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NAVATRA

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BRICS

B R A Z I L 2019



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 30th 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 Nov. to 30th Nov) will benefit our beloved readers.

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

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National

11th BRICS Summit

Question: Consider the following statements regarding BRICS Summit 2019:

- (1) The 11th BRICS Summit took place in in Brasilia, Brazil.
- (2) 2019 BRICS summit theme is “Economic Growth for an Innovative Future.”
- (3) BRICS countries adopted the Brasilia Declaration.

Of the above correct statement/s is/are:

- (a) Only 1 (b) Only 2 & 3 (c) Only 1 & 3 (d) All of the above

Answer: (d)

Related facts:



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

Brasilia Declaration:

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

India at the Summit:

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

Meetings on the sidelines of the Summit:

India – Brazil:

- PM Modi invited the President of Brazil Jair Bolsonaro as the Chief Guest at the Republic Day 2020.
- Brazil has decided to grant visa-free travel to Indian citizens.
- India – China:
 - The countries have agreed to hold the next round of border talks. The 21st round of border talks were held in 2018 by Security Advisor Ajit Doval and his Chinese counterpart.
 - The Chinese President invited the Indian Prime Minister for the 3rd informal summit in China in 2020. The first informal summit took place at Wuhan (China-2018) and second at Mamallapuram (India-2019).
 - Both the leaders reviewed the preparations for celebrating the 70th anniversary (in 2020) of establishment of diplomatic relations between the countries.

India – Russia:

- PM Modi met his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin and noted their satisfaction that the 25 billion USD trade target between the countries to be achieved by 2025 has already been achieved.
- To dismantle the barriers of trade at regional level, the first Bilateral Regional Forum will be held in 2020.
- About BRICS:
 - BRICS is the acronym coined for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
 - The group together represents about 42% of the population, 23% of GDP, 30% of the territory and 18% of the global trade.
 - The acronym BRIC was first used in 2001 by Goldman Sachs to indicate the emerging powers that would be, alongside the United States, the five largest economies of the world in the 21st century.
 - The 1st BRIC Summit was held in Yekaterinburg, Russia, on 16 June 2009.
 - South Africa was invited to join BRIC in December 2010, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.
 - The chairmanship of the forum is rotated annually among the members, in accordance with the acronym B-R-I-C-S. Brazil is the current chair of the grouping.
 - During the Sixth BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014) the leaders signed the Agreement establishing the New Development Bank (NDB). They also signed the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement.

Links:

<http://brics2019.itamaraty.gov.br/en/brasilia-summit/basic-information>

Sabrimala verdict

Question: Consider the following statements regarding Sabrimala verdict:

- (1) The Supreme Court referred the Sabarimala case to a larger bench consisting of 9 judges.
- (2) Worshipping deity in Sabrimala is Lord Ayyappa.

Choose the correct of the above:

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

Answer: b

Related facts:

- The Supreme Court referred the Sabarimala case to a larger bench consisting of 7 judges on 14th November, 2019.
- The Supreme Court referred petitions seeking a review of its 2018 decision to allow the entry of women of all ages in Kerala's Sabarimala temple to a larger seven-judge bench.
- In a majority verdict of 3:2, Justices R F Nariman and D Y Chandrachud gave a dissenting view by dismissing all the review pleas and directing compliance of its last year order.
- The majority verdict — written by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, Justice A M Khanwilkar and Justice Indu Malhotra — said the ban on women's entry in religious places is not restricted to Sabarimala alone but was part of a larger debate that also includes other religions.
- Reading out some portions of the majority view, Chief Justice Gogoi said the petitioners were endeavouring to revive the debate on religion and faith.
- He added that the apex court should evolve a common policy on religious places like Sabarimala and added that the larger bench will decide the issues relating to Sabarimala, entry of women into mosques and practice of female genital mutilation.
- Stating that pleas relating to Sabarimala, entry of women into mosque and practice of genital mutilation in the Bohra community may require adjudication by a larger bench, the court decided to keep pending the pleas seeking a review of its 2018 order.
- However, the majority verdict did not say anything adverse against the apex court's September 28, 2018 decision allowing women to enter the shrine nor did it stay the earlier judgment.
- The verdict comes just days before the Sabarimala temple opens for the annual 'Mandalam-Makaravilakku' festival.
- In 2018, a five-judge Constitution Bench headed by then CJI Deepak Misra had ruled that banning entry of menstruating women is discriminatory and violates the right to equality.
- It said discrimination based on menstruation is akin to practicing untouchability as both concepts are rooted in the idea of purity. Justice Malhotra, however, had given a dissenting verdict.
- The split decision came on 65 petitions — 56 review petitions, four fresh writ petitions and five transfer pleas — which were filed after the apex court verdict of September 28, 2018 sparked violent protests in Kerala. Temple custodians argue that women of menstrual age are prohibited from offering prayers as the deity there, Ayyappa, is a celibate.



Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/editorial/review-and-reference-on-sabarimala-review-pleas/article29975105.ece>

K12 Education Transformation Framework

Question: Which of the following software giants has rolled out K12 Education Transformation Framework?

(a) Google (b) Microsoft (c) TCS (d) Infosys

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Microsoft rolls out its K12 Education Transformation Framework more widely in India.
- The Framework provides a holistic framework to facilitate a comprehensive digital transformation of schools.
- The framework is a flexible platform based on the latest research and input from hundreds of academics, experts, and policymakers.



- It comprises four pillars — leadership and policy, modern teaching and learning, intelligent environments and technology blueprint.
- Education leaders in more than 50 countries have already adopted the Microsoft K-12 Education Transformation Framework to help plan their learning strategies in partnership with Microsoft.

Links:

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/education/school-leaders/k-12-microsoft-education-transformation-framework>

Kalaburagi Airport Inaugurated Under UDAN Scheme

Question: The recently inaugurated Kalaburagi Airport is situated in which of the following state of India?

(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Karnataka (c) Kerala (d) Tamil Nadu

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The first flight from Kalaburagi Airport to Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru took off on November 22 2019 after the inauguration of Kalaburagi airport by the Chief Minister of Karnataka.
- The airport has been built under the UDAN-RCS Scheme of Govt. of India and is spread across 742 acres and developed at an estimated cost of Rs. 176 crores.
- Kalaburagi Airport is at a distance of 13.8km from Kalaburagi City and it is a DGCA licensed Aerodrome for VFR/Day operations. Three flights per week will be operated on Monday, Friday and Sunday.
- The Ministry of Civil Aviation undertook the task to develop the Kalaburagi airport as it will pave way for direct connectivity to North Karnataka with state Headquarters and other commercial centers.
- Kalaburagi Airport will act as a gateway for tourist destinations including Buddha Vihar, SharanaBasaveshwara Temple, Khwaja Banda Nawaz Dargah and, Gulbarga Fort.
- The newly built airport is in line with the commitment & perseverance of Airport Authority of India under the supervision of the Ministry of Civil Aviation of India to enable the country with better air connectivity.
- So far, 230 routes and 42 airports have been operationalized under UDAN. UDAN will connect all States and UTs of the country with around 700 routes, laying the foundation of a new regional segment in India's aviation market.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1593174>

International Tourism Mart at Imphal, Manipur

Question: Which edition of the International Tourism Mart was inaugurated on November 23 2019 at Imphal, Manipur?

(a) Sixth (b) Eighth (c) Fifth (d) Seventh

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Minister of State for Culture & Tourism, Prahlad Singh Patel and Chief Minister of Manipur, N. Biren Singh jointly inaugurated the 8th International Tourism Mart at Imphal, Manipur on November 23 2019.
- The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, in association with the North Eastern States is organising this event from 23 November to 25 November, 2019.
- The entire North East region has great heritage of culture and natural beauty to attract tourists from across the globe and to attract more tourists to the North East region, there is a need to change the perception and added that government is working towards the same.

Major Highlights of the event:



- This is the 8th International Tourism Mart and an annual event organised in the North Eastern region with the objective of highlighting the tourism potential of the region in the domestic and international markets.
- It brings together the tourism business fraternity and entrepreneurs from the eight North Eastern States. The event has been planned and scheduled to facilitate interaction between buyers, sellers, media, Government agencies and other stakeholders.
- The North East Region of India comprising the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim, is endowed with diverse tourist attractions and products.
- The 8th International Tourism Mart, will put the spotlight on “Sustainable Tourism an engine for Economic Growth and Employment”. The Mart will also give a platform for promoting cultural ties, providing enhanced connectivity to the States of North Eastern Region with other countries in our neighbourhood.
- A total of 36 foreign Buyer delegates from over 19 countries namely Australia, Canada, Cambodia, Czech, Dubai, Italy, Japan, USA, UK, Vietnam etc. participated in the Mart.
- The North East region has witnessed 47% growth in terms of visits of foreign tourists, which is a very good sign for the entire region. Due to reduction in E-Visa fee and reduction in GST rates on Hotel rooms, more tourists are coming to India.
- The government has opened 137 peaks for foreign tourists and besides this, Siachen glacier has also been opened for public. India has jumped in World Travel and Tourism Index from 40th to 34th position in 2019.
- International and Domestic Buyers engaged on business-to-business meetings with sellers from the North Eastern Region.
- An exhibition by State Tourism Departments from the North Eastern States including display of beautiful handicrafts and handlooms was also organised to show case the tourism products of respective participating States.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1593270>

‘Destination North East’ festival

Question: Where the four day Destination North East festival is being organized from 23 to 26 November 2019?

(a) Lucknow (b) Indore (c) Varanasi (d) Jabalpur

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) Dr Jitendra Singh inaugurated a 4-day North East festival in Varanasi.

- This event will offer an opportunity for the fusion of the two rich cultures of Ganga and Brahmaputra, represented by Varanasi and North East respectively.

Highlights of the event:

- Varanasi is a holy city and it is a unique opportunity to have this event organised in Varanasi. This event would also bring India's cultural diversities together and help people across India to understand what Northeast is all about.
- Veteran cine star Zeenat Aman, Former cricketer R P Singh and several other celebrities for the world of films, music and sports were also present on the occasion.
- The festival is being organised by the Union Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) at IIT BHU grounds, Varanasi. The previous editions of 'Destination North East' were held in Delhi and Chandigarh.
- "Destination North East" 2019 is providing live experience to the audience. All the eight North Eastern States are participating in the event along with their respective handicrafts, handloom, organic products and cultural troupes.
- Northeast has something to offer to each of the young Start-Ups and aspiring entrepreneurs from all over India and therefore it is fast emerging as the favorite destination for youth from all over India. This will help in curbing youth exodus.
- North East model of development has today become a reference point for replication in other parts of India. There is so much to learn from North East. States like Sikkim have GDP that most of the other states don't have. "Venture fund" is started for start-ups introduced by DoNER ministry.
- Connecting North east with the rest of country is the priority of Modi Government. Various steps have been taken to boost rail, air and road connectivity. The budget to North east has been increased. A train will soon be flagged off to Bangladesh from North East.



Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1593279>

Arundhati Swarna Yojana

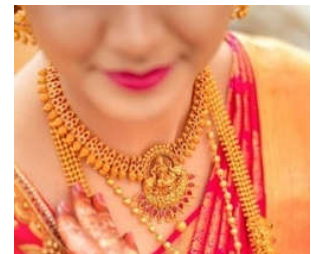
Question: Arundhati Swarna Yojana which provides each beneficiary bride 10 grams of gold during her marriage is to be launched by which state government?

(a) Assam (b) West Bengal (c) Tripura (d) Arunachal Pradesh

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- In order to reduce the child marriage and promote literacy, Assam government has announced to launch the Arundhati Swarna Yojana. The scheme will be in operation from January 1, 2020.
- Under the scheme, state government will give each beneficiary bride Rs 30,000 to purchase 10 grams (one tola) of gold during her marriage if the marriage is registered.
- The scheme will cost about Rs 800 crore annually on the government exchequer.
- Through the scheme the government will ensure the registration of marriages. As per State Finance Minister Himant Biswa Sarma around 3 lakh marriages occur in Assam but the number of registered marriages is quite low to 50-60 thousand.



Eligibility Criteria of the scheme:

- The annual income of the bride's family must be less than Rs. 5 lakh.

- Minimum age should be 18 years and 21 years for the bride and bridegroom respectively.
- Bride should have minimum education of 10th standard. However, this requirement of minimum educational qualification criteria is not required for tribes and workers of tea gardens.
- Family has to register their marriage under the Special Marriage (Assam) Rules, 1954.

Links:

http://www.bhasha.ptinews.com/news/1928648_bhasha

UIDAI operationalizes 21 Aadhaar Seva Kendras

Question: A total of how many stand-alone Aadhaar enrollment centres will be opened across the country as per the plan of UIDAI?

(a) 100 (b) 114 (c) 120 (d) 130

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Unique Identification Authority of India, UIDAI has operationalized 21 Aadhaar Seva Kendras as part of its plan to open 114 stand-alone Aadhaar enrollment and centres across the country.
- These are in addition to 35,000 Aadhaar Enrollment Centers run by Banks, Post Offices and State Governments.
- AI plans to set up 114 Aadhaar Seva Kendras in 53 cities across the country.
- While Aadhaar enrollment is free, a nominal charge of 50 rupees is payable for updating details like adding mobile number to Aadhaar and updating address.



Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=UIDAI-operationalizes-21-Aadhaar-Seva-Kendras&id=374892>

SARAS IITF Mela 2019

Question: Who inaugurated the SARAS IITF Mela 2019 organized in New Delhi?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Narendra Singh Tomar (c) Piyush Goyal (d) Arjun Munda

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The Union Minister for Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Agriculture Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the SARAS IITF Mela 2019 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi on November 19, 2019.
- The SARAS-IITF Mela 2019 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi is being organized by the Ministry of Rural Development from 14th to 27th November, 2019.
- 240 artisans from different states are showcasing wide range of curated collection of products like handicrafts, handlooms and natural food products in 120 stalls.
- The Union Minister said that the didis (sisters) from the Self Help Groups (SHGs) possess a lot of positive energy and will power and the same should be utilized for progress of the nation.
- The Minister of State for Rural Development Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti also participated as Special Guest at the event and addressed the gathering.
- SARAS has been instrumental in increasing the motivation of didis and women from SHGs called didis run their households with the money earned also manage to save for the future which is in itself a remarkable feat.

- SARAS Mela is an initiative by the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Government of India with an objective to bring the rural women SHG members formed under DAY-NRLM, in one platform to showcase their skills, sell and build linkages with potential market players.
- SARAS Mela not only provides a platform to these SHG women, but it also provides a national level exposure to understand the demand and taste of the urban customers in metros.
- Over 20 years now, SARAS has evolved as a brand and has brought wide range of products handcrafted by the Self Help Group of DAY-NRLM.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1592082>

IRCTC signs an MoU to run the Golden Chariot Train

Question: IRCTC has signed a MoU with which institution to run the Golden Chariot Train on 19 November 2019?

- (a) Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation
- (b) Kerala State Tourism Development Corporation
- (c) Andhra State Tourism Development Corporation
- (d) Maharashtra State Tourism Development Corporation

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC), a tourism arm of Indian Railways, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC) to market and operate the Golden Chariot Train in New Delhi on 19 November 2019.
- The new itineraries shall be a mix of history, culture, wildlife and nature.
- It is proposed to include Bandipur, Mysore, Halebid, Chikmagalur, Hampi, Bijapur and Goa in the itinerary.
- IRCTC is expected to carry out internal refurbishment of the train and commence operations from March 2020.

Golden Chariot Train:

- The Government of Karnataka and KSTDC have been operating and maintaining Golden Chariot since its inception in 2008 and it is the first and only luxury train in the whole South India.
- The Golden Chariot showcases the rich culture and heritage of the region.
- The Golden Chariot train which commenced operations in 2008 is a Government of Karnataka initiative in a Joint Venture with Ministry of Railways, Government of India.

- The 18 coach long train with 44 guest rooms having a capacity of 84 guest, covers tourist attractions in the state of Karnataka and other south Indian states.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1592207>

Road Accidents in India-2018

Question: What is the percentage of increase in the road accidents in India as per the recently released Road Accidents in India 2018 report by the Ministry of Road and Transport?

(a) 2% (b) 1.46 % (c) 0.46% (d) 3.46%

Answer:

- On 19 November 2019, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has released the 'Road Accidents in India, 2018'.
- It is an annual publication brought out by the Transport Research Wing of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways which reports on accidents, related deaths and injuries, calendar year-wise, based on information supplied by the Police Departments of States and UTs.

The major findings of the Report are as follows:

- As per the Report, Road accidents in the country have increased marginally by 0.46 % during 2018 with the year seeing 4,67,044 road accidents as against 4,64,910 in 2017.
- The fatalities during the same period have also risen by about 2.37% and 1,51,471 persons were killed in 2018 as against 1,47,913 in 2017.
- Road accident injuries have however showed a decrease of 0.33% in 2018 as compared to 2017.
- National Highways which comprise of 1.94 percent of total road network, accounted for 30.2 per cent of total road accidents and 35.7 per cent of deaths in 2018.
- State Highways which account for 2.97% of the road length accounted for 25.2 percent and 26.8 percent of accidents and deaths respectively.
- In terms of accident related killings by type of road user, the number of Pedestrians killed accounted for 15%, the share of cyclists was 2.4% and that of Two wheelers was 36.5%. Together these categories explain 53.9% of the accident related killings and are the most vulnerable category quite in line with global trends.
- During 2018, like the previous two years, young adults in the age group of 18 – 45 years accounted for nearly 69.6 percent of road accident victims. The working age group of 18 – 60 accounted for a share of 84.7 percent in the total road accident deaths.
- The number of hit and run cases in 2018 accounted for 18.9% of the deaths compared to 17.5% in 2017.
- The share of males in number of total accident deaths was 86% while the share of females hovered around 14% in 2018.
- Under the category of Traffic Rule Violations, over speeding is a major killer, accounting for 64.4% of the persons killed followed by driving on the wrong side of the road which accounted for 5.8% of the accident related death.
- Driving without valid license/learners license accounts for 13% of accidents. About 29% of deaths can be attributed to non use of helmets and 16% of deaths can be attributed to non use of seat belts.
- Vehicles more than 10 years accounted for 41% of accident related deaths. Overloaded vehicles accounted for about 12% deaths.

- As in 2017, the State of Tamil Nadu recorded the highest number of road accidents in 2018. Similarly as in 2017, the number of persons killed in road accident was the highest in Uttar Pradesh in 2018.

Efforts being done by Government:

- Road traffic accidents are amenable to remedial actions and the Ministry has been implementing a multi pronged road safety strategy based on Education, Engineering (both of roads and vehicles), Enforcement and Emergency Care consisting inter-alia of setting up Driver training schools, creating awareness, strengthening automobile safety standards ,improving road infrastructure , carrying out road safety audit etc.
- A major initiative of the Ministry this year in the field of Road Safety has been the passing of the Motor Vehicle Amendment Bill 2019 which focuses on road safety measures which include, inter-alia, stiff hike in penalties for traffic violations, computerisation/automation of vehicle fitness and driving tests, recall of defective vehicles.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1592206>

The IMD World Talent Ranking 2019

Question: What is India's position in released IMD World Talent Ranking 2019?

(a) 59th (b) 53rd (c) 57th (d) 61st

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- IMD World Talent Ranking- 2019 was released on November 18, 2019.
- India has slipped 6 places from 53rd in 2018 to 59th rank this year on a global annual list of 63 countries.
- International Institute for Management Development (IMD) is a business education school based in Switzerland.

Methodology:

- The IMD World Talent Ranking scores countries across three factors of investment and development, readiness and appeal.
- The Investment and Development factor measures the resources committed to cultivate home grown human capital.
- The Appeal factor evaluates the extent to which a country attracts local and foreign talent. And, the Readiness factor quantifies the quality of the skills and competencies that are available in a country.

Key facts:

- In 2019, the top of the table is still led by European small and mid-size economies.
- Switzerland retained its title as the world's top talent hub and topped the ranking, followed by Denmark (2nd) and Sweden (3rd).
- Most leading economies emphasized long-term talent development by focusing on investment and development.
- North-central Asian country Mongolia is least competitive (63rd rank).

India's status:

- In the published index India is lagging behind fellow BRICS countries – China ranked 42nd on the list, Russia (47th) and South Africa (50th). However, Brazil is at 61st rank in the 2019 list.
- India also witnessed one of the sharpest declines among Asian economies.
- The decline is due to low quality of life, negative impact of brain drain, and the low priority of its economy on attracting and retaining talents.

Links:

<https://www.imd.org/wcc/world-competitiveness-center-rankings/world-talent-ranking-2019/>

President Kovind presents special Flag to Indian Naval Academy

Question: President Kovind presented special Flag to Indian Naval Academy in which of the following city?

(a) Kannur, Kerala (b) Lucknow, UP (c) Bhopal, MP (d) Patna, Bihar

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- President Ram Nath Kovind awarded the President's Colour, the highest honour that is bestowed upon a military unit, to the Indian Naval Academy in Ezhimala, Kannur in Kerala.
- Kerala Governor Arif Muhammed Khan, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh, and State Minister, Kadamkampally Surendran graced the occasion
- In his address at the Indian Naval Academy, the President mentioned that Armed forces are completely equipped to face any kind of challenges be it in conventional or in the asymmetric domain.
- He urged the Naval officers to fully utilize the training and be prepared to deliver in all situations for the country. He complimented the commandants, instructors and officers involved in training for producing multi-faceted officers for Indian Navy.
- President received the Guard of honour from the Academy Cadets.



Link:

<http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=374786>

“Swachh – Nirmal Tat Abhiyaan”

Question: When is the Swachh Nirmal Tat Abhiyaan been organized by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change?

(a) 10- 16 November (b) 5- 10 November (c) 11-17 November (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- To strive to make our beaches clean and create awareness amongst citizens about the importance of coastal ecosystems, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) are undertaking a mass cleanliness-cum-awareness drive in 50 identified beaches under the “Swachh – Nirmal Tat Abhiyaan”.
- It was organized from 11th and 17th November, 2019. The identified beaches are in 10 coastal States/Union Territories (UTs) namely Gujarat, Daman & Diu, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha. The beaches have been identified after the consultation with the States/UTs.

- The cleaning drives in all beaches are being undertaken, involving school/college students of Eco-clubs, district administration, institutions, volunteers, local communities and other stakeholders. State Nodal Agencies for the Eco-clubs will be facilitating the week long intensive cleanliness drive in all 10 States/UTs.
- Nodal teachers from the Eco-clubs will be present at the sites during the entire cleanliness drive. MoEF&CC officials have also been deputed to monitor the implementation of the drive.
- For beach cleaning activities which will be a duration of two hours on daily basis, a minimum of one Kilometre stretch of the beach shall be identified. Beach sand cleaning machines shall also be deployed at about identified 15 beaches.
- Thereafter collected waste will be processed as per extant Waste Management Rules, 2016. Environment Education Division of the Ministry and Society of Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM) under the aegis of this Ministry will be responsible for the overall coordination for the drive in 50 beaches.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591232>

Shilpotsav -2019

Question: Where was the annual fair Shilpotsav 2019 organised from 1 to 15 November 2019?

(a) Jabalpur (b) Pushkar (c) Mysuru (d) New Delhi

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Shilpostav- 2019 was organized from 1st November to 15th November 2019 at Dilli Hat, New Delhi. Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment, Thaawarchand Gehlot visited the fair.
- It is the annual fair of artisans from across the country, belonging to the weaker sections of the society.
- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is working towards empowering disadvantaged and marginalized artisans nationwide and in continuance of this, Shilpostav has been organized every year.
- The artisans assisted by the Apex corporations of the Ministry Social Justice and Empowerment i.e. National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation, National Scheduled Caste Finance & Development Corporation, National Handicapped Finance & Development Corporation (NHFDC), National Safai Karamchari Finance & Development Corporation (NSKFDC) and National Trust are displaying and selling their products.
- The range of products in this fair include – silk sarees, durries, readymade garments, Terracotta products, Jute Products, dress materials, Kashmiri shawls/stoles, leather, cane & bamboo products, hand embroidery, bead products, pearls, imitation jewellery, lakh products, decorative candles, wood carving, block printing, wooden toys, tie & dye, wood, marble artefacts and handloom etc.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591062>

International Buyer- Seller Meet in Arunachal Pradesh

Question: Which edition of the International Buyer Seller Meet in Arunachal Pradesh was organized on 14th November 2019?

(a) Second (b) Third (c) First (d) Sixth

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) under the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, held the first edition of international buyer seller meet on Agriculture & Horticulture produce in Arunachal Pradesh on 14th November 2019.
- APEDA and Department of Agriculture & Horticulture, Government of Arunachal Pradesh organised it in Itanagar to promote export of agricultural products and to facilitate market linkages for agri- exports from the North Eastern Region (NER) especially Arunachal Pradesh.
- Highlights of the event:
 - Ten International buyers from seven countries of Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Indonesia, UAE, Sultanate of Oman and Greece participated in the meet and interacted with exporters.
 - Growers and exporters showcased the products of Arunachal Pradesh like Mandarin oranges, kiwi, pineapple, king chilly, large cardamom, organic products, other fresh fruits, vegetables, flowers and spices.
 - This conference was held to provide a platform for B2B and B2G meetings of international buyers with the importers and exporters and the progressive farmers and growers from the North East Region (NER) particularly from Arunachal Pradesh to explore the opportunities and prospects of agriculture and horticulture exports.
 - The buyer seller meet will provide linkages among the international and national buyers and farmers.
 - A colourful cultural evening was arranged to showcase the rich cultural heritage of the North East States especially Arunachal Pradesh. A field visit for the international buyers has been arranged today at a kiwi winery and kiwi orchard at Ziro.
 - APEDA is holding promotional activities in the areas of agriculture exports, like providing support to exporters to set up infrastructure facilities like pack houses and cold storages.
 - APEDA also helps exporters to exhibit their products in several national and international exhibitions. This event at Itanagar is part of the initiative of APEDA to bring the North-Eastern states of India on the export map.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591712>

India and Switzerland hold Secretary-level Bilateral Meeting

Question: Where did the India Switzerland secretary level bilateral meeting take place on November 13, 2019?

(a) Bern (b) New Delhi (c) Hyderabad (d) Mumbai

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Indian Revenue Secretary Dr Ajay Bhushan Pandey and Switzerland's State Secretary for International Finance Daniela Stoffel met in New Delhi on November 13 2019 in a secretary level bilateral meeting.

- Fighting the menace of Black Money stashed in offshore accounts is a key priority area for the Government of India. Following the agreement between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Swiss President Mr Ueli" Maurer for enhanced cooperation in the fight against tax evasion, the two sides have worked closely for expeditious information exchange in tax matters.

Highlights of the meeting:

- The Secretaries expressed satisfaction over the progress made over the past few years in the area of administrative assistance in tax matters, particularly the efforts made by Switzerland in providing assistance in HSBC cases.
- Welcoming the first transmission of financial account information on automatic basis between the two countries in September 2019, the Secretaries reiterated their countries' commitment to global tax transparency for tackling offshore tax evasion.
- This automatic exchange of financial account information will usher a new era of financial transparency as Indian tax administration will now know the details of all bank accounts held by Indians in Switzerland. The Secretaries encouraged the competent authorities of both the countries to further collaborate and share experiences with the aim of continuously enhancing the quality of the exchanged data.
- The Revenue Secretary and Swiss State Secretary also exchanged views on addressing the challenges arising out of digitalisation of the economy and agreed that coordinated international actions, as in the case of tax base erosion and profit shifting project, are central to achieving a consensus-based long-term solution that leads to desired tax certainty and sustainable development.
- The Secretaries reaffirmed the need for continuous dialogue at the level of competent authorities of the two countries to further enhance the cooperation under the India-Switzerland tax treaties and agreed to carry forward the dialogue in the spirit of mutual friendship and cooperation.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591480>

Def Connect 2019

Question: Who inaugurated the Def Connect 2019 organised by Ministry of Defence for showcasing the accomplishments of the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) initiative?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Rajnath Singh (c) Kiren Rijiju (d) VK Singh

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the 'Def Connect 2019' organised by Ministry of Defence for showcasing the accomplishments of the Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) initiative in New Delhi on November 11, 2019.
- He emphasized on the importance of 'Ideation, Innovation and Incubation' in cutting edge-technologies to achieve the goal of indigenisation and self-reliance in the defence sector. India is leading in the fields of technology and peacekeeping throughout the world.
- India is expected to emerge as a net innovator and net exporter of defence technologies rather than a net importer.



