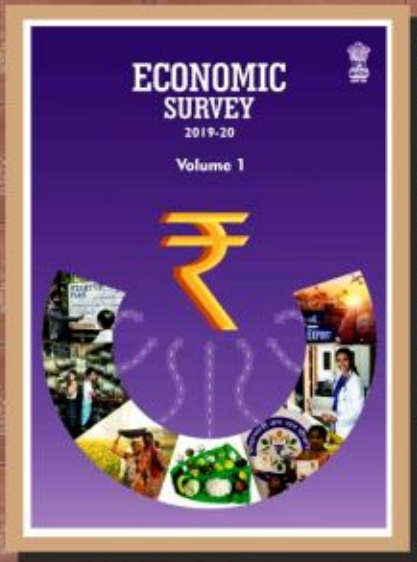


Website-  edristi.in



NAVATRA

Monthly Magazine on Current Events

Vol. - 3 >>> Issue - 8 >>> February, 2020

Union Budget 2020-21



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 Jan to 31th Jan) 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.

National

Union Budget 2020-21

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Ease of Living is the central theme of the Budget 2020-21.

(2) According to Budget 2020-21 India is now the fifth largest economy of the world.

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer:(c)

Related facts:

- The Union Minister of Finance has presented the Budget 2020-21. The Budget, with the central theme of ease of living for all citizens, is based on three prominent themes:
- Aspirational India – better standards of living with access to health, education and better jobs for all sections of the society
- Economic Development for all – “Sabka Saath , Sabka Vikas , Sabka Vishwas”.
- Caring Society – both humane and compassionate; Antyodaya as an article of faith.



Achievements of Indian Economy:

- India is now the fifth largest economy of the world.
- 4% average growth clocked during 2014-19 with inflation averaging around 4.5%.
- 271 million people raised out of poverty during 2006-16.
- India's Foreign Direct Investment elevated to US\$ 284 billion during 2014-19 from US\$ 190 bn during 2009-14.
- Central Government debt reduced to 48.7% of GDP (March 2019) from 52.2% (March 2014).
- **Two cross-cutting developments:**
- Proliferation of technologies (Analytics, Machine Learning, robotics, Bioinformatics and Artificial Intelligence).
- Highest ever number of people in the productive age group (15-65 years) in India.
- GST removed many bottlenecks in the system.

Aim of the union budget:

- To achieve seamless delivery of services through Digital governance.
- To improve physical quality of life through National Infrastructure Pipeline.
- Risk mitigation through Disaster Resilience.
- Social security through Pension and Insurance penetration.

Agriculture, Irrigation and Rural Development

- The govt has announced 16 point agenda for all round development of rural India.
- To achieve this, Rs. 2.83 lakh crore to be allocated for the following 16 Action Points:
- Rs. 1.60 lakh crore for Agriculture, Irrigation & allied activities.

- Rs. 1.23 lakh crore for Rural development & Panchayati Raj.
- Major action plans for sustainable development of rural India are:
- Mobilizing Agriculture credit of Rs. 15 lakh crore target set for the year 2020-21.
- Comprehensive measures for 100 water-stressed districts proposed.
- Under Blue Economy Fisheries exports worth Rs. 1 lakh Cr is set by 2024-25.
- 200 lakh tonnes of fish production by 2022-23.
- 3477 Sagar Mithras and 500 Fish Farmer Producer Organisation.
- Kisan Rail to be setup by Indian Railways through PPP. This will build a seamless national cold supply chain for perishables (milk, meat, fish, etc. Also Express and Freight trains are proposed to have refrigerated coaches.
- Krishi Udaan was proposed to be launched by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. Under this both international and national routes to be covered. North-East and tribal districts will be focused to realize Improved value of agri-products.

One-Product One-District:

- Will help in better marketing and export in the Horticulture sector.
- Balanced use of all kinds of fertilizers – traditional organic and innovative fertilizers

Measures for organic, natural, and integrated farming:

- Organic products market to be strengthened through Jaivik Kheti Portal. ▪ Zero-Budget Natural Farming to be included.
- Integrated Farming Systems in rain-fed areas to be expanded.
- Multi-tier cropping, bee-keeping, solar pumps, solar energy production in noncropping season to be added.

Expansion of PM-KUSUM:

- 20 lakh farmers to be provided for setting up stand-alone solar pumps.
- Another 15 lakh farmers to be helped to solarise their grid-connected pump sets.
- Scheme to enable farmers to set up solar power generation capacity on their fallow/barren lands and to sell it to the grid.

Village Storage Scheme:

- Will be run by the SHGs to provide farmers a good holding capacity and reduce their logistics cost.
- NABARD to map and geo-tag agri-warehouses, cold storages, reefer van facilities, etc.
- Viability Gap Funding for setting up such efficient warehouses at the block/taluk level.
- Food Corporation of India (FCI) and Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC) to undertake such warehouse building.
- Financing on Negotiable Warehousing Receipts (e-NWR) to be integrated with e-NAM.
- State governments who undertake implementation of model laws (issued by the Central government) to be encouraged.
- Model Agricultural Land Leasing Act, 2016.

- Model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2017.
- Model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion and Facilitation) Act, 2018.
- Livestock – Doubling of milk processing capacity to 108 MMT from 53.5 MMT by 2025.

Wellness, Water and Sanitation: PM Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY)

- Viability Gap Funding window proposed for setting up hospitals in the PPP mode.
- Aspirational Districts with no Ayushman empanelled hospitals to be covered in the first phase.
- TB Harega Desh Jeetega campaign launched to eliminate tuberculosis by 2025.
- Under Jal Jeevan Mission Rs. 11,500 Cr allocated for the year 2020-21.
- Under this augmenting local water sources, recharging existing sources and promoting water harvesting and desalination will be undertaken.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan:

- Allocation of Rs. 12,300 Cr.
- ODF-Plus in order to sustain ODF behavior.

Education and Skills:

- New Education Policy will be announced soon.
- National Police University and National Forensic Science University has been proposed for policing science, forensic science and cyber-forensics.
- Degree level full-fledged online education program would be provided by top 100 institutions in the National Institutional Ranking Framework.
- 1 – year internship to fresh engineers to be provided by Urban Local Bodies.
- Medical college to be attached to an existing district hospital in PPP mode.
- External Commercial Borrowings and FDI to be enabled in education sector.

Economic development:

- Investment Clearance Cell has been proposed
- To provide “end to end” facilitation and support.
- To work through a portal. o Five new smart cities proposed to be developed

National Technical Textiles Mission:

- Implementation period from 2020-21 to 2023-24.
- The aim is to position India as a global leader in Technical Textiles.

NIRVIK scheme:

- The objective is to achieve higher export credit disbursement.

- Turnover of Government e-Marketplace (GeM) proposed to be taken to Rs 3 lakh crore.
- Scheme for Revision of duties and taxes on exported products to be launched.

Infrastructure:

- Rs. 100 lakh Cr to be invested in the next five years.
- National Infrastructure Pipeline has been launched in December 2019. This had over 6500 projects worth over Rs.102 lakh Cr.
- National Logistics Policy to be released soon. This will
- Clarify roles of the Union Government, State Governments and key regulators.▪ A single window e-logistics market to be created.
- The focus will be on generation of employment, skills and making MSMEs competitive.
- Accelerated development of highways will be undertaken.

Railways:

- Large solar power capacity to be set up along the rail tracks, on land owned by railways.
- Four station redevelopment projects and operation of 150 passenger trains through PPP.
- More Tejas type trains to connect iconic tourist destinations.
- High speed train between Mumbai and Ahmedabad to be actively pursued.
- 48 km long Bengaluru Suburban transport project will be developed at a cost of Rs.18600 Cr.
- Centre to provide 20% of equity and facilitate external assistance up to 60% of the project cost.

Ports, waterways and airports:

- One major port to be corporatized and it would be listed on the stock market.
- Economic activity along river banks will be energized based on the Arth Ganga concept of PM.
- 100 more airports to be developed by 2024 to support Udaan scheme.
- Smart metering will be undertaken and more reforms to be taken to address the distress in discoms.
- To take advantage of new technology
- Policy to enable the private sector to build Data Centre parks throughout the country to be brought out soon.
- Fiber to the Home (FTTH) connections through BharatNet to link 100000 gram panchayats this year.
- The govt has proposed Rs.8000 Cr over the next five years for National Mission on Quantum Technologies and Applications.

To benefit startups:

- A digital platform will be promoted to facilitate seamless application and capture of IPRs.

- Facilities for designing, fabrication and validation of proof of concept and further scaling up Technology Clusters, harbouring test beds and small scale manufacturing will be established.
- Mapping of India's genetic landscape- Two new national level Science Schemes.
- to be initiated to create a comprehensive database.
- Early life funding proposed, including a seed fund to support ideation and development of early stage Start-ups.

Caring for society:

- The govt has proposed to appoint a task force to study about the age of girls entering motherhood. The task force to submit recommendations in six months.
- Allocation of Rs.28600 Cr proposed for women specific programs.
- Indian Institute of Heritage and Conservation has been proposed under the Ministry of Culture. This will be given a status of deemed university.
- 5 sites will be developed as iconic sites with on-site museums
- Rakhigarhi (Haryana)
- Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh)
- Shivsagar (Assam)
- Dholavira (Gujarat)
- Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu)
- Maritime museum to be set up at Lothal- the Harappan age maritime site near Ahmedabad, by Ministry of Shipping.

Environment and Climate change:

- Has proposed to advise the utilities to close the old thermal power plants with carbon emissions above the set norms.
- Would encourage the states which are formulating and implementing the plans for cleaner air in cities.

Governance:

- Taxpayer charter to be incorporated into the statute. This is expected to bring in efficiency and fairness in tax administration.
- Companies act to be amended to make convert certain offences from criminal to civil offences.
- A National Recruitment Agency (NRA) to be established. This is to conduct recruitment for nongazetted posts.

Financial Sector:

- So far, govt has announced merge of 10 PSBs into 4 and has infused a capital of Rs.350000 Cr.
- More governance reforms would be carried out to bring in transparency and greater professionalism.
- In order to raise capital, certain banks would be asked to go to the capital market.
- The DICGC (Deposit Insurance Credit Guarantee Corporation) has been asked to raise the deposit insurance from the current level of Rs.1 lakh to Rs.5 lakh per

depositor co-operative banks would be strengthened by amending Banking Regulation Act by enabling oversight and governance powers given to RBI, enabling access to capital etc.

- Pension Fund Regulatory Development Authority of India Act to be amended to
- Strengthen regulating role of PFRDA
- Facilitate separation of NPS trust for government employees from PFRDA
- Enable establishment of a Pension Trust by the employees other than Government o Window for MSME's debt restructuring by RBI to be extended by one year till March 31, 2021
- New scheme to provide subordinate debt for entrepreneurs of MSMEs by the banks:
- Would be counted as quasi-equity
- Would be fully guaranteed through the Credit Guarantee Trust for Medium and Small Entrepreneurs (CGTMSE)
- The corpus of the CGTMSE would accordingly be augmented by the government
- Factor Regulation Act 2011 to be amended to enable NBFCs to extend invoice financing to the MSMEs through TReDS

Export promotion of MSMEs:

- For selected sectors such as pharmaceuticals, auto components and others.

Financial Market:

To deepen the bond market

- Certain specified categories of Government securities would be opened fully for non – resident investors.
- FPI limit in corporate bonds increased to 15% from 9% of its outstanding stock.
- Debt Based Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) expanded by a new Debt-ETF consisting primarily of Government Securities, this would give attractive access to retail investors, pension funds and long-term investors.
- Disinvestment – partial sale of govt holdings in LIC would be conducted by the govt by way of Initial Public Offering.

Fiscal Management:

- Excess/Surplus collections in the GST compensation fund for FY17 and FY18 would be transferred into the fund in two installments.
- The centrally sponsored schemes and Central sector schemes would be overhauled in order to meet the emerging social and economic needs and to ensure that the scarce resources are utilized optimally.
- For the FY 2019-20
- Revised Estimates of Expenditure: at Rs. 26.99 lakh crore.
- Revised Estimates of Receipts: estimated at Rs. 19.32 lakh crore.

For year 2020-21:

- Nominal growth of GDP estimated at 10%.
- Receipts: estimated at Rs.22.46 lakh cr.
- Expenditure: at Rs.30.42 lakh cr.

- Fiscal deficit of 3.8% estimated in RE 2019-20 and 3.5% for BE 2020-21.
- The govt has announced a deviation of 0.5% in the fiscal deficit, consistent with Section 4(3) of FRBM Act, both for RE 2019-20 and BE 2020-21.
- Market borrowings: Net market borrowings: Rs.4.99 lakh crore for 2019-20 and Rs.5.36 lakh crore for 2020-21.
- A good part of the borrowings for the financial year 2020-21 to go towards Capital expenditure that has been scaled up by more than 21%.

Direct Tax:

- A new personal income tax regime has been proposed
- It is optional.
- About 70 of the existing exemptions and deductions to be removed.
- The new corporate tax rate of 15% to be extended to cover new electricity generation companies.
- Dividend Distribution Tax removed.

Startups:

- Would enjoy 100% tax deduction for a 3 year consecutive period (these must have a turnover of up to ₹ 100 Cr).

The cooperatives:

- Would be taxed at the same rate as the corporate sector.
- Exempted from Alternate Minimum Tax (AMT) as the companies are exempted from Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT).

Indirect taxes:

GST

- Cash reward system envisaged to incentivize customers to seek invoice.
- Simplified return with features like SMS based filing for nil return and improved input tax credit flow to be implemented from 1st April, 2020 as a pilot run.
- Dynamic QR-code capturing GST parameters proposed for consumer invoices.
- Electronic invoice to capture critical information in a centralized system to be implemented in a phased manner.
- Aadhaar based verification of taxpayers being introduced to weed out dummy or nonexistent units.
- GST rate structure being deliberated to address inverted duty structure.
- 5% health cess to be imposed on imports of medical devices, except those exempt from BCD (Basic Customs Duty).

Trade Policy Measures:

- Customs Act being amended to enable proper checks of imports under FTAs.
- Rules of Origin requirements to be reviewed for certain sensitive items.
- Provisions relating to safeguard duties to be strengthened to enable regulating such surge in imports in a systematic way.

- Provisions for checking dumping of goods and imports of subsidized goods being strengthened.

Tax facilitation measures:

- Instant PAN to be allotted online through Aadhaar.
- 'Vivad Se Vishwas' scheme, with a deadline of 30th June, 2020, to reduce litigations in direct taxes.
- Waiver of interest and penalty – only disputed taxes to be paid for payments till 31st March, 2020.
- Additional amount to be paid if availed after 31st March, 2020.
- Benefits to taxpayers in whose cases appeals are pending at any level.
- Faceless appeals to be enabled by amending the Income Tax Act.

Links:

<https://www.indiabudget.gov.in>

Economic Survey 2019-20

Question: Consider the following statements with reference to Economic Survey 2019-20:

- (1) **Wealth Creation is the theme for this survey.**
- (2) **Top export products are Petroleum products, precious stones, drug formulations & biological.**
- (3) **The best suitable meaning of Thalonomics is the Economics of a Plate of Food in India.**

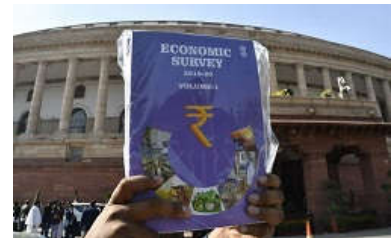
Choose the correct statement/s:

- (a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) All the above

Answer:(c)

Related facts:

- The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman presented the Economic Survey 2019-20 in the Parliament on January 31, 2020 .
- The Key Highlights of the Economic Survey 2019-20 are as follows:
- Theme of economic survey 2019-20 is Wealth Creation: The Invisible Hand Supported by the Hand of Trust.
- India's dominance as global economic power for three-fourths of economic history manifests by design.
- Kautilya's Arthashastra postulates the role of prices in an economy (Spengler, 1971).
- Historically, Indian economy relied on the invisible hand of the market with the support of the hand of trust:
- Invisible hand of the market reflected in openness in economic transactions.
- Hand of trust appealed to ethical and philosophical dimensions.
- Survey posits that India's aspiration to become a \$5 trillion economy depends critically on:
- Strengthening the invisible hand of the market.
- Supporting it with the hand of trust.



Strengthening the invisible hand by promoting pro-business policies to:

- Provide equal opportunities for new entrants.

- Enable fair competition and ease doing business.
- Eliminate policies unnecessarily undermining markets through government intervention.
- Enable trade for job creation.
- Efficiently scale up the banking sector.
- Introducing the idea of trust as a public good, which gets enhanced with greater use.
- Survey suggests that policies must empower transparency and effective enforcement using data and technology.

Entrepreneurship and Wealth Creation at the Grassroots

- Entrepreneurship as a strategy to fuel productivity growth and wealth creation.
- India ranks third in number of new firms created, as per the World Bank.

Pro-business versus Pro-markets

- Survey says that India's aspiration of becoming a \$5 trillion economy depends critically on:
- Promoting 'pro-business' policy that unleashes the power of competitive markets to generate wealth.
- Weaning away from 'pro-crony' policy that may favour specific private interests, especially powerful incumbents.
- Pro-crony policies such as discretionary allocation of natural resources till 2011 led to rent-seeking by beneficiaries while competitive allocation of the same post 2014 ended such rent extraction.

Undermining Markets: When Government Intervention Hurts More Than It Helps

- Government intervention, though well intended, often ends up undermining the ability of the markets to support wealth creation and leads to outcomes opposite to those intended.

Creating Jobs and Growth by Specializing in Network Products

- Survey says India has unprecedented opportunity to chart a China-like, labour-intensive, export trajectory.
- By integrating "Assemble in India for the world" into Make in India, India can:
- Raise its export market share to about 3.5 % by 2025 and 6 % by 2030.
- Create 4 crore well-paid jobs by 2025 and 8 crore by 2030.
- Exports of network products can provide one-quarter of the increase in value added required for making India a \$5 trillion economy by 2025.
- India's exports increased by 13.4 % for manufactured products and 10.9 % for total merchandise
- Imports increased by 12.7 % for manufactured products and 8.6 per cent for total merchandise.
- India gained 0.7 % increase in trade surplus per year for manufactured products and 2.3 % per year for total merchandise.

Targeting Ease of Doing Business in India

- A jump of 79 positions to 63 in 2019 from 142 in 2014 in World Bank's Doing Business rankings.
- India still trails in parameters such as Ease of Starting Business, Registering Property, Paying Taxes and Enforcing Contracts.

Golden jubilee of bank nationalisation: Taking stock

- Survey observes 2019 as the golden jubilee year of bank nationalization
- Accomplishments of lakhs of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) employees cherished and an objective assessment of PSBs suggested by the Survey.
- Since 1969, India's Banking sector has not developed proportionately to the growth in the size of the economy.
- India has only one bank in the global top 100 – same as countries that are a fraction of its size: Finland (about 1/11th), Denmark (1/8th), etc.

Thalinomics: The Economics of a Plate of Food in India

- An attempt to quantify what a common person pays for a Thali across India.
- A shift in the dynamics of Thali prices since 2015-16.
- Absolute prices of a vegetarian Thali have decreased significantly since 2015-16 across India and the four regions; though the price has increased during 2019-20.
- Post 2015-16:
- Average household gained close to Rs. 11, 000 on average per year from the moderation in prices in the case of vegetarian Thali.
- Average household that consumes two non-vegetarian Thalis gained close to Rs. 12, 000 on average per year during the same period.
- From 2006-07 to 2019-20:
- Affordability of vegetarian Thalis improved 29 %.
- Affordability of non-vegetarian Thalis improved by 18 %.

India's Economic Performance in 2019-20

- India's GDP growth moderated to 4.8 % in H1 of 2019-20, amidst a weak environment for global manufacturing, trade and demand.
- Real consumption growth has recovered in Q2 of 2019-20, cushioned by a significant growth in government final consumption.
- Growth for 'Agriculture and allied activities' and 'Public administration, defense, and other services' in H1 of 2019-20 was higher than in H2 of 2018-19.
- India's external sector gained further stability in H1 of 2019-20:
- Current Account Deficit (CAD) narrowed to 1.5 % of GDP in H1 of 2019-20 from 2.1 % in 2018-19.

Headline inflation expected to decline by year end:

- Increased from 3.3 % in H1 of 2019-20 to 7.35 % in December 2019-20 due to temporary increase in food inflation.
- Financial sector acted as a drag on the real sector (investment-growth-consumption).
- Reforms undertaken during 2019-20 to boost investment, consumption and exports:
- Speeding up the insolvency resolution process under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
- Easing of credit, particularly for the stressed real estate and NBFC sectors.
- Announcing the National Infrastructure Pipeline 2019-2025.
- Survey expects an uptick in the GDP growth in H2 of 2019-20:
- 5 % GDP growth for 2019-20 based on CSO's first Advance Estimates.
- Expeditious delivery on reforms for enabling the economy to strongly rebound in 2020-21.

Fiscal Developments

- Revenue Receipts registered a higher growth during the first eight months of 2019-20, compared to the same period last year, led by considerable growth in Non-Tax revenue.
- Gross GST monthly collections have crossed the mark of Rs. 1 lakh crore for a total of five times during 2019-20 (up to December 2019).

Balance of Payments (BoP):

- India's BoP position improved from US\$ 412.9 bn of forex reserves in end March, 2019 to US\$ 433.7 bn in end September, 2019.
- Current account deficit (CAD) narrowed from 2.1% in 2018-19 to 1.5% of GDP in H1 of 2019-20.
- Foreign reserves stood at US\$ 461.2 bn as on 10th January, 2020.

Global trade:

- In sync with an estimated 2.9% growth in global output in 2019, global trade is estimated to grow at 1.0% after having peaked in 2017 at 5.7%.
- However, it is projected to recover to 2.9% in 2020 with recovery in global economic activity.
- India's merchandise trade balance improved from 2009-14 to 2014-19, although most of the improvement in the latter period was due to more than 50% decline in crude prices in 2016-17.
- India's top five trading partners continue to be USA, China, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Hong Kong.

Exports:

- Top export items: Petroleum products> precious stones> drug formulations & biologicals, gold and other precious metals.
- Largest export destinations in 2019-20 (April-November): United States of America (USA), followed by United Arab Emirates (UAE), China and Hong Kong.

Imports:

- Top import items: Crude petroleum, gold, petroleum products, coal, coke & briquettes.
- India's imports continue to be largest from China, followed by USA, UAE and Saudi Arabia.

Logistics industry of India:

- Currently estimated to be around US\$ 160 billion.
- Expected to touch US\$ 215 billion by 2020.
- According to World Bank's Logistics Performance Index, India ranks 44th in 2018 globally, up from 54th rank in 2014.
- Net FDI inflows continued to be buoyant in 2019-20 attracting US\$ 24.4 bn in the first eight months, higher than the corresponding period of 2018-19.

Monetary Management and Financial Intermediation

- Monetary policy:
- Remained accommodative in 2019-20.
- Repo rate was cut by 110 basis points in four consecutive MPC meetings in the financial year due to slower growth and lower inflation.
- However, it was kept unchanged in the fifth meeting held in December 2019.

- In 2019-20, liquidity conditions were tight for initial two months; but subsequently it remained comfortable.

The Gross Non Performing Advances ratio:

- Remained unchanged for Scheduled Commercial banks at 9.3% between March and September 2019
- Increased slightly for the Non-Banking Financial Corporations (NBFCs) from 6.1% in March 2019 to 6.3% in September 2019.

Credit growth:

- The financial flows to the economy remained constrained as credit growth declined for both banks and NBFCs.
- Bank Credit growth (YoY) moderated from 12.9% in April 2019 to 7.1% as on December 20, 2019.
- Capital to Risk-weighted Asset Ratio of SCBs increased from 14.3% to 15.1% between March 2019 and September 2019.

Prices and Inflation

- **Inflation Trends:**
- Inflation witnessing moderation since 2014
- Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation increased from 3.7 per cent in 2018-19 (April to December, 2018) to 4.1 per cent in 2019-20 (April to December, 2019).
- WPI inflation fell from 4.7 per cent in 2018-19 (April to December, 2018) to 1.5 per cent during 2019-20 (April to December, 2019).

Sustainable Development and Climate Change

- India moving forward on the path of SDG implementation through well-designed initiatives

SDG India Index:

- Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Chandigarh are front runners.
- Assam, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh come under the category of Aspirants.
- India hosted COP-14 to UNCCD which adopted the Delhi Declaration: Investing in Land and Unlocking Opportunities.
- COP-25 of UNFCCC at Mandrid
- 24.56 % of the geographical area of the country.
- International Solar Alliance (ISA)
- 'Enabler' by institutionalizing 30 Fellowships from the Member countries.
- 'Facilitator' by getting the lines of credit worth US\$ 2 Billion from EXIM Bank of India and 1.5 Billion from AfD, France.
- 'Incubator' by nurturing initiatives like the Solar Risk Mitigation Initiative.
- 'Accelerator' by developing tools to aggregate demand for 1000 MW solar and 2.7 lakh solar water pumps.

Agriculture and Food Management

- GVA at Basic Prices for 2019-20 from 'Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing' sector is estimated to grow by 2.8 %.

- Agricultural productivity is also constrained by lower level of mechanization in agriculture which is about 40 % in India, much lower than China (59.5 %) and Brazil (75 %).
- Skewed pattern of regional distribution of agricultural credit in India:
- Low credit in Hilly, Eastern and North Eastern states (less than 1 % of total agricultural credit disbursement).
- Livestock income has become an important secondary source of income for millions of rural families:
- An important role in achieving the goal of doubling farmers' income.
- Livestock sector has been growing at a CAGR of 7.9 % during last five years.
- During the last 6 years ending 2017-18, Food Processing Industries sector has been growing:
- Average Annual Growth Rate (AAGR) of around 5.06 %
- Constitutes as much as 8.83 % and 10.66 % of GVA in Manufacturing and Agriculture sector respectively in 2017-18 at 2011-12 prices.
- While interests of the vulnerable sections of the population need to be safeguarded, Survey emphasizes on sustainability of food security operations by:
- Addressing the burgeoning food subsidy bill.
- Revisiting the rates and coverage under NFSA.

Industry and Infrastructure

- The industrial sector as per Index of Industrial Production (IIP) registered a growth of 0.6 per cent in 2019-20 (April-November) as compared to 5.0 % during 2018-19 (April-November).
- Fertilizer sector achieved a growth of 4.0 % during 2019-20 (April-November) as compared to (-) 1.3 per cent during 2018-19 (April-November).
- Steel sector achieved a growth of 5.2 % during 2019-20 (April-November) as compared to 3.6 % during 2018-19 (April-November).
- Total telephone connections in India touched 119.43 crore as on September 30, 2019.
- The installed capacity of power generation has increased to 3, 64,960 MW as on October 31, 2019 from 3, 56,100 MW as on March 31, 2019.
- Report of the Task Force on National Infrastructure Pipeline released on 31.12.2019 has projected total infrastructure investment of Rs. 102 lakh crore during the period FY 2020 to 2025 in India.

Services Sector

- Increasing significance of services sector in the Indian economy:
- About 55 % of the total size of the economy and GVA growth.
- Two-thirds of total FDI inflows into India.
- About 38 per cent of total exports.
- More than 50 % of GVA in 15 out of the 33 states and UTs.

Social Infrastructure, Employment and Human Development

- The expenditure on social services (health, education and others) by the Centre and States as a proportion of GDP increased from 6.2 % in 2014-15 to 7.7 % in 2019-20 (BE).
- India's ranking in Human Development Index improved to 129 in 2018 from 130 in 2017:
- With 1.34 % average annual HDI growth, India is among the fastest improving countries
- The share of regular wage/salaried employees has increased by 5 percentage points from 18 % in 2011-12 to 23 % in 2017-18.
- Total formal employment in the economy increased from 8 % in 2011-12 to 9.98 % in 2017-18.
- Around 60 % of productive age (15-59) group engaged in full time domestic duties.

- Access to health services inter-alia through Ayushman Bharat and Mission Indradhanush across the country has improved.
- Mission Indradhanush has vaccinated 3.39 crore children and 87.18 lakh pregnant women of 680 districts across the country.
- About 76.7 % of the households in the rural and about 96 % in the urban areas had houses of pucca structure.
- A 10 Year Rural Sanitation Strategy (2019-2029) launched to focus on sustaining the sanitation behavior change and increasing access to solid and liquid waste management.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=197771>

Raisina Dialogue 2020

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) The Raisina Dialogue is a multilateral conference held annually in New Delhi, India.
- (2) Raisina Dialogue 2020 will bring together 700 international participants of which 80 are from Africa, from over a 100 countries.
- (3) The first Raisina Dialogue held in 2014.

Choose the correct one:

- (a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) Only (3)

Answer (c)

Related Facts:



- The 5th edition of Raisina Dialogue held on 15th January , 2020 in New Delhi
- The Raisina Dialogue is a multilateral conference held annually in New Delhi. Since its inception in 2016, the conference has emerged as India's flagship conference on geopolitics and geo-economics.
- The conference is hosted by the Observer Research Foundation, an independent think tank, in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs of India.
- The conference is structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral discussion, involving a variety of global policymakers including heads of state, cabinet ministers and local government officials.
- The Dialogue also welcomes major private sector executives, as well as members of the media and academia.
- The name "Raisina Dialogue" comes from Raisina Hill, an elevation in New Delhi, seat of the Government of India, as well as the Presidential Palace of India, Rashtrapati Bhavan.
- The Dialogue, jointly organised by MEA and the Observer Research Foundation, has been India's contribution to global efforts to discover solutions, identify opportunities and provide stability to a century that has witnessed an eventful two decades.

Raisina Dialogue 2020:

- It brings together 700 international participants from over a 100 countries, of which 80 are from Africa, in one of the largest gathering of its kind. A remarkable 40% of the Speakers was women, emphasising our commitment to gender equality.

- The Dialogue had high level participation from 12 Foreign Ministers including the Foreign Ministers of Russia, Iran, Australia, Maldives, South Africa, Estonia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Hungary, Latvia, Uzbekistan and EU.

Highlights of Raisina 2020:

- India & Finland signed Memorandum of Understanding(MoU) in order to enhance cooperation in the field of production, procurement, research and development in defence sector.
- 'Green Strategic Partnership' with Denmark foreign minister was explored.
- 20th anniversary of partnership between India and Russia has been celebrated.
- Former heads of international governments with rich experience in governance were engaged in discussion on the important challenges in the world like climate change and counter-terrorism etc.

Links:

<https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/32286/Raisina+Dialogue+2020+begins+tomorrow>

Piyush Goyal to lead Indian delegation to WEF 2020

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Union Minister of Commerce and Industry & Railways, Piyush Goyal, will lead the Indian delegation to the 50th World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos from January 20th to 24th 2020.

(2) Commerce and Industry Minister will also participate in an informal WTO Ministerial gathering being held in Davos during this period.

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer:(c)

Related facts:

- On January 18, 2020, it is announced that, Commerce minister Piyush Goyal will lead Indian delegation to World Economic Forum 2020 in Davos.
- The theme of the 50th World Economic Forum 2020 meeting is stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World.
- Commerce and Industry Minister will hold bilateral meetings with Ministers of Australia, South Africa, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Korea and Singapore.
- The Commerce and Industry minister will also meet Director General of World Trade Organization and Secretary General of Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- The WEF annual meeting in Davos engages the world's top leaders to shape global, regional and industry agendas at the beginning of the year. The theme of the 2020 meeting is stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World.
- The World Economic Forum (WEF), based in Cologny-Geneva, Switzerland, is an NGO, founded in 1971.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1599749>

Mega Science Exhibition Vigyan Samagam

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Union minister, Jitendra Singh inaugurates global Mega Science Exhibition “Vigyan Samagam” in New Delhi.

(2) This is fourth such exhibition after being organised at Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata.

The correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On January 21, 2020, Union Minister, Jitendra Singh inaugurated global Mega Science Exhibition “Vigyan Samagam” in New Delhi.
- This is fourth such exhibition after being organised at Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata.
- During the exhibition, Science & Technology enthusiasts witnessed the world-renowned Mega Science projects and listen to eminent scientists at the National Science Centre Delhi.
- Projects are being showcased by CERN, FAIR, INO, ITER, LIGO, MACE, SKA and TMT, under the aegis of Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Science and Technology and the National Council of Science Museums.
- Two Hall's was also being set up for students in Pragati Maidan, Delhi i.e. 'Hall of Nuclear Energy' and 'Hall of space technology'.
- The Exhibition is designed in such a way that it ignite the minds of students, academia and industry to look for opportunities to pursue fundamental science and research as a strong career option.
- The Exhibition has themed galleries consisting of infographics, working models and exhibits, informative audio-visual content, electronic displays and interactive kiosks for each of the Mega Science Projects.
- In the inauguration event, different technological achievements and technological visions of India was discussed.
- Various aspects of India's upcoming space missions like Gaganyaan, Mangalyaan and Chandrayaan missions were also discussed.
- The exhibition will be open to public till 20th March, 2020



Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599971>

India's second semi high-speed train by IRCTC

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Ahmedabad-Mumbai Tejas Express became the second semi high-speed train to be run by Railway subsidiary IRCTC.

(2) Lucknow-Delhi Tejas Express was the first semi high-speed train operated by IRCTC.

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer:(c)

Related facts:

- On January 17, 2020, India's second semi high-speed train 'Tejas' was flagged off between Ahmedabad-Mumbai.
- The inaugural run of this second Tejas Train was flagged off by Chief Minister of Gujarat, Vijay Rupani from Ahmedabad.
- The commercial run of the train, to be operated by IRCTC like the first Tejas train, will start with effect from 19th January, 2020 from Ahmedabad.
- Lucknow-Delhi Tejas Express was the first semi high-speed train that runs by IRCTC



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599684a>

ELECRAMA 2020 inaugurated

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Union Minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurated ELECRAMA 2020, at India Expo Mart in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

(2) The focus of this year's event is on e-mobility, energy storage, start-ups, grid transformation, and revenue security with special attention on small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Which of the following statement (s) is/are true?

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- On 18th January 2020, the Union Minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurated ELECRAMA 2020, at India Expo Mart in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh (UP).
- It's a five-day event from January 18 to January 22, 2020.
- Elecrama is power industry event organised by IEEMA every two years.
- Over 1,300 exhibitors are participating in the event. Out of these about 450 are exhibitors from 120 nations.
- In the event, the government has set up a target of making India a USD 5 trillion economy and his industry will play a significant role in achieving this goal.
- The UP government asked investors to invest in UP, as Uttar Pradesh government has set a target of installing 2,000 MW of solar power generation capacity every year.
- UP government has given 1.2 crore power connections in past two years.
- The goal to achieve triple per capita consumption was also setup to reach the global average of 3600 units.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=197498>

Bhil Tribe Dispute in MP

Question: Consider the following statements about Bhil tribe:

(1) The Bhil are one of the largest tribal groups, living in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh only.

(2) They are known to be excellent archers coupled with deep knowledge about their local geography.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Recent controversial references to the Bhil tribe by Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commission (MPPSC) has received severe criticism.
- The MPPSC exam paper says 'Bhil' as criminal-minded and alcoholic.

About Bhil Tribe:

- The Bhil are one of the largest tribal groups, living in Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan.
- The name is derived from the word 'billu', which means bow.
- The Bhil are known to be excellent archers coupled with deep knowledge about their local geography.
- Traditionally, experts in guerrilla warfare, most of them today are farmers and agricultural labourers. They are also skilled sculptors.
- Bhil women wear traditional saris while men are dressed in long frock and pyjamas.
- The women put on heavy ornaments made of silver, brass along with rosaries of beads and silver coins and earring.



Links:

<https://tribal.nic.in/DivisionsFiles/tribalFaces.pdf>

Bharat Parv 2020

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) The annual event Bharat Parv is being celebrated from 26th to 31st January, 2020.

(2) The Theme for the Year 2020 is 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

Choose the correct one:

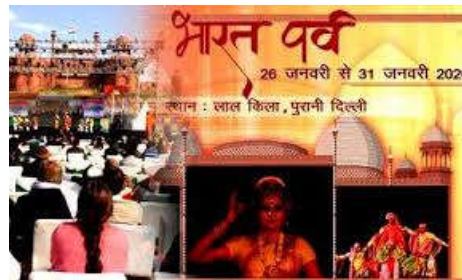
(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer : (c)

Related facts:

- The annual event Bharat Parv is being celebrated from 26th to 31st January, 2020 in New Delhi.
- It is organised by the Ministry of Tourism.

- The objective of Bharat Parv is to encourage Indians to visit different tourist places of India and to inculcate the spirit of 'Dekho Apna Desh'.
- The Theme for the Year 2020 is 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' and 'Celebrating 150 Years of Mahatma'.
- It also includes display of tourism theme pavilion by State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations and line Ministries, handicraft & Handloom Stalls by the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations, Commission Handloom / Handicrafts/ TRIFED.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1600526>

APNA UREA-SonaUgle brand of HURL

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) The APNA UREA-SonaUgle brand of HURL (Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Limited) was launched by the Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers D V Sadananda Gowda.

(2) HURL is a joint venture of Indian Maharatna companies namely IOCL (Indian Oil Corporation Limited), NTPC (National Thermal Power Corporation) and Coal India Limited.

Which of the following statement (s) is/are true?

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- On January 17, 2020, Union Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers D V Sadananda Gowda launched the APNA UREA-SonaUgle brand of HURL (Hindustan Urvarak & Rasayan Limited).
- The Union Government approved revival of three sick Urea plants located in Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh), Barauni (Bihar) and Sindri (Jharkhand).
- HURL, a joint venture firm promoted by three PSUs – Coal India Limited (CIL), NTPC Ltd and Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL).
- HURL's three units are expected to be commissioned in February 2021, while Ramagundam (Telangana) and Talcher (Odisha) units are also likely to commence operations next year.
- The objective of HURL is to make India self-reliant in Urea.



Targets for HURL:

1. The revival of three sick Urea plants by end of 2021.

2. Increase neem coated urea production capacity to 38.1 lakh metric tonnes per annum.
3. To start operations of energy efficient and environment friendly natural gas-based fertilizer plants by 2021. The feedstock (Natural Gas) is to be supplied by GAIL.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599732>

Wetlands from India get the Ramsar site tag

Question: How many new sites has been added from India in the Ramsar tag for international importance?

(a) 5 (b) 7 (c) 8 (d) 10

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- In a major recognition towards Government of India's effort towards conservation, restoration and rejuvenation of its wetlands, Ramsar has declared 10 more wetland sites from India as sites of international importance.
- The Ramsar Convention signed on February 2, 1971, is one of the oldest inter-governmental accord signed by members countries to preserve the ecological character of their wetlands of international importance.
- The aim of the Ramsar list is to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits.
- Wetlands declared as Ramsar sites are protected under strict guidelines of the convention.
- The conservation of wetlands would also go a long way in achieving 'Nal se Jal' in each household. The government in July 2019 has launched the new 'Nal se Jal' scheme, which aims to provide piped water connection to every household by 2024.



Total Ramsar sites in India:

- The numbers of Ramsar sites in India are now 37 and the surface area covered by these sites is now 1,067,939 hectares.
- Maharashtra gets its first Ramsar site (Nandur Madhameshwar) , Punjab which already had 3 Ramsar sites adds 3 more (Keshopur-Miani, Beas Conservation Reserve, Nangal) and UP with 1 Ramsar site has added 6 more (Nawabganj, Parvati Agra, Saman, Samaspur, Sandi and SarsaiNawar).
- Wetlands provide a wide range of important resources and ecosystem services such as food, water, fibre, groundwater recharge, water purification, flood moderation, erosion control and climate regulation. They are, in fact, are a major source of water and our main supply of freshwater comes from an array of wetlands which help soak rainfall and recharge groundwater.
- In the past six months, Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change has prepared a four pronged strategy for the restoration of wetlands which includes preparing a baseline data, wetland health cards, enlisting wetland mitras and preparing targeted Integrated Management Plans.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600857>

Project review of all National Highway development

Question: Who has chaired the meeting of reviewing the projects of all National Highway development which took place on 23 and 24 January 2020 at Gurugram, Haryana?

(a) VK Singh (b) Rajnath Singh (c) Nitin Gadkari (d) Piyush Goyal

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport & Highways along with V. K. Singh, Minister of State for Road Transport & Highways reviewed projects of all National Highway development, on 23 and 24 January 2020 at Manesar near Gurugram, Haryana.
- The review was done state wise. All senior officials of the Ministry, NHAI, State Governments, contractors, concessionaires, and consultants attended the review meeting.

**Highlights of the review:**

- The major reasons found were delay in land acquisition by State Governments, delay in regulatory clearances such as for quarrying etc. In addition, lack of coordination and communication between and within government agencies continues to delay decision making.
- About 740 National Highway Projects of 16 States were reviewed. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari went into the minutest of detail of every project making sure a clear path forward emerged to speed up projects.
- The issue of timely approval of Extension of Time (EOT) and change of scope (COS) was particularly raised by the Contractors/ Concessionaire. As these timely approvals would help in facilitating lending by banks, an on-line tool called "GATI" has been launched and this will be closely monitored at the highest level.
- All chief engineers in the Ministry and all members of NHAI are directed to organise "Review Mondays" on the first and third Monday of every month.
- 22 Greenfield Corridors of length 7500 kms is being developed with a total capital cost of Rs. 3.00 lakh crore. These projects are being pursued vigorously and are being implemented on priority.
- The construction of National Highways in terms of kms per day has been increasing and this is targeted to reach the level of 40 kms per day.
- He also informed that the progress of FASTags was also reviewed. All 537 Toll Plazas are now ETC enabled and more than 1.37 cores FASTags have been issued. My FASTag App has crossed 10 lakh downloads.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600477>

Question: Which city of India is declared as the most polluted city in as per the Greenpeace India Report released on January 21, 2020?

(a) New Delhi (b) Kanpur (c) Jharia (d) Raipur

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The fourth issue of Airpocalypse report by Greenpeace was released in January 21, 2020.
- The report has details of the air quality of different cities of India as well as it traces the improvement and degradation in it. The report has different projections which mention about the impact of the government policies on the air quality.



Major Highlight of the report:

- Jharia city of Jharkhand has been again declared as the most polluted city of India for the second time in a row.
- For the first time, Air Quality was seen and discussed as a public hazard by the political parties in India.
- Hazardous pollution level also led to the declaration of Health Emergency by the government in various cities.
- The report identified 231 Indian cities out of 287 surveyed having more than 52 monitoring days data in 2018 under National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP), where air pollution levels exceeded the 60 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ limits for PM10 as prescribed under National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).
- Jharia topped the list in terms of PM10 with a score of 322. Dhandbad of Jharkhand was at the second place with 264 score in PM10.
- Noida, Ghaziabad of Uttar Pradesh got was at third and fourth sport respectively.
- Ahmedabad was at fifth spot while capital New Delhi was spotted at the 10th place with 225 score in PM10.
- Delhi witnessed improvement in the air quality as compared to last two years but still remains more than 3.5 times more polluted than the NAAQS and more than 11 times the WHO prescribed limits for PM10.
- The report also highlights that almost all states including Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka, TamilNadu and Bihar have a bigger number of non-attainment cities compared to the current number included under National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).
- Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) released the first ever NCAP for India in January 2019.
- This project aims the cities to reduce their air pollution levels by 20-30% by 2024 from 2017 levels.
- Airpocalypse – IV Report however highlights that CPCB has identified only 122 non-attainment cities and 102 of them included under NCAP till now.
- These 122 cities are spread across 28 states and 9 union territories and is incomplete leaving 116 more cities which exceeding 60 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ limit prescribed by NAAQS according to 2018 annual data and should be included in the non-attainment category.
- The Report is a clear indication that MoEFCC needs to include all non-attainment cities under the fold of NCAP. While all the cities listed under NCAP have

submitted city specific clean air action plan, which have been approved by CPCB for ground implementation.

- More than 80% cities had PM10 levels exceeding the 60 µg/m3 limits for PM10 prescribed under National Ambient Air Quality Standards.
- The city level action plans provided by the non-attainment cities under NCAP also lacks regional and air-shed level approach and are too city centric i.e, of course vehicular emissions within the city are a part of the problem but the major emitters in the nearby regions should not be ignored. More emphasis needs to be laid on the regional and air-shed approach for air quality control.”

Links:

<https://storage.googleapis.com/planet4-india-stateless/2019/08/88c10172-airpocalypse-iv.pdf>

Final review of Phase-1 of the Jal Shakti Abhiyan held

Question: Who has inaugurated the Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) national review and workshop in New Delhi on January 28, 2020?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Gajendra Singh shekhawat (c) Sadguru (d) Ram Vilas Paswan

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The Union Minister for Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat inaugurated the Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) national review and workshop in New Delhi.
- The workshop also included a special interaction with Sadhguru, founder of Isha Foundation.
- In attendance were senior officials from the Government of India who have been implementing the Jal Shakti Abhiyan in the most water stressed districts across the country along with district administrations.



Jal Shakti Abhiyaan:

- The Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA) is managed by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti, in collaboration with key Departments of the central government working in the water conservation sector, along with state governments, for an integrated approach to accelerate the programmatic implementation of water conservation interventions.
- The campaign has since delivered a significant increase in water conservation awareness, related infrastructure and even certain outcomes of groundwater replenishing across 256 water stressed districts, as recorded by line departments and the office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Prime Minister.
- Sadhguru shared the scalable initiatives for water conservation being undertaken by the Isha Foundation and spoke of experiences with regard to the people's movement the campaigns have witnessed in recent years.
- The Cabinet Secretary also released a "Report on Jal Shakti Abhiyan- Outcomes and Learning" during the review.
- A short film on the spirit of the JSA and showcasing achievements of the Abhiyan implemented at the grassroots level was screened on the occasion.

The progress update under the five key interventions of the programme:

- water conservation and rainwater harvesting
- renovation of tradition water bodies/tanks
- reuse and borewell recharge structures
- watershed development
- Intensive afforestation.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600870>

22nd Meeting of the Central Zonal Council

Question: Where did the 22nd Meeting of the Central zonal Council take place on January 28, 2020?

(a) New Delhi (b) Lucknow (c) Ranchi (d) Raipur

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Union Minister for Home Affairs, Amit Shah chaired the 22nd meeting of the Central Zonal Council (CZC) held at Nava Raipur (Chhattisgarh).
- During the meeting, the members were asked to expeditiously resolve the issues relating to forest clearance and provide brick-&-mortar banking facility within 5 kms radius in each village – particularly in Naxal areas.
- States were asked to adhere to the timeline of 2 months for completion of investigation of offences under POCSO Act.
- The meeting was also attended by the Chief Ministers of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and various Ministers from these States
- The Council deliberated upon various issues including acceptance of procured coarse grain under Price Support Scheme (PSS), revision of “State Cap” fixed for the implementation of NSAP (Pension) Scheme, holding Inter State coordination meeting to take prompt action against criminals, Amendment in Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) guidelines, amendment in Section 78 of the Information Technology Act and declaration of certain castes and tribes as Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes.
- Detailed discussion was held on issues relating to Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana – particularly in LWE affected areas.



Other major issues discussed were:

- Land acquisition for development of Bilaspur Airport in Chhattisgarh.
- Granting permission for tree cutting and land acquisition for Railway Projects.
- Appointment of Controlling Authorities under Private Security Agencies (Regulation) Act, 2005.
- Equation of norms between Central & State agencies regarding compensatory afforestation.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600892>

3rd Apex Conference of Smart City CEOs

Question: Where did the 3rd Apex conference of Smart Cities CEOs take place on 24- 25 January 2020?

(a) New Delhi (b) Hyderabad (c) Visakhapatnam (d) Chennai

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The 3rd Apex Conference of the Smart Cities was organized on 24th-25th January, 2020 at Andhra University Convention Center, Beach Road, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- The value of tendered smart city projects is over Rs. 1,62,000 crores, the value of work orders issued is around Rs. 1,20,000 crores and the value of all completed projects is more than Rs 25,000 crores.
- Since, the 1st Apex Conference, the Mission has seen tremendous progress in the implementation of projects by the Smart Cities.
- There has been a growth of 224% in the number of projects tendered, a growth of 300% in the projects grounded and 421% growth in the number of projects completed.
- As implementation of Smart Cities Mission is only possible through a strong coordination between Municipal Administration, State Governments and the Central Government, CEOs of Smart Cities, etc. attended the Event.
- During the Conference, Smart Cities Awards were distributed amongst the Smart Cities under 7 urban themes, Innovative Ideas, Round-wise Recognition of Cities and Overall City Award.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=197542>

Rojgaar Sangi app

Question: Which state government has launched Rojgaar Sangi app?

(a) Chhattisgarh (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Odisha (d) West Bengal

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Recently, the Chhattisgarh State Skill Development Authority (CSSDA) has launched a mobile phone app – 'Rojgaar Sangi' to help skilled and trained candidates find jobs.
- The app has been developed with the help of National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- The app will also help start-up companies to hire an office staff.
- It will increase accessibility for skilled and trained candidates, which in turn will increase job opportunities.
- The app is expected to benefit 7 lakh students who were trained under the 705 courses offered by CSSDA.



Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/in-chhattisgarh-app-to-connect-trained-candidates-with-jobs-6216816/>

Manipur Tribes Call Truce after Decades of Conflict

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Nagas belongs to Indo-Mongoloid Family.

(2) Mim Kut' is celebrated by the Nagas.

Choose the correct one:

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The umbrella organisations of Naga and Kuki tribes namely, Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) and the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) have signed a declaration to settle contentious issues and inter-community differences peacefully.
- Following ethnic clashes between the Nagas and Kukis in the early 1990s, a number of Kuki outfits were formed as a means to counter Naga hegemony and assertion.
- The conflict between the Nagas and the Kukis in 1993 had claimed more than 230 lives and displaced 1,00,000, mostly Kukis.



Nagas

- The Nagas are not a single tribe, but an ethnic community that comprises several tribes who live in the state of Nagaland and its neighbourhood.
- Nagas belong to Indo-Mongoloid Family.
- Nagas claimed sovereignty on the basis of prior sovereign existence and differences, which is today expressed in terms of “uniqueness”.
- There are nineteen major Naga tribes, namely, Aos, Angamis, Changs, Chakesang, Kabuis, Kacharis, Khain-Mangas, Konyaks, Kukis, Lothas (Lothas), Maos, Mikirs, Phoms, Rengmas, Sangtams, Semas, Tankhuls, Yamchumgar and Zeeliang.

Kuki Tribe

- Kuki tribe is majorly found in Manipur with other states of North Eastern India.
- 'Mim Kut' is the main festival of the Kuki tribe.
- The Chin-Kuki group consists of Gangte, Hmar, Paite, Thadou, Vaiphei, Zou, Aimol, Chiru, Koirang, Kom, Anal, Chothe, Lamgang, Koirao, Thangal, Moyon and Monsang.
- The term Chin is used for the people in the neighboring Chin state of Myanmar whereas Chins are called Kukis in the Indian side. Other groups like Paite, Zou, Gangte, and Vaiphei identify themselves as Zomi and have distanced themselves from the name, Kuki.

Link:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/manipur-tribes-call-truce-after-decades-of-conflict/article30609516.ece/amp/>

PM chairs the 32nd PRAGATI interaction

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Prime Minister chaired the 32nd interaction through PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation).

(2) It is a platform which enables the Prime Minister to discuss the issues with the concerned Central and State officials with full information and latest visuals of the ground-level situation.

The correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On January 22, 2020, Prime Minister chaired the 32nd interaction through PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation).
- In 32nd PRAGATI different issues were discussed with the concerned Central and State officials with full information and latest visuals of the ground-level situation.
- A total of eleven items were discussed, out of which nine are delayed projects.
- The nine projects, worth over Rs. 24,000 crores, are spread over nine states viz. Odisha, Telangana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Bihar, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh and three Union ministries.
- The performance with regard to grievances related to insurance schemes under Department of Financial Services viz. 'Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana' (PMJJBY) and 'Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana' (PMSBY) was reviewed.
- The progress under Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) project- a comprehensive and integrated system for effective policing through e-Governance was also reviewed.



What is PRAGATI?

- PRAGATI is a platform which enables the Prime Minister to discuss the issues with the concerned Central and State officials with full information and latest visuals of the ground-level situation.
- The platform is aimed at addressing common man's grievances, and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.
- It is a three-tier system (PMO, Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of the States).
- The three objectives of PRAGATI are: Grievance Redressal, Programme Implementation, Project Monitoring.
- The PRAGATI platform uniquely bundles three latest technologies: Digital data management, video-conferencing and geo-spatial technology.
- It promotes cooperative federalism as it brings on one platform the Secretaries of Government of India and the Chief Secretaries of the States.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1600172>

Pariksha Pe Charcha 2020

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) The Third edition of Prime Minister's Interaction Programme with school students "Pariksha Pe Charcha 2020" was held at Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi.

(2) Prime Minister, Narendra Modi answered the questions and interacted with selected students about how they can beat examination stress.

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

The correct statement/s is/are:

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On January 20, 2020, Prime Minister's Interaction Programme with school students "Pariksha Pe Charcha 2020" was held at Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi.
- Prime Minister, Narendra Modi interacted with a cross section of Students, Teachers and Parents at the event.
- This was the Third edition of "Pariksha Pe Charcha".
- For the event, 1,050 students have been selected through an essay competition organised by the HRD Ministry in partnership with MyGov.
- Prime Minister interacted with students, parents and teachers and responded to their queries on a host of subjects related to examinations particularly, dealing with exam-centric anxiety.
- The first and the second edition of Prime Minister's Interaction Programme with school and college students "ParikshaPeCharcha 1.0 and 2.0" was also held at Talkatora Stadium in the years 2018 and 2019 respectively.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1599787>

Mega Science Exhibition 'Vigyan Samagam' inaugurated

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Union minister, Jitendra Singh inaugurated global Mega Science Exhibition "Vigyan Samagam" in New Delhi.

(2) This is fourth such exhibition after being organised at Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata.

The correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On January 21, 2020, Union minister, Jitendra Singh inaugurated global Mega Science Exhibition "Vigyan Samagam" in New Delhi.

- This is fourth such exhibition after being organised at Mumbai, Bengaluru and Kolkata.
- During the exhibition, Science & Technology enthusiasts witnessed the world-renowned Mega Science projects and listen to eminent scientists at the National Science Centre Delhi.
- Projects were showcased by CERN, FAIR, INO, ITER, LIGO, MACE, SKA and TMT, under the aegis of Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Science and Technology and the National Council of Science Museums.
- Two Hall's was also being set upped for students in Pragati Maidan, Delhi i.e. 'Hall of Nuclear Energy' and 'Hall of space technology'.
- The Exhibition is designed in such a way that it ignite the minds of students, academia and industry to look for opportunities to pursue fundamental science and research as a strong career option.
- The Exhibition has themed galleries consisting of infographics, working models and exhibits, informative audio-visual content, electronic displays and interactive kiosks for each of the Mega Science Projects.
- In the inauguration event, different technological achievements and technological visions of India was also discussed.
- Growing strength of India in space technology was also praised.
- Various aspects of India's upcoming space missions like Gaganyaan, Mangalyaan and Chandrayaan missions were also discussed.
- The exhibition will be open to public till 20th March, 2020



Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599971>

Andhra Pradesh three Capital Bill

Consider the following statements in regarding to Andhra Pradesh three capital Bill:

(1) Andhra Pradesh CM approved a proposal to have three capitals for Andhra Pradesh.

(2) The three proposed capitals for Andhra Pradesh are -Amaravati, Visakhapatnam, Kurnool.

The correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On January 21, 2020, Andhra Pradesh CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's cabinet approved a proposal to have three capitals for Andhra Pradesh.
- The government has proposed to retain Amaravati as the legislative capital, while making Visakhapatnam the home for executive and Kurnool the judicial capital.
- Andhra Pradesh Legislative assembly passed two bills in the state assembly to this effect.



- The current capital of Andhra Pradesh is Amravati.
- Andhra Pradesh cabinet chaired by CM approved the proposal on three capital cities aimed at 'decentralized and inclusive development of all regions of the state'.
- The Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council rejected the bills and sent them to a select committee for further deliberations.
- In December 2019, the state-government appointed an expert committee which recommended that Visakhapatnam be made the executive capital, Kurnool in the Rayalaseema region the legal capital with the high court located there, and suggested that Amaravati could house the governor's office and the state assembly, becoming the legislative capital.

Links:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/andhra-pradesh-assembly-clears-proposal-for-three>

Agri products testing laboratories set up by APEDA

Question: How many laboratories for Agri product testing have been recently set up by Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)?

(a) 200 (b) 250 (c) 150 (d) 186

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has added 135 laboratories to existing 51 recognized laboratories.
- With this initiative APEDA recognition of laboratories has reached 186 laboratories across the country.
- The number of laboratories has increased in states with exporting potential like Maharashtra (35), Gujarat (23), Andhra Pradesh & Telangana (10), Tamil Nadu (23) and Karnataka (17).
- Laboratory testing requirements are crucial in agri export supply chain.
- New Policy:
 - APEDA has taken a policy decision for simplification of APEDA recognition of laboratories to increase the laboratory network further.
 - The laboratories which are NABL accredited will be recognized by APEDA and same will be added in the network of APEDA recognition laboratories.
 - This will enable APEDA to continuously expand its recognition network of laboratories across the country.
 - The new policy will enable the exporters to have an easy access to the laboratories for testing of APEDA scheduled products for exports



Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599848>

Question: What is the name of the book have been selected speeches of the President Ram Nath Kovind?

- (a) Seeing like a state (b) Citizen and Society (c) I am an Indian
(d) Loktantra Ke Swar

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The Ministry took a series of initiatives in the year 2019 to inform the public in a seamless, transparent and accurate manner of all important activities undertaken by the Government.
- Information Sector:
 - World Book Fair at New Delhi from 5th to 13th January, 2019.
 - India Pavilion at London Book Fair, 12th to 14th March. 2019.
 - The India Pavilion laid special focus on 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and displayed the digital version of the Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, apart from various other titles on Culture, History and Folklore of India.
 - Second Volume of 'Loktantra Ke Swar' and 'The Republican Ethic' released- Compilation of selected speeches of President of India, brought out by Directorate of Publications Division.
 - Reference Annuals 'Bharat 2019' and 'India 2019' released- the flagship publications brought out by Publications Division.
 - Photo Exhibition to commemorate Centenary of Jallianwala Bagh incident in Amritsar by Regional Outreach Bureau organized in April 2019, titled Photo Exhibition on Freedom Struggle.
 - Several e-projects of Publications Division launched, including its redesigned dynamic website, mobile app "Digital DPD", e-version of Rozgaar Samachar and e-book "Satyagrah Geeta".
 - E-version of Rozgar Samachar launched with a view to make aspirants aware of job opportunities in government sector including public sector enterprises.
 - 'Jaldoot' a travelling exhibition on Jalshakti Abhiyan arranged by Regional Outreach Bureau, Pune. The exhibition consisted of various information display panels and Audio-Visual components to create awareness about bold initiatives and decisive actions taken by the government.



Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Broadcast Sector

- Travelogue program "Rag Rag Mein Ganga" and quiz show "Meri Ganga" on Doordarshan launched. The travelogue series "Rag Rag Mein Ganga" has been made by Doordarshan in collaboration with National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).
- Private FM Radio broadcasters permitted to broadcast All India Radio (AIR) News bulletins, in English/Hindi as per list of bulletins given in News Schedule, subject to certain terms and conditions.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched DD Arunprabha, a dedicated 24x7 Doordarshan satellite channel for Arunachal Pradesh on 9th February, 2019.

- 11 more State DD Channels brought on the Satellite footprint of India through DD Free Dish. It is for the first time that the States of Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Uttarakhand have got their own DD Channel on a Satellite Network through DD Free Dish.
- Ministry aims to establish Community Radio Stations in every district of the Country, as announced at the 7th National Community Radio Sammelan in August 2019, as development of a vibrant culture of Community Radio will help in greater information dissemination at the grassroot level, which will result in further empowerment of people.
- Accessibility Standards for Persons with Disabilities in TV programmes implemented. In a significant beginning from this year's Independence Day, Private Satellite News TV channels telecast programme on Independence Day Celebrations with sign language interpretation.
- Patriotic song "Watan" produced by Doordarshan to mark the occasion of Independence Day released. The song pays tribute to New India. It highlights several path breaking initiatives of the government including the determination and vision behind the successful launch of "Chandrayaan 2". The song also pays tribute to the bravery and valour of our armed forces and the martyrs of the country.

Films Sector:

- Facilitate in organization of 2nd Jharkhand International Film Festival in Ranchi, Jharkhand from 1st to 3rd February, 2019. The objective of promoting the Festival is to encourage states that have showcased potential of promoting cinema.
- Indian Panorama Film Festival organized by Directorate of Film Festivals at New Delhi. Festivals like this helps viewer's rise above the barrier of language and understand each other's culture better while also facilitating people to people contact from different cities.
- India Pavilion at the 69th Berlin International Film Festival acted as a platform to popularize Indian Cinema in overseas market and facilitate new business opportunities.
- India Pavilion at Abu Dhabi International Book Fair 2019, wherein India was designated as the Guest of Honour for the Book Fair, which was held from 24th – 30th April, 2019.
- India Pavilion organized at Cannes Film Festival 2019, to showcase Indian cinema across linguistic, cultural and regional diversity, with the aim of forging international partnerships in distribution, production, filming in India, script development, technology, promoting film sales and syndication. India Pavilion was also set at 'Toronto International Film Festival' (Sept. 2019).
- 50th International Film Festival of India organized in Goa. Russia was the focus country during the festival. The great doyen of Indian cinema Amitabh Bachchan and the 'Thalaiva' of Indian film industry Rajinikanth flagged off the extravaganza and announced the festival open.
- 66th National Film Awards. The Vice President of India, M Venkaiah Naidu conferred National Film Awards for the year 2018 in various categories at its 66th edition, held at New Delhi.
- In addition, it is pertinent to mention that the First Annual Conference of Media Units working under I&B Ministry was organized at New Delhi. During

- the Conference, performance of the Media Units was reviewed. The focus of the Conference was on ensuring synergy between the Media Units in their day to day functioning.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=196155>

14th Foundation Day of Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India (DFCCIL)

Question: Who was the chief guest at the 14th Foundation ceremony of Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India (DFCCIL) celebrated on January 18, 2020?

(a) Nirmala Sitharaman (b) Amit Shah (c) Piyush Goyal (d) Sadananda Gowda

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The 14th Foundation Day of Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India (DFCCIL) was celebrated at a function in New Delhi on 18th January 2020.
- Minister of Railways and Commerce & Industry, Piyush Goyal chaired this event.



Attainment of DFCCIL:

- DFCCIL has completed 500 km of Dedicated Freight Corridor and it will achieve the goal of 991 km by March 2020.
- DFC has the impact to transform the railways sector. It is necessary to have separate tracks for freight and for passengers to ensure faster movement of both.
- Indian Railways has given direction to the DFCCIL to run freight trains in convoys for maximum utilisation of the path and increasing the average speed of freight trains.
- Dedicated Freight Corridors are ushering in a paradigm change in Indian Railways and asserted that DFCCIL will play a significant role in shaping the Indian economy.

Awards:

- In the awards ceremony 28 individual awards and 4 Group awards were given.
- The running shield for the Western Corridor was given to Ajmer & Ahmadabad units jointly and for Eastern Corridor, it was given to Pt.Deendayal Upadhayaya (Mughalsarai) unit

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599788>

Question: Which of the following organisation/ ministry recently hosted a 3 day Youth Co: Lab National Innovation Challenge in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)?

- (a) FICCI (b) Ministry of Science & Technology (c) NITI Aayog
(d) Ministry of Human Resource & Development**

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) NITI Aayog and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on 17th January 20, 2020 launched a three day long Youth Co:Lab -national innovation challenge in Delhi .

Highlights of the event:

- UNDP and Atal Innovation Mission hosted a three day Youth Co: Lab National Innovation Challenge, 17-19 January 2020 in Delhi in which 30 selected teams participated.
- Four winning teams were selected to represent the Youth Co:Lab Regional Innovation Challenge in Malaysia slated to be held in April this year.
- The top two teams will be fully funded, while the next two teams will be partially funded for the final summit.
- Top eight teams will get incubated at the Atal Incubation Centres and receive support from UNDP to enhance their impact management for a year.
- The efforts of AIM and UNDP aims to support young people by catalysing youth-led innovation, empowering them through Youth Co:Lab.
- Youth Co: Lab aims at fostering technology, promoting youth leadership and social entrepreneurship in India.



