India State of Forest Report 2019

Preface

Dear readers, we have started edristi English edition as well since August, 2015. We are hopeful that it will help us to connect to the broader audience and amplify our personal bonding with each other.

While presenting Day-to-day current affairs, we are very cautious on choosing the right topics to make sure only those get the place which are useful for competitive exams perspective, not to increase unnecessary burden on the readers by putting useless materials. Secondly, we have also provided the reference links to ensure its credibility which is our foremost priority. You can always refer the links to validate its authenticity.

We will try to present the current affairs topics as quickly as possible but its authenticity is given higher priority over its turnaround time. Therefore it could happen that we publish the incident one or two days later in the website.

Our plan will be to publish our monthly PDF on very first day of every month with making appropriate modifications of day-to-day events. In general, the events happened till 31th day will be given place in the PDFs. The necessity of this is to ensure the contents factual authenticity.

Reader's satisfaction is our utmost priority so requesting you to provide your valuable feedback to us. We will warmly welcome your appreciation/criticism given to us. It will surely show us the right direction to improve the content quality. Hopefully the current affairs PDF (from 1st Dec to 31th Dec) will benefit our beloved readers.

Current affairs data will be useless if it couldn't originate any competitive exam questions. E-Dristi has been very successful in that direction. Almost all the questions from UPPCS and other examinations have been asked from our materials. You can verify that by matching the question papers and e-Dristi contents from yourselves.

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Table of Contents

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National

India State of Forest Report, 2019

Question: On the 30th of December 2019, the State of Forest Report 2019 was released. According to this report, which of the following states tops in the forest cover increase?
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Kerala (c) Himachal Pradesh
(d) Karnataka
Answer: (d)
Related facts:

- On 30th December 2019, the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar released the biennial "India State of Forest Report (ISFR)", in New Delhi.
- ISFR provides comprehensive information about the forest and tree cover, bamboo resources, carbon stock and forest fires.
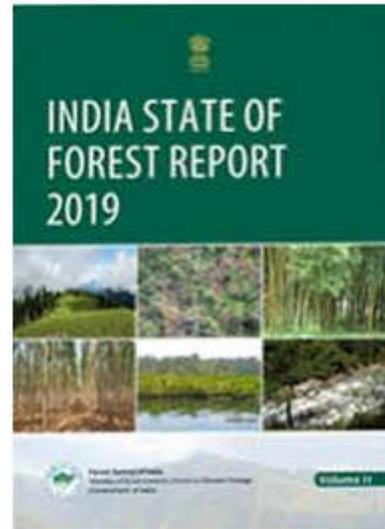
Key Findings of ISFR 2019

- The total forest cover of the country is 7,12,249 sq. km which is 21.67% of the geographical area of the country. The tree cover of the country is estimated as 95,027 sq km which is 2.89% of the geographical area.
- The total Forest and Tree cover of the country is 8,07,276 sq. km which is 24.56% of the geographical area of the country.
- The current assessment shows an increase of 3,976 sq km (0.56%) of forest cover, 1,212 sq km (1.29%) of tree cover and 5,188 sq km (0.65%) of forest and tree cover put together, at the national level as compared to the previous assessment i.e. ISFR 2017.
- Forest cover within the Recorded Forest Area/ Green Wash (RFA/GW) has shown a slight decrease of 330 sq km (0.05%) whereas there is an increase of 4,306 sq km of forest cover outside the RFA/GW as compared to previous assessment of 2017.
- The top five States in terms of increase in forest cover are Karnataka (1,025 sq km), Andhra Pradesh (990 sq km), Kerala (823 sq km), Jammu & Kashmir (371 sq km) and Himachal Pradesh (334 sq km).
- Forest cover in the hill districts of the country is 2, 84,006 sq km, which is 40.30% of the total geographical area of these districts. The current assessment shows an increase of 544 sq km (0.19%) in 140 hill districts of the country.
- The total forest cover in the tribal districts is 4,22,351 sq km, which is 37.54% of the geographical area of these districts. The current assessment shows a decrease of 741 sq km of forest cover within the RFA/GW in the tribal districts and an increase of 1,922 sq km outside.
- Total forest cover in the North Eastern region is 1,70,541 sq km, which is 65.05% of its geographical area. The current assessment shows a decrease of forest cover to the extent of 765 sq km (0.45%) in the region. Except Assam and Tripura, all the States in the region show decrease in forest cover.

- Mangrove cover in the country has increased by 54 sq km (1.10%) as compared to the previous assessment.
- The total growing stock of wood in the country is estimated 5,915.76 million cum comprising 4,273.47 million cum inside forest areas and 1,642.29 million cum outside recorded forest areas (TOF). The average growing stock per hectare in forest has been estimated as 55.69 cum.
- Total bamboo bearing area of the country is estimated as 1,60,037 sq km. There is an increase of 3,229 sq km in bamboo bearing area as compared to the estimate of ISFR 2017.
- In the present assessment, total carbon stock in forest is estimated as 7,124.6 million tonnes. There is an increase of 42.6 million tonnes in the carbon stock of the country as compared to the last assessment of 2017. The annual increase is 21.3 million tonnes, which is 78.1 million tonnes CO_2 eq.
- Area-wise Madhya Pradesh has the largest forest cover in the country followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Maharashtra.
- In terms of forest cover as percentage of total geographical area, the top five States are Mizoram (85.41%), Arunachal Pradesh (79.63%), Meghalaya (76.33%), Manipur (75.46%) and Nagaland (75.31%).
- The total mangrove cover in the country is 4,975 sq km.
- In the present assessment, total carbon stock in forest is estimated as 7,124.6 million tonnes. There is an increase of 42.6 million tonnes in the carbon stock of the country as compared to the last assessment of 2017. The annual increase is 21.3 million tonnes, which is 78.1 million tonnes CO_2 eq.
- Soil Organic Carbon (SOC) represents the largest pool of carbon stock in forests, which has been estimated 4,004 million tonnes. The SOC contributes 56% to the total forest carbon stock of the country.
- There are 62,466 wetlands covering 3.83% of the area within the RFA/GW of the country. The total number of wetlands located within the RFA/GW is 8.13%. Amongst the States, Gujarat has largest area of wetlands within RFA in the country followed by West Bengal.
- Dependence of fuelwood on forests is highest in the State of Maharashtra, whereas, for fodder, small timber and bamboo, dependence is highest in Madhya Pradesh. It has been assessed that the annual removal of the small timber by the people living in forest fringe villages is nearly 7% of the average annual yield of forests in the country.
- The information on area affected by five major invasive species in States/UTs based on analysis of NFI data has been given in the present ISFR.
- Fire prone forest areas of different severity classes have been mapped in the grids of 5km x 5km based on the frequency of forest fires. The analysis reveals that 21.40% of the forest cover of the country is highly to extremely fire prone.

Some Major Findings

- An increase of 54 sq Km in mangrove cover has been observed as compared to the previous assessment of 2017.
- Top three states showing mangrove cover increase are Gujarat (37 sq km) followed by Maharashtra (16 sq km) and Odisha (8 sq km).
- The total growing stock of India's forest and TOF is estimated 5,915.76 million cum of which 4,273.47 million cum is inside the forests and 1,642.29 million cum outside.

- There is an increase of 93.38 million cum of total growing stock, as compared to the previous assessment. Out of this the increase in growing stock, there is an increase of 55.08 million cum inside the forests and 38.30 million cum outside the forest areas.
- The extent of bamboo bearing area of the country has been estimated 16.00 million hectare. There is an increase of 0.32 million hectare in bamboo bearing area as compared to the last assessment of ISFR 2017. The total estimated green weight of bamboo culms is 278 million tonnes, slowly an increase of 88 million tonnes as compared to ISFR 2017.
- Under the current assessment the total carbon stock in country's forest is estimated 7,124.6 million tonnes and there an increase of 42.6 million tonnes in the carbon stock of country as compared to the last assessment of 2017. The annual increase in the carbon stock is 21.3 million tonnes, which is 78.2 million tonnes CO_2 eq.
- Wetlands within forest areas form important ecosystems and add richness to the biodiversity in forest areas, both of faunal and floral species. Due to importance of wetlands, FSI has carried out an exercise at the national level to identify wetlands of more than 1 ha within RFA. There are 62,466 wetlands covering 3.8% of the area within the RFA/GW of the country.

Indian Forest Status Report of Uttar Pradesh, 2019

- According to the ISFR 2019, the total recorded forest area in Uttar Pradesh is 16,582 square kilometers which is 6.88% of the total geographical area.
- As per statutory status, it has 72.79% of reserved forest, 6.98% protected forest and 20.23% unclassed forest.
- According to ISFR 2019, the total forest cover of Uttar Pradesh is 14,805.65 square kilometers (Based on the interpretation of IRS Resourcesat-2 LISS III satellite data of the period Oct 2017 to Jan 2018) which is 6.15% of the total area of Uttar Pradesh.
- There are 2,616.43 square kilometers of very dense forest (1.09%), 4080.04 square kilometers of moderately dense forest (1.69%) and 81.09.18 square kilometers are open forest (3.37%).
- The forest cover in the state has increased by 126.65 sq km as compared to revised figures of ISFR 2017.
- Five districts with highest forest area percentage in total area (in decreasing order) Sonbhadra, Chandauli, Pilibhit, Mirzapur and Chitrakoot.
- In Uttar Pradesh, the tree cover is 3.05% of the total area (7342 sq km).
- In Uttar Pradesh, the area of scrubs is 587 sq km in (0.24%).
- Sonbhadra, the district with the maximum forest cover in Uttar Pradesh (36.79 % of the geographical area of 6905 square kilometers).
- Bhadohi (Sant Ravidas Nagar), the district with the minimum forest cover in Uttar Pradesh (0.10% of the geographical area of 1015 square kilometers).
- Lakhimpur Kheri district is very densely forested area in the state (804.91 square kilometers).
- Maximum moderate forested area (967 square kilometers) and open forest area (1443.29 square kilometers) in Sonbhadra district.

Important statistics related to forest area

- **5 districts with maximum forest area percentage (decreasing order):**

8

Sonbhadra(36.79%),Chandauli (22.25%),Pilibhit (18.64%),Mirzapur(18.25%), Chitrakoot(18.23%).

- **5 districts with maximum forest area percentage (in increasing order):**

Sant Ravidas Nagar (0.31%),Mainpuri(0.49%),Deoria(0.60%), Budaun(0.62%), Mau(0.64%).

- **5 districts with maximum forest area (in decreasing order) are** Sonbhadra(2540.29 sq km), Kheri(1273.06 sq km), Mirzapur (803.73 sq km),Pilibhit (687.11 sqkm),Chitrakoot (586.40 sq km).

- **5 districts with minimum forest area (in increasing order):**

Bhadohi (3.12 sq km), Mau (11 sq km), Mainpuri(14sq km), Sant Kabir Nagar(14 sqkm), Deoria(15.21 sqkm).

Links:
http://fsi.nic.in/isfr19/vol1/executive-summary.pdf

KVIC opened first silk processing plant in Gujarat

Question: Where did Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) inaugurate first Silk Processing Plant?
(a) Surendranagar,Gujarat (b) Surat,Gujarat (c) Rajkot,Gujarat (d) Bhavnagar,Gujarat
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 3rd December 2019, Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) inaugurated first Silk Processing Plant at Surendranagar in Gujarat.
- The plant will cut down the cost of production of silk yarn drastically and increase the sale and availability of raw material for Gujarati Patola Sarees locally.
- The plant has been set up by a khadi institution at a cost of Rs 75 lack in which KVIC has contributed Rs 60 lakh.
- The unit has employed 90 local women, 70 of which belong to the Muslim community.
- Patola, the trademark Saree of Gujarat, is considered to be very costly and worn only by the Royals or the Aristocrat. Reason being the raw material silk yarn is purchased from Karnataka or West Bengal, where silk processing units are situated.
- Now, cocoons will be brought from Karnataka and West Bengal and Silk yarn will be processed in house, thus reducing the cost of production and giving a major boost to the sale of famous Gujarati Patola Sarees.

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1598399

http://www.edristi.in/

India's first Chief of Defence Staff

Question: Who has been appointed India's first Chief of Defence Staff on December 30,2019?
(a) Bipin Rawat (b) Manoj Mukund Naravane (c) Dalbir Singh Suhag
(d) Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 30th December 2019, General Bipin Rawat was appointed India's first Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).
- He will serve as the first CDS till March 2022.
- The Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) is the professional head of the Indian Armed Forces and the senior-most uniformed military adviser to the Indian government.
- CDS will function as a single-point advisor to the government on matters related to the military and will focus on the better synergy between the Indian Army, Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy.
- The Chief of Defence Staff will also head the Department of Military Affairs (DMA), to be created within the Ministry of Defence and function as its Secretary.
- The Chief of Defence Staff, apart from being the head of the Department of Military Affairs, will also be the Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.
- He will act as the Principal Military Adviser to Defence Minister on all tri-Services matters.
- Defence Ministry has amended the army, air force, and navy rules by bringing in a new clause that allows the CDS to serve up to a maximum age of 65 years.

CDS-a four star rank officer:

- The four-star rank of an officer in India is given to 5 officers. It includes Admiral of Indian Navy, Air Chief Marshal of Indian Air Force, General o f Indian Army and Director of Intelligence Bureau. Now, the rank is given to CDS officer as well.

Background:

- The position was first officially suggested in 1999 following the Kargil War through the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee.
- PM Narendra Modi in his Independence Day speech announced the creation of Chief of Defence Staff, CDS to further sharpen coordination between the forces.
- On 24 December 2019, Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved to create the post of Chief of Defence Staff.
- The other countries that hold Chief of Defence Staff in the world includes Italy, France, China, Spain, UK, Canada and Japan.

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1598029

Indian Railways to Launch Tejas Express from Ahmedabad

Question: Between which stations, India's second premium Tejas train is announced to be operated recently?
(a) Ahmedabad-Mumbai (b) Ahemdabad-New Delhi (c) Mumbai-Bangalore (d) Mumbai-Chennai
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- India's second premium Tejas train will be operated between Ahmedabad and Mumbai.
- The inaugural run of this second Tejas Train will be flagged off from Ahmedabad on 17th January, 2020.
- However,the commercial run of the train will start with effect from 19th January, 2020 from Ahmedabad.
- Prior to this on 04 October 2019, Tejas Express on Lucknow-Delhi route was flagged off by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in Lucknow.
- Tejas Express is India's first private train run by the Indian Railways. It a more premium version of the Shatabdi Express category of air-conditioned chair cars.
- All passengers travelling on IRCTC train will be provided with Rail Travel Insurance of up to Rs. 25 Lakhs, free of cost by IRCTC.
- This complimentary travel insurance also includes an exclusive coverage of Rs. 1 lakh against household theft / robbery during the travel period of the passengers.
- Besides, this special feature, in a first of its own, IRCTC will also pay a compensation of Rs. 100/- in case the train during its run, is delayed by more than one hour and Rs. 250/- in case of delay of more than two hours to every passenger as compensation.

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1597425

2019 Forbes India Celebrity 100 List

Question:Who got the top position in 2019 Forbes India Celebrity 100 List released on December 19, 2019?
(a) Salman Khan (b) Akshay Kumar (c) Virat Kohli (d) Deepika Padukone
Answer:(c)
Related facts:

- 2019 Forbes India Celebrity 100 List was released on December 19, 2019.
- With Rs 252.72 crore in annual earnings, India's ace cricketer Virat Kohli has become the first sportsman to gain the top spot in the Forbes India list.
- Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar jumped one spot to the second rank, with total earnings of Rs 293.25 crore.

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- Bollywood superstar Salman Khan, who had ruled at the top for the previous three years, slipped down to the third position in 2019 with Rs 229.25 crore in earnings.
- Famous Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan stood fourth in the list with a wealth of Rs 239.25 crore.
- Former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni retains his No 5 spot on the 2019 Forbes India Celebrity 100.
- Famous Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan finished 6th, Ranbir Singh 7th, Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt 8th, Sachin Tendulkar 9th and Deepika Padukone 10th.
- Among other prominent celebrities, Rajinikanth finished 13th, Priyanka Chopra 14th and Aamir Khan 15th.
- Among the women cricketers, Mithali, Raj (88th), Smriti Mandhana (90th) and Harmanpreet Kaur (91st) were also featured in this list.
- Other athletes in the list include shuttler PV Sindhu (63rd), Saina Nehwal (81st), wrestler Bajrang Punia (94th), boxer MC Mary Kom (87th), tennis player Rohan Bopanna (98th), footballer Sunil Chhetri (85th) and golfer Arniban Lahiri. (95th).
- The celebrity ranks are based on an aggregate of the estimated earnings and their calculated fame quotient, via print and social media reach.