Important highlights of the event:

- There is a need of the confluence of knowledge and power are important for the progress of a country and iDEX is emerging as a suitable platform for linking knowledge & power and tapping the energy of the youth.
- 'Make in India', 'Startup India' and 'Atal Innovation Mission' are some of the initiatives taken by the Government to provide the requisite environment to innovative minds in the country.
- The aim of iDEX is to recognise talent and harness it amongst the youth, MSMEs, Startups and fast emerging private sector.
- Defence Minister launched the new iDEX logo, its portal (www.idex.gov.in) and dashboard for real time monitoring of the programme. A Compendium of iDEX Guidelines was also released.
- The Defence India Startup Challenge (DISC) – III was launched under which three challenges from the Army, Navy and Air Force were thrown open to prospective startups.
- An iDEX Open Challenge was also launched to provide an opportunity to innovators to come up with their technologies that may be adopted to the country's defence requirements.
- The aim is to fund 250 startups and achieve 50 tangible innovations in the next five years. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) is in the process of seeking approvals of Rs 500 crore for the purpose.
- The event brought together all stakeholders of the iDEX ecosystem i.e., MoD, iDEX selected startups, partner incubators, Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO), nodal agencies (Indian Army, Navy, Air Force), DRDO, DPSUs, Indian Ordnance Factories (IOFs), MSMEs and Industry associations to showcase the growth of the defence ecosystem in the country.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591289>

39th India International Trade Fair

Question: Who inaugurated the 39th India International Trade Fair on November 14 2019?

(a) Piyush Goyal (b) Ram Vilas Paswan (c) Nitin Gadkari (d) Narendra Tomar

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways and MSME Nitin Gadkari, inaugurated the 39th India International Trade Fair(IITF) on November 14 2019.
- He was accompanied by the Minister of State for Commerce & Industry Som Parkash. The theme for this edition of the Fair is "Ease of Doing Business" which is inspired by the unique achievement of India of rising up to the 63rd rank on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index from 142nd rank in year 2014.
- The country has made good progress in the field of MSMEs. MSMEs contribute up to 29 per cent of India's total exports. The sector has generated employment to over a crore people recently. The Minister described the MSME sector as the growth engine for India's development.
- The entrepreneurs were appealed to come forward with new and fresh ideas on improving designs, reducing costs, and harnessing businesses. The government is working on setting up new technology training centres for quality production, which is internationally acceptable.
- MSME sector has to play an important role in accomplishing the twin targets of doubling the farmers' income by 2022, and making India a Five Trillion Economy.
- IITF offers opportunity for large corporations, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), non-government agencies, artisans, self-help groups (SHGs), etc. to promote their products and services to a very large sample of potential customers.

- The fair is an important platform for various central and state government departments and agencies for dissemination of information on progressive reforms, new schemes and initiatives. It serves as a convergence point for government agencies, private sector enterprises, and non-government institutions which have aligned their activities with the country's development objective.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591602>

Khadi gets unique tag to boost export

Question: Which of the following tag has been assigned to Khadi recently for promoting its export?

(a) GM tag (b) HS tag (c) Bonus tag (d) None of the above

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Khadi has been assigned exclusive HS code bracket by the central government on 4th November 2019 to categorize its products in export.
- In a long awaited move to make export of Khadi, exclusively categorized from the general league of textile products, the ministry of commerce and industries has allocated separate HS code for this signature fabric of India this week.
- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena said that this decision of government will open a new chapter in the field of Khadi export.
- Earlier, Khadi did not have its exclusive HS code. As a result, all the data regarding export of this signature fabric used to come as a normal fabric under the textile head. Now, a constant eye will be kept on export figures and will also help us in planning the export strategies.

Harmonised System Tag:

- HS Stands for Harmonized System and it is a six digit identification code. It was developed by the WCO (World Customs Organization) and custom officers use HS Code to clear every commodity that enters or crosses any international border.
- Khadi and Village Industries products are eco-friendly and natural, and are in great demand in the International Markets.
- Recognizing its potential to generate exports and its eco-friendly importance, the Ministry of Commerce had accorded deemed Export Promotional Council Status (EPCS) to KVIC in 2006, to boost the export of Khadi products.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1590633>

First batch of pilgrims at Kartarpur Sahib Corridor

Question: Who inaugurated the Integrated Check Post (ICP) and flagged off the first batch of pilgrimage at Kartarpur Sahib Corridor on November 9, 2019?

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

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Integrated Check Post and flagged off first batch of pilgrims at Kartarpur Sahib Corridor in Gurdaspur, Punjab on November 9 2019.
- He took a guided tour of digital installation on life of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, and the Passenger Terminal Building prior to the inauguration of Kartarpur Corridor.

Integrated Check Post, Kartarpur Corridor:

- Integrated Check Post would facilitate Indian pilgrims to visit to Gurudwara Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan.
- India has signed the Agreement with Pakistan on the 24th of October 2019 on the modalities for operationalisation of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor at Zero Point, International Boundary, Dera Baba Nanak.
- The Union Cabinet passed a resolution on 22 November 2018 to celebrate the historic occasion of 550th Birth Anniversary of Shri Guru Nanak Devji in a grand and befitting manner, throughout the country and across the globe.
- The Union Cabinet also approved the building and development of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor from Dera Baba Nanak to the International Boundary, to facilitate pilgrims from India to visit Gurudwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, round the year, in a smooth and easy manner.

Important Provisions made for facilitation of Pilgrims:

- The 4.2 Km four lane highway connecting Dera Baba Nanak from Amritsar – Gurdaspur Highway is constructed at a cost of Rs 120 Cr.
- The state-of-the-art Passenger Terminal Building is on 15 acres land. The fully air conditioned building akin to an airport has over 50 immigration counters for facilitating about 5000 pilgrims a day.
- It has all the necessary public amenities like kiosks, washrooms, child care, first aid medical facilities, prayer room and snacks counters inside main building.
- A 300 ft. National Monumental Flag is also being hoisted at the International Border.

The highlights of the Agreement are: –

- Indian pilgrims of all faiths and persons of Indian origin can use the corridor. The travel will be Visa Free. Pilgrims need to carry only a valid passport.
- Persons of Indian Origin need to carry OCI card along with the passport of their country. The Corridor is open from dawn to dusk. Pilgrims travelling in the morning will have to return on the same day.
- The Corridor will be operational throughout the year, except on notified days, to be informed in advance.

- Pilgrims will have a choice to visit as individuals or in groups, and also to travel on foot.
- India will send the list of pilgrims to Pakistan 10 days ahead of travel date. Confirmation will be sent to pilgrims 4 days before the travel date.
- The Pakistan side has assured India on sufficient provision for 'Langar' and distribution of 'Prasad'.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591113>

Youth Co: Lab

Question: A recently launched programme in India titled Youth Co: Lab is related to

(a) Space Research (b) Water Pollution (c) Computer Engineering (d) Social entrepreneurship

Answer: (d)

Related facts:



- On 04 October 2019; Youth Co: Lab has been launched in India with the objective of developing social entrepreneurship and innovation among young people.
- In a latest initiative to recognize young people as critical drivers of sustainable development this programme has been initiated by Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India.
- To mark the launch, a Letter of Intent (LOI) was signed between AIM, NITI Aayog and UNDP India.

Aims and targets to be achieved by Youth Co: Lab:

- Targeted at supporting young people overcome challenges, UNDP and AIM, NITI Aayog will empower young people through innovative development ideas.
- Youth Co: Lab will convene social innovation challenges at the national and sub-national level, which will invite young people in the age group of 18-29 years and start-ups.
- In this way Youth Co: Lab will promote people and enterprises to showcase their proposed ideas and solutions to tackle some of the region's biggest social challenges.
- Through Youth Co: Lab, young entrepreneurs and innovators will get a chance to connect with governments, mentors, incubators and investors, who will help equip them with entrepreneurial skills.
- The initiative will also convene a series of youth dialogues across several cities such as New Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Mumbai to promote entrepreneurship across India.
- AIM and UNDP, as part of UNSDF signed between NITI Aayog and UN India, are collaborating to spread awareness about different issues pertaining to youth.
- It will also create awareness about the future of work and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in the country.

- The first phase of Youth Co: Lab will focus on six SDGs: Gender Equality; Clean Water and Sanitation; Affordable and Clean Energy; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Sustainable Consumption and Production and the sixth is Climate Action.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193626>

No govt. jobs in Assam for people with more than two children

Question: Recently, which state government has adopted population policy for more than two children has no government job?

(a) Assam (b) Nagaland (c) Arunachal Pradesh (d) Tripura

Answer: (a)

- Two years after the 126-member Assam Assembly adopted a population policy, the State Cabinet decided to make government jobs out of bounds for people with more than two children.
- The Cabinet also adopted a new land policy that will make the landless indigenous people eligible for 3 bighas (43,200 sq. ft.) of land for farming and half a bigha for constructing a house.
- This will come with a rider: a beneficiary can sell the land only after 15 years of use.
- The State Assembly had in September 2017 passed the 'Population and Women Empowerment Policy of Assam' seeking to encourage small family.
- Apart from specifying that candidates with two children only would be eligible for government jobs, the policy warranted that existing government employees should strictly follow the two-child norm.
- Implementing the population policy was necessary, given the pressure on land and resources in Assam.
- Providing land to the landless was also one of our commitments," a Minister said after the Cabinet meeting.

Indira Miri:

- Other decisions taken by the Cabinet included increasing bus fares by 25% and providing ₹300 per month to widows under a scheme named after educationist Indira Miri.
- The scheme also entails a one-time grant of ₹25,000 for women who became widows on or after April 1.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/no-govt-jobs-in-assam-for-people-with-more-than-two-children/article29765330.ece>

National Nutrition Survey 2019

Question: Consider the following statements regarding National nutrition survey 2019:

(1) One in five children in the age group 5 to 9 years was stunted

(2) Tamilnadu and Goa had the highest number of adolescents who were obese or overweight

Of 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:

- Around 10% of children in the age group of 5 to 9 years and adolescents in the age group 10 to 19 years are pre-diabetic.
- 5% of them are overweight and 5% suffered from blood pressure.
- One in five children in the age group 5 to 9 years were stunted.
- Tamilnadu and Goa had the highest number of adolescents who were obese or overweight.
- 7% children and adolescents have risk of chronic kidney disease.
- 4% adolescents have high cholesterol.

Classification of energy and protein malnutrition:

1. Over nutrition leads to obesity.
2. Undernutrition leads to marasmus and Kwashiorkor or kwashiorkor like malnutrition

Steps taken by government to curb incidences of malnutrition:

- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY): Rs.6, 000 is transferred directly to the bank accounts of pregnant women for availing better facilities for their delivery.
- POSHAN Abhiyaan: Aims to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anemia and low birth weight babies through synergy and convergence among different programmes, better monitoring and improved community mobilisation.
- National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013, aims to ensure food and nutrition security for the most vulnerable through its associated schemes and programmes, making access to food a legal right.
- Mid-day Meal (MDM) scheme aims to improve nutritional levels among school children which also have a direct and positive impact on enrolment, retention and attendance in schools.

Global concern:

- On 1 April 2016, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly proclaimed 2016–2025 the United Nations Decade of Action on Nutrition.
- Led by WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition calls for policy action across 6 key areas:
 - creating sustainable, resilient food systems for healthy diets;
 - providing social protection and nutrition-related education for all;
 - aligning health systems to nutrition needs, and providing universal coverage of essential nutrition interventions;
 - ensuring that trade and investment policies improve nutrition;
 - building safe and supportive environments for nutrition at all ages; and
 - Strengthening and promoting nutrition governance and accountability, everywhere.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/obesity-and-undernutrition-coexist-finds-study/article29550673.ece>

Keezhadi excavations: Sangam era older than previously thought

Question: Consider the following statements regarding the Keezhadi excavations:

(1) The Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department (TNAD) has stated that the cultural deposits unearthed during excavations at Keeladi in Sivaganga district could be safely dated to a period between 6th century BCE and 1st century CE.

(2) The artifacts unearthed in the region have a possible link between the scripts of the Indus Valley Civilisation and Tamil Brahmi (language).

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:

- An excavation was carried out in Keezhadi village of Sivagangai district in Tamil Nadu on September 17, 2019.
- In this excavation archaeologists have made some major discoveries, the artefacts unearthed in the region have a possible link between the scripts of the Indus Valley Civilisation and Tamil Brahmi (language).
- According to the new findings, the Keeladi artefacts are about 300 years earlier than previously believed 3rd century BCE.
- The Indus Valley Civilisation in India happened between 5,000 BCE and 1,500 BCE in north-western part of the country.
- The civilisation crumbled in 1500 BCE and it is believed that people might have moved to the south of India.
- The script used by the Indus Valley people is known as the Indus script, and the language could be Dravidian.
- The discovered samples displaying graffiti belong to 580 BCE, which is believed to be the link between the Indus script and the Tamil Brahmi.
- According to the Tamil Nadu Archaeological Department (TNAD) report known as Keeladi-An Urban Settlement of Sangam Age on the Banks of River Vaigai, the cultural findings belong sometime between the 6th century BCE and the 1st century CE.
- The report, explaining the importance of the findings mentions that “Among the available scripts of India, the Indus scripts are considered to be the earliest one and were 4500 years old.
- One kind of script that survived between the disappearance of Indus script and the emergence of Brahmi script is called as graffiti marks.
- These graffiti marks are the one evolved or transformed from Indus script and served as a precursor to the emergence of Brahmi script.
- In the recent discovery it was also found that Tamil-Brahmi belongs to another century altogether, which is the 6th century BCE.
- The report also mentions that they learned the writing art back in the 6th century BCE. To sum it up, the Sangam era, marking the social and cultural developments in Tamil Nadu must be older than 300 BCE.

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/travel/destinations/keezhadi-excavation-in-tamil-nadu-leads-to-a-major-discovery/as71279120.cms>

India's first E-waste Clinic

Question: India's first e-waste clinic of country is going to be set-up in which city?

(a) Hyderabad (b) Indore (c) Bhopal (d) Mumbai

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- India's first e-waste clinic of country will soon be set-up in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to this effect was signed between the Bhopal municipal corporation (BMC) and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) on 27th September 2019.
- Clinic would enable segregation, processing and disposal of waste from both household and commercial units.
- A three-month pilot project, the clinic, if successful, would be replicated elsewhere in the country.

Water Management Mechanism

- Electronic waste will be collected door-to-door or could be deposited directly at the clinic in exchange for a fee.
- The CPCB will provide technical support at the collected hazardous waste will then be sent to Bangalore for recycling.
- The facility would ensure scientific handling and disposal of electronic waste generate from households and commercial establishments.
- The clinic is being conceived in compliance with the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016.
- In the absence of a safe disposal mechanism, electronic waste at present is being disposed of along with other waste.

Central Pollution Control Board

- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), statutory organisation, was constituted in September, 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
- Functions of CPCB
 - Advise the Central Government on any matter concerning prevention and control of water and air pollution and improvement of the quality of air.
 - Plan and cause to be executed a nation-wide programme for the prevention, control or abatement of water and air pollution.
 - Plan and organise training of persons engaged in programme on the prevention, control or abatement of water and air pollution.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/indias-first-e-waste-clinic-to-be-set-up-in-bhopal/article29598165.ece>

India, Philippines signed Four Agreements in Manila during President Kovind's Visit

Question: Recently President went to which country visit and sign four agreement with his counterpart?

(a) Philippines (b) Japan (c) Australia (d) Azerbezan

Answer: (a)

- President of India Ram Nath Kovind met his Philippines counterpart Rodrigo Duterte and signed four agreements.
- Indian President Ram Nath Kovind is on an official tour to the Philippines and Japan.
- He reached Manila in the first leg of his visit to both countries.
- President of India Ram Nath Kovind met his Philippines counterpart Rodrigo Duterte and signed four agreements.
- It was believed that Kovind's visit will make an impact in the region as China claims most of the sea area. China had claimed its possession on the South China Sea many times despite UN-backed international tribunal ruled that China's claim was without any legal basis.
- India and Philippines had four agreements including Science and Technology, Maritime, Tourism and Culture. These agreements include exchanging of white shipping data that includes identification and information about the movement of commercial and non-military vessels.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1588538>

Hindustan Petroleum and Power Grid Corporation classified as Maharatna

Question: Recently which of the following PSU's has been given maharatna status?

(a) HPCL (b) HECL (c) THDC (d) BSNL

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The government accorded 'Maharatna' status to state-owned Hindustan Petroleum and Power Grid Corporation, thus giving them greater operational and financial autonomy.
- Two separate orders to this effect were issued by the Department of Public Enterprises, under the Ministry of Heavy Industry and Public Enterprises.
- The grant of Maharatna status to the PSUs will impart enhanced powers to their Boards to take financial decisions.
- The Boards of Maharatna central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) can make equity investments to undertake financial joint ventures and wholly owned subsidiaries and undertake mergers and acquisitions in India and abroad, subject to a ceiling of 15 per cent of the net worth of the concerned CPSE, limited to Rs 5,000 crore in one project.
- The Boards can also structure and implement schemes relating to personnel and human resource management and training.
- They can also enter into technology joint ventures or other strategic alliances, among others.
- The holding companies of a 'Maharatna' PSU are also empowered to transfer assets, float fresh equity and divest shareholding in subsidiaries, subject to the condition that the delegation will only be in respect of the subsidiaries set up by the holding company.
- HPCL was incorporated in 1974 after the takeover and merger of erstwhile Esso Standard and Lube India through the Esso (Acquisition of Undertaking in India) Act passed by Parliament.
- Power Grid Corporation of India Limited is India's largest electric power transmission utility firm. It is a listed company since 2007.

Links:

<https://www.news18.com/news/business/govt-accords-maharatna-status-to-hindustan-petroleum-power-grid-corp-2359917.html>

Gandhinagar becomes first kerosene-free district of Gujarat

Question: Which district of Gujarat became the first to allot 100 percent LPG connection?

(a) Ahmadabad (b) Gandhinagar (c) Surat (d) Rajkot

Answer : (b)

Related facts:

- Government allotted 1000 LPG connections to women of Gandhinagar district of Gujarat and has become the first Kerosene-free district of the state.
- Union Home Minister Amit Shah has allotted one thousand LPG connections to the women beneficiaries of Gandhinagar district.
- The cooking gas connections to the rural women have been allotted under the Ujjwala Yojana.
- ONGC has completed this scheme at the cost of 6.13 crore rupees covering more than 75 thousand beneficiaries.

- The Home Minister also handed over 480 middle-income group houses to the beneficiaries at Kudasan near Gandhinagar. These houses have been built by the Gandhinagar Urban Development Authority – GUDA.
- He also dedicated various drinking water schemes and gardens in Kudasan, Sargasan, Raysan and Vaval in Gandhinagar district on this occasion.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Gandhinagar-becomes-first-kerosene-free-district-of-Gujarat%3b-Amit-Shah-allots-1000-LPG-connections-to-women&id=373477>

Fortune's 2019 "40 Under 40 List"

Question: Which two Indians are included in Fortune's 2019 "40 under 40 list"?

- (a) Arjun Bose and Ankit Bansal (b) Arjun Bansal and Ankiti Bose
(c) Arjun Reddy and Ankit Kumar (d) Ravi Bansal and Ankiti Bose

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Arjun Bansal, the Vice President of artificial intelligence (AI) software and AI Lab at Intel, and Ankiti Bose, the CEO and co-founder of Zilingo, are two Indian-origin individuals featuring in Fortune's 2019 '40 Under 40' list.
- The 40 Under 40 is an annual list by the American magazine featuring the 40 most influential and inspiring young people in business under the age of 40.

Arjun Bansal

- At 35, Bansal is heading a team of nearly 100 workers across the United States, Israel and Poland.
- The team works on AI technologies such as reinforcement learning and natural-language processing, all intended to help keep Intel's silicon chips working seamlessly with the latest AI software.

Ankiti Bose

- Bose, 27, launched Zilingo in 2015 after visiting Bangkok's Chatuchak market and realising its merchants had no easy way to sell their goods online.

Links:

<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/indian-origin-ankiti-bose-arjun-bansal-in-fortune-2019-40-under-40-list-4513431.html>

First Government-operated Daycare Recreation Centre for Senior Citizens

Question: Recently at which of the following places first government-operated daycare recreation centre for senior citizens has been inaugurated?

- (a) New Delhi (b) Ambala (c) Chandigarh (d) Leh

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On October 9, 2019, first Government-sponsored and operated day-care cum recreation centre for senior citizens inaugurated the in Leh, Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).
- The inauguration has been done by Supreme Court judge, Justice S. Abdul Nazeer in presence of Chief Justice J&K, Gita Mittal.

- This recreation centre veterans is co-sponsored by Government and the District Legal Service Authority of J&K.
- It is a one-stop-shop for entertainment, medical services and legal aid for the aged people of the region.

Link:

<https://www.timesnownews.com/india/article/supreme-judge-inaugurates-first-govt-operated-daycare-for-senior-citizens-in-leh/501460>

Uttar Pradesh has the greatest share of crimes against women

Question: Consider the following statement regarding the National Crime Records Bureau report:

- (1) Uttar Pradesh has the greatest share of crimes against women as per crime data for 2017.
- (2) Lucknow is second in number of assaults with intent to outrage modesty of women.

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:

- Uttar Pradesh has the greatest share of crimes against women as per crime data for 2017 released by the National Crime Records Bureau.
- Uttar Pradesh accounted for 15.6 per cent of all the crimes against women reported in the country under the Indian Penal Code as well as those reported under special laws.
- This translates into a crime rate of 53.2 per cent (number of crimes reported/population).
- Of the 3.4 lakh crimes against women reported in the country, 56,000 came from Uttar Pradesh.
- This is 6,749 cases more than the number reported in 2016, and 20,103 more than those reported in 2015.
- Overall, in the country, cruelty by husband or relatives is the most reported crime against women, followed by assault on woman with intent to outrage her modesty, kidnapping and abduction and rape.
- In Uttar Pradesh, kidnapping and abduction are the most reported, followed by assault on woman with intent to outrage her modesty, cruelty by husband/relatives and kidnapping and abduction to compel for marriage.

Dowry deaths

- Metropolitan cities—those with population of above 2 million—reported 7.29 lakh crimes.
- On this list, the state's capital, Lucknow, comes in only behind Patna in reporting dowry deaths.
- Kanpur is the other metropolitan city that reported the same percentage of dowry deaths.

Assaults:

- On the metropolitan city count, Lucknow is only second (behind Delhi) in number of assaults with intent to outrage modesty of women.
- The city accounted for most number of assaults on women, though it reported no cases of sexual harassment at work or office premises.
- On the crime of voyeurism, Lucknow stood only second to Kozhikode in Kerala.
- Of the four metros that reported the most cases for kidnapping and abduction with intent to force for marriage, three (Kanpur, Ghaziabad and Lucknow) are in Uttar Pradesh. Patna reported the most number of such crimes.

Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/shameful-up-cases-crime-against-women-priyanka-gandhi-1611987-2019-10-22>

Tawang Festival

Question: Tawang festival is associated with which state of India?

(a) Sikkim (b) Nagaland (c) Assam (d) Arunachal Pradesh

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 28th October 2019; 7th edition of Tawang Festival was celebrated in Tawang from 28-31, October 2019 by Arunachal Pradesh Tourism Department.
- US Ambassador to India Juster Kenneth inaugurated the festival in presence of CM of Arunachal Pradesh Pema Khandu.
- Tawang is the hill station of Arunachal Pradesh upon which the name of the festival is given.
- This festival is being organised to make the people aware of the beauty, tradition and culture of the state as well as promoting tourism.
- Buddhist traditions and their different lifestyles are also the part of performances done by artists taking part in the festival, who came from different parts of this hilly state.
- The most special attractions of Tawang Festival are Yak Dance, Aji-Lhamu dance and street performances etc.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=373647>

TechSagar

Question: Recently launched TechSagar is a –

(a) Battle Ship (b) Super Computer (c) Online portal (d) Submarine

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 21 October 2019; TechSagar, an online portal of India's technological capability has been launched at New Delhi.
- This portal has been created by the National Cyber Security Coordinator's office in partnership with Data Security Council of India (DSCI).
- This portal lists every technology-based business and research entities starting from the IT Industry, startups, Academia to even Individual Researchers.
- The portal was launched by Rajesh Pant, National Cyber Security Coordinator of India.
- The repository was built with the aim to facilitate new opportunities for businesses and academia to collaborate, connect and innovate, in future.
- The portal can be accessed at www.techsagar.in
- TechSagar provides insights about capabilities of more than 4000 entities from industry, academia and research across 25 technology areas.
- These areas are Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence/Machine Learning, blockchain, cloud and virtualisation, robotics and Automation and more.
- It enables targeted and customised search, granular navigation and drilldown methods using more than 3000 niche capabilities.
- It is to be noted that TechSagar came as boon, when the losses due to cyber crime globally on an average is 2.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- It will certainly help India's dream of growing to \$5 trillion economy by 2025 as the country is being seriously threatened by the losses due to cyber crime.

Links:-

<https://techobserver.in/2019/10/22/techsagar-national-cyber-security-coordinator-with-dsci-launches-online-repository-on-cybertech/>

Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN)

Question: Consider the following statement regarding Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN)?

(1) It aims to provide quality healthcare at zero cost to pregnant women, new mothers and newborns.

(2) All pregnant women, newborns and mothers up to 6 months of delivery will be able to avail several free health care services.

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 Union Government has launched Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN) to provide quality healthcare at zero cost to pregnant women, new mothers and newborns.
- It aims to provide dignified and quality health care at no cost to every woman and newborn visiting a public health facility.
- Under the scheme, the beneficiaries visiting public health facilities are entitled to several free services.
- These include at least four ante natal check-ups that also include one checkup during the 1st trimester, at least one checkup under Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan, Iron Folic Acid supplementation, Tetanus diptheria injection.

Eligibility:

- All pregnant women, newborns and mothers up to 6 months of delivery will be able to avail several free health care services.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) defines quality of care for mothers and newborns as “the extent to which health care services provided to individuals and patient populations improve desired health outcomes. In order to achieve this, health care must be safe, effective, timely, efficiently integrated, equitable and people-centered.”

Links:

https://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/quality-of-care/definition/en/

Scientist excavated an ancient river in Uttar Pradesh

Question: Recently scientists excavated an ancient buried river near Allahabad in UP; through which of the following towns this river had flown in the past?

(a) Manjhanpur (b) Manikpur (c) Kunda (d) Kaushambi

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- A team of scientist of the Union Water Ministry has excavated an old, dried-up river in Prayagraj that linked the Ganga and Yamuna rivers.
- This paleochannel has been excavated in the backdrop of increasing water crisis.
- This river flows through Manjhanpur, Saray Ankil towns of Kaushambi and south of Sirathu.
- This paleochannel reveal the course of rivers that have ceased to exist.
- The newly discovered river was a buried paleochannel that joins the Yamuna River at Durgapur village, about 26 km south of the current Ganga- Yamuna confluence at Prayagraj.

- The ancient buried river is around 4 km wide, 45 km long and consisted of a 15 meter thick layer buried under soil.
- The discovery was made by a team of scientists from CSIR-NGRI (National Geophysical Research Institute) and the Central Groundwater Board.
- This river was discovered through a helicopter borne geophysical survey covering the Prayagraj and Kaushambi region in Uttar Pradesh.
- This report concluded that evidence from paleochannel suggested that the mythological Saraswati River did indeed exist.
- Knowledge in subsurface connectivity between Ganga and Yamuna rivers will play a very crucial role in planning of Ganga cleaning and protecting safe groundwater resources.
- The genesis of the paleochannel's discovery followed a 2016 report of a seven member committee, headed by; Professor K.S. Valdiya.

Link:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/scientists-excavate-ancient-river-in-uttar-pradesh/article29560057.ece>

Release of Postal stamp of the NIN

Question: Where is National Institute of Nutrition located?

(a) New Delhi (b) Patna (c) Chandigarh (d) Hyderabad

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 16 October, 2019; a special commemorative postal stamp of the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad was released in New Delhi.
- The Stamp was released by Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, Dr. Harsh Vardhan at a function held in the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in New Delhi.
- The release of stamp has been done to commemorate the completion of Centenary Celebrations of the NIN.
- The NIN centenary year theme was: Empowering the nation through nutrition.
- The stamp has been brought out under the "Corporate My stamp" scheme of India Posts.
- These stamps are of limited edition and are made to order. Alongside these customised themed stamps, the NIN also opted for printing its centenary logo.
- About 5,000 stamps with a face value of ₹5 per stamp were printed by India Posts
- India Posts would print an additional 1,000 sheets for sale online at e-post office and for display and sale in national and global philately exhibitions by the Department.
- It should be noted that the NIN, is the oldest Institute under the ICMR.
- On the occasion, a one-time award instituted to commemorate NIN's Centenary called the "ICMR-NIN-Centenary Award" was conferred on C Gopalan.
- C Gopalan was the legendary nutrition scientist who passed away at the age of 101 on October 3, 2019.
- The award was presented posthumously to his son Sarath Gopalan.

Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/national-institute-of-nutrition-centenary-stamp-released/article29726370.ece>

President Kovind at Vishwa Shanti Stupa

Question: In which city President Ramnath Kovind addressed a gathering at Vishwa Shanti Stupa?