Youth Co: Lab

- Co-created in 2017 by the UNDP and the Citi Foundation.
- Youth Co:Lab aims to establish a common agenda for Asia-Pacific countries to invest in and empower youth to accelerate implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Youth Co:Lab was launched in India in October 2019, in collaboration with Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599897>

Year End Review 2019:Ministry of Defence

Question: Who has been appointed as the first CDS (Chief of Defence Staff) of India, the post created in 2019 by the Ministry in the rank of a four star general?

- (a) VK Singh (b) Bipin Rawat (c) Deepak Kapoor (d) BS Dhanoa**

Answer: (b)**Related facts:**

- 2019 was a year full of remarkable events for Ministry of Defence. The Government has approved to create the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) in the rank of a four-star General with salary and perquisites equivalent to a Service Chief.
- The CDS will also head the Department of Military Affairs (DMA), to be created within the Ministry of Defence and function as its Secretary.
- The decision will lead to improved coordination between the Armed Forces and make them more effective.

The other major decisions and events related to Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces are as follows:

- Prime Minister dedicated to the nation the National War Memorial in a solemn ceremonial function on February 25, 2019 near India Gate.
- The memorial has been erected in the memory of those soldiers who have sacrificed their lives in the service of the nation after India became Independent in 1947.
- In an intelligence led operation in the early hours of February 26 2019, India struck the biggest training camp of Jaish e Mohammad (JeM) in Balakot, Pakistan.
- Rajnath Singh became the first Raksha Mantri to fly the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) 'Tejas' at Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) Airport in Bengaluru, in September 2019.
- Defence Minister handed over Medium Range Surface-to-Air-Missile to Indian Air Force at the Bharat Dynamics Limited premises in Hyderabad on August 3 on the occasion of Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Defence PSU.
- Government decided to honour the contribution of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee by naming the Strategic Tunnel under Rohtang Pass after him on December 25, 2019.
- The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) worked relentlessly to overcome major geological, terrain and weather challenges that included the most difficult stretch of the 587-metre Seri Nalah Fault Zone.
- On 20 February 2019, the then Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman inaugurated the 12th biennial edition of International Aerospace and Defence Exhibition at Bengaluru which witnessed participation of more than 600 Indian Companies and 200 foreign companies.

**BILATERAL DEFENCE COOPERATION:**

- Rajnath Singh and Dr S Jaishankar took part in the India-US 2+2 dialogue between the Defence & External Affairs Ministers of India and their US counterparts in Washington on December 18 2019. Both sides committed to further deepen military-to-military cooperation, including between the Indian Navy and the US Navy Fleets under US Indo-Pacific Command.
- India-Japan 2+2 dialogue was held in New Delhi on November 30 2019. Rajnath Singh and Dr S Jaishankar participated in the meeting with their Japanese

counterparts. They affirmed that the dialogue will further enhance the strategic depth of bilateral security and defence cooperation.

- Shri Rajnath Singh visited Thailand's capital Bangkok to attend the 6th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) on November 17. He also held various bilateral meetings with the leaders of US, Thailand, Japan, Australia & New Zealand and discussed ways to further improving the ties.
- Rajnath Singh co-chaired the 19th India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military Technical Cooperation in Moscow along with his Russian counterpart.
- In February 2019, Nirmala Sitharaman visited Germany and met her counterpart. The two Ministers comprehensively reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral defence cooperation as an important facet of India-Germany Strategic Partnership.

Indian army:

- Successful summer user trials of third Generation Anti-Tank Guided Missile NAG at Pokhran Field Firing Ranges. The trials of DRDO developed Missile were conducted between July 7 and 18, 2019.
- The 14th edition of bilateral annual military exercise SURYA KIRAN-XIV between Indian and Nepal Army was held in December at Nepal Army Battle School (NABS), Salijhandi, Rupendehi district of Nepal.
- Inaugural edition of the Africa-India Field Training Exercise-2019 (AFINDEX-19) was culminated on March 27, 2019 at Foreign Training Node, Aundh Military Station, Pune. The Indian contingent was represented by Maratha Light Infantry (Jangi Paltan).
- Fourteen-day military exercise Mitra Shakti VI between Indian and Sri Lankan Army was held between March 26 to April 08, 2019 at Diyatalawa Parade Ground in Diyatalawa, Badulla District, Sri Lanka. This was the sixth edition of the joint exercise.

Indian Navy

Commissioning and Decommissioning

- The sixth ship of the 08 x IN LCU (Mark IV) project, IN LCU L56 was commissioned at Vishakhapatnam on July 29 2019. The seventh ship of the project, LCU L57, was delivered in December 19 and is likely to be commissioned in the near future.
- The second submarine of Scorpene Class (Project 75), INS Khanderi, and the Aircraft Carrier Dock, was commissioned by Rajnath Singh at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai on September 28 2019.
- Naval Air Station Shibpur was commissioned as INS Kohassa on January 24 2019.

Naval Operations/ Activities:

- Indian Navy has been undertaking Mission Based Deployments in the Areas of Interest in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) with an aim to safeguard national maritime interests and maintain continuous/near continuous presence in areas of significant maritime importance in the IOR.

- These deployments were also in consonance with the Prime Minister's vision of 'Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)'. The IN ships and aircraft are being regularly deployed in the Gulf of Oman/ Persian Gulf, Gulf of Aden/ Red Sea, South and Central Indian Ocean Region (IOR), off Sunda Strait, Andaman Sea/ approaches to Malacca Strait and Northern Bay of Bengal.

Indian Air Force:

- Contract for five Squadrons of Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile System i.e. S-400 missile system has been signed with the Russian Government. The equipment of the first Sqn is likely to be inducted in mid 2020.
- IAF is procuring 18 Squadrons of Medium Range Surface-to-Air Missile System which has been jointly developed by DRDO and IAI. Induction of the Medium Range Surface to Air Missile System will be from early 2020 onwards.
- Rafale Aircraft: To enhance the combat capability of IAF and improve its fighter squadron strength is in progress. Rafale is an omni-role fighter aircraft which will provide long range capability to engage targets in depth and will provide a strong weapons and systems capability edge over our adversaries.
- Additional Su-30 MKI Aircraft: IAF had contracted for 272 Su-30 MKI aircraft under various contracts. Presently deliveries are continuing under block IV contract and are likely to conclude by March 2020.
- Apache Helicopter: Apache is a Tandem Seating, day/night, all weather capable platform. It is highly agile, survivable against battle damage and is easily maintainable even in field conditions. 17 helicopters have already been delivered.
- Chinook Heavy Lift Helicopter (HLH): The delivery of 15 x Chinook helicopters has started from March 2019 and will be completed by March 2020.

Make Projects

- Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C): AEW&C is an indigenous system successfully developed by DRDO. The second AEW&C aircraft has been handed over by CABS to IAF on 11 Sep 19.
- Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS): The IACCS is fully indigenous project which will integrate all sensors to give composite Air Situation Picture and aids in quick decision making.

International Exercise

- Ex Garuda: Four Su-30MKI participated in Ex Garuda at Mont-de-Marsan, France from 01 to 14 Jul 19.
- Ex Eastern Bridge: Five Mig-29 participated in Ex Eastern Bridge V in Oman from 15 to 26 Oct 19. This is the first time that the MiG-29 ac participated in an international exercise abroad. The exercise was conducted professionally and performance of MiG -29 was appreciated.
- JMT: The bilateral phase of Joint Military Training with Singapore Air Force is planned from 14 to 29 Nov 19 at Air Force Station Kalaikunda. Su-30MKI participated in this exercise.
- Raksha Mantri commissioned Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) 'Varaha' in Chennai on September 25, 2019 to further strengthen coastal security.

DEFEXPO 2020

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh chaired the first meeting of the Apex Committee for DefExpo 2020 in New Delhi on September 9, 2019 in the presence of Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath.
- Rajnath Singh chaired Ambassadors' Round Table on DefExpo 2020 in New Delhi on November 4, 2019 in major outreach to defence manufacturing industries of the world. Heads of Missions and Defence Attaches of over 80 countries participated in the conference.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=196160>

Year End Review: Ministry of Science and Technology

Question: The Cabinet of India approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding with which country in the field of Astronomy on 12th June 2019?

(a) Finland (b) USA (c) Israel (d) Thailand

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The details of year-long achievements and work of Ministry of Science & Technology are as below:



Indian Science Congress (ISC), 2019 held at Jalandhar:

- Indian Science Congress (ISC) 2019 was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 3rd January 2019.
- The 106th Session of Indian Science Congress, 2019 was held from January 3-7, 2019 at Lovely Professional University, Jalandhar, and Punjab.
- During the Congress, significant lectures from three Nobel Laureates; 20 Plenary Sessions & several sectional symposia with top authorities from DRDO, ISRO, the USA, UK Universities, were attended by nearly 30,000 participants.
- Cabinet approves signing of Memorandum of Understanding between India and Thailand in the field of Astronomy (12th June):
- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding on the cooperation between India and Thailand in the field of Astronomy / Astrophysics / Atmospheric Science.
- The MoU will lead to new scientific results, human resource development through increased scientific interaction and training, joint use of scientific infrastructure etc. The MoU was signed in November, 2018.
- In a landmark decision, the Lok Sabha passed "The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill – 2019" on 8th January, 2019. The Bill has been formulated recognizing the need for regulation of the use and application of Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) technology, for establishing identity of missing persons, victims, offenders, under trials and unknown deceased persons.
- MoU signed for Inter-Ministerial Cooperation for Promotion and Facilitation of Agricultural Biotechnology Research and Education: The DBT and ICAR entered into Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 15th January, 2019 for much-needed emphasis on multi-disciplinary R&D activities in Agricultural Biotechnology Research and Education.

One Health India Conference, 2019:

- Two-day long One Health India Conference, 2019 was inaugurated on 18th February in New Delhi.
- The conference aimed to launch India's new One Health Initiative – an inter-sectoral approach to tackling the most urgent health threats in India as well as in low and middle income countries across South and South East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.
- Department of Biotechnology celebrates its 33rd Foundation Day in New Delhi on 26th February 2019 with the theme as “Celebrating Biotechnology: Building Indian as an Innovation Nation”.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and UK on Cancer Research Initiative:

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 7th March, 2019, has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and U.K. on Cancer Research Initiative. The MoU was signed on 14th November 2018.
- Government and IIT-Delhi to set up a Centre of Excellence for Waste to Wealth Technologies.
- MoU for Joint Collaboration on Cancer Research: The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), M/o Science and Technology and the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Government of India on 22nd May signed an MoU for supporting joint collaborative research programmes in the area of Cancer.
- India joined the Global Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Research and Development (R&D) Hub as a new member on 12th September 2019. This expands the global partnership working to address challenges and improve coordination and collaboration in global AMR R&D to 16 countries, the European Commission, two philanthropic foundations and four international organisations (as observers).

National Centre for Clean Coal Research & Development inaugurated at Bengaluru:

- Union Minister of Science & Technology, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated the National Centre for Clean Coal Research and Development at Indian Institute of Science (IISc)-Bengaluru on 16th September 2019.

5th India International Science Festival held in Kolkata from 5th to 8th November, 2019:

- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated via video conference, the 5th India International Science Festival at Kolkata on 5th November 2019. The theme of the festival “RISEN: Research, Innovation and Science Empowering the Nation”.

India's first-ever global Mega-Science exhibition, 'Vigyan Samagam', inaugurated at the Science City in Kolkata (4 November 2019):

- This multi-venue Science Exhibition, after its successful journey in Mumbai and Bengaluru, opened for public in Kolkata from 4th November till December 31, 2019.

- The Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), Department of Science and Technology (DST), the funding agencies of these projects and the National Council of Science Museums (NCSM), Ministry of Culture, who are venue partners and having expertise in design and hosting such exhibitions, have joined hands to organize this prestigious Science Exhibition.

First Indigenous Fuel Cell System developed by CSIR launched on CSIR Foundation Day on 26th September 2019:

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, on 26th September unveiled the first Indigenous High Temperature Fuel Cell System developed by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in partnership with Indian industries under India's flagship program named "New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI)" on the occasion of CSIR Foundation Day in New Delhi.
- A unique example of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) among CSIR's three Laboratories [CSIR-NCL, Pune; CSIR-NPL, New Delhi & CSIR-CECRI, Karaikudi (Chennai Center)] and two Indian industries; M/s Thermax Limited, Pune and M/s Reliance Industries Limited, Mumbai exemplified exploiting materials of science developments at CSIR laboratories into practice by Industry.

Union Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan launches "Green Crackers" developed by CSIR in a bid to curb air pollution on 5th October:

- Green logo and QR coding system was also launched to track manufacture & sale of counterfeit crackers. Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan announced that Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) labs have been successful in developing various environment-friendly fireworks such as sound emitting crackers, flowerpots, pencils, chakkar and sparklers.
- Union Minister of S&T Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated a demonstration plant for converting plastic waste to diesel:
- Union Minister of S&T Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated a demonstration plant for converting plastic waste to diesel based on technology developed by CSIR-IIP.
- This plant can convert one tonne of plastic waste into 800 liters of diesel every day that is of automotive grade and is in collaboration with Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) India.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=196226>

Year End Review: Ministry of Home Affairs

Question: Which of the following act related to Home ministry was not passed by the parliament in 2019?

Choose the correct option:

(a) 1, 2 and 4 (b) 1, 2 and 3 (c) 2, 3 and 4 (d) All of the above

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The details of year-long achievements and work of Ministry of Home Affairs are as below:

Important Bills Passed by Parliament



- Jammu and Kashmir – Abrogation of Article 370 and 35A ; The Jammu and Kashmir (Reorganisation) Act, 2019; The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Act, 2019
- National Investigation Agency (Amendment) Act, 2019
- Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019
- Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill, 2019 – aims to increase operational efficiency of SPG in ensuring the security of the Prime Minister of India.
- Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019 – focus on granting Indian Citizenship to persons belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities on ground of religious persecution in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.
- Arms (Amendment) Bill, 2019 – enhances the punishment for existing offences like illegal manufacture, sale, transfer and illegal acquiring, or carrying prohibited arms; illicit trafficking of firearms. Arms licenses to be issued for 5 years in electronic form, which would prevent forgery.
- Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019 – to make the constitution of NHRC and SHRCs broader and more inclusive.
- Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill, 2019 – Administrative efficiency, better service delivery and effective implementation of Central and State Government Schemes to be the focus.

Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh:

- Abrogation of Article 370 and 35A:
- Historic step to remove Article 370 and 35A of Constitution of India. Brought JK & Ladakh at par with other States and UTs. All provisions of Constitution of India, without any modifications or exceptions, to now apply to JK & Ladakh.
- Laws of Union Government wrt education, empowerment of SC, ST, Minorities etc to be applicable to JK & Ladakh. Boost to local economy and employment opportunities by increasing investment; Reservation to EWS of society in jobs & educational institutions to apply in JK & Ladakh.
- Betterment of socio-economic infrastructure in JK & Ladakh.

The Jammu and Kashmir (Reorganisation) Act, 2019

- Jammu and Kashmir reorganised into Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir with legislature, and Union Territory of Ladakh without Legislature which formally came into force on 31st October, 2019
- Maps of newly formed UTs of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh released.
- The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Act, 2019: 3% reservation in services and educational institutions extended to people living near the International Border (IB) in J&K, in line with reservation given to people living near the Line of Control (LoC).
- Amarnath Yatra: 3,42,883 yatris had safe and secure Darshan. Higher by nearly 20%, as compared to 2018.

Kartarpur Sahib Corridor:

- Union Cabinet passed a resolution on 22nd November 2018 to celebrate the historic occasion of 550th Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Devji in a grand and befitting manner, throughout the country and across the globe
- India signed the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor Agreement with Pakistan on 24th October, 2019. Indian pilgrims of all faiths to undertake year-round Visa-free travel to Gurudwara Kartarpur Sahib through Kartarpur Sahib Corridor.
- State of art Passenger Terminal Building (PTB) developed (estd. project cost – Rs. 400 crore), having modern public amenities and security features; architecture reflecting cultural heritage of Punjab. 54 Immigrations counters at PTB for facilitating travel of over 5000 pilgrims per day
- 4.19 km long, 4-lane highway worth Rs. 120.05 crores built, in record time of 6 months, on Indian side for giving accessibility for pilgrims to the PTB.

Strict Action on Terror and Insurgency

National Investigation Agency (Amendment) Act, 2019:

- NIA empowered with extra territorial jurisdiction for investigation of terrorism related offences taking place outside India, in which Indian property/citizens are victims.
- The mandate of NIA is expanded by inclusion of new offences viz. explosive substances, human trafficking, manufacturing/sale of prohibited arms and cyber terrorism, to its Schedule.
- Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019: Central Government empowered to designate individual as terrorist. NIA empowered to seize/forfeit property representing proceeds of terrorism in cases investigated by NIA.

Cyber Crime Control

- National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (www.cybercrime.gov.in) launched as a citizen centric initiative to facilitate public for reporting of all types of Cyber Crimes without visiting Police Station.
- Smart Fencing – Union Home Minister launched BOLD-QIT (Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique) under Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) on Indo-Bangladesh border in Dhubri district of Assam, as an effective deterrence against illegal infiltration.
- International Drug Syndicate busted – largest seizure of contraband drugs by NCB in India – 20 Kgs of Cocaine, worth Rs. 100 crores, seized.

National Register of Citizens (NRC), Assam published on 31.08.2019

- Machinery created for detection and deportation of illegal immigrants. 'In-principle' approval given for setting up of 1000 additional Foreigners Tribunals (FTs).

Government of India, Government of Tripura & National Liberation Front of Twipra led by Sabir Kumar Debbarma (NLFT-SD) sign Memorandum of Settlement:

- NLFT (SD) to abjure path of violence, join mainstream and abide by Constitution of India. Agreed to surrender 88 cadres with their weapons.
- Cyclones Fani, Vayu, Maha and Bulbul: Successful coordination of Assistance to States and execution of Rescue & Rehabilitation and dissemination of timely information to National & Regional Media by MHA.
- High Level Committee chaired by Union Home Minister approved Rs 4432.10 crore of additional Central assistance to Odisha, Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh. Additional financial assistance of Rs. 1813.75 crore given from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) to flood affected States of Karnataka and Bihar.
- 5375 persons rescued and more than 42,000 evacuated by NDRF from various districts of flood affected states viz. Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat

India hosted SCOJtEx-2019 for the 1st time:

- Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Joint Exercise (SCOJtEx)-2019 on Urban Earthquake Search & Rescue organized in New Delhi. Home Minister chaired 10th Meeting of Heads of Departments of SCO Member States, dealing with the prevention and Elimination of Emergency Situations

Pride of the Nation – Security Force

- Increasing Age of Retirement of CAPFs Personnel to 60 years. Ensuring Uniformity in Age of Retirement for Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) personnel

Census of India – 2021

- Foundation Stone of 'Janganana Bhawan' laid; Census 2021 to be conducted in 16 languages. All India Conference of State Coordinators, Directors of Census Operations for Census of India 2021 and updation of National Population Register in the country held.

Inter-State Council Meetings:

- North, West and East Zonal Councils Meetings organised by MHA. To foster Inter-State co-operation and co-ordination in the field of economic and social planning, border disputes, linguistic minorities or inter-State transport etc.
- Emergency Response Support System (ERSS- Dial 112) launched; operational in 28 States/UTs

Bilateral Agreements/MoUs

- India and Uzbekistan signed Security Cooperation Agreement.
- MoU between India and Indonesia on combating illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and its precursors.
- MoUs signed between India and Saudi Arabia in the field of combating illicit trafficking and smuggling of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Chemical Precursors.

- MoU signed between India and Myanmar on bilateral cooperation for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons.
- MoU between India and USA to access tip line reports on Missing and Exploited Children.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=196124>

Visit of Foreign Minister to Niger

Question: Who is the president of the Republic of Niger?

(a) Mahamadou Issoufou (b) Jacob Zuma (c) Paul Kagame (d) Emmerson Mnangagwa

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar visited Niamey, Republic of Niger from 20-21 January 2020.



Main highlights of his visit:

- During the visit, the President of Niger (Mahamadou Issoufou) with Dr. S Jaishankar jointly inaugurated the Mahatma Gandhi International Convention Centre (MGICC) on 21st January 2020.
- MGICC is the first centre to be established in Africa by India to honour the memory of Mahatma Gandhi whose 150th birth anniversary was observed in 2019.
- The establishment of the Centre is a landmark for India-Niger friendship, as also a symbol of India's firm commitment towards Africa.
- The Convention Centre has been designed as a spacious, modern and eco-friendly facility, including a 2000 capacity Plenary Hall, to witness high-level and wide-ranging participation from AU Member States and other high level Conventions.
- The construction of MGICC was completed in record time by M/s Shapoorji Pallonji Private Limited. M/s NBCC, a Govt of India undertaking, were the project management consultant for the project.
- During his stay in Niamey, EAM also called on Prime Minister of Niger Brigi Rafini and held discussions on a wide range of bilateral, regional and global issues with his, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Regional Integration of Niger.

India and Niger relations:

- India and Niger has close relations. Bilateral relations have expanded significantly in the recent years.
- India has provided Lines of Credit to Niger for projects in transport, electrification, solar energy and potable drinking water.
- Several hundreds of officials from Niger have utilized India's capacity building training programmes under ITEC programme.

- India has also extended assistance to Niger in support of organizing the African Union (AU) summit held in Niamey on 7-8 July, 2019.

Links:

[https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/32319/Visit of External Affairs Minister to Republic of Niger January 2021 2020](https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/32319/Visit%20of%20External%20Affairs%20Minister%20to%20Republic%20of%20Niger%20January%202021%202020)

‘SERVICE’ Scheme

Question: Which of the following PSU has recently started a scheme named ‘SERVICE’ to promote voluntary philanthropist activities by its employees?

(a) IOC (b) GAIL (c) SAIL (d) BSNL

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan on January 22, 2020 launched a ‘Service’ scheme of SAIL to promote Voluntary Philanthropist Activities (VPA) by its employees.
- The scheme called “SAIL Employee Rendering Voluntarism and Initiatives for Community Engagement (SERVICE)” will promote and facilitate philanthropist activities by the employees in a structured manner.
- The Minister also launched a portal for the employees to register for the scheme.
- The dedicated interactive “SAIL SERVICE” portal for implementation of this Scheme shall act as a platform for enabling faster interaction and communication amongst the various stakeholders.
- Through SERVICE, employees of SAIL will come forward to perform their social duties voluntarily and contribute towards social welfare and nation building.
- There is a need of mass scale mobilisation of employees towards achieving social good through voluntary activities, based on their interest areas.
- There are about 70,000 regular employees of SAIL and 60,000 contractual employees in various plants of SAIL. All these employees and their families will be encouraged to come forward and undertake such VPA for community development.
- They will be encouraged to undertake Voluntary Philanthropist Activities preferably under the identified thrust areas under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- These include education and health, women empowerment, sustainable income generation, assistance to Divyangjan, etc.
- SAIL will undertake mass mobilisation programmes in its plants and units to spread awareness about this scheme and to encourage employees to participate in VPS.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600276>

Induction of 222 Squadrons at Air Force Station

Question: In which Air Force Station did the induction of 222 squadrons take place on 20 January 2020?

(a) Ghaziabad (b) Kanpur (c) Thanjavur (d) Jaisalmer

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- No 222 Squadron, the Tigersharks were inducted at Air Force Station Thanjavur in a ceremony attended by General Bipin Rawat (CDS), Air Chief Marshal RKS Bhadauria, R Madhavan, Chairman, HAL on 20th January 2020.
- The resurrection of the 'Tigersharks' highlighted the Integration and Jointness which is the future of the Indian Armed Forces.
- Su 30 MKI aircraft along with the BrahMos extensively enhance the security of the Maritime domain.
- The Squadron will be operating closely with the Indian Army and Navy to get the ball rolling in jointness of the Indian Armed Forces.
- The decision to choose Thanjavur as the base for induction of the SU 30 MKI squadron was because of its strategic location.
- The induction ceremony culminated with a flying display by Light Combat Aircraft, Sarang Helicopter Display Team and Surya Kiran Aerobatic Team.



Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599898>

Defence Acquisition Council Meet

Question: Who chaired the first meeting of Defence Acquisition Council of 2020 which took place on 21st January 2020?

(a) Rajnath Singh (b) Bipin Rawat (c) Amit Shah (d) VK Singh

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 21st January 2020, the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh chaired the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC).
- This meeting was held to consider a number of new and ongoing proposals for procuring critically needed platforms and equipment for the Armed Forces.



Highlights of the meet:

- To promote indigenisation, the DAC accorded approval for procurement of equipment worth over Rs 5,100 crore from indigenous sources.
- These include sophisticated Electronic Warfare Systems for the Army designed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and manufactured locally by the Indian industry.
- These systems will be used in deserts and plains and will provide comprehensive Electronic Support and Counter Measure capabilities to the field formations in both communication and other aspects of Electronic Warfare.

- The DAC also approved prototype testing of trawl assemblies designed by DRDO for T-72 and T-90 tanks providing an important indigenous de-mining capability to the Army.
- In another significant step, the DAC approved shortlisting of Indian Strategic Partners (SP) and the potential Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) that would collaborate with SPs to construct six conventional submarines in India.
- This programme is being progressed under the 'Strategic Partnership Model', promulgated in 2017 to give a major boost to 'Make in India' in Defence Sector.
- The Strategic partner is expected to play a transformational role in building an eco-system in the country, comprising development entities, specialised vendors and suppliers; especially those from the MSME sector.
- SP Model also aims at promoting India as a manufacturing hub for defence equipment, in addition to establishing an industrial and R&D eco-system.
- The DAC also accorded approval for inclusion of Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) in Defence Procurement Procedure. This would provide avenues in capital procurement for the Armed Forces to startups and innovators working for iDEX and provide huge fillip to their budding efforts.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600018>

National Startup Advisory Council

Question: Which cabinet minister will chair the National Startup Advisory Council, which had been recently notified by the central government?

(a) Amit Shah (b) Piyush Goyal (c) Suresh Prabhu (d) Ravishankar Prasad

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The Central Government has notified the structure of the National Startup Advisory Council on January 21, 2020.
- It will advise the Government on measures needed to build a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and startups in the country.
- The National Startup Advisory Council will be chaired by Minister for Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal.



Functions of the Council

- The Council will suggest measures to foster a culture of innovation amongst citizens and students, in all sectors of the economy across the country.
- The Council will consist of the non-official members, to be nominated by Central Government, from various categories like founders of successful startups, veterans who have grown and scaled companies in India, persons capable of representing interests of investors into startups.
- It will also suggest measures to facilitate public organizations to assimilate innovation with a view to improving public service delivery, promote creation, protection and commercialization of intellectual property rights, keep control of startups with original promoters and provide access to global markets for Indian startups.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599998>

Tiger corridors in Country

Question: In which of the following states the Wildlife Institute of India is located?

(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Uttarakhand (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Assam

Answer: (b)

Related facts:-

- On 02 December 2019, the National Tiger Conservation Authority in collaboration with the Wildlife Institute of India has published a document titled "Connecting Tiger Populations for Long-term Conservation".
- The document has mapped out 32 major corridors across the country, management interventions for which are operationalised through a Tiger Conservation Plan, mandated under section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The Corridors grouped under 4 major categories were listed state-wise. The corridors are located in the Shivalik hills and Gangetic plains, central India and Eastern Ghats, Western Ghats and the North Eastern hills.
- In the Shivalik Hills & Gangetic Plains region, there are 3 corridors. It includes Rajaji-Corbett in Uttarakhand; Corbett-Dudhwa in Uttarakhand, Nepal and UP; Dudhwa-Kishanpur-Katerniaghat in UP, Nepal.
- In Central India & Eastern Ghats region, there are around 11 corridors. It includes Ranthambhore-Kuno-Madhav in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan; Bandhavgarh-Achanakmar in MP, Chattisgarh; Bandhavgarh-Sanjay Dubri-Guru Ghasidas in MP; Guru Ghasidas-Palamau-Lawalong in Chattisgarh, Jharkhand; Kanha-Achanakmar in MP, Chattisgarh; Kanha-Pench in MP, Maharashtra, Pench-Satpura-Melghat in MP, Maharashtra.
- The corridors in Eastern Ghats include Kanha-Navegaon Nagzira-Tadoba-Indravati in MP, Maharashtra, Chattisgarh, AP, Indravati-Sunabeda in Chattisgarh, Odisha, Similipal-Satkosia in Odisha and Nagarjunasagar-Sri Venkateshwara National Park in Andhra Pradesh.
- Similarly, there are around 8 corridors in Western Ghats and 10 corridors in North Eastern India.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority has also published a document titled 'Eco-Friendly measures to mitigate impacts of Linear infrastructure on wildlife' to safeguard these corridors from linear infrastructure development besides sensitizing user agencies.
- An amount of Rs. 370 crores, Rs. 345 crores and Rs. 350 crores was allocated during the financial years 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 respectively, while an amount of Rs. 350 crores has been allocated for the current financial year under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger.



Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=195280>

National Tribal Craft Mela – 2019

Question: In which of the following states National Tribal Craft Mela 2019 was organised during November 23-30, 2019?

(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Himachal Pradesh (c) Odisha (d) Sikkim

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 23rd November, 2019; National Tribal Craft Mela 2019 kickstarted in Odisha.
- Chief Minister of the state Mr. Naveen Patnaik inaugurated this seven-day long event in Bhubaneswar.
- More than 240 tribal artisans from 18 states including the North-Eastern states Sikkim, Manipur, Nagaland and Assam participated in this craft display.
- Local work cloth work of Assam like Gamosa etc. displayed here, these clothes were made by Assamese woman.
- Various kinds of items like iron, bamboo products, puppetry, lacquer craft, along with tribal jewellery were shown in the Mela for the sale.
- Handicraft items, handloom products, iron, bamboo products, puppetry, lacquer craft, along with tribal jewellery, craft and textiles were displayed by artisans during this seven-day-long event.
- The main objective of the Mela is to preserve, promote and popularise traditional tribal art and craft.
- This Mela is also helpful for the artisans to find better opportunities to develop their skills through cross-cultural interactions for commercial viability of their products.



Links:

<https://aninews.in/news/national/general-news/odisha-naveen-patnaik-inaugurates-national-tribal-craft-mela-2019-in-bhubaneswar20191124064142/>

Munderwa and Pipraich Sugar Mills of UP restarted

Question: In which of the following districts of Uttar Pradesh Pipraich Sugar Mill is located?

(a) Kanpur (b) Meerut (c) Baghpat (d) Gorakhpur

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 21 November, 2019; Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Adityanath inaugurated the newly-established Munderwa Sugar Mill in Basti district.
- Munderwa mill will have a capacity of 5000 Tons of Cane per Day and generate 27 Mega Watt of power.
- It should be noted that Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the Pipraich Sugar Mill in Gorakhpur on 17 November 2019.



- It was be third inauguration of sugar mills in the state in just three weeks after the opening of mills in Ramala in Baghpat and Pipraich in Gorakhpur.
- UP CM on the occasion of Munderwa Sugar Mill inauguration made it clear his government will ensure payment of sugarcane dues even if the state has to auction off defaulter mills.
- CM Adityanath also said that the state government, over the past two and half years, had facilitated cane payments of Rs 76,000 crore.
- Currently, the UP mills, mostly belonging to the private sector, owe about Rs 3,600 crore in farmers' payments for the previous 2018-19 crushing season.
- Like the Pipraich sugar mill, Munderwa sugar mill was closed. There was a long farmers' agitation in 2003 to start the mill.

Links:

<http://newsonair.nic.in/News?title=UP-CM-Yogi-Adityanath-to-inaugurate-Munderwa-Sugar-Mill-in-Basti-district&id=374849>

Ban on Junk Food in Gujarat

Question: Which of the following authorities has recommended a ban on sale of junk food in schools in Gujarat?

- (a) Government of Gujarat (b) Central Government
(c) Food Corporation of India
(d) Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

Answer: (d)

Related facts:



- The Gujarat government is in the process of banning sale of junk food in schools as well as in the 50-meter area around them to encourage consumption of healthy food among children.
- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has recommended a ban on sale of food high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS) in schools and the state government is in the process of framing draft rules for the same.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/gujarat-govt-to-ban-sale-of-junk-food-in-and-around-schools-119111801744_1.html

Punjab and WEF join hands to Promote Electric Mobility

Question: -World Economic Forum (WEF), which was established in 1971 as a not-for-profit foundation, is headquartered in-

- (a) Geneva (b) New York (c) London (d) Paris

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Punjab State government partnered with the World Economic Forum (WEF) to design a Public-Private pilot on shared, clean and electric mobility.
- The move aims to combat the growing problem of environmental pollution in the state.