Links:
http://www.forbesindia.com/lists/2019-celebrity-100/1819/1

UP Govt announces Pension for Triple Talaq Victims

Question: What amount of annual pension has been announced by the UP Government to Tripple Talaq victims?
(a) 6000 (b) 8000 (c) 10000 (d) 4000
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 29 December 2019,Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath announced to give a pension of Rs 6,000 per annum to victims of Triple Talaq.
- This new initiative will ensure easiness to victims of triple talaq and women abandoned by their husbands by giving Rs 500 per month as pension.
- The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act, 2019 declares the practice of Triple Talaq as illegal, unconstitutional and made it punishable.
- The Act makes declaration of talaq a cognizable offence, attracting up to three years' imprisonment with a fine.
- A cognizable offence is one for which a police officer may arrest an accused person without warrant.

Links:

https://www.india.com/news/uttar-pradesh-cm-yogi-adityanath-announces-annual-pension-of-rs-6000-for-triple-talaq-victims-3893048/

Jharkhand Legislative Assembly Election 2019

Question: Consider the following statements regarding Jharkhand Legislative Assembly Election 2019:
(1) Jharkhand Mukti Morcha won the most 31 seats.
(2) Bhartiya Janata Party secured 25 seats.
of the above correct statements are:
(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) & (2) (d) None of the above
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- General Election Result to the State Legislative Assembly of Jharkhand was announced by Election Commission of India on 23rd December, 2019.
- The election for a total of 81 seats were held in five phases from 30 November to 20 December 2019.
- Hemant Soren led Jharkhand Mukti Morcha emerged the largest party by winning 31 seats.
- While its opponent Bhartiya Janata Party won 25 seats.
- Indian National Congress got 16 seats. Rashtriya Janata Dal secured 1 seat.
- Among other parties, the Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajatantrik) bagged 3 seats, AJSU won 2 seats and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) (Liberation) & Nationalist Congress Party won 1 seat each.
- Two independents also won in their respective constituencies.
- Incumbent CM Raghubar Das was dethroned from his bastion Jamshedpur East by independent Saryu Roy.
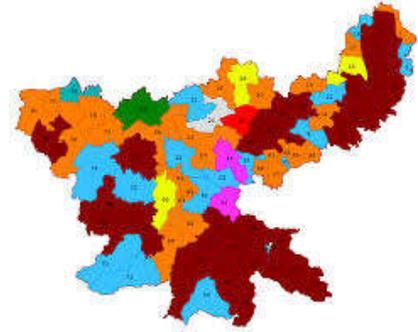
Government making:

- The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha-Congress-RJD alliance with 47 seats moved forward to make government in the state.
- On 29th December 2019, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, JMM leader Hemant Soren took oath as the 11th Chief Minister of Jharkhand. This is 44 year Soren' second stint as Jharkhand Chief Minister.
- Governor Draupadi Murmu administered the oath of office to Soren at Morhabadi grounds in Ranchi.
- Along with Soren, Congress Legislature Party Leader Alamgir Alam,state Congress president Rameshwar Oraon and only MLA of RJD Satyanand Bhokta were also sworn in as state cabinet ministers.

Links:
http://results.eci.gov.in/ACDEC2019/partywiseresult-S27.htm

http://www.edristi.in/

First Trial Run of Double Stack Train

Question: On which section the first trial run of Double Stack Train was flagged off on December 27 2019?
(a) Rewari-Madar (b) Khurda-Bilaspur (c) Raipur-Cherrapunji (d) None of These
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On December 28, 2019, a trial run of the first freight train was conducted on the newly built Rewari-Madar section of Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (WDFC).
- The train was flagged off by Dedicated Freight Corporation India Limited (DFCIL).
- The Rewari-Madar section is in Haryana State (for approximately 79 Km in Mahendragarh & Rewari districts) and Rajasthan State (for approximately 227 Km in Jaipur, Ajmer, Sikar, Nagaur & Alwar districts).
- Total cost of works on this section is Rs. 3918 Crore, excluding land.
- The opening of this stretch will benefit various industries in Rewari – Manesar, Narnaul, Phulera & Kishangarh areas of Rajasthan & Haryana.
- In its roadmap to ensure faster delivery, DFCCIL will run freight trains at the maximum speed of 100 Kmph hour as against the current maximum speed of 75 kmph.

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=196164

All India Radio organises National Symposium of Poets

Question:All India Radio (AIR) organized the National Symposium of Poets 2020 on 27 December 2019.The AIR was founded in which year?
(a) 1957 (b) 1948 (c) 1936 (d) 1985
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- National Symposium of Poets 2020 was organised by All India Radio on December 27 2019.
- 23 poets, representing all 22 languages in the Ninth Schedule of the Indian Constitution participated in the symposium.
- It aims to provide a creative platform for national integration and linguistic harmony through mutual interaction and coordinated presentation of the best contemporary poetry of all Indian languages.
- Eminent Litterateur Chitra Mudgal was the Chief Guest of the occasion.
- The national symposium is being held since 1956.
- Such National symposium is organized every year and broadcast on the eve of Republic Day at all the centers of AIR.

All India Radio:

- AIR is National Radio Broadcaster of India. Since 1956 is officially known as Akashvani.
- Founded in 1936, it is a division of Prasar Bharati.
- Currently, Surya Prakash is the Chairman of Prasar Bharti.

Links:
http://www.uniindia.com/national-symposium-of-poets-organized-in-delhi/india/news/1835525.html

National Workshop of HRD Ministry on Social Media Outreach & Communication

Question:Where did Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' inaugurate the National Workshop of HRD Ministry on Social Media Outreach & Communication?

(a) New Delhi (b) Mumbai (c) Kochhi (d) Ahemdabad

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 27th December 2019, Union Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' inaugurated the 'Social Media Outreach & Communication: National Workshop on Management and Best Practices' organised by Ministry of HRD for various educational institutions and organisations in New Delhi.
- Nearly 200 Social Media Champions from various Centrally funded educational institutions participated in the workshop.
- The purpose of the workshop is to bring the social media communication and outreach of various institutions under one umbrella and to open a channel for day to day communication and dialogue.
- The workshop was centered upon the effectiveness of social media in delivery of services and how it can be better utilized for building and maintaining the image of educational institutions by highlighting their achievements.
- In that context Social Media Champions will help to ensure improvement in the perception of the institution locally, nationally and globally.
- In today's time social media is a good tool to highlight the achievements of India's top class institutions and convert the image of the organization into a brand.

Links:

http://www.edristi.in/

Visit of Prime Minister of Portugal to India

Question: On 19-20 December 2019, the Prime Minister of Portugal visited India. Prime Minister of Portugal is-
(a) Antonio Costa (b) João Cravinho (c) Paulo Portas (d) Cecilia Mireles
Answer:(a)
Related facts:

- Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa visited India on 19-20 December 2019.
- It is noteworthy that Antonio Costa's current visit to India is his first bilateral visit outside Europe after being re-elected as Prime Minister on October 6, 2019.
- During the visit, he attended the second meeting of the Organizing Committee on the celebrations for the 150th Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 19 Dec 2019.
- This meeting of the Organizing Committee was presided over by the President Ram Nath Kovind.
- On December 19, 2019, he held official talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- This was the third official meeting between the Prime Ministers in a span of 3 years.
- The high level political exchanges between India and Portugal have imparted a robust momentum to bilateral relations, including in several new areas such as science and technology, defence, startups, shipping, youth exchanges and culture.

India –Portugal Relations:

- Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in the year 1949.
- The two countries share an excellent political relationship today.
- Portugal is supporting of India's bid for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council.
- Portugal is the first member country of the European Union to agree to extradition if anyone is facing charges in India.
- In October 2005, Portugal extradited Abu Salem and Monica Bedi to India facing terror charges in India.
- On October 9, 2015, Portugal became the first European and western country, and only the fourth outside the East Asia Summit, to sign a Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of the Nalanda University in India.
- A bilateral Agreement on Trade, Economic, Industrial and Technical Cooperation was signed in 1977 to give an impetus and improve bilateral trade relations.

Links:

https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/32215/Visit_of_Prime_Minister_of_Portugal_to_India_December_1920_2019

Bharat Heavy Electricals commissions India first lignite based 500 MW thermal unit

Question: Where did Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) commissioned the first lignite-based 500 MW thermal unit?

(a) Neyveli (b) Mumbai (c) Begaluru (d) Varanasi

Answer : (a)

Related facts:

- On 24 December 2019, Bharat Heavy Electricals ltd (BHEL) has commissioned the first lignite-based 500 MW thermal unit of the 2×500 MW Neyveli New Thermal Power Project in Tamil Nadu.
- This is not only the country's first lignite-fired 500 MW power plant, but also its highest rated pulverised lignite-fired thermal unit commissioned so far.
- The plant is based on the Once-Through and Tower Type Boiler design adopted for the first time in the country for a lignite-based thermal unit.
- Located in Tamil Nadu's Cuddalore district, the project is owned by NLC India Limited(NLCIL).

BHEL:

- Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) owned and founded by the Government of India, is an engineering and manufacturing company based in New Delhi, India.
- Established in 1964, BHEL is India's largest power generation equipment manufacturer.
- BHEL is engaged in the design, engineering, manufacturing, construction, testing, commissioning and servicing of a wide range of products, systems and services for the core sectors of the economy, viz. power, transmission, industry, transportation, renewable energy, oil & gas, and defence.

Links:

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/energy/power/bhel-commissions-first-lignite-based-500-mw-thermal-unit/articleshow/72952803.cms?from=mdr

http://www.edristi.in/

36th International Geological Congress

Question:Which country will host the 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) in March 2020?
(a) India (b) Bangladesh (c) China (d) Japan
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- The 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) will be held in India between 2-8 March,2020.
- The theme of the 2020 conference is 'Geosciences: The Basic Science for a Sustainable Development'.
- Popularly described as the Olympics of Geosciences, the IGCs are a prestigious global geoscientific events held once in four years and participated by around 5000-6000 geoscientists from all across the world.
- In a bid to gear up for the same, a half-day interactive workshop was held in New Delhi on December 12 2019.
- The 36th IGC is a comprehensive science program. A modern technical exhibition will also be held during this conference, in which the leading companies of mines and minerals sector will showcase their products and services.
- It may be noted that India is the only Asian country to host the event twice. In 1964, India had hosted it for the first time, which was the 22nd IGC.
- The event is being funded by the Ministry of Mines (MoM) and Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) with the support of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA).
- National Science Academies of Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- Geological Survey of India is the nodal agency for organizing the event.

Links:

https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=195843

Strategic tunnel named after former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Question: Recently which Mountain Pass strategic tunnel has been named after former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee?
(a)Rohtang Pass (b)Karakoram Pass (c)Mana Pass (d)Lipulekh Pass
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- In a befitting tribute to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his birth anniversary, Prime Minister Narendra Modi named the Strategic Tunnel under Rohtang Pass after him on 25th December 2019.
- Rohtang is a high mountain pass (elevation 3,978 m (13,050 ft)) on the eastern Pir Panjal Range of the Himalayas around 51 km (32 mi) from Manali. It connects the Kullu Valley with the Lahaul and Spiti Valleys of Himachal Pradesh, India.
- he decision to construct a strategic tunnel below the Rohtang Pass was taken in 2000 when late Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the Prime Minister. The foundation stone for the Access Road to the South Portal of the tunnel was laid in 2002.
- The 8.8-kilometre long tunnel is the world's longest tunnel above an altitude of 3,000 metres. It will reduce the distance between Manali and Leh by 46 kilometres. It is a 10.5-metre wide single tube bi-lane tunnel with a fire proof emergency egress tunnel built into the main tunnel itself.
- The tunnel is now nearing completion and will providing all weather connectivity to remote border areas of Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh which otherwise remained cut off from the rest of the country for about six months during winters.

Links:

https://pib.nic.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1597570

Scheme Abhinandan

Question: Which of the following state governments has launched the Abinandan scheme?
(a) Assam (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Tripura (d) Uttarakhand
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- To help the students of Assam pursuing higher studies, Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the Abhinandan scheme on 26 December 2019.
- This education loan subsidy scheme was launched during a programme held at Srimanta Sankardev Kalakshetra in Guwahati.
- Objective of the scheme is to provide loan wavier to students of Assam who has availed Educational loans.Under this,one time subsidy of INR 50,000 shall be deposited in bank account.
- Geared towards raising the welfare of students, those benefiting from the scheme should have taken loans of a minimum of 1 lakh.
- As per Assam State Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma 5,000 students in Assam are currently pursuing higher studies in the state.
- The loan will benefit 1500 students in the first batch and 3000 students will earn benefit in the second batch.

Links:

https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/assam-cm-sarbananda-sonowal-launches-welfare-scheme-for-students-1631808-2019-12-27

http://www.edristi.in/

Govt approved projects worth Rs 7000 cr under Nirbhaya fund

Question: Under the NIRBHAYA Fund, Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoW&CD) has announced the approval of projects worth
(a) Rs 7,000 crore (b) Rs 7,500 crore (c) Rs 8,000 crore (d) Rs 10,000 crore
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoW&CD) has announced the approval of projects worth Rs 7,000 crore including setting up of 1023 fast-track courts under Nirbhaya fund.
- These courts were decided to be set up in order to provide speedy trials of over 1.66 lakh pending cases of crime against women and children in India.

Nirbhaya Fund:

- The Nirbhaya fund was set up in 2013 with Rs.1000 crores corpus by the Congress party-led govt. as a tribute to a 23-year-old Delhi gang-rape victim. Nirbhaya (fearless) was the pseudonym given to the victim to hide the original identity.
- The Nirbhaya Fund can be utilized for projects of women safety and security.
- Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD) is the nodal authority for the Nirbhaya Fund in place of Home Ministry.It is the authority for appraising/recommending the proposals/schemes to be funded under Nirbhaya Fund.
- Earlier, MoWCD was the one releasing the funds but now it examines the programmes submitted to it by the states under Nirbhaya scheme, approves them and recommends to the department of economic affairs for allocating funds.

Nirbhaya fund administration:

- The Nirbhaya Fund Framework provides for a non-lapsable corpus fund for safety and security of women administered by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) of the Government of India.
- Further, it provides for an Empowered Committee (EC) of officers chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Women & Child Development (MWCD) to appraise and recommend proposals to be funded under this framework.

Failing in motive:

- Despite of handsome funding, Nirbhaya Fund hasn't earned significant achivement to ensure women safety.

- The horrific gangrape and murder of a woman veterinarian in Telangana, and similar incidents in Bihar, Rajasthan and Karnataka indicate that women are as unsafe and fearful today as they were on the eve of Nirbhaya gangrape and murder case.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/projects-worth-rs-7-000-okayed-under-nirbhaya-fund-119122001435_1.html

5th Round of India-Japan Maritime Dialogue

Question:Where did the 5th Round of India-Japan Maritime Affairs Dialogue take place on 24 December 2019?
(a) Tokyo (b) New Delhi (c) Vishakhapatnam (d) Kyoto
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- 5th Round of India-Japan Maritime Affairs Dialogue was held in Tokyo on 24 December 2019.
- Meanwhile, the countries also held their 8th round of bilateral consultations on disarmament and non-proliferation and export control in Tokyo on December 23.
- Indian delegation was led by Indra Mani Pandey, Additional Secretary (Disarmament and International Security Affairs), Ministry of External Affairs, while Japanese delegation was led by Ambassador Yamanaka A Osamu, Deputy Assistant Minister, Deputy Director-General in Foreign Policy Bureau.
- India and Japan have agreed to deepen maritime cooperation and also held consultations on disarmament, non-proliferation and export control.
- The first round of India-Japan Maritime dialogue was held in New Delhi in 2013.
- The countries have signed Acquisition and Cross Serving Agreement that allows access to each other's military bases.
- Through this ageement, India is now able to access Japan base in Djibouti and Japanese Navy are able to access Indian Naval base in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- India- Japan also holds 2+2 defence dialogue. Apart from the US, Japan is the only country with which India holds such defence dialogue.

Links:

https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/32240/5th+Round+of+IndiaJapan+Maritime+Affairs+Dialogue

PM Launches Atal Bhujal Yojana

Question:Which type of scheme is Atal Bhujal Yojana which was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 25 2019?
(a) Central sector scheme (b) Centrally Sponsored Scheme
(c) Private Sector Sponsored Scheme (d) None of these

21

Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 25th December 2019, on the Birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Atal Bhujal Yojana (ATAL JAL).
- It is a Central Sector Scheme with a total outlay of Rs.6000 crore to be implemented over a period of 5 years (2020-21 to 2024-25).
- Out of the total outlay of Rs. 6000 crore, 50% shall be in the form of World Bank loan, and be repaid by the Central Government. The remaining 50% shall be through Central Assistance from regular budgetary support. The entire World Bank's loan component and Central Assistance shall be passed on to the States as Grants.

The scheme:

- The scheme aims to improve ground water management through community participation in identified priority areas in seven States, viz. Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- Implementation of the scheme is expected to benefit nearly 8350 Gram Panchayats in 78 districts in these States.
- ATAL JAL has been designed with the principal objective of strengthening the institutional framework for participatory ground water management and bringing about behavioral changes at the community level for sustainable ground water resource management.
- The scheme envisages undertaking this through various interventions, including awareness programmes, capacity building, convergence of ongoing/new schemes and improved agricultural practices etc.