(a) Patna (b) Rajgir (c) Rajkot (d) Delhi

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 25th October 2019, President Ram Nath Kovind graced the 50th anniversary of establishment of Vishwa Shanti Stupa (World Peace Pagoda) at Rajgir in Bihar.
- Governor Fagu Chauhan, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and other dignitaries graced the Golden Jubilee celebration of Rajgir Vishwa Shanti Stupa.
- More than 300 Buddhist monks, devotees and delegates from Japan, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and other countries participated in the function.
- Addressing the event, President Kovind emphasized that timeless teachings of Lord Buddha and Gandhi are panacea for fundamental problems faced by individuals, a community, a country and the entire world.
- The President emphasized to promote heritage tourism and build circuits related to places linked with Lord Buddha so that youths can be effectively connected to ideals of Buddhism.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=President-Kovind-addresses-gathering-at-Vishwa-Shanti-Stupa-in-Rajgir&id=373456>

Online platform SMARTPORT

Question: Which of the following state became the first in India to launch an online platform SMARTPORT?

(a) Telangana (b) Karnataka (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Andhra Pradesh

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 25 October, 2019 Andhra Pradesh became the first state in India to launch an online platform SMARTPORT as part of implementing the Ease of Doing Business (EDB) reforms.
- It should be known that these reforms are related to trade and export promotion in all ports in the state.
- The platform will be covered under the Public Service Delivery Guarantee Act and tracked through a single desk portal.
- Its purpose is to bring in transparency and accountability and establish a corruption-free environment in port-related services.
- SMARTPORT will enable following online services:
 - Request for entry of vessels into Indian waters.
 - Furnishing cargo declaration.
 - Request for entry certificate of vessels, furnishing import/export parameters and request for final clearance certificate.
- It will also facilitate in following matters:
 - Registration.
 - Renewal of an agency or firm.
 - Payment of offshore support vessel charges.

- Payments for drawl of seawater.
- Pipeline charges.
- Barge registration.
- Renewal or change of ownership and fishing harbor permission.
- All this will ensure hassle-free, transparent, accountable and speedy service delivery in the ports (including those under public-private partnership initiative) and augment trade and export promotion in the state.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/ap-launches-online-platform-smartport-119102501288_1.html

Maternal death rate declining

Question: Consider the following statements regarding Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR):

(1) Maternal Mortality Rate or MMR is the annual number of maternal deaths per one lakh live births.

(2) Kerala has secured the first position in declining of Maternal Mortality Rate.

(3) The Maternal Mortality Rate has fallen from 130 in 2014-2016 to 122 in 2015-2017.

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:

- Sample Registration System (SRS) measured that maternal mortality rate (MMR) in India has declined.
- Assam (229) was registered with the highest MMR while Kerala (42) was at the lowest.
- As per the report, MMR has been declined up to 26.9 per cent since 2013.
- In southern states, MMR has come down from 77 to 72 per one lakh births, while in other states the figure has come down from 93 to 90. The report indicates that India has prevented about 2000 MMR per year.

Highlights of SRS Report:

- MMR has decreased by 6.15 per cent as compared to the previous survey 2014-2016.
- The report said that it is encouraging to see the maternal mortality rate has fallen from 130 in 2014-2016 to 122 in 2015-2017.
- The largest fall in MMR was registered in Assam where it has come down to 175 from earlier number 188.
- The report categorizes India into three categories – Empowered Action Group (EAG), the Southern States and other states.
- Kerala has secured the first position in declining of Maternal Mortality Rate. It has registered a decline in MMR from 46 to 42.
- However, Maharashtra was in second place with a decline in MMR from 61 to 55 followed by Tamil Nadu in third place with MMR rate declining from 66 to 63.

Maternal Mortality Ration (MMR):

- Maternal Mortality Ration or MMR is the annual number of maternal deaths per one lakh live births.
- Death of a pregnant woman while pregnant or after 42 days of termination of pregnancy is known as MMR.
- As per the UNICEF, MMR is the key indicator for efforts to improve the health and safety of mothers during and after childbirth.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/health/maternal-death-rate-declining-report/article29925365.ece>

3rd India Energy Forum

Question: Consider the following statement regarding 3rd India Energy Forum:

- (a) The 3rd India Energy Forum was organised in New Delhi by CERAWeek.
(b) The shares of renewables in electricity capacity has significantly gone up now to 22% from around 10% in 2014-15.

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:

- On 15th October, 2019, the India Ministerial Dialogue was held at 3rd India Energy Forum by CERAWeek in New Delhi.
- The Indian, as well as regional energy companies, institutions, and governments, participated at the forum held under the patronage of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- As India is experiencing the fastest growth in energy consumption among all large economies, the country will be the key driver of global energy demand in the coming decades.
- To meet the huge demand for energy, India would be implementing a healthy mix of all commercially viable energy sources.
- India plans its course of the energy transition in a responsible manner which would greatly influence global energy transition.

Important facts:

- The shares of renewables in electricity capacity has significantly gone up now to 22% from around 10% in 2014-15.
- The ethanol blending percentage has risen from 0.67% in 2012-13 to now close to 6%.
- Also, more than 95% of households now have access to LPG, making their kitchens smoke-free.
- Three critical transitions to be addressed in the Indian energy sector are:

Mobility; Urbanization; Power generation

- India's per capita consumption of coal is about 1/10th of that of the United States but still, India aims to use cleaner technology for low- carbon energy future.
- In addition to the above initiatives, India is planning to transform itself into Gas Economy. Natural Gas offers an option of a balancing fuel, as it has proven capability to complement renewables.
- The contribution of modern technologies, efficiency in production has been recognized for transforming the landscape towards climate justice, and a sustainable future.

CERAWeek

- CERAWeek by IHS Markit has become the world's premier energy event.
- In 1983, Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERA) was founded in Cambridge.
- Each year, CERA clients gathered for a few days in Houston, Texas to attend the executive conference where they gained insight into the energy future while connecting

with their peers. Over time, the program was expanded to five days of informative sessions and networking opportunities—and named CERAWeek.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588128>

39th World Congress of Poets (WCP) 2019

Question: In which of the following cities the 39th World Congress of Poets (WCP) 2019 was held?

(a) Bhubaneswar (b) Pune (c) Lucknow (d) Puri

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- From 2nd to 5th October, 2019; 39th World Congress of Poets (WCP), 2019 was organised in Odisha. It was held at the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology (KIIT) University, Bhubaneswar.
- Chief Minister of Odisha, Naveen Patnaik inaugurated this poet congregation which was held under the theme: Compassion through Poetry.
- It was held for the third time in India. Previously, it was held in Chennai in 1986 and 2007.
- Poetry recitation session in English, Chinese, Spanish and Regional Languages was held during the 3rd day. This congregation included more than 1000 poets (members of WCP) from 82 countries.

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/home/education/news/cm-naveen-inaugurates-39th-world-congress-of-poets-at-bhubaneswar/articleshow/71419472.cms>

DPIIT launches website and mobile app

Question: The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) recently launched a website and mobile App for which of the following section:

(a) Internal trade (b) Intellectual Property Rights (c) Online trading (d) None of the above

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Secretary Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Guruprasad Mohapatra launched the website and mobile application [Learn to Protect, Secure and Maximize Your Innovation] on Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in New Delhi on 14th October, 2019.
- The website and App has been developed by Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM)-DPIIT in collaboration with Qualcomm and National Law University (NLU), Delhi.
- This is an important project taken up by the Department as both the website and App will be very useful to the startup community which holds great promise for India and its economy.
- Startups are more tuned into investment and risk taking but lack legal knowledge and today when we are on the threshold of the fourth industrial revolution the interface between technology and law is growing and therefore it is very essential that a specialized website and App is available to help startups with the IP process.

L2Pro:

- The modules of this e-learning platform [L2Pro India IP e-learning Platform and the L2Pro India Mobile App] will aid and enable youth, innovators, entrepreneurs and small and medium industries (SMEs) in understanding IPRs for their ownership and protection, integrate IP into business models and obtain value for their R&D efforts.
- The L2Pro has been successfully implemented in Germany, United Kingdom, Italy and France, benefiting immensely from close collaboration with respective IP organizations and public research institutions.
- The learning app has been customized for India in order to ensure that innovation which is fundamental to startups are protected, managed and commercialized.
- The L2Pro India IP e-learning platform will have 11 modules for three different levels: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced. Each module comprises of e-text for understanding concepts, short animated videos of the concepts, links to additional resources on the subject and quizzes for assessment and grading the learner's knowledge and understanding of the subject.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588022>

Commemorative Coin on Paramahansa Yogananda

Question: Who has released the commemorative coin on Paramahansa Yogananda's 125th birth anniversary on 29th October, 2019?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Nirmala Sitharaman (c) Ravi Shankar Prasad (d) Amit Shah

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman released a special commemorative coin on Paramahansa Yogananda to mark his 125th birth anniversary on October 29 2019.
- The Paramahansa Yogananda was great son of India, who became so recognised globally.
- The importance lies in his universal message of bringing harmony among mankind and making it so acceptable globally even when communications modes were limited.
- Paramahansa Yogananda (5th January, 1893 – 7th March 1952) was born as Mukunda Lal Ghosh. He was an Indian monk, yogi and guru who introduced the teachings of meditation and Kriya Yoga through his organization Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF) / Yogoda Satsanga Society (YSS) of India.
- A chief disciple of the Bengali yoga guru Swami Sri Yukteswar Giri, he was sent by his lineage to spread the teachings of yoga to the West, to prove the unity between Eastern and Western religions and to preach a balance between Western material growth and Indian spirituality.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1589481>

Chenani Nashari Tunnel renamed

Question: The Chenani Nashari Tunnel has been renamed after Shyama Prasad Mookerjee. This tunnel is situated in?

(a) Jammu & Kashmir (b) Sikkim (c) Himachal Pradesh (d) Arunachal Pradesh

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and MSME Nitin Gadkari and Jitendra Singh, MoS Development of North Eastern Region has announced renaming of Chenani

Nashari Tunnel on NH 44 in Jammu & Kashmir as Dr Shyama Prasad Mookerjee Tunnel in an event in New Delhi on 24th October, 2019.

- This 9 km tunnel is the longest such state of art tunnel in the country. It connects Udhampur to Ramban in Jammu.
- This tunnel was constructed at a cost of Rs 2500 crore, it cuts down 31 km of travel distance and reduces the travel time between the two points by about two hours, in addition to substantial saving in fuel cost.
- This tunnel is a fitting tribute to Dr Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, who sacrificed his life for the country and has been a source of inspiration for the nation.
- Shri Gadkari informed that Rs 6000 crore worth of road projects have been taken up in the state during the last five years.
- These include Ring Roads around both Jammu and Srinagar, and construction of Zojila Tunnel among others. He said these projects will be major game changers for the people of the state, bringing employment and socio-economic development.
- The Minister announced plans for construction of a new road alignment between Delhi and Katra in Jammu, which will reduce the travel time up to six hours and will pass through the states of Haryana and Punjab.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1589080>

Cabinet approves ownership right

Question: As per the approval of the ownership rights to the people in Delhi's unauthorized colonies, how many colonies are going to get recognized by this decision?

(a) 1797 colonies (b) 1897 colonies (c) 1997 colonies (d) 1597 colonies

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The Union Cabinet on October 23 2019 has approved the Regulations for conferring/ recognizing ownership or mortgage/ transfer rights to residents of Unauthorized Colonies (UCs) in Delhi. The Cabinet further approved bringing a Bill in the next session of Parliament to implement the proposal.

Major impact & benefit to the People living in Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi:

- The decision will benefit more than 40 lakh residents of unauthorized colonies spread over around 175 sq kms, as development / redevelopment can now take place in these colonies resulting in a clean, secure and healthy living environment.
- This landmark initiative will address major issues being faced by the residents of UCs like lack ownership/transfer rights, provision of basic infrastructure and civic amenities.
- With recognition of property documents, the property holders in these colonies can now enter into valid property transactions.
- The decision is applicable to 1,797 identified Unauthorised Colonies, which are inhabited by lower income group society.
- The rights will be conferred on payment of nominal charge based on carpet area/plot size. For colonies on Government land, the charge will be 0.5% (for less than 100 sq m), 1% (for 100 – 250 sqm) and 2.5% (for greater than 250 sqm), of the circle rate of highest category of locality of the residential area surrounding the UC.

Details:

- Central Government will introduce a Bill for recognizing General Power of Attorney (GPA), Will, Agreement to Sell, Purchase and possession documents, which will be a one-time relaxation for this purpose for the residents of UCs.

- The Bill will provide for registration charge & stamp duty on last transaction and also address the issue of income tax liability on account of less than circle rate charges.
- DDA will lay down a simplified procedure for issuing conveyance deed and registration of property. Boundaries of the UCs/ clusters of UCs will be delineated by DDA.

Background:

- As per the existing Regulations of 2008, the entire process of regularization was to be coordinated and supervised by Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi, (GNCTD) by giving wide publicity.
- People living in these UCs have neither invested in safe structures nor could the Government create any social infrastructure on account of these colonies having developed without approved Layout Plan (LOP). In the absence of basic amenities, the residents of these colonies are living in uninhabitable conditions.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/cabinet-ministers-briefing-merging-of-mtnl-and-bsnl-unauthorised-colonies-in-delhi-6084023/>

Col. Chewang Rinchen Setu inaugurated in Ladakh

Question: Who inaugurated the Col. Chewang Rinchen Setu in Ladakh on October 20 2019?

(a) Satya Pal Malik (b) Raj Nath Singh (c) Amit Shah (d) Ram Madhav

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh was on a visit to the territory of Ladakh on 21st October, 2019.
- He attended the inaugural ceremony of Col. Chewang Rinchen Setu which has been constructed at an altitude of 14,650 feet in the forward area of Ladakh region.
- This Bridge is built on the strategically important road Durbuk Shyok Daulat Beg Oldie in sub sector north in eastern Ladakh.
- The Bridge, which is 1400 feet span, is constructed by the Border Road Organization.
- Micro pile technology is used during the foundation of the bridge to overcome the technological challenges in the remote areas of Ladakh.
- The construction of the Bridge was completed within 15 working months using 6900 cubic meters of concrete and 1984 metric tons of steel.
- It is named in honor of Colonel Chewang Rinchen who was one of the highly decorated officers in the Indian Army from Ladakh and he was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra twice.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Rajnath-Singh-to-inaugurate-Col.-Chewang-Rinchen-Setu-in-Ladakh&id=373250>

Bali Jatra: the biggest trade fair of Odisha

Question: Bali Jatra, one of the biggest trade fairs of Odisha, is organised during?

(a) October-November (b) December January (c) February March (d) August-September

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Bali Jatra, one of the biggest trade fairs of Odisha, kick started from 12th November 2019. The annual grand festival will be observed till 19th November 2019.
- The festival is also known Boita Bandana, which literally means 'A Voyage to Bali'.

- This year's Baliyatra is jointly organized by Cuttack District Administration, Cuttack Municipal Corporation (CMC) and District Cultural Council.

Cultural aspects of Bali Jatra:

- Bali Jatra the annual festival is celebrated from day of Kartika Purnima (according to Odia Calendar), which comes around end of October and November.
- Bali Jatra is celebrated as a large open fair near Barabati Fort area at Gadagadia Ghata of Mahanadi River in Cuttack.
- On this occasion several cultural programs has been organised and traders setup different stalls of games and food, selling Odia delicacies.
- It is celebrated to mark the day when ancient Sadhabas (Odia mariners) would set sail to distant lands of Bali, Java, Sumatra as well as Sri Lanka for trade and cultural expansion.
- People of Odisha gather near banks of Mahanadi River, Brahmani River, or other river banks, ponds to float miniature toy boats, made of colored paper as a symbolic gesture of their ancestors' voyage.

Links:

<https://odishasuntimes.com/historic-bali-jatra-kicks-off-in-odishas-cuttack/>

DIN System of CBIC comes into force

Question: When did the Documentation Identification Number (DIN) system of Central Board of Indirect Taxes (CBIC) come into force?

- (a) 7th November, 2019 (b) 5th November, 2019 (c) 8th November, 2019
(d) 1st November, 2019

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

null

- The Documentation Identification Number (DIN) system of Central Board of Indirect Taxes (CBIC) came into existence from 8th November 2019.
- This path breaking DIN system in indirect tax administration has been created as per the direction of Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman and from now onwards any CBIC communication will have to have a Documentation Identification Number.

Documentation Identification Number (DIN) system:

- Government has already executed the DIN system in the direct tax administration. This step is to further the Government's objectives of bringing transparency and accountability in the indirect tax administration also through widespread use of information technology.
- The DIN would be used for search authorization, summons, arrest memo, inspection notices and letters issued in the course of any enquiry.
- From now onwards, any communication from GST or Custom or Central Excise department without a computer generated DIN, would be treated as invalid and shall be *non est* in law or (deemed to be as if it has never been issued).
- The DIN system would ensure greater accountability and transparency in the indirect tax administration as well.
- It would also provide the taxpayer a digital facility to verify any communications. Further, the DIN system would be extended to other communications by the end of next month.
- This measure would create a digital directory for maintaining a proper audit trail of such communications.

- CBIC has specified that any communication issued manually under exceptional circumstances would have to be regularized on the system within 15 working days of its issuance.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1590857>

Chromium 2019 conclave

Question: Where did the Chromium 2019 conclave took place between 5th and 7th November, 2019?

(a) New York (b) Beijing (c) Singapore (d) New Delhi

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Chromium 2019 conclave was organized by the International Chromium Development Association (ICDA) from 5 to 7 November 2019 in New Delhi.
- Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Dharmendra Pradhan participating in the conclave has said that the steel consumption in the country is set for a quantum jump.
- Government is focusing on building infrastructure for future, creating smart cities, industrial corridors and so forth and so the steel consumption in the country is set for a quantum jump.
- India's economic growth will be driven by heavy investment in infrastructure, digital economy and job creation in small and medium firms. Initiatives such as 'Make in India' aim to support and encourage domestic value addition. Political stability, predictable policies and a huge diverse market make India an attractive investment destination for global investors.
- Around 70% of total chrome produced is used in production of stainless steel. Stainless steel has many specialized uses, including in sectors like space, defence and oil & gas.

Steel sector in India:

- Indian steel sector is becoming more vibrant, efficient, environment-friendly and globally competitive supported by the various policy measures taken by the Government and the entrepreneurial spirit of the industry.
- The National Steel Policy 2017, Domestically Manufactured Iron & Steel Product (DMI&SP) policy, and application of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) on steel products are some of the key policy initiatives taken to spur growth in this sector.
- The government has recently launched a collaborative branding exercise named "Ispati-Irada" aimed towards promoting more usage of steel. Growth of the stainless steel sector will naturally lead to higher demand for ferro chrome and, in turn, chrome ore.

International Chromium Development Association (ICDA):

- ICDA was established in 1984. It has become a unique organization for chromium in all its forms. There are over a hundred members across the value chain, promoting sustainable development of the chromium industry.
- The ICDA consists of a permanent team based in Paris (France) and in Beijing (China).

Links:

https://www.icdacr.com/download/files_1/Program_ICDA_Chromium_2019_1568288019.pdf

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1590561>

19th India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military Technical Cooperation meeting

Question: Where did the 19th India Russia Inter Governmental Commission on Military Technical Cooperation Meeting take place on 6th November, 2019?

(a) New Delhi (b) Pune (c) Moscow (d) Vladivostok

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The 19th India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC) meeting, co-chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Russian Defence Minister General Sergey Shoigu was held in Moscow on 6th November, 2019.
- Defence Minister inspected the Guard of Honour at the Russian Defence Ministry in Central Moscow. He was on the State visit to Russia from 5th to 7th November 2019.

Major highlights of the meeting:

- Rajnath Singh emphasized that the special and privileged strategic partnership between the two countries was further strengthened following the Vladivostok Summit in September 2019.
- He highlighted the importance of the Inter-Governmental Agreement on manufacturing of spares, components and aggregates in India through joint ventures that would reduce cost, timelines of supply and result in progressive indigenization. This agreement is expected to provide a major boost to the 'Make in India' initiative.
- The Russian Defence Minister assured robust Russian participation in DefExpo 2020, to be held in Uttar Pradesh capital Lucknow between February 5 and 8, 2020.
- Both Ministers also welcomed the outcome of the India-Russia Defence Industry Conference held in Moscow on November 5, 2019. The Russian side affirmed its readiness to operationalize the joint venture Indo-Russia Rifles Private Limited for the manufacture of world class Kalashnikov AK 203 rifles in India at the earliest.
- The Russian side reaffirmed its strong support to India in the field of counter-terrorism and stated that it accords priority to New Delhi's security interests in the region.
- The ministers reviewed the progress of the two working groups on Military and Military Technical Cooperation. It was agreed that the forthcoming TriService Indra Exercises will be a major milestone in Military Cooperation between the two countries.
- Both sides agreed to intensify efforts to finalize cooperation programme for 2021-2030 period.
- Defence Minister visited St Petersburg on November 7, 2019 on the final day of his visit to Russia.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1590655>

DRDO's Igniter Complex inaugurated

Question: Where has the DRDO recently inaugurated its Igniter Complex on 5th November, 2019?

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

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- MoS of Defence, Shripad Naik inaugurated the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) Igniter Complex at High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL) in Pune on 5th November, 2019.

High Energy Materials Research Laboratory:

- HEMRL is a premier laboratory of DRDO and primarily engages in developing Rocket and Gun Propellants, Pyrotechnic Devices, High Explosive Systems and synthesis of high energy molecules.
- HEMRL has created a state of the art facility for design, processing and evaluation of ignition systems. The facility consists of process, assembly & storage buildings and a design centre.
- Remotely controlled sophisticated equipments such as Sieve Shaker, Planetary Mixer, Granulating Machine, Pelleting Machine etc are installed in the process buildings. Design, modelling and simulation laboratory; assembly and testing centre are also part of Igniter Complex.
- Ignition is a crucial and highly critical phenomenon in the ignition chain of Rocket motor.
- HEMRL has developed various fuel /oxidizer based igniter compositions using organic binders. The laboratory has developed several ignition systems to ensure reliable initiation of rocket motors of various tactical as well as strategic missiles.
- Ignition system for Agni, Prithvi, Akash, Nag, Pinaka, Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile (LRSAM), etc. have been designed and developed in HEMRL.
- Technology for AKASH, Nag missiles and Pinaka Mk-I Rocket has been transferred to Ordnance Factory, Dehu Road, Pune and private industries.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1590541>

Uttam Rake

Question: Indian Railways has started the state of the art Uttam Rake on the 69th Foundation Day of which zone of railway?

- (a) Central Railway
- (b) North Central Railway
- (c) Western Railway
- (d) East Central Railway

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Indian Railways on the occasion of 69th Foundation Day of Western Railway on 5th November, 2019, introduced the state-of-the-art “UTTAM RAKE” in its inaugural run as Ladies Special local train from Churchgate to Virar.
- Uttam rake has improved interiors and advanced features to bring more comfort for Mumbaikars.
- The new rake will run on its normal services from 6th November, 2019 with 10 services a day.
- The Uttam rake while saving energy will feature posters about Western Railway's journey as an effective transport medium, various landmarks of Mumbai, inspirational quotes and posters of iconic women achievers to make the journey more enriching and delightful.
- Western Railways introduced world's first ever Ladies Special local train on 5th May, 1992 and India's first ever Air-Conditioned EMU train on 25th December, 2017 on Mumbai Suburban section.

- Only two Uttam rakes have been built at the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai so far, out of which the other has been given to South Central Railway.

Salient Features of Uttam rake:

- Provision of CCTV Surveillance System in all coaches.
- Anti-dent partitions in coaches to prevent thefts.
- Modular Luggage rack.
- High backrest seats in First Class coaches.
- Provision of Fibre Reinforced Plastic (FRP) seats in Second Class coaches with wooden finishing for better aesthetics.
- Improved Dual Lock Stopper with dual slot handles windows in all coaches.
- Wider and improved grab handles for better grip.
- Provision of modular type diffused LED lights.
- Latest Brushless DC (BLDC) fans in all coaches which consumes 30% less energy than conventional fans.
- Electrically operated Passenger Alarm System in place of traditional emergency chains.
- Smooth finished corrugated FRP ceiling and Wooden finished Roof Ventilation Duct Area to enhance the aesthetic appeal of coach interior.
- Provision of camouflaged aluminium moulded strips on floor to discourage theft.
- Stainless steel protective plate near all passenger seats to avoid colour fading due to footwear friction.
- Red Emergency Buttons

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1590595>

Shaala Darpan portal

Question: The portal named Shala Darpan launched recently is related to which of the following schooling institutions?

(a) Army School (b) Kasturba Gandhi School (c) Navodaya Vidyalaya (d) Kendriya Vidyalaya

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Sanjay Dhotre launched ShaalaDarpan portal, an E-Governance school automation and management system for Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) in New Delhi on November 6 2019.
- Navodaya Vidyalayas and its teachers are playing a crucial role in educationally uplifting the rural children.
- The comprehensive portal, ShalaDarpan, will not only make different processes of Navodaya Vidyalayas very smooth, but it will also bring transparency.

ShaalaDarpan:

- ShaalaDarpan is an end to end e-Governance school automation and management system.
- It has been implemented at Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti as the first major initiative to enable automation of all activities of the country's largest residential schooling system through a single umbrella – 636 schools, 8 Regional Offices, 8 NLIs and Head Quarter.
- This single integrated platform has been developed for information sharing and knowledge dissemination for the 22000 employees and over 2 lakh students across schools and offices of Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1590656>

National workshop on ODF Plus

Question: Where did the National workshop on ODF Plus with 12 states take place on November 9, 2019?

(a) New Delhi (b) Hyderabad (c) Pune (d) Patna

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti organised a one-day national workshop on ODF Plus – ODF Sustainability and Solid and Liquid Waste Management in New Delhi on November 9, 2019.
- Parameswaran Iyer, Secretary (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti, opened the workshop. Secretaries in-charge of rural sanitation, Mission Directors and other key state level officials from 12 states attended the workshop.
- 5.99 lakh villages, 699 districts and 25 states and union territories having declared themselves Open Defecation Free (ODF) under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) [SBM(G)] as of October 2019.
- States were encouraged to take stock of their rural sanitation situation and lay focus on sustaining the gains made under the SBM(G) and ensuring general cleanliness in the villages with solid and liquid waste management (SLWM).
- The Secretary also held bilateral meetings between the senior most officials representing the states along with officials from the Ministry, to discuss challenges and strategies on a state-by-state basis.

Open Defecation Free Plus:

- ODF Plus, SBM(G)'s latest component, consists of two main tracks: ODF Sustainability (ODF-S) and Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM).
- ODF-Sustainability includes sustaining behaviour change for safe sanitation, leaving no one behind and addressing gaps, ensuring community toilets for floating populations, and strengthening the capacity of all grassroots functionaries.
- As part of Solid Liquid Waste Management, the Mission is taking up biodegradable waste management, plastic waste management, grey water management, and fecal sludge management.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591125>

SkillsBuild platform

Question: Recently the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched the SkillsBuild platform in collaboration with?

(a) Intel (b) IBM (c) Wipro (d) Microsoft

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 4th November, 2019; Directorate General of Training (DGT), under the aegis of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) launched the SkillsBuild platform in collaboration with IBM.
- This program has been launched to empower the next generation to compete in the global economy. As part of the programme, a two-year advanced diploma in IT,

networking and cloud computing will be offered at the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) & National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs).

- The curriculum of this diploma has been co-created and designed by IBM. The platform will be extended to train ITI & NSTI faculty on building skills in Artificial Intelligence (AI). SkillsBuild offers digital learning content from IBM and partners such as CodeDoor, Coopacademy and Skillsoft.
- The digital platform will provide a personal assessment of the cognitive capabilities and personality via MyInnerGenius to the students.
- Through this platform, students will get the knowledge about digital technologies as well as other professional skills such as resume writing, problem solving, and communication.
- This initiative is part of IBM's global commitment to create a job-ready workforce and to build the next generation of skills needed for new collar careers.
- The platform is deployed with the support of leading NGOs like Unnati and Edunet Foundation.
- IBM Volunteers along with the NGOs will offer students personalised coaching and experiential learning opportunities.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=194240>

Red Atlas Action Plan Map

Question: Red Atlas Action Plan Map which has recently been unveiled by the Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, has its utility in?