- The state is preparing its own Electric Vehicles (EV) policy to support the adoption of e-vehicles.

WEF chose Punjab, as it is well-positioned for shared EV transition.

- WEF has already housed an existing auto component manufacturing base, besides having skilled labour and being a power surplus.
- The public-Private pilot will examine how Public and Private sectors can interplay to offer the most robust and successful EV ecosystem.
- It is a part of the collaboration to be formulated at the WEF annual meeting in Davos in January 2020.

World Economic Forum:

- World Economic Forum was established in 1971 as a not-for-profit foundation and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The World Economic Forum is the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation.
- The Forum strives in all its efforts to demonstrate entrepreneurship in the global public interest while upholding the highest standards of governance.
- The Forum engages the foremost political, business, cultural and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.
- It is independent, impartial and not tied to any special interests with moral and intellectual integrity is at the heart of everything it does.

Links:

<https://auto.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/punjab-partners-with-wef-for-e-mobility/72366123>

NDRF celebrated its 15th Raising Day

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) celebrated its 15th Raising Day on January 18 , 2020.
- (2) NDRF was constituted in 2006 with 8 Battalions.
- (a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer:(c)

Related facts:

- On January 18 , 2020 , NDRF celebrates its 15th Raising Day.
- The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai was the chief guest on this occasion.
- The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is a specialised force constituted “for the purpose of specialist response to a threatening disaster situation or disaster” under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.
- The “Apex Body for Disaster Management” in India is the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). Prime Minister is the Chairman of NDMA.



- These NDRF battalions are located at twelve different locations in the country based on the vulnerability profile to cut down the response time for their deployment.
- The aim of the National Disaster Management Authority is to build a safer and disaster resilient India by developing a holistic, proactive, multi-disaster and technology driven strategy for disaster management.
- This has to be achieved through a culture of prevention, mitigation and preparedness to generate a prompt and efficient response at the time of disasters.
- NDRF has proved its efficacy with its commendable performance during various disasters including the drowning cases, building collapses, landslides, devastating floods and Cyclones.
- NDRF has saved 1,33,192 human lives and retrieved 2760 dead bodies of disaster victims in 73 response operations in the country.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1599752>

Fourth edition of 'The Death Penalty in India: Annual Statistics'

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) The Death Penalty in India: Annual Statistics' was published by Project 39A of National Law University (NLU).

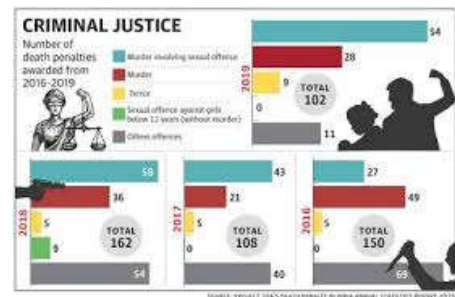
(2) The number of death sentences awarded for murders involving sexual offences in 2019 was the highest in four years.

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer:(c)

Related facts:

- Recently, the fourth edition of 'The Death Penalty in India: Annual Statistics' was published by Project 39A of National Law University (NLU), Delhi.
- The report states that higher number of death sentences awarded in India in recent years relates to the cases of sexual offences.



Major Highlights:

- The number of death sentences awarded for murders involving sexual offences in 2019 was the highest in four years.
- Trial courts: Imposed 102 death sentences in 2019, a significant drop from 162 death sentences in 2018. However, the percentage of sexual offences in these cases increased from 41.35% in 2018 to 52.94% in 2019.
- High Courts: 65.38% of cases of confirmations of death sentences involved sexual offences along with murder.
- Supreme Court: In 2019, the SC dealt with 27 capital punishment cases, the highest number since 2001. It confirmed the death penalty of seven cases out of which four were of murder involving sexual offences. It commuted a total of 17 cases of the death penalty.

- Warrants Issued: Six death warrants were issued in 2019 against one in 2018, with all warrants eventually stayed by the courts.
- All warrants that were issued indicate a lack of compliance with the guidelines issued in the case of Shabnam vs Union of India (2015), which requires that a warrant for execution not be issued until the reasonable time for exhausting all remedies under the law has lapsed and specifies procedures to be followed in issuing such warrant.

Reasons Stated:

- Amendment to the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, introducing stringent mandatory minimum punishments and death penalty for penetrative sexual assault on children was a major development.
- Andhra Pradesh's amendment to the Indian Penal Code to introduce the death penalty for rape under Disha Act.
- Widespread discussions on capital punishment in 2019 involving sexual offences against women and children.

Project 39A:

- It is inspired by Article 39-A of the Indian Constitution, a provision that furthers the intertwined values of equal justice and equal opportunity by removing economic and social barriers.
- Using empirical research to re-examine practices and policies in the criminal justice system, Project 39A aims to trigger new conversations on legal aid, torture, DNA forensics, mental health in prisons, and the death penalty.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/death-sentence-for-rape-murder-in-2019-highest-in-4-years-nlu-report/article30589789.ece>

NITI Aayog releases its Vision for the National Data and Analytics Platform

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP) vision was released by NITI Aayog.
- (2) The platform aims to democratize access to publicly available government data.

Choose the correct one:

- (a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- NITI Aayog released its vision for the National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP) on January 23, 2020.



Aim:

- The platform aims to democratize access to publicly available government data.

- It will host the latest datasets from various government websites, present them coherently, and provide tools for analytics and visualization.

National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP)

- NDAP will follow a user-centric approach and will enable data access in a simple and intuitive portal tailored to the needs of a variety of stakeholders.
- NDAP will spearhead the standardization of formats in which data is presented across sectors and will cater to a wide audience of policymakers, researchers, innovators, data scientists, journalists and citizens.
- An inter-ministerial committee will oversee the progress of the development of platform and a group of leading experts have been inducted into an advisory group to provide technical guidance for the development of the platform.
- The success of the endeavour is dependent on the cooperation and support of various stakeholders.
- The development of NDAP will take place over a period of one year. The first version of the platform is expected to be launched in 2021.
- The process will follow a user-centric approach, and will incorporate feedback received from various users and stakeholders throughout the course of its development.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1600370>

Stop on expansion work on commercial Karwar port

Question: Which High Court has directed the State government to stop all the developmental activities being undertaken at Karwar port ?

(a) Karnataka (b) Odisha (c) West Bengal (d) Kerala

Answer:(a)

- On 23rd January 2019, the High Court of Karnataka has directed the State government to stop all the developmental activities being undertaken at Karwar port under the Sagarmala project.
- Karwar is located in Uttara Kannada district at the Southern side of the Kali River.
- It is the only all-weather natural port out of 10 minor ports of Karnataka.
- It is sandwiched between the Arabian sea on one side and the Western Ghats on the other.
- It is known as Kashmir of Karnataka as it is blessed with a wide variety of flora and fauna.



Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/karnataka/stop-expansion-work-on-commercial-karwar-port-hc/article30637377.ece>

New Water Policy

Question: Consider the following statement New Water policy:

(1) The NWP currently in force was third policy drafted in 2012 since 1987.

(2) This policy was the concept of an Integrated Water Resources Management approach that took the “river basin/ sub-basin” as a unit for planning, development and management of water resources.

From the above correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only(1) (b) Only (2) (c) Only(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The government has finalised a committee to draft a new National Water Policy (NWP).
- The committee is expected to produce a report within six months.



National Water Policy 2012:

- The NWP currently in force was drafted in 2012 and is the third such policy since 1987.
- Among the major policy innovations in the 2012 policy was the concept of an Integrated Water Resources Management approach that took the “river basin/ sub-basin” as a unit for planning, development and management of water resources.
- It also proposed that a portion of river flows ought to be kept aside to meet ecological needs. Such an approach led to the government, in 2018, requiring minimum water levels to be maintained in the Ganga all through the year and hydropower projects, therefore, to refrain from hoarding water beyond a point.
- The policy also stressed for a minimum quantity of potable water for essential health and hygiene to all its citizens to be made available within easy reach of households.
- The policy also noted that inter-basin transfers of water should be considered on the basis of merits of each case after evaluating the environmental, economic and social impacts of such transfers.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/committee-to-draft-new-water-policy/article29947099.ece>

Supreme Court upholds disqualification of 17 Karnataka MLAs

Question: Recently which state has 17 MLAs of congress has disqualified?

(a) Karnataka (b) Maharashtra (c) Goa (d) New Delhi

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The Supreme Court has upheld former Karnataka Speaker's decision to disqualify the 17 rebel MLAs of the Congress and Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S) in Karnataka under Anti-Defection law.
- The Court clarified that the disqualification is till their re-election and not till the end of the term of the house as ruled by the speaker.
- The MLAs were disqualified by the then Legislative Assembly Speaker KR Ramesh Kumar ahead of the floor test of the HD Kumaraswamy government.



Anti-Defection Law:

- The tenth schedule of the Constitution lays down the process by which legislators can be disqualified on grounds of defection by the presiding officer of the legislature.
- A MLA is deemed to have been defected:
 - if he voluntarily gives up his membership of the party
 - If he disobeys party leadership on a vote

Links:

<https://www.news18.com/news/politics/sc-upholds-disqualification-of-17-congress-jds-mlas-but-allows-them-to-contest-december-5-karnataka-bypolls-2384647.html>

RIL among top 6 oil production companies

Question: Which of the following company has been listed in top 10 companies in oil production according to Bloomberg index?

(a) Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) (b) IOCL (c) ONGC (d) BHEL

Answer:(a)

Related facts:

- Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), the company of Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani, has once again created new history.
- The company's market cap has crossed Rs 9.5 lakh crore. RIL industry has become the first company in India to reach this mark.
- According to the Bloomberg Billionaire Index, Mukesh Ambani's total wealth has increased to USD 56 billion due to the increase in shares.



Links:

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/ril-s-mukesh-ambani-breaks-into-club-of-six-oil-elites-11574208116549.html>

15-point reform charter for a new political concept

Question: 15-point reform charter for a new political concept introduced by which of the following?

(a) President (b) Vice President (c) Prime Minister (d) Defence Minister

Answer :(b)

Related facts:

- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu unveiled the 15-point reform charter for a new political concept to ensure effective functioning in Parliament and State Legislatures.
- He also discussed the existing shortcomings of parliamentary democracy.
- The Vice President appealed to the political parties to ensure at least fifty per cent attendances for the proceedings of the House by adopting a roster arrangement.



- He was referring to the lack of attendance in the legislatures and the decline in the level of debate.
- He also called for a thorough review of the anti-defection law in view of its shortcomings.

Summary of Charter:

- As per the VP Venkaiah Naidu pre and post-legislative impact assessment should be done.
- The charter includes a review of the whip system which is stifling reasonable dissent even on non-consequential matters.
- Special courts should be established for time-bound adjudication of criminal cases against legislators.
- VP Venkaiah Naidu said that we should address the problem of the rising number of legislators with a criminal background.
- The government in power should be responsive to the opposition and opposition should be responsible and constructive while working in parliament.
- All political parties should understand the value of simultaneous elections and we should make a consensus on the proposal.
- A regular report on the attendance of members during the proceedings should be published by the secretariats of legislatures.
- In case of interruptions and disruptions, some rules should be framed against erring members.
- At least 50 per cent of attendance must be ensured by all political parties.
- He insisted that some concrete steps should be taken for the effective functioning of the Parliamentary Committees.
- VP Venkaiah Naidu said that the representation of women in legislatures needs to be raised.
- He also said that legislators should abide by the rules of the house.

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/to-reform-parliamentary-institutions-v-p-naidu-unveils-15-point-charter/articleshow/71812267.cms>

PM Modi inaugurates two-day Global investors' summit at Dharamshala

Question: Global Investors summit took place in which of the following city?

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

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 07 November 2019 inaugurated the two-day Global investors' summit at Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh.
- Over 200 foreign delegates along with local entrepreneurs attended the investors Meet.
- Ambassadors from 16 countries also participated in the meet.
- Addressing the Global Investors' meet – 'Rising Himachal' Prime Minister Modi said the states are now competing with each other to woo investors.
- Prime Minister said every state and district in the country has a role in India's efforts to become a five trillion dollar economy by 2025.



- Asserting that India has jumped 79 ranks in ease of doing business in last five years, Prime Minister Modi said unnecessary rules and regulations, too much interference of the government somewhere tends to prevent the pace of growth of the industries.
- Surpassing the earlier target of 85000 crore rupees of MoUs fixed by the state government, an MoU worth more than 92,000 crores rupees have been signed between the state government and the investors.
- Himachal govt displayed various initiatives launched by it to boost investment in the state. A short film on the investment opportunities in Himachal was also screened at the event.

Links:

<http://www.ddinews.gov.in/national/pm-modi-inaugurates-two-day-global-investors-summit-%C2%A0dharamshala%C2%A0>

5th India International Science Festival

Question: Consider the following statement:

- (1) 5th India International Science Festival was organised at Kolkata**
- (2) Theme of the festival was "RISEN: Research, Innovation and Science Empowering the Nation".**
- (3) India has emerged 3rd largest ecosystems for successful startups .**

From the above correct statement/s is/are:

- (a) Only(1) (b) Only(1)and (2) (c) Only(1) and (3) (d) All the above**

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The 5th India International Science Festival was organised in Kolkata.
- The theme of the festival "RISEN: Research, Innovation and Science Empowering the Nation" reflects the aspirations of 21st century India.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 5th edition of India International Science Festival (IISF) 2019 through video conferencing in Kolkata.
- The four-day science festival, organized from November 5-8 , aimed to build a strategy for inclusive advancement of Science and Technology.
- Prime Minister urged the scientists to be far more proactive in recognizing and responding to their broader social responsibilities with an aim to improve the quality of life of under-served communities.
- India has jumped from 81st rank to 52nd rank on the Global Innovation Index aided with initiatives taken by the govt.
- Also, India has emerged 3rd largest ecosystems for successful startups.
- More than 5,000 Atal Tinkering Labs have been set up and over 200 Atal Incubation Centres have been created, with an aim to instil scientific temper among the masses.
- The India International Science Festival (IISF) was launched in 2015 to promote Science and Technology. The goal of the Science festivity is to help youth, develop 21st century skills, with a focus on scientific knowledge, creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and teamwork.



Links:

<http://www.ddinews.gov.in/national/pm-modi-inaugurates-5th-india-international-science-festival%C2%A0>

National Waterway -2

Question: National Waterway -2 is between which of the following country?

(a) India-Bangladesh (b) India-Nepal (c) India-Srilanka (d) India-Bhutan

Answer:(a)

Related facts:

- In line with Government's focus on improving connectivity to the North Eastern Region (NER), first ever movement of container cargo on Brahmaputra (National Waterway -2) started on 4 November,2019.
- The journey of a container took place between Haldia Dock Complex (HDC) to the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) terminal at Pandu in Guwahati.
- The 12-15 days voyage is an integrated IWT movement via National Waterway-1 (river Ganga), NW-97 (Sunderbans), Indo-Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) route and NW-2 (river Brahmaputra).



National Waterway -2:

- It is a section of the Brahmaputra River having a length of 891 km between the Bangladesh border near Dhubri and Sadiya in Assam.
- As per the National Waterways Act, 2016, 111 waterways have been declared as NWs.
- National Waterway-1 (Prayagraj-Haldia) with length 1620 km is the longest National waterway in India.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=194209>

Expert committee formed to review draft of Sports Governance Code 2017

Question: A 13-member expert committee to review the Draft National Code for Good Governance in Sports, 2017 is constituted by which ministry ?

**(a) Union Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (b) Ministry of External Affairs
(c) Ministry of Skill Development (d) NITI Aayog**

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Union Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) has constituted a 13-member expert committee to review the Draft National Code for Good Governance in Sports, 2017.
- The committee will be chaired by Retired SC Justice Mukundakam Sharma and member includes former Indian football team captain Baichung Bhutia, Pullela



Gopichand, Anju Bobby George, Olympic medalist Gagan Narang, among others.

- Moreover, Joint Secretary of Sports will act as coordinator in committee.
- The committee will be required to suggest measures for making Draft National Code for Good Governance in Sports, 2017 acceptable to all stakeholders so that a balance is struck between autonomy of National Sports Federations (NSF).
- Committee's recommendations are needed for accountability and transparency and would also help bring government as well as all stakeholders on the same page as far as code is concerned.
- Committee will also examine comments received from Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and others on draft of National Code for Good Governance in Sports, 2017 and will be required to review draft of national code with present code.

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/more-sports/others/ministry-forms-expert-committee-to-review-sports-code/articleshow/72270938.cms>

Jal Jeevan Mission

Question: Consider the following statement Jal Jeevan Mission:

(1) The chief objective of the Mission is to provide piped water supply (Har Ghar Jal) to all rural and urban households by 2024.

(2) It was launched by Minister of Jal Shakti.

From the above correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only(1) (b) Only (2) (c) Only(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On November 11, 2019, Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has emphasized the urgency to start work on Jal Jeevan Mission as the first six months of the mission are critical for the success of the mission.



About Jal Jeevan Mission:

- The Mission was announced in August 2019.
- The chief objective of the Mission is to provide piped water supply (Har Ghar Jal) to all rural and urban households by 2024.
- It also aims to create local infrastructure for rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and management of household waste water for reuse in agriculture.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission is set to be based on various water conservation efforts like point recharge, desilting of minor irrigation tanks, use of greywater for agriculture and source sustainability.
- The Jal Jeevan Mission will converge with other Central and State Government Schemes to achieve its objectives of sustainable water supply management across the country.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=194405>

India International Science Festival (IISF)2019

Question: Fifth India International Science Festival was organized in which city?

(a) Delhi (b) Mumbai (c) Kolkata (d) Chennai

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- Fifth India International Science Festival was organized in Kolkata.
- India International Science Festival (IISF) is an annual event organised jointly by science and technology related Ministries and Departments of the Government of India and Vijnana Bharati (Vibha).
- The festival aims to instill scientific temper among the masses, showcase India's contribution in the field of S&T over the years and encourage translation of its benefits to people.
- It aims to build a strategy for inclusive advancement of Science and Technology.
- Theme for the 2019 edition is 'RISEN India – Research, Innovation, and Science Empowering the Nation'.



Links:

<https://www.ndtv.com/education/iisf-2019-to-be-held-in-kolkata-from-november-5-to-november-8-2126879>

IFFI 2019 to screen three films for differently-abled

Question: On November 08, 2019 at the golden Jubilee International Film Festival of India (IFFI) screening films for differently abled children, which of the following is not listed in this:

(a) Uri: The Surgical Strike (b) M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story

(c) Lage Raho Munna Bhai (d) Questao De Confusao

Answer:(a)

Related facts:

- On November 08, 2019, at the Golden Jubilee of International Film Festival of India (IFFI), held the screening of Accessible India Films.
- This is collaboration between IFFI, Saksham Bharat and UNESCO with the aim to promote the creation of inclusive spaces for the differently-abled to access the joy of cinema through Audio deion.
- Audio deion is an additional narration that translates images, visual information or non-dialogue portions of film into spoken words so that visually-impaired people can access, enjoy and learn from works of popular films.
- This unique film section witnessed the screening of three films, two in Hindi – Lage Raho Munna Bhai and M.S. Dhoni: The Untold Story and one in Konkani- Questao De Confusao in Konkani.



Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=IFFI-2019-to-screen-three-films-for-differently-abled&id=374259>

Question: Consider the following statement:

1) OCI status to a foreign citizen of Indian origin to live and work in India for an indefinite period. 2) It was launched in 2005

3) Pakistani person can be the card holder to OCI.

From the above correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(1)and (2) (c) Only(1) and (3) (d) All the above

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On November 07,2019, The government has revoked British-born writer Aatish Taseer's OCI card for concealing key information.
- Taseer, on the other hand, said he wrote to MHA seeking more time to respond on the matter as the authorities just gave him 24 hours to reply.



About OCI

- The OCI card provides Overseas Citizenship of India status to a foreign citizen of Indian origin to live and work in India for an indefinite period.
- The OCI card was launched in 2005, under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2005.
- The OCI card was introduced after demands for dual citizenship grew, especially from the Indians living in developed countries.
- The Indian constitution does not allow its citizens to hold dual citizenship.
- While the OCI card allows the holders to live and work in India, it has its own limitations as the citizens having the card do not enjoy the right to vote, right to hold constitutional offices or the right to buy agricultural properties.
- In the UK, however, the OCI card is considered as holding dual nationality.

Eligibility criteria

- Under the eligibility criteria for the OCI card, the holder must be a citizen of another country and have the passport of the nation, except that of Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- The Indian government provides the Overseas Citizen of India status if the holder:
 - Was an Indian citizen on or after January 16, 1950
 - Belonged to a part that merged with India after August 15, 1947
 - Was eligible to become Indian citizen on January 26, 1950 or is a child, grandchild or great-grandchild of such a citizen
 - is a minor child, whose parents are both Indian citizens or one parent is a citizen of India
 - is a spouse of foreign origin of an Indian citizen or spouse of foreign origin of an OCI cardholder and whose marriage has been registered and survived for a continuous period of not less than two years immediately before the application

Disqualification:

- No person, who had been a citizen of Pakistan or Bangladesh or whose parents, grandparents or great grandparents were citizens of Pakistan or Bangladesh is eligible to apply for the Overseas Citizen of India status.
- Those who served as a member of any foreign military are also not eligible to register for the OCI card.

Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/writer-aatish-taseer-loses-oci-card-he-hid-info-that-his-father-was-pakistani-says-govt-1616881-2019-11-08>

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis submitted his resignation

Question: Recently which Chief Minister submitted his resignation to the Governor?

(a) Yogi Aditya Nath (b) Biplev Dev (c) Devendra Fadnavis (d) Ashok Gehlot

Answer:(c)

Related facts:

- In Maharashtra, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis met Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari and submitted his resignation letter to the Governor at Raj Bhawan, a short while ago.
- The present term of the State Assembly expires on November 09,2019.
- In the 288 member assembly, the BJP has emerged as the single-largest party with 105 seats while its partner Shivsena has won 56 seats.
- The BJP is insisting on Chief Ministership being the single largest party, while the Shivsena is aspiring for equal share of power with rotational arrangement to share the top position in the state.
- He also thanked the people of maharashtra for allowing him to serve them. He also said that he has run a transparent government and he has always stood with the people. He also said that there is a lot more to do in the state.



Links:

<http://www.ddinews.gov.in/national/devendra-fadnavis-resigns-aharashtra-cm-governor-accepts-resignation>

Chhath festival

Question: Which of the following is the state festival of Bihar?

(a) Chhath Puja (b) Durga Puja (c) Deepawali (d) Gudiya Puja

Answer:(a)

Related facts:

- The four days long auspicious Chhath festival worship of the Sun God began with ritual of Nahay Khaya.
- The rituals include holy bathing, fasting, standing in water for long periods of time, and offering prayers and food to the setting and rising sun.



- Chhath is a Hindu festival dedicated to the Sun god and his wife Usha in order to thank them for bestowing the bounties of life on earth. The Goddess who is worshipped during the famous Chhath Puja is known as Chhathi Maiya (also known as Usha, wife of the sun god).
- The word chhath means sixth and the festival is celebrated on the sixth day of the month Kartika of the Hindu lunar Bikram Sambat calendar.
- The main worshipers, called Parvaitin, are usually women. However, many men also observe this festival as Chhath is not a gender-specific festival.
- The festival is observed most elaborately in Mithila Province of Nepal, Terai-Madhesh region of Nepal, Indian states of Bihar, Jharkhand and UP. It is also more prevalent in areas where migrants from those areas have a presence.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=373813>

PM Modi attended BRICS summit

Question: PM Modi attended BRICS summit on which date?

(a) Nov13-14 (b) July 13-14 (c) Oct 13-14 (d) September 23-24

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Brazil from Nov 13-14 to attend an annual summit of BRICS, a grouping of five countries.
- The BRICS comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- The leaders at the summit mobilized on boosting overall cooperation among the member nations.
- Brazil chaired the group which represents over 3.6 billion people, or half of the world population and they have a combined nominal GDP of USD 16.6 trillion.



Links:

<http://www.ddinews.gov.in/national/pm-modi-visit-brazil-attend-brics-summit>

India achieves complete phase out of Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141 b

Question: Which of the following potent ozone- depleting chemical has been completely phased out by India recently?

(a) Carbon tetrachloride (b) Hydrobromofluorocarbons (c) Hydrochlorofluorocarbon- 141b (d) Methyl bromide

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- India has successfully achieved the complete phase out of Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141 b,
- This chemical is used by foam manufacturing enterprises and one of the most potent ozone depleting chemical after Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).
- (HCFC)-141 b is used mainly as a blowing agent in the production of rigid polyurethane (PU) foams.



Major highlights of the complete phase out:

- India has consciously chosen a path for environment friendly and energy efficient technologies while phasing out Ozone Depleting Substances (ODSs).
- India is one among the few countries globally and a pioneer in some cases in the use of technologies, which are non-Ozone Depleting and have a low Global Warming Potential (GWP).
- India had proactively and successfully taken the challenge of complete phase out of Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC)-141 b, which is a chemical used by foam manufacturing enterprises by January 1, 2020.
- On 31st December, 2019, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) brought out a notification in the Gazette of India through which the issuance of import license for HCFC-141b is prohibited from 1st January, 2020 under Ozone Depleting Substances (Regulation and Control) Amendment Rules, 2019 issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- HCFC-141b is not produced in the country and all the domestic requirements are met through imports. With this notification, prohibiting the import of HCFC-141 b, the country has completely phased out the important ozone depleting chemical.
- The use of HCFC-141 b by foam manufacturing industry has also been closed as on 1st January, 2020 under the Ozone Depleting Substances (Regulation and Control) Amendment Rules, 2014.
- Nearly, 50 % of the consumption of ozone depleting chemicals in the country was attributable to HCFC-141 b in the foam sector.
- The Ministry adopted a structured approach to engage with foam manufacturing enterprises for providing technical and financial assistance in order to transition to non-ODS and low GWP technologies under HCFC Phase out Management Plan (HPMP).
- Around 175 foam manufacturing enterprises have been covered under HPMP out of which, 163 enterprises are covered under stage II of HPMP.
- The complete phase out of HCFC 141 b from the country in foam sector is among the first at this scale in Article 5 parties (developing countries) under the Montreal Protocol.
- The phase out of HCFC-141b from the country has twin environmental benefits viz. (i) assisting the healing of the stratospheric ozone layer, and (ii) towards the climate change mitigation due to transitioning of foam manufacturing enterprises at this scale under HPMP to low global warming potential alternative technologies.
- The polyurethane foam sector has links with important economic sectors related to buildings, cold storages and cold chain infrastructure, automobiles, commercial refrigeration, domestic appliances such as refrigerators etc.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600233>

1st Sukumar Sen Memorial Lecture

Question: Who has delivered the first Sukumar Sen Memorial Lecture organized by Election Commission of India on 23rd January 2020?

- (a) Mohan Bhagwat (b) Murali Manohar Joshi (c) Pranab Mukherjee
(d) Ram Nath Kovind

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 23rd January 2020, the Election Commission of India announced Annual first Sukumar Sen Memorial Lecture Series.
- This Lecture has instituted as a tribute to Late Sukumar Sen.
- Sen (1898-1963) commendably conducted the first two General Elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, thereby putting India firmly on the map of democracy.
- The rationale behind instituting the lecture is to make a positive and constructive intervention in the democratic discourse of the nation within the constitutional mandate of the Election Commission of India.
- Former President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, delivered the first of the Lectures on 23rd January 2020.



Sukumar Sen:

- Sukumar Sen was born on 2nd January, 1898. He was educated at Presidency College, Kolkata and University College, London. Sen joined the Indian Civil Services in 1922.
- He served as the first Chief Election Commissioner of India from 21st March 1950 till his retirement 19th December, 1958. He conducted the first two Lok Sabha elections of India held in 1952 and 1957 simultaneously with the Legislative Assembly Elections based on universal adult franchise under challenging circumstances and little precedence to guide him.
- Sen is also credited with conducting the first general elections in the then Sudan in November-December, 1953 as the Chairman of the International Election Commission.
- He was awarded the Padma Bhushan for his distinguished contribution to public life. He was one of the earliest recipients of that award in 1954.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600111>

Lai Haraoba

Question: Lai Haraoba is a ritualistic festival observed in:

(a) Nagaland (b) Tripura (c) Sikkim (d) Assam

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 2 January 2020, Lai Haraoba kickstarted in Agartala, Tripura.
- Lai Haraoba is a ritualistic festival observed by Manipuri Meitei communities since ancient times.
- The five-day-long festival is jointly organised by the Department of Information and Cultural Affairs, Government of Tripura, Puthiba Lai Haraoba Committee and Puthiba Welfare & Cultural Society, Agartala.



- The festival was inaugurated by Speaker of state legislative Assembly, Rebati Mohan Das.
- The festival aims to uphold tradition and cultural values of the Meitei community.
- Lai Haraoba is celebrated through oral literature, music, dance and rituals.

Link:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Ritualistic-festival-%E2%80%98Lai-Haraoba%E2%80%99-begins-in-Tripura&id=377056>

Third International Symposium on Marine Ecosystems

Question: On 7-10 January, 2020; third international symposium on marine ecosystems – challenges and opportunities (MECOS-3) was organised in:

(a) Kochi (b) Manglore (c) Vishakhapatnam (d) Paradip

Answer: (a)

Related facts:



- On 7-10 January, 2020; third international symposium on marine ecosystems – challenges and opportunities (MECOS-3) was organised in Kochi.
- Eminent marine scientists, oceanographers, fisheries researchers and marine biotechnologists from across the globe participated in the symposium.
- MECOS-3 was organised by the Marine Biological Association of India.
- The four-day meet, held at the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute.
- It was expected that it would serve as a platform for discussions on a range of topics, including the impact of the climate crisis on marine ecosystems and an unusual warming of the Arabian Sea.
- The symposium is aimed at reviewing the concerns involved in marine ecosystem.
- It assumed significance in the backdrop of the recent spate of cyclonic storms and other climatic phenomena in the Arabian Sea.
- The meet also focused on the UN's sustainable development goal-14 (life under water), development of small-scale fisheries, recent developments in aquaculture, eco-labelling and green fishing technologies.

Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/agri-business/kochi-to-host-global-meet-on-marine-ecosystem/article30485472.ece>

Swachh Sarvekshan League 2020

Question: Which city has topped the SS League 2020 (in the more than 10 lakh population category)?

(a) Surat (b) Indore (c) Bhopal (d) Jamshedpur

Answer: (b)

Related facts:



- On 31st December 2019, the Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs (Shri Hardeep Singh Puri), announced the results of Swachh Sarvekshan League 2020 (Quarter 1 and Quarter 2) in New Delhi.

- Swachh Survekshan 2020 (SS League 2020), the fifth edition of the annual urban cleanliness survey conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), commenced from 4th of January 2020 across India, was also rolled out on occasion.
- West Bengal alone did not participate in the Swachh Survekshan League 2020.

Rankings:

10lakh population (more than 10 lakh population category)

Top 3 cities (Quarter 1):

1. Indore (Madhya Pradesh)
2. Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh)
3. Surat (Gujarat)

Top 3 cities (Quarter 2):

1. Indore (Madhya Pradesh)
2. Rajkot (Gujarat)
3. Navi Mumbai(Maharashtra)

1-10 lakh population

Top 3 cities (Quarter 1):

1. Jamshedpur (Jharkhand)
2. New Delhi
3. Khargone (Madhya Pradesh)

Top 3 cities (Quarter 2)

1. Jamshedpur (Jharkhand)
2. Chandrapur (Maharashtra)
3. Khargone (Madhya Pradesh)

Swachh Survekshan League 2020 (SS League 2020)

- Swachh Survekshan is the world's largest urban sanitation and cleanliness survey in India.

Objectives:

- To encourage large scale citizen participation and create awareness amongst all sections of society about the importance of working together towards making towns and cities better places to reside in.
- To develop, wherever required, community managed sanitation systems focusing on scientific Solid & Liquid Waste Management systems for overall cleanliness in the urban areas.

Operation of SS League 2020

- SS League 2020 is being conducted in 3 quarters, i.e. April- June, July – September and October- December 2019.