Background:

- Ground water contributes to nearly 65% of total irrigated area of the country and nearly 85% of the rural drinking water supply.
- The limited ground water resources in the country are under threat due to the increasing demands of growing population, urbanization and industrialization.
- Intensive, and unregulated ground water pumping in many areas has caused rapid and widespread decline in ground water levels as well as reduction in the sustainability of ground water abstraction structures.
- The increasing stress on ground water due to over- exploitation, contamination and associated environmental impacts threaten to endanger the food security of the nation, unless necessary preventive / remedial measures are taken on priority.

Links:

https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=196116

http://www.edristi.in/

Govt to launch Digital Radio

Question: By which year Central government is planning to launch Digital radio?
(a) 2024 (b) 2025 (c) 2022 (d) 2021
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- In an initiative to revamp All India Radio(officially known as Akashvani),BJP led NDA Government has announced to intoduce Digital Radio in India by 2024.
- The announcement in this regard was made by Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar on December 24, 2019 at the 2019 Akashvani Annual Awards in New Delhi.
- The audio of digital radio will be more clear and its reach will be higher.There will also be four times more stations.

All India Radio:

- AIR was established in 1936 and is officially known as Akashvani since 1956
- Akashvani is the national public radio broadcaster of India and is a division of Prasar Bharati, which is India's largest public broadcasting agency.
- AIR is sister service of Prasar Bharati's Doordarshan television Network.

Links:

http://www.newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=376623

Good Governance Index

Question:Which of the following states has topped the Good Governance Index in Big States category?
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) AndhraPradesh (c) Goa (d) Maharashtra
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- In order to determine the status of governance prevailing in states, Dr. Jitendra Singh,launched the Good Governance Index on December 25 2019(Good Governance Day).

Good Governance Index:

- The Good Governance Index is a uniform tool across States to assess the Status of Governance and impact of various interventions taken up by the State Government and UTs.

- Good Governance Index is scientifically designed on various parameters of governance.
- The GGI consider ten sectors: 1). Agriculture and Allied Sectors, 2). Commerce & Industries, 3). Human Resource Development, 4). Public Health, 5). Public Infrastructure & Utilities, 6). Economic Governance, 7). Social Welfare & Development, 8). Judicial & Public Security, 9). Environment and 10). Citizen-Centric Governance.
- The states and UTs are divided into three groups: a). Big States, b). North-East & Hill States and c). UTs.

The rankings:

- Among Big states, Tamil Nadu topped the Good Governance Index.The poor performers are Odisha, Bihar, Goa, and Uttar Pradesh with Jharkhand finishing last in the group.
- Under the North-East and Hill States category,Himachal Pradesh topped the index, followed by Uttarakhand, Tripura, Mizoram, and Sikkim.
- The poor performers in this group are Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh being last.
- Concerning the governance status in Union Territories,Puducherry topped the index followed by Chandigarh and Delhi. Lakshwadeep is the worst UT.

Good Governance Day:

- The Good Governance Day is observed on the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Links:

https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=196119

Andhra Pradesh Nethanna Nestham scheme

Question: Recently Andhra Pradesh CM Jagan Mohan Reddy launched which welfare scheme to benefit weavers?
(a) Nethanna Nestham (b) Indiramma (c) Banguru Thalli (d) None of These
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 21 December 2019, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the YSR Nethanna Nestham scheme for state weavers.
- CM launched the scheme in Dharmavaram, a town in Anantapur district known for its handloom sarees and is home to a large community of weavers.
- Under the scheme, financial assistance of ₹24,000 per year will be provided to each weaver family, which owns a loom.
- Over five years, each weaver family will be given Rs 1.2 lakh in total.
- The scheme will benefit 85,000 handloom weaver families in the State.

- The scheme will revamp the condition of handloom weavers facing financial crisis and stuck in debt.

Links:

https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/andhra-pradesh/2019/dec/22/andhra-cm-jagan-launches-ysr-nethanna-nestham-to-benefit-85k-weavers-2079458.html

Gulmarg Mountain Festival, 2019

Question: In February 2020, the first Gulmarg Mountain Festival will be held in Gulmarg, Kashmir Valley. Which of the facts is not correct regarding this festival?
(a) It will be held between 13-16 February 2020
(b) This will be India's first comprehensive Snow Adventure & Leisure Sports Festival
(c) This sports festival will be organized by Travel Amazing India
(d) The brand ambassador of Gulmarg Mountain Festival, 2020 is professional golfer Saania Sharma
Answer:(c)
Related facts

- The Inaugural edition of Gulmarg Mountain Festival will be organized from 13th to 16th February 2020 at Gulmarg, Kashmir.
- Organized by Crazy Mad Dogs, this would be India's first comprehensive Snow Adventure & Leisure Sports Festival.
- Gulmarg Mountain Festival 2020 has been curated by Northern Escapes in association with Travel Amazing India & Reach India.
- This Festival promises to have a unique mix of adventure, sports and leisure which help in boosting Global and Domestic, Ecologically Driven Tourism for Kashmir and India.
- This unique and high-adrenaline initiative is being organized to create a potential model of Sustainable Adventure Tourism in the Himalayas or other ecologically sensitive zones in the country.
- The festival will include a number of adventure sports like, Snow Car Race, Heli-Skiing, Skiing, Snowboarding, Hot-Air Balloon Rides, Snow Running, Snow Biking and Snow Cycling apart from its main attractions of Snow Golf and Snow Cricket.
- Lieutenant Colonel Bhuwan Khare is the co-founder of festival.
- The brand ambassador of Gulmarg Mountain Festival, 2020 is professional golfer Saania Sharma.

Links:
https://www.impactnews.in/inaugural-edition-of-gulmarg-mountain-festival-to-commence-on-13th-february-2020-in-kashmir/

6th Indian Ocean Dialogue

Question: Where did the 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue take place on December 13, 2019?

(a) Colombo (b) Mumbai (c) Bangalore (d) New Delhi

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Union Ministry of External Affairs hosted 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) and Delhi Dialogue XI at Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi.
- This is for the first time that these two dialogues, which are key elements of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), and India-ASEAN calendars were held consecutively and on similar Indo-Pacific themes.
- The theme of 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) was "India Pacific: Re-imagining the Indian Ocean through an Extended Geography".
- It was organized by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India with the assistance of Indian Council for World Affairs on December 13,2019.
- IORA Member States discussed the role of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in an evolving Indo-Pacific region.
- The Indian Ocean Rim region, like the Asia-Pacific to the east, is among the world's most vital in terms of global commerce, energy, environmental and geopolitical stability.
- Half of the world's container ships, and two-thirds of the world's oil shipments pass through the Indian Ocean Rim region, which is home to 2.7 billion people.

11th Delhi Dialogue:

- The 11th Delhi Dialogue took place between December 13-14, 2019.
- The theme for this year's Delhi Dialogue is "Advancing Partnership in Indo-Pacific".
- It was organized by the Ministry of External Affairs with the help of Research and Information System (RIS) for developing countries.

Links:
https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/32180/11th+Delhi+Dialogue+6th+Indian+Ocean+Dialogue+and+associated+events+December+1314+2019

First country to recognize Indian Pharmacopoeia

Question: Which country became the first to recognize Indian Pharmacopoeia recently?
(a) China (b) Japan (c) UAE (d) Afghanistan
Answer: (d)
Related facts:

- A pharmacopoeia (from the obsolete typography pharmacopœia, literally, "drug-making"), in its modern technical sense, is a book containing directions for the identification of compound medicines, and published by the authority of a government or a medical or pharmaceutical society.
- **Recently, the Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP**) has been **recognised formally** by the **National Department of Regulation of Medicines and Health Products of the Ministry of Public Health of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan**.
- It will also be **used based** on the requirement as **reputable pharmacopoeia in the laboratory of medicines** and health products quality.
- With this, a new beginning has been made and Afghanistan has become the **first country to recognize IP pursuant** to the efforts of Department of Commerce and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The Indian Pharmacopoeia:

- IP is an **officially recognized book of standards** as per the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules 1945** there under.
- The IP specifies the **standards of drugs manufactured and marketed** in India in terms of their identity, purity and strength.
- The **quality, efficacy and safety** of the medicines are important from healthcare perspective. In order to ensure the quality of medicinal products, the legal and scientific standards are **provided by Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC)** in the form of Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP).
- As per, the **Second Schedule of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act**, IP is designated as the **official book of standards for drugs imported** and/or manufactured for sale, stock or exhibition for sale or distribution in India.
- The IP Commission's **mission is to promote public and animal health in India** by bringing out authoritative and officially accepted standards for quality of drugs including active pharmaceutical ingredients, excipients and dosage forms, used by health professionals, patients and consumers.
- This is achieved by **developing the standards for medicines** and supporting their implementation. In addition, IPC also develops **IP Reference Substances (IPRS)** that act as fingerprint for identification of an article under test and its purity as prescribed in the IP monographs.

Links:

EChO Network launched

Question: EChO Network, which has been launched recently, is a national program to provide a template for
(a) Education (b) Trade (c) Cross disciplinary leadership (d) None of the above
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- **EChO Network**, a national program to provide a template for **cross-disciplinary leadership in India** with the specific f**ocus of increasing research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment** was launched on December 19 2019 in **New Delhi by Prof. K VijayRaghavan**, Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India.
- India has **recently embarked on a number of national-level efforts to promote ecological and environmental research** on the subcontinent. There is a need to **train a new generation of educators and students** who can identify and solve problems in an interdisciplinary manner and who can listen to our natural world and tackle real-world problems in medicine, agriculture, ecology, and technology.
- India faces **unprecedented threats to its human environmental and ecosystems**, solving which requires a confluence of India's strong technological expertise and knowledge of the natural world itself.
- **EChO Network** would develop a **national network to catalyse a new generation of Indians** who can synthesize interdisciplinary concepts and tackle real-world problems in medicine, agriculture, ecology, and technology. EChO Network establishes a **new platform to change how science is embedded in our modern society.**
- Through **interactive sessions** with **citizens, industry, academia, and the government,** the Network will identify gaps in knowledge regarding selected topics in human and environmental ecosystems.
- The program will then **train postdoctoral leaders** in research and outreach on these topics, while also incorporating current public and private efforts into a national network.

Links:

Commerce and Industry Minister meets export promotion Councils

Question: Where did the meeting of the Export Promotion Council take place with the Union Commerce and Industry Minister on December 20 2019?
(a) Pune (b) Mumbai (c) New Delhi (d) Lucknow
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- **Union Minister for Commerce and Industry & Railways, Piyush Goyal** met with all **Export Promotion Councils (EPCs), Federation of Indian Export Organisation (FIEO) and Commodity Boards** under the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry in **New Delhi**.
- Piyush Goyal **reviewed and sought inputs** from EPCs for the **Foreign Trade Policy** and got their views on steps that may be taken to **boost India's exports**. **Pre-budget inputs** from EPCs were also taken by the Finance Ministry.

Major highlights of the meeting:

- **Thirty-seven EPCs, FIEO and three Commodity Boards of the Department of Commerce** attended the meeting and took this opportunity to discuss with Commerce and Industry Minister each and every issue that the Councils are facing while exporting merchandise and services and also give their feedback on the various initiatives that are being taken by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to ease lending and credit availability to exporters.
- The EPCs also gave their views on **India's FTAs/ PTAs with other countries especially ASEAN.**
- The problem of **exporters identified as "risky exporters"** by CBIC was taken up and Commerce and Industry Minister directed that a **nodal officer be appointed** in the office of Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) and he urged the Councils to send a list of those identified as risky exporters to the nodal officer in DGFT so that this issue may be taken up with the Finance Ministry.
- Commerce and Industry Minister further suggested that **rationalization of EPCs must be taken up in order to avoid duplication of work** and suggested that the big exporters may continue to be part of FIEO and smaller Councils may merge with bigger EPCs that deal with products of similar nature.
- Commerce and Industry Minister urged exporters to make **use of the NIRVIK (Niryat Rin Vikas Yojana) Scheme** that will soon be approved by Cabinet so that **exporters are able to access easy lending and enhanced loan availability** that will cover 90% of the principle interest and will also include both pre and post shipment credit.
- The **top 5 products in global** exports, accounting for **over 50%,** are **electrical & electronic products, petroleum goods, machinery, automobile and plastic goods**. However, their share in India's exports is less than 33%.
- **India's global share in these 5 products, put together, is about 1%.** Therefore, the New FTP should facilitate the export of these products.
- The **issue of India's low share in high technology exports** was also discussed by FIEO. High technology exports **accounts for 6.3% of our exports**, whereas the same is **29% for China, 32% for South Korea, 34% for Vietnam, 39% for Singapore**.
- At the end of the meeting, it was decided by the Minister, **in concurrence with all EPCs and Boards,** that another meeting will be held after the Budget in **February 2020** to review the tasks achieved and those still pending.

Links:

46th Gem & Jewellery Awards 2019

Question: What is the percentage contribution of gem and jewellery industry in the GDP of India?
(a) 10% (b) 15% (c) 7% (d) 20%
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- The **46th India Gem & Jewellery awards** 2019 held in **New Delhi** on **18 December 2019**. It was felicitated by the **Union Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal.**
- The **Indian gem and jewellery sector** is the **global hub of jewellery** and **contributes to around 7% of the country's GDP** and 15% to India's total merchandise exports. Commerce and Industry Minister, **Piyush Goyal** urged those in this sector to now **achieve the target of USD 75 billion from 40 billion much faster.**

Highlights of the event:

- Indian gem and jewellery sector has a **huge potential to grow** in the trade and in **creation of more jobs** and he assured that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry will extend all help to the sector to achieve its target of USD 75 billion.
- He urged entrepreneurs in the sector to make full use of the **soon to be launched NIRVIK Scheme of ECGC** that will ease the lending process and enhance loan availability for exporters. It will also **make foreign exchange loans available at much cheaper rates** not only for large export houses but also small exporters.
- There are **4 Common Facility Centers** being set-up in the country apart from the 4 that are already in use at present and the sector must make full use of them to get jewellery tested and certified.
- Members of this sector may also explore the possibility of **creating jewellery parks on the lines of the gold souk in Dubai** to attract buyers from the domestic market and also overseas.
- Out of the **15 diamonds mined** in the world **14 are cut and polished in India** therefore it is very essential that the diamond sector help in training talent and scale up skilling to get more value for its products.
- Commerce and Industry Minister gave away **awards in recognition of the business excellence in the sector** that is helping to strengthen Brand India.
- Awards in **various categories of metal jewellery, Cut & Polished Coloured Gemstones, Diamonds, highest taxpayer company, Most Socially Responsible Company, Woman Entrepreneur of the Year, best digital initiative and company with the highest employment** on the roll were given away at the hands of the Commerce and Industry Minister.
- A **Lifetime achievement award** was also received by Vasant Mehta, at the hands of the Minister of Commerce and Industry, for his role in **transforming the Indian diamond manufacturing industry** into a global jewellery manufacturing hub that boasts of quality and design oriented jewellery.

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Links:

https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1597007

National Broadband Mission

Question: Who launched the National Broadband Mission on December 17, 2019? (a) Narendra Modi (b) Piyush Goyal (c) Venkaiah Naidu (d) Ravishankar Prasad
Answer: (d)
Related facts:

- The Minister for Communications, Law & Justice and Electronics and Information Technology, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad has said that the National Broadband Mission is to fulfill all aspirations of the people and enables fast track growth of digital communication infrastructure.
- He launched the National Broadband Mission (NBM) at an event. The Minister of State for Communications, Human Resources Development and Electronics & Information Technology, Sanjay Shamrao Dhotre, the Secretary (Telecom), Anshu Prakash and other senior officials were present on the occasion.
- Ravi Shankar Prasad also launched the Logo of the NBM, a Booklet on this occasion.

National Broadband Mission:

- The vision of the NBM is to fast track growth of digital communications infrastructure, bridge the digital divide, facilitate digital empowerment and inclusion and provide affordable and universal access of broadband for all.
- Some of the objectives of the Mission which is structured with strong emphasis on the three principles of universality, affordability and quality are:
- Broadband access to all villages by 2022.
- Facilitate universal and equitable access to broadband services for across the country and especially in rural and remote areas.
- Laying of incremental 30 lakhs route km of Optical Fiber Cable and increase in tower density from 0.42 to 1.0 tower per thousand of population by 2024.
- Develop innovative implementation models for Right of Way (RoW) and to work with States/UTs for having consistent policies pertaining to expansion of digital infrastructure including for RoW approvals required for laying of OFC.
- Develop a Broadband Readiness Index (BRI) to measure the availability of digital communications infrastructure and conducive policy ecosystem within a State/UT.
- Creation of a digital fiber map of the Digital Communications network and infrastructure, including Optical Fiber Cables and Towers, across the country
- Investment from stakeholders of USD 100 billion (Rs 7 Lakh Crore) including Rs 70,000 crore from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

http://www.edristi.in/

- Work with all stakeholders including the concerned Ministries / Departments/ Agencies, and Ministry of Finance, for enabling investments for the Mission.