- (a) Flood mitigation in Chennai, Tamil Nadu (b) Flood mitigation in Kedarnath, Uttarakhand
(c) Flood mitigation in Patna, Bihar (d) Flood mitigation in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 3rd November, 2019; Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu unveiled the Red Atlas Action Plan Map and the Coastal Flood Warning System App (CFLOWS-Chennai) for flood mitigation in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- Red Atlas Action Plan Map is a first of its kind ready reckoner, prepared by Union Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- It will be used to aid State Government of Tamil Nadu in effective flood mitigation in Chennai which faced the worst cataclysm in 2015.
- The atlas is aimed at flood mitigation, preparedness, operations and management aspects.
- The manual provides information, including on corporation wards that are likely to be affected due to flooding.
- It will also provide the information about the areas that may need evacuation in Chennai taking into account all historical datasets.
- CFLOWS is an integrated system that involves coupling models of regional weather forecasts, storm surges and captures about 796 flood scenarios.
- Both Red Atlas and the 'Coastal Flood Warning System App (CFLOWS-Chennai), are intended as decision support systems covering aspects, including preparedness and prevention.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/red-atlas-map-unveiled-for-flood-mitigation-in-chennai-119110300762_1.html

Kalapani Territorial Dispute

Question: Recently Kalapani territorial dispute break out between which two countries?

(a) India and Nepal (b) India and Bangladesh (c) India And Indonesia (d) India and Sri Lanka

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Kalapani has become an issue of contention between India and Nepal after the Nepal government raised objections to its inclusion in India's new political map. The Nepal government claimed that the Kalapani territory located in its far-west is an integral part of its region.
- The Nepal government made the claim on November 6, 2019, few days after India issued its new political map, which showed Kalapani as a part of its own territory.
- India had released its new political map depicting the newly created Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh on November 2, 2019, a day after they came into existence.

Latest Map of India

- The new map of India shows Pakistan-occupied Kashmir as a part of the newly created Union Territories. While three districts of PoK- Muzaffarabad, Mirpur and Punch are depicted as a part of the J&K Union Territory, Gilgit-Baltistan is shown as a part of Ladakh.
- The new political map also shows the Kalapani area as a part of India but the Nepal government is clear that the area lies within its territory. Nepal stated that it was the media reports which brought its attention to the fact that Kalapani has been included in the new Indian map.

About Kalapani:

- Kalapani territory is a disputed territory between India and Nepal. While Nepal claims Kalapani to be a part of its Darchula district, the region is administered in India as a part of Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand.
- Kalapani is located at an altitude of 3600m on the Kailash Manasarovar route. It borders Uttarakhand in India and Sudurpashchim Pradesh in Nepal.
- Since the Indo-China war of 1962, Kalapani is controlled by India's Indo-Tibetan Border Police. Nepal claims that the river located towards the west of the territory is the main Kali river and thus it falls in its territory, India claims a ridgeline towards the east of the Kalapani territory and hence, includes it in the Indian Union.
- Under the treaty of Sugauli signed between Nepal and the British East India Company in 1816, the Kali River was located as Nepal's western boundary with India. It, however, made no mention of a ridgeline and subsequent maps of the areas drawn by British surveyors showed the source of the Kali river at different places.
- This discrepancy has led to the boundary disputes between India and Nepal, with each country producing maps including the territory in their own area to support their claims. The exact size of the Kalapani territory also varies in different sources.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/our-map-is-accurate-india-on-kalapani-dispute-with-nepal/article29909793.ece>

Million Farmers School 3.1

Question: On 21st October, 2019, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the Million Farmers School 3.1 (Kisan Pathshala). Which of the following statement is not correct about this school?

- (a) This is the 5th edition of Kisan Pathshala
- (b) The 5th edition will be held in 4 sessions
- (c) During this edition, schools will be organized in a total of 15366 villages
- (d) More than 10 lakh farmers will be trained in these schools

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 21st October, 2019; Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the Million Farmers School 3.1 (Kisan Pathshala). This is the 5th edition of Kisan Pathshala.
- This edition will be held in 2 sessions; the first session will be held from 21st-24th October, 2019 and the second session from 4th-7th November, 2019.
- From Rabi 2017-18 till date, 4 editions of Kisan Pathshala have been organized.
- On this occasion, the Chief Minister released the booklet of The Million Farmers School 3.1 (Kisan Pathshala) and also launched the App.
- The Chief Minister launched the Organic Matter Mission-2025.

Link:

<http://information.up.nic.in/attachments/files/5dad9ea8-11e8-4a0a-b171-69810af72573.pdf>

Apps launched: UAN REGISTRATION, E-INSPECTION AND DIGI LOCKE

Question: On 1st November, 2019; Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) celebrated its?

- (a) 57th Foundation Day
- (b) 67th Foundation Day
- (c) 61th Foundation Day
- (d) 17th Foundation Day

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Ministry of Labour and Employment launched 3 Apps namely, UAN REGISTRATION, E-INSPECTION AND DIGI LOCKE.
- Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Minister of State (I/C) for Labour and Employment launched these Apps on 1st November, 2019; on the occasion of 67th Foundation Day of Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO).
- These apps have been developed by Employees Provident Fund Organization (EPFO).
- It is expected that these apps will immensely enhance the Ease of Doing Business and promote transparency in the working in the EPFO.
- Mr Gangwar on this occasion said that the government has used information technology in a big way for better service delivery to members.
- IT technology is being used in providing online transfer of Provident Fund, online claim settlement, providing digital lockers and for keeping documents in digital form.
- Now withdrawal of funds will become very easy, if the person's EPF account is linked with his Aadhar.
- A time limit of 10 days has been fixed for claim settlement.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=194182>

Guinness World Records with largest astrophysics assemble

Question: The students of which Indian city have created the record for the largest astrophysics lessons on November 05, 2019?

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

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

null

- The Guinness World Records for the largest astrophysics lesson (45 minutes) and assembly of spectroscopes was successfully achieved at the Science City, Kolkata on the first day of India International Science Festival (IISF) 2019 with the participation of over 1,598 students.
- Astronomers use spectroscopes to know details like temperature, chemical composition, etc. of celestial objects hundreds or millions of light years away from us.
- A piece of a Compact Disc is used to split the light by a process called diffraction. This attempt is dedicated to Meghnad Saha and C. V. Raman.
- The host city of the 5th IISF-2019 is home to renowned scientific institutions that have been the workplace of pioneering scientists who gave shape to science in India.
- IISF is the largest science festival in the world. The theme for this year's festival is RISEN India –Research, Innovation and Science Empowering the Nation.
- The largest electronics lesson and assembly of optical media communication units at a single location was also attempted with the participation of over 1,000 students.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1590544>

First Ever Indian Brain Atlas (IBA)

Question: Researchers from which of the following institute have created first ever Indian Brain Atlas (IBA)?

(a) IIIT Hyderabad (b) TIFR (c) IISc (d) AIIMS

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Researchers at the IIIT Hyderabad have created the first ever Indian Brain Atlas (IBA).
- Team of researchers led by Jayanthi Sivaswamy from the International Institute of Information Technology (IIITH), Hyderabad, completed this task related to brain anatomy.
- One of the important findings of this research is that the average brain size of an Indian was smaller in height, width and volume in comparison to people of the Caucasian and eastern races.
- The research team in its next step is thinking to prepare atlases for different age groups to study age related affects on brain anatomy.
- It was in 1993 that the MNI and the International Consortium for Brain Mapping (ICBM) created the first digital human brain atlas.
- Scientists say that findings can have implications in treatment outcomes of certain neurological problems.
- These neurological problems are brain related ailments – like dementia, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease etc.

- It should be known that Medical practitioners depend on Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) scan to decide on the line of treatment for brain related ailments.
- The references they use to compare their MRI scan are the one's created by the Montreal Neurological Institute (MNI), based on Caucasian brains.

Standard brain atlases:

- The earliest known brain atlas, the Talairach and Tournoux atlas, was created by manually drawing post-mortem brain sections of a 60-year-old French woman.

Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/science/an-indian-brain-atlas/article29822964.ece>

Cyclone Maha

Question: Cyclone Maha originated in which of the following ocean/sea?

(a) Bay of Bengal (b) Arabian Sea (c) Pacific Ocean (d) Arctic Ocean

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 1st November, 2019, India Meteorology Department reported that the system in the Arabian Sea is intensifying into a severe cyclonic storm, namely Maha, and lays centered at 250 km north-northeast of Kavaratti in the Islands Territory.
- It was reported that heavy rainfall is expected in most parts of the Lakshadweep, and light to moderate rain in some places in Tamil Nadu and Kerala in the next twenty-four hours.
- Total suspension of fishing has been suggested over the South East Arabian Sea and along the Kerala and Karnataka coast and the East Central Arabian Sea.

Links:

<http://www.ddinews.gov.in/national/cyclone-maha-crosses-lakshadweep-imd>

World Bank Doing Business Report 2019

Question: What is the rank of India in the latest World Bank Doing Business Report 2019 released on October 23 2019?

(a) 77th (b) 63th (c) 80th (d) 59th

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- World Bank has released the World Bank Doing Business Report 2019.
- The Doing Business 2020 study shows that developing economies are catching up with developed economies in ease of doing business. Still, the gap remains wide.
- An entrepreneur in a low-income economy typically spends around 50 percent of the country's per-capita income to launch a company, compared with just 4.2 percent for an entrepreneur in a high income economy.
- Worldwide, 115 economies made it easier to do business.
- New Zealand secured the top position in the list followed by Singapore, Hong Kong, Denmark, South Korea respectively.
- US, UK, Japan, China, secured 6th, 8th, 29th and 31st respectively in the list. Somalia is the worst performing country with 190th rank.
- The economies with the most notable improvement in Doing Business 2020 are Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Togo, Bahrain, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Kuwait, China, India, and Nigeria.
- Only two African economies rank in the top 50 on the ease of doing business; no Latin American economies rank in this group.

- Doing Business 2020 acknowledges 22 reforms in the 20 top-ranking economies. Data suggest that a considerable disparity persists between low- and high-income economies on the ease of starting a business.

India in the list:

- India has recorded a jump of 14 positions against its rank of 77 in 2019 to be placed now at 63rd rank among 190 countries assessed by the World Bank.
- India's leap of 14 ranks in the Ease of Doing Business ranking is significant considering that there has been continuous improvement since 2015 and for the third consecutive year India is amongst the top 10 improvers.
- The DBR ranks countries on the basis of Distance to Frontier (DTF), a score that shows the gap of an economy to the global best practice. This year, India's DTF score improved to 71.0 from 67.23 in the previous year.
- India has improved its rank in 7 out of 10 indicators and has moved closer to international best practices. Recovery rate under resolving insolvency has improved significantly from 26.5% to 71.6%.
- The time taken for resolving insolvency has also come down significantly from 4.3 years to 1.6 years. India continues to maintain its first position among South Asian countries. It was 6th in 2014.

Links:

<https://www.doingbusiness.org/>

White water rafting expedition – Rudrashila

Question: Where was the white water rafting expedition Rudrashila flagged off on October 25 2019?

(a) Jodhpur (b) Jaipur (c) Bikaner (d) Udaipur

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The white water rafting expedition christened as 'Rudrashila' undertaken by Kalidhar Battalion was flagged in by Lieutenant General VS Sreenivas, General Officer Commanding Konark Corps on 25 October 2019 at Jodhpur Military Station.
- The white water rafting expedition was organized by Kalidhar Battalion to commemorate its 75th Raising Day.
- The team comprising of two officers, four Junior Commissioned Officers and 18 Soldiers led by Major Ravikant Gaurav covered a total distance of over 140km from Rudraprayag to Rishikesh in the mighty Ganges River in the mountains of Uttarakhand.
- Such expeditions in the Army are carried out to prepare the soldiers to overcome adversities with determination and grit. It also helps to promote spirit-de-corps and courage amongst the soldiers.
- The team also spread awareness among locals on current social issues of 'Swachh Bharat Campaign' and 'Preservation of River Eco-Systems'.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=194025>

Visit of Vice President to Sierra Leone

Question: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu was on a state visit to Sierra Leone from 12 to 14 October 2019. India announced a Line of Credit of how much to Sierra Leone?

(a) \$ 30 million (b) \$ 50 million (c) \$ 20 million (d) \$ 80 million

Answer: (a)
Related facts:

- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu was on a state visit to African Country Sierra Leone. He was there from 12 to 14 October 2019.
- He is the first ever Vice President of India to visit the country. The visit was a part of India's Africa Outreach Policy.

Major highlights of the visit:

- India and Sierra Leone signed 6 agreements to expand the bilateral relations in various fields and also agreed to push for UNSC reforms so that one-third of mankind residing in Africa and India occupy their rightful place in decision making bodies of the UN.
- The agreements were signed in the presence of Julius Maada Bio, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and the Vice President at Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone.
- India has also announced the decision to establish a High Commission in Sierra Leone.
- Declaring that India's developmental assistance to Sierra Leone so far aggregated to US\$ 217.5 million for various sectors including agriculture, energy, water resources and telecommunication.
- A Line of Credit to the tune of US\$ 30 million for Irrigation development in Tomabum to achieve self-sufficiency in rice production was announced.
- India has extended e-Visa facility to Sierra Leone nationals for ease of mobility and both sides are also negotiating a visa waiver agreement for holders of diplomatic and official passports.
- A MoU was signed for Sierra Leone to participate in India's Pan-African tele-Education, tele-Medicine initiatives, e-VidyaBharati and e-Arogya Bharati.
- An agreement was signed to initiate a cultural exchange program between the governments of India and Sierra Leone for the years 2019-23.
- The Vice President expressed his happiness on Sierra Leone joining the International Solar Alliance in which India is playing a leading role to enable rapid deployment of solar energy globally and to facilitate the transfer of technology.
- Vice President reiterated India's offer to conduct a "Jaipur Foot" camp in Sierra Leone under the "India for Humanity" initiative for fitting of artificial prosthetic limbs for the disabled.

Relation between India and Sierra Leone:

- India has a long history of cordial relationship with Sierra Leone. India had played an important role in achieving peace and stability in Sierra Leone by contributing troops to the UN Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) in 2000-01.
- India has extended concessional lines of credit to Sierra Leone worth US \$ 123 million for in sectors such as agriculture, water and transmission line.
- Sierra Leone has also availed lines of credit worth US \$ 49.45 million from ECOWAS Bank for investment and Development (EBID) for projects in solar and telecom sector out of Lines of Credit extended by India to EBID.
- India has also undertaken grant projects through IBSA fund and provided direct humanitarian assistance to Sierra Leone during Ebola crisis in 2014 and during floods in 2017.

Links:

[https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/31917/Visit of Vice President to Comoros and Sierra Leone October 10 4 2019](https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/31917/Visit%20of%20Vice%20President%20to%20Comoros%20and%20Sierra%20Leone%20October%2010%20to%2014%202019)

Visit of Vice President to Comoros

Question: Which award has been given the Vice President of India Venkaiah Naidu by Comoros during his visit to the state?

- (a) Order of the Green Crescent (b) Order of Merit (c) Order of Zayed
(d) Order of the Aztec Eagle

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The Vice President of India Venkaiah Naidu was on a state visit to Comoros. The visit was from 11 to 12 October 2019.
- The Comorian President conferred the 'Order of the Green Crescent', the highest civilian honour of the Union of Comoros to the Vice President.

Highlights of the visit:

- India and Comoros today signed 6 MoUs including one on defence cooperation.
- Other MoUs sought to cement cooperation in the fields of health and medicine, arts and culture and tele-education (e-Vidya Bharati) and tele-medicine (e-Arogya Bharati). MoUs on exemption of Visa for Diplomatic and Official Passport holders for short visits and protocol on foreign office consultation were also signed.
- India called for enhancing defence ties in maritime domain with Comoros as part of a collaborative security architecture in the Indian Ocean.
- India will be gifting medicines and medical equipments worth USD 1 mn, \$1 million for transport vehicles, \$2 million for procurement of high-speed interceptor boats and 1000 MT of rice.
- India also announced Line-of-credit of \$ 41.6 million for setting up an 18MW power plant in Moroni and a vocational training centre.

India Comoros relation:

- India shares close, warm and friendly relations with Comoros.
- The bilateral trade between India and Comoros is modest and reached US \$ 47.11 million in 2018-19.
- Comoros avails scholarship/training programmes offered by India under the Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC)/IAFS III and ICCR schemes.
- India has extended humanitarian assistance to Comoros in 2012 and has been paying annual contribution of Comoros towards its membership of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

Links:

[https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/31917/Visit of Vice President to Comoros and Sierra Leone October 10 to 12 2019](https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/31917/Visit%20of%20Vice%20President%20to%20Comoros%20and%20Sierra%20Leone%20October%2010%20to%2012%202019)

Van Dhan Internship Programme

Question: Who launched the Van Dhan Internship Programme on October 16 2019?

- (a) Hardeep Singh Puri (b) Arjun Munda (c) Nitin Gadkari (d) Giriraj Singh

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Arjun Munda, Union Minister of Tribal Affairs launched the "Van Dhan Internship Programme" organised by TRIFED under Ministry of Tribal Affairs on October 16 2019.

- These interns will help the tribal population in becoming self reliant and entrepreneurs. He said that all interns are now part of “National Building Team”.
- 18 interns (to be called Minister’s interns) from some of the reputed Institutes of Rural Management/ Management Institutions/ Institutes of Social Work/ Social Services of the country are participating in the “Van Dhan Internship Programme”.
- These interns have been selected to go and work on Van Dhan programme in the field. These interns have an inclination towards involving in matters related to tribal livelihood.
- The period of internship is 6 months (extendable developing upon the need of the organisation and mutual sustainability).
- These interns will work with the team of TRIFED in various states and districts in tribal areas in development of tribal welfare and inclusive growth (a dissertation has to be submitted on conclusion of the internship).
- They will support the TRIFED activities on livelihood promotion, value addition of NTFTs, marketing and credit linkages.
- They will develop tools and techniques on institutional development including mechanism for determination of a just price or producer price of Minor Forest Products.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588276>

Prime Minister visit to Saudi Arabia

Question: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on the state visit of Saudi Arabia. Who is the King of Saudi Arabia?

- (a) Salman bin Abdulaziz (b) Mohammad bin Salman (c) Abdullah Abdullah
(d) Sultan aziz al Mohammad

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- At the invitation King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, of Saudi Arabia the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi paid an official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 28- 29 October 2019.
- The two sides held bilateral talks during which they reviewed the historical and close relations that bind the two friendly countries and their peoples.
- They underlined the relations of friendship and partnership embodied in economic, social, cultural and civilizational ties between the people of the two countries.

Major Highlights if the visit:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the formation of the India-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council on October 29 2019. This council will be led by the leaderships of both countries.
- Prime Minister Modi also delivered the keynote address at the Future Investment Initiative Summit in Riyadh, which has emerged as a major investment event in the Gulf region.
- India also cleared MoU that will help Hajj pilgrims to travel comfortably in Saudi Arabia during the pilgrimage seasons.
- The two sides re-affirmed their deep commitment to strengthen the strategic partnership envisaged in the ‘Riyadh Declaration’ of March 2010, which was reiterated during the visit of the King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud to India in February 2014.
- Both sides expressed appreciation for the progress of bilateral relationship in political, economic, security, defence, manpower and people to people exchanges, in recent years, which have strengthened the bilateral relations.

- Ministry of External Affairs declared that both sides had signed 12 MoUs on issues such as preventing narcotics trafficking, renewable energy, training of diplomats, defence industry production, security collaboration, and the use of RuPay cards in Saudi Arabia.
- The two sides agreed on the importance of bilateral engagement to promote ways to ensure the security and safety of waterways in the Indian Ocean region and the Gulf region from the threat and dangers affecting their national security.
- The Indian side condemned the terrorist acts against civilian installations in Saudi Arabia. Both sides called for closer cooperation in the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Center in combating terrorist operations.
- The two sides stressed on the importance of expanding the trade and investment ties in order to advance the strategic cooperation.
- They expressed happiness with the positive trend in the bilateral trade over the recent years and reaffirmed the further deepening of trade and investment cooperation between the two countries under the Vision 2030 of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
- The two sides urged the business communities in the two countries to utilize the investment opportunities in both countries, especially in the fields of infrastructure, mining, energy including renewables, agriculture, technology transfer, and in the areas of skilled human resources in information technology, electronics and telecommunications.
- The crown prince welcomed the invitation extended to him by the Prime Minister to visit India, to complete the consultations and discuss matters of bilateral cooperation and regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Meeting with Jordan King:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi also met King of Jordan Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein on October 29 2019 on the sidelines of the Future Investment Initiative (FII) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- The two leaders exchanged views on strengthening bilateral relations, including MoUs and Agreements signed during the King's visit to India from 27 February -01 March 2018.
- They discussed the Middle East Peace Process and other regional developments. Both leaders also discussed cooperation in counter-terrorism.

Links:

<http://ddnews.gov.in/national/pm-modi-delivers-keynote-address-saudi-arabias-future-investment-initiative-forum-riyadh>

PFRDA permitted Overseas Citizen of India to enroll in NPS

Question: When was the program of National Pension Scheme (NPS) extended to the Non Resident Indians (NRIs)?

(a) October 2014 (b) December 2015 (c) October 2015 (d) December 2017

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) has now permitted Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) to enroll in National Pension Scheme (NPS) at par with Non-Resident Indians vide Circular No: PFRDA/2019/19/PDES/3 dated 29th October 2019.
- The Government vide notification S.O. 3732(E) dated 17th October, 2019 on Foreign Exchange Management (Non-debt Instruments) Rules, 2019 of Dept. of Economic Affairs, has specified that an OCI may subscribe to the National Pension System governed and administered by PFRDA.

- Now, any Indian citizen, resident or non-resident and OCIs are eligible to join NPS till the age of 65 years. The Non Resident Indians were allowed in the NPS in October 2015.
- Contributions made towards NPS are eligible for an additional tax deduction under section 80CCD(1B) upto Rs. 50,000 which is over and above the Rs 1,50,000 limit of deduction available under sec 80CCD(1).

About PFRDA:

- Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) is the statutory Authority established by an enactment of the Parliament, to regulate, promote and ensure orderly growth of the National Pension System (NPS) and pension schemes to which this Act applies.
- NPS was initially notified for central government employees joining service on or after 1st Jan 2004 and subsequently adopted by almost all State Governments for its employees.
- NPS was extended to all citizens of Indian on voluntary basis from May 2009 and to corporates in December 2011 and to Non-Resident Indians in October 2015.
- As on 26th October 2019, the total number of subscribers under NPS and Atal Pension Yojana has crossed 3.18 crores and the Asset under Management (AUM) has grown to Rs. 3,79,758 crores.
- More than 66 lakhs government employees have been enrolled under NPS and 19.2 lakhs subscribers have subscribed to NPS in the private sector with 6,812 entities registered as corporates.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1589523>

National Highway named as Guru Nanak Dev Ji Marg

Question: Which Highway has been renamed as the Guru Nanak Dev Ji Marg recently by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari?

(a) NH 17 (b) NH 21 (c) NH 703AA (d) NH 47

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has announced naming of new National Highway No. 703AA as “Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Marg.”
- The road starting from Kapurthala connecting Goindwal Sahib and terminating near Taran Taran in Punjab has been declared as new National Highway.
- The naming would be effective from next month. The decision has been taken to mark the 550th Birth Anniversary of Shri Guru Nanak Dev.

Links:

<http://ddnews.gov.in/national/nh-no-703aa-punjab-named-guru-nanak-dev-ji-marg-gadkari>

mHariyali app launched

Question: Who launched the mHariyali app on October 11 2019?

(a) Amit Shah (b) Rajnath Singh (c) Hardeep Singh Puri (d) Harsemrat Kaur Badal

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State(I/c) for Housing & Urban Affairs launched the mobile app, “mHariyali”, on October 11 2019.

- This app is aimed to encourage Public engagement in planting trees and other such Green drives.
- People can now upload information/photos of any plantation done by them, which is linked to app and will be displayed on the website www.epgc.gov.in.
- The App provides for automatic geo-tagging of plants. This app will also enable nodal officers to periodically monitor the plantation. The App is user friendly and works on any android mobile phone.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1587831>

Lieutenant Governor of Kashmir and Ladakh

Question: Who has been appointed as the first Lieutenant Governor of Kashmir?

(a) Radha Krishna Mathur (b) Kalraj Mishra (c) Girish Chandra Murmu (d) Abhijeet Ghosh

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Government has appointed Girish Chandra Murmu as Lieutenant Governor of Jammu-Kashmir and Radha Krishna Mathur as Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh.
- P.S. Sreedharan Pillai appointed as Governor of Mizoram. Satya Pal Malik transferred as Governor of Goa.
- Girish Chandra Murmu was Expenditure Secretary while Radha Krishna Mathur was defence secretary.
- Murmu is a 1985-batch IAS officer of Gujarat cadre. Mathur, a 1977-batch officer of Tripura cadre, has served as the defence secretary and is a former chief information commissioner.
- The two Union Territories of Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh will come into existence on October 31 2019.
- Former interlocutor to Jammu and Kashmir Dineshwar Sharma has been appointed the administrator of Union Territory of Lakshadweep.

Links:

<http://ddnews.gov.in/national/jk-ladakh-uts-get-new-lieutenant-governors>

Ladakh Literature Festival

Question: Which edition of the Ladakh Literature Festival has been organized from 29 to 31st October 2019?

(a) Third (b) Eighth (c) First (d) Fifth

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Ladakh administration has organised a three day Ladakh Literature Festival from 29th to 31st October 2019.
- This is the first-ever Ladakh Literature festival aims to celebrate the uniqueness of the region in the fields of Art, Culture and Literature.
- There were screenings of Ladakhi films, discussions on Heritage and presentations on History and Archeology of Ladakh.
- Children, youth and women participated in the Festival in several competitions and events like Calligraphy, Culinary art etc.
- Along with local artists, literary personalities, historians, musicians and senior IAS officers who turned authors like Parvez Dewan, Anil Swarup and Dr MK Ranjith Sinh also participated in the festival.

- At venues like historic Leh palace and Central Asian Museum the Ladakh Literature Festival will be an annual event.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Ladakh-administration-to-organize-3-Day-Ladakh-Literature-Festival-between-Oct-29th-and-31st&id=373547>

Joint Working Group meeting between India and Switzerland

Question: India and Switzerland have decided to work together in close cooperation with each other in which of the following sector as decided in the JWG meeting held recently?

(a) Healthcare (b) Tourism (c) Railways (d) Defence

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- India and Switzerland had meetings on October 21 2019 followed by the 1st meeting of Joint Working Group (JWG) held between two sides after the MoU for cooperation in rail sector was signed in 2017.
- India and Switzerland decide to carry forward working together in the Rail Transport sector.
- The Indian side was led by the Minister of Railways and Commerce & Industry, Piyush Goyal at the high-level delegation. The Swiss delegation comprising Swiss Officials from Department of Transport and representatives from Swiss companies.
- A need for a continuous dialogue between the two sides to advance the common interests in finding innovative solutions to technological issues in Railways was emphasized.
- The discussions in Joint Working Group focused on Freight and Passenger Cars, Railway Electrification Equipments, Multimodal transport and tunneling technology. It was also agreed during the meeting that a regular system of follow-up will be institutionalized to monitor the progress of interactions and implementation in time bound manner.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588747>

Interpol to hold general assembly in India in 2022

Question: India will host which edition of the General Assembly of Interpol in 2022?

(a) 90th (b) 91st (c) 80th (d) 81st

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- India will host the 91st Interpol General Assembly in 2022 after a proposal received the overwhelming support of member countries at the ongoing 88th General Assembly at Santiago in Chile on October 18 2019.
- A proposal in this regard was given to Interpol Secretary General Jürgen Stock by Union Home Minister Amit Shah Mr Stock's official visit in Delhi August
- This will be held as part of celebrations of the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence.
- The International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) had hosted the general assembly, where representatives of all member countries converge, in India in 1997.
- Rishi Kumar Shukla, the director of the CBI represents Interpol in India as the country's national central bureau.
- The general assembly of Interpol is an annual exercise hosted by member countries. All major decisions affecting general policy, the resources needed for international

cooperation, working methods and finances are deliberated and discussed by representatives.

- Headquartered in Lyon, France, Interpol is an international police cooperation organization.
- It has 194 member states and 100 years of experience of international cooperation in policing. The organisation has 90-million records spread across 17 databases.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Interpol-to-hold-general-assembly-in-India-in-2022&id=373189>

Indian Railway launches One Touch ATVM

Question: Indian Railways has launched 'one touch ATVM' on October 24 2019 in how many suburban stations?

(a) 32 (b) 42 (c) 50 (d) 35

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Indian Railways has launched 'one touch ATVM' at 42 suburban stations of Central Railway to render fast ticketing to millions of commuters over Mumbai Suburban Network on October 24 2019.
- Railway passenger can avail the service of this new machine at 42 suburban stations. This new machine will reduce the waiting time of the passengers and allow passenger to avoid standing in long queues.
- The new machine is loaded with the user friendly and uncomplicated procedure which will greatly ease the load on ticketing system of Mumbai Suburban Network.
- A total of 92 ATVMs has been installed at 42 suburban stations. The salient features of one touch ATVM is that a passenger can obtain a ticket in just two steps instead of earlier six steps on a regular ATVM.
- One touch ATVM will show one screen display for selecting single/return journey tickets. The passenger can select desired station in the distance slab, just press tab "upto station" either for journey tickets or return journey tickets. The passenger can get platform ticket also with single touch.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1589087>

India Innovation Index 2019

Question: Consider the following statement in relation with the recent released India Innovation Index 2019.

