAPS) and launched the 'NOAPS Non Single window system' in September 2015. Later, 'NOAPS Single window system' was officially launched on 1 May 2016. As of August 2019, NOAPS was limited to only 5 urban local bodies in Delhi and 1 civic body in Mumbai, however from now onwards the facility has been expanded to 6 more states.

Six states: Madhya Pradesh (378), Andhra Pradesh (110), Haryana (15), Punjab (10), Jharkhand (3) and Telangana (1). In total, 517 local bodies have made it online.

Portal has integration with Indian Space Research Organization's (ISRO) '**Smarac**' mobile app, through which applicant can traverse his plot and submit geo coordinates of land, along with uploading images into NIC (National Informatics Centre) portal.

Process: Desired applicant needs to fill up a single form which is being sent to concerned agencies by Urban Local Body (ULBs), from whom NOC is required. NMA on its part will communicate its decision to the local body within 15-30 working days, bringing down the time limit from 90 days. This time limit is prescribed in **Ancient Monuments and Archeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act**.

Need: With increasing population pressure as well as increase of urbanization, development and growth there is growing pressure on land including land around centrally protected monuments. However as this often affects site or monument adversely, it is important that such growth around centrally protected monuments is properly regulated such that it balances the needs of individuals and growth and development on one hand and requirements of preservation and protection of these monuments on the other.

Significance: NOAPS will now ease the process to seek approval for construction in prohibited and regulated areas around Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) protected monuments in 6 states (517 local bodies). By this integration, NMA has made a humble effort towards the Mantra of 'Reform, Perform and Transform'.

NOTE: National Monuments Authority (NMA) functions under Union Ministry of Culture. NMA has been established as per provisions of The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2010.

Indian Institute of Petroleum sets up plant to turn plastic waste into diesel

Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP) has set up a **waste plastic to diesel plant** in Dehradun (capital of Uttarakhand) as a step towards ensuring freedom from plastic. It was inaugurated by Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Science and Technology and Trivendra Singh Rawat, Chief Minister of Uttarakhand.

Key Highlights

Process: In the waste plastic to diesel plant set up in IIP, scientists will process waste plastics into fuel. The plant has a capacity to produce 800-litre diesel from 1 tonne of plastic. The plastic used will be collected with the help of NGOs.

Benefits: By producing diesel out of plastic waste on a large scale, the plant beside being a good step towards freedom from plastic also reduces India's dependence on other countries for petroleum products.

Significance: The plant has been set up at a time various countries are working towards a plastic-free world. This is yet another achievement of IIP after successfully producing biofuel for aircraft.

About Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP)

It is one of the constituent laboratories of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), dedicated to Research & Development (R&D) in hydrocarbon sector.

It was established in 1960.

Function: It develops processes and products for petrochemical industries and petroleum refining, training of personnel in oil and petrochemical industries, as well as assisting in formulation of standards for petroleum products.

ONGC CMD honoured with Distinguished Fellowship of IOD 2019

Shashi Shanker, the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) was honoured with Distinguished Fellowship of Institute of Directors (IOD), 2019 during 29th Institute of Directors (IOD) Annual Day Ceremony held in New Delhi.

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Key Highlights

The prestigious Fellowship honour was conferred to Shanker in appreciation of his distinguished contribution to business and society.

Apart from Shanker, two more fellowships were also conferred. The other two recipients are-

(1) Durga Shankar Mishra, Secretary, Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

(2) M Sumanta Chaudhuri Secretary, Ministry of Coal

The honour was bestowed upon fellowship recipients by Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Civil Aviation and Trade and Commerce.

About Distinguished Fellowship of Institute of Directors (IOD), 2019

The 2019 Fellowships were decided by a jury led by Justice M N Venkatachaliah, former Chief Justice of India (CJI). He is also the former Chairman of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India and National Commission for Constitution of India Reforms (NCCIR).

Institute of Directors (IOD) trains Directors on corporate Boards and gives Golden Peacock Awards to corporates for 15 different corporate functions.

Theme of 2019's IOD Annual Day Ceremony– 'Future Boards: Leading Strategy to Embrace Sustainability'

Maitri mobile app: to connect old-age homes and orphanages, win tech prize in US

Five Girls from Amity International School in Noida, Uttar Pradesh developed a mobile application called 'Maitri' that connects children at orphanages with senior citizens in old-age homes. The innovation by this all-girls team called "Tech Witches" fetched them a bronze medal at global tech competition called 'Technovation Challenge' held in San Francisco, United States.

The developers of app include Arefa, Vanshika Yadav, Ananya Grover, Vasudha Sudhinder and Anushka Sharma all Class 12 students of Amity International School in Noida.

About Maitri mobile app

Objective: It is aimed at bringing together individuals suffering from loneliness and depression and those lacking nurturing love of elderly role models.

App is available for free download on Google playstore.

Features:

It allows users to volunteer and donate to old-age homes and orphanages through it.

Maitri' allows old-age homes and orphanages to sign up and organise meetings, thus facilitating children and senior citizens to spend time together.

Maitri allows only validated facilities to register and provides contact details and map locations for assistance.

App has seen more than 1,000 downloads till date and has 13 old-age homes and 7 orphanages connected through it.

Coverage: During initial phase the focus area of app was Delhi-NCR area but the team now seeks to take this app pan-India by getting more and more orphanages and old-age homes registered on it.

Finance: Now 'Maitri' developers are looking forward to crowdfund \$40,000, the investment needed for 1st year of their operations. Also, donations received through Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding will also help team recover their operation costs.

About Technovation Challenge

It is world's largest technology and entrepreneurship programme for girls.

It runs across more than 100 countries, supported by Google.org, Salesforce.org, Uber, Adobe Foundation, Samsung, BNY Mellon as well as UNESCO, the Peace Corps and UN Women, according to its website.

IAF's Shalija Dhami becomes India's 1st female flight commander

Indian Air Force's (IAF) Wing Commander Shalija Dhami scripted history by becoming country's 1st female officer to be appointed as flight commander of a flying unit. She took over as flight commander of a Chetak helicopter unit at Hindon airbase in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh.

A Flight Commander post is 2nd in command of flight commander unit which means that Dhami is 2nd in unit after commanding officer. Therefore, her elevation in flying branch is moving a step closer towards women officers commanding units and formations in service.

**About Shalija Dhami**

She was raised in Ludhiana, Punjab.

She is the 1st woman officer of IAF to be given a permanent commission for a long tenure. She is a permanent commissioning officer of Flying Branch in Indian Air Force (IAF) and flies helicopters.

She is also the 1st women qualified flying instructors of Indian Air Force for helicopters. In her career of 15 years, Wing Commander S Dhami has flown Chetak and Cheetah helicopters.

Her promotion to Flying Branch is a step towards Commanding Unit of Women Officers.

On 26 August 2019 women in Indian Armed Forces set another milestone with appointment of Wing Commander Shalija Dhami who became 1st female flight commander of operations unit of Indian Air Force.

India to restore 50 lakh hectare of degraded land by 2030: Environment Minister

Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar announced that India has set target to restore 50 lakh hectare of its degraded land by 2030. He made this announcement at curtain raiser event for 14th meeting of Conference of Parties to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP14) to be held in India for first time from September 2-13, 2019. India will take President of COP14 for two years from China.

Announcements made

29% land of India's total geographical area is degraded which has to be restored and will be the agenda of COP14 summit.

Centre of excellence to combat desertification of fertile land will be set up at Forest Research Institute (FRI) in Dehradun. It will study the causes of desertification and devise solutions and technologies for land degradation neutrality. It will also function as resource and training centre.

UNCCD COP14

It will be held from 2 to 13 September 2019 at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida. 12 day event will be attended by over 5000 participants, including 3000 international delegates from 196 countries. Nearly 200 countries have confirmed their participation in this mega event.

About United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

It had entered into force in December 1996. It is one of three Rio Conventions along with United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). India became its signatory in October 1994 and ratified it in December 1996. It is only legally binding international agreement to address problem of land degradation, desertification and other land issues.

Main objective:

- (i) To combat desertification and mitigate effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought or desertification.
- (ii) To involve long-term integrated strategies in affected areas, for improving productivity of land, and rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water resources, leading to improved living conditions, in particular at community level.

Features: Its 197 parties work together to-

- (i) improve living conditions for people in drylands
- (ii) mitigate the effects of drought
- (iii) maintain and restore land and soil productivity.

It is committed to bottom-up approach by encouraging participation of local people in combating land degradation and desertification.

Fact Box: India's first woman DGP Kanchan Chaudhary

The first woman Director General of Police (DGP) Kanchan Chaudhary Bhattacharya passed away following illness in Mumbai, Maharashtra. She was 1973 batch IPS officer, who had scripted history when she was appointed DGP of Uttarakhand in 2004.

About Kanchan Chaudhary

She was born in Himachal Pradesh, Chaudhary. She was the country's second woman IPS officer after Kiran Bedi. She had led Uttarakhand Police force as DGP from 2004 to 2007. During her 33-year-long career, she had handled some sensitive cases, including killing of national badminton champion Syed Modi.

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and Reliance-Bombay Dyeing case. She also had served as Inspector General of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

In 1997, she was awarded President's police medal for distinguished service. She had made guest appearance in 'Udaan' TV serial aired on Doordarshan in late 1980s, which was based on her life, showing her struggles to become an IPS officer. After retirement, she had joined Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and unsuccessfully contested 2014 Lok Sabha polls in Haridwar, Uttarakhand.

Udaan serial: It was one of the first shows on Indian television to deal with the subject of women empowerment. It was based on inspiring true life story of Kanchan Chaudhary and was aired on Doordarshan in late 80s. It was written and directed by Kanchan's younger sister Kavita Chaudhary who also played lead protagonist.

Peacock Parachute Spider: Rare tarantula sighted for first time

Researchers have sighted critically endangered species of tarantula- Peacock Parachute Spider for first time beyond its known habitat in the Eastern Ghats. Its known habitat is in degraded forests near Nandyal in Andhra Pradesh. Recently, it was spotted in a cave in Pakkamalai Reserve Forests (in Eastern Ghats) near Gingee in Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu.

About Peacock Parachute Spider

It belongs to the genus *Poecilotheria*. It is commonly known as Peacock Parachute Spider or Gooty Tarantula. It is endemic to India. It was sighted for first time way back in 1899 by Reginald Innes Pocock on the basis of a single female specimen in Gooty. It is considered as biological pest controller.

Threats: There is huge demand for tarantulas by collectors in the pet trade. There is an urgent need to protect them.

Protection status: The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) categorised it as Critically Endangered.

August 29, 2019

India launches world's first facial biometric data-based ID for seafarers

Union Ministry of Shipping has launched Biometric Seafarer Identity Document (BSID) to be issued for Indian seafarers. With this, India became world's first country to launch facial biometric data-based identity document (ID) for seafarers.

About BSID

- **Implementing agencies:** This project has been taken up by Union Ministry of Shipping in collaboration with Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Mumbai.
- **Rules:** It is being implemented in pursuance of Government notified the Merchant Shipping (Seafarers Bio-metric Identification Document) Rules in 2016.
- **Features:** Issuance of SID involves collection of biometric and demographic details of seafarers, their verification and then issuance of the card to them.
- It has dimensions of smart ID card. It has modern security features like embedded biometric chip, optical security features such as micro prints/micro texts and Unique Guilloche pattern. Its security is ensured at various levels and through different methods. At the time of its data capturing, live face is cross matched through passport photo using face matching software. Software has been developed for capturing facial biometrics and its authentication through public key infrastructure. Record of each SID issued will be maintained in national database and its related information will be internationally accessible.
- **Significance:** It is in confirmation of Convention No. 185 of International Labour Organisation (ILO) on BSID. India ratified this convention in October 2015. It will give foolproof identification to Indian seafarers which will facilitate their movement, provide ease of getting jobs and help in identifying them from any location in the world.

Cabinet approves setting up of international Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure in New Delhi

Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved establishment of International Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) along with its supporting Secretariat Office in New Delhi. CDRI is proposed to be launched at United Nations (UN) Climate Action Summit scheduled to be held in New York, US on 23rd September 2019.

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**Cabinet Approval is for**

- Establishment of International CDRI along with its supporting Secretariat office in New Delhi.
- Establishment of Secretariat of CDRI as Society under The Societies Registration Act, 1860 in New Delhi as 'CDRI Society' or similar name as per availability.
- In-principle approval for India's support of Rs. 480 crore (around US \$70 million) to CDRI for corpus required to fund technical assistance and research projects on on-going basis, setting up Secretariat office and covering recurring expenditures over period of 5 years from 2019-20 to 2023-24.
- Endorsed version of Charter document that will act as founding document of CDRI. The charter will be finalized after taking inputs from potential member countries by National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) in consultation with External Affairs Ministry.

CDRI

It will serve as platform where knowledge is generated and exchanged on different aspects of disaster and climate resilience of infrastructure. It will bring together technical expertise from multitude of stakeholders. In doing so, it will create mechanism to assist countries to upgrade their practices and capacities, with regard to infrastructure development in accordance with their risk context and economic needs.

12th India Security Summit held in New Delhi

The 12th India Security Summit was held in New Delhi. It was organized by Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and is officially supported by Union Ministry of Communications & Information Technology. The theme of this edition of summit was "Towards New National Cyber Security Strategy". During the summit, many issues were discussed such as protection of critical national infrastructure, emerging cyber threats: incidents, challenges and response. It was attended by senior officers from various law enforcement agencies. In his address, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G. Kishan Reddy announced that Government has taken various measures to counter cyber threats. Union Home Ministry has launched scheme 'Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)' to combat cyber crime in the country, in coordinated and effective manner. Governance also has rolled out "Cyber Swachhta Kendra" as part of Digital India initiative under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

CCEA approves 75 new Government Medical Colleges by 2021-22

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved establishment of 75 additional Government Medical Colleges by 2021-22. These colleges will be attached with existing district/referral hospitals under Phase-III of the ongoing Centrally Sponsored scheme. These new medical colleges will be set up in under-served areas having no medical college with at least 200 bedded District Hospital. Moreover, preference will be given to aspirational districts and district hospital having 300 beds.

Benefits of establishment of new Medical Colleges

It will lead to increase in availability of qualified health professionals, improve tertiary care in public health sector by utilizing existing infrastructure of districts hospitals and promote affordable medical education in the country. It will lead to addition of at least 15,700 MBBS seats in the country.

Background

Government as part of 'Ayushman Bharat' has announced two path breaking initiatives that address health holistically, impacting primary, secondary and tertiary care system as well as prevention and health promotion. Under scheme aimed at continuing focus on creation of health care infrastructure, Government earlier had approved establishment of 58 new Medical Colleges attached with existing district/referral hospitals (under Phase-I) and 24 (under Phase-II). Of this, 39 medical colleges under first phase have already started functioning, while remaining 19 will be made functional by 2020-21. Under second phase of the scheme, 18 new medical colleges were approved.

IMD hands over Kochi Cyclone Detection Radar (CDR) building to Indian Navy

India Meteorological Department (IMD) has handed over its Kochi Cyclone Detection Radar (CDR) building to Indian Navy. In this regard, Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Indian Navy (IN) and IMD. The MoU will enable Indian Navy to utilise CDR building within naval premises at Kochi for

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meteorological purposes.

Kochi Cyclone Detection Radar (CDR) building

It was constructed during period 1983–86 inside Naval Base. It has S-band Cyclone Detection Radar installed by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL). The facility was operated by IMD from 1987-2017 to provide weather support for civil aviation at old Kochi Airport – presently Naval Air Station INS Garuda.

In 2017, IMD commenced operating new Doppler Weather Radar (DWR) at Mundamveli, Kochi as S-band radar had become obsolete. Since then it was lying vacant and unused. Based on request by Indian Navy, IMD has agreed to hand over building permanently for meteorological purposes.

The building now will be utilised by Indian Naval Meteorological Analysis Centre (INMAC), an operational unit of Indian Navy set up in 2013 with mandate to provide daily meteorological information/ forecasts to users across Indian Navy such as ships and establishments.

Cabinet approves Sugar export policy for evacuation of surplus stocks

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for sugar export policy for evacuation of surplus stocks during sugar season 2019-20. The policy provides lump sum export subsidy of Rs. 10,448 per Metric Tonne (MT) to sugar mills for season 2019-20.

Export Subsidy

It will be provided for expenses on marketing costs including handling, upgrading and other processing costs, international and internal transport costs and freight charges. It will be directly credited into farmers' account on behalf of mills against cane price dues and subsequent balance, if any, will be credited to mill's account. It shall be in conformity with the provisions of Article 9.1 (d) & (e) of Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and thus World Trade Organisation (WTO) compatible. The decision will benefit millions of farmers in Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Karnataka as well as other states.