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1596744

GeM launches National Outreach Programme

Question: What is the name of the national outreach programme started by the GeM recently?
(a) GeM Talk (b) GeM Samvaad (c) GeM Lok Sunwaai (d) GeM Lok Sansad
Answer: (b)
Related facts:

- A national outreach Programme, GeM Samvaad, was launched by Anup Wadhawan, Secretary, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India and Chairman, GeM in New Delhi on December 16 2019.
- The outreach programme will take place with stakeholders across the country and with local sellers in order to facilitate on-boarding of local sellers on the marketplace while catering to specific requirements and procurement needs of buyers.
- The outreach programme will take place from 19 December 2019 to 17 February 2020 and will cover all the States and UTs of the country.

Government e Marketplace (GeM):

- GeM has more than 15 lakh products and around 20,000 services, more than 3 lakh registered sellers and service providers and more than 40,000 Government buyer organizations.
- In its short journey of three years, GeM has processed more than 28 lakh orders worth Rs. 40,000 crores in Gross Merchandise Value out of which 50% has been transacted by MSMEs.
- State Departments and Organizations and Public Sector Enterprises (PSEs) have been using GeM for their buying needs. Sellers from the State are also benefitting through the access to national Public Procurement market using the portal.
- Through GeM Samvaad the marketplace is looking forward to receiving feedback from users which shall be used for making improvements and advancements in the system.
- Government e Marketplace (GeM) is the national public procurement portal offering end to end solutions for all procurement needs of Central and State Government Departments, PSUs, autonomous institutions and local bodies.

http://www.edristi.in/

- Since its commencement on 9th August 2016, GeM has transformed public procurement in the country by leveraging technology and making procurement contactless, paperless, and cashless.

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1596732

ADB, India sign loan for energy efficiency investments in India

Question: What is the amount of the loan signed between India and ADB for the energy efficiency investment in India recently?
(a) $250 million (b) $350 million (c) $150 million (d) $450 million
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India on 16th December 2019 signed a $250 million loan to Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) to expand energy efficiency investments in India that will benefit agricultural, residential and institutional consumers.
- In addition, $46 million financing will be provided from the Clean Technology Fund (CTF), to be administered by ADB.
- ADB previously approved a $200 million loan to EESL, a public sector energy service company, in 2016 for Demand Side Energy Efficiency Sector Project that focused on efficient lighting and appliances.

Major highlights of the loan:

- The project is expected to contribute to the mission of Government of India to promote energy efficiency and meet Government's commitments to reduce energy intensity of the economy.
- The introduction of energy-efficient technologies in eligible states including smart meters, distributed solar photovoltaic systems and electric vehicles will help reduce electricity network losses and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- The project's smart metering component will help address billing and collection inefficiencies. EESL will also explore business models to generate greater public demand for e-vehicles to support India's current push for electric vehicles.
- Promoting awareness of the benefits of using energy efficient technologies is another feature of the project. Awareness campaigns will engage local organisations in knowledge-sharing and training, with a focus on women electricity consumers.
- Accompanying the loan will be a technical assistance (TA) of $2 million to support EESL in implementing the project, including a gender action plan, mobilising private sector participation in energy efficiency services, identifying new business opportunities, and transferring knowledge about successful models.
- The TA will also support the identification and development of new subprojects and pilot test some technologies. The grant comes from the Clean Technology Fund, to be administered by ADB.

- ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. In 2018, it made commitments of new loans and grants amounting to $21.6 billion.
- ADB was established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members — 49 from the region.

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1596765

Accessible India Campaign

Question: Consider the following statement:
(a) Government extended the deadline for Accessible India Campaign to March 2020.
(b) The scheme was also launched under Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995.
Choose the correct:
(a) Only (1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above
Answer :(c)

- Recently GoI extended the deadline for Accessible India Campaign to March 2020.
- The main objective of the campaign is to make public spaces friendly for persons with disabilities.

Objective:

- The campaign is also called Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan.
- The scheme was launched by Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- The initiative is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to which India signed in 2007.
- The scheme was also launched under Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995.
- Under the act, the scheme comes under the jurisdiction of sections 44, 45 and 46 that provides equal opportunities and protection of rights in transport sector to those who are physically challenged.
- The campaign aims at making at least 50% of government owned buildings as disabled-friendly.

Links:
http://disabilityaffairs.gov.in/content/accessible_india.php

Mobile app: Madhu

Question: On 03 December, 2019; Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched mobile app 'Madhu' it has been developed for-
(a) Providing e-Learning facility to students
(b) Providing apiculture information to the farmers
(c) Girl Education (d) None of the above
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 03 December, 2019; Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched 'Madhu' app, an e-learning mobile phone application for school students.
- It can be used by the students to understand their subjects in a better and efficient way.
- The app is named after Madhusudan Das well known as Utkal Gourab in the state.
- This app is developed by Ganjam district administration, Odisha for school students.

Objectives:

- It is aimed at helping school students in learning their lessons taught in school classrooms through videos and practicing them.
- Through the app, the students will have access to video explanation of the topics they are taught in their classroom, said an official.
- The courses have been prepared to make the videos interesting using quality teaching-learning material.
- It also features interactive question answering sessions.

Links:
https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/news/story/odisha-cm-launches-madhu-app-to-help-school-students-1624763-2019-12-03

International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems" for BIMSTEC countries

Question: Where was the 3 day "International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems" for BIMSTEC countries being organized from 11 to 13 December 2019?
(a) Dhaka (b) Rangoon (c) Kathmandu (d) New Delhi
Answer: (d)
Related facts:

- The three day 'International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems' for BIMSTEC countries organized by the Department of Agricultural Research & Education, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmer's Welfare and Indian Council of Agricultural Research is being held in New Delhi.
- Participants from all the Seven BIMSTEC Countries viz. Bhutan, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and BIMSTEC Secretariat is attending the Seminar.
- Inaugurating the seminar Dr. Trilochan Mohapatra, Secretary DARE and DG ICAR emphasized that despite climate changes, farmers' income can be enhanced effectively by adopting technological interventions.
- The seminar is being organized as a Government of India initiative as announced earlier by the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi at the 4th BIMSTEC Summit at Kathmandu on 30-31st August, 2019.
- The objective of this International Seminar is to have experience sharing to enable improvement of tropical smallholder farming systems for greater productivity and resilience to climate change through ecological approaches.

- Some of the success stories shall be shared as case studies for the benefit of the BIMSTEC countries.
- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional organization comprising of seven member states in South Asia and Southeast Asia lying in littoral and adjacent areas of Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity.
- This sub-regional organisation came into being on June 6, 1997, through the Bangkok Declaration.

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1595940

Digital Exhibition on history of Constitution of India

Question: Who inaugurated the Digital Exhibition on history of Constitution of India organized by the Department of Personnel and Training on December 9 2019?
(a) Narendra Modi (b) Ram Nath Kovind (c) Jitendra Singh (d) Ram Vilas Paswan
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- The Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region, Personnel, Public Grievances Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated the 'Digital Exhibition on History of Constitution of India', in Delhi on December 9 2019.
- The exhibition has been organised by the Department of Personnel & Training, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, in collaboration with Parliament Museum and Archives of Lok Sabha Secretariat and Bureau of Outreach and Communication in New Delhi.

The Exhibition:

- By the historical point of view, 9th December is an important day as the first sitting of the Constituent Assembly was held on 9th December, 1946.
- The current year 2019, marks the 70th Year of the adoption of the Constitution. The Prime Minister has given emphasis on performing Fundamental Duties along with having Fundamental Rights.
- The Minister visited the exhibition and also administered the National Pledge to the officials of DoPT on the occasion.
- The exhibition contains photograph of Members of Constituent Assembly, Debates (audio) in the Constituent Assembly, Movie on making of Constitution, Quotes and audio speeches of Members of Constituent Assembly, Replica of the Constitution, Posters on Preamble to the Constitution and Fundamental Duties, Directive Principles etc.

History of the day:

http://www.edristi.in/

- 9th December is an important day as the first sitting of Constituent Assembly was held on this day in 1946. On 29th August, 1947, the Constituent Assembly through a resolution appointed a Drafting Committee to scrutinize the draft of the text of the Constitution of India prepared by Constitutional Advisor, giving effect to the decisions already taken in the Assembly and to submit to the Assembly for consideration the text of the draft Constitution as revised by the committee.
- The Constitution of India was adopted on 26th November, 1949, and the Members appended their signatures to it on 24.01.1950. In all, 284 Members (total Members-299) actually signed the Constitution.
- The day of adoption of the Constitution is being celebrated in the country as "Constitution Day".

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1595508

International Seminar cum Exhibition on Naval weapon Systems – NAVARMS-19

Question: Which edition of the International Seminar NAVARMS 19 was organized recently in New Delhi?
(a) Second (b) Third (c) Fifth (d) Fourth
Answer: (d)
Related facts:

- The **fourth edition of International Seminar cum Exhibition on Naval Weapon Systems 'NAVARMS-19'** with the theme "**Make in India – Fight Category: Opportunities and Imperatives"** was organised at Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, Development Enclave, **New Delhi on 12-13 December 2019.**
- The **two day event** spread over **five plenary sessions** provided opportunity for exchange of ideas, create awareness and identify **emerging prospects for Indian/International defence industry** in domain of Naval Weapon Systems.
- **NAVARMS is the only international seminar and exhibition on Naval Weapon System**s conducted in the country to invite all the stakeholders in life cycle management of Naval Weapons and provide a common platform to share their views and concerns.
- **Defence Minister Rajnath Singh** addressed the gathering during the Inaugural session on **12 December 2019** and will inaugurate the Exhibition.
- The **past three editions** of NAVARMS organised in **2007, 2010 and 2013** have aroused much enthusiasm and **active participation by the Industry, Ministry of Defence, DRDO and the users.**
- India's **quintessential maritime character and vital geo-strategic location** are twin factors that have defined her growth as a nation and evolution as a civilisation.
- The Indian Navy today remains the **principal manifestation of India's maritime power and plays a central role in safeguarding and prompting her security** and national interests in the maritime domain.

- To enable companies to gain maximum benefit from this platform, a parallel technology display in the form of Exhibition for two days is also being organized to demonstrate Industry's capabilities to the key users.

Links:

https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1595775

4th India Water Impact Summit

Question: Where did the 4th India Water Impact Summit take place from 5 to 7 December 2019?
(a) Devprayag (b) Haridwar (c) Varanasi (d) New Delhi
Answer: (d)
Related facts:

- The **Ministry of Jal Shakti** and the **Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga)** led by IIT-Kanpur organised the **fourth India Water Impact Summit** in **New Delhi**, which discussed water-related issues and steps taken to save the planet's most precious resource.
- The event, which was held here from **December 5 to 7 2019** at the **Vigyan Bhawan**, was inaugurated by Jal Shakti Minister **Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.**
- Reports on **'Ambassadors' Meet', 'River Restoration and Conservation – A Concise Manual and Guide',** as well as documents on 'Ganga Hubs' developed so far were released by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Major highlights of the summit:

- The summit focused on **integrated management of water resources in rural and urban area**s, and experts from various fields discussed various water-related issues.
- **'Valuing Water – Transforming Ganga'** was the **theme** of this year's summit.
- An important objective of the summit was **bringing together global financial investors and institutions** to focus on water impact in smart cities.
- **"European Union (EU) countries, Israel, Ghana** and other nations are present. **10 MoUs related to technologies** were also exchanged.
- **Ambassadors and diplomatic representatives** of the EU member states also participated in the summit. They talked about the importance of water to their respective nations and discussed collaboration with India.
- As water security is a global issue, the NMCG has been taking a global call to action to invite countries from around the world to save the most precious resource on the planet.

Major projects of cleaning water:

- There has been a **massive improvement in the Clean Ganga Mission** during the last five years.

- Recently, a **massive river rafting expedition** called 'Ganga Aamantran Abhiyan' was launched **from Devprayag on 10th October, 2019**. The expedition covered around **2,500 KM length of the Ganga during its 34-day journey** till **Ganga Sagar in West Bengal**.
- **Quality of water** in the Ganga has **improved tremendously** in the last five years. Five years earlier, **only tens of Gangetic dolphins** were sighted, but this time they have observed **more than 2,000 dolphins** and all other aquatic life has improved.
- The **Union Cabinet** chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for **establishment of the Clean Ganga Fund (CGF).**
- The Jal Shakti Minister said the approach in **Namami Gange for ensuring Aviral Dhara or improving flows is comprehensive**.
- The **role of academic institutions** including IITs, NITs, NEERI etc from India and the European Union, Germany, Denmark, Israel, Japan and Canada for Technology Collaboration Agreements with c-Ganga (Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies) in cleaning Ganga was lauded in the summit.
- Under the **first draft of the Ganga River Basin Management Plan (GRBMP)** submitted by a consortium of IITs in 2015, projects for **liquid pollution abatement** in Ganga river basin have already been sanctioned and are at **various stages of implementation** and more of such projects will come for the tributaries for the Ganga rivers as well.
- India holds **only about 4% of global freshwater** compared to **around 18% of its population** and an equivalent percentage of livestock population.
- It was mentioned that **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)**, like the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), will be completed within the stipulated five year **period by 2024.**

Links:

https://aninews.in/news/national/general-news/nmcg-organises-4th-india-water-impact-summit-2019-in-delhi20191207195944/

Launch of Indian Culture Portal

Question: Who has launched the Indian Culture Portal which will showcase the rich cultural heritage of India?
(a) Prahlad Singh Patel (b) Ravi Shankar Prasad (c) Prakash Javadekar
(d) Shripad Yesso Naik
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 10 December 2019, Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (IC), Prahlad Singh Patel launched the Indian Culture web portal in New Delhi.
- Indian culture portal is the first government authorized portal where knowledge and cultural resources of various organizations of Ministry of Culture are now available in public domain on a single platform.
- As a part of the Prime Minister's Digital India initiative, the portal will showcase information about the rich tangible and intangible cultural heritage of India both at home and abroad.
- The portal is culmination of the mélange of Indian cultures that has co-existed and thrived for more than five thousand years.

40

- On this portal information about more than 90 lakhs items are currently available. The content on the portal is available in English and Hindi language in an interactive, user-friendly interface.
- The Indian Culture portal was envisioned by the Ministry of Culture and was developed by a team from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bombay while the curation of the data has been done by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU).

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1595757

India-Australia Foreign and Defence Secretaries' Dialogue (2+2)

Question: Where did the 3rd Edition of India-Australia Foreign and Defence Secretaries' Dialogue (2+2) take place on December 9, 2019?
(a) Canberra (b) New Delhi (c) Mumbai (d) Ahmedabad
Answer:(b)
Related facts:

- The 3rd Edition of India-Australia Foreign and Defence Secretaries' Dialogue (2+2) was held on December 9, 2019 at Hyderabad House in New Delhi.
- Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale and Defence Secretary Dr. Ajay Kumar led the Indian delegation for 2+2, while the Australian delegation was led by Ms Frances Adamson, Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs and Mr. Greg Moriarty, Secretary, Department of Defence.
- The delegation called on Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs.
- The two sides welcomed the recent progress made in deepening bilateral, political, economic, security and defence cooperation.
- They discussed recent regional and global developments. They also exchanged views on achieving their shared objective of peace, prosperity and progress in the Indo-Pacific region.

Links:
https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/32178/IndiaAustralia_Foreign_and_Defence_Secretaries_Dialogue_2432

Alliance Air flags off its first flight operations under UDAN-RCS

Question: Alliance Air, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Air India, flagged-off its first flight operations between which North-East cities?

(a) Guwahati-Dimapur- Imphal (b) Guwahati-Dispur- Gangtok

(c) Guwahati-Aizawl- Kohima (d) Guwahati-Dimapur- Agartala

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 7th December 2019, Alliance Air, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Air India, flagged-off its first flight operations between the capital city of Assam, Guwahati to Dimapur, the largest city of Nagaland, to the capital city of Manipur, Imphal.
- This will be 236 route under the Regional Connectivity Scheme – Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (**RCS-UDAN**) under the Government of India.
- The inaugural event was graced by N. Biren Singh, Chief Minister of Manipur, Losii Dikho, Minister (PHED) Govt. of Manipur, Dr. Sapam Ranjan Singh, Chairman, Tourism Corporation of Manipur Ltd and other dignitaries from Air India and Air Alliance.
- Flight services from Dimapur to Imphal were a long pending demand from the region. This marks another step by the Ministry of Civil Aviation to establish a strong air network in North East India.
- This flight marks the inception of the first-ever alternative option of connectivity to Imphal, as until now, Imphal is yet to be connected with India's Railway Network.
- Alliance Air continues to focus on new routes to connect regional destinations. The airline has been awarded 12 new routes under UDAN-3.1, which are being launched progressively in the coming year bringing new destinations on India's air map.

Links:

https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1595410

ADB approves loan for Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor

Question: To strengthen the electricity connectivity between the southern and northern parts of Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor (CKIC), what amount of loan has been approved by the ADB?