Evaluation

- SS League 2020 has 2000 marks for each quarter evaluated on the basis of monthly updation of SBM-U online MIS by cities along with citizen's validation on the 12 service level progress indicators through outbound calls.

Rank Category

- Ranks have been assigned in two categories, namely, cities with population of one lakh and above (with two sub-categories, i.e. 1-10 lakh and 10 lakhs and above) and cities with population of less than 1 lakh (under the < 1 lakh population category, the rankings are given zone and population wise).
- The 25% weightage of the quarterly assessments to be included in the annual survey scheduled to commence from 4 January till 31 January 2020

SS League 2020 Parameter

- In the SS league 2020, wastewater treatment and reuse, and faecal sludge management have been given special attention. In this regard, the ODF+ (Open Defection Free), ODF++ and Water+ Plus Protocols work as the guiding document for cities in this league.

Future Targets by GOI (Government of India)

- Single use plastic (SUP) free India by 2022.
- Innovative models such as the Garbage Café (where one can get a meal in return of plastic waste) to tackle the menace of plastic waste.
- Collaboration with the Cement Manufacturing Association and the National Highway Authority of India to promote reuse of plastic in road construction.
- 100% processing and safe disposal of solid waste.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1598071>

ASER report 2019

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) This report is published by Non-governmental organization (NGO) Pratham.

(2) It finds that older children perform better than younger one.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

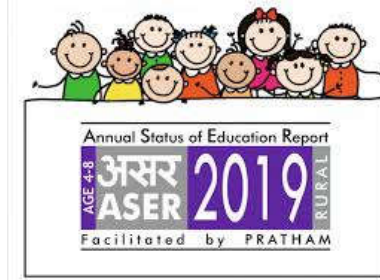
(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- Pratham – a well-known Non-Profit Organization has released the Annual Status of Education Report 2019 on January 2019.
- The report shared several key insights and interesting observations about the state of education, especially school-level education in the country.

- According to a brief analysis, Pratham's ASER Report 2019 showcases parents' choice of school when it comes to education of their students.
- According to the report, parents prefer private schools for education of boys while girl students are primarily sent to government schools to get basic education.
- In addition to this, the Annual Status of Education Report has also highlighted several other startling facts, which are discussed below:



ASER 2019 Report – Key Findings:

- Some of the key highlights and interesting findings of the Annual Status of Education Report are discussed below:

Choice of Schools-

- The ASER 2019 report states that parents exhibit a unique bias when it comes to selection of schools for their children.
- The report shows that parents are more likely to opt for a private school when selecting a school for boys while government schools are primary choice of parents when it comes to girls education.

Statistical Analysis-

- In line with the above finding, it has also been noted that between the age-group of 4-5 years, around 56.8% girls enrolled in government schools as compared to only 50.4% boys.
- On the other hand, when it comes to private schools, 49.6% boys were enrolled in schools as compared to 43.2% girls in the same age group.
- Even in higher age group i.e. from 6 to 8 years, some 61.1% girls were enrolled in government schools against 52.1% boys; while the number in private schools hovered at 47.9% boys against 39% girls.

RTE Admission Age Findings:

- Another key finding which came forth through the ASER 2019 was that older children perform better than younger one.
- The report stated that half of all 7 and 8-year-olds can do a 1-digit numerical subtraction problem correctly.
- Children's foundational skills improve in each subsequent grade.
- In line with this, the RTE / the Right to Education Act has recommended that all admissions under RTE to Class 1 be done after completion of 6 years.
- However, in reality 4 out of every 10 children entering Class I are less than 5 years old.

Recommendations:

- Based on the findings of the Annual State of Education Report 2019, Pratham has made some interesting recommendations to improve the state of school-level education in the country.

It includes-

- Strengthening and expansion of the existing network of Anganwadi Centres
- Age of students play an important role in development of language, numeracy, social and emotional learning.
- Enrolling students in primary grades at right age important for overall development.
- Age group between 4 to 8 years seen as continuous progressive stages, so curriculum development should be done in accordance with it.

Links: <http://img.asercentre.org/docs/ASER%202018/Release%20Material/asereport2018.pdf>

First digital exhibition on Indian Heritage inaugurated

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) State of Culture and Tourism minister Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated the exhibition on Indian Heritage in Digital Space.

(2) The exhibition aims to reach people in a way that they get a chance to know and understand the unseen aspects of heritage sites easily.

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above.

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- On January 15, 2020 , State of Culture and Tourism minister Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated the exhibition on Indian Heritage in Digital Space.
- The exhibition was launched for a month , this long special exhibition titled Indian Heritage in Digital Space and a 2 day long 1st international heritage symposium.
- The exhibition was organized by Ministry of Culture and Tourism in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi.
- The exhibition aims to reach people in a way that they get a chance to know and understand the unseen aspects of heritage sites easily.
- This special exhibition showcase adaptation and infusion of technologies being developed under the Indian Digital Heritage (IDH) initiative of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India in the cultural heritage domain of the country.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1599491>

Year End Review 2019 – Ministry of Power

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) SAUBHAGYA scheme objective is to achieve universal household electrification to all remaining un-electrified households in rural and urban areas by 31st March, 2019.

(2) Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram JyotiYojana (DDUGJY) worked for objective that 100% villages across the country stands electrified.

(3) Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has been conferred

with the Maharatna Status by the Government.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) All the above

Answer:(d)

Related facts:

- The details of year-long achievements for Ministry of Power are as below :

Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (SAUBHAGYA):

- Launched in September, 2017 with the objective to achieve universal household electrification by providing last mile connectivity and electricity connections to all remaining un-electrified households in rural and urban areas by 31st March, 2019.
- Scheme Outlay: Rs. 16320 Crore including GOI Grant of Rs. 12320 Crore. GOI Grant released: Rs. 5720 Crore. As on 31st March, 2019, all States reported electrification of all willing households under 'Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana' (Saubhagya), except few households in LWE affected Bastar region of Chhattisgarh.

Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY):

- 100% villages across the country stands electrified as on 28th April, 2018. Total Scheme Outlay is Rs.75893 Crore (DDUGJY: Rs. 43033 crore and RE Component: Rs.32860 Crore).
- Projects with total cost of Rs. 43486 crore have been sanctioned in 32 States/UTs.

Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS):

- Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS) was launched in the year 2014 with an Outlay of Rs. 32,612 crore for improving and augmenting the distribution and sub-transmission systems in Urban areas with a view to improve reliability.
- Under the scheme, till today, system strengthening of sub-transmission and distribution network has been in 371 circles. 560 additional urban Towns have been IT-enabled, and about 30,000 kms of HT/LT lines have been installed across 546 circles in the country.
- 820 new substations have been constructed, while more than 50,000 Distribution transformers have been installed.
- Under the older projects subsumed under IPDS, till now, 1287 towns have been IT enabled, and SCADA systems have been completed in 57 towns.



Smart Metering:

- In the current financial year, Ministry of Power has issued guidelines to all States to convert all existing consumer meters into Smart meters in prepaid mode.

- Operation of Smart meters in prepaid mode would allow consumers to pay as per their own financial convenience and electricity consumption requirements.
- EESL, a JV between CPSUs in the power sector, has been providing Smart metering services to various Utilities as per MOUs entered into with them.

Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY):

- Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY), a scheme for financial and operation turn around of Power Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) was launched by the Government for State owned Distribution Utilities on 20-11-2015 at a time when the outstanding debts and losses of the Distribution utilities had increased to levels that were adversely affecting the viability of the Power and Banking Sectors.
- The purpose of UDAY was to usher reforms across the Power and coal Sectors through competitive and cooperative federalism to pave the way for 24X7 affordable and reliable Power for all.
- UDAY scheme is now in final stages, with majority of states having completed 3 years at the end of FY19.

Hydro:

- 16% higher generation (120.7 BU) in 2019-20 (April ~ Nov.) from generation (103.9 BU) in 2018-19 (April ~ Nov.) Mangdechhu hydropower project (720 MW) in Bhutan commissioned in August 2019 and inaugurated by Prime Minister on 17.08.2019.
- Himachal Pradesh has also deferred free power, agreed for 50% reimbursement of State GST and for booking 1.5% LADF to any head other than project cost.
- One Nation-One Grid-One Frequency: Expansion of ISTS transmission lines (220 kV and above) by 14,546 km. Transformation capacity addition of ISTS network by 74,910 MVA. Inter-Regional Transfer capacity of addition of 5,700 MW
- Eight REMCs have been commissioned in the States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamilnadu, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat and Southern Regional Load Despatch Centre and Western Regional Load Centre during 2019
- Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) has been conferred with the coveted Maharatna Status by the Government of India on 23.10.2019.

National Energy Conservation Awards and Painting Competition:

- Bureau of Energy Efficiency has been organizing school, state and national level painting competitions across the country every year. During 2019, over 84 lakhs students participated in these competitions and awards are to be given to the winners during the occasion of National Energy Conservation Day i.e. 14th December, 2019.
- North Eastern states: Over 1 crore LED bulbs, 93,900 LED tube lights and 3.65 lakh energy efficient fans distributed under UJALA scheme. Over 1 lakh LED street lights installed under SLNP.
- Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA): Over 36.10 crore LED bulbs, 71.61 lakh LED tube lights and 23.10 lakh energy efficient fans distributed across the country. This has resulted in estimated energy savings of 47 billion kWh per year with avoided peak demand of 9,590 MW.

Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP):

- Over 1 crore energy efficient LED streetlights have been installed across the country.
- This has resulted in estimated energy savings of 6.9 billion kWh per year with avoided peak demand of 1,152 MW, estimated GHG emission reduction of 4.76 million t CO₂ per year and estimated annual cost saving of INR 2,686 crore in electricity bills of Municipalities.
- Procurement process of 10,000 e-cars concluded. The price discovered for e-cars is 25 % less than similar cars in market.
- Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure: EESL is also installing Public Charging Stations to promote Electric vehicles. Till date, 65 nos. of Public Charging Stations (PCS) have been commissioned in New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) area.
- Atal Jyoti Yojana (AJAY) and Solar Study Lamp scheme:
- Over 1.48 lakh Solar LED Street Lights commissioned in rural areas under AJAY and over 59.18 lakh Solar Study Lamps distributed to school going students under Solar Study Lamp scheme.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599334>

Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA)

Question: Consider the following statements about CARA:

(1) Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) has been set up as a statutory body of the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

(2) It deals with inter-country adoptions in accordance with the provisions of the Hague Conventions on Inter-Country Adoptions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both (1) and (2)

(d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:



- The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) has celebrated its 5th Annual Day recently.
- CARA has conducted various training programmes and workshops at national and state levels for all the stakeholders of the adoption programme.
- It has also carried out a number of advocacy programs through various mediums for creating awareness and sensitization of the general public.
- It is giving emphasis to the rehabilitation of older and special needs children in various Child Care Institutions across the country.

Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA):

- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) has been set up as a statutory body of the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- It functions as a nodal body for the adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoption.
- CARA is designated as the Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions in accordance with the provisions of the Hague Conventions on Inter-Country Adoptions, 1993, ratified by the Government of India in 2003.

- CARA primarily deals with adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children through its associated /recognised adoption agencies.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599474>

Statue of Unity Listed Among 8 Wonders of SCO

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) 'Statue of Unity' is added in the list of eight wonders of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).
- (2) The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance.

Choose the correct one:

- (a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- On January 14, 2020, the Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar announced that 182-metre Statue of Unity in Gujarat has been listed in the eight wonders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).
- The Statue of Unity is a colossal statue of Indian statesman and independence activist Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (1875–1950).
- He was the first Deputy Prime Minister and Home minister of independent India and the chief adherent of Mahatma Gandhi during the non-violent Indian Independence movement.
- Statue of Unity, world's tallest statue is located on a river facing the Sardar Sarovar Dam on river Narmada in Kevadiya colony.
- The Statue was inaugurated on the 143rd birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhai Patel on 31st October 2018.



Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), is a Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance.
- Its creation was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.

The Wonders of SCO:

- It includes Statue of Unity in India, Daming Palace in China, Navruz Palace in Tajikistan, Mughals Heritage in Pakistan, Tamgaly Gorge in Kazakhstan, Po-i-Kalan Complex in Uzbekistan, The Golden Ring of Russia, Lahore the Mughals heritage in Pakistan.

Links:

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/statue-of-unity-gets-listed-among-8->

Prime Minister visit to Kolkata

Question: What is the new name of Kolkata port trust?

(a) Vivekanand Port (b) Subhash Chandra Bose Port (c) Bankim Chandra Port (d) Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Port

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi was on a two day state visit of West Bengal from 11 to 12 January 2020.
- He reached Kolkata and met the Chief Minister of West Bengal Mamta Banerjee at her residence on 11 January.



Other major highlights of the visit:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi participated in the grand Sesquicentenary Celebrations of the Kolkata Port Trust on January 12, 2019.
- Prime Minister unveiled a plaque at the site of original Port Jetties to commemorate 150 years of the Kolkata Port Trust (KoPT).
- PM also announced Kolkata Port Trust to be named after Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee.
- The Prime Minister also launched the Port Anthem during the event. He also handed over a Cheque of Rs 501 Crore towards final instalment to meet the deficit of pension fund of retired and existing employees of the Kolkata Port Trust.
- Prime Minister inaugurated Kaushal Vikas Kendra and Pritilata Chhatra Avas for 200 Tribal girl students of Sunderbans.
- The Prime Minister also inaugurated the upgraded Ship Repair Facility of Cochin Kolkata Ship Repair Unit at Netaji Subhas Dry Dock.

Sagarmala Project:

- The coasts are gateways to development. This is the reason the government started Sagarmala project for modernizing infrastructure and improving connectivity of the Ports.
- Thirty six hundred projects worth more than Rs 6 lakh crore have been identified under this scheme. Out of these, more than 200 projects worth more than Rs 3 lakh crore are underway and about one hundred twenty five have been completed.
- Kolkata Port is connected to the industrial centers of eastern India due to the construction of river waterways.

Visit to Belur Math:

- Prime Minister also visited Belur Math in Kolkata on January 12 2020, on the occasion of Swami Vivekananda Jayanti and National Youth Day.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599185>

Naval version of Tejas conducts its maiden flight

Question: The naval version of Tejas aircraft conducted its maiden flight from which of the following aircraft carrier?

(a) INS Vishal (b) INS Vikramaditya (c) INS Arihant (d) INS Khanderi

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- After completing extensive trials on the Shore Based Test Facility (SBTF), naval version of Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) did a successful arrested landing onboard on Kiev-class aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya on January 11, 2020.
- Commodore Jaideep Maolankar conducted the maiden landing.
- Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) is originally developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

**Important Highlights:**

- The MoD pronounced the successful take-off and landing as an “important milestone.”
- With the completion of this feat, the indigenously developed niche technologies specific to deck based fighter operations have been proven, which will now pave the way to develop and manufacture the Twin Engine Deck Based Fighter for the Indian Navy, which is expected to proudly fly from the aircraft carriers by the year 2026.
- The Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) has been working on a twin-engine medium-weight fighter jet for the Indian Navy’s future carrier force.
- Tejas aircraft took off for the first time last November with two beyond visual range (BVR) and two close combat air-to-air missiles (CCM) from Shore Based Test Facility (SBTF) at INS Hansa, near Dabolim in Goa.
- At INS Hansa, Goa, over 50 ski jump take-offs and landings were conducted by Tejas LCA. The first arrested landing was carried out in September 2019.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599123>

Meeting of the Island Development Agency

Question: Who chaired the meeting of the Island Development Agency focused on ‘Green developments in the island to reach a new height’?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Amit Shah (c) Rajnath Singh (d) Venkaiah Naidu

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, chaired the sixth meeting of the Island Development Agency (IDA) held in New Delhi on January 13, 2020.

Major Highlights of the meeting:

- The Island Development Agency reviewed the progress made towards the programme “Holistic development of islands”.
- For the first time in the country, under the guidance of IDA, an initiative of sustainable development in the identified Islands within scientifically-assessed carrying capacity has been taken-up.
- Development Plans with focus on creation of jobs for the islanders through tourism promotion as well as export of seafood and coconut-based products made in the Islands have been prepared and are being implemented in four islands of Andaman & Nicobar and five islands of Lakshadweep.
- In the second phase, suitable sites in 12 more islands of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and 5 islands in Lakshadweep have been covered.
- Model tourism projects both Land-based and Water Villas were planned and bids have been invited for private sector participation.
- As a unique initiative, to spur investment, it was decided to obtain clearances for implementation of the planned projects up-front. All necessary clearances would be in place before bids finalization.
- Environment and Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) clearances have already been obtained for four exemplary tourism projects of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- For strengthening infrastructure support, projects for improving air, sea and digital connectivity are also being implemented. Port Blair and another 7 islands in Andaman & Nicobar would get digitally connected through submarine optical fibre cable by June, 2020.
- Better communication services would facilitate setting up of Information Technology based and other Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the islands with incentives through Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands Industrial Development Scheme (LANIDS), 2018 notified on 1st January, 2019.
- The proposed airports in Great Nicobar Island of Andaman & Nicobar and Minicoy Island of Lakshadweep would catalyze the development process in the region.
- In addition, he advised to implement suitable strategies for sustainable utilization of fisheries resources available in Exclusive Economic Zone around the islands.
- Adequate technology-based facilities need to be provided to enhance fish collection, storage, processing and export of value-added products which would provide more jobs and generate additional income for the islands.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599301>

MHRD to transform Education Sector

Question: Narendra Modi Government has initiated the process of formulating a New Education Policy, Draft of this new Education Policy has been submitted by- (a) Dr. K Kasturirangan Committee (b) Ajit Kumar Committee

(c) Athreya Committee (d) Abhijit Sen Committee

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The Government has initiated the process of formulating a New Education Policy.
- The policy aims to meet the changing dynamics of the requirements of the population with regard to quality education, innovation, and research.
- In the year 2019, Dr. K Kasturirangan Committee submitted the Draft National Education Policy to the ministry.
- The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) took a leap forward in transforming the education sector with the motto of Education for All and Quality Education.



New programs mentioned in the draft:

- MHRD has launched the Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Program, DHRUV, to identify and encourage talented children to enrich their skills and knowledge.
- It also launched the National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) to improve learning outcomes at the elementary level through an Integrated Teacher Training Programme.
- To boost research and Innovation culture in the country MHRD launched many other new schemes in the Higher Education Department.
- A five-year vision plan named Education Quality Upgradation and Inclusion Programme (EQUIP) has also been finalized by the Department of Higher Education.
- In 2019 HRD Ministry also released other major schemes, like SWAYAM 2.0, Deeksharambh and PARAMARSH, of the Department of Higher Education.
- Under the Samagra Shiksha programme a total of 5930 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas have been sanctioned in the country out of which 4881 such schools are operational.
- An outlay of over Rs.800 crore has been approved under sports grants for over 10 lakh government schools of different categories.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=HRD-Ministry-takes-a-leap-forward-in-transforming-education-sector&id=377201>

Dhanu Jatra festival

Question: Dhanu Jatra festival, which recently began in Odisha and celebrated as the largest open-air theatre of the world, is based on the mythological story of—
(a) Lord Krishna (b) Arjuna (c) Lord Rama (d) Bali the brother of Sugriva

Answer:(a)

Related facts:

- On 31 December, 2019 11-day Dhanu Jatra festival began in Bargarh in western Odisha.

- The famous Dhanu Jatra celebrated as the largest open-air theatre of the world and based on the mythological story of Lord Krishna and his demon uncle King Kansa.
- Around 3,000 artists of 120 cultural troupes from across the state and from neighboring states will perform at the Raj Durbar, Nanda Durbar, and Rangamahala during the festival.
- Dhanu Jatra considered being the world's largest outdoor theatrical festival that finds a mention in the Guinness Book of World Records.

History of Dhanu Jatra:

- The annual festival came into being in 1947-48 to celebrate Indian's Independence and to symbolize the victory of good over evil.
- Over 70 artists performed in the Dhanu Yatra at Mathura, another 45 artists played different roles at Gopapura during the festival.
- The department of Culture of the Government of India accorded the National Festival status to Dhanu Jatra in November 2014



Link:-

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=11-day-long-%E2%80%98Dhanu-Jatra%E2%80%99-begins-at-Bargarh-in-western-Odisha&id=376893>

Government approves over Rs 5000 crore fund for North East natural gas grid project

Question: Consider the following statement:

- (1) The Natural Gas Pipeline Grid will connect Guwahati, Agartala, Aizawl, Kohima, Imphal, Dimapur and Itanagar.
- (2) The Government has approved 'Viability Gap Funding' worth Rs 5559 crores to set up a natural gas pipeline grid in the North East.

Choose the correct one:

- (a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer : (c)

Related facts:

- The Government has approved 'Viability Gap Funding' worth Rs 5559 crores to set up a natural gas pipeline grid in the North East.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs gave its approval to the project on January 8, 2020.
- This is the second such funding approved by the Union Government for a gas pipeline project.
- Under the project, a capital grant worth Rs 5559 crores will be provided to Indradhanush Gas Grid Limited to build a natural gas pipeline grid covering eight north eastern states.
- The Indradhanush Gas Grid Limited (IGGL) has been set up as a joint venture company of five CPSEs – ONGC, IOCL, OIL, GAIL and NRL to develop and operate natural gas pipeline grid in the north east. It was set up in 2018.



Viability Gap Funding:

- The sanctioned funding will cover 60 percent of the total cost of the natural gas pipeline project.
- The total expenditure of the grid project is expected to be around Rs 9256 crores.
- The funding will help natural gas supplies reach different kinds of consumers such as Industrial, CNG (Transport) and PNG (Domestic) and substitute the liquid fuels.
- The Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas will identify major milestones for the project and link the same for the release of capital grant.

North East Natural Gas Pipeline Grid:

- The Natural Gas Pipeline Grid will be developed in the eight states of the north east including Sikkim and the seven sisters- Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura.
- The total length of the pipeline will be 1656 km. It will connect Guwahati in Assam to other major cities in the region such as Agartala, Aizawl, Kohima, Imphal, Dimapur and Itanagar.

Advantages:

- The availability of natural gas across the north east will help boost industrial growth in the region.
- It will also be environment-friendly and would offer a better quality of life to people due to the use of cleaner and green fuel and reduction in the usage of wood and kerosene.
- It will also boost production and exploration activities in the region and help connect regional gas sources with pipeline network for early monetisation of natural resources in the region.
- It will also open the possibility of installing bottling plants for LPG in the region to reduce transportation costs. The uninterrupted supply of LPG will bring energy security to the people living in the region.
- The Natural Gas Pipeline Grid project is a significant step towards achieving the central government's Hydrocarbon Vision 2030 for the North-East.
- The Government aims to bring in a gas-based economy and increase the share of natural gas in the country's energy mix.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/govt-to-provide-5559-crore-funding-to-northeast-gas-grid/article30513102.ece>

DefExpo India- 2020

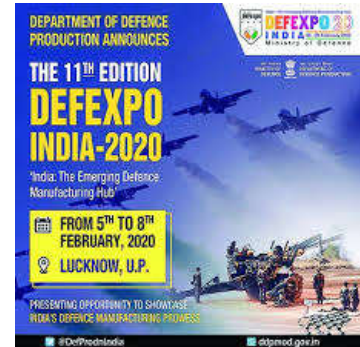
Question: The 11th biennial edition of DefExpo India- 2020 is to be held in- (a) New Delhi (b) Bengaluru (c) Lucknow (d) Chennai

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The 11th biennial edition of DefExpo India- 2020 is to be held from 5-8 February 2020 in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- The preparations were reviewed by the Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on 5 January 2020.

- It is expected to be the largest exhibition for the world's defence companies to display their land, sea and air capabilities at a single exhibition.
- Defence Expo- 2020 will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The theme of the expo is India: The Emerging Defence Manufacturing Hub.
- The previous expo was held in Chennai, Tamil Nadu in 2018. It was held over an 80-acre area. The 2020 Def Expo is organized over a 200-acre area.
- It is expected that 65 MoUs will be signed with the Indian and foreign defence companies at the Lucknow expo.
- India has 135 countries to participate in the event till now 70 countries confirmed their participation.
- The defence ministers and army chiefs of 25 countries are expected to participate in the programme.
- Around 925 exhibitors are expected to participate in the event as well as top defence manufacturers from the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, South Korea, France, Sweden etc. will participate in the expo.



Links:-

<https://defexpo.gov.in/>

Amma Vodi scheme

Question: Consider the following statement:

(1) The flagship 'Amma Vodi' scheme aims to support lakhs of below poverty line mothers or guardians to educate their children.

(2) It was launched by Tamil Nadu Government.

Choose the correct one:

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer :(a)

Related facts:

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the flagship 'Amma Vodi' scheme to support lakhs of below poverty line mothers or guardians to educate their children.
- Under the Rs 6318 crore scheme, the state will provide direct financial assistance worth Rs 15000 annually to poor and financially weak mothers or guardians, to support them in educating their children.
- The amount will be transferred directly into the bank accounts of the beneficiaries in January every year.



Beneficiaries

- All below poverty line mothers/ guardians in the state with school-going children, studying in class 1-12 in either private, government, aided or unaided schools will be eligible for the financial assistance.

- The state government has credited the annual financial assistance under the Amma Vodi scheme for the year 2020 into the accounts of 43 lakh poor and needy mothers/guardians, which is expected to benefit around 82 lakh children in the state.

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/vijayawada/andhra-pradesh-cm-launches-rs-6318-crore-amma-vodi-scheme-for-indigent-mothers/articleshow/73172250.cms>

State Energy Efficiency Index 2019

Question: Consider the following statement:

(1) The first “State Energy Efficiency Preparedness Index 2018”, was launched on August 1, 2018.

(2) The top-performing states for 2019 are Haryana, Kerala and Karnataka, are in the ‘Achiever’ category.

Choose the correct one:

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- The government has released the ‘State Energy Efficiency Index 2019’.
- The Index tracks the progress of Energy Efficiency (EE) initiatives in states and union territories based on 97 significant indicators.
- Assessment is based on their efforts and achievements in policy and regulation, financing mechanisms, institutional capacity, adoption of energy efficiency measures and energy savings achieved.
- The index incorporates qualitative, quantitative and outcome-based indicators to assess energy efficiency initiatives, programs and outcomes in five distinct sectors – buildings, industry, municipalities, transport, agriculture, and DISCOMs.



Details about the Index:

- The first “State Energy Efficiency Preparedness Index 2018”, was launched on August 1, 2018.
- The index is developed by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) in association with Alliance for an Energy-Efficient Economy (AEEE).
- The 2019 index has included new indicators like the adoption of Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) 2017, energy efficiency in MSME clusters, etc.
- Data collection: The required data were collected from the concerned state departments such as DISCOMs, Urban Development departments and other departments with the help of State Designated Agencies (SDAs).

Key facts:

- For rational comparison, States/UTs are grouped into four groups based on aggregated Total Primary Energy Supply (TPES) required to meet the state’s actual energy demand (electricity, coal, oil, gas, etc.) across sectors.

- The index categorizes states as 'Front Runner', 'Achiever', 'Contender' and 'Aspirant' based on their efforts and achievements towards energy efficiency implementation.
- The top-performing states for 2019 are Haryana, Kerala and Karnataka, are in the 'Achiever' category.
- Manipur, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand and Rajasthan performed the worst in the Aspirant groups.
- Since there isn't state in the 'Front runner' category, it can be inferred that a lot more can be done at the state level to realise energy savings from energy efficiency.
- TPES grouping helps states compare their performance and share best practices within their peer group.
- The index will help states contribute towards national goals on energy security and climate action by helping drive EE policies and program implementation at the state and local level.
- It will track progress in managing the states' and India's energy footprint and institutionalizing the data capture and monitoring of EE activities by states.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599010>

Launch of Purvodaya

Question: "Purvodaya" is related to which of the following field?

(a) Coal (b) Petroleum (c) Natural Gas (d) Steel

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Ministry of steel in partnership with CII(Confederation of Indian Industry) and JPC is organising the launch of 'Purvodaya': Accelerated Development of Eastern Region through an Integrated Steel hub.
- Purvodaya will be a world-class steel hub. It would significantly contribute to propelling socio-economic development in the Eastern region.
- It is expected that the growth of the steel industry through such a hub will generate over 2.5 Million jobs in the region through its world-class logistics and utility infrastructure.
- The Eastern region of India, though extremely rich in resources, lags behind other states in terms of development.
- Eastern states of India (Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Northern Andhra Pradesh) collectively hold ~80% of the country's iron ore, ~100% of coking coal and significant portion of chromite, bauxite and dolomite reserves.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599007>

India's Energy Policies report launched

Question: India's Energy Policies report was launched in New Delhi by which agency?

(a) NITI Aayog (b) FICCI (c) International Energy Agency (IEA)

(d) Ministry of Petroleum

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- In-depth Review of India's Energy Policies report by International Energy Agency (IEA) was launched in New Delhi on January 10, 2020 by Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel, Pralhad Joshi, Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary, Dr Fatih Birol, Executive Director, International Energy Agency and other.
- India is now the third largest energy consumer in the world.
- India is in the midst of a major transformative shift in its energy sector.
- The energy policies has already been put in place by the Government and also those on the anvil, clearly demonstrate govt determination to embrace this energy transition in a sustainable and responsible manner.
- India's transformation to a gas-based economy and developing indigenously produced biofuels, apart from renewable energy and energy efficiency measures, can potentially achieve the much-needed carbon reductions.
- An estimated investment of 100 billion dollar in oil and gas infrastructure has been lined up. The gas pipeline network will soon be covering the length and breadth of the country; from Kutch in Western India to Kohima in the East, and from Kashmir in the North to Kanyakumari in the South.
- Government has approved viability Gap Funding/ Capital Grant at 60 percent of the estimated cost of Rs 9265 crore for the North East gas grid project to develop gas pipeline grid of 1656 Km in the eight States of the North-eastern region.
- The government is aggressively working to build City Gas Distribution Network covering more than 400 districts of India. This network will serve 72% of India's population with cleaner and affordable gas over more than 50 % of India's geography.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599000>

Fast Track Special Courts for Speedy disposal of Rape and POCSO Act Cases

Question: How many new Fast Track courts are decided to be set up for speedy disposal of Rape and POCSO Act case under the National Mission for safety of Women?

(a) 500 (b) 1000 (c) 1023 (d) 2000

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Incidents of rape and gang rape of minor girls below age of twelve years and similar heinous crimes against women have shaken the conscience of the entire nation.
- Therefore, the offences of rape and gang rape of women and children require effective deterrence through fast and time bound completion of trial relating to sexual offences.

- To bring out more stringent provisions and expeditious trial and disposal of such cases, Union of India enacted the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2018.
- This has taken up work of setting up of Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs) as a part of National Mission for Safety of Women (NMSW).
- Accordingly, the Central Government has started a Scheme for setting up of 1023 FTSCs across the country based on pendency of subject cases obtained from various High Courts (1,66,882 numbers as on 31.03.2018) for time bound trial and disposal of pending cases related to rape and POCSO Act.
- The Scheme was circulated to all concerned State Governments/ Union Territories Administrations in September, 2019.
- Out of total 31 States and UTs, so far, 24 have joined this scheme (Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, NCT of Delhi, Nagaland, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, UT of Chandigarh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh) for setting up of 792 numbers of FTSCs/ including 354 exclusive POCSO courts.
- 216 numbers of POCSO courts have already been operationalized in 12 States under the scheme.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1598939>

Sahitya Akademi, Iran Embassy organize Indo-Iranian Writers' Meet

Question: The cultural exchange programme Sahitya Akademi in collaboration with Embassy of Iran organized an Indo-Iranian Writers' in which of the following city?

(a) New Delhi (b) Bangalore (c) Kolkata (d) Hyderabad

Answer : (a)

Related facts:



- On 07 January, 2019, In continuation of the cultural exchange programme between India and Iran, Sahitya Akademi in collaboration with Embassy of Iran organized an Indo-Iranian Writers' Meet in New Delhi.
- The objective of the meet is to further deepen cultural ties between the two nations and heighten literary awareness among the readers at both sides.
- The meet was also aimed at providing a platform for meaningful-dialogue between writers of both countries.
- Culture Counsellor of Iran Mohammad Ali Rabbani, Secretary Sahitya Akademi K Sreenivasarao and eminent writer and scholar Nasera Sharma were present in the meet.
- The events also witnessed a panel discussion on Indo-Iranian Cultural Bonds.
- Addressing the gathering, Mohammad Ali Rabbani said, mutual understanding and communication have been the bases of the cultural and civilizational bond between the two countries.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Sahitya-Akademi%2c-Iran-Embassy-organize-Indo-Iranian-Writers%26%2339%3b-Meet-in-New-Delhi&id=377344>

Centre assistance to flood affected states

Question: How many states were given the financial assistance by Centre due to flood in their regions this year?