August 30, 2019

Pakistan test-fires nuclear-capable ballistic missile Ghaznavi

Pakistan successfully conducted night training launch of hypersonic surface-to-surface ballistic missile **Hatf-III Ghaznavi** from Sonmiani test range in Balochistan.

About Hatf-III Ghaznavi Missile

It is "Scud" type short range surface-to-surface hypersonic ballistic missile. It is named after 11th century Muslim Turkic conqueror Mahmud of Ghazni. It has been designed and developed by Pakistan's missile developer- National Development Complex. Its design is believed to be influenced from Chinese design, M-11 (NATO reporting name: CSS-7). It had entered in service with Pakistan Army in 2012.

Features: It has length of 9.64m, diameter of 0.99 m, launch weight of 5256 kg. It is powered by single stage solid fuel rocket motor. It is capable of delivering multiple types of warheads (both nuclear and conventional warheads) upto range of 290 km.

Kashmir Connection with this test

The launch of missile coincides with Pakistan's scaled-up effort to internationalise the Kashmir issue after India abrogated provisions of Article 370 of the Constitution to withdraw Jammu and Kashmir's special status and bifurcated it into two Union Territories. It is also seen as part of two-pronged effort to internationalise Kashmir issue at both military and diplomatic levels, and for impact, raise spectre of nuclear war between the two countries.

In protest to India's decision to end Jammu and Kashmir's special status Pakistan has downgraded diplomatic ties with India and also had expelled Indian High Commissioner. It also suspended its trade with India and stopped train and bus services. India has categorically notified international community that repealing of temporary provision of Article 370 was internal matter and also advised Pakistan to accept the reality.

India's Shaurya missile: DRDO is developing similar missile to Pakistan Hatf-III Ghaznavi Missile for Indian. It is short-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile, Shaurya. It is capable of carrying different types of warhead (including both nuclear and conventional) weighing around one-tonne at hypersonic speed up to 600km range.

International Day Against Nuclear Tests observed on August 29

The International Day Against Nuclear Tests is observed across every year across the world on 29 August

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with aim to raise awareness about the effects of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions.

Purpose of this day: (i) To promote peace and security world-wide and calls for urgent need to prevent nuclear catastrophes to avert devastating effects on humankind, environment and the planet. (ii) To highlight urgent need for cessation of nuclear weapons as one of the means of achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

About International Day Against Nuclear Tests

It was officially proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) by unanimously adopting *Resolution 64/35* in December 2009 initiated by Kazakhstan with support of large number of sponsors and cosponsors. It was observed for first time in 2010 and since then observed annually to galvanize necessity of banning nuclear weapon tests.

Why August 29? It seeks to commemorate closure of Semipalatinsk Nuclear Test site (also known as The Polygon) on 29 August 1991. This nuclear test site was the primary testing venue for nuclear weapons of then Soviet Union. It is located on steppe in northeast Kazakhstan (then Kazakh SSR part of USSR), south of valley of the Irtysh River. On this test site, Soviet Union had conducted total 456 nuclear tests from 1949 until 1989 (340 underground and 116 atmospheric explosions i.e. roughly equivalent of 2500 Hiroshima atomic bombs) with little regard for their ill-effects of radiation on local people or environment.

Uttarakhand to set up Special Tiger Force for Corbett Tiger Reserve

Uttarakhand Government has decided to for Special Tiger Force for Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR). This decision was taken by State Cabinet meeting. The force will have 85 posts and will help serve as the much needed second layer of protection for the big cat.

About Special Tiger Force (STPF)

It will be effective in checking illegal human intrusion into the reserve through villages located on its fringes and serve as a second layer of protection for tigers at the CTR. The decision is in line with Central Government's guidelines for providing three-tier protection to tigers at reserves. It will help in conserving the population of 250 tigers at the reserve. It will be deployed at maximum on extremely sensitive southern fringe of reserve bordering Uttar Pradesh through which criminal elements keep trying to intrude into reserve areas. Illegal intruders from fringe areas have been behind poaching incidents in the reserve in the past.

Three-tier protection to tigers at reserves

1st layer of protection: It is provided in the inner range by beat level forest guards through regular patrols.

2nd layer of protection: It is provided by STPF.

3rd layer of protection: it comes from intelligence-gathering mechanisms in which forest, police and central intelligence agency personnel work together to prevent crimes like the poaching of tigers.

26th Mela of Ladakhi-Kisan-Jawan-Vigyan Mela inaugurated in Leh

The 26th Ladakhi-Kisan-Jawan-Vigyan Mela was recently inaugurated by Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in Leh, Jammu and Kashmir. It was organised by Leh-based Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR) of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

About Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR)

It is constituent laboratory of DRDO. It was established in 1960 to meet fresh food requirement of soldiers deployed in the harsh terrain of Ladakh. It has core competence in cold arid agro-animal technology. It aims to meet fresh food requirement of the soldiers at high altitude cold desert condition. It is also responsible to make region reasonably green. Its research stations are located at Ranbirpura, (Ladakh). Partapur (Siachen Sector), Base Laboratory (Chandigarh). It also hosts world's highest terrestrial R&D Centre at Changla, Ladakh.

Contributions: It is known for many success stories in translating science to alleviate real-life problems being faced in the remote Ladakh region. It is now working to develop newer technologies to make fresh food available even in remotest locations in the Himalayas. Technologies developed by it provides Indian Army locally grown fresh organic farm produce and as a spin-off of its technologies developed, farmers in Ladakh region are able to produce a variety of vegetables and fruits resulting in improving their socio-

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economic condition. The interdependence created between locals and Army through scientific endeavours of DIHAR has contributed to socio-economic upliftment of local farmers.

PM Modi launches Fit India Movement

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched nation-wide Fit India Movement from event held in Indira Gandhi Stadium Complex in New Delhi. It was launched on the occasion of National Sports Day (observed on 29 August) observed to commemorate birth anniversary of hockey doyen Major Dhyan Chand.

About Fit India Movement

It is aimed at encouraging people to give priority to sports and fitness in their day-to-day lives. It will inculcate physical activities/sports into the daily lives of citizens to improve their physical fitness and well-being.

Advisory committee

Union Sports Ministry has constituted Advisory committee to advise the government on the "Fit India Movement. It is headed by Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju. Its members comprises of Indian Olympic Association (IOA), national sports federations (NSFs), government officials, private bodies and celebrated fitness enthusiasts. Representatives of private bodies such as Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), Tata Trusts, JSW Cement and JSW Paints, Reliance Foundation, SE TransStadia Pvt. Ltd., ASSOCHAM India, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI), and actors Milind Soman and Shilpa Shetty will also be involved in it.

Padmaja mahapatra | mahapatrapadmaja28@gmail.com |

#HumFitTohIndiaFit campaign

This is not the first time Union Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs has launched a fitness campaign. In 2018, it had launched #HumFitTohIndiaFit campaign to encourage people to share their fitness level by doing exercises like push-ups. It was launched by the Sports Minister Rajwardhan Rathore and as part of it, his video doing push-ups had gone viral on social media, several personalities including PM Modi, Saina Nehwal Virat Kohli, and Hrithik Roshan had shared videos of them doing exercises or yoga on social media.

August 31, 2019

Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award 2018

President Ram Nath Kovind on the occasion of National Sports day (on August 29) ceremony presented Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Awards 2018 to winners at Rashtrapati Bhavan. It is highest national award for adventure sports in India, at par with the Arjuna award.

Winners are:

- Land Adventure category: Aparna Kumar, Late Dipankar Ghosh and Manikandan K.
- Water Adventure category: Prabhat Raju Koli
- Air Adventure: Rameshwer Jangra
- Life Time Achievement: Wangchuk Sherpa

Aparna Kumar: She is 2002 batch IPS officer of Uttar Pradesh Cadre. She is currently posted as DIG in Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBF) at Dehradun. She is first IPS officer to be honoured with Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award.

About Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award

It is highest national awards for adventure sports in India. It is conferred annually to recognize achievements of people in the field of adventure on land, sea and air. It aims to provide incentive to the young people for getting exposed to the adventure activities. It is conferred in four categories – Land Adventure, Air Adventure, Water Adventure, and Life Time Achievement.

Winners are selected based on the recommendations of the National Selection Committee chaired by Secretary (Youth Affairs) and has experts from the field of adventure as members. The awardees are presented with statuettes, certificates and cash prize worth Rs. 5 lakh each. It is named after Nepali-Indian Sherpa mountaineer Tenzing Norgay. He was one of the first two individuals known to reach summit of Mount Everest, which he accomplished with Edmund Hillary on 29 May 1953.

GeM inks MoU with SIDBI for MSMEs

Government portal for public procurement GeM (Government e-marketplace) has inked MoU with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to boost MSME ecommerce sales. The MoU aims to enable

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promotion of special initiatives of GeM, such as Womaniya and Start-up Runway, with SIDBI stakeholders. It also seeks to promote MSMEs, women entrepreneurs, and Self Help Groups (SHGs).

Features of MoU

Under it, GeM and SIDBI will take steps to ensure timely payments to sellers, and enhance working capital availability through bill discounting. It will also help to promote MSMEs, start-ups, and artisans, who can now sell to government on an open, transparent and technology-driven platform. It will help to strengthen capacity building through GeM-specific training programmes of personnel from partner agencies.

CBDT notifies creation of special cell for startups

Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has created five-member special cell to address grievances of startups with relation to angel tax and other tax-related issues. It will be headed by member (Income Tax and Computerisation) of CBDT. This initiative is the latest amongst the recent initiatives taken by the CBDT to further ease the compliance issues pertaining to startups.

Special Cell

It will work towards redressal of grievances and mitigate tax-related issues in case of startup entities with respect to administration of *Income-tax Act, 1961*. Startup entities can approach the cell for speedy resolution of their grievances.

Background

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman her recent press conference had announced creation of such a cell in the CBDT and had declared exempting startups from the so-called angel tax. She had mentioned that Government has decided that section 56(2)(viib) of the Income-Tax Act shall not be applicable to a startup registered with DPIIT. She also had notified that startup having any income tax issue can approach cell for quick resolution of the same for mitigating genuine difficulties of startups and their investors.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. The researchers at which IIT have developed industrial and field robot 'GraspMan'?

- [A] IIT Madras
- [B] IIT Indore
- [C] IIT Hyderabad
- [D] IIT Kanpur

Answer: IIT Madras

The researchers from IIT Madras have developed a multi-modal robot 'GraspMan' with good grasping, manipulation and locomotion abilities for use in industrial and field applications. The GraspMan is consists of a pair of graspers, which provide morphological adaptation. It will enable to conform to the geometry of the object being grasped. This allows the grasper to hold objects securely and manipulate it much like the human hand. The motivation behind this research is to realize a robot with a minimalistic design that can overcome the need for task-specific robots that are capable of navigating and manipulating across different environments without increasing the system complexity.

2. Who has become the first Indian to win gold at the World Junior Wrestling Championships after 18 years?

- [A] Akash Antil
- [B] Parveen Malik
- [C] Vijay Patil
- [D] Deepak Punia

Answer: Deepak Punia

Wrestler Deepak Punia has won gold in men's 86-kg freestyle bout at the World Junior Wrestling Championships after beating Russia's Alik Shebzukhov in the final at Tallinn, Estonia. With this, Punia has become the first Indian to win gold at the junior World Championship after 18 years. Earlier, Ramesh Gulia (69 kg) and Palwinder Singh Cheema (130 kg) had won international gold medals at the junior circuit in 2001.

3. Which state has got award at the World Education Summit-2019?

- [A] Karnataka
- [B] Rajasthan
- [C] Kerala



[D] Odisha

Answer: Rajasthan

Rajasthan has bagged the "best innovation and initiative leadership award" for its achievements in higher education in the 14th World Education Summit (WES-2019). The award was received by the Minister of State for Higher Education Bhanwar Singh Bhati at the 14th summit in New Delhi. The representatives of 8 countries and 17 States of India participated in the 2-day summit.

4. VB Chandrasekhar, who passed away recently, was associated to which sports?

[A] Basketball

[B] Cricket

[C] Football

[D] Hockey

Answer: Cricket

V.B. Chandrasekhar (57), the former India and Tamil Nadu cricketer, has passed away in Chennai on 15th August 2019. Fondly referred to as VB, he represented India in 7 ODIs, with an innings of 53 being his highest score. In 81 First Class matches, Chandrasekhar notched up 4999 runs at 43.09 with 10 centuries. After his eventful cricketing career, where he was a part of the last Tamil Nadu team to triumph in the Ranji Trophy in 1988. Later, he led the state side and then briefly played for Goa — VB focussed on coaching and commentary. Notably, he was the cricket manager of Chennai Super Kings (CSK) in the franchise's first 3 years and was instrumental in getting the iconic M.S. Dhoni to CSK.

5. Which former Indian athlete has been appointed as a member of the Athletes Commission of the Asian Athletics Association (AAA)?

[A] Anju Bobby George

[B] Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore

[C] Karnam Malleswari

[D] PT Usha

Answer: PT Usha

Legendary Indian athlete and Olympian P.T. Usha has been appointed as a member of the Athletes Commission of the Asian Athletics Association (AAA). Usha will be one of the six members of the AAA Athletes Commission. The commission will be headed by 1992 Olympics gold medallist hammer thrower Andrey Abduvaliyev of Uzbekistan. Usha is known for her stellar performance at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, where she missed the bronze in the 400m hurdles finals by 1/100 second. The 'Payyoli Express' was awarded with the prestigious Arjuna Award in 1983. Recently, Usha is nominated for the prestigious International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF) Veteran Pin Award.

6. Which state government has launched a programme for student entrepreneurs "E Step"?

[A] Karnataka

[B] Punjab

[C] Tamil Nadu

[D] Kerala

Answer: Karnataka

The Karnataka government has launched an initiative E-Step to empower student start-ups. The focus of E-Step is on boot camps, mentoring and training programmes which cover various aspects of entrepreneurship. The programme is part of Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society (KITS). It is specially crafted for students / start-ups / entrepreneurs to understand the basics of entrepreneurship from experienced trainers. The first phase of E-Step will be to organize day long boot camps across all New Age Incubation Networks (NAIN) across the state. The boot camp gives participants an overview of the current start-up system. It also acts as a platform for ideation where teams will work on various ideas based on problems, solutions, competitors and customer.

7. India's first private Space Science Museum has opened in which city?

[A] Hyderabad

[B] Ujjain

[C] Dehradun

[D] Lucknow

**Answer: Hyderabad**

India's first private Space Science Museum has opened in Hyderabad to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Birla Archaeological and Cultural Research Institute (BACRI). It is a collaborative effort between the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the B M Birla Science Centre. The ISRO on its part is providing some 65 models of various spacecrafts, satellites and rockets of varying sizes. This museum exhibits scale models of Indian Launch vehicles GSLV Mark III, GSLV Mark II and PSLV, Chandrayaan-1, Mars Orbiter spacecraft, APPLE, Aryabhata, Bhaskara, Rohini RS-1 and a model of the International Space Station (ISS). Presently, 24 exhibits are on display to encourage young minds to explore Space Science and Technology.

8. Advait Bhartia, who recently climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, is from which city?

- [A] Delhi
- [B] Pune
- [C] Chandigarh
- [D] Bhubaneswar

Answer: Pune

Advait Bhartia, a 9-year old boy from Pune, has recently climbed the highest peak in Africa – Mount Kilimanjaro – in a span of just 7 days. Advait is fondly called 'Simbum ToTo' (Little Simba). He reached the top of mountain on 31st July 2019 under the supervision of his expedition leader Samir Patham. The trek was organized by Pune-based adventure and trekking company Adventure Pulse. Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania is about 4,900m from its base and 5,895m above sea level. The mountain has been the subject of many scientific studies because of its shrinking glaciers and disappearing ice fields.

9. Who is the author of the book "Kashmir's Untold Story: Declassified"?

- [A] Parvez Sharma
- [B] Iqbal Chand Malhotra
- [C] Jabbar Patel
- [D] Aleksa Muhammed Fazil

Answer: Iqbal Chand Malhotra

The book "Kashmir's Untold Story: Declassified" has been authored by filmmaker Iqbal Chand Malhotra and defence analyst Maroof Raza. It will tell the riveting story of the history of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), from the time of its political and geographic consolidation under Maharaja Gulab Singh to the present-day. It will also shed light on why the special status was integral to the accession treaty. The book would reveal amazing insights into the Government of India (GoI)'s policy towards the state, right from 1889, when it first imposed central rule and dispossessed the rule of the then Maharaja, till date. It will also provide answers to some of the most asked questions on the situation in the Valley, like "Why has this state of siege in the Kashmir valley continued for 72 years since the Partition of India?", "What role has Pakistan played in it all these years?", or the question of the hour, "Will there ever be a resolution to the militancy in the state?". Now, the former state has been bifurcated into two union territories — J&K and Ladakh.