- (1) India Innovation Index 2019 is released by NITI Aayog and Institute for Competitiveness.
- (2) Kerala is declared the most innovative state in the Index.
- (3) Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra are the second and third best performer states.
- (4) Delhi is the most innovative in the Union Territory list.

Choose the correct option:

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

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- NITI Aayog with Institute for Competitiveness as the knowledge partner released the India Innovation Index (III) 2019 on October 17 2019.
- Karnataka is the most innovative major state in India.

- Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Telangana, Haryana, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh form the remaining top ten major states respectively. The top ten major states are majorly concentrated in southern and western India.
- Sikkim and Delhi take the top spots among the north- eastern & hill states, and union territories/city states/small states respectively.
- Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh are the most efficient states in translating inputs into output.
- The index was released in the presence of Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog and Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog.
- The India Innovation Index would create synergies between different stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem and India would shift to competitive good governance.
- The index is a great beginning to improve the environment of innovation in the country as it focuses on both the input and output components of the idea and promote competitive federalism.

Background:

- Recognizing the role of innovation as a key driver of growth and prosperity for India, NITI Aayog with Institute for Competitiveness as the knowledge partner has released the India Innovation Index 2019.
- The study is an outcome of extensive research and analysis by examining the innovation capabilities and performance of Indian states and union territories.
- The aim is to create a holistic tool which can be used by policymakers across the country to identify the challenges to be addressed and strengths to build on when designing the economic growth policies for their regions.
- The India Innovation Index 2019 is calculated as the average of the scores of its two dimensions – Enablers and Performance. The Enablers are the factors that underpin innovative capacities, grouped in five pillars: (1) Human Capital, (2) Investment, (3) Knowledge Workers, (4) Business Environment, and (5) Safety and Legal Environment.
- The Performance dimension captures benefits that a nation derives from the inputs, divided in two pillars: (6) Knowledge Output and (7) Knowledge Diffusion.
- The states have been bifurcated into three categories: major states, north-east and hill states, and union territories / city states / small states.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588392>

India destroys several terror camps in POK

Question: A total of how many terror camps were destroyed operating in the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) on October 20 2019?

(a) Seven (b) Eight (c) Three (d) Five

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Indian Army has destroyed three terror camps in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir on October 20 2019.
- It also killed ten Pakistani soldiers. In a major counter-offensive after unprovoked firing by Pakistan, Indian Army carried out heavy artillery strikes targeting four terror camps and several Pakistani military positions in Neelum Valley.
- As per the reports, ten terrorists were also killed in the retaliatory action by the Army.
- The action by the Indian forces caused substantial harm to the terror infrastructure across the Line of Control (LoC).
- Army chief said the terror camps destroyed by the forces were located in Athmuqam, Kundal Shahi, Jura and one in Leepa Valley.

- There have been a series of infiltration attempts from Gurez, Tangdhar, Uri, and Macchil sectors and in areas south of Pir Panjal.
- This was a Pre-emptive strike and four launch pads were targeted by the Army.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/indian-army-hits-terrorist-launch-pads-pakistan-posts-in-retaliatory-firing/article29749500.ece>

Girls to enter Sainik School

Question: Who gave nod to the proposal of the entry of girls in the Sainik School from the academic session 2021-22?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Amit Shah (c) Rajnath Singh (d) Prakash Javdekar

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has approved a proposal for admission of girl children in Sainik schools w.e.f. academic session 2021-22 in a phased manner.
- The decision has been taken following the success of the pilot project started by the Ministry of Defence for admission of girl children in Sainik School Chhingchhip in Mizoram two years ago.
- The decision is in line with the objective of the Government towards greater inclusiveness, gender equality, enabling greater participation of women in Armed Forces and strengthening the motto of 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao'.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588466>

Free rides for women in buses

Question: Which state of India has recently allowed the women to travel free of cost in the state transport buses?

(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Goa (c) New Delhi (d) Sikkim

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The state of Delhi rolled of the scheme on October 29 2019 allowing the female passengers for free rides in the DTC (Delhi Transport Corporation) buses.
- A special ticket of pink color called Pink Ticket has been issued for these passengers. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has announced this scheme on Independence Day.
- The conductors of buses will distribute pink tickets having face value of ₹10 each to women passengers for free-travel which will then be reimburse by the government to the transporters based on the number of such tickets issued.
- Around 3,700 DTC buses and 1,800 buses under the cluster scheme of the Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System (DIMTS) are running on the roads of Delhi.
- The public buses in Delhi carry over 45 lakh passengers each day out of which 30 per cent of travelers are women.
- The facility will also be available in Noida-NCR service, airport and other special services operated by the DTC and cluster scheme operators.
- The Delhi assembly passed the government's supplementary demands for grants of Rs 290 crore for free travel for women passengers in buses and metro trains.
- A grant of ₹150 crore has been approved by the Delhi government for implementation of the scheme in metro.

Links:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/with-the-pink-ticket-women-ride-dtc-cluster-buses-free-of-cost/who-is-not-eligible/slideshow/71802958.cms>

First National Protocol to Enumerate Snow Leopard Population in India

Question: Who inaugurated the first national protocol to enumerate Snow Leopard population in India?

(a) Prakash Javdekar (b) Ravishankar Prasad (c) Kiren Rijju (d) Maenka Gandhi

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- In a major boost towards protecting and conserving Snow Leopards, Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar launched the First National Protocol on Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India.
- It was launched on the occasion of International Snow Leopard Day on October 23 2019.
- Snow Leopard enumeration of the nation is the first of its kind.
- It has been developed by scientific experts in association with the Snow Leopard States/UTs namely, Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

4th Steering Committee Meeting:

- There also was the 4th steering committee meeting of the Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Program, at New Delhi.
- The two day international meeting of GSLEP Program is being organized by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change at New Delhi on 23-24 October 2019.
- The 4th Steering Committee meeting of the GSLEP is being attended by Ministers from Nepal, Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia along with senior officials from nine of the Snow Leopard countries.
- The Steering Committee meeting of GSLEP chaired by Nepal and Co-Chaired by Kyrgyzstan, who shared their experiences to intensify collaborative efforts towards conserving the Snow Leopards and its ecosystem.
- The Steering Committee also assessed efforts in combating poaching and illegal wildlife trade of Snow Leopards.

Tigers & Snow Leopard:

- It is noteworthy to mention that Snow Leopard is found in 12 countries. They are India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Mongolia, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- India has witnessed increase in tiger population with 2967 tigers i.e. 77 per cent of world's tiger population residing in the country, wherein 26000 cameras were used to

enumerate the near exact number. India is also home to 500 plus lions, 30000 plus elephants, 2500 plus single-horned rhinos.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588843>

25 years of Pulse Polio Programme

Question: When was the Pulse Polio Programme was launched countrywide by the government of India?

(a) 1994 (b) 1995 (c) 1993 (d) 1996

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Silver Jubilee of the Pulse Polio Programme was celebrated on 22nd October 2019. Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Health Minister said that an event is scheduled to be held on 31st October, 2019 at Dr. Ambedkar International Center, Janpath with an expected gathering of around 800-900 delegates.
- India has been declared Polio free in 2014 after a long and momentous journey.
- The success of administering polio vaccination drops to 12 lakh children through 4000 'polio kendras' on 2nd October, 1994 in the city of Delhi, led to a countrywide movement and Pulse Polio Program was taken countrywide a year later in 1995.
- The best practices and the systems established by the Pulse Polio programme have benefitted other health programs, viz. the community mobilization, and logistics management, reaching the last mile or setting up a surveillance system.
- The learnings from Pulse Polio programme have helped implementation of other immunization programme i.e. the Mission Indradhanush (MI) and the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI).
- The MI as a flagship programme and included it in the multi-ministerial programme like the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (GSA) as well as the Extended Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (EGSA) and we were able to reach and immunize crores of children across the country.
- Since 2014, the Universal Immunization (UIP) basket of vaccines has expanded to cover 12 Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPDs) from the earlier 7.
- Mission Indradhanush and related drives have successfully reached out to and vaccinated 3.39 crore children and 87.2 Lakh pregnant women in India.

Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI):

- In 1988, the World Health Assembly (WHA) passed a resolution to launch the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).
- The Government of Delhi piloted the first ever large scale supplementary immunization campaign with OPV in 1994 giving birth to the "Pulse Polio" immunization campaign with the iconic 'Do Boond Zindagi Ki' tagline, on 2nd October 1994, Mahatma Gandhi's birthday.

- The campaign in Delhi reached nearly one million children up to the age of three years with two doses of OPV being administered on 02 October and 04 December through exclusive booth-based strategy. This strategy was later adopted and implemented by Government of India as Pulse Polio Campaigns.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588770>

20th Livestock Census

Question: As per the 20th Livestock Census done by the government, what is the total number of desi (native) breed of cows in India?

- (a) 4.81 crores
- (b) 4.85 crores
- (c) 5 crores
- (d) 4.50 crores

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- As per the 20th Livestock Census 2019 report released on October 16 2019, there are 4.85 crores desi breed of cows in India.
- The Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying under Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying attributes critical importance to livestock and to the related to livestock, as they are the vital component of rural economy.
- The Livestock Census is the main source of livestock data in the country collecting up-to-date and accurate data.
- The livestock census is conducted across the country periodically since 1919. The census usually covers all domesticated animals and head counts of these animals are taken.
- So far, 19 Livestock Censuses were conducted in participation with State Governments and UT Administrations. The 20th Livestock Census was launched during the month of October, 2018.
- The 20th Livestock Census was carried out in about 6.6 lakhs villages and 89 thousand urban wards across the country covering more than 27 Crores of Households and Non Household.

Some of the key outcomes of the 20th Livestock Census:

- The total Livestock population is 535.78 million in the country showing an increase of 4.6% over Livestock Census 2012.
- Total Bovine population (Cattle, Buffalo, Mithun and Yak) is 302.79 Million in 2019 which shows an increase of 1.0% over the previous census.
- The total number of cattle in the country is 192.49 million in 2019 showing an increase of 0.8 % over previous Census.
- The Female Cattle (Cows population) is 145.12 million, increased by 18.0% over the previous census (2012).
- There is a decline of 6 % in the total Indigenous (both descript and non-descript) Cattle population over the previous census. However, the pace of decline of Indigenous Cattle population during 2012-2019 is much lesser as compared to 2007-12 which was about 9%.
- The total buffaloes in the country are 109.85 Million showing an increase of about 1.0% over previous Census.
- The total milch animals (in-milk and dry) in cows and buffaloes are 125.34 Million, an increase of 6.0 % over the previous census.

- The collection and availability of up-to-date and accurate data in the country is 74.26 Million in 2019, increased by 14.1% over previous Census.
- The Goat population in the country in 2019 is 148.88 Million showing an increase of 10.1% over the previous census.
- The total Pigs in the country are 9.06 Million in the current Census, declined by 12.03% over the previous Census.
- The total Horses and Ponies in the country are 3.4 Lakhs in 2019, decreased by 45.6% over previous Census.
- The total Poultry in the country is 851.81 Million in 2019, increased by 16.8% over previous Census.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/foreign-milch-cows-grow-32-while-no-growth-in-desi-milk-producers-livestock-census-2019/article29715020.ece>

Waste Management Accelerator for Aspiring Women Entrepreneurs (WAVE Summit 2019)

Question: Who inaugurated the Waste Management Accelerator for Aspiring Women Entrepreneur (WAVE Summit 2019) on 18 September 2019?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Amitabh Kant (c) Ramesh Pokhriyal (d) Amit Shah

Answer: (c)

- Union Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched several initiatives of All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) in New Delhi on September 18 2019.
- It includes Facilitation through Margadarshan and Margadarshak, Model Curriculum for Diploma Courses, Waste Management Accelerator for Aspiring Women Entrepreneurs (WAVE Summit 2019) and 360-degree Feedback of Faculty.

WAVE Summit 2019:

- 'WAVE Summit 2019' is a great initiative because women have skills in their hands and it will further empower and motivate them. The Minister informed that the WAVE Summit will be held in November-December 2019.
- It will be jointly organized by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Institute of Waste Management (IIWM) at Jaipur.
- He further said that Facilitation through Margadarshan and Margadarshak is also a very good initiative in which the topmost institutions will mentor other institutions, so that they can improve their rankings and follow best practices of the mentor institute.

Facilitation through Margadarshan and Margadarshak

- Margadarshan: Under this scheme, institutions having good accreditation record / highly performing institutions are supposed to mentor relatively newer 10 – 12 potential institutions. These institutions are also provided funding upto Rs. 50 lakhs per institution over a period of three years in installments for carrying out various activities like trainings, workshops, conferences and travel.
- Margadarshak: Under this scheme, mentor teachers or Margdarshaks who are either serving or superannuated but willing and motivated with good knowledge of accreditation and who can devote adequate time to make required visits to these Institutions are identified.

Salient features of Model Curriculum for Diploma Courses in Engineering & Technology are as follows:

- Reduced number of credits.
- Two-week mandatory Induction Program for students has been designed and has to be given at the beginning of the course.
- Introduction of credit course on Sports & Yoga in first semester to inculcate the habit of physical and mental fitness right at the start.
- Inclusion of courses on socially relevant topics. Course on Indian Constitution, Environmental Science & Essence of Indian Knowledge and Tradition have been embedded in the curriculum as audit course.
- Provision of organizing at least one expert lecture per semester for each branch by inviting resource persons from domain specific industry.

‘Waste Summit 2019’

- It will be the largest gathering of young women students to promote entrepreneurship in waste management and providing alternatives to single use plastic carry bags.
- Indian Institute of Waste Management (IIWM) & All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) will be registering the interested participation and guiding them to connect from “Start Up India to Stand Up India”.
- Theme: Make your own bag – empowering women to take up income generation activity and entrepreneurship in waste management through making a business out of this record creating concept.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1585478>

Statewide data on Malnutrition

Question: Which of the following is the reason for 2 out of 3 child death in India as per the recent study of Statewide data on Malnutrition?

(a) Infant Mortality Rate (b) Malnutrition (c) Vaccination (d) Polluted water

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- A state-wide data on malnutrition presented by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) was released citing Malnutrition as the predominant risk factor for death in children younger than five in every state of India in 2017.
- This accounts for 68.2 per cent of the total under-5 deaths amounting to 706,000 deaths (due to malnutrition). This is also the leading risk factor of loss of health among all age groups.

The report:

- The prevalence of low birth weight in India in 2017 was 21.4 per cent, child stunting 39.3 per cent, child wasting 15.7 per cent, child underweight 32.7 per cent, anaemia in children 59.7 per cent, anaemia in women 15–49 years of age 54.4 per cent, exclusive breastfeeding 53.3 per cent and overweight child 11.5 per cent.
- There would be 8.9 per cent excess prevalence for low birthweight, 9.6 per cent for stunting, 4.8 per cent for child underweight, 11.7 per cent for anaemia in children, and 13.8 per cent for anaemia in women relative to the 2022 targets if the trends estimated up to 2017 for the indicators continue till National Nutrition Mission 2022.

- Statewise, the DALY (disability adjusted life years) rate due to malnutrition was found to be highest in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam, and Rajasthan, mostly of Central India.
- The worst effect of child and maternal malnutrition is reflected in neonatal disorders, followed by lower respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases in children below 5 years.
- The under-5 death rate in India decreased proportionately from 70.4 percent in 1990 to 68.2 per cent in 2017.
- The largest contributor to the malnutrition DALYs in India, having a prevalence of 21 per cent in 2017 is Low birth weight, which showed a modest declining trend.
- Anaemia, as per the report has been extremely high in India at 60 per cent in children and 54 per cent in women in 2017, with only moderate decline during 2010–17.
- The prevalence of overweight children has increased in India in the past decade with a prevalence of 12 per cent in 2017.
- These findings also raise concern about a host of policies in India which have been in practice since 1990 to tackle malnutrition, the key ones being Integrated Child Development Scheme launched in 1975, the National Nutrition Policy 1993, the Mid Day Meal Scheme for school children 1995, and the National Food Security Act 2013, as the prevalence of stunting, wasting and underweight remains high.

Suggestions of the report:

- The report suggests for an integrated nutrition policy is needed to effectively address the broader determinants of undernutrition across the life cycle for improving malnutrition indicators in the states of India.
- The improvement suggested include providing clean drinking water, reducing rates of open defecation, improving women's status, enhancing agricultural productivity and food security, promoting nutrition sensitive agriculture, coupled with harmonisation of efforts across ministries and sectors, political will and good governance, and strategic investments in a multi-sectoral approach.

Links:

https://phfi.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/progress_report_07_2011.pdf

Ministry of HRD announces National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) Scheme

Question: The newly announced National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) Scheme by Ministry of HRD is for which type of Education?

(a) Elementary education (b) Higher education (c) Vocational education (d) None of the above

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Ministry of Human Resource Development has announced a new PPP Scheme, National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) for using technology for better learning outcomes in Higher Education.

National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) Scheme:

- The objective is to use Artificial Intelligence to make learning more personalised and customised as per the requirements of the learner.
- This requires development of technologies in Adaptive Learning to address the diversity of learners.
- Educating the youth is a National effort and MHRD proposes to create a National Alliance with such technology developing EdTech Companies through a PPP model.

- MHRD would act as a facilitator to ensure that the solutions are freely available to a large number of economically backward students. MHRD would create and maintain a National NEAT platform that would provide one-stop access to these technological solutions.
- EdTech companies would be responsible for developing solutions and manage registration of learners through the NEAT portal. They would be free to charge fees as per their policy.
- As their contribution towards the National cause, they would have to offer free coupons to the extent of 25% of the total registrations for their solution through NEAT portal. MHRD would distribute the free coupons for learning to the most socially/economically backward students.
- AICTE would be the implementing agency for NEAT programme. The scheme shall be administered under the guidance of an Apex Committee constituted by MHRD.
- Independent Expert Committees would be constituted for evaluating and selecting the EdTech solutions. MoUs will be signed with the shortlisted EdTech companies. Awareness programs would be taken up by MHRD to create awareness of the NEAT solutions to teachers and students.
- MHRD proposes to launch and operationalise NEAT in early November 2019.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1585558>

Foundation Stone of NERAMAC Marketing Complex in Guwahati

Question: Which Union Minister laid the foundation stone of North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited (NERAMAC) marketing complex in Guwahati, Assam on September 4, 2019?

(a) Amit Shah (b) Kiren Rijju (c) Dr. Jitendra Singh (d) Hemanta Biswa Saran

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Union Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region (IC) Dr Jitendra Singh laid the foundation stone of North Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation Limited (NERAMAC) marketing complex in Guwahati, Assam on September 4, 2019. The Secretary, North Eastern Council (NEC), Ram Muivah was also present on the occasion.
- The marketing complex will be a destination to showcase the products of the North Eastern region.
- This initiative will be a new landmark in the field of Agri-Horti Sector where all farmers and entrepreneurs of North East will get a common platform to showcase and market their produce.

NERAMAC Building:

- NERAMAC is coming up with "Construction of its Marketing Complex at Six Mile, Guwahati" in a land measuring 2007 sq. mt. (1.5 bigha) with the support of North Eastern Council (NEC).
- The construction of this building of Office cum marketing complex is funded by North Eastern Council under its scheme for 'Marketing support Agri-horti produce in NE region'.
- This Building will be developed as a 'Green Building' and one of the State of Art land mark buildings in the region. The building will have the provisions for an Agri-Horti Retails Hub wherein all the farmers & entrepreneurs of North East will get a common platform to showcase and sell their products and produces.

- The proposed NERAMAC's Office cum Marketing Complex shall also have the provisions for accommodating Agri – Horti related Government Departments under a single roof for better coordination and to provide single window facilitation centre to the farmers groups/ Entrepreneurs to avail Schemes of Government.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1584142>

Integrated Online Junction for School Education: Shagun

Question: Consider the following statement regarding Shagun:

- (1) It is an initiative to improve school education system
- (2) Shagun is combination of two words Shala meaning Schools and Gunvatta meaning Quality.
- (3) It was launched by Ministry Human Resource Development.

From the above correct statement/s is/are:

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

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 28th August, 2019, The Union Human Resource Development Minister launched one of the world's largest Integrated Online Junction for School Education, Shagun.
- It is an online junction of different websites and portals into a single platform to enhance the accessibility of information relating to schools.
- It will ensure a holistic approach to transforming the education sector.

Shagun

- It is an initiative to improve school education system by creating a junction for all online portals and websites relating to various activities of the Department of School Education and Literacy in the Government of India and all States and Union Territories.
- The term Shagun is coined from two different words- Shala meaning Schools and Gunvatta meaning Quality.
- The portal seeks to provide a very robust feedback mechanism which will increase public participation and will ensure accountability and transparency.
- It also provides vital information relating to the availability of nearby schools, navigable distance vis-a-vis aerial distance between schools.

Focus areas:

- Reinforcing and cleaning the data of the Integrated Online Junction through feedback from Stakeholders.
- Ensuring full inter-operability among the websites, portals and applications which are already hosted in the junction.
- Creating high-quality e-contents, including quizzes and puzzles to enhance learning and also for teachers in aiding classroom transactions.

- Using artificial intelligence and deep machine learning in a variety of ways to enhance the quality of school education including for designing evidence-based inventions

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1583276>

Gandhi Solar Park at UN headquarter

Question: Who inaugurated the Gandhi Solar Park at UN head quarter?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Donald trump (c) Angela Markel (d) Emanuel Macron

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with other world leaders inaugurated the Gandhi Solar Park at the UN headquarters in New York on 24th September, 2019.
- The 50 kilowatt hour (kWh) roof-top solar park has 193 solar panels—each representing a member of the 193 UN Member State.
- The \$1 million gift to the UN comes at a time when India has emerged as a clean energy champion.
- To be held in the General Assembly Hall at UN Headquarters, PM Modi will be joining other global leaders at the Summit in the backdrop of US withdrawal from the Paris climate deal.
- India, the biggest emitter of greenhouse gases after the US and China, has been pushing for a clean energy fuelled economy.
- India plans to reduce its carbon emissions by 33-35% from its 2005 levels by 2030, as part of its commitments to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change adopted by 195 countries in Paris in 2015.
- The UN Climate Action Summit is being held before the second general assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) scheduled in New Delhi from 30th October to 2nd November, 2019.
- ISA was jointly launched by the PM Modi and the President of France on 30th November, 2015 in Paris, on the sidelines of COP-21, the UN Climate Conference.
- United Nations secretary-general Antonio Guterres had also attended the first general assembly of the International Solar Alliance in October in New Delhi.
- This also comes at a time of even as countries such as India have been trying to rejig its energy mix in favor of green energy sources.
- At present, India has an installed power-generation capacity of 357,875 megawatts (MW), of which around 22% or 80,000 MW is generated through clean energy projects such as solar and wind.
- With addition of large hydro projects to clean energy segment, India is poised to have 225 GW of renewable energy by 2022.

Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/modi-to-inaugurate-gandhi-solar-park-at-un-headquarters/article29466958.ece>

President of India Addressed the Federal Council of Switzerland

Question: Consider the following statements regarding President of India visit to Switzerland.

1) Berne is the capital of Switzerland

2) Federal Council of Switzerland is the highest executive authority of the Swiss Confederation.

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:

- President Mr. Ramnath Kovind addressed the Federal Council of Switzerland in Berne on 13th September, 2019.

Highlights of the President's Address:

- The partnership between India and Switzerland has made significant progress.
- Switzerland's support to enhance global efforts to defeat and destroy all forms of terrorism.
- In the coming weeks, both countries would have their first automatic exchange of information on tax matters.
- A positive development since tax evasion and money laundering had links with terrorism.
- He also thanked Switzerland for its consistent support for India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.
- India will work with Switzerland in fighting climate change and that she was looking forward to Switzerland joining the International Solar Alliance.

About the Federal Council of Switzerland:

- It is the highest executive authority of the Swiss Confederation (the official name of Switzerland).
- Its members represent Switzerland's main political parties.
- It is a seven-member council which constitutes the federal government of the Swiss Confederation.
- The Council serves as the collective head of state and of the government of Switzerland.
- It is appointed by the Federal Assembly, which is the federal legislature of Switzerland

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193185>

PM Modi, Mongolian President jointly unveil statue of Lord Buddha

Question: Recently PM Modi and which country President jointly unveil statue of Lord Buddha at Gandan Monastery?

(a) Mongolia (b) Bhutan (c) Nepal (d) Fiji

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 20th September, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting Mongolian President Khaltmaagiin Battulga jointly unveiled a statue of Lord Buddha at Gandan Monastery in Ulaanbaatar through video-conferencing in New Delhi.
- Mr Modi had offered prayers at the Gandan Tegchenling Monastery during his visit to Mongolia in 2015 and had announced to gift a statue of Lord Buddha to the monastery, underlining the common Buddhist heritage and civilization links between the two countries and peoples.
- Gandan Tegchenling Monastery is a prominent centre of Mongolian Buddhists and a treasure house of valuable Buddhist heritage.
- The Statue unveiled by Prime Minister and Mongolian President symbolizes the shared respect of the two countries for the universal message of Lord Buddha.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=371812>

NIRVIK scheme

Question: Consider the following statement:

- (1) Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC) has introduced 'NIRVIK' scheme
- (2) Its aim is to ease the lending process and enhance loan availability for exporters.
- (3) It will help make Indian exports competitive.

From the above correct statement/s is/are:

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

Answer : (d)

Related facts:

- On 16th September 2019, Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC) has introduced 'NIRVIK' scheme to ease the lending process and enhance loan availability for exporters.

Key features of the scheme:

1. Insurance cover guaranteed will cover up to 90 percent of the principal and interest.
2. The increased cover will ensure that foreign and rupee export credit interest rates are below 4 percent and 8 percent respectively for the exporters.
3. The insurance cover will include both pre and post-shipment credit.
4. The gems, jewellery and diamond (GJD) sector borrowers with limit of over Rs 80 crore will have a higher premium rate in comparison to the non-GJD sector borrowers of this category due to the higher loss ratio.
5. For accounts with limits below Rs 80 crore, the premium rates will be moderated to 0.60 per annum and for those exceeding Rs 80 crore, the rates will be 0.72 per annum for the same enhanced cover.
6. It mandates inspection of bank documents and records by ECGC officials for losses exceeding Rs. 10 crore as against the present Rs 1 crore.
7. The banks shall pay a premium to ECGC monthly on the principal and interest as the cover is offered for both outstandings.

Benefits of the scheme:

- It will enhance accessibility and affordability of credit for exporters.
- It will help make Indian exports competitive.
- It will make ECGC procedures exporter friendly.
- The insurance cover is expected to bring down the cost of credit due to capital relief, less provision requirement and liquidity due to quick settlement of claims.
- It will ensure timely and adequate working capital to the export sector.

About ECGC:

- The Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC) is a fully government-owned company that was established in 1957 to promote exports by providing credit insurance services.
- The ECGC provides Export Credit Insurance to Banks (ECIB) to protect the banks from losses on account of export credit at the Pre and Post-Shipment stage given to exporters due to the risks of insolvency or protracted default of the exporter borrower.

Links:

<https://www.livemint.com/videos/-dream-girl-chhichhore-m-o-m-up-for-grabs-business-of-entertainment-1568687531408.html>

National Police University (NPU)

Question: National Police University (NPU) will be set-up in which city?

(a) Bangalore (b) Hyderabad (c) Allahabad (d) Greater Noida

Answer : (d)

- A world-class National Police University (NPU) will be set-up in Greater Noida with a dynamic, state-of-the-art learning and working environment for the advancement and dissemination of education and research in policing science and related areas.
- The proposed multi-disciplinary university will be established at a prime location in the NCR region on a plot of 100 acres located at IT Park, Tech zone in Greater Noida.
- The Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) has offered land on a 90-year lease at a concessional rate at the cost of Rs 371 crore.
- One of the priority agenda of the government is to establish a world-class NPU having a dynamic, state-of-the-art learning and working environment dedicated to the advancement and dissemination of education, research and scholarships of the highest quality in the domain of policing science, forensic science, cyber forensics, criminology, criminal justice, risk management and related areas.
- It will offer to the students formal education programmes leading to the award of the bachelor's, masters' and doctoral degrees as well as PG Diploma in specialised niche areas in police sciences, cyber forensics, criminology, criminal justice, forensic science, risk management and allied subjects with special papers in specified areas using classroom teachings initially and later also through distance learning mode.

Links:

<http://www.uniindia.com/centre-decides-to-establish-national-police-university-in-greater-noida/india/news/1734494.html>

Mary Kom recommended for the Padma Vibhushan Award

Question: Who is the first female athlete to be recommended for the Padma Vibhushan?