(a) $ 251 million (b) $ 151 million (c) $ 351 million (d) $ 451 million

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- In November 2019, Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a $451-million loan to strengthen power

connectivity between the southern and northern parts of the Chennai–Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor **(CKIC)** in Tamil Nadu.

- ADB's loan approval for CKIC will further promote economic development in Tamil Nadu by providing more reliable and competitive power supply for industry and services in the future.

- The total cost of the project is $653.5 million, of which the government will provide $202.5 million. The estimated completion date is at the end of 2024.

Links:

https://www.adb.org/projects/51308-001/main#project-pds

Credit-linked Subsidy Services Awas Portal (CLAP)

Question: Credit-linked Subsidy Services Awas Portal (CLAP) was launched by-
(a) Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers (b) Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
(c) Ministry of Power (d) None of these
Answer:(d)
Related facts:

- On 25 November 2019, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched the Credit-linked Subsidy Services Awas Portal (CLAP) of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Housing for All (Urban).
- The CLAP portal will help the beneficiaries to track their application status online in real-time.
- The portal will provide a transparent real-time monitoring system for the credit-linked subsidy services.
- Under CLSS (Credit Link Subsidy Scheme), the Centre provides interest subsidy of up to around Rs 2.67 lakh on home loans to individuals, which reduces the principal outstanding amount of the loan.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/hardeep-puri-launches-portal-for-subsidy-scheme-under-pmay-119112500742_1.html

New round of RCS-UDAN scheme launched

Question: Which round of the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) has been recently flagged off by the government?
(a) 3rd (b) 2nd (c) 4th (d) 6th
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- Following the three successful rounds of bidding, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched the 4th round of Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)- UdeDeshKaAamNagrik(UDAN) to further enhance the connectivity to remote and regional areas of the country.
- The focus of this round would be the priority areas like NER, Hilly States, J&K, Ladakh and Islands.

Some of the key features of the Scheme are:

- Revision of (Viability Gap Funding) VGF cap: The provision of VGF for Category 2 / 3 aircraft (more than 20 seater) has been enhanced for operation of RCS flights in Priority Area(s) (Union Territories [UT] of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir; the States of Himachal Pradesh, Uttrakhand, North Eastern State; UT of Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar).
- Promoting short-haul routes – The provision of VGF would be restricted for routes with stage length up to 600 kms, for operation of Category 2 / 3 aircraft, beyond it no monetary support would be provided. The table for provision of VGF for various stage lengths would be available for stage length up to 500 kms.
- Well defined Prioritization framework – Airports that has already been developed by AAI would be given higher priority for award of VGF under the Scheme, followed by airports not part of the above list but located Priority Area(s) would be given a priority, followed by airports located in areas other than Priority Area(s).
- Flexibility to change the frequency of flight operation – The Selected Airline Operator (SAO) would be allowed to change the frequency of flight operation, during the tenure of flight operation of the given route, provided that the total scheduled flight operation submitted as part of the Technical Proposal, is conformed and adhered to within a period of one year.
- Inclusion of helicopter and sea plane operation under NSOP license – The operation of helicopter and sea plane would be allowed under this round.

Progress of UDAN 1, 2 and 3

- In the last three years MoCA has successfully completed three rounds of bidding under the Scheme and awarded about 700 routes.
- Under UDAN-1 scheme, a total of 56 routes were awarded in which 53 routes have got operationalized.
- Similarly under UDAN-2 scheme, a total of 297 routes were awarded in which 104 routes have got operationalized.
- Under UDAN-3 scheme, a total of 335 routes were awarded in which 74 rountes have got operationalized.
- Efforts are made to develop the airports and operationalize the pending routes. Many of these routes will be operationalized during the winter schedule 2019.
- MoCA aims to operationalize 1000 routes and more than 100 airports in the next five years. This would be achieved by focusing on operationalizing routes in Priority Areas.
- AAI would focus on developing no-frills airport in the future and routes connecting such airports would be prioritized for award of VGF.

http://www.edristi.in/

Election Commission of India to implement "Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System"

Question: The new Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System will be implemented by the Election Commission of India from:
(a) 1 January, 2020 (b) 1 March, 2020 (c) 1 December, 2019 (d) None of the above
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- The Election Commission of India has reviewed the system and process of registration of political parties.
- The new guidelines will be effective from 1st January, 2020.
- Accordingly the "Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System" (PPRTMS) will be implemented through an online portal, to facilitate tracking of status of application by applicants.
- The salient feature in the Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System is that the applicant (who is applying for party registration from 1st January, 2020 onwards) will be able to track the progress of his / her application and will get status update through SMS and email.
- The applicant is required to provide contact mobile number and email address of the party / applicant in his application if he/she wishes to track the progress of the application.
- The Registration of Political Parties is governed by the provisions of section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- A party seeking registration under the said section with the Commission has to submit an application to the Commission within a period of 30 days following the date of its formation in prescribed format with basic particulars about the party such as name, address, membership details of various units, names of office bearers, etc, as required under sub-section (4) of the said section, and such other particulars that the Commission has specified under sub-section (6) of Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, as mentioned in the Guidelines for registration.

11th BRICS Summit

Question: Consider the following statements regarding BRICS Summit 2019:
(1) The 11th BRICS Summit took place in in Brasilia, Brazil.
(2) 2019 BRICS summit theme is "Economic Growth for an Innovative Future."
(3) BRICS countries adopted the Brasilia Declaration.
Of the above correct statement/s is/are:
(a) Only 1 (b) Only 2 & 3 (c) Only 1 & 3 (d) All of the above

Answer: (d)
Related facts:

- The **11th BRICS Summit** took place from 13th-14th November 2019 at the Itamaraty Palace in **Brasilia, Brazil**.
- The theme of the 2019 BRICS summit is **"Economic Growth for an Innovative Future."**
- The BRICS countries, Brazil, the Russian Federation, India, China and South Africa discussed on spheres of political and socioeconomic coordination.
- This year's meeting covered the areas of finance, trade, foreign affairs, national security matters, communications, environment, labor and employment, science, technology and innovation, energy, agriculture, health and culture.
- In order to reaffirm the shared goal of building a peaceful, stable and prosperous world,BRICS countries adopted the Brasilia Declaration.

Brasilia Declaration:

- It advocates and supports multilateralism as well as upholding the central role of the UN in international affairs and respecting international law.
- The declaration emphasizes the urgent need to strengthen and reform the multilateral system, including the UN, the WTO, the IMF and other international organizations which will support to enable emerging markets and developing countries in international decision-making.
- The rising protectionism arising due to trade war between China and the U.S. is hurting the global economy.So,multilateralism is crucial for emerging countries to protect their own interests.

India at the Summit:

- Attending the summit PM Modi called for paying special attention to mutual trade and investment, as Intra-BRICS trade accounts for just 15% of world trade, while the combined population is more than 40% of the world's population.
- Participating in the Leaders dialogue with BRICS Business Council and New Development Bank,PM Modi said that BRICS Business Council created a roadmap to achieve the $ 500 billion Intra-BRICS trade target by the next summit.
- PM Modi proposed the first meeting of BRICS Water Ministers in India.
- India highlighted the menace of terrorism which has resulted in the loss of $1 trillion to the world economy.

Meetings on the sidelines of the Summit:

India – Brazil:

- PM Modi invited the President of Brazil Jair Bolsonaro as the Chief Guest at the Republic Day 2020.
- Brazil has decided to grant visa-free travel to Indian citizens.

India – China:

- The countries have agreed to hold the next round of border talks. The 21st round of border talks were held in 2018 by Security Advisor Ajit Doval and his Chinese counterpart.
- The Chinese President invited the Indian Prime Minister for the 3rd informal summit in China in 2020. The first informal summit took place at Wuhan (China-2018) and second at Mamallapuram (India-2019).
- Both the leaders reviewed the preparations for celebrating the 70th anniversary (in 2020) of establishment of diplomatic relations between the countries.

India – Russia:

- PM Modi met his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and noted their satisfaction that the 25 billion USD trade target between the countries to be achieved by 2025 has already been achieved.
- To dismantle the barriers of trade at regional level, the first Bilateral Regional Forum will be held in 2020.

About BRICS:

- BRICS is the acronym coined for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- The group together represents about 42% of the population, 23% of GDP, 30% of the territory and 18% of the global trade.
- The acronym BRIC was first used in 2001 by Goldman Sachs to indicate the emerging powers that would be, alongside the United States, the five largest economies of the world in the 21st century.
- The 1st BRIC Summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia, on 16 June 2009.
- South Africa was invited to join BRIC in December 2010, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.
- The chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S. Brazil is the current chair of the grouping.
- During the Sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014) the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB). They also signed the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement.

47

International

Human Development Index-2019

Question: What is the rank of India in 2019 Human Development Index published by the ?
(a) 129 (b) 124 (c) 125 (d) 119
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released the 2019 Human Development Report (HDR), entitled "Beyond income, beyond averages, beyond today: inequalities in human development in the 21st Century".
- India was ranked 129 out of 189 countries on the 2019 Human Development Index (HDI) up one position from the 130th rank in 2018.

Human Development Index:

- HDI emphasizes that rather than evaluating a country by GDO, it is much better to evaluate its human development.
- The HDI measures average achievement in three basic dimensions of human development —
- life expectancy
- education and
- per capita income

The rankings:

- Norway, Switzerland and Ireland occupied the top three positions in that order.
- Among India's neighbors, Sri Lanka (71) and China (85) are higher up the rank scale.
- Bhutan (134), Bangladesh (135), Myanmar (145), Nepal (147), Pakistan (152) and Afghanistan (170) were ranked lower on the list.

Region Wise Performance:

- South Asia was the fastest growing region in human development progress witnessing a 46% growth over 1990-2018.
- It is followed by East Asia and the Pacific at 43%.

Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index:

- The IHDI indicates percentage loss in HDI due to inequality.

- India's HDI value increased by 50% (from 0.431 to 0.647), which places it above the average for other South Asian countries (0.642).
- However, for inequality-adjusted HDI (IHDI), India's position drops by one position to 130, losing nearly half the progress (.647 to .477) made in the past 30 years.

Gender Inequality Index (GII):

- GII presents a composite measure of gender inequality using three dimensions:
- Reproductive health
- Empowerment and
- The labour market
- In the Gender Inequality Index (GII), India is at 122 out of 162 countries.
- Neighboring countries China (39), Sri Lanka (86), Bhutan (99), Myanmar (106) are above India.
- The world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030 as per the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. It may take 202 years to close the gender gap in economic opportunity — one of the three indicators of the GII.

Links:
http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/hdr2019.pdf

Global Gender Gap Index 2020

Global Gender Gap Report 2020

Question: What is the rank of India in Global Gender Gap Index 2020 published by World Economic Forum?
(a) 112 (b) 102 (c) 108 (d) 124
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- The Global Gender Gap Index is a framework for capturing the magnitude of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress over time.
- It was first introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006.
- India has been ranked 112th among 153 countries in the annual Global Gender Gap Index for 2020.In 2018 India's rank was 108.

Parameters of the Index:

- The Global Gender Gap Index benchmarks 153 countries on their progress towards gender parity in four dimensions:
- Economic Participation and Opportunity,
- Educational Attainment,
- Health and Survival and
- Political Empowerment
- Over the Index, the highest possible score is 1 (equality) and the lowest possible score is 0 (inequality).

http://www.edristi.in/

Key findings:

- Globally, the average (population-weighted) distance completed to parity is at 68.6%, which is a further improvement since last edition.
- At current pace, it will take 99.5 years to achieve full parity between men and women.
- The largest gender disparity is in political empowerment. Only 25% of the 35,127 seats in parliaments around the world are occupied by women, and only 21% of the 3,343 ministers are women.
- Iceland is once again the most gender-equal country in the world for the 11th time in a row. It has closed almost 88% of its overall gender gap, further improving since last year.
- Iceland is followed by Nordic neighbors Norway (2nd, 84.2%), Finland (3rd, 83.2%) and Sweden (4th, 82.0%).
- Yemen is ranked the worst (153rd), while Iraq is 152nd and Pakistan 151st.
- India is far behind other countries like China (106th), Sri Lanka (102nd), Nepal (101st), Brazil (92nd), Indonesia (85th) and Bangladesh (50th).

Links:
http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2020.pdf

WHO Report on Cholera,2019

Question: On December 19, 2019, the World Health Organization released a report related to Cholera. According to this, what percentage of reduction has been registered in the year 2019 against 2018?
(a) 40 percent (b) 60 percent (c) 30 percent (d) 50 percent
Answer: (b)
Related facts:

- On 19th December 2019, World Health Organization (WHO) released a report related to Cholera.
- According to this, the number of cholera cases decreased globally by 60% in 2018.
- Cholera is an acute diarrhoeal infection caused by ingestion of food or water contaminated with the bacterium Vibrio cholerae.
- According to reports from 34 countries, there were 499 447 cases of cholera and 2990 deaths in 2018.
- Most cases were registered in Yemen with 371 326 cholera cases in 2018.
- As per WHO the global decrease in case numbers is due to large-scale vaccination campaigns.
- It is noteworthy that in 2017, WHO formulated "**Global Roadmap to 2030 strategy"** for effective prevention of cholera.
- The Global Roadmap aims to reduce cholera deaths by 90% and to eliminate transmission in up to 20 countries by 2030.

Links:

https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/19-12-2019-drop-in-cholera-cases-worldwide-as-key-endemic-countries-report-gains-in-cholera-control

http://www.edristi.in/

Global Climate Risk Index 2020

Question: What is the rank of India in 'Global Climate Risk Index, 2020' released by Germanwatch on December 4, 2019?

(a) 14th (b) 7th (c) 5th (d) 9th

Answer (c)

Related facts:

- On 4 December 2019, the Global Climate Risk Index, 2020 was released by the international environmental think tank Germanwatch.
- This is the 15th edition of this index.
- The index analyses the extent to which countries and regions have been affected by the impacts of weather-related loss events (storms, floods, heat waves etc.).
- The countries and territories affected most in 2018 were Japan, the Philippines as well as Germany.
- For the period from 1999 to 2018(long-term index) Puerto Rico, Myanmar and Haiti rank highest.
- Altogether, about 495 000 people died as a direct result of more than 12 000 extreme weather events globally and losses between 1999 and 2018 amounted to around US$ 3.54 trillion (in purchasing power parities).
- Heatwaves were one major cause of damage in 2018. Of the ten most affected countries in 2018, Germany, Japan and India were suffering from extended periods of heat.
- Of the ten most affected countries and territories in the period 1999 to 2018, seven were developing countries in the low income or lower-middle income country group, two were classified as upper-middle income countries (Thailand and Dominica) and one was an advanced economy generating high income (Puerto Rico).

India specific findings:

- In the Climate Risk Index 2020, India is ranked 5th.
- Whereas in 2017 India's rank was 14th.
- India's high rank is due to severe rainfalls, followed by heavy flooding and landslide that killed over 1000 people.
- India has also recorded the highest number of fatalities due to climate change and the second-highest monetary losses from its impact in 2018.

THE SIPRI TOP 100 ARMS PRODUCING AND MILITARY SERVICES COMPANIES, 2018

Question: As per report by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) how much of sale of arms and military services was done by the sector's largest 100 companies?
(a) $420 billion (b) $320 billion (c) $520 billion (d) $620 billion
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 9 December 2019, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) released its report on Global arms industry rankings.
- As per report, Sales of arms and military services by the sector's largest 100 companies (excluding those in China) totaled $420 billion in 2018, marking an increase of 4.6 per cent compared with the previous year.
- The database excludes Chinese companies due to the lack of data to make a reliable estimate.
- Global Arms industry ranking highlights that eighty of the 100 top arms producers in 2018 were based in the USA, Europe and Russia. Of the remaining 20, 6 were based in Japan, 3 in Israel, India and South Korea, respectively, 2 in Turkey and 1 each in Australia, Canada and Singapore.

United States-The Dominator:

- The report figures that total arms sales of US companies in the ranking amounted to $246 billion, equivalent to 59 per cent of all arms sales by the Top 100. This is an increase of 7.2 per cent compared with 2017.
- For the first time since 2002, the top five spots in the ranking are held exclusively by arms companies based in the United States: Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon and General Dynamics.
- Russia appeared second on the list of arms production while the UK was third in the rankings with 8.6 percent and 8.4 percent of shares respectively.

India Specific Findings:

- The combined arms sales of the three Indian arms companies listed in the Top 100 were $5.9 billion in 2018—a decrease of 6.9 per cent on 2017.
- The decline is mainly a result of Indian Ordnance Factory's significant 27 per cent drop in arms sales.
- In the Top-100 arms-producing and military services companies rankings, India's Hindustan Aeronautics was ranked 38th with arms sale of USD 2740 mn in 2018.
- Among other two Indian companies in Top-100, Indian Ordnance Factories is ranked 56th and Bharat Electronics is at 62nd spot.