10. The National Tribal Festival "Aadi Mahotsav" has started in which region?

- [A] Shimla
- [B] Udaipur
- [C] Ladakh
- [D] Delhi

Answer: Ladakh

The 9-day National Tribal Festival "Aadi Mahotsav" is a joint initiative of Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs & Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED). On 17th August 2019, the fest is started at Polo Ground in Leh-Ladakh with theme "A celebration of the spirit of Tribal Craft, Culture and Commerce". The event will see around 160 Tribal artisans from more than 20 states across the country, actively participating and showcasing their masterpieces. The mahotsav will showcase traditional art and handicrafts and cultural heritage of the country. The product range will consists of Tribal Textiles from Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Odisha, West Bengal; Tribal Jewellery from Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and North East; Tribal Paintings like Gond art from Madhya Pradesh, Warli art from Maharashtra; Metal craft from Chhattisgarh; Black pottery from Manipur, and Naturals and Organic products from Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka.

11. Rizia Rahman, who passed away recently, was the renowned novelist of which country?

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- [A] Indonesia
- [B] Myanmar
- [C] Iran
- [D] Bangladesh

Answer: Bangladesh

Rizia Rahman (79), the renowned Bangladeshi novelist and the Ekushey Padak winning author, has passed away in Dhaka on August 17, 2019. She was born in Kolkata in 1939 and migrated to East Bengal after the partition. Rizia wrote in all genres of creative work viz. short stories, poems, essays and children's fiction but she was renowned for her novels. Some of her well-known novels are as follows: Bong Theke Bangla, Rokter Okshor and Ghar-Bhanga-Ghar.

12. Which state government has decided to set up Atal Bihari Vajpayee residential schools for children of labourers?

- [A] Jharkhand
- [B] Uttar Pradesh
- [C] Karnataka
- [D] Haryana

Answer: Uttar Pradesh

In Uttar Pradesh, the state government has decided to set up Atal Bihari Vajpayee residential schools for children of labourers in all 18 divisions of state. Beside this, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced many projects in state in remembrance of former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee including a memorial in Bateshwar, the former prime minister's native village in Agra. A 'Centre of Excellence' will also establish in DAV College in Kanpur where Atal ji had his education. The state government also announced that the work to set up a medical university in Lucknow is underway and a satellite centre of KGMU is being set up in Balrampur, from where Vajpayee had contested elections in 1957.

13. Which state government has rolled out the Grama and Ward Volunteer system ?

- [A] Andhra Pradesh
- [B] Chhattisgarh
- [C] Rajasthan
- [D] Maharashtra

Answer: Andhra Pradesh

On the eve of 73rd Independence day, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the Grama and Ward Volunteer system for effective delivery of schemes. The basic idea behind implementing the scheme is to ensure corruption-free governance and last-mile delivery of welfare schemes and services to every household and citizen in the State. The scheme will involve over 2.8 lakh volunteers. Under the scheme, one volunteer will cover 50 families in each village. Identity cards will be given to each volunteer and they would get an honorarium of Rs 5,000 per month. A toll-free telephone number – 1902 – would be set up at the call centre in the Chief Minister Office to receive the grievances of the people.

14. Who has been awarded Tamil Nadu government's Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Award?

- [A] Kailasavadivoo Sivan
- [B] A S Kiran Kumar
- [C] Ritu Karidhal
- [D] Mylswamy Annadurai

Answer: Kailasavadivoo Sivan

On the occasion of the 73rd Independence Day 2019, ISRO Chairman Dr Kailasavadivoo Sivan has been honoured with the Dr A P J Abdul Kalam award by the Tamil Nadu government. However, Dr. Sivan could not receive the award at the Independence Day celebrations at Fort St. George but he is expected to collect the award from the Chief Minister at a later date. He won the award in recognition of his stellar work in promotion of science and technology. The Kalam award is to honour those who work for promoting scientific growth, humanities and students' welfare and the awardees should hail from Tamil Nadu. The award carries 8 gm gold medal, Rs. 5 lakh in cash and a citation.

15. Madan Mani Dixit, the veteran Litterateur & Journalist has passed away. He was from which country?

- [A] South Africa



- [B] India
- [C] Sri Lanka
- [D] Nepal

Answer: Nepal

Madan Mani Dixit (96), a pioneering writer and Journalist, has passed away in Kathmandu on 15th August 2019. He was fondly known as 'maadsaap' by his contemporaries and friends. Some of his famous works include Meri Nilima, Bhumisukt, Rig Veda and the short story, Kasle jityo kasle haryo?. He was awarded the prestigious Madan Puraskar of Nepal for his literary masterpiece "Madhavi". Dixit is also acknowledged as the first photojournalist of Nepal.

16. Jyske Bank, which has launched world's first negative interest rate mortgage, is associated to which country?

- [A] Sweden
- [B] Denmark
- [C] Norway
- [D] Finland

Answer: Denmark

Denmark's third largest, Jyske Bank has launched the world's first negative interest rate mortgage and started to offer a 10-year mortgage deals at a negative interest rate of 0.5% a year. Under its negative mortgage, borrowers will pay the usual EMI but the outstanding amount will be slashed each month by more than the borrower has paid. The unconventional decision is the latest in a series of moves central and commercial banks in advanced economies have undertaken to revive demand and boost consumption.

17. India's first National Essential Diagnostics List (NEDL) has finalized by which organisation?

- [A] ICMR
- [B] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- [C] AIIMS
- [D] Tata Memorial Hospital

Answer: ICMR

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has recently finalized the India's first National Essential Diagnostics List (NEDL) that recommends that at least 159 tests should be made available for patients in even basic government health facilities. The list aims to bridge the current regulatory system's gap that do not cover all the medical devices and In-Vitro Diagnostic device (IVD). The current system is equipped to manage only the few notified devices. With this, India has become the first country to compile such a list that would provide guidance to the government for deciding the kind of diagnostic tests that different healthcare facilities in villages and remote areas require. The list is meant for facilities from village till the district level. The list also encompasses tests relevant for new programmes such as Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. In India, diagnostics (medical devices and in-vitro diagnostics) follow a regulatory framework based on the drug regulations under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945. Diagnostics are regulated under the regulatory provisions of the Medical Device Rules, 2017.

18. SUPRA Scheme, which is in news recently, is associated to which field?

- [A] Women Empowerment
- [B] Science & Technology
- [C] Child Education
- [D] Digital Banking

Answer: Science & Technology

The Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) has proposed a new scheme called Supra with the sole objective of funding exploration of new scientific and engineering breakthroughs with global impact. The initiative is part of the PM Modi's 100-day transformative ideas. The Supra (or Scientific and Useful Profound Research Advancement) scheme is designed to attract high quality research proposals consisting of new hypotheses or challenge existing ones and provide 'out-of-box' solutions. The SERB is a statutory body under the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to promote and fund research in different scientific disciplines.



19. Which union ministry has launched the 5th edition of Swachh Survekshan 2020 (SS 2020)?

- [A] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- [B] Ministry of Rural Development
- [C] Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
- [D] Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Answer: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

In New Delhi, the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has launched the 5th edition of the annual cleanliness survey – Swachh Survekshan 2020 (SS 2020) – with theme “Cleanliness is Our Right”. The survey will be conducted in January 2020. On this occasion, the MoHUA also launched Swachh Nagar app for waste collection – solid, wet or Construction and Demolition (C&D). The Ministry also launched the Water PLUS Protocol which aims to provide a guideline for cities and towns to ensure that no untreated waste-water is released into the environment thereby enabling sustainability of the sanitation value chain. A city could be given the tag of Water+ if it ensures 100% treatment of wastewater and 10% use of treated wastewater, among other things.

20. India's first Central Institute of Chemical Engineering & Technology (CICET) is proposed to set up in which state?

- [A] Maharashtra
- [B] Gujarat
- [C] Karnataka
- [D] Uttar Pradesh

Answer: Gujarat

Union Minister of State for Chemical & Fertilizers, Mansukh Mandaviya has recently announced that the India's first Central Institute of Chemical Engineering & Technology (CICET) will be set up in Gujarat to give boost to the chemical industry. The CICET will come up either at Ahmedabad or Surat. The proposed institute will help the chemical industry with research and innovations.

21. Damodar Ganesh Bapat, who passed away, was the noted personality of which field?

- [A] Painting
- [B] Social Work
- [C] Photography
- [D] Journalism

Answer: Social Work

Damodar Ganesh Bapat (84), the noted social worker and Padma Shri awardee, has passed away in Bilaspur district, Chhattisgarh on August 17, 2019. He dedicated his life to the treatment and service of leprosy patients at an ashram run by Bharatiya Kushta Nivarak Sangh (BKNS) in Sothi village in Janjgir-Champa district of the state for the last four-and-a-half decades. He played an instrumental role in making people aware about leprosy in tribal areas of the state.

22. Which country's team has won the 2019 T20 Physical Disability Cricket World Series?

- [A] India
- [B] England
- [C] New Zealand
- [D] Pakistan

Answer: India

Indian cricket team has won the T20 Physical Disability World Cricket Series in England. In the final, India defeated England by 36 runs at the Blackfinch New Road ground in Worcester. The Indian team called itself Wadekar Warriors, in memory of former India captain Ajit Wadekar, who played an active role in All India Cricket Association for Physically Challenged (AICAPC). The AICAPC organised the selection and preparation for the event. The 6-nation tournament was organised by England and Wales Cricket Board.

23. The Special Purpose Trust Fund (SPTF) is associated to which international organisation?

- [A] United Nations
- [B] World Bank
- [C] AIIB



[D] ADB

Answer: United Nations

India has recently contributed \$1 million to the UN Special Purpose Trust Fund (SPTF) for the Resident Coordinator System. The SPTF is a specific fund housed within the UN Secretariat. The fund has been established to receive, consolidate, manage and account for all contributions and financial transactions of the new Resident Coordinator system in a transparent and effective way. On real time basis, the SPTF web portal reflects all commitments, contributions and expenditures recorded for the fund.

24. On which date, the 2019 World Photography Day (WPD) was observed recently?

[A] August 18

[B] August 21

[C] August 19

[D] August 20

Answer: August 19

The World Photography Day (WPD) is observed every year on 19th of August to inspire photographers across the planet to share a single photo with a simple idea – To share their world with the world. The date of August 19 was chosen to commemorate the invention of the Daguerreotype, a photographic process developed by Frenchmen Louis Daguerre & Joseph Nicéphore Niepce in 1837. On 9th January 1839, the French Academy of Sciences announced the Daguerreotype process. After that, on 19th August 1839, the French government purchased the patent and announced the invention as a gift "free to the world".

25. What is the campaign of 2019 World Humanitarian Day (WHD)?

[A] #NotATarget

[B] #PeopleHelpingPeople

[C] #WomenHumanitarians

[D] #WorldNeedsMore

Answer: #WomenHumanitarians

The World Humanitarian Day (WHD) is held every year on 19 August to pay tribute to aid workers who risk their lives in humanitarian service, and to rally support for people affected by crises around the world. The 2019 WHD campaign – #WomenHumanitarians –honour the work of women in crises throughout the world. This year's focus salutes the efforts of women humanitarian workers across the world who rally to people in need and are often the first to respond and the last to leave.

26. The famous Hazratganj Chauraha, which has been renamed as Atal Chowk, is located in which district of Uttar Pradesh?

[A] Agra

[B] Allahabad

[C] Meerut

[D] Lucknow

Answer: Lucknow

The famous 'Hazratganj Chauraha' of Lucknow has been renamed as 'Atal Chowk' in memory of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The announcement came on the first death anniversary former PM. Hazratganj is a major Victorian style shopping area situated in the heart of the city. It houses showrooms, shopping complexes, restaurants, hotels, theatres, offices and businesses. Hazratganj shops sell the famous Lucknow Chikan material. Naza Market, part of Hazratganj, is the biggest market for computer/IT goods in the state and 2nd largest in India after Delhi's Nehru Place. Naza Market is also the biggest piracy market in whole Asia.

27. Where is the headquarters of National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW)?

[A] Bhopal

[B] Agra

[C] New Delhi

[D] Jaipur

Answer: New Delhi

Harshad Pandurang Thakur, Professor at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), has been appointed as
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the new Director of National Institute of Health and Family Welfare (NIHFW), New Delhi for a period of 5 years. The NIHFW is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and is headquartered in New Delhi. It acts as an apex technical institute as well as a think tank for the promotion of health and family welfare programmes in the country.

28. Which renowned scientist has bagged the prestigious J C Bose Fellowship?

- [A] K Thangaraj
- [B] Annie Zaidi
- [C] Raghunath Anant Mashelkar
- [D] Shiraz Minwalla

Answer: K Thangaraj

Dr. K Thangaraj, Chief Scientist at the city based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) has bagged the prestigious J C Bose Fellowship for his outstanding scientific contributions in the field of population and medical genomics. The J C Bose fellowship is awarded to active scientists in recognition of their outstanding performance by the Science and Engineering Research Board, Department of Science & Technology. Dr Thangaraj is a population geneticist. Some of his major works includes finding out the origin of Indian population– how humans migrated from Africa during different episodes and populated different parts of India. These studies led to further work on understanding how these populations interbred. He also showed how in the last 2000 years Indians started practicing endogamy resulting in many population specific genetic disorders.

29. Ranjit Guru, the noted journalist and columnist passed away. He was from which state?

- [A] Jharkhand
- [B] Odisha
- [C] Bihar
- [D] Uttar Pradesh

Answer: Odisha

Ranjit Guru (61), the noted Odisha journalist and columnist, has passed away in Bhubaneswar on August 18, 2019. He was working with leading Odia daily Sambad in a senior editorial position. During his over a 3-decade long career in journalism, he was also associated with the leading newspapers like 'Anandabazar Patrika' and 'The Asian Age'.

30. Ansupa lake, sometimes seen in news, is located in which state?

- [A] Odisha
- [B] Nagaland
- [C] Kerala
- [D] Andhra Pradesh

Answer: Odisha

The Odisha Wetland Authority has recently approved implementation of an integrated management plan for Chilika (India's largest brackish water lagoon), and Ansupa (State's largest freshwater lake). The plan for Chilika & Ansupa will cost Rs 180 crore. The 5-year management of lakes is intended at strengthening livelihood of thousands of fishermen relying on the two water-bodies. Chilika is spread over 1,100 sq km and lakhs of tourists visit the lake to watch endangered Irrawaddy dolphins and migratory birds during winter. While Ansupa is famous for its sweet water fish, especially for labeo bata locally known as pohala. It is spread over almost 2 sq km & is also the wintering ground for 32 species of migratory birds. Its calmness, scenic beauty and forest coverage behold the visitors.

31. Which state government has launched School Fagadaba to improve infrastructure in government schools?

- [A] Arunachal Pradesh
- [B] Nagaland
- [C] Tripura
- [D] Manipur

Answer: Manipur

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh launched a scheme named "School Fagadaba" (Make education better) to improve infrastructure of government schools in the state. The aim of the scheme is to ensure better infrastructure, quality education and overall improvement of government schools to make them

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model schools. In the first phase of the scheme, one school from each of the 60 Assembly constituencies in the state has been selected. The overall purpose of School Fagadaba is to improve the government schools in terms of physical and manpower gaps and increase in enrollment of students.

32. Which Indian personality has been conferred the UAE's highest civil honour 'Order of Zayed'?

- [A] Ram Nath Kovind
- [B] Narendra Modi
- [C] Lata Mangeshkar
- [D] Amitabh Bachchan

Answer: Narendra Modi

On 23rd August 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will embark on a 3-day official visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Bahrain. During the visit, PM Modi will receive the UAE's highest civil honour 'Order of Zayed'. The honour was conferred to him in April 2019 in recognition of his distinguished leadership that gave a big boost to bilateral relations between the two countries. The award is named after the UAE's founding father Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. It acquires special significance as it was awarded to PM Modi in the year of the birth centenary of Sheikh Zayed. So far, six countries — Russia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Palestine and Afghanistan — have given their highest award to Prime Minister Modi. After that, PM Modi will visit Bahrain that will be the first-ever Prime Ministerial visit from India to Bahrain.