(a) Mary Kom (b) PV Sindhu (c) Sania Mirza (d) Saina Nehwal

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Mary Kom has been recommended for the Padma Vibhushan Award, India's second-highest civilian award.
- She is the first female athlete to be recommended for the Padma Vibhushan.
- PV Sindhu's name has been suggested for the Padma Bhushan Award.
- The Sports Ministry has also named seven other female athletes for the Padma awards, making the awards women-dominated this time.
- The Sports Ministry has recommended the name of wrestler Vinesh Phogat, India's T20I skipper Harmanpreet Kaur, Hockey captain Rani Rampal, ace TT player Manika Batra, shooter Suma Shirur and mountaineer twin sisters, Tashi and Nungshi Malik for the Padma Shri awards.
- Besides the names of the women sportspersons, the sports ministry has recommended the names of archer Tarundeep Rai and hockey Olympian MP Ganesh for the Padma Shri award.
- Mary Kom is a six-time World Champion and 2012 Olympic bronze medalist.
- She is also the first Indian female boxer to win gold at the Asian Games (2014) and Commonwealth Games (2018).
- Mary Kom was honoured with the Padma Shree in 2006 and Padma Bhushan in 2013.
- Mary Kom has also been conferred with the Arjuna award in 2003 and the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award in 2009.

- Only three sportspersons have received the Padma Vibhushan award till now and they include Vishwanathan Anand (2007), Sir Edmund Hillary (2008) and former Indian batting maestro Sachin Tendulkar, who received the honour in 2008.

Links:

<https://sportstar.thehindu.com/other-sports/mc-mary-kom-padma-vibhushan-nomination-harmanpreet-kaur-manika-batra-vinesh-phogat-rani-rampal-padma-shri/article29398370.ece>

Ladakhi Shondol dance

Question: Naropa Festival is related to which state?

(a) Sikkim (b) Nagaland (c) Ladakh (d) Arunachal Pradesh

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Ladakhi Shondol the royal dance of Ladakh creates history by entering into the Guinness book of world records as the largest Ladakhi dance.
- Shondol dance, which is best known as the royal dance used to be performed by artists for King of Ladakh.
- This time Shondol performed on the occasion of annual Naropa Festival 2019 celebrated during September 16- 20, 2019.
- This year the dance has been performed with the theme 'Environmental sustainability of Ladakh and the Himalayan region'.
- As many as 408 women attired in traditional dresses and beautiful headgears performed the dance, which broke the previous record of 299 artists dance of Shondol in the 2018 festival. The event was held on the concluding day of the ongoing Buddhist carnival Naropa festival near the Hemis Monastery in Ladakh.
- It was organized by the Live to Love India, Drukpa Charitable Trust and Young Drukpa Association.
- The festival focuses on end use of plastics also sensitise the leaders of religious community on plastic waste management and recycling process.
- In Ladakh Naropa Festival Celebrated every 12th year of the Tibetan calendar, this is also known as the 'Kumbh Mela of the Himalayas'.
- The festival celebrates the life of Buddhist philosopher and scholar Naropa and people from across the Himalayas give their participation in traditional ways with singing and cultural events.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Ladakhi-Shondol-dance-created-history&id=371868>

Handbook on Fisheries Statistics – 2018

Question: Consider the following statements regarding Handbook on Fisheries Statistics – 2018

(1) India is currently the world's second largest producers of fish.

(2) Andhra Pradesh has recorded the highest production of inland fish.

Of 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 Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying has released the "Handbook on Fisheries Statistics – 2018".

Key findings of the handbook:

- India is currently the world's second largest producers of fish. It is also world number two in aquaculture production as well as in inland capture fisheries.
- The total fish production of 12.59 million metric tonnes was registered during 2017-18 with a contribution of 8.90 million metric tonnes from inland sector and 3.69 million metric tonnes from marine sector.
- The average growth in fish production during 2017-18 stands at 10.14% when compared to 2016-17 (11.43 million metric tonnes).
- The percentage contribution of inland fish production in the total fish production of 29% during the year 1950-51 has increased to 71% in the year 2017-18.
- Andhra Pradesh has recorded the highest production of inland fish whereas Gujarat is the leading state in Marine fish in the country.
- The Fisheries sector is also the major source of livelihood for over 1.60 Crore people along with double the number in down and upstream.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1585615>

Gully Boy India's official entry for the Oscars 2020

Question: Which Indian film has got official entry for Oscar?

(a) Gully boy (b) Raazi (c) Super 30 (d) Batla House

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Ranveer Singh and Alia Bhatt starred Gully Boy has been nominated as India's official entry for the 92nd Oscars 2020.
- It was directed by Zoya Akhtar.
- Gully Boy features its main character Ranveer Singh as an aspiring rapper who struggles a lot to become successful.
- If nominated, the film will compete in the Best Foreign Language Film category at the 92nd Academy Awards.
- Earlier, in 23rd Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival (BIFAN), Gully Boy had received the Promotion of Asian Cinema (NETPAC) Award held at South Korea.

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/videos/entertainment/hindi/ranveer-singh-and-alia-bhatt-gully-boy-becomes-indias-official-entry-for-oscars-2020/videoshow/71242166.cms>

Fortune India Most Powerful Women list-2019

Question: Who is the youngest woman to be featured in the Fortune India Most Powerful Women list-2019?

(a) Anushka Sharma (b) Deepika Padukone (c) Alia Bhatt (d) Hima Das

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 20 September 2019, Fortune India released its Most Powerful Women list-2019 in business featuring women that are making an impact by virtue of their business acumen and social and cultural influence.
- In the published list, Anushka Sharma (Age 31) is the youngest woman to be featured in the list with a rank of 39.
- She ventured into Bollywood in 2008 with the film Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi.
- She is also co-founder of Clean Slate Films, which she established at 25(age), has produced three small-budget Hindi films—NH10, Phillauri, and Pari.

- Zia Mody (Age 63) Co-founder of AZB & Partners is ranked first. Whereas, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (Chairperson and MD, Biocon) and Suneeta Reddy (Managing director, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise) were ranked second and third respectively.

Links:

<https://www.fortuneindia.com/mpw?year=2019>

The Jammu & Kashmir Public Safety Act

Question: Consider the following statements regarding the Jammu & Kashmir Public Safety Act:

- (1) Public Safety Act accounts in the Jammu Kashmir government.
- (2) Under this act individual person can detained for two years.

Choose the correct:

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

Answer: (C)

Context:

- Former Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Dr. Farooq Abdullah was detained under the State's Public Safety Act on September 16, for 12 days.
- This was hours before the Supreme Court was due to hear Rajya Sabha Member Vaiko's habeus corpus petition, seeking the J&K government to produce him in court and release him from detention.

Public Safety Act:

- Ironically, the law was introduced by Sheikh Abdullah (Farooq Abdullah's father) in 1978.
- But its purpose was different.
- It was brought in to prevent timber smuggling, and keep the smugglers in prison. This is a preventive detention law that allows the State government to detain a person up to two years without a trial.
- It is similar to the National Security Act, but this was enacted two years before the NSA came into being.
- Even before Dr. Abdullah was detained under the PSA, he claimed to be under house arrest following the abrogation of certain provisions of Article 370, like other politicians in the State.

Why has he been detained under PSA now?

- In police custody, a person has to be produced before a magistrate within 24 hours of detention.
- But the PSA allows the State to hold a person without producing them in court.
- While the J&K government has not given details as to why Dr. Abdullah has been detained under the PSA, senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal on September 17 hit out at the BJP over the detention and questioned if this action was precipitated by Mr. Vaiko's habeus corpus plea.

What happens after PSA is used?

- Within four weeks of passing the detention order, the government has to refer the case to an Advisory Board.
- This Advisory Board will have to give its recommendations within eight weeks of the order.
- If the Board thinks that there is cause for preventive detention, the government can hold the person up to two years.
- The person detained has limited rights.

- Usually when a person is arrested, they have the right to legal representation and can challenge the arrest.
- But, when a person is arrested under the PSA, they do not have these rights before the Advisory Board unless sufficient grounds can be established that the detention is illegal.
- There have been cases where the High Court has interfered and quashed the detention.
- According to Section 13(2), the detaining authority need not even inform the detained individual as to the reason for the action, if it decides that it goes against public interest.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/expained-the-jammu-kashmir-public-safety-act/article29438694.ece>

First integrated battle group to be deployed along India-Pakistan border

Question: At which border India's integrated battle group is to be deployed?

- (a) India – Pakistan Border (b) India – China border (c) India – Nepal Border
(d) India – Afghanistan Border

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On September 2, 2019, the Indian Army is set to deploy its first Integrated Battle Group (IBG) along the India-Pakistan border by the end of 2019.
- The Indian Army plans to form and deploy 11 -13 IBGs to protect its western and eastern borders.
- The announcement comes as tensions rise across the border on Kashmir issue.
- The Defence Ministry has cleared the reorganization of IX Corps, based in Yol in Himachal Pradesh, to form the Integrated Battle Group to be deployed along the western border.
- This is one of the biggest reorganizations of the Army.
- The first Integrated Battle Groups are smaller in comparison to the regular fighting units of the Army Corps. The groups are also self-contained fighting units, including elements of air power, artillery and armour.

Links:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/first-integrated-battle-group-to-be-deployed-along-india-pakistan-border/story-wrvIDDDkQHqcBwxwFI2wpN.html>

Union Government to oversee the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)

Question: Which Committee has been constituted by the Union Government to oversee the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) into Union Territories?

- (a) Sanjay Mitra Committee (b) Rajnath Singh Committee (c) Amit Shah Committee
(d) Ajay Kumar Committee

Answer: (a)

Related Facts:

- The Union government recently constituted a 3-member committee chaired by former defence secretary Sanjay Mitra to oversee the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) into two Union Territories.
- The other Members of the Committee are Arun Goyal, retired IAS officer and Giriraj Prasad Gupta, retired Indian Civil Accounts Service officer.
- The Committee will look into distribution of assets and liabilities of J&K between two UTs.

Links:

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/govt-sets-up-three-member-committee-to-look-into-assets-liabilities-of-jk-2302681.html>

Champions Boat League (CBL)

Question: Champions Boat League (CBL) took place in which of the following state?

(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Kerala (c) Karnataka (d) Telangana

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- 'Nadubhagam Chundan', the snake boat of Pallathuruthy Boat Club, lifted the 67th Nehru Trophy at Punnamada Lake in Alappuzha in Kerala.
- The Pallathuruthy Boat Club has thus emerged winner in the maiden race of the inaugural edition of the Champions Boat League (CBL).
- Champakulam Chundan rowed by the United Boat Club, Kainakary, finished second.
- Karichal Chundan (Police Boat Club) and Devas Chundan (NCDC Boat Club, Kumarakom) came third and fourth.
- Although the snakeboat which ferried Nehru was retired a few years ago, the Nadubhagam Boat Club, owner of the snakeboat, built a new chundan with the same name and is competing in boat races.
- Earlier, the 67th edition of the Nehru Trophy Boat Race was inaugurated by Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran.
- Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan opened the inaugural edition of the CBL in the presence of cricketer Sachin Tendulkar.
- A total of 79 boats, including 23 snakeboats, participated in the Nehru trophy.
- Hosted by Kerala Tourism, CBL is the country's first-ever boat race on the lines of the IPL.
- There will be 12 races in the CBL beginning with the Nehru trophy and concluding with President's Trophy Boat Race in Kollam on November 23.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kerala/nadubhagam-repeats-history-after-67-years/article29311211.ece>

Bank of Baroda launches agri digital platform

Question: Bank of Baroda launched its agri digital platform, the name of the platform is:

(a) Baroda Kisan (b) Baroda Majdoor (c) Kisan (d) BOB krishak

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Bank of Baroda launched its agri digital platform "Baroda Kisan" on September 21, 2019.

About Baroda Kisan

- The platform can also be accessed on mobiles by farmers.
- The web-based portal will cater to all the needs of farmers, including weather forecasts, crop conditions, the moisture levels of the soil, information on crop worms, market prices, special crop-related consultation
- Further, it will also help farmers with inputs related to the purchase of different products, (For example – seeds, fertilizers, pesticides), agricultural equipment on rent, consultancy services and innovative financing options for the sale of agricultural products.

Further information:
Loan schemes

- The Bank also launched centralised processing hubs at Gandhinagar and Hyderabad of agriculture proposals.
- It also introduced two loan schemes.
- One of the schemes was meant for the construction and renovation of toilets as well as domestic drinking water facilities under Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, while the would help the people with the construction of houses in rural areas.

Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/money-and-banking/bank-of-baroda-launched-agri-digital-platform/article29477135.ece>

Bamboonomics

Question: Which ministry has launched Bamboonomics?

- (a) Ministry of Tribal Affairs (b) Ministry of Science and Technology
(c) Ministry of Finance (d) Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions

Answer : (a)

Related facts:

- Arjun Munda, Minister of Tribal Affairs has launched biggest Tribal Movement to promote tribal enterprise through Bamboonomics at 'COP 14 UNCCD'.
- He launched the movement for combating desertification and the climate change at "The Indian Perspective through Bamboonomics" session at 'COP 14 UNCCD: TRIFED-GIZ' organized at Greater Noida Expo on 13th September 2019.
- He informed that how TRIFED will involve the tribal community of India for rehabilitating the degraded land without compromising the income of the poor in the garb of environmentally friendly development.
- Bamboonomics has been designed in such a way that while doing the environmental services, the tribals will earn.
- He also launched two International Committees.
- The Side Event participants also deliberated and finalized TRIFED DELHI Declaration on 4P1000 Initiative: A Tribal Perspective through Bamboonomics.
- The Minister signed and announced the Delhi Declaration of TRIFED.
- TRIFED is striving to integrate its Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojna (PMVDY) with this new global environmental intervention termed as TICD (TRIFED's Initiative to Combat Desertification).
- TRIFED proposed a business model to supplement the income of tribal community and put it on the world scale by partnering with the German Cooperation (GIZ).
- It called for globalization of this movement by further international cooperation.
- TRIFED's message to UNCCD is that the 4P1000 Initiative with the tribal perspective through Bamboonomics is the best answer for combating desertification and rehabilitation of degraded wastelands.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193175>

Approval to Sugar export policy -season 2019-20

Question: How much, a lump sum export subsidy per Metric Tonne (MT) to sugar mills for the sugar season 2019-20 is being provided by the central Government under the recently approved Sugar export policy?

(a) Rs. 10,448 (b) Rs. 6,600 (c) Rs. 8,800 (d) Rs. 9,400

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Approval was given to sugar export policy for evacuation of surplus stocks during sugar season 2019-20.
- This has been done for providing a lump sum export subsidy at Rs. 10,448 per Metric Tonne (MT) to sugar mills for the sugar season 2019-20.
- The total estimated expenditure of about Rs.6,268 crore will be incurred for this purpose.
- The lump sum export subsidy will be provided for the following expenses:-
- On marketing costs including handling, upgrading and other processing costs.
- Costs of international and internal transport.
- Freight charges on export of up to 60 Lakh Metric Tonne (LMT) of sugar limited to Maximum Admissible Export Quantity (MAEQ) allocated to sugar mills for the sugar season 2019-20.
- The subsidy would be directly credited into farmers' account on behalf of mills against cane price dues and subsequent balance, if any, would be credited to mill's account.
- The subsidy shall be in conformity with the provisions of Article 9.1 (d) & (e) of Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) and thus WTO compatible.

Links:-

https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/cabinet-oks-sugar-export-policy-for-evacuation-of-surplus-stocks-during-sugar-season-2019-20-119082801401_1.html

Amit Shah launches Emergency Response Support System 'E-Beat Book' System and 'E-Saathi' App

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) ERSS provides a single emergency number 112 to help the people in distress
- (2) ERSS is one of the key projects of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs under Nirbhaya Fund
- (3) E-Beat Book is a web and mobile based application which will ease the collection, updation and analysis of the information related to crime and criminals in a real time

From the above, correct statement/s is/are:

- (a) Only 1 (b) Only 2 & 3 (c) Only 3 (d) All of the above

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 20 September 2019, Union Minister for Home Affairs, Amit Shah launched three citizen centric services of the Chandigarh Police namely Emergency Response Support System (ERSS – Dial 112), 'E-Beat Book' System and the 'E-Saathi App' in Chandigarh.
- These citizen centric services will enhance Indian policing System by building a Smart Police Force.

Emergency Response Support System (ERSS):

- ERSS is one of the key projects of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs under Nirbhaya Fund.
- Under this, a single emergency number (112) has been developed which will help the public in various emergency situations.
- The emergency number 112 will connect to Police, Fire, Health and other helplines through an Emergency Response Centre.
- In future, the Emergency Number for Road Accidents (1073), Women Helpline (1091, 181), Child Help Line (1098), including other Helpline services would be added under the 112 unified emergency response number.

E-Beat Book:

- E-Beat Book is a web and mobile based application which will ease the collection, updation and analysis of the information related to crime and criminals in a real time.
- The E-Beat Book would be linked with Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS), which would help in a real time updation of crime/criminal data.
- With this type of services, citizens' grievances can be effectively redressed in quick manner.

E-Saathi App:

- The 'E-Saathi' App would help the general public, including senior citizens, to remain in touch with the police and also give suggestions to facilitate participative community policing ('Your Police at Your Doorstep' initiative).
- Through the app, the beat officer can do passport verification, tenant verification, servant verification, character certification etc. at a click of a button.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193315>

All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report

Question: Consider the following statement regarding All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) report:

- 1) It was published by HRD ministry.
- 2) In Uttar Pradesh more number of female in higher education than the male.
- 3) Gross enrollment ratio increased from last year in higher education.

From the above, correct statement/s is/are:

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

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On September 22, 2019, latest All-India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) was released by HRD ministry.
- The survey, undertaken as an annual, web-based, pan-India exercise on the status of Higher Education since 2010-11, covers all the Higher Educational Institutions in the country.
- The survey collects data on several parameters like teachers, student enrolment, programmes, examination results, education finance, infrastructure, etc.

Important facts of the report:

- Gender gap narrowing.
- More Girls in two states: In Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka, there are now more females in the age group of 18-23 enrolling for higher education than male students.
- Female enrolment improved from 47.6% in 2017-18 to 48.6% in 2018-19.
- The gross enrolment ratio (GER) increased marginally – from 25.8 in 2017-18 to 26.3 in 2018-19.
- In absolute terms, enrolment increased from 3.66 crore to 3.74 crore students in the same period. GER for SCs has also shown a growth from 21.8 to 23.0 and STs from 15.9 to 17.2.
- Number of universities has grown from 903 in 2017-18 to 993 in 2018-19 and total HEIs (higher educational institutions) from 49,964 to 51,649 in the same period.
- Number of faculty has also increased from 13.88 lakh to 14.16 lakh.
- Preferred stream at PG level: While one-third of undergraduate students are enrolled in humanities, management seems to be a preferred stream at the postgraduate (PG) level.

Science and engineering technology registered relatively more enrolment in M. Phil and Ph.D programmes.

- Preferred stream at the UG level, 35.9% of the total enrolment was in arts/ humanities/social science, just 16.5% students are pursuing science, followed by commerce with 14.1%. Engineering is the fourth choice.

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/lucknow/in-uttar-pradesh-and-karnataka-more-girls-than-boys-in-higher-education/articleshow/71240592.cms>

International **Budapest convention**

Question: Which of the following fields is related with Budapest convention?

- (a) Conservation of migratory species and wild animals
- (b) Global cybercrime
- (c) Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal
- (d) Sustainable development

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- A UN committee has passed a *Russian-led resolution on a global cybercrime treaty*, despite reservations that it could be used to justify shutting down civil society in repressive countries.
- *The resolution was sponsored by* China, North Korea, Cuba, Nicaragua, Venezuela and Syria, among others, and will up an “Open Ended Working Group” to examine cybercrime.
- The Russian proposal entitled “Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes” passed in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Third Committee 88-58, with 34 absentions, on Monday.
- The proposed treaty has been framed to serve as *an alternative to the US-led Budapest Convention*. As India’s domestic data laws continue to hang in the balance, the country has remained non-committal in the international arena, watching a clear cleavage with Russia and China on one side and the US and EU on the other.

Budapest convention:

- *The Convention on Cybercrime, also known as the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime or the Budapest Convention*, is the first international treaty seeking to address Internet and computer crime by harmonizing national laws, improving investigative techniques, and increasing cooperation among nations.
- It was drawn up by *the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France*, with the active participation of the Council of Europe’s observer states Canada, Japan, South Africa and the United States.
- It is *open for ratification even to states that are not members of the Council of Europe*. As of September 2019, *64 states have ratified the convention*.
- The convention is the sole legally binding multilateral treaty that coordinates cybercrime investigations between nation-states and criminalises certain cybercrime conduct.

Link:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/on-global-cybercrime-india-votes-in-favour-of-russia-led-resolution-6130980/>

KPCS Plenary 2019

Question: Where did the Plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCSP) is being organized from 18 to 22 October 2019?

(a) New York (b) Davos (c) Melbourne (d) New Delhi

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The Plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) is being hosted by India, the present Kimberley Process (KP) Chair, from 18th to 22nd November, 2019 in New Delhi.
- The Plenary meeting was inaugurated by Commerce Secretary, Dr. Anup Wadhawan.
- India, as a founding member of KP, has been actively involved in the development of KP as an important protocol in trade of diamonds which has ensured that 99.8% of the diamonds in the world are conflict free.
- India has given leadership to address the issue of differentiation between Natural Diamonds and Lab Grown Diamonds and will take further initiatives to have better differentiation and ensure responsible business on this front.
- India is sensitive to the issues and challenges of artisanal and small scale mining and acknowledges the contribution made by the KP members, observers and agencies for their upliftment.
- India exports around USD 24 billion cut and polished diamonds and it will reach an export target of USD 1 trillion in coming years and the gem and jewellery sector particularly cut and polished diamonds will contribute significantly to achieve this target.
- The closing session of the KPCS will be held on 22nd November 2019 in New Delhi and India will hand over the KP Chair to the Russian Federation.
- The Kimberley Process is a joint initiative involving Government, International Diamond Industry and Civil Society to stem the flow of Conflict Diamonds.
- "Conflict Diamonds" means rough diamonds used by rebel movements or their allies to finance conflict aimed at undermining legitimate governments. It is also described in United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions.
- The KPCS came into effect from 1st January, 2003 and evolved into an effective mechanism for stopping the trade in conflict diamonds. KPCS has 55 members representing 82 countries including EU with 28 members.
- The Kimberley Process is chaired, on a rotating basis, by participating countries.
- As per the Scheme, each shipment of rough diamonds being exported and imported by crossing an international border be transported in a tamper proof container and accompanied by a validated Kimberley Process Certificate.
- Since 2003, India has been actively participating in the KPCS process and is a member of all Working Groups of KP (except for WGAAP).
- Department of Commerce is the nodal Department and Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) is designated as the KPCS Importing and Exporting Authority in India.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=159197>

Global Terrorism Index 2019

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Afghanistan was most impacted by terrorism in 2018

(2) India is highly impacted by terrorism and is ranked 7th

Of the above correct statement/s is/are:

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

Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- In order to measure the impact of terrorism, the seventh edition of the Global Terrorism Index (GTI) report was produced by the Institute for Economics & Peace (IEP) on November 20, 2019.
- The report assesses 163 countries mapping terrorism within its region.
- As per report, Afghanistan is now the country most impacted by terrorism – counting 7,379 deaths from terrorism – an increase of 59%.

2019 Report key findings:

- The total number of deaths from terrorism declined for the fourth consecutive year in 2018, falling by 15.2% to 15,952 deaths. This represents a 53% reduction since its peak in 2014 when 33,555 people were killed in terrorist attacks.
- Between 2002 and 2018, South Asia, MENA (Middle East and North Africa) and Sub Saharan Africa accounted for 93 per cent of all deaths from terrorism.
- South Asia has had the highest impact from terrorism since 2002, while Central America and the Caribbean region has had the lowest impact.
- The Taliban is now the deadliest terrorist group in the world, accounting for 38 per cent of all terrorist deaths. This is an increase of 71%.
- Terrorism still remains a global security threat with 71 countries recording more than one death – the second highest number of countries since 2002.
- Deaths in Europe fell by 70%. Western Europe recorded its lowest number of incidents since 2012.
- Female suicide attacks are still a small percentage of all terrorist attacks, accounting for 5% of suicide attacks from 1985 to 2018.
- The global economic impact of terrorism was US\$33 billion in 2018; a substantial decrease of 38% from the previous year.

Five most & least terrorism affected countries:

- Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Syria and Pakistan are the most impacted countries holding consecutively the top five positions.
- Belarus, Guinea-Bissau, Oman, The Gambia and North Korea are the least impacted countries.
- India with score of 7.518 has been ranked 7th in the 2019 index.
- Far right terrorism in the west:
 - There has been an increase in far-right terrorism in Western Europe, North America, and Oceania for the third consecutive year.
 - In North America, Western Europe, and Oceania, far-right attacks increased by 320 per cent over the past five years.
 - Far-right terrorism is also more likely to be carried out by individuals unaffiliated with a specific terrorist group.
 - The rise in politically motivated attacks by unaffiliated individuals comes at a time when Positive Peace is declining across the West. Declines in Positive Peace are usually associated with higher levels of social disorder.

Links:

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/GTI-2019web.pdf>

Presidential election in Sri Lanka

Question: Who has sworn in as the new President of Sri Lanka?

(a) Mahindra Rajapaksa (b) Gotabaya Rajapaksa (c) Basil Rajapaksa (d) Maithripala Sirisena

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 18th November 2018, Gotabaya Rajapaksa sworn in as the next President of Sri Lanka.
- He will succeed Maithripala Sirisena for a five-year term.
- Gotabaya Rajapaksa received 52.25% of votes (6,924,255) while other contestant Sajith Premadasa secured 41.99% of the total votes polled (5,564,239) during the elections.
- Prior to this, Gotabaya Rajapaksa served as Secretary to the Ministry of Defence and Urban Development from 2005 to 2015 under the administration of his elder brother former President Mahinda Rajapaksa.
- 70-year-old Gotabaya Rajapaksa has both an idol and a controversial image in Sri Lanka.
- Majority of Sinhalese Buddhists consider him a 'war hero' (Sri Lankan Civil War-defeat of Tamil Tigers and killing its leader Velupillai Prabhakaran in 2009) while a majority of Tamil minorities look at him with disbelief. Rajapaksa dynasty is known for its pro-china tilt.

Links:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/11/gotabaya-rajapaksa-wins-sri-lanka-election-191117133518223.html>

WHO to identify online shopping as addictive disorder

Question: By which year will the World Health Organisation (WHO) identify online shopping as an addictive disorder?

(a) 2020 (b) 2022 (c) 2024 (d) 2028

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- World Health Organisation (WHO) will identify online shopping as an addictive disorder, as millions abuse digital commerce and encounter financial stress by 2024 as per a research firm Gartner.
- Consumer spending via digital commerce platforms will continue to grow over 10 per cent year over year through 2022, according to its top strategic predictions for 2020 and beyond.

Major highlights of the report:

- The ease of online shopping will cause financial stress for millions of people, as online retailers increasingly use artificial intelligence (AI) and personalisation to effectively target consumers and prompt them to spend discretionary income that they do not have.
- The resulting debt and personal bankruptcies will cause depression and other health concerns caused by stress, which is capturing the attention of the WHO.
- By 2023, the number of people with disabilities employed will triple due to AI and emerging technologies, reducing barriers to access.
- AI, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR) and other emerging technologies have made work more accessible for employees with disabilities.
- By 2024, AI identification of emotions will influence more than half of the online advertisements you see. Artificial emotional intelligence (AEI) is the next frontier for AI development, especially for companies hoping to detect emotions in order to influence buying decisions.

- By 2025, 50 per cent of people with a smartphone but without a bank account will use a mobile-accessible cryptocurrency account, and by 2023, a self-regulating
- association for oversight of AI and machine learning designers will be established in at least four of the G7 countries.
- By 2023, up to 30 per cent of world news and video content will be authenticated as real by blockchain countering deep fake technology.
- Through facial recognition, location tracking and big data, organisations are starting to monitor individual behaviour and link that behaviour to other digital actions, like buying a train ticket.
- The Internet of Things (IoT) where physical things are directed to do a certain thing based on a set of observed operating parameters relative to a desired set of operating parameters is now being extended to people, known as the Internet of Behaviour (IoB).

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=WHO-will-identify-online-shopping-as-addictive-disorder-by-2024&id=374069>

18th Non-Aligned Summit in Baku, Azerbaijan

Question: The 18th Non-Aligned Summit held in which country?