(a) 5 (b) 4 (c) 7 (d) 10

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The High Level Committee (HLC), chaired by the Union Minister for Home Affairs Amit Shah, met in New Delhi on January 6, 2020 to consider additional central assistance to seven states, which were affected by floods/ landslides/cloudburst during south west monsoon 2019.
- HLC approved additional central assistance of Rs. 5908.56 crore to seven States from National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) – Rs. 616.63 crore to Assam, Rs. 284.93 crore to Himachal Pradesh, Rs. 1869.85 crore to Karnataka, Rs. 1749.73 crore to Madhya Pradesh, Rs. 956.93 crore to Maharashtra, Rs. 63.32 to Tripura and Rs 367.17 crore to Uttar Pradesh for floods/ landslides/cloudburst during south west monsoon 2019.
- Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman, was present in the meeting, along with senior officers of the Ministries of Home Affairs, Finance, Agriculture and NITI Aayog.
- Earlier, the Central Government has released an interim financial assistance of Rs. 3,200 crore to 4 States – Rs 1200 crore to Karnataka, Rs 1000 crore to Madhya Pradesh, Rs 600 crore to Maharashtra and Rs 400 crore to Bihar.
- In addition, during 2019-20, till date, Centre Government has released Rs 8068.33 crore to 27 States as Central share from State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).
- Central Government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been providing full support to the State Governments by providing timely logistics and financial resources to supplement efforts of the State Governments to deal with the situation effectively in the wake of natural calamities.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1598547>

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 CO₂ 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 CO₂ 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 CO₂ 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% unclassified 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):**

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 lakh 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/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1598399>

International

India ranked 5th in Carbon Disclosure Project 2019

Question: What is India's rank in Carbon Disclosure Project 2019 report?

- (a) Second (b) Third (c) Fifth (d) Sixth

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On January 20, 2020, "Climate and business partnership of the future: CDP India Annual Report 2019" was released by CDP (Carbon Disclosure Project).
- CDP (Carbon Disclosure Project) is a not-for-profit charity running the global disclosure system for investors, companies to manage their environmental impacts.
- India was ranked 5th among the countries surveyed for corporate commitments to science-based targets (SBT).



- 58 Indian companies shared details about the environment-related activities undertaken by them in 2019.
- The report has ranked countries as per their responsibilities taken by the corporate business towards carbon reduction.
- **Top 3 countries with SBT companies:**
 1. United States of America (135 SBT Companies)
 2. Japan (83 SBT Companies)
 3. United Kingdom (78 SBT Companies)

Key Points of CDP 2019:

- The report surveyed a total of 6900 companies across the globe to compile their annual report for 2019. These firms contribute to 55% of world capitalization.
- The report notified that more than 98 % of leading Indian companies have formed some committee / group within its organization to meet & address climate-related issues.
- The report also found that investors responded to companies in a good manner who has disclosed their climate risk. The report also claimed that investors also took into account the environmental activity from Indian companies before investing in an organization.
- India secured 5th spot ahead of Germany (30 companies) and Sweden (27 companies) & becomes the 1st developing nation with maximum number of companies committing to the SBTs.

Links:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/science/india-5th-among-countries-with-corporate-commitments-to-science-based-targets-report/articleshow/73434464.cms?from=mdr>

Greece first female president

Question: Who has become the first female President of Greece recently?

- (a) Julia Gillard (b) Katerina Sakellaropoulou (c) Jacinda Andern
(d) Jayda Fransen

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- European country Greece elected Katerina Sakellaropoulou as its first female president in the latest parliamentary vote.
- Katerina is a High Court judge and popular human right activist of Greece.
- Since 200 years, the time since Greece proclaimed independence, no woman was ever voted to be the head of the state.
- A total of 261 deputies out of 300-seat House voted in favour of Katerina to assume the role of President.
- She will take the oath for the post on March 13, 2020.
- Katerina will succeed Prokopis Pavlopoulos, a former conservative minister who held this post for 5 years.



Links:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/22/greek-parliament-elects-countrys-first-female-president>

Global Corruption Perception Index

Question: Consider the following statement in reference to the recently released Global corruption Perception Index:

- (1) Global Corruption Preception Index is released annually by the Economist
- (2) India has been ranked at 80th position in the index
- (3) The index is topped by New Zealand and Denmark
- (4) India improved by 2 positions in the latest index

Choose the correct option:

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1, 2 and 3 (d) All of the above

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Transparency International has released the Global Corruption Perception Index 2019 on January 23, 2020.



**TRANSPARENCY
INTERNATIONAL**

Major highlight of the index:

- The Corruption Perceptions Index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, according to experts and business people.
- This year's analysis shows corruption is more pervasive in countries where big money can flow freely into electoral campaigns and where governments listen only to the voices of wealthy or well-connected individuals.
- The top ranked countries are New Zealand and Denmark, with scores of 87 each, followed by Finland (86), Singapore (85), Sweden (85) and Switzerland (85).
- The bottom ranked countries are Somalia, South Sudan and Syria with scores of 9, 12 and 13 respectively.
- The report is made on the basis of 13 surveys and expert assessments measuring public sector corruption.
- The report mentions that around the world, a majority of countries showed little to no improvement in tackling corruption.
- The report mentions that only 22 countries significantly improved their CPI scores in the last 8 years.
- 21 countries saw a significantly fall in their while remaining 137 countries, the levels of corruption show little to no change.
- India's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI-2019) went down from 78 to 80 in the latest index. The score of India is 41 out of 100, which remains the same.
- The report mentions that democracies like India and Australia have unfair and opaque political financing, undue influence in decision-making and lobbying by powerful corporate interest groups. This leads to no decrease in the corruption level.
- Asia Pacific region's average score is 45 showing general stagnation across the region.

- Neighbor China showed large improvement in the list as compared to the last year. It ranked 80 from 87 with a score of 41 out of 100.
- China and India are having similar ranking.
- Some of the major performers in the list are: New Zealand (87), Singapore (85), Australia (77), Hong Kong (76) and Japan (73).
- However, the low performers like Afghanistan (16), North Korea (17) and Cambodia (20) still shows the tough challenges that is in front of the world.
- The performing and leading economies of the world like China (41), Indonesia (40), Vietnam (37), the Philippines (34) and others are still struggling to tackle corruption.

Transparency International:

- Transparency International is a not for profit, non-governmental organisation which works to fight corruption globally.
- The organisation was founded in 1993 and is based in Berlin, Germany.

Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/india-ranked-80th-in-corruption-perception-index-1639648-2020-01-24>

Tropical Cyclone Tino

Question: On 17th January, 2020 which of the following island nations has faced Cyclone Tino?

(a) Indonesia (b) Japan (c) Philippines (d) Fiji

Answer: (d)

Related Facts:-

- On 17 January, 2020; Cyclone Tino has hit an island nation of Fiji.
- Second-largest Island in Fiji, Vanua Levu was hit by Cyclone Tino category 3 storms.
- Vanua Levu happens to be the second largest island in Fiji.
- Here Winds were observed at the speed of 130-140 kmph.
- The system was first noted as a tropical disturbance during January 11, to the southwest of Honiara in the Solomon Islands.
- Over the next few days, the system gradually developed further as it moved eastwards in between the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.
- On January 16, the system started moving south-eastwards towards Fiji and passed within 40 km (25 mi) of the Fijian dependency of Rotuma.
- The system had developed into a Category 1 tropical cyclone, on the scale as it passed near Rotuma.
- At this point the Fiji Meteorological Service FMS named it Tino.
- Tino continued strengthening as it passed over Fiji, bringing copious amounts of rainfall to the area.
- Whilst losing latitude, the system continued to strengthen and peaked as a category 3 tropical cyclone on January 17.



Links:

<https://www.accuweather.com/en/hurricane/potential-tropical-cyclone-tino-creeps-closer-to-fiji/663310>

Samsung's STAR Labs has developed world's first artificial human

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Samsung's future factory STAR Labs has developed Neon, AI-powered virtual beings that look and behave like real humans.

(2) NEONs are being called as the world's first artificial humans.

(3) Artificial human i.e. NEONs was firstly introduced at Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2020.

Choose the correct one:

(a) Only (1) and (3) (b) Both (2) and (3) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) All of the above

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 7 January 2020, Samsung's future factory STAR Labs introduced world's first artificial human i.e. NEONs.
- The project is led by Pranav Mistry, a human-computer interaction researcher and former senior vice president at Samsung Electronics.
- The AI-powered lifeforms, called Neons, were debuted at 2020s Consumer Electronics Show (CES) and included simulations of a yoga instructor, a banker, a K-pop star, a news anchor and a fashion model.
- NEONs are computationally created virtual humans — the word derives from NEO (new) + human.
- The NEONs are designed to converse and sympathise “like real people” in order to act as hyper lifelike companions.
- The Neons are still currently in their early development phase, acting mainly as AI chatbots in human-like form.



Links:

<https://www.neon.life/>

Taal Volcano

Question: Taal Volcano recently emerged in which of the following country?

(a) USA (b) Japan (c) Philippines (d) Canada

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- A volcano called Taal on the island of Luzon, 60 km from Manila, Philippines erupted on 12th January 2020.
- Taal is classified as a “complex” volcano by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS).



- A complex volcano, also called a compound volcano, is defined as one that doesn't have just one main vent or cone but several eruption points. Another such example is Mount Vesuvius on the west coast of Italy.
- Taal has erupted more than 30 times in the last few centuries, and the most recent was in 1977.
- It needs to be noted that the Philippines is situated at the boundaries of two tectonic plates — the Philippines Sea Plate and the Eurasian plate — thus susceptible to earthquakes and volcanism.

Link:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/01/12/asia/taal-volcano-eruption-philippines-trnd/index.html>

World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020 (WESO)

(1) World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020 (WESO) report released by International Labour Organisation (ILO) .

(2) The number of people unemployed around the world stands at some 188 million.

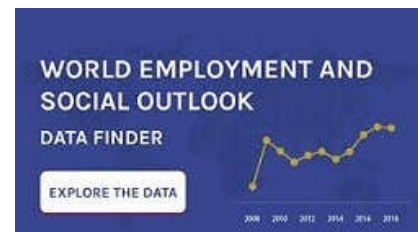
Choose the correct one:

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer :(c)

Related facts

- The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has released the World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2020 (WESO) report.
- The annual WESO Trends report analyses key labour market issues, including unemployment, labour underutilisation, working poverty, income inequality, labour income share and factors that exclude people from decent work.
- Major Highlights:
 - The number of people unemployed around the world stands at some 188 million.
 - Some 267 million young people aged 15-24 are not in employment, education or training, and many more endure substandard working condition.
 - Working poverty is defined as earning less than USD 3.20 per day in purchasing power parity terms.
 - It affects more than 630 million workers or one in five of the global working population.
 - 165 million people do not have enough paid work, and 120 million have either given up actively searching for work or otherwise lack access to the labour market.
 - Almost half a billion people are working fewer paid hours than they would like or lack adequate access to paid work.
 - It is projected to increase by around 2.5 million in 2020. Though, global unemployment has been roughly stable for the last nine years.
 - Moderate or extreme working poverty is expected to increase in 2020-21 in developing countries, increasing the obstacles to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 1 on eradicating poverty everywhere by 2030.
 - Reasons for Rising Unemployment:



- Persisting and substantial work-related inequalities (Gender, age and geographical location) and exclusion are preventing from finding decent work and better futures.
- These inequalities also limit both individual opportunity and economic growth.
- It is one of the major reason for not creating enough new jobs to absorb new entrants to the labour market.
- In addition, many African countries are experiencing a drop in real incomes and a rise in poverty.
- A rise in trade restrictions and protectionism restricts national as well as global employment generation.
- Labour underutilisation and poor-quality jobs mean our economies and societies are missing out on the potential benefits of a huge pool of human talent.
- Recommendations:
- It suggests countries to ensure that economic growth and development occurs in a way that leads to the reduction of poverty and better working conditions.
- It also recommends for structural transformation, technological upgrading and diversification in global as well as national economies.
- International Labour Organisation:
- International Labour Organisation (ILO) was created in 1919, as part of the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, to reflect the belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if it is based on social justice.
- It became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946.
- It is a tripartite organization, the only one of its kind bringing together representatives of governments, employers and workers in its executive bodies.
- India is a founder member of the International Labour Organization.
- It is Headquartered at Geneva in Switzerland.
- In 1969, ILO received the Nobel Peace Prize for improving fraternity and peace among nations, pursuing decent work and justice for workers, and providing technical assistance to other developing nations.

Links:

<https://www.ilo.org/global/lang-en/index.htm>

Global Social Mobility Index 2020

Question: What is the rank of India in the latest Global Social Mobility Index 2020 released on January 20, 2020?

(a) 50th (b) 67th (c) 76th (d) 43rd

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The World Economic Forum released the Global Social Mobility Index 2020 on January 20, 2020 ahead of the 50th Annual Meeting of WEF in Davos.
- The report summarizes to the point that greater social mobility can only help in narrowing the gap between rich and poor.
- The rank of India, most promising South Asian performer declined to the 76th position out of the 82 countries surveyed.



Major highlights of the report:

- The report finds that most economies are failing to provide the conditions in which their citizens can thrive, often by a large margin resulting individual's opportunities in life remain tethered to their socio-economic status at birth, entrenching historical inequalities.

Social Mobility:

- Social mobility can be understood as the movement in personal circumstances either “upwards” or “downwards” of an individual in relation to those of their parents. It is the ability of a child to experience a better life than their parents.
- On the other hand, relative social mobility is an assessment of the impact of socio-economic background on an individual's outcomes in life.
- It can be measured against a number of outcomes ranging from health to educational achievement and income.

Key findings:

- The Global Social Mobility Index reveals that there are only a handful of nations with the right conditions to foster social mobility. Mostly, countries underperform in four areas: fair wages, social protection, working conditions and lifelong learning.
- The report mentions that inequalities are rising even in countries that have experienced rapid growth.
- In most countries, individuals from certain groups have become historically disadvantaged and poor social mobility perpetuates and exacerbates such inequalities.

Key Rankings:

- The Nordic countries are the best performers. Denmark tops the rankings with a social mobility score of 85.2, closely followed by Finland (83.6), Norway (83.6), Sweden (83.5) and Iceland (82.7).
- These nations combine access, quality and equity in education, while also providing work opportunities and good working conditions, alongside quality social protection and inclusive institutions.
- Among the G7 economies, Germany ranked 11th followed by France in 12th position. Canada ranks 14th followed by Japan (15th), the United Kingdom (21st), the United States (27th) and Italy (34th).
- Among the world's large emerging economies, the Russian Federation is the most socially mobile of the BRICS grouping, ranking 39th with a score of 64 points. Next is China, which ranks 45th, followed by Brazil (60th), India (76th) and South Africa (77th).

Key suggestions:

- Creating a new financing model for social mobility: improving tax progressivity on personal income, policies that address wealth concentration
- and broadly re-balancing the sources of taxation can support the social mobility agenda.

- More support for education and lifelong learning: targeted at improvements in the availability, quality and distribution of education programmes as well as a new agenda for promoting skills development throughout an individual's working life.
- Creates action plans specific to each industry: these are required to address shifts in inequality taking into account each industry's differing circumstances.

Facts about India:

- India ranked 76th out of 82 countries. It ranked 41st in lifelong learning and 53rd in working conditions.
- India improved in area including social protection (76th) and fair wage distribution (79th).

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/business/india-ranks-low-at-76th-place-on-global-social-mobility-index/article30607184.ece>

Chair of the Group of 77

Question: Which country has assumed the chairmanship of the Group of 77?

(a) Guyana (b) China (c) Jamaica (d) Algeria

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- South American country Guyana under Ambassador Rudolph Ten-Pow took over the chairmanship of G77 (Group of 77).
- It assumed the chairmanship of the Group from the State of Palestine.
- In 2020, Group of 77 will be celebrating the 75th anniversary of the United Nations.



Group of 77:

- The Group of 77 and China is a coalition of 135 developing nations set up to promote its members' collective economic interests and create an enhanced joint negotiating capacity in the UN.
- The Group of 77 (G-77) was established on 15 June 1964 by seventy-seven developing countries at the end of the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in Geneva.

Guyana:

- Guyana officially the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, is a country on the northern mainland of South America.
- It is located in the northeastern corner of South America bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Suriname and Venezuela.

- It is the only English speaking country in South America, and is culturally considered part of the Anglophone-Caribbean sphere.
- It was originally a Dutch colony in the 17th century which later became a British possession by 1815.

Links:

<https://www.g77.org/nc/>

Volcano in White Island erupted

Question: The White Island, which is also an active volcano, is part of which of the following countries?

(a) Australia (b) New Zealand (c) Indonesia (d) Philippine

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 9 December 2019 the volcano in White Island in New Zealand's northeastern Bay of Plenty region explosively erupted.
- The volcano of White Island is an active strato-volcano, situated 48 km (30 mi) off the north-northeast coast of the North Island of New Zealand in the Bay of Plenty.
- The volcano has erupted many times in recent history, including several times in the 1980s.
- A major eruption formed a new crater in 2000, and small eruptions occurred in 2012, 2013 and 2016.
- The volcano had been showing signs of unrest for several weeks before the 2019 eruption.
- In October 2019, volcanic tremors and sulphur dioxide gas were at their highest levels since 2016.
- It indicated that an eruption was more likely to occur, and on 18 November, the volcano was rated at Volcanic Alert Level 2.
- It predicted moderate to heightened volcanic unrest, due to increased activity.



Links:

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/14/white-island-volcano-eruption-police-divers-search-sea-for-missing-bodies>

Global Refugee Forum 2019

Question: From 17-18 December 2019; the first ever Global Refugee Forum was held in-

(a) New York (b) New Delhi (c) Geneva (d) Paris

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- From 17-18 December 2019; the first ever Global Refugee Forum was held in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It was hosted by United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) along with Government of Switzerland.



- At GRF the international community displayed and exchange good practices at national, regional or global levels.

Aims or the objectives of the Global Refugee Forum 2019:

- This forum has been launched to give impetus to efforts to achieve compact's objectives and translate international solidarity into concrete action.
- **Six Thematic Areas focus under this forum:**
 - 1) Arrangements for burden and responsibility-sharing,
 - 2) Solutions,
 - 3) Energy and Infrastructure,
 - 4) Protection Capacity,
 - 5) Jobs and Livelihoods
 - 6) Education
- It has been expected that GRF could be able to make more states and other actors joining the response to refugee situation as donors, hosts and partners.
- GRF convened at the ministerial level and participants here gathered to address current refugee situation.
- It was a high-level gathering of states and other stakeholders including UN member states.
- Private businesses, nonprofits and nongovernmental organisations (including Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)) also participated in the GRF.
- High-level delegations from co-host Switzerland and from co-convening countries Germany, Costa Rica, Ethiopia, Turkey etc. as well as UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to attended the forum.

Four objectives of GCR:

- 1) Share responsibilities more equitably
- 2) Enhance refugee self-reliance
- 3) Expand access to third-country solutions (i.e., permanent resettlement or other opportunities such as scholarships or work permits)
- 4) Support conditions in countries of origin for safe, voluntary, dignified repatriation

Link:

<https://www.unhcr.org/global-refugee-forum.html>

2000-year-old massage was added to UNESCO's prestigious heritage list

Question: Recently a 2000-year-old massage was added to UNESCO's prestigious heritage list. This massage is prevalent in-

(a) Thailand (b) Philippine (c) Indonesia (d) Japan

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Thailand's famous 2000-year-old massage, Nuad Thai was added to UNESCO's prestigious heritage list.

- It is to be noted that about 2,500 years ago this Thai massage originated in India and brought it to Thailand by doctors and monks. They carried its secrets for generations.
- Under King Rama III of Thailand in the nineteenth century, scholars carved their knowledge on the stones of Wat Pho (a Buddhist temple complex).
- Nuad Thai is an intense form of massage in which the body is pulled and rotated well with the help of the thumb, elbow, knees and feet.
- This massage targets many acupuncture points of the body, which improves blood circulation. It also aims to cure muscle pain.
- Thai massage training has helped many people fight the shortage of jobs in Thailand.
- The Buddha School is inside the complex of the Watfo Temple, trained more than two lakh massage specialists.
- This recognition will help promote the practice of Nuad Thai locally and internationally.



Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/lifestyle/what-s-hot/story/2000-year-old-world-famous-thai-massage-could-make-it-to-unesco-heritage-list-1627161-2019-12-10>

Bangalore, Delhi, Mumbai among 113 cities in world on new Global Prosperity Index

Question: Bilbao, which was in news recently due to the release of first-ever Prosperity & Inclusion City Seal and Awards (PICSA) Index, is a city located in the country-

(a) Norway (b) Sweden (c) Switzerland (d) Spain

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On November 21, 2019; the first-ever Prosperity & Inclusion City Seal and Awards (PICSA) Index released in the Basque Country capital of Bilbao in northern Spain.
- Bangalore emerged as India's highest-ranked city at No. 83 in a new index of the world's 113 cities in terms of economic and social inclusivity.
- Zurich in Switzerland topped the PICSA Index list.
- This Index is designed to showcase not only the quantity of economic growth of a city but also its quality and distribution across populations.
- Delhi at 101 and Mumbai at 107 are the other Indian cities to make at the index, with the top 20 awarded a PICSA Seal as the world's highest-ranked cities building inclusive prosperity.
- Bilbao, the host city of the new index, is ranked at 20
- In reference to the index launch, Director of strategic programmes, Asier Alea Castanos, at the Regional Council of Biscay, expressed the following views:-
- As the first-ever non-commercial ranking index, PICSA provides a new measure of economic productivity that goes beyond GDP.



- It provides a holistic account of how well people are doing in the economy and which have the populations that are most empowered to contribute to its economy and share in its benefits.
- He further explained that there is increasing recognition in governments and also the private sector that success needs to be judged in new ways: factors like health, housing affordability and quality of life need to be put alongside jobs, skills and incomes when measuring prosperity.
- Commissioned by Basque institutions and compiled by D&L Partners, the PICSA Index measures factors such as the affordability of housing and access to education and healthcare, besides GDP per capita.

Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/bangalore-delhi-mumbai-make-it-new-global-prosperity-index-1621474-2019-11-22>

Ice from Arctic Ocean may vanish by 2044

Question: Ice from arctic vanished in which of the following year?

(a) 2020 (b) 2022 (c) 2025 (d) 2044

Answer:(a)

Related facts:

- According to a study, due to human-caused climate change, the ice present in the Arctic Ocean will end from 2044 to 2067.
- Researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles, however, have said that as long as humans are on Earth, the Arctic region will remain ice.
- There is a decline of 13 per cent per decade in ice-sheet. This series has been going on since 1979.



Links:

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/science/1205850/Climate-change-news-Arctic-ice-disappear-global-warming-human-blame-study-UCLA>

Freedom on the Net (FoTN) report 2019

Question: Consider the following statement:

- (1) China was ranked as the world's worst abuser of internet freedom.
- (2) Iceland was recorded as the world's best protector of internet freedom.
- (3) India was given was declared 'partly free' in its internet freedom status.

From the above correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(1)and (2) (c) Only(1) and (3) (d) All the above

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The Freedom on the Net report 2019 titled 'The Crisis of Social Media' was released by an international internet watchdog, the Freedom House on November 5, 2019.
- The report recorded an overall decline in global internet freedom status between July 2018 and May 2019.

Highlights of the report :

- The report assessed 65 countries and 33 among them showed an overall decline in internet freedom since June 2018. Only 16 countries showed improvements in their internet freedom status.
- Some of the countries that showed the biggest decline in internet freedom include Sudan, Kazakhstan, Brazil, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe.
- The country that recorded the biggest improvement in its internet freedom score in 2019 included Ethiopia.
- China with an overall score of 10 was adjudged 'not free' and as the world's worst abuser of internet freedom for the fourth consecutive year.
- Pakistan was given a score of 26 and was declared 'not free' in internet freedom status for the 9th consecutive year.
- Though the online environment was reported to be vibrant and free from state censorship in the United States, the report saw a decline in the overall internet freedom in the US for the third straight year. The US had an overall score of 77.
- The internet freedom status in Malaysia and Armenia also recorded a positive trend.
- Iceland was recorded as the world's best protector of internet freedom, as it had no civil or criminal cases registered against users for online expression during the coverage period. Iceland ranked the highest with an overall score of 95.



India in this report:

- India was given an overall score of 55 in the Freedom on the Net 2019 report and was declared 'partly free' in its internet freedom status.

About Freedom on the net:

- Freedom on the Net is a comprehensive study of internet freedom in 65 nations across the globe. The report covers 87 percent of the world's total internet users.
- The annual report tracks declines and improvement in internet freedom.
- The 2019 edition is the ninth report in the series, which focused on internet freedom in the period between June 2018 and May 2019.
- The report has chosen specific countries to represent diverse geographical regions.
- The 2019 edition of the report was created from the data of 70 analysts.
- The report provides the overall scores to countries using a 21-question research methodology, which addresses freedom of expression, internet access and privacy issues.

Links:

<https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3036312/china-worst-abuser-internet-freedom-online-censorship-hits>

Brown to Green Report 2019

Question: Consider the following statement:

(1) The 2019 Brown to Green Report has been published by the Climate Transparency partnership.

(2) Energy-related carbon dioxide emissions in G20 countries shot up by 1.8 per cent in 2018.

From the above correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only(1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The 2019 Brown to Green Report has been published by the Climate Transparency partnership, an international research collaboration.
- The report is the most comprehensive review of G20 countries' climate performance, mapping achievements and drawbacks in their efforts to reduce emissions, adapt to climate impacts and green the financial system.



Important facts:

- Carbon emissions from the world's 20 biggest economies, including India, are rising.
- None of the G20 countries have plans that will help them achieve the target. Many of the current 2030 climate targets under the Paris Agreement (Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs) are too weak, with about half of the G20 countries projected to meet or overachieve their inadequate NDCs.
- Energy-related carbon dioxide emissions in G20 countries shot up by 1.8 per cent in 2018 due to rising energy demand.
- Energy supply is not getting cleaner: despite a more than five per cent rise in G20 total renewable energy supply in 2018, the share of fossil fuels in the G20 energy mix remains at 82 per cent.
- While renewables now account for 25.5 per cent of power generation, this is not sufficient to outweigh the growth of emissions from fossil fuel sources.
- Low-carbon fuels need to increase roughly 10 times by 2050 to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- G20 emissions in the building sector grew more than in any other sector in 2018 (4.1 per cent). Retrofitting existing buildings challenges all G20 and especially OECD countries. New buildings have to be near zero-energy by 2020-25 to keep global warming below 1.5 degrees.



Links:

<https://www.powerengineeringint.com/2019/11/12/top-emitters-named-in-g20-brown-to-green-report/>

Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) 2020

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) India has 72nd position in the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) 2020.

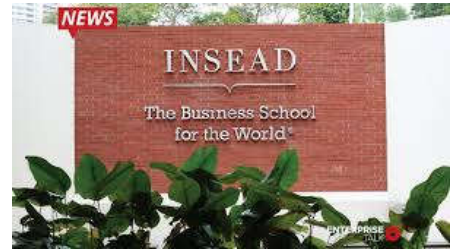
(2) The theme of this index is ‘Global Talent in the Age of Artificial Intelligence’.

Choose the correct one:

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer :(c)

Related facts:



- India has moved up eight places to the 72nd position in the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) 2020.
- Switzerland topped the list of 132 nations, followed by the US and Singapore.

Major Highlights:

- It was started in 2013 and is an annual benchmarking report that measures the ability of countries to compete for talent, their ability to grow, attract and retain talent.
- Theme for 2020 was ‘Global Talent in the Age of Artificial Intelligence’. It explores how the development of artificial intelligence (AI) is not only changing the nature of work but also forcing a re-evaluation of workplace practices, corporate structures and innovation ecosystems.
- Inequality: The report noted that the gap between high income, talent-rich nations and the rest of the world is widening. More than half of the population in the developing world lack basic digital skills.

Background of the Report:

- It is launched by INSEAD, a partner and sponsor of the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Davos, Switzerland recently.
- INSEAD is one of the world’s leading and largest graduate business schools with locations all over the world and alliances with top institutions.
- The six metrics used to decide a country’s rank are – enable, attract, grow, retain, vocational skills and global knowledge skills.
- **In context with India:**
- The report stated that India’s GTCI score and GDP per capita are both lower than the other emerging market economies such as BRICS – Brazil (80th), Russia (48th), China (42nd), and South Africa (70th).
- India’s key strength relates to growing talent, due to its levels of lifelong learning and access to growth. However, more could be done to improve India’s educational system.
- The country’s highest-ranked sub-pillar is employability but the ability to match labour market demand and supply stands in contrast to the country’s poor “mid-level skills”, which result in a mediocre score in vocational and technical skills.
- India faces the challenge of attracting and retaining talent and the weak ability to overcome it. India has to strengthen the role of minorities and women to raise the level of internal openness in the country which would make it more appealing.

Links:

<https://gtcistudy.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/GTCI-2020-Report.pdf>

World Future Energy Summit

Question: Which city hosted the World Future Energy Summit 2020 held from 13 to 16 January 2020?

(a) New York (b) Jerusalem (c) Abu Dhabi (d) Wellington

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The World Future Energy Summit of 2020 has been organized in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. This is the leading global industry event and exhibition for future energy, cleantech and sustainability.
- The summit was organized from 13 to 16 January 2020.

Important highlights of the summit:

- Around 33,500 participants from 170 countries and 800 specialist exhibitors attended the four-day annual event.
- The theme for this year's summit is "Rethinking Global Consumption, Production, and Investment."
- World Future Energy Summit is the largest future energy and sustainability event organized in the Middle East.
- Held annually at Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre, the 2020 edition includes exhibition and forum programmes across five main pillars: energy, solar, water, waste and smart cities, hosting an unrivalled gathering of top-level government and business leaders.
- The event set an example for best practice, supporting the circular economy through recycling, and acting to remove single-use plastics from the event.
- Also held alongside the World Future Energy Summit are the Climate Innovations Exchange, 'CLIX' for short and the Future Sustainability Summit.
- The event showcased 42 of the world's most disruptive innovations, selected from 1,402 global submissions from 128 countries, related to the future of energy, food, agriculture and sustainability in space.

Links:

<http://ddnews.gov.in/international/world-future-energy-summit-begins-abu-dhabi>

Economics

Strategic Disinvestment of Air India

Question: The Union Government has announced for the strategic disinvestment of Air India. As per the announcement, what percent of disinvestment is approved for the Air India?

(a) 25% (b) 49% (c) 75% (d) 100%

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Hardeep S. Puri, Minister of State(I/C), Ministry of Civil Aviation on January 27, 2020 informed that the newly constituted Air India Specific Alternative Mechanism (AISAM) has invited for Strategic Disinvestment of Air India.
- The Government has invited disinvestment of Air India's 100% share.
- The Air India along with Air India Express has 146 aircraft in its fleet out of which 82 are owned by it. It has worldwide bilateral rights and spread over domestic as well as international slots.
- Air India and Air India Express have almost 51% share of the international traffic to/from India among Indian carriers and 18 % share including global carriers (ex-India).
- Air India has coverage of 98 destinations with 56 domestic and 42 international destinations. Air India offers 75 additional destinations through its secondary network of code share operations.
- Air India and Air India Express have a combined revenue of Rs.30,632 crore in 2018-19, which is the highest among Indian carriers.
- Air India + Air India Express employee cost as % of revenue is about 11% which is comparable to Indian carriers and much lower to International carriers.
- Even after infusion of about Rs.30,500 crore as per Turn Around Plan since 2012, Air India has been running into losses year after year.
- Due to its accumulated debt of about Rs.60,000 crore, its financial position is in a very fragile condition.



Links:

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/air-india-disinvestment-government-to-sell-100-per-cent-stake-in-national-carrier-issues-bid-document/1835856/>

IMF lowers India Growth ate

Question: What is the growth rate predicted by the IMF for India in its recent release?

(a) 5% (b) 4.5% (c) 4.8% (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on January 20, 2020 lowered the growth rate of India to 4.8% for 2019.

Major highlights:

- IMF did the reduction due to hassle in the non-bank financial sector and weak rural



income growth.