33. NCPCR and which IIT have developed a kit to spread sexual-abuse awareness?

- [A] IIT Kharagpur
- [B] IIT Kanpur
- [C] IIT Bombay
- [D] IIT Madras

Answer: IIT Kanpur

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) in collaboration with IIT Kanpur has developed a kit to spread sexual-abuse awareness among children by using interactive means to teach them about personal safety. The kit is a set of cards, posters, short animation clips and games. It can be used by teachers or NGOs to conduct an interactive workshop for children about sexual-abuse awareness. The kit also features game cards as an intervention to assess the learning acquired by children. It can be used in classrooms for kids aged between 8-12 and in a group of 30-35 students in one session. It has manuals, reading and video material for the teacher or workshop facilitator to read and understand how to conduct the workshop. The workshop kit has been vetted by the psychologists at Central Institute of Psychiatry of Ranchi, and a revised version will be developed based on their feedback.

34. Mohammed Zahur Hashmi, who has passed away recently, was the veteran personality of which field?

- [A] Journalism
- [B] Politics
- [C] Film Industry
- [D] Photography

Answer: Film Industry

Mohammed Zahur Hashmi (92), the veteran music composer, has passed away in Mumbai on August 20, 2019. Popularly known as Khayyam, he was best known for his music in classic films such as 'Umrao Jaan' and 'Kabhi Kabhie'. He was a recipient of Sangeet Natak Akademi Award and Padma Bhushan. In 2016, the veteran composer established Khayyam Jagjeet Kaur KPG Charitable Trust and pledged to donate his entire wealth to the trust to support budding artists and technicians in India.

35. Dr. Jagannath Mishra, who passed away recently, was the former chief minister of which state?

- [A] Jharkhand
- [B] Uttar Pradesh
- [C] Bihar
- [D] Rajasthan

Answer: Bihar

Dr. Jagannath Mishra (82), the 3-times former chief minister of Bihar, has passed away in Delhi on August 19, 2019. He was known for sharp political acumen and bold decision-making, which he demonstrated during the peak of his career. Mishra was the last Congress chief minister of Bihar between December

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1989 and March 1990. He also served as a Union minister in the P V Narasimha Rao cabinet. He was one of the most powerful leaders of the state in pre-Mandal politics who brought the infamous 'Press Bill' to curtail the freedom of the press. Currently, he was a member of Bhartiya Jan Congress (Rashtriya).

36. Who is the head of the task force on Direct Tax Code which recently submitted report to Union Finance Ministry?

- [A] G C Srivastava
- [B] Mansi Kedia
- [C] Girish Ahuja
- [D] Akhilesh Ranjan

Answer: Akhilesh Ranjan

The task force, headed by CBDT member Akhilesh Ranjan, constituted by the Union government for drafting the new Direct Tax Code (DTC) has recently submitted its report to Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman. The task force was constituted to replace the 6-decades-old Income Tax Act 1961. It is believed that the task force has suggested changes in the slab for personal income tax & corporate tax. At present, the personal income tax structure has 3 categories — for people below the age of 60, for people above the age of 60 but less than 80, and the third for people of 80 years and above. Currently, companies with turnover up to Rs 400 crore attract tax at the rate of 25%. This covers 99.3% of all the companies registered. Now, the report is expected to be placed in Parliament as a part of Union Budget 2020-21.

Padmaja mahapatra | mahapatrapadmaja28@gmail.com |

37. Which country is the world's largest emitter of anthropogenic Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂), according to latest report by environmental NGO Greenpeace?

- [A] Iran
- [B] India
- [C] Russia
- [D] South Africa

Answer: India

Environmental NGO Greenpeace has recently released an analysis of a National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Ozone Monitoring Instrument (OMI) satellite data. As per country-wise world rankings, India is the world's largest emitter of Sulphur Dioxide (SO₂) as it has the maximum hotspots. It contributes more than 15% of all anthropogenic SO₂ hotspots in the world. The major SO₂ emission hotspots in India are Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh, Neyveli and Chennai in Tamil Nadu, Talcher and Jharsuguda in Odisha, Korba in Chhattisgarh, Kutch in Gujarat, Ramagundam in Telangana and Chandrapur and Koradi in Maharashtra. According to report, the vast majority of plants in India lack Flue-Gas Desulfurization (FGD) technology to reduce their air pollution. Individually, the Norilsk smelter complex in Russia is the largest SO₂ emission hotspot in the world, followed by Kriel in Mpumalanga province in South Africa and Zagros in Iran. Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh is at 5th position.

38. Which state government has recently classified Nicotine as Class A poison?

- [A] Punjab
- [B] Karnataka
- [C] Haryana
- [D] Odisha

Answer: Karnataka

The Karnataka government has recently classified nicotine as Class A poison by amending the Karnataka Poisons (Possession and Sale) Rules 2015. The move is to curb illegal sale, smuggling of nicotine cartridges & e-cigarettes. Highly toxic chemicals (such as cyanogen, hydrocyanic acid, nitrogen peroxide, and phosgene) which even in very small quantities as gas or vapour in the air are dangerous to life.

39. The underground British-era Bunker turned Museum has come up in which city of Maharashtra?

- [A] Mumbai
- [B] Nagpur
- [C] Nashik
- [D] Aurangabad

Answer: Mumbai

President Ram Nath Kovind has recently inaugurated the thematic underground British-era Bunker turned

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Museum inside the Raj Bhavan at Malabar Hill in Mumbai. The 15,000 sq.ft museum has Virtual Reality Booths (VRBs) in which visitors can "time travel" to the 19th century when the bunker was created to fire cannons at approaching enemy ships. The history of Raj Bhavan has also been depicted in another section. In 2016, the British-era bunker was discovered by Governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao. It is made up of 13 rooms such as Shell Store, Gun Shell, Cartridge Store and Central Artillery Store. The underground passage has a proper drainage system and inlets for fresh air and light. The bunker dates back to the pre-World War I era and is believed to have been an asset of the battery stationed near the coast to defend Bombay Castle from naval attacks.

40. Which state government has rolled 'Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana' health insurance scheme?

- [A] Haryana
- [B] Uttar Pradesh
- [C] Punjab
- [D] Madhya Pradesh

Answer: Punjab

To mark the 75th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the Punjab government has rolled out a mega health insurance scheme named 'Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana'. It will cover 76% of the state's population. The scheme has clubbed with the Centre's health insurance scheme titled 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)' for the poor. As per latest Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC), Ayushman Bharat would have covered only 14.86 lakh families while the Punjab scheme in its new form, will benefit a total of 46 lakh families. Like the original PMJAY, the Punjab government will provide cashless health insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh per year. The Centre and the state government will bear the cost of the annual premium for 14.86 lakh families in the ratio of 60:40. For the remaining beneficiaries, the Punjab government will bear the entire expense. The Punjab scheme with 1,396 treatment packages will be implemented through over 450 empanelled hospitals, including 200 government hospitals.

41. NISHTHA programme, which is in news recently, is associated to which field?

- [A] Mangalyaan
- [B] Education
- [C] Digital Banking
- [D] Women Empowerment

Answer: Education

On 21st August 2019, the Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched the world's biggest teacher training programme – , NISHTHA – in New Delhi under which more than 42 lakh teachers will be trained across the country. The acronym 'NISHTHA' stands for 'National Initiative for School Head's and Teachers' Holistic Advancement'. The purpose of the integrated programme is to build the capacities of around 42 lakh participants covering all teachers and Heads of the school at the elementary level in all government schools, faculty members of states councils of Educational Research and Training and other educational departments. The integrated training will motivate and equip teachers to encourage and foster critical thinking in students, handle diverse situations and act as first-level counsellors.

42. Babulal Gaur, who passed away recently, was the former Chief Minister of which state?

- [A] Jharkhand
- [B] Himachal Pradesh
- [C] Uttar Pradesh
- [D] Madhya Pradesh

Answer: Madhya Pradesh

In Madhya Pradesh, former Chief Minister of the state Babulal Gaur (89) has passed away in Bhopal on 21st August 2019. Born on 2nd June 1930 at Pratapgarh in Uttar Pradesh, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader was credited with expanding party's foothold in Madhya Pradesh. He retired from electoral politics in 2018 citing old age. He served as the Chief Minister of MP from August 2004 to November 2005 and represented Govindpura Vidhan Sabha seat 10 times.

43. Satendra Singh Lohia, who became the first Asian swimmer to cross the Catalina Channel of America, is from which state?

- [A] Madhya Pradesh



- [B] Rajadthan
- [C] Punjab
- [D] Haryana

Answer: Madhya Pradesh

On 21st August 2019, Indian Para swimmer Satendra Singh Lohia from Madhya Pradesh has scripted history by becoming the first Asian swimmer to cross the Catalina Channel of America. He holds the Asian record of crossing both the English and Catalina channels. Gwalior-born Satendra led the Indian Para Relay team along with 5 team mates and crossed the Catalina Channel in 11 hours 34 minutes. At that time, the water temperature was around 13 degrees Celsius. In 2014, Satyendra has also honoured with the highest sports award of Madhya Pradesh – Vikram Award.

44. Which Indian-American teenager has won the 2019 South Asian Spelling Bee contest?

- [A] Kavya Kopparap
- [B] Navneeth Murali
- [C] Dhruv Gaur
- [D] Syamantak Payra

Answer: Navneeth Murali

Navneeth Murali, an Indian-American teenager from New Jersey, has won the 2019 South Asian Spelling Bee (SASB) contest. The prize money for this contest is USD 3,000. The SASB is an annual spelling bee platform in the US for children of South Asian descent. The competition is open to any student at or below the age of 14, who has at least one parent or grandparent who is of South Asian descent, or whose lineage can be traced to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and/or Sri Lanka.

45. Which country has decided to hold SAARC Foreign Ministers' informal meet?

- [A] Bhutan
- [B] Nepal
- [C] India
- [D] Sri Lanka

Answer: Nepal

Nepal is planning to hold SAARC Foreign Ministers' informal meet on the sidelines of the 74th UN General Assembly (UNGA) session in September 2019. The 18th SAARC summit was held in Kathmandu in 2014 and Pakistan was to host the next summit in 2016. But, the summit was cancelled after India boycotted the meeting, in the wake of the terror attack at a military base in Uri in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), which killed 19 soldiers. Other countries viz. Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan, also walked out following India's decision to exit the summit to step up diplomatic pressure on Pakistan. India also declared that it will participate only if Pakistan took steps to tackle terrorism.

46. The 2019 World Youth Chess Championship is being held in which city?

- [A] Kolkata
- [B] Mumbai
- [C] Pune
- [D] New Delhi

Answer: Mumbai

For the first time-ever India is hosting the prestigious World Youth chess championship, which is scheduled to be held in Mumbai from October 1 to 13. The world's best talent in under-14, u-16 and u-18 categories will be on view. The tournament is being held under the aegis of the All-India Chess Federation and organised by the All-Marathi Chess Association. Players from 62 countries have confirmed their participation, including Russia, USA, France, Italy and Azerbaijan.

47. The researchers at which IIT have developed method to make biofuel with sugar and salt?

- [A] IIT Indore
- [B] IIT Bombay
- [C] IIT Hyderabad
- [D] IIT Kanpur

Answer: IIT Hyderabad



By using sugar, sulphuric acid and salt, the researchers of IIT Hyderabad have developed a cheap and efficient nano-carbon catalyst to help in the production of biofuel precursors. The catalyst showed better efficiency and selectivity than the commercially available variants to produce the desired C15 oxygenated hydrocarbon — a precursor to diesel and jet fuel. This development is important as States like Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh /Telengana produce a large amount of corncob waste in the country. This can be converted into valuable fuel instead of being burnt. The nano-carbon catalyst developed by the institute can enable conversion into biofuel (fuel from biological sources rather than fossil fuels) and provide an additional earning opportunity for the corn farmer, besides being a sustainable energy source.

48. Which Indian sprinter has won gold in men's 300m at the 2019 Athleticky Mitink Reiter event in Czech Republic?

- [A] Kunhu Muhammed
- [B] Mohan Kumar Raja
- [C] Mohammad Anas
- [D] Nirmal Tom

Answer: Mohammad Anas

Top Indian sprinters Hima Das and Mohammad Anas have won a gold each in women's and men's 300m races respectively at the 2019 Athleticky Mitink Reiter event in Czech Republic. This was Hima's 6th gold in 2019 in European races since July 2. On the other hand, Mohammad Anas won the gold clocking 32.41 seconds. India's Nirmal Tom clinched a bronze in the same event by clocking a timing of 33.03 seconds. National record holder Anas has already qualified for 400m event for the World Championships to be held in Doha in September-October while Hima is yet to achieve it.

49. On which date, the Communal Harmony Day (CHD) is celebrated in India?

- [A] August 21
- [B] August 22
- [C] August 20
- [D] August 23

Answer: August 20

In India, the Sadbhavana Diwas (or Communal Harmony Day) is celebrated every year on August 20 to commemorate birth anniversary of late former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. On the occasion of 75th birth anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi, Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi along with Rahul Gandhi inaugurated an exhibition titled 'Memories and Archives of Rajiv Gandhi' on 20th August 2019. Rajiv Gandhi served as the 6th Prime Minister of India from 1984 to 1989. He took office after the 1984 assassination of his mother, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, to become the youngest Indian Prime Minister at the age of 40. In 21st May 1991, Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated by a Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) suicide bomber during an election rally in Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu. His death anniversary is also observed as National Anti-Terrorism Day.

50. The Cabinet Secretary of India works under the direct charge of ____?

- [A] Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- [B] Prime Minister
- [C] Ministry of Home Affairs
- [D] Ministry of Finance

Answer: Prime Minister

Rajiv Gauba, a 1982 batch IAS officer of Jharkhand cadre, has been appointed as the new Cabinet Secretary for two years. His tenure will be effective from August 30, 2019 & will succeed Pradeep Kumar Sinha. Gauba is currently posted as Union Home Affairs secretary. The Cabinet Secretary is the top-most executive official and senior-most civil servant of the Government of India (GoI). He works under the direct charge of the Prime minister.

51. Who is the newly appointed Defence Secretary of India?

- [A] Ajay Kumar
- [B] Brij Kumar Agarwal
- [C] Subash Chandra
- [D] Rajiv Gauba

Answer: Ajay Kumar



Ajay Kumar, a 1985 batch IAS officer of Kerala cadre, has been appointed as the new Defence Secretary. He succeeded Sanjay Mitra. Apart from him, Brij Kumar Agarwal has been appointed as Secretary to the Lokpal and Subash Chandra as Secretary of Department of Defence Production. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the appointments.

52. The National Conference on Varmam Science has recently held in which city?

- [A] Chennai
- [B] New Delhi
- [C] Kochi
- [D] Jaipur

Answer: Chennai

On 22nd August 2019, Union Minister of State for AYUSH Shripad Yesso Naik inaugurated the two-day National Conference on Varmam Science in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. 'Varmam' is a constituent of the Siddha system of medicine, that also doubles up as a martial art. The national conference is being organized by the National Institute of Siddha in Chennai.

53. 'Op-Blue Freedom' is associated to which sports?

- [A] Water skiing
- [B] Water polo
- [C] Parasailing
- [D] Scuba diving

Answer: Scuba diving

In a first-of-its-kind initiative in Asia, 8 armed forces veterans have initiated a high-end adventure sports survival training and self-defence mission at a pan India level titled 'Op-Blue Freedom' as a part of their parent project — Special Forces Adventures (SFA). The SFA is led by Major (retd) Vivek Jacob and has veterans from the Indian Army Para Commandos and the Naval Marine Commandos (MARCOS). 'Op-Blue Freedom' is a nation-wide adaptive scuba diving programme for people with disabilities as well as able-bodied persons. The purpose of the program is to train adventure enthusiasts in special forces skills like survival techniques, emergency first response skills, unarmed combat, endurance and fitness. Recently, 'Op-Blue Freedom' is in news because the Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju and football legend Bhaichung Bhutia have flagged off dive for Delhi-NCT leg for the Op-Blue Freedom.