(a) Venezuela (b) Azerbaijan (c) Croatia (d) Afghanistan

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The 18th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit was held between 25 October and 26 October 2019 in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- The theme for the 18th NAM Summit was “Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of the contemporary world.”
- The theme relates to the forthcoming 65th anniversary of Bandung Principles (2020) and the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Non-Alignment Movement (2021).
- Bandung principles promote world peace and cooperation which were formulated at the Asian-African Conference in 1955.
- This NAM Summit majorly focused on contemporary issues such as Terrorism, threats to peace and security, UN reform, climate change, sustainable development, economic governance, and south-south cooperation.
- The 18th meeting of the 120-nation group covering 55 per cent of the world’s population is expected to discuss responses to contemporary challenges around the world.
- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu represented India at this two-day 18th NAM Summit.
- Vice President addressed the members of the Indian Diaspora and told it is a very important component of India’s aspiration to be an inclusive, equitable and prosperous nation.
- He emphasized that India and Azerbaijan have deepened their economic ties recently, but, the level of engagement is not enough and there is much more scope of deepening bilateral relations.

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM):

- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a forum of 120 developing world states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. After the United Nations, it is the largest grouping of states worldwide.

Links:

<http://www.ddinews.gov.in/national/vice-president-represents-india-nam-summit>

Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile

Question: Recently which of the following country tested fired intercontinental ballistic missile Minuteman III?

(a) USA (b) North Korea (c) China (d) France

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On October 2, 2019; the United States Air Force (USAF) successfully tested an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) named as Minuteman III.
- Fired from Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, this was an unarmed missile equipped with reentry vehicle.
- It travelled approximately 4,200 miles (6,750km) across the Pacific Ocean to the Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands.

Some special features of Minuteman III:

- It was the first US missile fitted with Multiple Independent Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs).
- It enables it to carry up to three different warheads that can strike independent targets.
- This missile project was started in 1966 and the missile is armed with 170 kilotons of TNT (Trinitrotoluene).
- Airborne Launch Control System is a part of the missile.
- At present the US has as maximum as 440 Minuteman III missile in its arsenal

Links:

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/us-test-icbm-intercontinental-ballistic-missile-north-korea-11963404>

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Links:

<https://www.channelnewsasia.com/news/world/us-test-icbm-intercontinental-ballistic-missile-north-korea-11963404>

Global Wealth Report 2019

Question: Consider the following statements regarding Global Wealth report 2019:

(1) US has contributed the most towards global wealth growth

(2) India is the one of the fastest wealth creators in the world

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 tenth anniversary edition of the Global wealth report published by the Credit Suisse Research Institute is the most comprehensive and up-to-date source of information on global household wealth.
- Global wealth grew during the past year by 2.6% to USD 360 trillion and wealth per adult reached a new record high of USD 70,850, 1.2% above the level of mid-2018 with Switzerland topping the biggest gains in wealth per adult this year.
- The US, China, and Europe contributed the most towards global wealth growth with USD 3.8 trillion, USD 1.9 trillion and USD 1.1 trillion respectively.
- This year's report also provides a deep dive into wealth in the 21st century.
- While the century began with a "golden age" of robust and inclusive wealth creation, wealth growth collapsed during the financial crisis and never recovered to the level experienced earlier.

India's context:

- India's total household wealth grew by 5.2% in dollar terms in the period, the Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report released on October 21, 2019.
- Net wealth per adult grew at 3.3%, sharply slower than the average 11% growth rate reported in the 20 years to 2019.
- India, however, remains one of the fastest wealth creators in the world, with household wealth in dollar terms growing faster than any other region.
- The slowdown in wealth creation coincides with a downturn in the Indian economy, which grew at the slowest pace in six years in the three months ended 30 June.
- Growth in private consumption expenditure also slumped to an 18-quarter low of 3.1% in the June quarter, indicating a negative wealth effect.
- Overall, the Credit Suisse report found that non-financial assets of Indian households grew by 6.9% in 2018-19, outpacing the 1.4% growth in financial assets.
- The last time household wealth grew at a slower pace was in 2017-18, when it expanded 2.6%. But that was largely due to the sharp weakening of the rupee in that year — a 7-8% rise in asset values was offset by an almost 5% currency depreciation.
- In 2018-19, Indian asset prices grew at a slower pace of nearly 6% but foreign exchange fluctuations were more favourable.
- The report estimates wealth per Indian adult at \$14,569 (₹10.31 lakh as on 21 October). However, the average number is skewed heavily by a few wealthy individuals.

- The report estimates that 78% of India's adult population has wealth below \$10,000, while 1.8% of India's population has more than \$100,000.
- At the other extreme, 1,790 adults have wealth over \$100 million. India accounts for 2% of the world's millionaires.
- Indians hold an average of about \$13,000 in physical assets and roughly \$3,000 in financial assets. There is also a debt of \$1,345 per adult.
- The Credit Suisse report also found that the increase in household wealth in India in 2018-19 was mostly driven by rising home prices.

Links:

<https://www.credit-suisse.com/about-us/en/reports-research/global-wealth-report.html>

World Giving Index (WGI) 2019

Question: World Giving Index (WGI) 2019 was released by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). What is India's rank in this index?

(a) 53 (b) 45 (c) 82 (d) 11

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 15th October 2019; World Giving Index (WGI) 2019, a survey ranking was released by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), an international organization
- According to the WGI, USA stood at the top followed by Myanmar, New Zealand and Australia.
- Others in the top ten countries included Ireland, Canada, UK, Sri Lanka and Indonesia.
- India ranked 82nd, in the 2019 World Giving Index (WGI) among the 128 countries surveyed by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF).
- On the index India falls even below to Nepal (53), Pakistan (69), Mexico (73) and Brazil (74).
- At the bottom of the list are Yemen, Greece and China.
- It should be noted that the survey is being conducted by CAF over the past decade, 2009 to 2018.
- In India as per the WGI report, it showed that 34% of people helped a stranger, 24% donated money, and 19% volunteered or donated their time.

Links:

<https://cafindia.org/media-center/publications/world-giving-index-2019>

Tulagi Island

Question: Tulagi Island, which was recently in news, is the territory of which country?

(a) South Korea (b) Japan (c) Solomon (d) Madagascar

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 25 October, 2019; Solomon Islands completely rejected Chinese company's attempt to lease an entire Tulagi Island in the Pacific archipelago.
- Solomon's Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare's office said in a statement that this lease deal was unlawful and will not be allowed to go ahead.
- It should be noted that in September 2019 a Chinese company Sam Enterprise Group has signed a secretive deal with the government of the Solomon Islands to lease an entire Tulagi island.
- The lease deal has to be effective for up to 75 years but the status of the lease remains unclear since it is a non-binding agreement.
- The deal was signed just a few days after the Solomon Islands abandoned Taiwan and began diplomatically recognizing Chinese aid and investment to flow.

- Solomon Government insisted that provincial government did not have the power to negotiate the agreement regarding Tulagi island, which has the type of deep-water harbour coveted by the military.
- Solomon Islands, lie east of Papua New Guinea and northeast of Australia in the south Pacific, is a scattered archipelago of about 1,000 mountainous islands and low-lying coral atolls.
- Tulagi, among Solomon's is an island about two square kilometres (0.8 square miles) with a population of 1,200, is the site of a former Japanese naval base and was the scene of fierce fighting in World War II.
- The agreement with China's company Sam mentioned developing a refinery on the island, but the United States and Australia would have been concerned at its potential for dual use as a Chinese military base.
- The Solomons was previously Taiwan's largest ally in the Pacific region but now they have taken the decision to ditch Taipei for China.

Links:-

<https://www.news18.com/news/world/chinese-firms-plan-to-lease-an-entire-island-turns-sour-as-solomon-islands-pm-terms-deal-illegal-2361905.html>

The State of the World's Children Report

Question: Consider the following statement regarding The State of the World's Children Report:

(1) It was released by United Nations Children's Fund, formerly United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).

(2) The report has said that 50 million children are affected by wasting

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:

- United Nations Children's Emergency Fund-UNICEF has released "The State of the World's Children Report".

Key Highlights of the report:

- The report states that a third of the world's children under five years of age which is around 700 million have nutrition problems.
- They are undernourished or are facing overweight problems.
- Also, at least 1 in 2 children suffer from hidden hunger.
- It has also stated that despite 40% drop in stunting of children in poor countries between 1990 and 2015, 149 million are still too short for their age.
- The report warns that poor eating and feeding practices start from the earliest days of a child's life. It stated that breastfeeding can save lives, but only 42% of children under six months of age are exclusively breastfed.
- In 2018, according to Unicef data, 149 million children under five years of age worldwide were stunted, and just under 50 million were wasted.
- The triple burden of malnutrition – undernutrition, hidden hunger and overweight – threatens the survival, growth and development of children, young people, economies and nations.

Report in context to India:

- 5% of Indian children suffer from stunting, 17% suffer from wasting, 33% are underweight and 2% are overweight.

- Indian children are being diagnosed with adult diseases such as hypertension, chronic kidney disease and diabetes.
- Every second woman in the country is anaemic, as are 40.5% children.
- Among countries in South Asia, India fares the worst (54%) on the prevalence of children under five who are either stunted, wasted or overweight.
- Afghanistan and Bangladesh follow at 49% and 46%, respectively. Sri Lanka and the Maldives are the better performing countries in the region, at 28% and 32%, respectively.
- India also has the highest burden of deaths among children under five per year, with over 8 lakh deaths in 2018.
- It is followed by Nigeria, Pakistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo, at 8.6 lakh, 4.09 lakh and 2.96 lakh deaths per year, respectively.

UNICEF:

- UNICEF, acronym of United Nations Children's Fund, formerly United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund,
- It was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946. It is headquartered in New York, USA.
- It is a special program of the United Nations (UN) devoted to aiding national efforts to improve the health, nutrition, education, and general welfare of children.

Links:

<https://www.news18.com/news/lifestyle/1-in-3-children-under-age-of-5-undernourished-or-overweight-2346353.html>

Singapore to become first country to ban advertisements for sugary drinks

Question: Which country will become the first country to ban advertisement for sugary drinks?

(a) Norway (b) Singapore (c) Japan (d) France

Answer: (b)

Related Facts:

- Singapore is set to become the first country in the world to ban ads for unhealthy drinks with high sugar content in what it says is the latest move in its ongoing "war on diabetes."
- The ban, which will apply to "the least healthy" sugar-sweetened beverages, will cover all media platforms including print, broadcast and online, as per Edwin Tong, Senior Minister of State for the city-state's Ministry of Health.
- According to the International Diabetes Federation, 13.7 per cent of adults suffer from diabetes in Singapore, one of the highest rates among developed nations.
- Other marketing bans around the world have focused on restricting children's exposure to junk food ads.
- Some 420 million people around the world today suffer from diabetes, with the number expected to rise to 629 million by 2045, according to the International Diabetes Federation. (AFP)

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/rest-of-world/singapore-to-become-first-country-to-ban-ads-for-very-sugary-drinks/articleshow/71521361.cms>

Shrink in Switzerland Glaciers

Question: Which of the following statements is incorrect regarding the recent study report about Switzerland's glaciers?

- (a) According to the study glaciers in Switzerland have lost a tenth of their volume in the past five years alone.
- (b) The Cryospheric Commission at the Swiss Academy of Sciences has published this annual study on the state of the glaciers in Switzerland.
- (c) In September 2019 a funeral march was undertaken up by the natives of Switzerland to mark the disappearance of the Meola glacier.
- (d) Measurements under this study on 20 Swiss glaciers have shown that melt rates this year (2019) have reached record levels.

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On October 15, 2019; a study has been published about the state of Switzerland's glaciers.
- The Cryospheric Commission at the Swiss Academy of Sciences has published this annual study on the state of the glaciers in Switzerland.
- According to the study glaciers in Switzerland have lost a tenth of their volume in the past five years alone.
- It was a melting rate that unmatched during observations stretching back more than a century.
- Measurements under this study on 20 Swiss glaciers have shown that melt rates this year (2019) have reached record levels.
- It has found that intense heat waves over the summer in Switzerland had dashed hopes that an exceptionally snow-filled winter would limit the glacier melt this year.
- The commission said that in April and May, snow cover on the glaciers was between 20 and 40% higher than usual, with depths of up to six metres measured in some places as late as June.
- In a comparative study it has been noted that during two weeks of intense heat at the end of June and again in late July, the volume of snow and ice melting on Swiss glaciers was equivalent to the country's total annual consumption of drinking water.
- The result, it said, was that the thick snow layer quickly disappeared and the strong melt continued until early September.
- Researchers informed that over the past 12 months, around two percent of Switzerland's total glacier volume has been lost.
- The commission said that the overall rate of loss over the past five years "exceeds 10%."
- There is a deep concern in Switzerland about melting of glaciers as in September 2019 a funeral march was undertaken up a steep mountainside to mark the disappearance of the Pizol glacier.
- Pizol glacier was one of more than 500 glaciers to vanish from the Swiss Alps since the turn of the 20th century.
- A recent study by glaciologists at the ETH technical university in Zurich indicated that more than 90% of the some 4,000 glaciers dotted throughout the Alps could disappear by the end of this century if greenhouse gas emissions continue at the present pace.

The Longest and Largest Glacier in Switzerland:

- The Great Aletsch Glacier is the longest and largest glacier in Switzerland.
- This glacier has a length of about 22.47 km and a volume of 15.4 cubic km.
- The glacier encompasses an area of 81.7 square km in the Bernese Alps in Valais.
- The Great Aletsch is part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Links:-

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/swiss-glaciers-shrink-10-in-five-years-study/article29689416.ece>

Global Mobility Report

Question: According to SuM4All initiative, how many countries are on track to achieve sustainability in the transportation sector?

(a) 10 (b) 20 (c) 30 (d) None of these

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Not a single country — developed or developing — is on track to achieve sustainability in the transportation sector and attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) mandated by the United Nations, according to a report by Sustainable Mobility for All (SuM4All) initiative.

The SuM4All initiative:

- It was launched in 2017, is an umbrella platform that brings together 55 public and private organisations and companies to act collectively to implement the SDGs and transform the transport sector.
- The report, released on October 23, 2019, charted a Global Roadmap for Action (GRA), which provides a catalogue of policy measures that have been used and tested around the world to achieve four policy goals — universal access, efficiency, green mobility and safety.
- It analysed mobility performances of 183 countries on these key indicators.
- Developed countries outperformed developing countries on all mobility policy goals, except per capita transport-related greenhouse gas emissions, found the report.
- The gap is more striking on safety and air pollution, placing a higher burden on developing countries compared with the developed countries.
- Other indicators also showed wide disparities between developed and developing countries.
- For example, in developed countries, universal urban access, as measured by the rapid transit-to-resident ratio, varies between zero and 95, and averages 32 kilometers per million residents.
- In developing countries, the same indicator ranged between zero and 48, but averaged only four, showed the report.
- Further, the report classified all countries into four categories from A to D ('D' being the lowest performing), based on key indicators.
- Most countries fell into the lowest performance groups for universal urban access, gender, and efficiency.
- About 68 per cent countries fell in the lowest performing category for 'universal accesses in urban areas. Similarly, only 13 per cent were in the 'A' category in terms of 'efficiency'.
- With growing urbanisation, increasing world trade and new technologies, the global mobility system is stressed.
- More than one billion people or one-third of the global rural population, lack access to all-weather roads and transport services, showed the report.
- Closing this transport access gap in rural areas can connect this population to education, health and jobs, it pointed out.
- Besides, improvements in border administration, transport and communication infrastructure can also increase global gross domestic product (GDP) by up to \$2.6 trillion.
- Halving the pollution caused by the transport sector can help an additional 1.6 billion people to breathe cleaner air, according to the report.
- The new GRA takes a holistic approach of sustainability and offers concrete policy solutions to tackle this urgency and help countries to adapt and adopt sustainable mobility, the report noted.
- The policy framework consists of 182 policy measures and six case studies (from Ethiopia, Colombia, Sweden, Spain, China and Europe and Central Asia) to show how some of these policy measures have been implemented to make progress on mobility.

- The GRA will help countries to identify gaps, crucial steps and appropriate policies to ensure that transport sector contributes to attain the SDGs by 2030.
- GRA will work in three ways to the policy agenda on mobility:
- Charting mobility performances of 183 developed and developing countries,
- Providing a catalogue of suitable policy measures that have been used and tested around the world to achieve any of the four policy goals,
- Laying out a methodology to extract from this catalogue of policies those measures that are most impactful and relevant to a country's context

About GRA:

- The GRA relies on a scoring approach to filter the catalogue of policy measures.
- Each policy measure is assigned two scores: an impact score to measure the impact on each of the four policy goals, and country- relevance score to measure the relevance of this policy measure by country group.

Links:

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/air/no-country-on-sustainable-transport-track-global-mobility-report-67423>

US has announced the increase of H-1B work visa application fee

Question: H-1B is related to which of the following countries?

(a) USA (b) UK (c) Canada (d) France

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 7th November, 2019; United States announced the increase of H-1B work visa application fee by 10 US Dollars as part of its revised selection process.
- US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) remarked that the non-refundable fee will support the new electronic registration system to make the H-1B cap selection process more efficient. Petitioners seeking to file H-1B cap-subject petitions will first have to electronically register with the USCIS during a designated registration period.
- USCIS Acting Director Ken Cuccinelli said the electronic registration system is part of an agency-wide initiative to modernize immigration system while deterring fraud.
- The H-1B program allows US companies to temporarily employ foreign workers in occupations that require the application of a body of highly specialized knowledge with bachelor's or a higher degree in the specific specialty, or its equivalent.

Link:

<http://www.ddinews.gov.in/international/us-announces-increase-h-1b-work-visa-application-fee>

Cyclone Hagibis

Question: Cyclone Hagibis, which was recently in news affected-

(a) Sri Lanka (b) Japan (c) South Korea (d) Madagascar

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 12th October large and powerful tropical cyclone Hagibis hit the Izu Peninsula in Japan.
- It made landfall at as a Category 2–equivalent typhoon and the cyclone was considered to be the most devastating typhoon to hit the Kantō region of Japan since Ida in 1958.

- Hagibis developed from a tropical wave located a couple hundred miles north of the Marshall Islands on 2nd October, 2019. The system reached tropical storm status late on 5th October as it travelled westward.
- It should be noted that Hagibis caused additional impacts to Japan, after Faxai struck the same region one month before.
- The nineteenth named storm and the ninth typhoon of the 2019 Pacific typhoon season, Hagibis underwent a period of rapid intensification, which brought it to its peak intensity on 7th October.
- The typhoon disrupted power or water supply in a large area which made the situation worst for the people on the spot.
- Although typhoons are not uncommon in Japan, Hagibis — which means speed in the Philippine language Tagalog — was particularly brutal, leading to the high death toll.

Links:

<https://edition.cnn.com/2019/10/15/asia/japan-typhoon-hagibis-aftermath-intl-hnk/index.html>

5th World Parliament of science, religion and philosophy 2019

Question: Recently in which of the following cities 5th World Parliament of Science, Religion and Philosophy 2019 was organised?

(a) Hyderabad (b) Patna (c) Pune (d) New Delhi

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- 5th World Parliament of Science, Religion and Philosophy was held during 2nd – 4th October, 2019. The objective of the event was to create and promote interfaith and inter-religious movement for World Peace.
- The theme of the programme this year is: Role of science, religion and philosophy for world peace and well-being of mankind. Karan Singh inaugurated the fifth edition of this Conclave.
- On concluding day, Sumitra Mahajan, Former Union Minister and Ex Lok Sabha Speaker, conferred the 'Vishwa-Vigyan-Darshanik Award' to revered Prof Dr Vishwanath D Karad.
- Prof Karad got this award for his outstanding contribution to science, spirituality, and philosophy by creating the world's largest dome dedicated to world peace.
- This World Parliament was organised by MIT (Maharashtra Institute of Technology) World Peace University in association with World Peace Centre, Alandi, MAEER's MIT Group of institutions and MIT ADT University.
- This conclave was held at the world's largest dome philosopher Saint Dnyaneshwara World Peace Prayer Hall, Loni Kalbhor in Pune, Maharashtra.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-ani/world-leaders-encouraged-the-interfaith-and-inter-religious-movement-for-world-peace-at-the-5th-world-parliament-2019-119100500486_1.html

Canada Prime Minister Election

Question: Justin Trudeau has won the recently held Prime Minister election in Canada. He belongs to?

(a) Conservative Party (b) Liberal Party (c) Green Party (d) New Democratic Party

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Canada witnessed the General Elections on 21st October, 2019 in which the incumbent leader Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party got the highest number of seat.

- Trudeau will however form a minority government in his second term as the party alone has failed to secure majority seats.
- Liberals secured 157 seats which is 13 short to form a majority in nation's 338 electoral seats.
- Conservatives won the second highest seats by winning 121 seats while The Bloc Quebecois took 32 seats.
- The New Democratic Party (NDP) won 24 seats. NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, a leftist former criminal defence lawyer, is the first non-white leader of a federal political party in Canada.
- Canada has a quasi federal system of government and the Prime Minister is elected for the period of 4 years.

Links:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-50134640>

Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report 2019

Question: On 14th October, 2019 The Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report (APTIR) 2019 was released. Which of the following agency/agencies was/were involved in preparation of this report?

(1) ESCAP (2) WTO (3) UNCTAD (4) IMF

Select the correct answer from the following codes

(a) i & ii (b) ii & iii (c) i & iii (d) iv

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 14th October, 2019; The Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report (APTIR) 2019 was released.
- The theme of APTIR 2019 is: Navigating Non-tariff Measures (NTMs) towards Sustainable Development.
- The report was been published by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
- It provides insights into the impact of recent and emerging developments in trade and foreign direct investment on countries' abilities to meet the challenges of achieving sustainable development.
- The report provides information on developments in (a) intra- and inter-regional trade in goods and services (b) foreign direct investment (c) trade facilitation measures (d) trade policy measures and (e) preferential trade policies and agreements.
- The report has said that the Non-tariff measures (NTMs) have increased in the past two decades and are affecting trade as well sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Asian countries.
- Around half the Asia-Pacific's economies have at least one NTM addressing water and energy efficiency and only 10% have measures addressing illegal, unreported and unregulated(IUU) fishing and illegal timber trade.
- NTMs can also affect foreign direct investment negatively which may slow down countries' economic activities. It can also have a direct impact on the performance of trading partners.

- The report closes by offering sets of national-and regional-level policy recommendations for streamlining NTMs for sustainable benefits.

Links:

<https://www.unescap.org/publications/APTIR2019>

Prime Minister election in Mauritius

Question: Recently, Who has won the Prime Minister election held in Mauritius?

(a) Mohammed Solih (b) Pravind Jugnauth (c) Bobby Jindal (d) Tulsi Gabbard

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Militant Socialist Movement (MSM), the ruling party of Mauritius has won more than half of the seats in parliament in the recent held parliamentary election waving way for the incumbent Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth a five-year term.
- Mauritius is a prosperous Indian Ocean island of 1.3 million people having large share of Indian diaspora.
- MSM has won 38 of the 62 seats while the Labour Party and the Mauritian Militant Movement (MMM) managed 13 and 9 seats respectively.
- Jugnauth was lifted to the post of prime minister in 2017 when his father stepped down from the post.
- Some 723,660 voters, 76.84 percent of those eligible, turned out for the ballot.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591135>

Newly elected President of Tunisia

Question: Who is elected recently as the President of African nation Tunisia in the recent election?

(a) Zelenskey (b) Kais Saied (c) Monacef Marzouki (d) Fouad Mebazza

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Kais Saied has been declared victorious in the recent Presidential election held in Tunisia.
- Islamist-backed Kais Saied is a Law Professor. He received 72.71% of the vote, while his opponent and media mogul Nabil Karoui got 27.29%.
- 55% of the registered citizens eligible to vote cast their ballots in the election
- The 61-year-old Saied will succeed Beji Caid Essebsi, who died in office in July 2019.
- Saied was an independent candidate in the election and received support from the moderate Islamist party Ennahdha.

Links:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-50032460>

Joko Widodo sworn in as President for second term

Question: Joko Widodo has been sworn in as the President for the second and final term of which of the following country?

(a) Myanmar (b) Thailand (c) Indonesia (d) Cambodia

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Indonesia's President Joko Widodo has been sworn into office for his second and final five-year term on October 20 2019 amid a string of fresh challenges around security, corruption and economic slowdown.
- Widodo, popularly known as Jokowi, took oath at a ceremony in the capital, Jakarta, attended by politicians and foreign dignitaries.
- He was re-elected in polls that took place in 17th April 2019.
- Widodo, the 58-year-old was sworn into office along with 76-year-old vice president Maruf Amin, who replaces Widodo's vice president in his first term, Jusuf Kalla.
- Widodo secured victory with 55.5 percent of the vote in the last held presidential election.
- Indonesia is world's most populous Muslim-majority nation and its capital is Jakarta.

Links:

https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/indonesias-popular-president-to-be-sworn-in-for-final-term/2019/10/20/639b90cc-f306-11e9-bb7e-d2026ee0c199_story.html

Indian, Chinese tourists exempted from visas

Question: Which country has recently exempted tourists of India and China from visa to travel to that country?

(a) Turkey (b) Britain (c) South Africa (d) Brazil

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Indian and Chinese tourists will be exempted from visas to enter Brazil for tourism or business purposes.
- Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro mentioned that there will be no reciprocity in the beginning. US, Australia, Japan, and Canada are already exempt from short-term tourist and business visas.
- It is to be noted that both India and China are part of BRICS – an association of five major emerging national economies including Brazil, Russia and South Africa.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/indian-chinese-to-be-exempted-from-visas-to-enter-brazil-president-119102501340_1.html

Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index 2019

Question: What is the rank of India in the recently released Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index 2019?

(a) 22nd (b) 32nd (c) 42nd (d) 52nd

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index 2019 has been released on October 23 2019.
- India has been to 32nd position for providing pension and retirement benefits to citizens compared to last year.
- The grade category of India is D.

Major Highlights of the Index:

- The Netherlands topped the index with highest index value (81.0) followed by Denmark. Both were graded as A. Thailand was ranked the lowest value (39.4) with D category.
- In a sub index wise analysis, Ireland had the highest score for adequacy (81.5), Denmark for sustainability (82.0) and Finland for integrity (92.3).

- Thailand scored the lowest for adequacy (35.8), Italy for sustainability (19.0) and Philippines for integrity (34.7).

India in the report:

- The score in the Index 2019 rose to 45.8 from 44.6 last year and the ranking was improved from 33rd to 32nd.
- The index covers a total of 37 countries. The rankings are based on how they fare on providing pension and retirement benefits to different income group citizen.
- As per the report, India has witnessed improvement in all three sub-indices of adequacy, sustainability and integrity.
- There was slight increase in scores across various dimensions, including net household savings, greater flexibility in managing retirement and part time work, steady progress in governance and reporting around private pension plans.
- The draft wages and social security reforms initiated in India indicate the intent of policy makers in creating an inclusive and sustainable pension system.
- The Atal Pension Yojana (APY) started by the BJP government available to all citizens below the age of 40, but is aimed at the unorganised sector and encourages them to save voluntarily before retirement.
- The report also mentioned several new schemes introduced by the government for different segments of workers in the unorganised sector like the PM Karam Yogi Maan-Dhan Scheme for retailers and shop keepers, PM Kisan Pension Yojan (PM-KMY) for small and marginal famers and the recently announced contributory scheme Pradhan Mantri Shram-Yogi Maan-Dhan (PM-SYM) that covers workers in the unorganized sector with equal contribution by the government.

Links:

<https://www.financialexpress.com/economy/india-improves-ranking-in-melbourne-mercator-global-pension-index/1744202/>

Global Tuberculosis Report 2019

Question: Which of the following statement is/are correct in reference to the Global Tuberculosis Report 2019 published by WHO recently?

- (1) The report was released by World Health Organisation (WHO) on October 17 2019.
- (2) The TB incident rates in India have been decreased by 50,000 patients in 2018.
- (3) WHO has published a global TB report every year since 1997.
- (4) Most TB cases diagnosed in 2018 were in the WHO regions of South-East Asia.

Correct options are:

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

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has released its Global Tuberculosis Report 2019 on October 17 2019.
- WHO has published a global TB report every year since 1997 to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date assessment of the TB epidemic.

2019 report:

- The data are collected by 202 countries and territories that account for more than 99% of the world's population and estimated number of TB cases.
- SDG Target 3.3 includes ending the TB epidemic by 2030.
- Globally, an estimated 10.0 million (range, 9.0–11.1 million) people fell ill with TB in 2018.