52

New Prime Minister of Finland

Question: Who has been elected the new Prime Minister of Finland to replace Antti Rinne after losing the confidence of the coalition partner?
(a) Sanna Marin (b) Juha Sipila (c) Petteri Orpo (d) Jussi Halla-aho
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 8th December 2019, Finland's Transport Minister and Social Democratic Party leader Sana Marine was elected next Prime Minister of Finland.
- 34-year-old Sana Marin will be the world's youngest sitting prime minister after she takes office. New Zealand PM Jacinda Ardern is 39, while Ukrainian premier Oleksiy Honcharuk is 35.
- Sanna Marin narrowly won vote to replace outgoing leader Antti Rinne, who quit as PM after losing the confidence of the coalition partner Centre Party over his handling of a postal strike.
- On 3 December 2019 Antti Rinne stepped down after several weeks of political crisis over a plan to cut wages for 700 postal workers.
- Former PM Antti Rinne headed Finland's centre-left five-party coalition since June, and Marin's appointment is unlikely to lead to significant policy changes by the Social Democrat-led administration.

Typhoon hits Philippines

Question: What is the name of the typhoon that hit the country of Philippines recently?
(a) Savi (b) Katrina (c) Kammuri (d) Amman
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- Typhoon Kammuri landed in the Philippines with fierce winds and heavy rain in the country.
- Due to the typhoon, hundreds of thousands took refuge in shelters and the capital Manila prepared to shut down its international airport over safety concerns.
- The powerful storm roared ashore and was due to pass south of Manila – home to some 13 million people.

- Kammuri remained strong, with sustained winds of up to 155 kilometres per hour, and maximum gusts of 235 kmph as it tracked northwest.
- Over 3 lakh people had been evacuated from their homes in the central Bicol region.
- The Philippines is hit by an average of 20 storms and typhoons each year, killing hundreds and putting people in disaster-prone areas in a state of constant poverty.

Links:
http://ddnews.gov.in/international/over-3-lakh-evacuated-typhoon-kammuri-hits-philippines

Economics
RBI to conduct Operation Twist

Question:Recently RBI has announced the Indian version of 'America's Operation Twist' –
(a) to bring down long-term interest rates (b) to reduce NPA
(c) to improve the managerial structure of banks (d) None of these
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 19 December, the Reserve Bank of India decided to conduct its version of 'Operation Twist'.
- It will be done through simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities under Open Market Operations (OMOs) for Rs 10,000 crore each.
- This step will boost the economy by bringing down long-term interest rates making loans less expensive.
- Operation Twist is the name given to a US Federal Reserve monetary policy operation, which involves the purchase and sale of government securities to boost the economy by bringing down long-term interest rates.
- It is the first time the RBI will conduct a special open market operation (OMO) of this kind.
- Bond yields have been rising since the RBI unexpectedly left its key repo rate unchanged earlier this month.

Links:
https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/reserve-bank-of-india-operation-twist-omo-6178883/

RBI Fifth Bi-Monthly Monetary Policy

Question: As per the Reserve Bank of India fifth bi-monthly monetary policy statement for the year 2019-20; what is the current repo rate?
(a) 5.15 percent (b) 5.25 per cent (c) 5.35 percent (d) 5.45 percent
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- According to the policy, released on December 5, 2019, the repo rate was unchanged at 5.15%.
- This is the first stance in the current financial year that a no change approach has been adopted after four successive rate cuts.
- Last time it was cut by 25 basis points to a 9-year low.
- Accordingly, the reverse repo rate stood at 4.9% and the bank rate stood at 5.4%.
- The CPI projection was increased from 4.7% to 5.1%.
- It is to be noted that RBI is currently following target inflation at 4% with a band of ±2 per cent.
- The monetary policy committee said that the global economic activity has subdued since its last meeting.
- Among the other emerging markets, growth of China has decelerated in the Q3 and its exports have declined greatly mainly due to trade tensions with the US.
- The GDP growth of Russia and Brazil in the Q3 has accelerated. It was mainly due to agricultural output and industrial activities.
- Sixth bimonthly policy for financial year 2019-20 will be released on February 6, 2020.

Links:
https://www.rbi.org.in/

India gained profit in US-China Trade War: UNCTAD Report

Question: According to a study by UNCTAD, the US-China trade war has resulted in an increase in Indian exports to the US. What amount of gain has been accrued by India in the first half of 2019?
(a) 400 million dollar (b) 500 million dollar (c) 600 million dollar (d) 755 million dollar
Answer: (d)
Related facts:

- In November 2019, UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), the trade investment unit of the United Nations, published a report related to the US-China trade war.
- Accordingly, Indian export to the US has increased due to the trade diversion effect of US trade war with China.
- As a result, India received profit of $ 755 million in the first half of 2019.
- Indian commodities whose exports to the US have increased due to trade diversion effect mainly include chemicals, metals and ores, electrical machinery, agro-food, furniture, etc.
- At the time of trade war with US, China was about $21billion in the first half of 2019 which indicates its trade loss about 14million dollar.

- The traffic against them made the other investors more competitive in the US market that leads to the trade diversion effect.

Links:

https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/india-gained-755-million-in-additional-exports-to-us-due-to-us-china-trade-war-unctad/articleshow/71934187.cms

Scientific

Defense/Science Short Notes

Launch of largest carrier rocket Long March-5

Question:Which country has launched its largest carrier rocket Long March-5 on December 27 2019?
(a) China (b) Russia (c) Japan (d) USA
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- China successfully launched the largest carrier rocket of the country, Long March-5, from Wenchang Space Launch Center in south China's Hainan Province on December 27 2019.
- The rocket, also known as CZ-5, blasted off with more than 1,000 tonnes of thrust.
- The Chinese space authorities declared the mission a "complete success" just over half an hour after the lift-off when the Shijian-20 satellite it carried entered its designated orbit.
- It is the country's third attempt to launch the rocket.Earlier two attempts made in 2016 & 2017 got failed.
- The successful launch of Long March 5 is a crucial step for its planned Mars mission in 2020 lunar sample-return mission, and modular space station ,all of which require the lifting capabilities of a heavy lift launch vehicle.

Links:
https://www.aninews.in/news/world/asia/china-successfully-launches-countrys-largest-carrier-rocket20191227212942/

World's oldest rhino' dies in Tanzania

Question: What is the name of World's oldest Rhino which died in Tanzania in December 2019?
(a) Fausta (b) Tumolt (c) Iman (d) Puntung
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- Fausta, a female black rhino, who was believed to be the world's oldest rhino has died at the age of 57 in a Tanzanian conservation area.
- Fausta died of natural causes in captivity in Ngorongoro Crater, which lies in Ngorongoro Conservation Area of Tanzania.
- As per Ngorongoro authority, Rhinos' life expectancy is around 40 years in wild but they can live an extra decade in captivity.

About Black rhinoceros:

- They are also called hook-lipped rhinoceros.
- Although the rhinoceros is referred to as black, its colors vary from brown to grey.
- Black rhinos are native to eastern and southern Africa including Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Eswatini, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.
- The species overall is classified as critically endangered (even though the South-western black rhinoceros is classified as vulnerable).
- Western black rhinoceros has been declared extinct by IUCN in 2011.

Links:
https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tanzania-rhino/worlds-oldest-rhino-dies-in-tanzania-at-57-idUSKBN1YX0D1

World record for longest single spaceflight by woman

Question: Who created world record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman?
(a) Christina Koch (b) Peggy Whitson (c) Jessica Meir (d) Anne McClain
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 28 December 2019, NASA Astronaut Christina Koch created a record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman.
- She surpassed the earlier record of 288 days in space as previously established by NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson in 2017.
- When she arrives back on Earth in February 2020, she will have spent more than 300 days in space.
- She is onboard the International Space Station since 14th March 2019.
- The U.S. record for longest spaceflight is 340 days set by Scott Kelly (men) in 2015-2016.
- However, the world record for the single longest mission by any space explorer whether man or woman, is held by cosmonaut Valery Polyakov, who spent 438 consecutive days on board Russia's former space station Mir from January 1994 to March 1995.

Russia inducts first Avangard hypersonic missiles into service

Question: On 27 December 2019,Russia has inducted which hypersonic missiles into service?

(a) Avangard (b) Kinzhal (c) RS-26 Rubezh (d) RS-28 Sarmat

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 27 December 2019,Russia inducted first Avangard hypersonic missiles into service.
- Avangard is also known as Objekt 4202, Yu-71, and Yu-74. It is a Russian hypersonic glide vehicle that can be carried as a MIRV payload by the UR-100UTTKh, R-36M2 and RS-28 Sarmat heavy Inter Continental Ballistic Missiles.
- The Avangard has a range of over 6,000 km, weighs approximately 2,000 kg, and can deliver both nuclear and conventional payloads.
- This intercontinental hypersonic weapon can fly 27 times the speed of sound and is capable of sharp manoeuvres in the atmosphere en route to target making it much harder to intercept.
- The Avangard can carry a nuclear weapon of up to 2 megatons.
- Avangard is designed using new composite materials to withstand temperatures of up to 2,000 Celsius resulting from a flight through the atmosphere at hypersonic speeds.

MIRV:

- A multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV) is a missile payload containing several warheads, each capable of being aimed to hit a different target.

Hypersonic Cruise Missiles:

- HypersonicCruise Missiles travel at a speed of more than 5 Mach.Many countries are working to develop Hypersonic Cruise Missiles.
- BrahMos Aerospace is also in the process of developing a hypersonic cruise missile,**BRAHMOS II**,which wouldfly at a speed greater than 5 Mach.

Links:

http://www.edristi.in/

Successful launch of Brahmos Missile

Question: What kind of missile is the Brahmos which was launched recently in DRDO?
(a) Medium Range Missile (b) Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile
(c) Intercontinental ballistic (d) None of the above
Answer: (b)
Related facts:

- **Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO)**, **Indian Air Force (IAF)** and **BrahMos** jointly successfully conducted **two BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles** tests on **17 December 2019**, one each from **land and air platforms**.
- The first missile launch was from a **land based mobile launcher**, where most of the components were indigenous, including the **missile airframe, fuel management system and DRDO designed seeker.**
- The second launch of the missile was carried out by Indian Air force (IAF) from **SU-30MKI platform** against a sea target.
- The test conducted in user configuration, revalidated the ship attack capability of the **advanced air-launched cruise missile**.
- During the test, the missile was gravity dropped from the air combat platform's fuselage and the **two-stage weapon's engine** fired up and the missile straightaway propelled towards the **intended target** positioned at the sea, piercing it with pin point accuracy.
- Earlier on May 22, 2019, IAF had successfully tested the missile against a land-based target in the **Car Nicobar Islands region**. The **BrahMos Air Launched Cruise Missile (ALCM)** promises to bolster the air combat capability of IAF from stand-off ranges.

Links:

PSLV successfully launches RISAT-2BR1 and nine commercial satellites

Question: From which of the following sites PSLV launched RISAT-2BR1 and nine commercial satellites in the fiftieth flight (50th) on 11 December 2019?
(a) Chandipur (b) Sriharikota (c) Pokharan (d) Bengaluru
Answer: (b)
Related facts:

- **India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, in its fiftieth flight (PSLV-C48)**, successfully launched **RISAT-2BR1** along with **nine commercial**

satellites from **Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota on December 11 2019.**

- **PSLV-C48** lifted-off at 15:25 Hrs (IST) and after 16 minutes and 23 seconds, was successfully injected into an orbit of 576 km.
- Subsequently, nine commercial satellites were **injected into their intended orbits**. After separation, the two solar arrays of RISAT-2BR1 were deployed automatically and the ISRO Telemetry Tracking and Command Network at Bengaluru assumed control of the satellite.
- A book titled **'PSLV@ 50'** was released by Dr. Sivan on this occasion. He further added that this versatile **launcher has lifted off 52.7 tonne into space,** of which 17% belongs to customer satellites.
- RISAT-2BR1 is **radar imaging earth observation satellite** weighing about **628 kg**.
- The satellite will provide **services in the field of Agriculture, Forestry and Disaster Management. The mission life of RISAT-2BR1 is 5 years.**
- The nine customer satellites of **Israel, Italy, Japan and USA** were precisely injected into their designated orbits. These satellites were launched under a **commercial arrangement with NewSpace India Limited (NSIL).**
- PSLV-C48 is the **2nd flight of PSLV in 'QL' configuration** (with 4 solid strap-on motors).
- Besides being the 50th launch of PSLV, today's launch was also the 75th launch vehicle mission from SDSC SHAR, Sriharikota.

Links:

https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1595929

Development of Anti-Diabetes Medicine

Question: Which of the following institute of India has recently developed an Anti Diabetic Medicine?
(a) IIT Kanpur (b) IISc (c) CSIR (d) AIIMS New Delhi
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR),** through its constituent laboratories namely **CSIR-Central Institute of Medicinal & Aromatic Plants (CSIR-CIMAP), Lucknow; and CSIR-National Botanical Research Institute (CSIR-NBRI), Lucknow** developed scientifically validated **herbal product NBRMAP-DB** as **anti-diabetic formulation**.
- Theknowhow for the product was licensed to **M/s AIMIL Pharma Ltd., Delhi** who are **manufacturing and marketing it as BGR-34,** across the country.
- The **Central of Research in Ayurveda Sciences (CCRAS),** and autonomous body under Ministry of AYUSH has been engaged in **extending research oriented Ayurveda** based on integrative health care services for the management sof Madhumeha(Diabetes Mellitus).

- The **diabetic population in the country** is close to hitting the **alarming mark of 69.9 million by 2025,** which denotes that the country is expected to witness an **increase of 266%.**
- **The following are the core activities:**

- CCRAS in collaboration with Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has implemented and executed a programme viz. **Integration of AYUSH (Ayurveda) component with NPCDCS(National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular diseases & Stroke) programme** in the identified districts of 3 states viz. Bhilwara (Rajasthan), Surendranagar (Gujarat) and Gaya (Bihar) to cater health care services and to reduce the burden of NCDs including Diabetes by combining the strength of Ayurveda and Yoga.
- CCRAS had developed the **AYUSH82 formulation for diabetes** through scientific process of drug development and commercialized through **National Research Development Corporation (NRDC)** for wider public utility.

Links:

https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1595264

BASIC Ministerial Joint Statement at UNFCCC COP25

Question: Where did the Conference of Parties under the UN framework convention on Climate Change UNFCCC COP25 take place recently?
(a) London (b) Berlin (c) Madrid (d) Oslo
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- **BASIC countries, a group of four countries namely Brazil, South Africa, India and China participated in the UNFCC COP25 which was organized in Madrid, Spain.**
- **The Ministers of the Brazil, South Africa, India and China group (BASIC) met during the 25th Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP25) in Madrid, Spain, on 10th December 2019.**
- **The meeting was chaired by Zhao Yingmin, Vice Minister of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China, and attended by Ricardo Salles, Minister of the Environment of Brazil, Barbara Creecy, Minister of Environment, Forestry and Fisheries of the Republic of South Africa, and Prakash Javadekar, Minister for Environment of the Republic of India.**
- **The Ministers pledged their full support to the Chilean COP Presidency, expressed their gratitude to the Kingdom of Spain for hosting the meeting and noted that the central mandate of COP25 is to prepare the way for the full implementation of the Paris Agreement in the post-2020 period building upon the climate action efforts under the Convention and its Protocol.**
- **They further stated that the progress on the pre-2020 agenda will be the benchmark of success for this COP. The Paris Agreement, adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, represents a key**

milestone in the progressive development of multilateralism to enable the international community to collectively address climate change, which is of pressing global concern.

Ministers underlined that COP25 should achieve outcomes as follows:

- **To conclude the negotiations related to article 6 of the Paris Agreement.**
- **To mandate a 2-year Work Programme under SBI to assess the pre-2020 progress and gaps, with a view to making the necessary arrangements to fill those gaps.**
- **To urge developed country Parties to fulfill their commitments on providing finance, technology development and transfer and capacitybuilding support to developing countries.**
- **To interpret and implement the provisions of the Paris Agreement in a holistic and faithful manner.**
- **Recalling that the Paris Agreement represents a delicate political balance negotiated amongst 195 Parties with diverse levels of development and distinct national circumstances, the Ministers expressed grave concern regarding the current imbalance in the negotiations.**
- **Commitments made by developed countries in the pre-2020 period must be honoured, because the completion of the pre-2020**
  Agenda is of critical importance in building the basis for mutual trust and ambi tion in the post-2020 period.
- **The pre-2020 gaps with regard to mitigation, adaptation, means   of implementation and reporting by developed countries must be assessed and closed, without transferring any burden to developing countries.**

Links:

https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1596001

Rotavirus vaccine – ROTAVAC-5D

Question: Who launched the new Rotavirus vaccine named ROTAVAC-5D on December 3 2019?
(a) Harsh Vardhan (b) Narendra Modi (c) Venkaiah Naidu (d) Gagan Narang
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu launched the new Rotavirus vaccine – ROTAVAC-5D designed and developed by Bharat Biotech in New Delhi.
- ROTAVAC is said to be an example of a true social innovation that was realized through a partnership between scientists from India and the USA.
- He added that India is committed to the goal of protecting the health of each and every one of its children.
- India is firmly committed to ending morbidity and mortality in children caused due to diarrhoea by 2022.