54. How many island nations are members of Forum for India-Pacific Islands cooperation (FIPIC)?

- [A] 20
- [B] 14
- [C] 16
- [D] 18

Answer: 14

The Union Tourism Ministry has decided to offer e-Tourist Visa fee based on tourist footfall to attract foreign travellers from over 160 countries to India. The ministry has proposed to introduce e-visa fee for short duration of 30 days during peak tourism season — from July to March — at a charge of \$25. However, the e-visa fee during the lean period — from April to June — is to be kept at \$10. The Ministry also introduced a new 5 year e-tourist visa the fee of which will be \$ 80 and the fees of one year e-visa would be \$ 40. Though, there will be no visa fee for tourists from 14 Pacific Island nations belonging to Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) — Fiji, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue Island, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu — and Myanmar, Argentina, Indonesia, Jamaica, Mauritius, Seychelles, South Africa and Uruguay. Both the Ministry of Home Affairs (HA) and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) have given approval to the flexible e-tourist visa regime.

55. Which Indian tech company has partnered with IISc on robotics and 5G?

- [A] Wipro
- [B] Infosys
- [C] Tata
- [D] Reliance

Answer: Wipro

Wipro has partnered with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) to conduct advanced applied research in

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autonomous systems – robotics and 5G. Both the organizations have jointly set up a hybrid industry-academia collaboration unit – Wipro IISc Research and Innovation Network (WIRIN) – which will drive idea discovery, research and innovation in technology and product design. Both will focus on the research and development of cutting-edge technologies in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning, Visual Computing, Human Computer Interaction (HCI) and Vehicle-to-everything communication (V2X). The insights from the research will be leveraged by Wipro for its customers and the industry ecosystem.

56. Which state has acquired first position in the SARAL – 'State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index'?

- [A] Andhra Pradesh
- [B] Gujarat
- [C] Karnataka
- [D] Telangana

Answer: Karnataka

The State of Karnataka has got the first position in the SARAL – 'State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index' that evaluates Indian states based on their attractiveness for rooftop development. The index has recently launched by the Union Minister of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy (IC), RK Singh. Telangana has acquired the 2nd position, followed by Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh. The index has been designed collaboratively by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (SSEF), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and Ernst & Young (EY).

Padmaja mahapatra | mahapatrapadmaja28@gmail.com |

57. 'Sea Tinkle' in Chennai beach, which is in news recently, is caused by which algae?

- [A] Cryptomonad
- [B] Diatom
- [C] Noctiluca
- [D] Wakame

Answer: Noctiluca

On 18th August 2019, visitors to the Injambakkam beach in Chennai and Besant Nagar's Eliot's Beach noticed a blue shimmer on the waves i.e. Popularly known as 'Sea Tinkle'. According to marine experts, the Noctiluca algae were behind this blue glow phenomenon. The algae exhibit the phenomenon of bioluminescence (or biologically produce light when disturbed). The light is produced by a chemical reaction in the presence of oxygen involving an enzyme called "luciferase". Bioluminescence has been observed in fireflies, a few beetles and in marine creatures such as Anglerfish and copepods. Though the sight that algae produce is beautiful, their arrival may not be good news for marine health. Noctiluca are known to be voracious predators of planktonic organisms (diatoms) that leads to disruption of the marine food chain. Such blooms have been reported annually in the Northern Arabian Sea since the early 2000s. Goa, Mumbai and the backwaters of Kerala have witnessed these algal blooms. Recently the magical glow featured in the Malayalam movie Kumbalangi Nights, which gained much attention.

58. Which international organisation has released a report titled 'Quality Unknown: The Invisible Water Crisis'?

- [A] ADB
- [B] UNCTAD
- [C] UNGA
- [D] World Bank

Answer: World Bank

The World Bank (WB) has recently released a report titled 'Quality Unknown: The Invisible Water Crisis' to address human and environmental harm. The study evaluated how a combination of bacteria, sewage, chemicals and plastics suck oxygen from water supplies and transform water into poison for people and ecosystems. Both rich and poor countries are at risk from poor water quality as a result of pollution. The researchers noted that a key contributor to poor water quality is nitrogen, which, applied as fertiliser in agriculture, eventually enters rivers, lakes and oceans where it transforms into nitrates. Early exposure of children to nitrates affects their growth and brain development, impacting their health and adult earning potential. The report also found that when Biological Oxygen Demand (an indicator of overall water quality) crosses a certain threshold, GDP growth in areas affected by the problem drops by as much as a third because of the impact on health, agriculture and ecosystems.

59. Where is the headquarters of the Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network "TRAFFIC"?

- [A] France

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- [B] Germany
- [C] United States
- [D] United Kingdom

Answer: United Kingdom

The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network "TRAFFIC" has recently revealed a new report titled 'Skin and Bones Unresolved: An Analysis of Tiger Seizures from 2000-2018'. As per new TRAFFIC analysis, India topped in the trafficking of tigers and tiger body parts over 19 years since 2000. Apart from tiger skin and bones, live tigers are also traded illegally in a number of cases. It accounted for 40.5% of total incidents (463) and 26.5% of tigers seized (626). Overall, the analysis estimated that 2,359 tigers and tiger body parts were seized during the period across 32 countries and territories globally, resulting from 1,142 seizure incidents. Around 95% of these seizures were recorded in countries that are home to tigers. The study was launched to coincide with discussions around the trade in tigers and other big cat species at the 18th meeting of governments that are parties to the Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, or CITES. It must be noted here that India has the world's largest wild tiger population. The headquarters of TRAFFIC is located in Cambridge, United Kingdom (UK).

60. Which country has launched rocket carrying life-sized robot "Fedor" to International Space Station (ISS)?

- [A] United States
- [B] China
- [C] France
- [D] Russia

Answer: Russia

Russia has launched a rocket carrying life-sized robot to the International Space Station (ISS) from Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. It is set to arrive at the station on Saturday. The robot, named Fedor (Experimental Demonstration Object Research), is the first ever sent into space by Russia. Fedor stands some one metre and 80 centimetres tall (5ft 11 inches) and weighs 160 kgs. In order to test a new emergency rescue system, the robot was the Soyuz rocket's only passenger. During its 10 days at the ISS, Fedor will learn new skills such as connecting and disconnecting electric cables using standard items from a screwdriver and a spanner to a fire extinguisher.

61. Who is the author of the book "Big Billion Startup: The Untold Flipkart Story"?

- [A] Mihir Dalal
- [B] Prahalad Joshi
- [C] Raj Kumar Singh
- [D] Ashwini Kumar

Answer: Mihir Dalal

The book titled "Big Billion Startup: The Untold Flipkart Story" has been authored by Mihir Dalal. It will recount the story of how the IIT graduates Sachin and Binny Bansal built Flipkart and how internet entrepreneurship was made a desirable occupation. It is also a story of big money, power and hubris, as both business and interpersonal complexities weakened the founders' control over their creation and forced them to sell out to a retailer whose dominance they had once dreamt of following.

62. On which date, the World Senior Citizen's Day (WSCD) is celebrated?

- [A] August 20
- [B] August 23
- [C] August 21
- [D] August 22

Answer: August 21

The World Senior Citizen's Day (WSCD) is celebrated every year on 21st of August to raise awareness about the issues that affect older adults. and to support them throughout the aging process. The day also recognizes & acknowledges the contributions of older people to the society. It provides an opportunity to show our appreciation for their dedication, accomplishments, and services they give throughout their lives.

63. Which Indian Professor has been conferred the Pushkin Medal 2019?

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- [A] Bishnupriya Dutt
- [B] Meeta Narain
- [C] Anindya Sinha
- [D] Aijaz Ahmad

Answer: Meeta Narain

Prof. Meeta Narain of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) has been conferred the prestigious 'Pushkin Medal – 2019' for her contribution to Russian studies abroad. Narain has contributed towards re-writing of Russian studies textbooks for graduate students after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Her work gave a contemporary flavour to the textbooks, which are now being used in departments of Russian language studies at various universities of India, in many former Soviet nation institutes, Europe, the US and other countries. The Pushkin Medal is the highest honour given to an Indian scholar by the Russian government in recognition of outstanding contributions to the promotion of the Russian language and culture. It was instituted in the name of famous Russian author and poet Alexander S. Pushkin.

64. The Telangana government has signed pact with which tech company for 'Digital Telangana'?

- [A] Microsoft
- [B] Google
- [C] Wipro
- [D] Infosys

Answer: Google

The Telangana Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Google India for 'Digital Telangana'. The MoU will improve and get more local language content online using Google's digital publishing tool "Navlekha". As part of the MoU, Google will work with the state government to help digitize the government's content in Telugu to make it easier for the common man to get access to all the information and services on government sites in their local languages. Apart from this, Google will also collaborate with the government to support its digital literacy vision and aid in the overall digitization agenda of the state.

65. Which company has recently bagged title sponsorship rights for Indian cricket team for 5 years?

- [A] Paytm
- [B] Vodafone
- [C] PhonePe
- [D] Airtel

Answer: Paytm

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has extended title sponsor rights to Paytm for the Indian cricket team's international and domestic matches with a winning bid of Rs 3.80 crore per match for the 4-year cycle commencing October, 2019. Over the next 4 years, India is set to host at least 86 international men's matches in bilateral series & BCCI is thrilled with the 57% hike in sponsorship amount. Besides men's international cricket, BCCI offers extension of sponsorship rights to domestic cricket and women's international games at no additional cost.

66. The first-ever International Day for Victims of Acts of Violence based on Religion or Belief is observed on which date?

- [A] August 21
- [B] August 24
- [C] August 23
- [D] August 22

Answer: August 22

The first-ever International Day for Victims of Acts of Violence based on Religion or Belief is observed on 22nd of August 2019 to honour the victims and survivors of heinous acts who often remain forgotten. This is a great opportunity to raise awareness about religious intolerance, and violence and discrimination against anyone based on their religion or belief.

67. Which union ministry has organized a 'San-Sadhan' Hackathon for Divyangjan accessible toilets?

- [A] Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- [B] Ministry of Jal Shakti



[C] Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

[D] Ministry of Rural Development

Answer: Ministry of Jal Shakti

Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, the Government of India (GoI) has launched its latest initiative called the 'San-Sadhan' Hackathon – for Divyangjan accessible toilets. The aim of the initiative is to ease lives of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) by making toilets smarter, more accessible, and easier to use. In this hackathon, the government is looking for smart, scalable and innovative solutions for economical toilets for individual and community use in rural and urban contexts. The Hackathon is inviting researchers, start-ups, student innovators, technology enthusiasts, and industry experts to participate. The last date to apply for participating in the Hackathon is August 28. The shortlisted applicants will work to develop their prototype during the two-day Hackathon scheduled to be held in the month of September in New Delhi. The initiative is being organized jointly by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, in collaboration with Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and 91springboard.

68. Which state has ranked 1st in free medicine scheme implementation under the National Health Mission (NHM)?

[A] Rajasthan

[B] MP

[C] UP

[D] Jharkhand

Answer: Rajasthan

The flagship scheme of Rajasthan government has topped the 16-state chart detailing implementation of the free medicine scheme i.e. run under the National Health Mission (NHM). The NHM assessed the performance of the states on the basis of effective implementation of Drugs and Vaccine Distribution Management System (DVDMS), stock of essential drugs, value of drugs about to expire along with other such parameters. According to an NHM letter, the DVDMSA (coverage in Rajasthan is 77.26% and proportion of online drug distribution counters – 96.03%. The expired quantity proportion viz. breakage, wastage and loss are just 7.43%.

69. Which Union Ministry has recently declared ocean energy as green power?

[A] Ministry of Jal Shakti

[B] Ministry of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries

[C] Ministry of New and Renewable Energy

[D] Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Answer: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has approved a proposal to declare ocean energy as a renewable source of energy. The decision is expected to boost the use of ocean energy. The MNRE has clarified to all the stakeholders that energy produced using various forms of ocean energy such as tidal, wave, ocean thermal energy conversion among others shall be considered as renewable energy and shall be eligible for meeting the non-solar Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPO). Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) has a theoretical potential of 180,000 MW in India subject to suitable technological evolution. The total identified potential of tidal energy in India is around 12,455 Megawatt whereas the total theoretical potential of wave energy along the country's coast is estimated at 40,000 MW.

70. Who is the translator of the book "the Diary of Manu Gandhi (1943-44)"?

[A] Saraswathy Nagarajan

[B] Nita Sathyendran

[C] Tridip Suhrud

[D] Krishna Kripalani

Answer: Tridip Suhrud

Union Culture and Tourism Minister Prahlad Singh Patel has recently launched the book titled – "the Diary of Manu Gandhi (1943-44)" at a function in New Delhi. The book has been brought out by National Archives of India (NAI) in collaboration with Oxford University Press on the occasion of 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The book originally written in Gujarati language and has been edited & translated by a well known scholar Dr. Tridip Suhrud. The first volume of the book covers the period of 1943-1944. It throws light on Gandhiji's life as a prisoner and his endeavour to establish the possibility of

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collective non-violence. It also chronicles the spiritual and educational pursuits of a woman who takes up writing as a mode of self examination. She shares a moving portrait of Kasturba Gandhi's illness and death. Manu Gandhi (Mridula) was a grand niece of Mahatma Gandhi, and stayed with Gandhiji till his assassination. She was an aide to Kasturba Gandhi during her imprisonment in the Aga Khan Palace in 1943.

71. Who has taken charge as new Prime Minister of Sudan?

- [A] Mohamed Tahir Ayala
- [B] Abdalla Hamdok
- [C] Bakri Hassan Saleh
- [D] Motazz Moussa

Answer: Abdalla Hamdok

Prominent economist Abdalla Hamdok has taken charge as the new Prime Minister of Sudan and vowed to work towards ending the country's economic crisis and establishing peace. In his new role, Hamdok will be tasked to deal with Sudan's mounting economic problems viz. high inflation and unemployment after decades of poor governance. His biggest challenge would be integrating his country into the international economy after 20 years of crippling United States trade sanctions.

72. Which country has been blacklisted by Asia-Pacific Group of FATF for its failure to comply with terror funding standards?

- [A] Iran
- [B] Pakistan
- [C] North Korea
- [D] Afghanistan

Answer: Pakistan

The Asia-Pacific Group (APG) of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is a global watchdog for terror financing and money laundering. It has recently put Pakistan in the Enhanced Expedited Follow Up List (Blacklist) for its failure to meet its standards. The APG has also found that Pakistan was non-compliant on 32 of the 40 compliance parameters of terror financing and money laundering. On 11 effectiveness parameters of terror financing and money laundering, Pakistan was adjudged as low on 10. According to officials, Pakistan could not convince the 41-member plenary to upgrade it on any parameter. Now, Pakistan has to focus on avoiding the blacklist in October 2019, when the 15-month timeline ends on the FATF's 27-point action plan.

73. Under Digital India campaign, the Banjari village of which district of Madhya Pradesh has become an integral part of the digital map of the country?

- [A] Katni
- [B] Jabalpur
- [C] Chhindwara
- [D] Gwalior

Answer: Katni

In Madhya Pradesh, the Banjari village of Katni district has become an integral part of the digital map of the country. It is the first village in the state to be associated with the Prime Minister's ambitious project – Digital India. In line with Digital India campaign, the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEiTY) has envisaged the Digital Village Project. It has plans to build 1000 digital villages across the country. The digital village will not only help in providing connectivity in every village but it will also help in bridging the digital divide between rural and urban areas. This will also open new jobs and employment. Akodara village of Sabarkantha district of Gujarat is the first digital village in the country.

74. Monali Jadhav, who won 3 medals at World Police Games (WPG), is from which state?

- [A] Madhya Pradesh
- [B] Maharashtra
- [C] Rajasthan
- [D] Uttar Pradesh

Answer: Maharashtra

Constable Monali Jadhav from Maharashtra was representing the Indian Police Force (IPF) at the recently



concluded 2019 World Police and Fire Games International Championship held in Chengdu, China. She bagged the gold in target and field archery while settled for a bronze in the '3D Archery' in the tournament. She also made a new record with a score of 716 out of 720 points in the game. Jadhav is attached to the Jalamb police station in Buldhana district of Maharashtra.

75. What is the reference year for the recently released Composite Water Management Index 2.0 (CWMI 2.0)?

- [A] 2019-20
- [B] 2018-19
- [C] 2016-17
- [D] 2017-18

Answer: 2017-18

The NITI Aayog in association with Ministry of JAL Shakti and Ministry of Rural Development has released Composite Water Management Index 2.0 (CWMI 2.0). CWMI 2.0 ranks various states for the reference year 2017-18 as against the base year 2016-17. The CWMI is an important tool to assess and improve the performance of States/ Union Territories in efficient management of water resources. The index would provide useful information for the States and also for the concerned Central Ministries/Departments enabling them to formulate and implement suitable strategies for better management of water resources.