- It expects growth to be 5.8% in 2020 and further to 6.5% in 2021. International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported for India economic growth to be at 6.1 per cent for 2019 in October 2019.
- The domestic demand has slowed more sharply than expected in India leading to the downfall of growth rate.
- India's economy witnessed the weakest pace of growth in nearly six years i.e. just 4.5 percent in July-September 2019.
- However, the growth is projected to improve to 5.8% in 2020 and 6.5% in 2021 (1.2 and 0.9 percentage point lower than in the October WEO).
- India is also mentioned to be the biggest contributor in the downward revision of the growth rate of world highly due to slow income growth rate in rural India as well as stressed NBFC.
- The pickup in global growth for 2020 remains highly uncertain for it being dependent highly on better performance of stressed economies like Argentina, Iran, and Turkey and for underperforming emerging and developing economies such as Brazil, India, and Mexico.
- Global growth is estimated at 2.9 per cent in 2019. It is projected to increase to 3.3 per cent in 2020 and inch up further to 3.4 per cent in 2021.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/imf-lowers-india-s-growth-forecast-to-4-8-blames-it-for-global-slowdown-120012001522_1.html

Sushil Kumar Modi to head the GoM on IGST

Question: Sushil Modi to head the GoM on Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST). At present he is-

- (a) Union Finance Minister (b) Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar
(c) Chief Minister of Bihar (d) Finance minister in Bihar Government**

Answer: (b)

Related facts

- On 10 December, 2019; the composition of the Group of Ministers (GoM) on Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) was changed by the Centre.
- Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi now will head the GoM on IGST.
- The Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who was heading the GoM, has decided to opt out of the ministerial panel.
- It should be noted that the GoM on IGST, which was constituted on December 4, had Nirmala Sitharaman as its convenor, as per the earlier office of memorandum.
- The GoM will deliberate on IGST issues and submits its recommendation to the Union finance minister and the Chairperson of GST Council.



Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/sushil-modi-replaces-fm-nirmala-sitharaman-as-head-of-gom-on-igst-119121100043_1.html

RIL becomes first Indian company to hit Rs 10 lakh crore market cap

Question: Name the company, which has recently become the first Indian company with a market cap of over Rs 10 lakh crore?

**(a) Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) (b) Hindustan Unilever
(c) Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) (d) Kotak Mahindra Bank**

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 28 November, 2019; the Reliance Industries became the first Indian company with a market cap of over Rs 10 lakh crore.
- RIL's shares continued the record-breaking run that has made it the world's top-performing major energy stock in 2019.
- RIL, India's most valuable company, now has overtaken Petro China to enter the top five clubs of global energy giants (by M-cap).
- It is now the world's 67th most valuable stock and has risen 41 per cent this year. At the end of trade on 28th November, 2019 RIL's market cap stood at \$139.69 billion compared with Petro China's \$139.32 billion.
- RIL's contribution to India's total M-cap is now at a decade high of 6.5 per cent.
- In May 2009, the figure had touched 8.62 per cent.
- The Mukesh Ambani Company has contributed one-third of the total Nifty gains so far in 2019, and outperformed the benchmark index by 30 per cent.



Link:-

<https://m.economictimes.com/markets/stocks/news/ril-first-indian-firm-to-cross-rs-10-lakh-crore-m-cap/articleshow/72286843.cms>

15th Finance Commission submitted its report

Question: Who among the followings is authorized to constitute a Finance Commission under the provisions of Article 280 in the Constitution of India?

(a) Finance minister (b) President of India (c) Prime Minister (d) Vice President

Answer: (b)

Related facts:-

- The 15th Finance Commission submitted the report of the Commission for the financial year 2020-21 for further action.
- It was submitted by Chairman N.K. Singh and members of the commission.
- The final report for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2026 will be submitted by 30 October 2020.
- It should be noted that on 27 November 2017; the 15th Commission was constituted by the President of India under Article 280 of the Constitution.
- The commission was formed to make recommendations for a period of five years from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025.



Link:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/15th-finance-commission-submits-its-report-for-2020-21-to-president/article30187879.ece>

‘Mani App’ for Visually Challenged

Question: On 1st January 2020, the RBI (Reserve Bank of India) Governor launched which App (application) for aiding visually impaired persons to identify the denomination of Indian Banknotes?

(a) ROSHANI (b) BOLO (c) MANI (d) Sahyatri

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 1st January 2020, the RBI Governor (Mr. Shaktikanta Das) launched the “Mobile Aided Note Identifier (MANI)”.
- It is a mobile application for aiding visually impaired persons to identify the denomination of Indian Banknotes.
- Indian banknotes contain several features which enable the visually impaired (colour blind, partially sighted and blind people) to identify them, viz., intaglio printing and tactile mark, variable banknote size, large numerals, variable colour, monochromatic hues and patterns.



Features of mobile application, MANI

- Capable of identifying the denominations of Mahatma Gandhi Series and Mahatma Gandhi (New) series banknote by checking front or reverse side/part of the note including half folded notes at various holding angles and broad range of light conditions (normal light/day light/low light/ etc.).
- Ability to identify the denomination through audio notification in Hindi/English and non-sonic mode such as vibration (suitable for those with vision and hearing impairment).
- After installation, the mobile application does not require internet and works in offline mode.
- Ability to navigate the mobile application via voice controls for accessing the application features wherever the underlying device & operating system combination supports voice enabled controls.
- The application is free and can be downloaded from the Android Play Store and iOS App Store without any charges/payment.
- This mobile application does not authenticate a note as being either genuine or counterfeit.

Links:

https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/BS_PressReleaseDisplay.aspx?prid=49022

SBI announces Residential builder finance with buyer guarantee scheme

Question: Consider the following statement:

(1) The State of Bank of India launched a ‘residential builder finance with buyer guarantee’ scheme to revive the Indian real estate sector.

(2) The buyer guarantee scheme will focus on affordable housing projects worth

up to Rs 2.5 crore in 10 cities initially.

Choose the correct one:

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- The State of Bank of India launched a 'residential builder finance with buyer guarantee' scheme to revive the Indian real estate sector on January 8, 2020.
- Under the scheme, the largest public sector bank will issue a guarantee for completion of selected residential projects to customers availing home loans from it.
- According to SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar, the scheme will create a win-win situation for builders, homebuyers and the bank alike.

About the scheme:

- The buyer guarantee scheme will focus on affordable housing projects worth up to Rs 2.5 crore in 10 cities initially.
- Under the scheme, the SBI will refund the entire principal amount if the home developer fails to deliver the project within the assured deadline.
- The bank will issue the guarantee until the housing project gets the occupation certificate (OC). The refund scheme will only be valid until then.
- Further, the guarantee will only be available for RERA registered projects and they will be considered stuck only after they cross the RERA deadline.
- The developer fulfilling due diligence by the bank will also be able to avail loans between Rs 50 crores to Rs 400 crores under the scheme.



Significance:

- The guarantee scheme will improve homebuyers' confidence in residential builders and give a boost to residential sales. The move will provide a much-needed boost to the real estate sector.

Background:

- The launch of the new guarantee scheme follows several efforts made previously to revive the struggling real estate sector.
- The central government had announced the setting up of an alternative investment fund (AIF) worth Rs 25,000 crore in November 2019, which was aimed at providing relief to real estate builders with unfinished projects to ensure timely delivery of residences to the buyers.
- The SBI also recently reduced its external benchmark rate by 25 basis points to 7.8 percent. New home loan borrowers can avail mortgage at 7.9 percent in comparison to earlier 8.15 percent. The public sector lender has a 22 percent market share in home loans.

Links:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/stocks/news/govt-sets-up-rs->

Scientific

New NATO grade diesel: HFHSD- IN 512

Question: Which of the following Oil Company of India has developed the NATO grade diesel: HFHSD- IN 512?

- (a) Bharat petroleum (b) Indian Oil Corporation (c) Hindustan Petroleum (d) Oil and Natural Gas Corporation

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On January 13, 2020 Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has developed a special class diesel (HFHSD- IN 512) High Flash High Speed Diesel.
- The quality of this diesel is at par with NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) grade.
- The new diesel results in a reduced carbon footprint. It has lesser environmental impact due to low Sulphur content and would result in the better performance of engine.
- It has been developed for the use in ships and vessels of Indian Army.
- Vice Admiral Gurtej Singh Pabby, Indian Navy launched the HFHSD- IN 512 during an occasion in New Delhi.
- The upgraded HFHSD- IN 512 blend, NATO specifications, is being supplied from Haldia and Pardip refinery, Kolkata, West Bengal.
- The revised technical specification of new fuel arrived consisting of 22 test parameters including critical parameters cetane number, flash point, sulphur content, sediment content, oxidation stability and Cold Filter Plugging Point (CFPP).
- The new fuel is expected to benefit other IOCL consumers like the Indian Coast Guard and other merchant marine in the coming years.
- This new development will now allow India to fuel the vessels of friendly foreign countries where fuel conforming NATO grade is supplied.



Links:

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/oil-and-gas/indian-oil-corporation-launches-special-nato-class-diesel-for-indian-navy/73251236>

ISRO identifies astronauts for Gaganyaan

Question: ISRO has identified how many astronauts for India's maiden manned space mission 'Gaganyaan'?

- (a) 3 (b) 4 (c) 5 (d) 6

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On January 1, 2020, ISRO chief K Sivan announced that , 4 astronauts have been identified for the India's



first manned space mission Gaganyaan.

- The astronauts were selected based on the results of the medical examinations including fitness tests conducted at the Institute of Aerospace Medicine (IAM) a premier institute of the Indian Air Force and in Russia.
- They are all from the Indian Air Force and the training of astronauts will begin in January in Russia.
- Gaganyaan is a crewed orbital spacecraft intended to send astronauts to space for a minimum of seven days by 2022, as part of the Indian Human Spaceflight Programme.
- If Gaganyaan is successful, India would become the fourth nation to achieve the feat.

Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/science/story/gaganyaan-4-astronauts-identified-isro-k-sivan-1633024-2020-01-01>

Humanoid ‘Vyommitra’ for Gaganyaan

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) ISRO will send humanoid Vyommitra in unmanned Gaganyaan spacecraft ahead of human spaceflight.

(2) Vyommitra is a female humanoid – something that has an appearance resembling a human but is robotic.

Which of the following statement (s) is/are true?

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- On 22nd January 2020, ISRO introduced a humanoid Vyommitra at a seminar, ‘Human Space Flight and Exploration-Present Challenges and Future Trends’, that was held in Bengaluru.
- Vyommitra is a female humanoid – something that has an appearance resembling a human but is robotic and has no legs.
- ISRO Inertial Systems Unit has developed the humanoid in Thiruvananthapuram.
- Vyommitra is built for ISRO’s first unmanned Gaganyaan mission.
- Gaganyaan will undertake two unmanned space flights before the manned mission in which the vyomitra will be used.
- Vyommitra can monitor module parameters, alert astronauts and perform life support operations.
- Vyommitra can simulate the exact human functions in space; it will check whether the systems are right.
- Vyommitra is capable of switching panel operations, performing Environment Control and Life Support Systems (ECLSS) functions, conversations with the astronauts, recognising them and solving their queries.
- Vyommitra will be very useful to simulate, as if a human is flying.
- Vyommitra can understand and speak english and hindi both languages.



Gaganyaan:

- Gaganyaan is India's ambitious human spacecraft mission which envisages sending three astronauts to space by 2022.
- The Gaganyaan mission is scheduled for December 2021.
- Gaganyaan will undertake two unmanned space flights before the manned mission.
- The ISRO has set target of achieving country's ambitious manned mission by 2021, with the first unmanned programme of Gaganyaan in December 2020, into lower earth orbit(LEO) by 2022.

Links:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/science/isro-to-send-humanoid-vyommitra-in-unmanned-gaganyaan-spacecraft-ahead-of-human-spaceflight/articleshow/73576959.cms>

High accuracy TB diagnostic test 'Truenat MTB'

Question: World Health Organisation (WHO) recently admitted that Truenat MTB is a high accuracy TB diagnostic test. This TB diagnosis test has been developed by-

(a) UK (b) India (c) USA (d) Italy

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 14 January, 2020; the World Health Organization (WHO) in its Rapid Communication had mentioned that TB diagnostic test developed in India has high accuracy.
- This new TB diagnostic test is India-made Truenat MTB, a molecular diagnostic test for pulmonary and extra pulmonary TB and rifampicin-resistant TB.
- It will be used as an initial test thus replacing sputum smear microscopy.
- Truenat is developed by the Goa-based Molbio Diagnostics.



Link:

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/tb-diagnostic-test-developed-in-india-has-high-accuracy-says-who/article30577819.ece>

Retirement of the Giant Tortoise Diego

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Diego, a Galapagos giant tortoise who lives on the island of Espanola, which is the southernmost in the Galapagos Archipelago.

(2) Diego belongs to the species *Chelonoidis hoodensis*.

Which of the following statement (s) is/are true?

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer : (c)

Related facts:

- On 12 January 2020, Diego, the giant tortoise is retiring after his high sex drive helped save his entire species.
- The Galapagos National Park announced the end of the breeding program, saying an evaluation showed it had met its conservation goals.
- Diego belongs to the species *Chelonoidis hoodensis*.
- Diego was among 14 male tortoises selected to take part in a breeding programme on Santa Cruz Island.
- The programme has been a success, producing more than 2,000 giant tortoises since it began in the 1960s.
- The 100-year-old tortoise has fathered hundreds of progeny, around 800 by some estimates.
- The programme has now finished and Diego will be returned to his native island of Espanola in March 2020.



Links:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/diego-galapagos-tortoise-saving-species-having-lots-of-sex/>

Defense/Science Short Notes

Sudan's first-ever satellite 'SRSS-1' launched by China

Question: SRSS-1 satellite was launched by which country?

(a) India (b) Bhutan (c) Nepal (d) Bangladesh

Answer:(b)

Related facts:

- On November 03, 2019, China has launched Sudan's first-ever satellite, SRSS-1, along with its satellites.
- The satellite is a small remote-sensing satellite that aims to give boost to Sudan's military and space technology research.



About the Satellite:

- The SRSS-1 was developed and built by Chinese satellite manufacturer Shenzhen Aerospace Oriental Red Sea Satellite Co. on behalf of the Sudanese government, and will be used for both civil and national security Earth observation missions.
- SRSS-1 will generate a comprehensive, cost effective and reliable data base on the topographic mapping, natural resources for developmental planning, exploration of natural resources, environmental monitoring, agricultural monitoring and yield estimation and beside public security (intelligence) and defense applications.
- SRSS-1 is also being heralded as a springboard for the establishment and development of an indigenous Sudanese space and satellite industry that will be located in Khartoum North.

Links:

<https://spacewatch.global/2019/11/sudans-first-satellite-srss-1-launched-by-china/>

Exercise Shakti

Question: Exercise Shakti is organised between which of the following countries?

- (a) India and Oman (b) India and France (c) India and Maldives
(d) India and Sri Lanka

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The bilateral 'Exercise SHAKTI' between the armies of India and France was conducted from 31st October to 13th November 2019 at Foreign Training Node in Mahajan Field Firing Ranges, Rajasthan.
- The joint military exercise focused on counter terrorism operations in semi-desert terrain.
- The exercise aims at enhancing understanding, cooperation and interoperability between the two armies.
- **Defence Exercises between India and France:**
 - Varuna – Naval exercise
 - Garuda – Air exercise
 - Shakti – Army exercise



Link:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=India-France-joint-Army-exercise-to-begin-from-Oct-31&id=373636>

ISRO to set its 2nd launch port in Tamil Nadu

Question: ISRO is to set its 2nd launch port in which of the following district of Tamil Nadu?

- (a) Villupuram (b) Cuddalore (c) Thiruvavur (d) Thoothukudi district

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 1 January, 2020; ISRO Chairman K. Sivan announced that ISRO to set its 2nd launch port in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu.
- Sivan made it clear that second launch port of ISRO will be used exclusively to launch small satellite launch vehicles.
- He also informed that for this purpose 2300 acres of land has been acquired.



Other announcement related to ISRO's future plans:

- In the line of GPS navigation system developed by America, the Indian navigation system called Navic with the indigenous atomic clock will soon be operational.
- It will promote mobile phone manufacturers coming forward to install the regional navigation device.
- Chandrayaan 3 mission to the moon comprising of a lander and a rover is approved by the Union Government.

- India's first human-crewed mission to outer space Gaganyaan and four men selected from Indian Air Force.
- These four AF men will leave for Russia in the third week of January to get training.

Programmes related to Gaganyaan Mission:

- The Gaganyaan mission targeted to launch by 2022.
- The uncrewed missions will be launched to test the crew module with robots resembling humans.
- This uncrewed space mission will test spacecraft re-entry technology, space capsule recovery experiment and the effect of microgravity on the crew module necessary for human space travel.

Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/science/story/chandrayaan-3-gaganyaan-launch-pad-tuticorin-tamil-nadu-isro-missions-2020-k-sivan-1633087-2020-01-01>

ISRO proposed First Human Space Flight Infrastructure Centre (HSFIC)

Question: Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) proposed 2,700 crores of infrastructure plans to construct its first Human Space Flight Infrastructure Centre (HSFIC) in which of the following city?

(a) Chitradurga, Karnataka (b) Hyderabad, Telangana (c) Bhubaneswar, Odisha (d) Chennai, Tamil Nadu

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On January 06, 2020, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) proposed 2,700 crores of infrastructure plans to construct its first Human Space Flight Infrastructure Centre (HSFIC).
- This astronaut hub will be established Challakere, Chitradurga district of Karnataka.
- It is expected that this center will start functioning in the next three years.
- Various activities related to the training of astronauts to manned missions will be conducted here.
- This place is about 200 km from Bengaluru. Challakere is also known as Science City where various other scientific establishments are already working.
- According to the ISRO's proposal, Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) will become functional 2022.
- At present, the Human Spaceflight Program is being carried out in various centers like U.R. Rao Satellite Centre in Bengaluru and Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Thiruvananthapuram.
- However, the Institute of Aerospace Medicine of the Air Force (IAMAF) is working for astronauts' selection and training.



Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/challakere-to-be-isros-astronaut-training-hub/article30489101.ece>

Materials to produce energy from water

Question: Researchers of which of the following IITs have recently developed materials to produce energy from water on a small scale?

(a) IIT Hyderabad (b) IIT Mumbai (c) IIT Madras (d) IIT Guwahati

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 30th December 2019, IIT Guwahati researchers developed materials to produce energy from water.
- In this way energy can be produced on a small scale but it can work well as decentralized sources of energy for the individual households.
- The findings were recently published in ACS Applied Nanomaterials.
- The research was conducted by Raidongia along with other scholars from the institute namely Jumi Deka, Kundan Saha and others.



Mechanism Used to produce energy: –

- A nanoscale phenomenon which is called Electrokinetic streaming potential is being used by the researchers of IIT-G, to harvest energy from flowing water.
- Various types of semiconducting materials are also used to produce power from stagnant water.

Links:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/science/iit-guwahati-researchers-develop-materials-to-produce-energy-from-water-on-a-small-scale/articleshow/73029600.cms?from=mdr>

Sports

Cricket

Virat Kohli named as Captain of ICC's ODI and Test teams

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Virat Kohli is named as Captain of ICC's ODI and Test teams of the year.

(2) It is the 3rd successive year that Kohli has been named captain of both the ICC teams of the year starting 2017.

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer:(c)

Related facts:

- On January 15, 2020 , Virat Kohli was named as Captain of ICC's ODI and Test teams of the year.
- It's the 3rd successive year in succession that Kohli has been named captain of both the ICC teams of the year starting 2017.



- Kohli's gesture for Steve Smith during World Cup 2019 was awarded the Spirit of Cricket Award.
- Kohli is the only other cricketer apart from Stokes and Mitchell Starc who have been selected in both the teams.
- Kohli scored 1,322 runs at an average of 55.08 in 13 Tests with five hundreds during the calendar year while in 14 ODIs he amassed 1202 runs at an astonishing average of 133.55 with six centuries. He also scored 211 runs in 10 T20Is.
- The ICC Awards are a set of sports awards for cricket.
- The awards recognise and honor the best international cricket players of the previous 12 months.
- The awards have been institutionalised by International Cricket Council since 2004.

Links:

<https://www.icc-cricket.com/media-releases/980937>

India wins T20 series against Bangladesh

Question: Recently India and Bangladesh played three-match T20 series from 3-10 Nov 2019. Which team has won the series?

(a) India (b) Bangladesh (c) Tie (d) None of the above

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The Bangladesh cricket team toured India in November 2019 to play two Test and three Twenty20 International (T20I) matches.
- In the three-match T20 series played from 3-10 Nov 2019, India claimed the series by 2-1.
- India defeated Bangladesh by 30 runs in the third and final T20 International match played at Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium in Nagpur.
- Team India scored 174 runs in 20 overs and gave Bangladesh a target of 175 runs to win.
- In response, Bangladesh's team could only manage 144 runs for 10 wickets in 19.2 overs.
- Deepak Chahar made a unique record of taking six wickets for seven runs. He became the best bowler in T20 Internationals.



Links:

<https://www.news18.com/cricketnext/news/india-vs-bangladesh-deepak-chahar-hat-trick-gives-india-t20-series-win-over-bangladesh-2381289.html>

Hockey

India to host Men's Hockey World Cup 2023

Question: Which of the following country will host Men's Hockey World Cup 2023?

(a) India (b) Germany (c) London (d) Brazil

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- International Hockey Federation (FIH), in Lausanne, has recently selected India to host the 2023 Men's Hockey World Cup.
- According to the FIH, the Men's Hockey World Cup will be played in India from January 13 to 29.
- The format of the 2023 World Cup will be the same as in the previous tournament.
- India will thus become the first country to host the Men's Hockey World Cup four times. Earlier in India, this tournament has been organized in 1982, 2010 and 2018.



Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/sports/hockey-world-cup-2023-india-to-host-next-edition-of-the-men-s-tournament-119110801349_1.html

7th National Ice Hockey Championship

Question: Which of the following team lifted the 7th National Ice Hockey Championship Women trophy?

(a) Chandigarh (b) Delhi (c) Maharashtra (d) Ladakh

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 7 January, 2020; Ladakh lifted the 7th National Ice Hockey Championship Women trophy defeating Delhi in the final match.
- The match was held at the Karzoo Ice Hockey Rink, Ladakh.
- The tournament was organised by the Ice Hockey Association of India (IHAI) in association with the Ladakh winter sports club.
- Four women teams representing Chandigarh, Delhi, Maharashtra, and Ladakh participated in the tournament.



Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/ladakh-lifts-7th-national-ice-hockey-championship-women-trophy-120010800201_1.html

Athletics

Tokyo Olympics 2020: Mary Kom to represent Asian bloc in athlete ambassadors group

Question: Who will represent Asian bloc in athlete Ambassadors group in Olympics 2020?

(a) M C Mary Kom (b) P V Sindhu (c) Saina Nehwal (d) Mirabai Chanu

<http://www.edristi.in/>



Answer :(a)

Related facts:

- Six-time world champion M C Mary Kom has been included in a 10-strong athlete ambassadors group to represent boxers in the build-up in 2020 ,Tokyo Olympic Games by the IOC's Task Force for the sport.
- Mary Kom will represent the Asian bloc in the group, which also comprises two-time Olympic and world gold-medallist Vasyi Lamachenko and five-time world champion and 2016 Olympic gold-winner Julio Cesar La Cruz among others.
- The 36-year-old Indian recently surpassed herself as the most successful boxer in the history of the world championships when she claimed her eighth medal, a bronze, at the marquee event's latest edition in Russia.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Tokyo-Olympics-2020%3a-Mary-Kom-to-represent-Asian-bloc-in-athlete-ambassadors-group&id=373789>

Short Notes

Personalities

Vice Chief of the Army Staff

Question: Who has been recently appointed as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff?

(a) Satinder Kumar Saini (b) Jagmeet Singh (c) Deepak Kapoor (d) None of the above

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Lt Gen Satinder Kumar Saini assumed the charge of Vice Chief of the Army Staff.
- Before assuming the appointment of Vice Chief of the Army Staff, the General Officer was heading the Southern Command of the Indian Army.
- He was commissioned into the 7th Battalion, The JAT Regiment in June 1981.
- He has also served as the Deputy Chief Military Personnel Officer in the UN Mission in Iraq-Kuwait, attended an exercise on peacekeeping conducted by the Global Peace Operations Initiative in Mongolia and a counter terrorism exercise in Australia.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600893>

Chairperson of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

Question: Who has been recently appointed as the chairperson of the executive council of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML)?

(a) Aditya Mittal (b) Nripendra Mishra (c) Jayati Ghosh (d) Sam Pitroda

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Former principal secretary to the Prime Minister, Nripendra Misra, has been appointed chairperson of the executive council of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) in January 18, 2020.
- According to a government order, the Executive Council of the NMML has been reconstituted and it will be now chaired by Misra.
- Misra is a 1967-batch retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer.
- Before serving as the principal secretary to the Prime Minister, Misra worked in several top positions including as the chairperson of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), secretary, Telecom and secretary, Fertilizers.
- DR. A Surya Prakash, chairperson of the Prasar Bharati board, will be the council's vice chairperson.
- Among other eminent persons who find themselves on the reconstituted executive council are Rajya Sabha members Vinay Sahasrabudhhe and Swapan Dasgupta.
- Academic Kapil Kapoor has also been nominated as a member of the committee apart from the Director of NMML, and two senior bureaucrats of the Culture Ministry as ex-officio members of the eight-member panel.



Links:

<http://ddnews.gov.in/national/nripendra-misra-appointed-chairperson-nmml-executive-council>

Ursula von der Leyen

Question: On 1st December 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 Juncker.
- 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.



Link:

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

New President of the Archery Association of India (AAI)

Question: Who has been elected as the new President of the Archery Association of India (AAI)?

(a) Arjun Munda (b) Smriti Irani (c) Rajyavardan Rathore (d) Piyush Goyal

Answer : (a)

Related facts:

- Arjun Munda has been elected as the new President of the Archery Association of India (AAI).
- He was elected to the position during elections conducted on January 18, 2020.
- The much-delayed elections were conducted smoothly, as it was conducted in the presence of three observers, one each from World Archery, Sports Ministry and the Indian Olympic Association.
- Union Minister Arjun Munda won a clear majority over his rival BVP Rao with 34-18 votes. He will now serve a full term of four years.



Links:

<https://sportstar.thehindu.com/archery/arjun-munda-president-archery-association-of-india-aa-bvp-rao-tokyo-olympics-2020/article30593978.ece>

Padma Shri Awardee Dr. HL Trivedi Passes Away

Question: Recently which renowned kidney transplant surgeon and Padma Shri recipient has passed away?

(a) H L Trivedi (b) J S pandey (c) Anurag Singh (d) SAurabh Gujrati

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On October 2, 2019, Dr Hargovind Laxmishanker Trivedi was a renowned kidney transplant surgeon and Padma Shri recipient. He was 87.
- He was awarded Padma Shri in 2015 for his valuable contribution to society as a nephrologist.
- Dr. HL Trivedi established a dialysis centre in all district hospitals of Gujarat with the help of state government.
- He had conducted more than 5,000 transplants during his entire career.



Links:

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/noted-nephrologist-and-padma-shri-awardee-hl-trivedi-passes-away-pm-modi-pays-tribute-2331269.html>

Kapil Dev resigned from BCCI's 3-member Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC)

Question: Which one of the following Indian cricketer has resigned from BCCI's 3-member Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC)?

(a) Kapil Dev (b) Sachin Tendulkar (c) Rahul Dravid (d) Sourav Ganguly

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Kapil Dev resigned from BCCI's 3-member Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), after Shantha Rangaswamy tendered her resignation.
- Anshuman Gaekwad also followed suit by sending his resignation to BCCI CEO Rahul Johri on October 2, 2019.
- The three members resigned from the CAC after they received a conflict of interest notice by the BCCI ethics officer Justice (Retd) DK Jain. The notice was issued on a complaint by Sanjeev Gupta, who stated that they were a part of the committee despite being directors of players' association.
- Shantha Rangaswamy was the first to put in her resignation and Kapil Dev was quick behind with his resignation.
- The third member of the committee, Anshuman Gaekwad, stated that he was also ready to resign if the committee still existed.
- Gaekwad stated that as per him, the ad-hoc committee was appointed only for a day to select the head coach. So, according to him, it is non-existent but he said that if it does still exist then, he will also resign if conflict question comes up.
- The CAC, headed by Kapil Dev, was constituted to appoint the head coaches of the Indian men's and women's team.
- The Chief of Committee of Administrators (CoA), Vinod Rai also clarified that the CAC was only appointed for selecting the head coaches and the three members of the committee- Kapil Dev, Shantha Rangaswamy and Anshuman Gaekwad were not conflicted in their understanding.
- Rai had earlier stated that the CAC doesn't exist anymore as it was just a one-time committee.



Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/sports/cricket/story/kapil-dev-resigns-cricket-advisory-committee-cac-bcci-shantha-rangaswamy-1605372-2019-10-02>

Justice AP Sahi becomes Chief Justice of Madras High Court

Question: Who sworn in as Chief justice of Madras high court?

(a) AP Shahi (b) Banwarilal Purohit (c) Madan B Lokur (d) Deepak Mishra

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Justice AP Sahi has recently sworn-in as the Chief Justice of the Madras High Court.
- Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit administered the oath of office to the Chief Justice.
- Justice AP Sahi practised in Allahabad High Court to gather expertise in constitutional and civil matters.
- In 2004, he was elevated as an Additional Judge of the Allahabad Court.
- He became permanent Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court in 2005.



Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/ap-sahi-sworn-in-as-new-chief-justice-of-madras-high-court/articleshow/72001640.cms>

AIBA Athletes Commission

Question: Recently who was elected to the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) first-ever athletes commission?

(a) Sarita Devi (b) M C MaryKom (c) Sunita Devi (d) P T Usha

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- India's Sarita Devi was elected unopposed as a member of the AIBA Athletes Commission.
- The veteran boxer was among the six boxers who were selected as members of the commission from 5 continents.
- This is a one-of-a-kind commission formed to be represented by boxers from across the globe.
- The election of the AIBA Athletes Commission members was conducted during the AIBA men's and women's Boxing Championships 2019 in Russia.
- One member was elected per continent, except in the case of Europe, which has two elected representatives.



Links:

<https://www.femina.in/trending/achievers/boxer-sarita-devi-elected-to-first-ever-aiba-athletes-commission-140776.html>

Appointment of Managing Director(MD) of SBI

Question: Recently who has been appointed Managing Director of the State Bank of India?

(a) Challa Sreenivasulu Setty (b) S. S. Mallikarjuna Rao (c) Sanjiv Chadha (d) Amitabh Chaudhry

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 20 January 2020, the Appointment Committee of the Cabinet has appointed Challa Sreenivasulu Setty as the Managing Director (MD) of State Bank of India (SBI) .
- He is appointed for a period of three years.
- Prior to this role, he was serving in the State Bank of India as its Deputy Managing Director.
- Rajnish Kumar is the Chairman of the country's largest lender State Bank of India.



Links: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/banking/finance/banking/c-halla-sreenivasulu-setty-appointed-md-of-sbi/articleshow/73441920.cms>

Indian-origin women attorneys have been appointed as judges in New York

Question: Which Indian-origin women attorney was appointed as judge in New York City courts?

(a) Deepa Ambekar (b) Archana Rao (c) Both (a)&(b) (d) Zia Mody

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- In January 2020; two Indian-origin women attorneys have been appointed as judges in New York City courts.
- These appointments have been made by the New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio.
- Judge Archana Rao is appointed to criminal court of New York and Judge Deepa Ambekar is appointed to civil court in New York. These appointments were effective from 1 January 2020.



Links:

<https://www.news18.com/news/world/two-indian-origin-women-appointed-judges-in-new-york-city-2448761.html>

Ravindra Nath Mahto elected as Jharkhand Assembly Speaker

Question: Who is elected as new speaker of Jharkhand Assembly?

(a) Ravindra Nath Mahto (b) Ram Nath (c) Stephen Marandi (d) Hemant Soren

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On January 07, 2019, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) legislator Ravindra Nath Mahto from Nala constituency was unanimously elected as the new Assembly Speaker.
- Protem Speaker Stephen Marandi administered the oath to the newly elected Speaker of the State Assembly.
- Speaker Ravindra Nath Mahto expressed his gratitude towards the Members of the Assembly for his election for the post.
- Governor Draupadi Murmu addressed to the new legislators and emphasized on conservation of water, forest and land to bring an all round development of the state.
- A supplementary budget of 4,210 crore rupees was also tabled by the Hemant Soren Government in the Assembly session.



Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Ravindra-Nath-Mahto-elected-as-Jharkhand-Assembly-Speaker&id=377334>

Awards & Honors

Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu National Awards

Question: Who has been named to be awarded the first “Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu National Award for Excellence” recently?



**(a) Mohan Bhagwat (b) Swapandas Dasgupta (c) Dr. MS Swaminathan
(d) Dr. G Muniratnam**

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Eminent Agricultural Scientist Dr M S Swaminathan and well-known social worker, Dr. Gutta Muniratnam were respectively chosen as the first recipients of 'Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu National Award for Excellence' and 'Muppavarapu National Award for Social Service'
- The National Award for Excellence was instituted by the Muppavarapu Foundation, while the one for Social Service was launched by the Swarna Bharat Trust, in Hyderabad on January 9, 2020.
- Prof. M.S. Swaminathan was awarded for his distinguished contributions to the field of agriculture while Dr G Muniratnam, was awarded for his extraordinary contribution in improving quality of people's lives through social service.
- A plant geneticist by training, Professor Swaminathan's contributions to the agricultural renaissance of India have led to his being widely referred to as the scientific leader of the green revolution movement.
- Dr Muniratnam is Founder Secretary of Tirupati -based Rashtriya Seva Samiti and an exemplary social worker. He dedicated his life to the cause of transforming rural India by empowering people.
- The announcement on the awards was made during the 10th Anniversary Celebrations of Muppavarapu Foundation and Sankranthi Sambaralu (festivities) organized in Hyderabad.
- Each award carries a cash prize of Rupees Five Lakh and citation.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1598981>

Harivarasanam Award for 2020

Question: Who was selected by the Government of Kerala for the Harivarsanam Award for the year 2020?

(a) KJ Yesudas (b) Ilaiyaraaja (c) P Susheela (d) KS Chitra

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 27 December 2019, Kerala government selected renowned composer Ilaiyaraaja for the 2020 Harivarasanam Award.
- The award will be presented to him at a function at Sabarimala Sannidhanam in January 2020.
- The award carries a cash prize of Rs one lakh and a citation.



- The award, launched by the Government of Kerala, is being given since the year 2012.
- Ilaiyaraaja was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in the year 2018.

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/chennai/kerala-government-and-tdb-honour-music-maestro-ilaiyaraaja/articleshow/73004489.cms>

Operations & Campaign

Joint Exercise SAMPRITI-IX

Question: With which country will India start the ninth edition of Joint Exercise Sampriti from February 3 to 16, 2020?

(a) Mongolia (b) USA (c) Turkey (d) Bangladesh

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- As part of the ongoing Indo-Bangladesh defence cooperation, a joint military training exercise SAMPRITI-IX is being conducted at UMROI, Meghalaya, India from 03 Feb to 16 Feb 2020.
- Exercise SAMPRITI is an important bilateral defence cooperation endeavour between India and Bangladesh and will be the ninth edition of the exercise which is hosted alternately by both countries.
- During the joint military exercise SAMPRITI-IX a Command Post Exercise (CPX) and a Field Training Exercise (FTX) will be conducted.
- For both the CPX and FTX, a scenario where both nations are working together in a Counter Terrorism environment will be simulated under the UN Charter.
- The FTX curriculum is progressively planned where the participants will initially get familiar with each other's organizational structure and tactical drills.
- The training will culminate with a final validation exercise in which troops of both armies will jointly practice a Counter Terrorist Operation in a controlled and simulated environment.
- In addition, to understand each other at tactical level, greater cultural understanding will be emphasized to strengthen military trust and cooperation between two nations.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1601128>

Dharmendra Pradhan launched Saksham

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Saksham, is an annual one-month long, people-centric fuel conservation mega campaign of Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

(2) PCRA is an organization established in 1978 under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas by the Government of India for promoting energy efficiency.

Choose the correct one:

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer (c)

Related Facts:

- On 16th January, the campaign 'Saksham' was launched by Dharmendra Pradhan (Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel) at a function in Delhi.
- 'Saksham', is an annual one-month long, people-centric fuel conservation mega campaign of Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- PCRA and Oil & Gas companies shall carry out various interactive programs during this month-long campaign.
- Activities like 'Saksham' Cycle Day, Cyclothons, and Workshops for drivers of commercial vehicles, Seminars for housewives on adopting simple fuel saving measure, Nationwide campaign are planned with an aim to reach the nook and corner of the country.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599406>

Planning & Project

Ministry of Road Transport & Highways launches Integrated Road Accident Database Project

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Ministry of Road Transport & Highways launched a central accident database management system that will help in analyzing causes of road crashes and in devising safety interventions to reduce such accidents in the country.

(2) Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD), has been developed by the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) and will be implemented by the National Informatics Centre.

Choose the correct one:

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- On 13th January 2020, Ministry of Road Transport & Highways launched a central accident database management system that will help in analysing causes of road crashes and in devising safety



interventions to reduce such accidents in the country.

- The IT tool, known as the Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD), has been developed by the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) and will be implemented by the National Informatics Centre and the project costs ₹258 crore and is being supported by the World Bank.
- The system will be first piloted in the six States with highest fatalities from road crashes — Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.

How it works:

- The IRAD mobile application will enable police personnel to enter details about a road accident, along with photos and videos, following which a unique ID will be created for the incident. An engineer from the Public Works Department or the local body will receive an alert on his mobile device.
- He or she will then visit the accident site, examine it, and feed the required details, such as the road design. Data thus collected will be analysed by a team at IIT-M, which will then suggest if corrective measures in road design need to be taken.
- It is also expected that road users will also be able to upload data on road accidents on a separate mobile application, which is expected to go live from April 1.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1558915>

Launch of Paperless Licensing for Petroleum Service Stations

Question: Which of the following Ministry has recently launched the paperless licensing for petroleum service stations?

- (a) Ministry of Finance (b) Ministry of Petroleum
(c) Ministry of Commerce & Industry (d) Ministry of Home Affairs

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry has launched paperless licensing process through Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) for petroleum service stations (retail outlets storing and dispensing petrol/diesel for motor conveyances) under the Petroleum Rules, 2002.
- Paperless application and grant of license process for road tankers for transportation of petroleum under the Petroleum Rules has been launched on 7th January, 2020.
- After the launch of paperless process, more than 300 licences have been issued.
- This initiative for petroleum pump licensing is directly going to benefit more than 70,000 petroleum pump owners and oil marketing companies under the Petroleum Rules, 2002.
- The advantage of this move is that the authenticity of the license may be verified on PESO's website <https://peso.gov.in/index.aspx>.



- This automation will greatly benefit the petroleum and gas industry.
- This initiative is in line with the vision of Prime Minister, Narendra Modi's Digital India and Ease of Doing Business towards paperless and green India that will provide simpler mechanism, ease of living and business to the petroleum road tanker owners.

The process:

- The process will include filing the applications online, online payment of fees which will go directly to the concerned officer's ID without any manual interface.
- Applicants, at each stage of processing of the application, will be intimated via SMS and email, in case of discrepancy or grant of license or approval.
- These details will also be reflected in the applicant's profile. The entire process will not require any printing and physical dispatch of license. The license will be dispatched electronically.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599868>

Treaty & Agreements

Government of India and the World Bank signs \$ 210 million loan agreement

Question: India and World Bank has recently signed a \$ 210 million loan agreement for agribusiness and rural transformation along with which of the following state?

(a) Bihar (b) Karnataka (c) Maharashtra (d) Orissa

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Government of India, the Government of Maharashtra and the World Bank on January 24, 2020 signed a loan agreement of \$ 210 million to support small holder farmers participate in competitive agriculture value chains, facilitate agri-business investments, increase market access and productivity in focus commodities, and build resilience of crops to recurrent floods or droughts in the Indian state of Maharashtra.
- The \$ 210 million Maharashtra Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project will help build capacity of the nodal departments and institutions; increase private sector investments in agricultural value chains; remove constraints for producers and entrepreneurs in accessing emerging domestic and export markets etc.



Important highlights of the project:

- The project will be implemented in all 36 districts of Maharashtra. Over one million farming households will directly benefit from the project.
- At least 43 percent of farmers and farm-workers participating in project activities are expected to be women.

- Specific focus will be given to women-led enterprises and the participation of women in the decision-making processes of farmer producer organizations.
- Such an agricultural transformation is already under way in Maharashtra with an upsurge in the production of high value crops such as fruits and vegetables, pulses, and maize and soybean for animal feed.
- The state has emerged as one of the country's largest producer and exporter of fruits, vegetables, pulses, cotton, and soybean.
- The focus of the project on enhancing the capacity of the state to effectively manage and deliver agricultural technical support and services, increasing credit linkages to formal financing institutions, improving Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) standards and investing in business development services will help small holder farmers become more competitive and increase their links to organized domestic and export markets.
- The \$ 210 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) has a 6-year grace period and a maturity period of 13.5 years.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600497>

Indian Navy Signs MoU for offshore Data with GSI

Question: The Indian Navy has signed MoU for the offshore data with which of the following institute?

(a) IIT Mumbai (b) CSIR (c) IISc Bengaluru (d) Geological Survey of India

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Indian Navy has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Geological Survey of India (GSI) for 'Sharing of seabed sediments data, products and expertise for Naval Application in Meteorology and Oceanography'.
- The MoU was signed on 21st January 2020 between Commodore AA Abhyankar, who heads Indian Navy's Oceanology and Meteorology Directorate and N Maran, Deputy Director General of GSI.



Highlights of MoU:

- GSI's Marine and Coastal survey Division based at Mangaluru has mapped most of India's 2.1 Million km² Exclusive Economic Zone and has a vast repository of offshore data.
- This data collected using GSI's state-of-the-art oceanic research vessels Samudra Manthan, Samudra Kaustubh, Samudra Shaudhikama and Samudra Ratnakar, will now be used by Indian Navy's rapidly growing blue water fleet for reliable and accurate oceanographic modeling to support their expansive maritime operations in the Indian Ocean region.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600050>

MoU on Genonomics Research With AIIA

Question: This MoU was signed with an objective of enhancing collaboration in the field of Genomics research with which of the following country?

(a) France (b) Germany (c) Russia (d) Uzbekistan

Answer:(b)

Related facts:

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA), under the Ministry of AYUSH, and Germany's Innovationszentrum Biotechnologie GmbH (FiZ) in New Delhi.
- This MoU was signed with an objective of enhancing collaboration in the field of Genomics research.
- As per the agreement, several scientists will work together as a team from both countries. A team of scientists will develop evidence-based guidelines supported by modern technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML).



All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA):

- The AIIA was established on 10 October 2015 as a public Ayurveda medicine and research institution located in New Delhi.
- Former Prime Minister Atal Bihar Vajpayee proposed the establishment of AIIA in the year 2000 during Vaidya Ram Narayan Sharma Memorial Award Distribution program.
- It is an apex institute of Ayurveda and research on Ayurvedic medicines. AIIA offers PG and doctoral courses in different disciplines of Ayurvedic medicines. AIIA also has a 200-bed hospital facility along with clinical research laboratories.

Links:

<https://aiia.gov.in/>

MoU signed with National Petroleum Authority of Ghana

Question: Which of the following PSU has signed a MoU with the National Petroleum Authority of Ghana for providing assistance and technical expertise?

(a) NTPC (b) Indian Oil (c) Bharat Petroleum (d) GAIL

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Indian Oil has signed a MoU with the National Petroleum Authority (NPA) of Ghana on 21st January 2020 to strengthen the relations between India and Ghana.
- This MoU is signed for providing its assistance and technical expertise in the implementation of Ghana's National LPG Promotion Policy.
- Ghana sought assistance from India in its own efforts to promote to safe, clean and environmentally friendly LPG for increased domestic, commercial and industrial usage.



- The MoU was exchanged between NPA of Ghana and Indian Oil in the presence of Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Dharmendra Pradhan, and Michael Aaron, High Commissioner of Ghana at New Delhi.
- The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is to strengthen cooperation between the Parties in the field of Petroleum in particular LPG by which Indian Oil would support the NPA on the successful implementation of the Re-circulation Model (CRM) of LPG.
- In this regard, Indian Oil would (On behalf of India) provide support to the National Petroleum Authority of Ghana in several areas such as development of Health, Safety, Security and Environment (HSSE) Standards, development of Licensing, permit and legal framework, development of economics for LPG bottling plant, pricing structure, and communication strategy.
- Indian Oil will also assist in areas of infrastructure development for the new LPG Value chain, support for upgrading capacities of institutions along with policy development and review.
- The MoU also provides for administrative assistance to Indian Oil in case it decides to participate as a commercial participant in Ghana's downstream petroleum sector.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600240>

Historic Agreement to end the Bru-Reang Refugee Crisis

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Government of India signed historic agreement to end the Bru-Reang Refugee Crisis.

(2) The agreement is signed between Government of India, Governments of Tripura and Mizoram and Bru-Reang representatives.

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer :(c)

Related facts:

- On January 16, 2020 , Government of India signed historic agreement to end the Bru-Reang Refugee Crisis.
- The agreement is signed between Government of India, Governments of Tripura and Mizoram and Bru-Reang representatives .
- According to this agreement , around 34,000 Bru refugees will be settled in Tripura and would be given aid from the Centre to help with their rehabilitation and all round development, through a package of around Rs 600 crores.
- The refugees would get all the rights that normal residents of the States get and they would now be able to enjoy the benefits of social welfare schemes of Centre and State governments.
- The settlement has been reached after detailed discussions held by Union government with the State governments of Mizoram and Tripura and the representatives of Bru tribes.
- Under this new arrangement, each of the displaced families would be given 40×30 sq.ft. residential plots, in addition to the aid under earlier agreement of a



fixed deposit of Rs. 4 lakhs, Rs. 5,000 cash aid per month for 2 years, free ration for 2 years and Rs. 1.5 lakhs aid to build their house.

Background of Bru-Reang Refugee Crisis:

- In 1997, following ethnic tension, around 5,000 families comprising around 30,000 Bru-Reang tribals were forced to flee Mizoram and seek shelter in Tripura.
- The refugees were housed in temporary camps at Kanchanpur, in North Tripura.
- Since 2010, Government of India has been making sustained efforts to permanently rehabilitate these refugees.
- The Union government has been assisting the two State governments for taking the care of the refugees. Till 2014, 1622 Bru-Reang families returned to Mizoram in different batches.
- On 3rd July, 2018, an agreement was signed between the Union government, the two State governments and representatives of Bru-Reang refugees, as a result of which the aid given to these families was increased substantially.
- 328 families comprising of 1369 individuals returned to Mizoram under the agreement. There had been a sustained demand of most Bru-Reang families that they may be allowed to settle down in Tripura, considering their apprehensions about their security.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599633>

Conference

Wings India 2020

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Wings India 2020 is an international exhibition and conference on the civil aviation sector.

(2) 'Wings India 2020'- a four-day event themed: "Flying for All" is an international platform focused on the new business acquisition, investments, policy formation and regional connectivity in the civil aviation industry.

Which of the following statement (s) is/are true?

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer:(c)

Related facts:

- Wings India 2020, an international exhibition and conference on civil aviation sector, will be held at Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad from March 12 to 15, 2020.
- This event will be organized by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, GOI, Airports Authority of India (AAI) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) to provide a congenial forum that will cater to the rapidly changing dynamics of the sector.
- 'Wings India 2020'- a four-day event themed: "Flying for All" is an international platform focused on the new business acquisition, investments, policy formation and regional connectivity in the civil aviation industry.



- Wings India 2020 will be Asia's largest event.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=197497>

International Summit on Women in STEM –“Visualizing the Future: New Skylines”

Question: Where did the International Summit on women in “STEM- Visualising the Future: New Skylines” take place on 23 and 24 January 2020?

(a) Hyderabad (b) Bengaluru (c) Mumbai (d) New Delhi

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The Department of Biotechnology organized an International Summit on Women in STEM– “Visualizing the Future: New Skylines” on 23rd and 24th January, 2020 at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.
- The Summit was organized with the overall aim to boost the participation of women in STEM field for development of scientific career.
- During the summit, different sessions of the summit included mechanisms of leadership building, empowering women through networking, career opportunities and interactive exercises with scientists.
- The aim was to showcase women in STEM successes as real-world examples of successful women scientists, doctors and engineers demonstrating the excitement of being in the STEM field as well as the rewards associated with it.
- Discussions and interactive sessions between aspiring young, mid-career and senior scientists in the STEM field were held to understanding the future requirements of women's employment and career progression.
- Around 350 participants from different STEM field across the globe participated in the event including scientists, socialists, entrepreneurs, researchers, teachers and students.
- The summit provided a good platform for young students and researchers to interact and network with leaders in the field, to develop ideas and generate a future action plan for making career in STEM fields.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600447>

10th Annual Meeting of FEMBoSA

Question: which one of following has taken charge as the Chairman for 10th Annual Meeting of FEMBoSA 2020 that was organized in New Delhi recently?

(a) Ashok Lavasa
(b) S. Y. Qureshi
(c) Sunil Arora
(d) Raveesh Kumar

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Chief Election Commissioner of India, Sunil Arora assumed the Chairmanship of The Forum of the Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of South Asia (FEMBoSA) for the year 2020 on January 24, 2020.
- The Outgoing Chair of FEMBoSA, K.M.Nurul Huda, CEC of Bangladesh handed over the Logo of FEMBoSA to the incoming Chair, Sunil Arora at the 10th Annual Meeting of FEMBoSA held in New Delhi.
- EMB Bangladesh presented the Stewardship Report on the activities of FEMBoSA members during the last year.
- For Capacity Building, Election Commission of India has established the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM) in June 2011.



FEMBoSA:

- FEMBoSA was established at the 3rd Conference of Heads of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of SAARC Countries held at New Delhi in May, 2012.
- With its eight members, FEMBoSA represents a very large part of the democratic world and is an active regional association of EMBs. Annual FEMBoSA meeting is held by rotation among the members.
- The last (9th) annual meeting of FEMBoSA was held in Dhaka in September 2018.
- A New Delhi Resolution was unanimously adopted at the 10th FEMBoSA Annual Meeting by the seven FEMBoSA members present at the meeting.
- The Members resolved to : Implement the Work Plan for 2020 as approved by the member EMBs in the 10th Meeting of FEMBoSA; Cooperate in capacity building of the member countries; Host election visitor programmes in the respective countries as feasible; Provide technical assistance to the members as requested and as feasible, etc.
- The Work Plan for 2020 on 'Use of Technology in Elections' calls for Members to undertake projects and initiatives on various aspects of use of technology in elections and present a report on their experiences and challenges faced in this regard at the next FEMBoSA Meeting.
- On the sidelines of the Conference, ECI renewed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for cooperation in the field of election management with the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan.
- An International Conference was also organised on the theme "Strengthening Institutional Capacity", where nearly 30 delegates gathered to attend the International Conference.
- On this occasion, CEC Sunil Arora along with the two Election Commissioners of India Ashok Lavasa and Sushil Chandra launched the 10th issue of ECI's magazine – 'VOICE International' which carries articles on the theme of "Innovative Methods of Voter Registration".
- A webportal on Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) was also unveiled. IIIDEM will host A-WEB Centre for documentation, research and training for sharing the best practices and capacity building of officials of A-WEB members.
- Election Commission of India has endeavoured to play a pioneering role in organizing free, fair and credible elections in a participative manner in the largest democracy in the world. In September 2019, ECI took over as Chair of the 115 member Association of World Election Bodies for 2019-21 term.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600461>

Renewable Energy Investors Meet

Question: Which ministry has recently organized Renewable Energy Investors Meet?

**(a) Ministry of Railway (b) Ministry of Home Affairs
(c) Ministry of Science & Technology (d) Ministry of Defence**

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Indian Railways and Railway Energy Management Company Ltd. (REMCL – a Joint Venture of Ministry of Railways & RITES Ltd.) organized a Renewable Energy Investors' Meet on 09th January, 2020 in New Delhi.
- The objective of the Investors' Meet was to disseminate information about the opportunities available under renewable energy in Indian Railways. In the meet, experience of developers with Railways and key benefits of partnering with Indian Railways was showcased.
- The Investors' Meet was attended by leading financiers and institutions including Department for International Development, Government of United Kingdom (DFID), Asian Development Bank (ADB), GIZ from Germany, AFD from France, Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA), State Bank of India (SBI), Punjab National Bank (PNB) as well as leading renewable energy organizations such as Softbank Energy, L&T, Renew Power, Sembcorp, Amplus Solar, SunEdison and Gensol.
- They shared their expectations of being partners in the journey of renewable energy of Indian Railways. The investors acknowledged the efforts of Indian Railways in leading the development of renewable energy in the country and expressed strong support to Indian Railways on the path of going green and achieving the net zero carbon emissions target by 2030.
- Indian Railways has recently invited bids for 47 MW rooftop solar projects and 249 MW of wind solar hybrid projects.
- This meet was supported under the Power Sector Reforms Programme, as a part of cooperation agreed in the MoU signed between UK's DFID and Indian Railways on 2nd December 2019.

**Links:**

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1599457>

2nd National GST Conference

Question: Where did the 2nd National GST Conference take place on January 7, 2020?

(a) Hyderabad (b) New Delhi (c) Pune (d) Mumbai

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The 2nd National GST Conference of the Commissioners of State Tax and Chief Commissioners of Central Tax was held here under the chairmanship of Dr Ajay Bhushan Pandey, Revenue Secretary, Ministry of Finance in New Delhi.
- The multi-faceted Conference was focused on brainstorming session for streamlining Goods and Services Tax (GST) system and plugging revenue leakages.
- This was the 2nd edition of all India Conference where both tax administrations came together formally to build synergy and to share their knowledge and best practices with intent to bring about uniformity in tax administrations.
- During the Conference, deliberations were held on a mechanism and machinery for disseminating inter-departmental data among various agencies like GSTC, CBDT, CBIC, FIU, DoR, DGGI and State Tax Administrations etc. in order to achieve efficiency in curbing evasion and augment revenue collection.



After the day-long in-depth deliberations, the following measures were decided for necessary action:

- To constitute a Committee of Centre and State officers to examine and implement quick measures in a given time frame to curb fraudulent refund claims including the inverted tax structure refund claims and evasion of GST.
- Considering fraudulent IGST refund claims, it was explored to link foreign exchange remittances with IGST refund for risky and new exporter.
- All major cases of fake Input Tax Credit, export/import fraud and fraudulent refunds shall also be compulsorily investigated by investigation wing of the Income Tax Department.
- To explore access to banking transactions including the bank account details by GST system, in consultation with RBI and NPCI.
- To share data of cases involving evasion and fraudulent refund detected by CBIC with CBDT and vice versa, so that proper profiling of these fraudsters could also be done.
- The approach of strengthening enforcement through data exchange, sharing knowledge and best practices for a common national goal that leads to enhanced compliance management and revenue augmentation and at the same time ensuring that genuine taxpayers are not harassed was welcomed by all.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1598653>

Law & Justice

Kerala Assembly passes resolution against Citizenship Amendment Act

Question: Which state Assembly passed a resolution against the Citizenship Amendment Act and became the first state in the country to do so on 31st December 2019?

(a) Assam (b) Kerala (c) Arunachal Pradesh (d) Nagaland

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 31st December 2020, Kerala assembly passed a resolution against CAA Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).
- Kerala became the first state in the country to do so.
- According to the Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan the CAA contradicts the basic values and principles of the Constitution.
- As per CM, implementation of the act will lead to religion-based discrimination in granting citizenship, which is against the secular values enshrined in the Constitution.
- According to the Citizenship Amendment Act, members of the Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Jains, Buddhist and Zoroastrian communities who have come from Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh till December 31, 2014 and facing religious persecution will not be treated as illegal immigrants but given Indian citizenship.



Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/kerala-assembly-passes-resolution-against-citizenship-amendment-act/article30442061.ece>

Year, Day & Week

World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day

Question: When was the first ever World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day observed?

(a) 25 January (b) 29 January (c) 30 January (d) 20 January

Answer: (c)

Related facts:



- January 30, 2020 was observed as the first-ever World Neglected Tropical Diseases Day (World NTD Day), a day when the celebration of achievements made towards control of the world's NTDs is done, yet recognize the daunting challenges we face in the control and elimination of these conditions.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies 20 major conditions as NTDs, which includes four major soil-transmitted helminth infections (ascariasis, hookworm infection, trichuriasis, and strongyloidiasis), followed by lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis, scabies, leishmaniasis, Chagas disease, and dengue.
- It is to be mentioned that all of the world's population living below the World Bank poverty line of US\$1.90 per day are infected with one or more of the WHO's 20 NTDs, corresponding to at least 10% of the global population.
- These NTDs also disproportionately affect indigenous populations living in extreme poverty.
- NTDs are generally described as chronic and debilitating illnesses with the ability to promote poverty because of their effects on productivity, child development, societal stigma, and the health of women.

- Based on those criteria, PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases has expanded the WHO list to include a total of 40 NTDs.

Links:

<https://journals.plos.org/plosntds/article?id=10.1371/journal.pntd.0007999>

10th National Voters Day

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Election Commission of India (ECI) celebrated 10th National Voters day on January 25, 2020.

(2) The theme for National Voter's Day 2020 is 'Electoral Literacy for Stronger Democracy'.

The correct statement/s is/are:

(a) Only (1) (b) Only (2) (c) Both (1) and (2) (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On January 25, 2020, the Election Commission of India (ECI) celebrated 10th National Voters on January 25, 2020 at Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantt.
- President of India Ram Nath Kovind was the chief guest. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Minister for Law and Justice, Communications and Electronics and Information Technology also graced the function.
- Chief Election Commissioners and delegates from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Maldives, Mauritius, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Tunisia, also attended the 10th Annual Meeting of the Forum of the Election Management Bodies of South Asia (FEMBoSA), graced the occasion.
- 2020 is an important milestone in the history of Indian democracy as Election Commission of India (ECI) completes 70 years of its journey.
- The theme for National Voter's Day 2020 is 'Electoral Literacy for Stronger Democracy.'
- The National Voters' Day has been celebrated on January 25 every year since 2011.
- Election Commission of India (ECI) was established on 25th January 1950.
- The main purpose of the National Voter's Day celebration is to encourage, facilitate and maximize the enrolment, especially for the new voters.
- Belief in the Ballot-2, an anthology of 101 human stories from across the nation about Indian elections, developed in collaboration with the Publication Division was launched on the occasion and the first copy was presented by the Commission to the President.
- 'The Centenarian Voters: Sentinels of Democracy' with 51 stories of veteran voters across the nation who braved difficult terrain, poor health and other challenges to come out and vote was launched on the occasion by the President.
- The National Awards for the Best Electoral Practices shall be conferred on District and State level Officers for their outstanding performance in the conduct of elections in different spheres such as IT initiatives, Security Management, Election Management and contribution in the field of voter awareness and outreach.



Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600407>

National Girl Child Day

Question: When is the National Girl Child Day celebrated?

(a) January 21 (b) January 22 (c) January 24 (d) January 25

Answer:(c)

Related facts:

- On January 24, the National Girl Child Day is celebrated in India every year.
- It was started by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and the Government of India in 2008.
- National Girl Child Day is celebrated in India, in order to spread awareness about the inequalities face by the girl child among the people, and to ensure that they get equal opportunities and exposure.
- This day is celebrated throughout India, several programs are organised, and awareness campaigns related to subjects like saving the girl child, child sex ratios, and creating a healthy and safe environment for a girl child are also organised.
- The day in 2019 is celebrated with theme of “Empowering Girls for a Brighter Tomorrow”.
- Government is planning many strategies like scholarship for girl,s, reservations in government jobs,increasing construction of toilet for girls in rural areas to increase the attendance of girls in school.
- Campaign like ‘Beti Bachao,Beti Padhao’ which addresses issues like stop female foeticide, girls’ right to education is created a mass awareness about changing the mindset of people.
- This Year Ministry of Women and Child Development is promoting 5th Anniversary of “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao” campaign.



Links:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/more-lifestyle/national-girl-child-day-2020-history-significance-and-facts/story-BuydLPMYz72Zk2nv24Pf0O.html>

Army Day

Question: When is the Army Day celebrated?

(a) 15th August (b) 15th March (c) 2nd January (d) 15th January

Answer :(d)

Related facts:

- Army Day is celebrated every year on 15th January in India to commemorate the jawans and the Indian Army.
- The Army Day celebrations, which began in 1949, will be observed for the 72nd time in 2020.
- Army Day is celebrated to mark Lt Gen K M



Carriappa taking over as commander-in-chief of the Indian Army in 1949 from General Francis Butcher, the last British commander-in-chief of India.

- The Indian Army was established on April 1, 1895. Its motto is "Service before self."

Special about 2020 Army Day:

- The Army Day parade in New Delhi will see for the first time a woman, Captain Tania Shergill, leading an all-men contingent.
- Apart from the three service chiefs, India's first chief of defence staff General Bipin Rawat will also attend the parade.

Links:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/army-day-all-you-need-to-know-about-this-special-indian-army-day/articleshow/73264607.cms>

World Hindi Day 2020

Question: Consider the following statement:

(1) World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on January 10.

(2) Its objective is to create a suitable environment for the promotion of Hindi worldwide and to present Hindi as the prevalent language of the world.

(3) Hindi is the fifth most spoken language among the total languages spoken in the world.

Choose the correct one:

(a) Only(1) (b) Only(2) (c) Both(1) and (2) (d) All the above

Answer :(d)

Related facts:

- World Hindi Day is celebrated every year on January 10.
- Its objective is to create a suitable environment for the promotion of Hindi worldwide and to present Hindi as the prevalent language of the world.
- The Indian Embassies located in other countries outside India celebrates World Hindi Day by organizing special programs.
- Various government and non-government institutions organize unique programs for the promotion of Hindi.
- Article 343 (1) of the Indian constitution states that the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script. The form of numerals to be used for the official purposes of the Union shall be the international form of Indian numerals.



World Hindi Day:

- The first World Hindi Conference was held in Nagpur on January 10, 1975, where 122 delegates from 30 countries participated in the program.
- Former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh announced to celebrate World Hindi Day on January 10 every year in 2006.

- Hindi is the fifth most spoken language among the total languages spoken in the world.
- Hindi is spoken in many countries including Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, USA, UK, Germany, New Zealand, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, Guyana, Suriname, Trinidad, Mauritius, and South Africa.

Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/information/story/world-hindi-day-2020-inspirational-quotes-and-images-1635615-2020-01-10>

Books

Ranjan Gogoi releases Assamese version of the book

Question: On Nov 10, 2019, Assamese version of the book 'Courts of India: Past to Present' was inaugurated by which one of the following ?

- (a) Ranjan Gogoi (b) D Y chandrachurna (a) Madan Bhimarao Lokur
(b) Sharad Arvind Bobde

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 10 November 2019, then Chief Justice of India Justice Ranjan Gogoi released the Assamese version of the book 'Courts of India: Past to Present' in Guwahati.
- Chief Minister of Assam Sarbananda Sonowal, Chief Justice of India designate Sharad Arvind Bobde along with other dignitaries also attended the event.
- The book has been published by the Publication division.
- The book fabulously explains the Indian justice system featuring the historical developments which took place in the history of nation's courts.
- The various chapters of the book narrates the historical events of the court.



Links:

<http://www.ddinews.gov.in/national/cji-ranjan-gogoi-inaugurate-assamese-version-book-courts-india-guwahati-today>

Miscellaneous

National Cadet Corps Rally 2020

Question: Recently where the annual National Cadet Corps Rally 2020 has been organised?

- (a) Delhi (b) Pune (c) Visakhapatnam (d) Dehradun

Answer :(c)

Related facts:



- On 28th January 2020, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the Annual National Cadet Corps (NCC) rally 2020 at the Cariappa Parade ground in New Delhi.
- Prime Minister inspected the Guard of Honour and reviewed the March Past by the various NCC contingents and also from Cadets from other friendly and neighbouring countries.
- NCC cadets presented their capabilities in fields such as adventure sports, music and performance arts.
- NCC cadets also performed some themed cultural performance.
- Prime Minister distributes awards for the meritorious NCC cadets.
- In this rally, the efforts of NCC cadets has praised in the relief and rescue operations during natural disasters as well as their efforts for the promotion of initiatives such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1600810>