62

- The first generation, Rotavirus vaccine, ROTAVAC developed under a Public-Private Partnership with the Department of Biotechnology, Govt. of India.
- This has put India on the global map for setting new standards in pharmaceutical Research and Development.

Links:
http://ddnews.gov.in/health/vp-naidu-launches-new-rotavirus-vaccine-rotavac-5d%C2%AE

Exercise Surya Kiran – XIV

Question: India is undertaking the joint military exercise Surya Kiran XIV with which of the following neighbour country?
(a) Myanmar (b) Bangladesh (c) Nepal (d) Mongolia
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- The 14th edition of bilateral annual military exercise SURYA KIRAN-XIV between Indian and Nepal Army commenced on December 3, 2019 at Nepal Army Battle School (NABS), Salijhandi, Rupendehi district of Nepal.
- The 13th edition of the joint military exercise was held at Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand in June 2018.
- The aim of this exercise is to conduct a battalion level combined training between Indian Army and Nepal Army with a scope to enhance interoperability at military level in jungle warfare, counter terrorist operations in mountainous terrain, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief operations, medical and environmental conservation including aviation aspects.
- As part of the exercise, important lectures, demonstrations and drills related to counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations in jungle and mountainous terrain will be conducted.
- Both the Armies will also share their valuable experiences in countering such situations and also refine drills and procedures for joint operations wherever the need arises.

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1594720

Exercise Mitra Shakti -VII: 2019

Question: India is undertaking the joint military exercise Mitra Shakti VII: 2019 with which of the following neighbour country?
(a) Myanmar (b) Bangladesh (c) Sri Lanka (d) Mongolia
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- The seventh edition of Exercise MITRA SHAKTI- 2019 aimed at enhancing interoperability and operational efficiency amongst the armies of both India and Sri Lanka when deployed as part of United Nations peace keeping forces commenced on December 1, 2019 at Aundh Military Station, Pune.

http://www.edristi.in/

- The objective of the exercise is to build and promote positive relations between armies of India and Sri Lanka through focus on sub unit level training on counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations in urban and rural environment under United Nations mandate.
- The joint training exercise also signifies the strength of India-Sri Lanka relations in the field of military cooperation and engagement, which is vital for refining the interoperability and operational preparedness.
- The joint exercise is designed for incorporating the current dynamics of United Nations peace keeping operations through practical and comprehensive discussions and tactical exercises.
- The primary focus of the joint training exercise will remain on field craft, battle drills and procedures as also the ability to operate jointly with seamless interoperability.
- As member nations of the United Nations, the participating contingents will gain immensely through joint operability and enhanced military and diplomatic association.

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1594439

Sports

Chess

FIDE Women's World Rapid Championship, 2019

Question: Who won the FIDE Women's World Rapid Championship,2019?
(a) Koneru Humpy (b) Lei Tingjie (c) Olga Girya (d) Ekaterina Atalik
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- The FIDE Women's World Rapid Championship took place from 26-28 December 2019 in the V Luzhniki Football Stadium in Moscow, Russia.
- Indian grandmaster Koneru Humpy won the title by defeating China's Lei Tingjie.
- Tingjie finished with silver, while Turkey's Ekaterina Atalik won bronze.
- By winning the title she became India's best-ever women's chess player.
- In the Men's category, Norwegian grandmaster Magnus Carlsen won the title.
- A native of Andhra Pradesh,she is India's youngest woman chess grandmaster player.

Badminton

Badminton Asia U-17 and U-15 Junior Championships, 2019

Question: Who won the Under-15 Women's Singles title in Badminton Asia U17 & U-15 Junior Championships, 2019, held between 11-15 December 2019?
(a) Tara Shah (b) Tasnim Mir (c) Lee Man Ki (d) Maya Taguchi
Answer:(b)
Related facts:

- Badminton Asia U-17 and U-15 Junior Championships,2019 was organized in Indonesia on 11-15 December 2019.

Results of Under-15 Women's Singles:

- Winner-Tasnim Mir (India)
- Runner-up-Tara Shah (India)

Links:
https://bwfbadminton.com/results/3792/badminton-asia-u17-u15-junior-championships-2019/draw/ws-u15

Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh Junior International Series 2019

Question: Who has won the Men's Singles title at the Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh Junior International Series, 2019, concluded on December 22, 2019?
(a) Siril Verma (b) Kiran George (c) Rahul Bhardwaj (d) Meiraba Luwang
Answer:(d)
Related facts:

- Badminton tournament Yonex-Sunrise Bangladesh Junior International Series, 2019 was organised in Bangladesh on 17-22 December 2019.

Tournament Results:

Men's Singles

- Winner – Meiraba Luwang (India)
- Runner-up -Ken Yon Ong (Malaysia)

Women's Singles

- Winner-Krittaporn Jiantanet(Thailand)
- Runner-up Treesa Jolly (India)

Links:

SYED MODI INTERNATIONAL BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS 2019

Question: Who has won the men's singles title at Syed Modi International Badminton Championships, 2019, concluded on December 1, 2019?
(a) Wang Tzu Wei (b) Sourabh Verma (c) Shi Yu Qi (d) Ajay Jayaram
Answer:(a)
Related facts:

- Syed Modi International Badminton Championship held from November 26, 2019 to December 1, 2019, at the Babu Banarasi Das Indoor Stadium, Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh).
- Sponsor – EcoGreen

Championships results:

Men's Singles:

- **Winner-**Wang Tzu Wei (Chinese Taipei)
- **Runner-up-**Sourabh Verma (India)

Women's Singles:

- **Winner-**Carolina Marin (Spain)
- **Runner-up-**Phittayaporn Chaiwan (Thailand)

Men's Doubles:

- **Winner-**He Ji Ting & Tan Kiang(both China)
- **Runner-up-**Choi Sol Gyu & Seo Seung Jae (both South Korea)

Women's Doubles:

- **Winner-**Baek Ha Na & Jung Kyug Eun(both South Korea)
- **Runner-up-**Chang Ye Na & Kim Hye Rin(both South Korea)

Mixed Doubles:

- **Winner-**Rodion Alimov & Alina Davletova(both Russia)
- **Runner-up-**Marcus Ellis & Lauren Smith(both England)

http://www.edristi.in/

Links:

Athletics

WADA bans Russia from international sporting events for four years

Question: World Anti-Doping Agency, WADA has banned which country from international sporting events for four years?
(a) Russia (b) Azerbaijan (c) Papua New Guinea (d) None of these
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 9th December 2019, the World Anti-Doping Agency, WADA, banned Russia from global sporting events for four years at its meeting in Lausanne, Switzerland.
- Under the ruling, Russia will not be allowed to participate in international competition, which includes the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics, Youth Olympic Games, Paralympics, FIFA's World Cup, world championships and other major sporting events subject to WADA code.
- WADA spokesman James Fitzgerald stated that the 12-member WADA's executive committee unanimously approved to assert non-compliance on the Russian anti-doping agency for accused state-sponsored system of doping.
- Apart from this, the ruling means Russian athletes will still be allowed to compete at the Tokyo Olympics as neutrals, but only if they can demonstrate that they were not part of what WADA believes was a state-sponsored system of doping.
- Fitzgerald said that participants will have to prove that they were not involved in the doping schemes as described by the McLaren report, or they did not have their samples affected by the manipulation.
- The independent McLaren report released in 2016 revealed the significant extent of state-sponsored doping in Russia, notably between 2011 and 2015.

Links:

http://www.edristi.in/

Short Notes

Personalities

Newly appointed Chief Justice of Pakistan

Question: Who took over as the new Chief Justice of Pakistan?
(a) Saad Saud Jan (b) Nasirul Mulk (c) Gulzar Ahmed (d) None of These
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- On 21 December 2019, Justice Gulzar Ahmed sworn-in as the 27th Chief Justice of Pakistan.
- He will hold the office till February 21, 2022.
- He succeeds Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa, whose tenure came to an end on 20th December.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/justice-gulzar-ahmed-sworn-in-as-27th-pak-chief-justice-119122100233_1.htm

Ex Kolkata Police Chief Rajeev Kumar appointed as Principal Secretary in West Bengal

Question: Who has been appointed as the Principal Secretary in West Bengal on December 26 2019?
(a) Rajeev Kumar (b) Debasish Sen (c) Arun Bhattacharya (d) None of These
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 26 December 20199, former Kolkata Police commissioner Rajeev Kumar was appointed as Principal Secretary in the Information, Technology and Electronics Department.
- He will replace IAS officer Debasish Sen on this post.
- He was holding Additional DG of state CID.

Why in news?

- The appointment attracts significance as the IPS officer has been involved in a legal tussle with the Central Bureau of Investigation since February this year when Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee held a dharna when the agency tried to question Mr. Kumar in connection with the Saradha scam.
- The main allegation against Rajeev Kumar is that he suppressed and destroyed key evidence in the investigation of the Saradha scam while heading the Special Investigating Team (SIT) set up by the State government to probe the crime.

- The Saradha group of companies has allegedly duped lakhs of people to the tune of 2,500 crore rupees promising higher rates of returns on their investments. The Saradha scam surfaced in 2013.

Links:

https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/kolkata/west-bengal-govt-appoints-ips-officer-rajeev-kumar-as-it-secretary/article30409762.ece

New President of FICCI

Question: Who took over as the President of FICCI on December 23 2019?
(a) Sangita Reddy (b) Sandip Somany (c) Uday Shankar (d) Sanjiv Mehta
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 23 December 2019, Dr Sangita Reddy, Joint Managing Director, Apollo Hospitals Group, took over as the President of FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry).
- She will be FICCI President for 2019-20.
- She succeeds Sandip Somany, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, HSIL.
- Established in 1927, FICCI is the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India.
- It is involved in sector-specific business building, business promotion and networking.It is non-government, not-for-profit organization.

Links:

http://www.ficci.in/pressrelease-page.asp?nid=3589

Country's next army chief

Question: On December 17, 2019, who was appointed as the next Army Chief of the country by Central Government?
(a) Lieutenant General Prakash Pant
(b) Lieutenant General Manoj Mukund Naravane
(c) Lieutenant General R.C. Dutt (d) Lieutenant General Jasbir Singh
Answer-:(b)
Related facts:

- On December 17, 2019, the Central Government appointed Lt.General Manoj Mukund Naravane as the next Chief of Army Staff (COAS).
- Naravane is currently serving as Vice Chief of the Army.
- He will take over as the 28th COAS from incumbent Gen Bipin Rawat whose term ends on December 31.

- He will be the third Army Chief from the Sikh Light regiment after Gen VP Malik and Gen Bikram Singh.

Links:
https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/lt-gen-manoj-mukund-naravane-to-be-next-army-chief/article30322649.ece

Ankur Garg

Question: Ankur Garg was appointed the Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) of which major airline company on December 15, 2019?
(a) Air India (b) Vistara (c) Indigo (d) AirAsia India
Answer: (d)
Related facts:

- Ankur Garg was appointed the Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) of AirAsia India on December 15,2019.
- Before this appointment, Garg worked as the vice-president of revenue management at IndiGO.
- Ankur Garg will replace Mr. Sanjay Kumar, AirAsia India's Chief Operation Officer (COO).
- He will be in charge of areas such as marketing and sales, network and revenue management, and cargo.
- He will be reporting to Sunil Bhaskaran, MD, and CEO, AirAsia India.
- AirAsia India is an Indian low cost carrier headquartered in Bangalore, India. The airline is a joint venture with Tata Sons holding 51% stake in the airline and AirAsia Berhad holding 49% stake.
- AirAsia India began its operations in June 2014. It is the fourth largest low-cost carrier in India.

Links:
https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/ankur-garg-appointed-as-chief-commercial-officer-at-airasia-india/article30311221.ece

Shriram Lagoo passes away

Question: Eminent personality Shriram Lagoo passed away recently. He was a famous

(a) Actor (b) Writer (c) Footballer (d) Politician

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Veteran actor Shriram Lagoo passed away in Pune on December 17 2019.

- The 92-year old actor died due to age-related ailments. Lagoo played important role in the growth of theatre movement in Maharashtra in the post-Independence era.

- His roles in Marathi plays such as "Natsamrat" and "Himalayachi Saoli", and films such as "Pinjra" made him popular.

- In Hindi, he essayed memorable roles in films such as "Ek Din Achanak", "Gharonda" and "Lawaris", to name a few.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over the demise of veteran actor Shreeram Lagoo, saying he personified versatility and brilliance.

Links:
http://ddnews.gov.in/node/39579

Sridhar Patra appointed CMD of NALCO

Question: Who is appointed as CMD of NALCO?

(a) Sridhar Patra (b) Sambit Patra (c) Rekha Sharma (d) Manish Joshi

Answer :(a)

Related facts:

- The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appointed Sridhar Patra as the new chairman-cum-managing director (CMD) of National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO).

- He has been appointed as CMD of NALCO till the date of his superannuation, i.e. on 31 October 2024 until further orders, whichever is earlier.

- At present he is the Director (Finance) in NALCO.

- NALCO was established on 7 January, 1981, with its registered office at Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

- National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) is a Navratna CPSE under Ministry of Mines.

- It is one of the largest integrated Bauxite-Alumina-Aluminium- Power Complex in India.

Links:
https://nalcoindia.com/company/nalco-leadership/board-of-directors/

http://www.edristi.in/

Ursula von der Leyen

Question: On December 1st, 2019, Ursula von der Leyen took charge as the President of-
(a) World Bank (b) IMF (c) FATF (d) European Commission
Answer: (d)
Related facts:

- On 1st December 2019, Ursula von der Leyen took charge as the President of the European Commission.
- She is the first woman to become the President of the European Commission.
- She replaced Jean-Claude Juncke.
- Gynecologist by profession Ursula (aged 60) started her political career at her early age of 40.
- In 1990 she joined Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union party (CDU) and worked for 14 years.
- Leyen moved to the Labor Ministry in 2009. She became the first female defense minister in 2014.

Links:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/news/new-european-commissioner-energy-takes-office-2019-dec-02_en

First woman pilot of Indian Navy

Question: Who became the first woman pilot of Indian Navy on December 2, 2019?
(a) Sub Lieutenant Shivanshi (b) Sub Lieutenant Anushree Dutta
(c) Sub Lieutenant Shivangi Swaroop (d) Sub Lieutenant
Avni Chaturvedi
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- On 2 December 2019, Sub Lieutenant Shivangi Swaroop became the first woman pilot of the Indian Navy.
- She joined operational duties in Kochi naval base.
- Shivangi will be flying the Dornier surveillance aircraft of the Indian Navy.
- A native of Muzaffarpur, Bihar, Shivangi was inducted into the Indian Navy under the Short Service Commission Pilot entry scheme.

Links:

https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/sub-lieutenant-shivangi-first-woman-pilot-indian-navy-1624385-2019-12-02

Awards & Honors
Dadasaheb Phalke Award

Question: Who has been awarded Dadasaheb Phalke Award for the year 2018?
(a) Amitabh Bacchan (b) Gulzar (c) Salim Khan (d) Dilip Kumar
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 29 December 2019, Veteran actor Amitabh Bachchan was presented the 2018 Dadasaheb Phalkaward by President Ram Nath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhawan.
- He has been felicitated for his outstanding contribution to Indian cinema.
- Amitabh Bachchan won four National Film Awards for Best Actor through his illustrious career, last winning it for his performance in the 2015 film Piku.

Dadasaheb Phalke Award:

- The award is named after Dhundiraj Govind Phalke,revered as the father of Indian cinema.
- Instituted in 1969,the award is considered as the highest honour for an artiste in Indian cinema.
- The award comprises a Swarna Kamal medallion, a shawl, and a cash prize of 10 lakh rupees.
- It was conferred upon late actor Vinod Khanna in 2017.

Links:
http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Amitabh-Bachchan-honoured-with-Dadasaheb-Phalke-Award&id=376791

UNICEF's Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award

Question: Who has been conferred the Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award by UNICEF on December 3, 2019?
(a) Priyanka Chopra (b) Aamir Khan (c) Akshay Kumar (d) Neeta Ambani
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 3 December 2019, famous Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra was awarded the Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award -2019 by UNICEF.
- She received the award at the 15th Annual Snowflake Ball in New York City.
- The award was announced in June 2019 and Priyanka was nominated for the award by the United Nations Children's Fund.
- She was given this award for her work in the field of environment, health and education.

- Priyanka Chopra has been associated with UNICEF for the past 15 years as a Goodwill Ambassador.
- The award is named after American actor and social worker Danny Kaye. He was UNICEF's first Goodwill Ambassador in 1954.