76. Which state has been ranked first in the recently released Composite Water Management Index 2.0 (CWMI 2.0)?

- [A] Madhya Pradesh
- [B] Andhra Pradesh
- [C] Gujarat
- [D] Goa

Answer: Gujarat

NITI Aayog has recently released report on the Composite Water Management Index 2.0 (CWMI 2.0) for reference year 2017-18. Gujarat has been ranked first in the CWMI 2.0, followed by Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. In North Eastern and Himalayan States, Himachal Pradesh has been adjudged No. 1 in 2017-18 followed by Uttarakhand, Tripura and Assam. The Union Territories have first time submitted their data and Puducherry has been declared as the top ranker. In terms of incremental change in index (over 2016-17 level), Haryana holds No. 1 position in general States and Uttarakhand ranks at first position amongst North Eastern and Himalayan States. On an average, 80% of the states assessed on the Index over the last 3 years have improved their water management scores, with an average improvement of +5.2 points.

77. The first-ever World Youth Conference for Kindness has recently held in which city?

- [A] New Delhi
- [B] Pune
- [C] Shimla
- [D] Lucknow

Answer: New Delhi

The first-ever World Youth Conference for Kindness has been inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi. It organized by the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP). The theme of the conference was 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: Gandhi for the Contemporary World: Celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi'. The conference was in commemoration of the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi. Its purpose is to provide youth with creative, effective methods of engaging and in realizing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It sought inspiration from Gandhi's championing of non-violence. The conference hosted 60 international delegates from over 27 countries, each of whom work in the field of positive social change.

78. Amazon Rainforest Forests are located in which continent?

- [A] South America
- [B] Africa
- [C] Australia



[D] Europe

Answer: South America

According to the latest data by Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (Inpe), the Amazon Rainforest Forests in Brazil has recorded 74,155 fires since January 2019. Its satellite data showed an 84% increase as compared to the same period in 2018. The Amazon is the largest tropical forest in the world, which covers more than 5 million square kilometres across nine countries: Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela. It acts as an enormous carbon sink & stores up to an estimated 100 years worth of carbon emissions produced by humans, and is seen as vital to slowing the pace of global warming. It is the most significant climate stabilizer as it creates 20 percent of the air we breathe and it also holds 20% of the fresh flowing water on the planet. But in the last half-century alone, nearly 20% of the forest has disappeared. Scientists have warned that if tree loss in the Amazon were to pass a certain "tipping point", somewhere between 25 -40%, deforestation could start to feed on itself and lead to the demise of the forest within a matter of decades. Hence, preserving the forest is of critical importance for both the region it encompasses and the rest of the world.

79. Sabka Vishwas scheme, which is in news, is associated to which purpose?

[A] To settle pending SC/ST cases

[B] To settle pending PIL cases

[C] To settle pending indirect tax disputes

[D] To settle pending women related cases

Answer: To settle pending indirect tax disputes

The Government of India (GoI) has recently notified the Sabka Vishwas – Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme 2019 to reduce legacy service tax and central excise cases in the pre-GST era. The scheme will be operationalized from 1st September 2019 & would continue till 31st December 2019. The two main components of the Scheme are dispute resolution and amnesty. The most attractive aspect of the scheme is that it provides substantial relief in tax dues for all categories of cases as well as full waiver of interest, fine and penalty. For all the cases pending in adjudication or appeal – in any forum – this Scheme offers a relief of 70% from the duty demand if it is Rs.50 lakhs or less and 50% if it is more than Rs. 50 lakhs. The same relief is available for cases under investigation and audit where the duty involved is quantified and communicated to the party or admitted by him in a statement on or before June 30, 2019. The scheme is especially tailored to free the large number of small taxpayers of their pending disputes with the tax administration.

80. Which football team has won the 2019 Durand Cup tournament?

[A] Gokulam Kerala

[B] Mohun Bagan

[C] East Bengal

[D] FC Goa

Answer: Gokulam Kerala

In football, Gokulam Kerala FC won the 129th Durand Cup tournament by defeating heavyweights Mohun Bagan 2-1 at the Salt Lake Stadium in Kolkata on 25th August 2019. It was a close game throughout which saw both the teams go through testing moments. With this win, Gokulam Kerala became the first club from the state in 22 years to clinch the tournament.

81. What is the theme of the 45th G7 summit?

[A] Fight for Peace & Equality

[B] Fighting Injustice

[C] Fighting Inequality

[D] Fighting for Migrants

Answer: Fighting Inequality

In France, the 45th edition of G7 summit was held in Biarritz on 24-26 August 2019 with theme "Fighting Inequality". The annual meet was attended by the leaders of 7 member states — France, Italy, Canada, United States, Japan, Germany and the United Kingdom. US President Donald Trump, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and German Chancellor Angela Merkel are in Biarritz to discuss various issues during the G7 meeting. PM on way to France to attend G7 meeting in Biarritz; Theme of the summit is 'Fighting Inequality'. Prime Minister Narendra Modi also attended the G7 meeting in which India has been invited as a partner country.



82. Komalika Bari is associated to which sports?

- [A] Basketball
- [B] Football
- [C] Badminton
- [D] Archery

Answer: Archery

On 25th August 2019, Komalika Bari from Jharkhand has become recurve cadet world champion at the World Archery Youth Championships in Madrid, Spain. In the final, she defeated higher-ranked Sonoda Waka of Japan 7-3 and earn India's 2nd gold on the final day of the Championships. Earlier, India also won a gold in the compound junior mixed pair event and a bronze in the compound junior men's team event. Thus, India concluded their campaign with two gold and one bronze medal in their last event. Now, the 17-year-old Komalika is now India's second recurve cadet world champion (under-18) after Deepika Kumari who won the title in 2009. This was also India's fourth individual world championship title after Deepika (cadet and junior) and Palton Hansda (compound junior in 2006). This is the last tournament for the Indian archers to play under the national flag as the World Archery's suspension of the country will come into effect after this event.

83. Who has become the first Indian-ever to win World Badminton Championships gold?

- [A] Parupalli Kashyap
- [B] Saina Nehwal
- [C] Srikanth Kidambi
- [D] PV Sindhu

Answer: PV Sindhu

In Badminton, ace Indian shuttler PV Sindhu has become the first Indian to book a gold medal at the World Championships at Basel in Switzerland. In the final, she defeated her Japanese opponent Nozomi Okuhara by 21-7, 21-7. This was Sindhu's third straight World Championships final. Sindhu is also the second women shuttler to have five medals and the third to have medals in all three colours.

84. Who is the head of CVC committee to examine bank frauds above 50 crore?

- [A] D K Pathak
- [B] Suresh N Patel
- [C] T M Bhasin
- [D] Madhusudan Prasad

Answer: T M Bhasin

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has constituted Advisory Board for Banking Frauds (ABBF) to examine bank fraud over Rs 50 crore and recommend action. The panel in its previous avatar called the Advisory Board on Bank, Commercial and Financial Frauds. The 4-member ABBF, which is headed by former Vigilance Commissioner T M Bhasin, has been formed in consultation with the RBI and it will function as the first level of examination of all large fraud cases before recommendations or references are made to the investigative agencies by the respective Public Sector Banks (PSBs). The jurisdiction of board will be confined to those cases involving officers of General Manager (GM) level and above in the PSBs in respect of an allegation of a fraud in a borrowal account. The banks will refer all large fraud cases above Rs 50 crore to ABBF and on receipt of its recommendation, they concerned will take further action in such matter. The tenure of the Chairman and members would be for a period of two years from August 21, 2019.

85. Dokdo islands is the bone of contention between which countries?

- [A] South Korea & Japan
- [B] India & Sri Lanka
- [C] Indian & Bangladesh
- [D] North Korea & South Korea

Answer: South Korea & Japan

South Korea has recently conducted 2-day drill exercise to practise defending disputed islands off its east coast against an unlikely attack from Japan. The annual drills come just days after Seoul terminated a military intelligence-sharing pact with Tokyo. The exercise will involve warships and aircraft. The drill — re-named "East Sea territory defence training" — will solidify the military's resolve to defend the Dokdo

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islands and the area surrounding the Sea of Japan. The delayed exercise comes as tensions with neighbouring Japan continue. Seoul has controlled the rocky islets in the Sea of Japan since 1945 when Tokyo's 35-year colonial rule over the Korean peninsula ended. Tokyo also claims the islands and accuses South Korea of occupying them illegally. The two nations are both market economies, democracies and US allies, and both are threatened by nuclear-armed North Korea.

86. The researchers at which IIT have developed lab grown meat?

- [A] IIT-Bombay
- [B] IIT-Guwahati
- [C] IIT-Delhi
- [D] IIT-Madras

Answer: IIT-Guwahati

The researchers at IIT-Guwahati have developed a novel technique for production of meat which is completely natural. The lab-grown meat is nutritious and will be a step towards cruelty-free food. The taste of the final meat product will remain similar as raw meat but with improvised nutritional values as per customer needs. The product can be printed in varying shapes and sizes using a 3D bioprinter with the edible components and preserved for future use. According to researchers, the meat industry has been facing immense pressure in keeping up with the food requirements due to rapid increase in population. Citing predictions from the UN population prospects, Dr Biman B Mandal stated that the current meat industry will not be able to meet the global needs by 2050. Around 4,000 litres of water are required to produce one kg chicken meat and more than 8,000 litres of water are required to produce one kg of mutton. Hence, the lab grown meat made will have immense value in the Indian as well as the foreign market as it is nutritious and can be tuned for the high in demand needs of fast-food joints.

87. Where is the headquarters of Tropical Forest Research Institute (TFRI)?

- [A] Dehradun
- [B] Kanpur
- [C] Delhi
- [D] Jabalpur

Answer: Jabalpur

The Jabalpur-based Tropical Forest Research Institute (TFRI) has launched a mobile phone application containing details about insects and pests and their management. The app "INSECT PESTS" is a tool that provides information on insect and pests found in various forest areas and their management in tropical forests of central India. The app contains information in three categories— insect and pests of forest nurseries, of plantations, of natural forest—and their management. The app also has various features to identify pests, their host plants, infestation period, the nature of damage, their brief life history and also the measures to control them. The TFRI works under the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

88. Which state government has launched exclusive education TV channel "Kalvi Tholaikkatchi"?

- [A] Tamil Nadu
- [B] Karnataka
- [C] Kerala
- [D] Andhra Pradesh

Answer: Tamil Nadu

The Tamil Nadu government has recently launched its exclusive education TV channel – Kalvi Tholaikkatchi – to benefit students of classes I to XII. The content will include shows aimed at school children, besides those on jobs and related issues. The Education TV will telecast programmes from 6 am to 9.30 pm every day. The programmes will be based on board exam preparation for students, employment news and opportunities for the youth and career-guidance information. The content for the channel has been prepared by a group of 25 teachers and the programmes will also have guest speakers like authors and subject experts. The State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT) has also contributed towards content development for the channel. The TN SCERT has a channel on YouTube already with around 2.5 lakh subscribers and more than 3,000 videos. The videos range from chapter-wise tutorials on subjects to easy science experiments conducted by middle school students.

89. The annual festival of famous Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple has started in which state?

- [A] Kerala



- [B] Tamil Nadu
- [C] Andhra Pradesh
- [D] Karnataka

Answer: Tamil Nadu

On 26th August 2019, the 10-day annual festival of the famous Madurai Meenakshi Amman temple has started in Tamil Nadu with a formal flag hoisting ceremony in the sprawling temple premises. The main ceremony of the crowning of Lord Sundareswara will be held on 7th of September, after which Lord Sundareswar will accept the reign of Madurai for six months. One of the interesting aspects of the festival is the enactment of various incidents in the lives of Lord Sundareswara and Goddess Meenakshi. In one of the important incidents enacted during the annual festival, Lord Sundareswar disguises himself as a labourer to help a poor old woman called Pittu. Music and dance performances as well as processions will be held in the brightly lit temple premises including the famous Golden Lotus pond and the Thousand Pillared Hall. It is notable that the Golden Lotus pond was thoroughly cleaned recently and natural water resources underneath the pond were revived using eco friendly geo carpeting technology.

90. The UNCCD's Conference Of Parties (COP 14) is being held in which country?

- [A] Israel
- [B] New Zealand
- [C] China
- [D] India

Answer: India

India will host the Conference Of Parties (COP 14) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) from 2nd to 13th of September 2019 at the India Mart and Expo in the Greater Noida area of New Delhi. The event will see participation of over 3000 representatives from over 200 countries which will include Ministers from around 100 countries. The focus of the conference will be on desertification and degradation of land.

91. Project SU.RE (Sustainable Resolution) is associated to which field?

- [A] Fashion Industry
- [B] Film Industry
- [C] Jute Industry
- [D] Cotton Industry

Answer: Fashion Industry

The Project SU.RE (Sustainable Resolution) is a joint project of CMAI (Clothing Manufacturers Association of India) of United Nations (UN) & IMG Reliance (International Management Group). It has been inaugurated by Union Minister for Textiles Smriti Zubin Irani during Lakme Fashion Winter/Festive 2019 in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The purpose of this project is to move towards sustainable fashion that contributes to a clean environment. The sustainability resolution reflects the thought of Mahatma Gandhi. Project SU.RE involves 16 leading retail fashion brands and is a step towards responsible and smart business. Top fashion and retail brands such as Future Group, Shoppers Stop, Aditya Birla Retail, Arvind Brands, Lifestyle, Max, Raymond, House of Anita Dongre, Westside, Spykar, Levis, Bestsellers and Trends are signatories to the project.

92. The National Centre for Avian Ecotoxicology has come up in which city?

- [A] Chennai
- [B] Kochi
- [C] Coimbatore
- [D] Bengaluru

Answer: Coimbatore

Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar has inaugurated the National Centre for Avian Ecotoxicology at Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural Sciences (SACON) in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. The purpose of the center is to explore the impact of chemical contaminants on individual species of birds and, where possible, link them to population and communities. The centre would study the movement of environmental contaminants such as pesticides, heavy metals, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, polychlorinated biphenyls and drugs through the food chain, and their harmful effects on birds. The Union Ministry allocated Rs 4 crore for the centre, which contains instruments such as High Performance Liquid Chromatograph (HPLC), Atomic Absorption

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Spectrometer (AAC) and Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometer (ICP-MS).

93. Who has been chosen for the 'Eminent Engineer Award for the Year 2019' by the Institution of Engineers (India)?

- [A] P S Juneja
- [B] Prabhakar Singh
- [C] Tulsi Verma
- [D] Jitendra Sharma

Answer: Prabhakar Singh

Prabhakar Singh, Director General (DG) of Central Public Works Department (CPWD), has been chosen for the 'Eminent Engineer Award for the Year 2019' by the Institution of Engineers (India) for his distinguished and exemplary Service in the field of Engineering and Technology. This Elite and Prestigious Award shall be conferred to him on the 'Engineers Day' on September 15, 2019 in New Delhi. Singh is an IIT Graduate and MBA from one of the Premier Business Institute of the Country. His enormous contributions and dedicated Service to the Nation as an Eminent Technocrat has been instrumental in transforming the Premier Engineering Organisation of the Central Government – CPWD.

94. The researchers at which IIT has produce collagen from waste eel skin?

- [A] IIT-Hyderabad
- [B] IIT-Indore
- [C] IIT-Kanpur
- [D] IIT-Delhi

Answer: IIT-Hyderabad

The researchers at the IIT-Hyderabad have derived collagen from discarded skin of eel (a snake like fish) by treating it with acetic acid, common salt and pepsin. It then combined the collagen with alginate hydrogel and used a 3D printing process to obtain scaffolds. They shown that tissue scaffolds built using such collagen allow growth and proliferation of stem cells. Thus, eel-skin derived collagen is a promising biomaterial for tissue engineering applications. The research was funded by the Central government's Department of Science and Technology-Science and Engineering Research Board (DST-SERB) through the National Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme (N-PDF). The practical applications of this research can lead to utilizing eel fish skin-derived collagen as a promising alternative to animal derived collagen, which are expensive and are associated with pathological diseases. Collagen is a protein found especially in the joints of humans and animals.

95. The 4th edition of the Internet of Things (IoT) India Congress 2019 held in which city?

- [A] Raipur
- [B] Bengaluru
- [C] Bhopal
- [D] Amravati

Answer: Bengaluru

The 4th edition of the Internet of Things (IoT) India Congress 2019 held in Bengaluru, Karnataka. The theme of Edition is 'Mainstreaming the Internet of Things'. It is the India's largest confluence of digital technology. The 2-day session focused on 10 tracks viz. Energy, Healthcare, Defence, Standards and Regulatory, Retail, Digital Communication, Skills and Development, Agriculture, Manufacturing and Smart Cities.

96. Kanchan Chaudhary Bhattacharya, who passed away recently, was the India's first woman DGP. She was from which state?

- [A] Punjab
- [B] Haryana
- [C] Uttar Pradesh
- [D] Madhya Pradesh

Answer: Punjab

Kanchan Chaudhary Bhattacharya was the India's first woman Director General of Police (DGP) who passed away in Mumbai on 26th August 2019. Hailing from Amritsar in Punjab, she made history in 2004 when she was appointed as the DGP of Uttarakhand & become the first woman in the country to hold



such position. Bhattacharya was also the 2nd woman IPS officer in the country, the first being Kiran Bedi. After retirement in 2007, she took a plunge into politics by contesting the 2014 Lok Sabha election on an Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s ticket from Haridwar constituency. Though, she could not make it to the lower house of Parliament.

97. The 7th 'Community Radio Sammelan' is scheduled to be held in which city?

- [A] Pune
- [B] Delhi
- [C] Jaipur
- [D] Bhopal

Answer: Delhi

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) is organizing the 7th 'Community Radio Sammelan' at Dr B R Ambedkar Bhawan in Delhi from Aug 27-29 with theme 'Community Radio for SDGs'. The Sammelan will witness discussion on various flagship schemes of the government such as the Jal Shakti Abhiyaan and efforts for disaster risk reduction. Beside this, research, production, broadcasting, dissemination of social welfare messages through social media and content management for community radio stations will also be discussed. The 'Sammelán' will witness participation of all operational community radio stations across the country.

98. Who is representing India at the 2019 Indo Pacific Chiefs of Defence (CHOD) Conference in Bangkok?

- [A] Rishi Kumar Shukla
- [B] Birender Singh Dhanoa
- [C] Bipin Rawat
- [D] Sunil Lanba

Answer: Birender Singh Dhanoa

Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa is representing India at the 2019 Indo Pacific Chiefs of Defence (CHOD) Conference in Bangkok, Thailand. The theme for the conference is "Collaboration in a free and Open Indo – Pacific". The conference will provide perspectives on common challenges faced by attending nations and elicit open discussions on the same. More than Chiefs of Defence of 33 countries are participating in the conference.

99. Which country has launched the world's first floating nuclear reactor into the Arctic despite warnings?

- [A] United States
- [B] United Kingdom
- [C] Russia
- [D] China

Answer: Russia

Despite environmentalists warning of serious risks to the region, Russia has launched the world's first floating nuclear reactor – Akademik Lomonosov – across the Arctic. It was loaded with nuclear fuel from the Arctic port of Murmansk to begin its 5,000km voyage to Pevek in northeastern Siberia. The reactor's trip is expected to last between four and six weeks, depending on the weather conditions and the amount of ice on the way. The vessel weighs 21,000 tons and has two reactors with a capacity of 35 megawatts each, close to that of those used by nuclear icebreakers. It has a crew of 69 and travels at a speed of 3.5 to 4.5 knots. However, environmental groups have warned dangers of unprecedented project & dubbed it a potential "Chernobyl on ice" and a "nuclear Titanic". Though, Russia claims the project will provide clean energy to the remote region and allow authorities to retire an ageing nuclear plant and a coal-burning power station.

100. Shaheen VIII is the joint military exercise between Pakistan & which country?

- [A] China
- [B] Sri Lanka
- [C] Israel
- [D] Myanmar

Answer: China

The 8th edition of joint military exercise titled Shaheen VIII has started between the air forces of China and Pakistan in Chinese city of Holton, which is closer to the Indian border near Ladakh. The purpose of

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the exercise is to improve training standards of the two air forces through mutual learning. It comes at a time when the country's relations with Pakistan have hit rock-bottom. The air to air war games is said to be an exercise to develop a mechanism for interoperability of both countries' air forces. The Indian Air Force (IAF) is keeping a close eye on the Pakistan-China aerial exercise in which both the countries have deployed latest fighter jets.

101. Who has become the India's first female flight commander?

- [A] Mitali Madhumita
- [B] Seema Rao
- [C] Shalija Dhami
- [D] Punita Arora

Answer: Shalija Dhami

Wing Commander Shalija Dhami has scripted history by becoming India's first female officer of the Indian Air Force (IAF) to become the Flight Commander of a flying unit. She took over as flight commander of a Chetak helicopter unit at Hindon airbase in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. Chetak is a single engine turbo shaft, light utility helicopter with capacity of 6 passengers and has maximum speed of 220 km/hour. Flight Commander is the second in command of the unit. The helicopter is suitable for commuting, cargo / material transport, casualty evacuation, Search & Rescue (SAR), Aerial Survey & MaybePatrolling, Emergency Medical Services, Off-shore operations and Under slung operations.

102. Which E-commerce major has launched Military Veterans Employment programme in India?

- [A] Myntra
- [B] Snapdeal
- [C] Flipkart
- [D] Amazon

Answer: Amazon

E-commerce major Amazon India has launched a Military Veterans Employment programme in the country to create hundreds of opportunities for military veterans and their spouses across the company's fulfilment centres. For this noble cause, Amazon India has partnered with the Office of the Director General of Resettlement (DGR) and the Army Welfare Placement Organisation (AWPO) to create continued work opportunities for military families across the country.

103. Which union ministry has launched National Digital Library of India (NDLI)?

- [A] Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- [B] Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
- [C] Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- [D] Ministry of Human Resource Development

Answer: Ministry of Human Resource Development

The Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) under its National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT) has launched the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) project to develop a framework of virtual repository of learning resources with a single-window search facility. Till date, there are more than 3 crore digital resources available through the National Digital Library (NDL). The contents cover almost all major domains of education and all major levels of learners. More than 50 lakh students have registered themselves in the National Digital Library with about 20 lakh active users. The NDL has been integrated with UMANG App and users can register through www.ndl.gov.in or through the mobile app.

104. Where is the headquarters of Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP)?

- [A] Dehradun
- [B] Delhi
- [C] Mumbai
- [D] Kolkata

Answer: Dehradun

In Dehradun, the Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP) has set up a plant which can turn plastic waste into diesel. The plant was recently inaugurated by the Union Science and Technology Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan. The plant is not just a good step towards freedom from plastic but will also reduce India's dependence on other countries for petroleum products. The plant will also boost economic growth as it

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will produce 800 litres of diesel from one tonne of plastic waste which will be collected with the help of NGOs.

105. Manasi Joshi, who won gold at the 2019 BWF Para Badminton World Championships, is from which city?

- [A] Jabalpur
- [B] Pune
- [C] Rajkot
- [D] Ranchi

Answer: Rajkot

Indian Para-badminton player Manasi Joshi from Rajkot has recently clinched her first gold in women's singles category at the BWF Para Badminton World Championships in Basel, Switzerland. In the final, she defeated 3-time SL3 world champion Parul Parmar with a score of 21-12, 21-7.

106. Which Indian app clinched mobile app at the 2019 US Technovation Challenge?

- [A] Vithu
- [B] Maitri
- [C] BHIM
- [D] IRCTC

Answer: Maitri

The US Technovation Challenge is the world's largest technology and entrepreneurship programme for girls which runs across 100+ countries. It is supported by Salesforce.org, Google.org, the Adobe Foundation, Uber, Samsung, BNY Mellon as well as UNESCO, the Peace Corps and UN Women. The competition was recently held in San Francisco. In it, from India, the mobile app "Maitri" clinched the bronze medal at global tech competition. The app was developed by the Noida-based girl team 'Tech Witches' to connect children at orphanages with senior citizens in old-age homes. The purpose of the app is to bring together individuals suffering from loneliness and depression and those lacking the nurturing love of elderly role models. The app is available for free on Google playstore & also allows users to volunteer and donate to old-age homes and orphanages.

107. Which former footballer has won the 2019 UEFA President's Award?

- [A] Johan Cruyff
- [B] Franz Beckenbauer
- [C] David Beckham
- [D] Eric Cantona

Answer: Eric Cantona

Eric Cantona, the former Manchester United forward and France legend, has been awarded the UEFA President's Award in Monaco in recognition of his playing career and commitment to charitable causes after it. Cantona won four Premier League titles in five years with United in the 1990s and scored 64 goals for the Old Trafford club in 143 appearances.

108. Which state government has decided to offer modern nursery education at anganwadis?

- [A] Madhya Pradesh
- [B] Chhattisgarh
- [C] Punjab
- [D] Haryana

Answer: Madhya Pradesh

The Madhya Pradesh government has decided to offer modern nursery education at anganwadis (or childcare centres) on the lines of private nursery schools. Under this scheme, all the 97,000 anganwadis of the state would be covered. In the first phase, a nursery school has been opened at each anganwadi across 313 administrative blocks across the state from August 28. Children would be imparted education based on 'learning by playing' method in a bid to strengthen their foundation by the time they get admission in regular schools.

109. 'Shagun' portal, which is in news recently, is associated to which field?

- [A] Ground Water preservation
- [B] School education



[C] Women Empowerment

[D] Sound Pollution

Answer: School education

Union Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank has recently launched a school education portal 'Shagun', which links over 15 lakh schools across the country to provide all the information on school education. The schools have been geo-tagged and all the data provided by them can be accessed through this portal. According to HRD officials, there would also be a third-party verification of the information provided by schools. Through this initiative, more than 2.3 lakh educational websites can be integrated.

110. Peacock Parachute Spider, which is recently spotted in Eastern Ghats, belongs to the genus _____?

[A] Avicularia

[B] Poecilotheria

[C] Mygale

[D] Chilobrachys

Answer: Poecilotheria

For the first time, the researchers have sighted a critically endangered species of tarantula – Peacock Parachute Spider (or Gooty Tarantula) beyond its known habitat in the Eastern Ghats. The spider belongs to the genus 'Poecilotheria'. The spider was spotted by a team of researchers of the Puducherry-based Indigenous Biodiversity Foundation (IBF) in the Pakkamalai Reserve Forests near Gingee in Villupuram district. The spider was first sighted in 1899 by Reginald Innes Pocock on the basis of a single female specimen in Gooty. The known habitat of Peacock Parachute Spider is in degraded forests near Nandyal in Andhra Pradesh. Tarantulas are biological pest controllers and there is a huge demand for them by collectors in the pet trade. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) categorised it as Critically Endangered.

111. Which country has launched the world's first facial biometric-based ID for seafarers?

[A] India

[B] China

[C] South Korea

[D] Russia

Answer: India

In a bid to boost employment in the coastal shipping sector, India has become the first country in the world to issue a Biometric Seafarer Identity Document (BSID) to its seafarers. The new document will give a foolproof identification to Indian seafarers which will facilitate their movement, provide ease of getting jobs and help in identifying them from any location in the world. The BSID has the dimensions of a smart ID card. It introduces modern security features like an embedded biometric chip, as well as optical security features such as micro prints / micro texts and Unique Guilloche pattern. The new card is in confirmation of the Convention No. 185 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on BSID. India ratified the Convention in October 2015. The total number of existing Indian seafarers who will be required to be issued BSIDs is around 3, 50,000. All the existing seafarers will be given BSID within the next two years. After this, it is estimated that around 15,000 new seafarers will be issued BSIDs annually.

112. The 25th Senior Women's National Football Championship is being held in which state?

[A] Andhra Pradesh

[B] Himachal Pradesh

[C] Arunachal Pradesh

[D] Uttar Pradesh

Answer: Arunachal Pradesh

For the first time, the 25th Senior Women's National Football Championship is scheduled to be held in Arunachal Pradesh from 10th to 24th September 2019. The tournament will be held in the oldest town of the state Pasighat in East Siang District. A total of 30 teams from across the country, representing various States, Union Territories and Indian Railways will participate in the tournament. The teams have been divided into 8 groups — A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H. Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Telangana is in group H. The inaugural match will be played between Railways and Mizoram.

113. Which state has been ranked first at the India Child Well-Being Index?

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- [A] Jharkhand
- [B] Himachal Pradesh
- [C] Tamil Nadu
- [D] Kerala

Answer: Kerala

The India Child Well-Being Index is a tool designed to measure and track children's well-being through 3 dimensions of healthy individual development, positive relationships and protective contexts. The index has been prepared by NGOs World Vision India and IFMR LEAD. The researchers used a total of 24 indicators to create the score instead of just considering income poverty. The 24 indicators are divided into three categories: Healthy individual development, positive relationships and protective contexts. As per index, Kerala (0.76) has acquired the topped spot due to its exceptional performance in health, nutrition and education facilities. Tamil Nadu (0.67) bagged the 2nd spot, followed by Himachal Pradesh (0.67). Though, Meghalaya (0.53), Jharkhand (0.50) and Madhya Pradesh (0.44) featured at the bottom of the index. Among the Union territories, Puducherry led the way with a score of 0.77 and Dadra and Nagar Haveli featured at the other end with a score of 0.52.

114. The 12th India Security Summit (ISS) was recently held in which city?

- [A] Dehradun
- [B] New Delhi
- [C] Pune
- [D] Kolkata

Answer: New Delhi

On 29th August 2019, the 12th India Security Summit (ISS) was held in New Delhi on the theme "Towards New National Cyber Security Strategy". During the conference, the various issues discussed such as protection of critical national infrastructure, emerging cyber threats: Incidents, Challenges and Response. The Government of India (GoI) has taken various measures to combat cyber threats. To combat cyber crime, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has already rolled out a scheme 'Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)' in the country. Beside this, "Cyber Swachhata Kendra" which is a part of the Government of India's Digital India initiative under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is also in force.

115. The National Sports Day (NSD) of India marks the birth anniversary of which sports legend?

- [A] Shanta Rangaswamy
- [B] Bhaichung Bhutia
- [C] Dhyan Chand
- [D] P T Usha

Answer: Dhyan Chand

The National Sports Day (NSD) is celebrated every year in India on 29th of August to mark the birth anniversary of legendary hockey player Major Dhyan Chand, who was known as 'The Wizard' or 'The Magician' of hockey for his superb ball control. He won gold medals in Olympics for India in the years 1928, 1934 and 1936. He scored over 400 goals in his career, from 1926 to 1948. It is believed that after India defeated Germany in the 1936 Olympics final by 8-1, Adolf Hitler offered him a senior post in the German Army, to which Chand refused. His autobiography "Goal!" was published by Sport & Pastime (Madras) in 1952. The Government of India (GoI) awarded him the 3rd highest civilian honour of Padma Bhushan in 1956. Beside this, the most noted memorial for him is the Major Dhyan Chand Award, which is the highest award for lifetime achievement in sports and games in India. It has been awarded annually from 2002 to sporting figures that not only contribute through their performance but also contribute to the sport after their retirement.

116. Which state government has decided to launch a new initiative '10 Hafte, 10 Baje, 10 Minute – Har Ravivar, dengue par war'?

- [A] Delhi
- [B] UP
- [C] MP
- [D] Bihar

Answer: Delhi



From 1st September 2019, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has decided to launch a mega 10-week anti-mosquito campaign against dengue and chikungunya that aims to increase the participation of residents in preventing their spread. The initiative titled '10 Hafte, 10 Baje, 10 Minute – Har Ravivar, dengue par war'. As part of the campaign, the government has asked the people of Delhi to give 10 minutes every Sunday at 10 a.m. to check all sources of stagnant water at their homes as the dengue mosquitoes breed only in clean water.

117. On which date, the International Day Against Nuclear Tests is observed on which date?

- [A] August 30
- [B] August 28
- [C] August 29
- [D] August 31

Answer: August 29

The International Day Against Nuclear Tests is observed every year on 29th of August for increasing awareness about the effects of nuclear weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions and the need for their cessation as one of the means of achieving the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

118. Who is the head of the committee that suggested the RBI pay interim dividend to the Union government only under exceptional circumstances?

- [A] Bimal Jalan
- [B] Rajiv Mehrishi
- [C] Viral Acharya
- [D] Hasmukh Adhia

Answer: Bimal Jalan

The Bimal Jalan Committee has suggested that the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) economic capital framework must be periodically reviewed after every five years and its accounting year (July-June) be aligned with the fiscal year that ends on 31 March. The Committee has recommended that the central bank pay interim dividend to the government (a practice that started in 2016-17) only under exceptional circumstances. The committee also recommended that the RBI should put in place a framework for assessing the market risk of its off-balance sheet exposures in view of their increasing significance. The panel also suggested a clearer distinction between the two components of economic capital — realised equity and revaluation balances — mainly because of the volatile nature of the revaluation balances.