Links:
https://www.indiatoday.in/movies/celebrities/story/priyanka-chopra-receives-danny-kaye-humanitarian-award-nick-jonas-is-inspired-1625313-2019-12-05

Miss Universe 2019

Question: Who has been crowned Miss Universe for the year 2019?
(a) Zozibini Tunzi (b) Madison Anderson (c) Ashley Alvidrez (d) None of these
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 8th December 2019, South Africa's Zozibini Tunzi has been crowned Miss Universe for the year 2019, beating more than 90 contestants.
- The 26-year-old Tunzi was declared the winner at a televised event at Atlanta in United States.This is the third Miss Universe crown for South Africa.
- Miss Puerto Rico Madison Anderson was named the first runner-up, followed by Mexican contestant Ashley Alvidrez as the second runner-up.
- Indian contestant Vartika Singh crashed out of the world's biggest beauty pageant after securing a place in the top 20.

Links:

http://newsonair.com/News?title=South-Africa%26%2339%3bs–Zozibini-Tunzi-crowned-Miss-Universe-2019&id=375833

Planning & Project

Kerala sets 2024 deadline for semi high-speed rail project

Question: Kerala semi-high speed rail project named as silver line extends between
(a) Thiruvananthapuram–Kasargod (b) Kottayam–Kannur
(c) Tirur–Kollam (d) Ernakulum–Kasargod
Answer:(a)
Related facts:

- The Thiruvananthapuram–Kasargod Semi High Speed Rail Corridor (SHSR) that would connect Thiruvananthapuram with Kasaragod in Kerala is expected to be completed by 2024.
- Recently,the Central Government has given its approval of Rs 56,443 crore for 532 km Thiruvananthapuram – Kasaragod, Kerala semi-high speed rail (SHSR) corridor project, named "Silver Line".

74

- This high speed corridor project will be implemented by Kerala Rail Development Corporation (KRDCL), a joint venture between the Government of Kerala and the Ministry of Railways.
- After the construction of this corridor, the travel time between Thiruvananthapuram and Kasaragod will be reduced from 12 hours to 4 hours.
- This corridor will pass through 11 districts in 14 of Kerala barring Pathanamthitta, Idukki, Palakkad and Wayanad. Trains on track will run at 200 km per hour.

Links:

https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/thiruvananthapuram/state-sets-2024-deadline-for-semi-high-speed-rail-project/articleshow/72876382.cms

ADB, India signs $490 million loan

Question: The loan of $490 million signed between ADB and India is to upgrade the roads in which of the following states?
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Punjab
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- On 20 December 2019,**Asian Development Bank (ADB)** and the **Government of India** signed a **$490 million loan** for **public-private partnership (PPP) project** to upgrade about 1,600 km of state highways and major district roads (MDRs) from single-lane to two-lane widths in the **state of Madhya Pradesh**.
- An additional **$286 million investment** will be mobilised through **private sector participation under the PPP modality.**
- The state highways and major district roads provide a **crucial link** between rural roads and national highways. The upgradation of these roads under the project will **improve rural and peri-urban connectivity** in the state and improve access to markets and better services.
- The project will **upgrade 750 km of state highways and 850 km of MDRs** to two-lane and all-weather standards with road safety features. It will also **develop an e-maintenance system**, which can record defects or required maintenance, along with a training program to develop capacity on contract implementation and project finance in the Madhya Pradesh Road Development Corporation.
- Since 2002, ADB has provided the state government with five loans to develop its road network, **improving about 7,300 km of roads** or about 11% of the total network.

Links:

https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1597022

Mission Indradhanush 2.0

Question: Mission Indradhanush is the launched by the government to immunize children under the age of?
(a) 1 year (b) 3 years (c) 2 years (d) 7 years
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- Mission Indradhanush 2.0, the second session of the ambitious immunization programme of the government started from December 2 2019.
- The government's flagship scheme is aimed at immunizing children under the age of 2 years and pregnant women.

Major highlights of the Mission Indradhanush 2.0:

- The Intensified Mission Indradhanush 2.0 has been launched to focus on 272 districts of 27 states and 652 blocks of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar among hard-to-reach and tribal populations.
- The program aims to escalate efforts to achieve the goal of attaining 90% national immunization coverage across India.
- The Intensified Mission Indradhanush immunization drive will consist of four rounds of immunization. The program will be completed by March 2020.
- The salient features of IMI 2.0 are immunization activity will be in four rounds over seven working days
- There will be enhanced immunization session with flexible timing, mobile session & mobilization by other departments
- Enhanced focus on left outs, dropouts, and resistant families & hard to reach areas.
- Focus on urban, underserved population and tribal areas.

Links:
http://ddnews.gov.in/health/governments-flagship-scheme-mission-indradhanush-20-begins

Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned projects covering all the North Eastern States for Rs.1456 crore

Question: A total of how many projects have been sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism for the North Eastern states worth Rs. 1456 crore?
(a) 10 (b) 12 (c) 14 (d) 18
Answer: (d)
Related facts:

- The Ministry of Tourism is focusing on development and promotion of tourism in the North Eastern Region.
- For development Ministry under the Swadesh Drashan and PRASHAD Schemes has sanctioned 18 projects covering all the North Eastern States for Rs.1456 crore.

- The Ministry of Tourism undertakes various activities for the promotion of North Eastern region of the country as a tourist destination.

These activities include:

- Release of television campaigns on Doordarshan and private channels in the country.
- Production of publicity material, creatives and television commercials/promotional films on the region.
- The North East region is the theme of the India Pavilion set up by the Ministry at the South Asia Travel and Tourism Exchange (SATTE) in which the Ministry participates annually.
- Complimentary space is provided to the North Eastern States for their participation in the India Pavilion set up by the Ministry at major international travel fairs and exhibitions.
- The Ministry organizes an annual International Tourism Mart in the North Eastern region with the objective of highlighting the tourism potential of the region.
- The projects under the Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD schemes are identified for development in consultation with the State Governments / Union Territory Administrations and are sanctioned subject to availability of funds, submission of suitable detailed project reports, adherence to scheme guidelines and utilization of funds released earlier.
- Ministry has also identified Kaziranga as one of the 17 sites for development in the country under the Development of Iconic Tourist site scheme.

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1594756

Law & Justice

The Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill, 2019

Question: Recently the Dadra and Nagar Haveli have been merged with which union territory?
(a) Andaman and Nicobar Islands (b) Daman and Diu (c) Lakshadweep
(d) Puducherry
Answer: (b)
Related facts:

- On 3rd December 2019, the Parliament passed a bill to merge two Union territories **Daman and Diu**, and **Dadra and Nagar Haveli** into one unit.
- The Rajya Sabha passed the Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill, 2019 on 3rd December 2019 through voice vote.
- Lok Sabha has already passed this bill on November 27, 2019.

- This bill was introduced by the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Amit Shah in Lok Sabha on 26th November 2019.
- The merged Union Territory will be named **Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu**.

Background:

- Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu have administered as a union territory of India by virtue of Article 240 (2) of the Constitution of India.
- Article 240(1) of the Constitution permits the President to make regulations for certain UTs, including the UTs of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu.
- The President of India appoints an administrator to administer the territory on behalf of the central Government of India.
- Prior to incorporation in independent India these UTs were part of Portuguese colony.

Links:

https://pib.nic.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1594745

Year, Day & Week
National Mathematics Day

**Question :When is the National Mathematics Day?**
(a) 20 December (b) 22 December (c) 24 December (d) 18 December
Answer:(b)
Related facts:

- National Mathmatics Day was celebrated across the country on 22 December 2019.
- This day marks the birth anniversary famous mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan.
- The main objective behind celebrating the day is to raise awareness among people about the importance of mathematics for the development of humanity.
- Ramanujan was born on December 22, 1887, into a Tamil brahmin Iyenger family in Erode, Madras Presidency.
- The former Prime Minister of India, Manmohan Singh declared this day as National Mathematics Day on February 26, 2012 on his 125th birth anniversary.
- The amazing discoveries he made in mathematics became the cornerstone of today's modern mathematics and science.
- His work in the number theory is especially regarded, and he made advances in the partition function.
- Ramanujan was recognised for his mastery of continued fractions, and had worked out the Riemann series, elliptic integrals, hypergeometric series, and the functional equations of the zeta function.
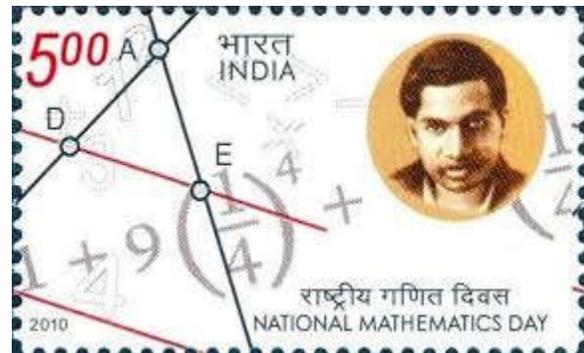
International Human Solidarity Day

Question:When is the International Human Solidarity Day celebrated?
(a) 20 December (b) 22 December (c) 24 December (d) 28 December
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- International Human Solidarity Day is observed on December 20 every year.
- The Day aims to raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity. It encourages debate on the ways to promote solidarity for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) including poverty eradication.
- On 22 December 2005, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) identified solidarity as one of the fundamental and universal values and designated 20 December of each year as International Human Solidarity Day.
- On 20 December 2002, the UNGA established the World Solidarity Fund. It was set up in February 2003 as a trust fund of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- The fund aimed to eradicate poverty and promote human and social development in developing countries.

National Consumer Day

Question: When is the National Consumer Day observed?
(a) 24 December (b) 22 December (c) 21 December (d) 25 December
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- National Consumer Day was observed on December 24, 2019.
- Objective of the day is to make every consumer more aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- The theme this year is "Timely Disposal of Consumer Complaints".
- On this day the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 was enacted which aims to provide consumers with effective safeguards against different types of exploitation, such as defective goods, deficiency in services and unfair trade practices.

Consumer Protection Act, 1986:

- As per this act, the rights were allowed from the rights enshrined in between Articles 14 to 19 of the Constitution of India.
- The RTI was opened up to the Governance sector to ensure consumer protection.
- The rights covered under this act were – Right to Safety, Right to be Informed, Right to Choose, Right to be heard, Right to seek Redressal, Right to Consumer Education.

Consumer Protection Act, 2019:

- The Lok Sabha passed the Consumer Protection Bill, 2018 on the 20th December 2019. The Bill seeks to replace the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.
- Intention of the Act is to protect, promote and enforce the rights of consumers by establishing an authority named as "Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)".
- The agency can initiate class action, including enforcing recall, refund and return of products.
- The Act also seeks to establish Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions at District, State and National level.

Links:

http://newsonair.nic.in/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=357077

Human Rights Day

Question: When is the Human Rights Day celebrated?
(a) 10 December (b) 9 December (c) 8 December (d) 12 December
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- Human Rights Day is celebrated on 10th December every year to commemorate the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which was adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948.
- UDHR is a milestone document proclaiming the inalienable rights which everyone is inherently entitled to as a human being regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
- 2019 theme for the day is **'Youth Standing Up for Human Rights'.**
- The formal inception of Human Rights Day dates from 1950, after the Assembly passed resolution.

India's concern:

- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India has organized a function in New Delhi on 10th December, 2019 to celebrate Human Rights Day.

- The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of India is a Statutory public body constituted on 12 October 1993 for the promotion and protection of human rights.
- The statute under which it is established is the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993 as amended by the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2006.
- Section 2(1)(d) of the PHRA defines Human Rights as the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India.

Links:

https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day

World Soil Day

Question: Recently World Soil Day observed on which day?
(a) 4 December 2019 (b) 5 December 2019 (c) 6 December 2019 (d) 1 December 2019
Answer: (b)
Related facts:

- **World Soil Day** is observed on 5 December every year.
- World Soil Day highlights the problem due to population expansion and it raises the profile of healthy soil.
- The day encourages governments, organizations, communities, and individuals to work towards improving soil health and its conservation.
- The day aims to encourage people around the world to engage proactively to improve the health of the soil.
- The day aims to create awareness about the importance of soil on Earth.
- **The theme** for the 2019 World Soil day is: **Stop Soil Erosion, Save our Future.**
- It aims at raising the awareness on the importance of sustaining healthy ecosystems human well-being.
- In December 2013, UN General Assembly at the 68th session declared December 5 as World Soil Day.

Links:

https://www.greeningtheblue.org/event/world-soil-day

World Computer Literacy Day

Question:When is World Computer Literacy Day celebrated?
(a) 1 December (b) 2 December (c) 4 December (d) 30 November
Answer :(b)
Related facts:

- World Computer Literacy Day was observed on 2 December 2019 across the world.
- The purpose of this day is to promote the awareness about computer so that people of any age can understand the importance nf computer and its related technology.

- It was originally launched by NIIT (National Institute of Information Technology), an Indian skills and talent development company, in 2001.

Links:

https://anydayguide.com/calendar/3690

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

Question: When is International Day of Persons with Disabilities celebrated?
(a) 2 December (b) 3 December (c) 1 December (d) 28 November
Answer: (b)
Related facts:

- International Day of Persons with Disabilities was celebrated on 3 December 2019 across the world.
- 2019 theme for the day is "Promoting the Participation of Persons with disabilities and their leadership: taking action on the 2030 Development Agenda".
- The purpose of this day is to understand the problems of differently abled persons and work for their rights to empower them.
- The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons was proclaimed in 1992 by United Nations General Assembly.
- On this occasion, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu presented the 'National Award for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, 2019' to the PwDs (Persons with Disabilities) at a function held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

Links:

https://www.un.org/en/observances/day-of-persons-with-disabilities

World AIDS Day

Question: When is the World AIDS Day observed every year?
(a) 1 December (b) 30 November (c) 2 December (d) 29 November
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- World AIDS day was observed across the globe on December 1, 2019.
- This year the theme for the World Aids Day 2019 is "Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic: Community by Community".
- World AIDS Day is held on the 1st December each year and is an opportunity for people worldwide to unite in the fight against HIV, show their support for people living with HIV and to commemorate people who have died.
- World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day, held for the first time in 1988.

- Of the 37.9 million people living with HIV at the end of 2018, 79% received testing, 62% received treatment, and 53% had achieved suppression of the HIV virus with reduced risk of infecting others.
- There are 17,00,000 newly infected HIV patients in 2018 and 7,70,000 people died in the HIV related deaths.
- Thousands of community health workers and members of the HIV and key population networks – many of whom are living with HIV or affected by the epidemic – contributed to this success.

Links:
http://ddnews.gov.in/health/world-aids-day-observed-across-globe

Books
Book:Politics of Opportunism

Question: Who is the author of the book Politics of Opportunism?
(a) R P N Singh (b) Manish Rao (c) Anish Singh (d) None of These
Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- On 27 December 2019, noted Economist and Political Analyst S Gurumurthy released a book titled Politics of Opportunism at a function in New Delhi.
- The book was written by R P N Singh which throws light on the subject related to rise of regional parties and Centre -States relation.
- The presents a crisp overview of the past and a critical look at Indias political present, and charts the path of instability that has finally led to a firming up of Indias democratic process.
- RNP Singh is a former officer of the Intelligence Bureau, Government of India. He has also earned the coveted Presidents Police Medal, Indian Police Medal, the Sukriti and Kautilya awards for his distinguished services.

Links:

http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=376735
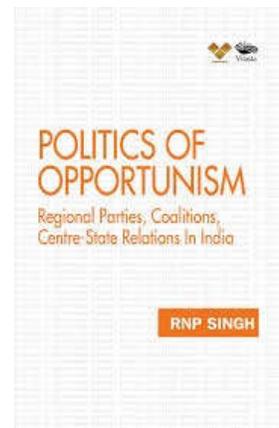
Miscellaneous
Glory Run Marathon

Question: The Ultra Marathon-Glory Run was conducted between which two cities which completed on November 6 2019?
(a) Kargil to New Delhi (b) Kargil to shimla (c) Kargil to Kohima (d) None of the above
Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria, Chief of the Air Staff Indian Air Force felicitated a team of 25 Air Warriors at Air Force Station, New Delhi on 16 December 2019 for a unique achievement – a running expedition from Kargil to Kohima- aptly named as K2K Ultra Marathon-Glory Run.
- The event commemorating the 20th year of Kargil Victory was flagged off from the Kargil War Memorial at Drass on 21 September 2019.
- The Air Warriors undertook the challenging task of carrying the 'Glory Torch' through 4500 kms, averaging 100 kms on the road per day for 45 days, passing through mountains and plains, traversing densely populated cities and wilderness enroute, culminating on 06 November 2019 at Kohima, Nagaland.
- The expedition also saw the Air Warriors break the mental barriers of Age and Gender, and spread awareness on Pedestrian safety and Fit India Movement.
- The ceremonial Flagging In of the Glory Run Warriors at Air Force Station New Delhi by the CAS IAF on Vijay Diwas reinforces the commitment of the Men and women in Blue towards remembering our martyrs and lives up to the true tradition and motto of the IAF – Touch the Sky with Glory!

Links:
https://pib.gov.in/PressReleseDetail.aspx?PRID=1596683