119. Elavenil Valarivan is associated to which sports?

- [A] Wrestling
- [B] Shooting
- [C] Boxing
- [D] Chess

Answer: Shooting

In shooting, 20-year old Elavenil Valarivan from India claimed her first senior World Cup gold medal in the women's 10m air rifle competition at Rio de Janeiro in Brazil on 28th August 2019. With this, Valarivan became the third Indian to achieve the feat. In her debut year at the senior level, Elavenil shot 251.7 in the finals to help India extend their new-found dominance in the event. Though, Valarivan's top prize did not translate into an Olympic quota for India as Apurvi Chandela and Anjum Moudgil have already secured the maximum two berths available per country in 2018 World Championships. Elavenil is a junior World Cup gold-medallist besides being an Asian champion.

120. The Gorewada International Zoo is going to set up in which city?

- [A] Nagpur
- [B] Delhi
- [C] Jaipur
- [D] Shimla

Answer: Nagpur

In a bid to protect forests, the Government of India (GoI) has given approval to establish an International Standard Zoo and Biopark on the forest land at Gorewada, Nagpur. The Zoo will have attractions like Bio Park, Indian Safari, African Safari, Night Safari, Research, Education and Training, facilities for tourists, etc. The Government of Maharashtra has accorded permission for establishing the International Zoo,

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through Forest Development Corporation of Maharashtra Limited (FDCM. Ltd.), Nagpur. The tasks of protection of forests and wildlife at the Gorewada forests and wildlife habitat development have been assigned to FDCM Ltd., for which State Forest Department is providing grants and manpower at the disposal of FDCM Ltd.

121. Kandangi saree, which has got GI tag, is associated to which sports?

- [A] Karnataka
- [B] Kerala
- [C] Tamil Nadu
- [D] Telangana

Answer: Tamil Nadu

Two well-known products from Tamil Nadu — the Dindigul lock and the Kandangi saree — have been given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by The Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai. The lock is known throughout the world for its superior quality and durability, even the city is called Lock City. The Government institutions such as prisons, godowns, hospitals, and even temples use these locks instead of other machine-made ones. The abundance of iron in this region is the reason for the growth of the lock-making industry. The Kandangi sarees are manufactured in the entire Karaikudi taluk in Sivaganga district. They are characterised by large contrast borders and some are known to have borders covering as far as two-thirds of the saree which is usually around 5.10 m-5.60 m in length. These cotton sarees are worn in summer & usually bought by customers in bulk.

122. The Government e Marketplace (GeM) has signed pact with which organisation to enable growth of MSMEs, Start-ups and Women Entrepreneurs?

- [A] NABARD
- [B] SIDBI
- [C] NHB
- [D] IRDA

Answer: SIDBI

The Government e Marketplace (GeM) has signed an MoU with Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to benefit MSMEs, women entrepreneurs, Self Help Groups (SHGs), Women Self Help Groups (WSHGs) and various loan beneficiaries under MUDRA and Stand-up India scheme. The MoU will enable promotion of special initiatives of GeM like Womaniya and Start-up Runway with SIDBI stakeholders. GeM and SIDBI will also take steps to ensure payments within a guaranteed time-frame to sellers, enhance working capital availability through bill discounting and control NPAs through control of end use.

123. The Union Health Ministry has signed a pact with which institute to explore AI for combating tuberculosis?

- [A] IISc Bangalore
- [B] University of Hyderabad
- [C] IIT Madras
- [D] Wadhvani Institute for Artificial Intelligence

Answer: Wadhvani Institute for Artificial Intelligence

The Central TB Division of the Health Ministry has signed a pact with Wadhvani Institute for Artificial Intelligence (WIAI) to explore the application of cutting-edge Artificial Intelligence technology in its fight against TB. As per pact, Wadhvani AI would support the National TB programme in vulnerability and hot-spot mapping, modelling novel methods of screening and diagnostics and enabling decision support for care-givers apart from supporting the Revised National TB Programme (RNTCP) in adoption of other AI technologies. According to the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates, India has close to 27 lakh TB cases every year and 4.23 lakh cases die. India is committed to ending TB by 2025, 5 years ahead of the Global Sustainable Development targets.

124. The Malayala Manorama New Conclave 2019 was held in which city of Kerala?

- [A] Thiruvananthapuram
- [B] Kochi
- [C] Thrissur
- [D] Palakkad

**Answer: Kochi**

On 30th August, the 2019 edition of Malayala Manorama New Conclave was held in Kochi. It is the Kerala's first and only news conclave deals with the most contemporary and compelling theme – New India; New government; New aspirations; New challenges; New frontiers; New avenues. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the conclave via video-conference from New Delhi. During the conclave, discussions were held on varied topics like new Indian nationalist, politics, new boundaries of belief, youth, and opportunities for Kerala. On this occasion, Shashi Tharoor launched a language challenge on twitter – #LanguageChallenge – to help people learn one word each from languages other than their mother tongue. The initiative began after Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged the media to unite India with the help of language.

125. The International Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) is being set up in which city?

- [A] New Delhi
- [B] Kolkata
- [C] Pune
- [D] Chennai

Answer: New Delhi

The Union Cabinet has recently given ex-post facto approval for the Establishment of an International Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) along with its supporting Secretariat Office in New Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch CDRI during the UN Climate Summit in New York on September 23, 2019. The CDRI will serve as a platform where knowledge is generated and exchanged on different aspects of disaster and climate resilience of infrastructure. It will bring together technical expertise from a multitude of stakeholders. It will also create a mechanism to assist countries to upgrade their capacities and practices, with regard to infrastructure development in accordance with their risk context and economic needs.

126. S Aswatha Narayana, who won Gold in Water Technology at the 2019 World Skills Kazan International Competition 2019, is from which state?

- [A] West Bengal
- [B] Odisha
- [C] Tripura
- [D] Andhra Pradesh

Answer: Odisha

S Aswatha Narayana from Odisha has created history by becoming the first Indian to win gold at 45th World Skills competition 2019 in Kazan city of Russia. He bagged the gold in water technology in the competition that was held between August 23-27. He was also rewarded as 'Best of Nation' amongst the Indian competitors. Pranav Nutalapati from Karnataka won Silver in Web Technologies. While Sanjoy Pramanik from West Bengal and Shweta Ratanpura from Maharashtra both won bronze in Jewellery and graphic design technology respectively. Shweta has also earned the distinction of being the only female candidate to win a medal for India at World Skills Kazan 2019. In all, a 48-member Indian team returned with the best-ever finish at the competition by winning 19 medals and Medallions of Excellence.

127. The term 'Animal spirits', which is in news recently, is associated to which field?

- [A] Economics
- [B] Environment
- [C] Science
- [D] Geography

Answer: Economics

In its annual report for 2018-19, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has stated that the lack of domestic demand is holding back the animal spirits in the economy and emphasized the need to revive consumption demand and private investment during 2019-20. The report claimed that the economy is undergoing a cyclical slowdown rather than a deep structural one. It also stressed that issues related to "land, labour and marketing" will need to be addressed as a broad-based downturn is underway in sectors such as manufacturing, trade, hotels, transport, communication and broadcasting, construction and agriculture. The term 'Animal spirits' in Economics was coined by British economist John Maynard Keynes in his 1936 book 'The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money' to explain the persistence of economic fluctuations under capitalism. The term refers to the emotions and instincts that guide the behaviour of investors and consumers in a market economy. It is economic optimism and

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confidence that drives investors to make more investment even when there is uncertainty. In simple words, Animal spirits shows how human psychology drives the economy.

128. Which union ministry has launched campaign Angikaar for change management?

- [A] Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
- [B] Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers
- [C] Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- [D] Ministry of AYUSH

Answer: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has recently launched a campaign for change management "Angikaar" for social behaviour change. The campaign focuses on issues such as water & energy conservation, waste management, health, tree plantation, sanitation and hygiene for beneficiaries of completed houses under PMAY (U), through community mobilisation and IEC activities. For this purpose, the campaign will converge with schemes and Missions of other Ministries dealing with these subjects. The convergence would especially focus on Ujjwala for gas connection and Ayushman Bharat for health insurance to the beneficiaries of PMAY (U). Apart from this, the Ministry also launched e-Course on Vulnerability Atlas of India.

129. Who has become the first Indian woman para-athlete to be conferred Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award?

- [A] Manasi Joshi
- [B] Deepa Malik
- [C] Karamjyoti Dalal
- [D] Pooja Rani

Answer: Deepa Malik

On the occasion of National Sports Day (NSD), Bajrang Punia and Deepa Malik have been conferred with the prestigious Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award for the year 2019 in recognition of their outstanding achievements in the sport of wrestling and para-athletics, respectively at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. With this, Malik (49) became the first Indian woman para-athlete and the oldest athlete ever to be conferred the prestigious award. She also became only the second para-athlete after double Paralympic gold-medallist javelin thrower Devendra Jhajharia, who received the recognition in 2017, to have won the prestigious award. The Khel Ratna award carries a prize purse of Rs 7.5 lakh.

130. Which state government has decided to form a Special Tiger Force (STF) for Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR)?

- [A] Uttarakhand
- [B] Jharkhand
- [C] Bihar
- [D] Uttar Pradesh

Answer: Uttarakhand

The Uttarakhand government has decided to form a Special Tiger Force (STF) for Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR). The force will have 85 posts & will help serve as the much needed second layer of protection for the big cat at the CTR. The STPF will be effective in checking illegal human intrusion into the reserve through villages located on its fringes. The decision was taken by the State Cabinet in line with Government of India (GoI) guidelines for providing 3-tier protection to tigers at reserves. The first layer of protection is provided in the inner range by beat level forest guards through regular patrols. The second layer of protection is what the STPF will take care of. The third layer of protection comes from intelligence-gathering mechanisms in which forest, police and central intelligence agency personnel work together to prevent crimes like the poaching of tigers.

131. Which state government has launched Walk to Work on Wednesdays (WWW) campaign?

- [A] Odisha
- [B] Meghalaya
- [C] Tripura
- [D] Nagaland

Answer: Meghalaya

Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma has launched Walk to Work on Wednesdays (WWW) campaign in the state. The campaign is a part of the nationwide Fit India Movement, which has been

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launched in the country by the Prime Minister. The idea of 'walk to work' will have multiple benefits like cost cutting of fuel including reduction of CO₂ emission, reduction in congestion in the city and the most important "health and fitness" for the citizens.

132. Which city has been ranked first at the Safe Cities Index (SCI-2019) of Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)?

- [A] Osaka
- [B] Paris
- [C] Tokyo
- [D] Singapore

Answer: Tokyo

The Safe Cities Index (SCI) 2019 has been released by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). Tokyo has been ranked first in the SCI index, followed by Singapore and Osaka. The index ranks 60 countries worldwide across five continents and measures the multi-faceted nature of urban safety, with indicators categorized as digital, infrastructure, health and personal security. From India, Mumbai has been ranked as the 45th safest city on the SCI, while Delhi stood at the 52nd position.

133. Which state / UT government has decided to provide free rides to women in city buses and metro trains?

- [A] Laddakh
- [B] Punjab
- [C] Chhattisgarh
- [D] Delhi

Answer: Delhi

The Delhi Cabinet has given "in principle" approval to the free-ride scheme of providing free rides for women in city buses and metro trains. For this cause, the Delhi Assembly also passed Supplementary Demands for Grants of Rs 290 crore. Of the Rs 290 crore, Rs 140 crore is for free rides for women in buses and Rs 150 crore for rides in metro trains. The free-ride scheme is slated to begin from October 29. Though, women employees of the Delhi government, local bodies and undertakings will not be entitled for transport allowance if they opt for free ride in Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) and cluster buses. Both DTC and Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System (DIMTS) will strengthen their ticket checking mechanisms prevent "misuse" and "pilferage" of single journey passes.

134. Who has become the first IPS officer to be bestowed with the 2018 Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award?

- [A] Sonia Narang
- [B] Sanjukta Parashar
- [C] Meera Borwankar
- [D] Aparna Kumar

Answer: Aparna Kumar

Aparna Kumar, a 2002 batch Uttar Pradesh Cadre IPS officer, has been honoured with the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award 2018. With this, she became the first IPS officer to be bestowed with this prestigious award. Currently, she is posted as DIG in Indo Tibetan Police Force at Dehradun. This is the highest National award at par with Arjuna award for Adventure sports in India. The award is given in 4 categories – Land, Water, Air Adventure and Lifetime achievement. The awards are given by the Government of India (GoI) with an aim to encourage young people to develop the spirit of endurance, risk-taking, cooperative teamwork and quick, ready and effective reflexes in tough situations. Besides Aparna, five more personalities also received the award. The other personalities are late Dipankar Ghosh, Manikandan K, Prabhat Raju Koli, Rameshwer Jangra and Wangchuk Sherpa. The awardees received a statuette, certificates and cash award of Rs. 5 lakh each.

135. Which sportsperson has won the 2019 Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar?

- [A] Abhinav Bindra
- [B] Jeev Milkha Singh
- [C] Mary Kom
- [D] Gagan Narang

Answer: Gagan Narang

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On 2019 National Sports Day (NSD), Gagan Narang and Pawan Singh have been honoured with the Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puraskar for their Gagan Narang Sports Promotion Foundation (GNSPF) at the Arjuna Awards ceremony in Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. The award recognizes their contribution in the growth of their favourite sport and a reward for sacrifices they have made to realize their dream. In 2011, Narang and co-founder Pawan Singh founded GNSPF to nurture budding talent and provide them training in a systematic and structured and also education to help carve out future champions. The Gun For Glory Shooting Academy — formed under the aegis of GNSPF — has 16 centres spread across India and has over 50 shooters getting international level coaching. The academy shooters have won over 165 international medals and many of them are a regular feature in the national team.

136. Which team has been crowned the Subroto Cup International Football Tournament for sub-junior boys (under-14) category?

- [A] Mizoram
- [B] Tripura
- [C] Goa
- [D] Manipur

Answer: Mizoram

The Saidan Secondary School of Mizoram has been crowned Under-14 boys champions of 2019 Subroto Cup International Football tournament after defeating Unique Model Academy of Manipur 2-0 in the summit clash. It was the Mizoram school's first title win in the tournament. Saidan also won the best team award (Rs 3,00,000) while its player B Romalsawma was titled the best player of the tournament. The best goalkeeper award went to Manipur's Bijando and Lalbulliana of Saidan Secondary School was declared the best coach. The fairplay award went to Our Lady Mount Carmel High School of Goa. The best goalkeeper, best player and fairplay award winners won Rs. 50,000 each.

137. The 5th Aqua Aquaria India 2019 was held in which city?

- [A] Ranchi
- [B] Hyderabad
- [C] Dehradun
- [D] Manali

Answer: Hyderabad

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 5th edition of Aqua Aquaria India 2019, which is organized by the Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) under the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The event was held at HITEC exhibition center in Hyderabad from 30th August to 1st September. The theme of the 2019 edition is "To take Blue Revolution to India's hinterland". The event showcased the recent advances in aquaculture and ornamental fish breeding / rearing technology for encouraging diversification and promotes intensification in a sustainable manner. It is a biennial exhibition. Aqua Aquaria also showcased the diversification of potential species like sea-bass, Tilapia, Mud crab, which will boost the export-oriented aquaculture.

138. Which union ministry has launched the National Lab Directory (NLD)?

- [A] Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare
- [B] Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution
- [C] Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- [D] Ministry of Corporate Affairs

Answer: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

The National Lab Directory (NLD) has been launched by the Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Ram Vilas Paswan. The NLD is a one-stop-shop for all testing needs of the industries, academia, researchers and other stakeholders who need to get their Testing Facilities accredited / certified / recognized. Presently, the NLD encompasses the labs accredited by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL), Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and Hallmarking Labs. Now, the labs which are recognized / notified by FASAI, APEDA, EIC, can also be indicated accordingly. The NDL will benefit all stakeholders such as manufacturers, consumers, regulatory agencies, government and research institutions in identifying the test facilities that are required for assessing conformity of relevant products or in testing for the purpose of research and development.

139. India's first-ever sky cycling park to be opened in which city?



- [A] Manali
- [B] Mussoorie
- [C] Nainital
- [D] Shimla

Answer: Manali

To boost tourism and give an all new experience to visitors, India's first-ever sky cycling park will soon open at Gulaba area near Manali in Himachal Pradesh. It is 350m long & is located at a height of 9000 Feet above sea level. Forest Department and Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports have jointly developed an eco-friendly park. The adventure sport will give a fillip to tourism in Manali and visitors will get an enriching experience of adventure sports at this park. It will also help provide employment to locals.

Padmaja mahapatra | mahapatrapadmaja28@gmail.com |

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