- The burden of disease varies enormously among countries, from fewer than five to more than 500 new cases per 100 000 population per year, with the global average being around 130.
- There were an estimated 1.2million (range, 1.1–1.3 million) TB deaths among HIV-negative people in 2018 (a 27% reduction from 1.7 million in 2000), and an additional 251 000 deaths (range, 223 000–281 000) among HIV-positive people (a 60% reduction from 620 000 in 2000).
- TB affects people of both sexes in all age groups but the highest burden is in men (aged ≥15 years), who accounted for 57% of all TB cases in 2018. By comparison, women accounted for 32% of cases.
- Geographically, most TB cases in 2018 were in the WHO regions of South-East Asia (44%), Africa (24%) and the Western Pacific (18%), with smaller percentages in the Eastern Mediterranean (8%), the Americas (3%) and Europe (3%).
- Eight countries accounted for two thirds of the global total: India (27%), China (9%), Indonesia (8%), the Philippines (6%), Pakistan (6%), Nigeria (4%), Bangladesh (4%) and South Africa (3%). These and 22 other countries in WHO's list of 30 high TB burden countries accounted for 87% of the world's cases.
- It was reported that most WHO regions and many high TB burden countries are not on track to reach the 2020 milestones of the End TB Strategy.
- Globally, the average rate of decline in the TB incidence rate was 1.6% per year in the period 2000–2018, and 2.0% between 2017 and 2018.
- Globally, 7.0 million new cases of TB were notified in 2018; an increase from 6.4 million in 2017 and a large increase from the 5.7–5.8 million notified annually in the period 2009–2012.
- In India, notifications of new cases rose from 1.2 million to 2.0 million between 2013 and 2018 (+60%).
- Ten countries accounted for about 80% of the gap, with India (25%), Nigeria (12%), Indonesia (10%) and the Philippines (8%) accounting for more than half of the total.
- In 2019, the 119 low- and middle-income countries, which accounts for 97 per cent of reported TB cases, received a global funding of \$6.8 billion. In 2018, it was \$6.4 billion in 2018 and \$3.5 billion in 2006.

Links: https://www.who.int/tb/publications/global_report/tb19_Exec_Sum_15October2019.pdf?ua=1

G20 Health Ministers' Meeting

Question: Where did the G20 Health Ministers Meeting take place on October 19- 20 2019?

(a) Osaka (b) Jakarta (c) Okayama (d) Seoul

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The G20 Health Minister Meeting take place in Okayama, Japan on October 19-20 2019.
- Dr. Harsh Vardhan represented India in this meeting.
- The deliberations of the G 20 Health Ministers focused on four major global health issues, namely

I. Achievement of Universal Health Coverage

II. Response to population aging

III. Management of health risks and health security management including Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR) and its containment.

India's vision for the inclusive health:

- Intervening on Universal Health coverage (UHC), India highlighted programmes like Ayushman Bharat, FIT India Movement and Eat Right Campaign. Union Health minister confided that India is on the path to UHC and will contribute effectively in sustaining UHC at the global level.
- On “Response to Population Aging” Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare, during his intervention, shared India’s vision for its projected 20% elderly population by 2050.
- Efforts done so far under National Programme for Health Care of Elderly to provide accessible, affordable, and high-quality long-term, comprehensive health care services to an ageing population were conveyed to G20 countries.
- Deliberating on Health risk and health security, Union Health Minister made intervention on Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR), seen as a serious emerging threat to global public health.
- He conveyed G20 Health Ministers that in a short span of time India has made commendable progress by implementing a national action plan, establishing a national antimicrobial resistance surveillance system, and its decision to contribute to global AMR R&D efforts.
- The G20 Health Ministers meeting concluded by adopting the “Okayama Declaration of the G 20 Health Ministers”. The declaration, having 52 articles endorses the Commitment of G20 countries to address the major global health issues, as highlighted above and to pave the way towards an inclusive and sustainable world, as envisioned in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.
- This opportunity was also utilized to have bi-lateral meetings with Italy, Singapore, United Kingdom and United States of America.

G20 Health Minister Meeting:

- The first G20 Health Ministers’ Meeting was held in Berlin, Germany, in May 2017, followed by the second meeting in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in October 2018.
- Health ministers of the G20 member states have discussed various topics on global health. Under the Japanese presidency, the third G20 Health Ministers’ Meeting will be held this year in Okayama City, Okayama Prefecture.
- G20 countries participated in the event along with invited guest countries; Chile, Egypt, Netherlands, Senegal, Singapore, Spain, Thailand, Vietnam.

Links:

<https://g20-meeting2019.mhlw.go.jp/health/overview.html>

First graduate-level research-based AI University in world

Question: Which of the following country has announced recently to establish the first graduate level, research based university in the world?

(a) China (b) Japan (c) UAE (d) Germany

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- UAE has announced the establishment of the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence(MBZUAI), the first graduate-level, research-based AI university in the world.
- MBZUAI will enable graduate students, businesses and governments to advance the artificial intelligence field.
- The University is named after Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces.
- MBZUAI will introduce a new model of academia and research to the field of AI, providing students and faculty access to some of the world’s most advanced AI systems to unleash its potential for economic and societal development.

- MBZUAI will provide all admitted students with a full scholarship, plus benefits such as a monthly allowance, health insurance, and accommodation.
- The University will work with leading local and global companies to secure internships, and will also assist students in finding employment opportunities.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=UAE-announces-establishment-of-1st-graduate-level%2C-research-based-AI-university-in-world&id=373066>

Argentina Presidential Election

Question: Who has been recently elected as the President of Argentina in the recently held elections?

(a) Alberto Fernandez (b) Mauricio Marci (c) Cristina Kirchner (d) Loku Widodo

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Argentina's left-leaning candidate Alberto Fernandez won the presidential election in the recent held Presidential election.
- Fernández got 47.3% vote needed to win, beating the conservative incumbent Mauricio Macri.
- Fernandez, a 60-year-old law professor. His win also caps a remarkable political comeback for ex-president Cristina Kirchner, who will be the vice-president.
- The election has taken place amid an economic crisis leaving a third of Argentina's population in poverty.
- Fernandez vowed to end sharp divisions between his Peronist movement and supporters of the business-friendly incumbent.
- The return to power of protectionist Peronists comes amid a lengthy recession and a debt crunch, raising market fears of a possible default on a \$ 57 billion IMF loan.
- Fernández is expected to assume the presidency on 10 December 2019.

Links:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-50203727>

29th BASIC Ministerial Meet

Question: Where did the 29th BASIC Ministerial Meet take place on October 25-26 2019?

(a) New Delhi (b) Tokyo (c) Rio De Jenerio (d) Beijing

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The 29th BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India, China) Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change was held in Beijing, China, on 25th-26th October 2019. The meeting was chaired by Li Ganjie, Minister of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China.
- The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Prakash Javadekar represented India in the meeting. Roberto Castelo Branco, National Secretary for International Relations, Ministry of the Environment of Brazil, and Maesela Kekana, Chief Director of International Climate Change Relations and Negotiations of South Africa.

Following is the Joint Statement issued at the Conclusion of 29th BASIC Ministerial Meet on Climate Change:

- BASIC Ministers expressed their concern for the global challenge of climate change and its adverse effects, and confirmed their commitments to multilateralism in order to address the

issue and to foster climate resilience and promote greenhouse gas emissions reduction, low-carbon and sustainable development, with a view to collectively working towards preparedness of international community for the wellbeing of all.

- Ministers emphasized the faithful and comprehensive implementation of the Paris Agreement, in particular of its goals and principles, and underlined the importance of a full, effective and sustained implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), its Kyoto Protocol and its Paris Agreement, in accordance with the principles of equity, common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities (CBDR-RC), in the light of different national circumstances, as well as the nationally- determined nature of the Paris Agreement.
- The BASIC Ministers reaffirmed and emphasized the need for people's participation and climate friendly lifestyles for addressing the challenge of climate change acknowledging that Paris Agreement embodies and calls for sustainable lifestyles and consumption patterns.
- Ministers highlighted that developing countries, including BASIC countries, notwithstanding the multiple challenges including food security, poverty eradication, and insufficient and uneven progress of domestic development, have been implementing ambitious climate action based on their national circumstances in the context of sustainable development, and have achieved great progress with significant contribution to global efforts in combating climate change.
- In 2018, China has reduced carbon dioxide emissions per unit of GDP by 45.8% from the 2005 level, increased the share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to 14.3%. South Africa has recently implemented carbon tax, and announced massive renewable energy program in its latest electricity plan. India has already achieved 21% reduction in emission intensity of GDP in 2014 compared to 2005 levels, thereby achieving its pre-2020 voluntary target. In 2015, Brazil had already achieved a 58% emission reduction in the business as usual scenario set for its NAMAs, thereby overachieving its target of 36%- 39% reductions set for 2020.
- Ministers noted UN Climate Action Summit and its strong political signal of upholding multilateralism, implementing the Paris Agreement, and enhancing ambitions of action and support. BASIC countries actively engaged and contributed, and are ready to further strengthen international cooperation to explore solutions which are cost-effective and with lower risks, such as nature-based solutions, and technology innovation in industry transition.
- Ministers expressed their appreciation to the Polish Presidency's contribution to the conclusion of the bulk of the Paris Agreement Work Programme (PAWP). They appreciated Costa Rica for hosting Pre-COP25 to promote political dialogue on specific issues.
- Ministers underlined their commitment to taking ambitious actions to implement their NDCs. They stressed that action and support are integral in terms of ambition, and the ambition of support by developed countries should match the ambition of action by developing countries
- Ministers expressed their deep concern on the insufficiency and inadequacy of the support provided by developed countries to date, and underlined that the climate finance should be new, additional, and with significant public funded component.
- Ministers hailed the 10th anniversary of the BASIC Group and agreed to further strengthen the solidarity and cooperation among the four countries.
- Ministers welcomed the offer of India to host the 30th BASIC Ministerial Meeting.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1589318>

International Migrant Stock 2019

Question: Which of the following organization has released the International Migrant Stock 2019 on September 17, 2019?

- (a) Amnesty International (b) Economic Intelligence Unit
(c) UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (d) World Bank

Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- The International Migrant Stock 2019, a dataset released by the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) on September 17 2019 provides the latest estimates of the number of international migrants by age, sex and origin for all countries and areas of the world.
- The estimates are based on official national statistics on the foreign-born or the foreign population obtained from population censuses, population registers or nationally representative surveys.

Major highlights of the report:

- The number of international migrants globally reached an estimated 272 million in 2019, an increase of 51 million since 2010.
- Currently, international migrants comprise 3.5 per cent of the global population, compared to 2.8 per cent in the year 2000.
- These data are critical for understanding the important role of migrants and migration in the development of both countries of origin and destination.
- In 2019, regionally, Europe hosts the largest number of international migrants (82 million), followed by Northern America (59 million) and Northern Africa and Western Asia (49 million).
- Around half of all international migrants reside in just 10 countries, with US having the largest number of international migrants (51 million) followed by Germany and Saudi Arabia (13 million each), Russian Federation (12 million), the United Kingdom (10 million), the United Arab Emirates (9 million), France, Canada and Australia (around 8 million each) and Italy (6 million).
- Concerning their place of birth, one-third of all international migrants originate from only ten countries, with India as the lead country of origin, accounting for about 18 million persons living abroad.
- Forced displacements across international borders continue to rise. Between 2010 and 2017, the global number of refugees and asylum seekers increased by about 13 million, accounting for close to a quarter of the increase in the number of all international migrants.
- Northern Africa and Western Asia hosted around 46 per cent of the global number of refugees and asylum seekers, followed by sub-Saharan Africa (21%).
- Turning to the gender composition, the share of women and girls in the global number of international migrants fell slightly, from 49 per cent in 2000 to 48 per cent in 2019.
- In terms of age, one out of every seven international migrants is below the age of 20 years.

India in the report:

- The number of Indians living abroad has risen from 66 lakh in 1990 to 175 lakh in 2019.
- There has been a consistent decline in the share of international migrants in India. International migrants make up just about 0.4% of India's population, a decline from 0.9% in 1990 and almost all from neighbouring countries.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/international-migrant-count-slopes-downward-in-india-6011407/>

Three animal species in India are on the verge of extinction

Question: At which of the following place, 14th meeting of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 14) was organised?

(a) Gurugram (b) Greater Noida (c) New Delhi (d) Shimla

Answer: (b)
Related facts:

- 14th meeting of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 14) held in Greater Noida during 2nd to 13th September, 2019.
- In this conference, researchers warned that Indian cheetah, pink-headed Duck and Great Indian Bustard can become extinct in India due to desertification.
- Many other animals and birds have come under the category of critically endangered species.
- The Zoological Survey of India has a database for more than 5.6 million samples, which were collected from all over India and from neighboring countries before independence.
- Looking at their distribution in geo-special platforms shows the impact of deforestation and desertification.
- According to researchers, desertification affects not only animals but also the entire biodiversity.
- More than 30 percent of its land is degraded through deforestation, excessive cultivation, soil erosion and wetland decay.

Cause of desertification

- There may be various causes of desertification geographical as well as manmade.
- Under the manmade causes; desertification may occur due to extensive use of insecticides, pesticides and other industrial chemicals.
- The chemical mentioned above degrades the top soil and makes it fragile and unfit for cultivation ultimately and permanently.
- Desertification also occurs due to Conversion to agricultural land, industries and indiscriminate development.
- To save our land from desertification everything has to be regulated so that it could be minimised and we can reverse this process back.
- The researcher also said that desertification not only impacts animals but the entire biodiversity, which includes microscopic animals to human beings.
- Desertification also affects the entire food chain in the biosphere of the related area.

Links:

<https://www.unccd.int/conventionconference-parties-cop/cop14-2-13-september-new-delhi-india>

84th Edition of Thessaloniki International Fair TIF 2019

Question: Thessaloniki is a port city of which of the following country?

(a) Italy (b) Greece (c) Spain (d) Germany

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 7-15 September 2019; 84th Edition of Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF) for the year 2019 held in Greece.
- India participated in the Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF) as the Indian delegation was led by Minister of State (MoS) for Commerce and Industry, Hardeep Singh Puri.
- The Fair was also attended by officials of Indian Government from the Ministries of Commerce and Industry, Electronics & Information Technology, and Tourism etc.
- Officers of Embassy of India in Greece, International Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) & other prominent Indian entrepreneurs also made their presence at the TIF.

- In the fair New India Pavilion was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic, Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis and the Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Hardeep Singh Puri.
- Mr. Puri on this occasion stated that India welcomed investments in different sectors.
- He said that India is playing a leading role now in the global developments of technology, innovation and science.
- Following are the Exhibitors from India in TIF-2019:
- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)
- National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC)
- Agricultural Produce Export Development Authority (APEDA)
- Companies from the Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector and tiles and ceramics industry and handicrafts from Rajasthan, Moradabad and Jammu & Kashmir also participated in this trade fair.
- It should be known that the rank of India in the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2019 is 52 amongst 129 countries in the listed in the Index.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193085>

South Africa temporarily closed its diplomatic missions in Nigeria

Question: Recently South Africa has shut its embassy in which of the following country?

(a) Nigeria (b) Guatemala (c) Latvia (d) Estonia

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- As per report dated 6th September, 2019, South Africa has temporarily closed its diplomatic missions in Nigeria following reprisal attacks by Nigerians triggered by xenophobic violence in South Africa.
- South Africa's Foreign Minister, Naledi Pandor, called the violence an embarrassment for her country.
- She ordered the closure of the country's high commission in the Nigerian capital, Abuja, and its mission in Lagos, following threats made to the diplomatic staff.
- Mobs looted and destroyed shops, many of them foreign-owned, in South Africa's commercial hub, Johannesburg. The unrest subsided after arrest of more than 420 rioters.
- South African-owned businesses were targeted by protesters in several Nigerian cities, and the looters said the attacks were reprisals for the killing of Nigerians in South Africa.

Links:

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/09/south-africa-shuts-embassy-nigeria-reprisal-attacks-190905064418164.html>

QS World University ranking

Question: Which Indian Institute has been top ranked amongst the other Indian Institutes in the QS World University ranking?

(a) IIT Madras (b) IIT Guwahati (c) IIT Bombay (d) IIT Delhi

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Indian Institute of Bombay (IIT-B) leads India's representation in the latest QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2020 with a 111-120 band ranking, up from 141-150 band 2019.
- At 151-160 band and 171-180 band, IIT Delhi and IIT Madras formed the three best ranked Indian institutes in the latest rankings.

- The rankings covers world's top 500 universities and explores how employable a university is.

Parameter used in this ranking:

- To explore the university-employability relationship, QS uses a unique five-metric method that captures each institution's regard among 44,000 employers worldwide, alma mater data from 29,000 highly successful individuals, institutional industry partnerships, employer presence on campus, and location-adjusted graduate employment rate.
- While employer reputation carries the highest weightage of 30 per cent, other metrics include alumni outcomes with a weightage of 25 per cent, partnerships with employers per faculty (25 per cent), employer/student connections (10 per cent), and graduate employment rate (10 per cent).
- It is in the last metric of graduate employment rate that IIT Madras was ranked at number three globally, though its overall ranking came to be 171-180 band.
- Fifteen Indian universities participated in the 2020 edition of the QS Graduate Employability Rankings, and ten made it into the published range, one more than last year.
- In other metrics, the University of Delhi has achieved the next best score of being ranked 20th globally for alumni outcomes, while The University of Mumbai has been ranked 41st globally in the same metric.
- The Birla Institute of Science and Technology (BITS) has debuted in the QS Graduate Employability Rankings 2020 in the 201-250 band and achieved the best rank for the Employer-Student Connection indicator among all the featured Indian universities of 72nd rank globally.

Top 10 institutes on the QS World Graduate Employability Rankings 2020:

- 1) Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), United States
- 2) Stanford University, United States
- 3) University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), United States
- 4) The University of Sydney, Australia
- 5) Harvard University, United States
- 6) Tsinghua University, China
- 7) The University of Melbourne, Australia
- 8) University of Cambridge, United Kingdom
- 9) The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
- 10) University of Oxford, United Kingdom

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/jobs/iit-bombay-top-indian-institute-in-qs-graduate-employability-rankings-2020-119091901135_1.html

Indonesia chooses new capital

Question: At which of the following island, Indonesia recently announced to shift its new capital?

(a) Komodo (b) Sulawesi (c) Sumatra (d) Borneo

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On August 26, 2019, the President of Indonesia, Joko Widodo announced that the government has decided to pick up new capital for the country in Borneo.
- The new capital now will be established at sparsely populated East Kalimantan province on forested Borneo Island.
- With more than 10 million people, the current capital of Jakarta became overcrowded.

- The old capital city also sits on watery land and parts of the city are sinking by as much as 25cm a year and almost half now sits below sea level.
- The proposed location, not named yet, is close to the regional cities Balikpapan and Samarinda.
- This area is located in the geographical center of the South East Asian Islands and there is a 'minimum' risk of natural disaster.
- The new location is less populated with only 3.5 million people and has 180,000 hectares (444,780-acre) of land.
- This area is surrounded by Kutai National Park, known for orangutans and other primates and mammals.
- Orangutans:
- Orangutans are great apes mostly found in Indonesia and Malaysia.
- Orangutans, as opposed to monkeys, and are closely related to humans, having 97% of DNA in common.
- Orangutans are extremely patient and intelligent mammals. They are very observant and inquisitive.

Links:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/indonesia-picks-borneo-island-for-new-capital/articleshow/70848708.cms?from=mdr>

18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CITES

Question: Where did the 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CITES (CoP18) take place?

(a) Geneva (b) London (c) Paris (d) Washington

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The 18th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES CoP18), held in Geneva, Palexpo, from 17 to 28 August 2019.
- 183 CITES member nations participated in the latest meeting held in Geneva.
- A key highlight was the 57 proposals that governments have submitted for changing the levels of protection afforded to over 500 species of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and plants.
- The 71st and 72nd meetings of the Standing Committee held at the same venue on 16 August and 28 August respectively.
- Objective: The meet aimed at the discussion over the future of the ivory trade, illegal killings of rhinos and the rhino horn trade, management of African elephant populations, and the booming exotic pet business.

About CITES:

- It is a multilateral treaty to protect endangered plants and animals.
- It came into force in 1975 with the goal of ensuring that international trade does not threaten the survival of wild plants and animals.
- It is administered through the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- Its secretariat is located in Geneva, Switzerland.

CITES Appendix:

- It classifies plants and animals according to three categories, or appendices, based on the level of threats faced by them.

- Appendix I: It includes species threatened with extinction. CITES completely bans commercial trade in specimens of these species. But is permitted only in exceptional circumstances.
- Appendix II: It provides a lower level of protection.
- Appendix III: It contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade.

Links:

<https://www.genevaenvironmentnetwork.org/10jul2019.html>

Economics

The Union Cabinet has decided to hike Minimum Support Price, MSP, for Rabi crops for marketing season 2020-21

Question: After MSP by government what will be the price of wheat for season 2020-21?

(a) 1,825 (b) 1,925 (c) 2,025 (d) 2100

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar stated that MSP of wheat has been increased by 85 rupees per quintal to 1,925 rupees per quintal.
- While MSP of Gram has been increased by 255 rupees, barley 85 rupees, mustard oil 225 rupees and sunflower 270 rupees per quintal.
- To encourage cultivation of pulses, the support price of masoor has been increased by Rs 325 to Rs 4,800 per quintal for this year from Rs 4,475 per quintal last year.
- Barley MSP has also been increased by Rs 85 to Rs 1,525 per quintal for the current year from Rs 1,440 per quintal last year.
- Among oilseeds, rapeseed/mustard MSP has been increased by Rs 225 to Rs 4,425 per quintal for 2019-20 rabi crop from Rs 4,200 per quintal during 2018-19.
- The minimum support price of safflower has been hiked by Rs 270 to Rs 5,215 per quintal for the current year from Rs 4,945 per quintal last year.

Links:

<http://www.ddinews.gov.in/national/government-hikes-minimum-support-price-rabi-crops-2020-21>

21st Meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)

Question: Who chaired the 21st Meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) on 7th November, 2019?

(a) Nirmala Sitharaman (b) Shashikant Das (c) Amitabh Kant (d) Piyush Goyal

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The 21st Meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) was held here on 7th November, 2019 under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, Nirmala Sitharaman.
- The meeting was attended by Shaktikanta Das, Governor, Reserve Bank of India (RBI); Atanu Chakraborty, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs; Rajiv Kumar, Finance

Secretary and Secretary, Department of Financial Services and other senior officers of the Government of India and Financial Sector Regulators.

- The Council reviewed the current global and domestic macro-economic situation and financial stability and vulnerabilities issues, including inter-alia, those concerning NBFCs and Credit Rating Agencies.
- The Council reviewed the action taken by members on the decision taken by FSDC earlier and held discussions on the proposals submitted for further strengthening of the resolution framework and framework for cyber security of the financial sector.
- The Council also took note of the activities undertaken by the FSDC Sub-Committee chaired by the Governor, RBI and the initiatives taken by the various regulators in the financial sector.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1590865>

ECGC Introduces scheme of loan availability for Exporters

Question: What is the name of the scheme launched recently by Ministry of Commerce to enhance loan availability for Exporters?

(a) Nirvana (b) Nirvik (c) Nirmaan (d) Nishpadan

Answer: (b)

Related fact:

- Ministry of Commerce & Industry through Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) has introduced a new Export Credit Insurance Scheme (ECIS) called NIRVIK Scheme to enhance loan availability and ease the lending process.
- The details of the scheme were shared by the Commerce & Industry and Railways Minister, Piyush Goyal in a press conference in New Delhi on September 16 2019. It was announced by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to boost exports on 14th September 2019 in New Delhi.

The Scheme:

- The gems, and diamond (GJD) sector borrowers with limit of more than Rs. 80 crore will have a higher premium rate as compared to non-GJD sector borrowers of this category due to the higher loss ratio. The ECGC cover provides additional comfort to banks as the credit rating of the borrower is enhanced to AA rated account.
- Enhanced cover will ensure that Foreign and Rupee export credit interest rates will be below 4% and 8% respectively for exporters.
- Under ECIS, insurance cover percentage has also been enhanced to 90% from the present average of 60% for both Principal and Interest.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/ecgc-introduces-nirvik-to-enhance-loan-availability-for-exporters-119091700145_1.html

Govt cuts corporate tax rate to 22%, relief on buyback tax

Question: The finance ministry lowered the corporate tax rate to how much percentage for firms that do not avail tax incentive?

(a) 22% (b) 23% (c) 24% (d) 26%

Answer : (a)

Related facts:

- On September 20th 2019, all domestic companies to be allowed to pay corporation tax at the rate of 22% (effective rate 25.17% including cess and surcharge).
- This would be subject to the condition that these companies do not avail of any tax incentives or exemptions. Moreover, no Minimum Alternative Tax (MAT) would be imposed on these companies.
- Any new domestic manufacturing company, incorporated on or after October 1, 2019, will be allowed to pay corporation tax at the rate of 15% (effective rate 17.01%).
- No MAT will be imposed on these companies either. This will be subject to the condition that the company does not avail of any tax incentives or exemptions and commences production by 31 March, 2023.
- Companies that are availing tax holidays at present can join the new regime once their tax holiday period ends, announced the minister.
- To provide relief to companies that continue to avail of exemptions and incentives, the rate of MAT has been reduced from 18.5% to 15%.
- Enhanced surcharge introduced by the Finance Act 2019 shall not apply to capital gains arising on sale of equity share in a company/unit of equity-oriented fund or unit of business trust liable for securities transaction tax, the FM announced.
- Enhanced surcharge shall not apply to capital gains on sale of any securities, including derivatives, in the hands of Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs).
- Relief to listed companies which have already made a public announcement of buyback before 5th July 2019.
- No tax on buyback of shares in case of such companies.
- The finance minister also announced an expansion in the scope of CSR activities.
- The companies can now spend 2% of the money on state or union government incubators, PSUs, state universities, IITs, public-funded entities.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseFramePage.aspx?PRID=1585641>

Scientific

Defense/Science Short Notes

Avian Botulism

Question: Recently in which of the following lakes of India, case of Avian Botulism has been witnessed?

(a) Chilka (b) Sambhar (c) Tso Moriri (d) Vemnad

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Avian botulism killed over 18,000 birds in and around Rajasthan's Sambhar lake, the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI), Bareilly, said in a report released on November 21, 2019.
- The avian botulism that caused the mass die-off at Sambhar was caused by the climate, according to the IVRI report.

- Water levels were fluctuating throughout the year. Locals reported that due to a good monsoon this year, the water level reached the lake bed after a gap of 20 years.
- The good monsoon provided a favorable environment for the bacteria to spread. The bacteria needs anaerobic (absence of oxygen) conditions and does not grow in acidic conditions.
- The temperature of the water was about 25 degree Celsius. Its pH ranged between 7.4-9.84.
- It also requires a nutrient-rich substrate, like areas with large amounts of decaying plant or animal materials. The monsoon brought with it a large population of crustaceans (like shrimps, crabs, and prawns), invertebrates (snails) and plankton (like algae).
- These living organisms are capable of hosting the bacteria for a long period of time. According to reports, the bacterium is also found in the gills and digestive tracts of healthy fish.
- It reproduces through spores and these spores remain dormant for years. They are resistant to temperature changes and drying. Under favourable conditions, the spores are activated.
- The IVRI report noted that after the monsoon, when the water levels receded, there might have been an increase in salinity levels which could have led to the death of these living organisms. At this point in time, the spores could have been activated.
- According to another theory, 'a bird-to-bird cycle' could also have led to the tragedy. In such an event, maggots feeding on dead birds can concentrate the toxin. Birds feeding on dead birds can get affected.
- This was observed in Sambhar too as researchers found only insectivorous and omnivorous birds affected and not herbivores.
- The IVRI report discounted external factors like water pollution and eutrophication (a body of water becoming overly enriched with minerals and nutrients, in turn inducing excessive growth of algae) as no farming was being carried out in the vicinity and the runoff from the same was not possible.

Sambhar Lake

- The Sambhar Salt Lake is India's largest inland saltwater body located near Jaipur in Rajasthan.
- The lake is surrounded on all sides by the Aravali hills.
- It is the source of most of Rajasthan's salt production.
- Sambhar has been designated as a Ramsar Site (recognized wetland of international importance) because the wetland is a key wintering area for tens of thousands of flamingos and other birds that migrate from northern Asia.

Avian botulism:

- Botulinum is a natural toxin produced by a bacterium known as *Clostridium botulin*. It produces the toxin when it starts reproducing.
- *The bacterium* is commonly found in the soil, river, and sea water. There are around eight types — A, B, C₁, C₂, D, E, F, and G — of Botulinum toxin.
- They are distinguishable when diagnosed. But all types of toxins attack the neurons, which leads to muscle paralysis.
- Botulinum affects both humans and animals but the type of the toxin varies — botulinum C in birds and A, B and E in humans. The toxin has been recognised as a major cause of mortality in wild birds since the 1900s.

Links:

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/climate-change/avian-botulism-killed-18-000-birds-at-sambhar-govt-report-67866>

ISRO to launch Cartosat-3, 13 commercial nano satellites

Question: Consider the following statement:

(1) PSLV-C47 will be launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

(2) Cartosat-3 is an advanced, high-resolution earth observation and imaging satellite.

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:

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is going to launch Cartosat-3 along with 13 commercial nano satellites aboard PSLV-C47 into the Sun Synchronous orbit on November 25, 2019.
- The satellite will be launched from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- Cartosat-3 is an advanced, high-resolution earth observation and imaging satellite.
- The 13 commercial nano satellites are from the United States.

Cartosat-3:

- The Cartosat-3 satellite is a third-generation agile advanced satellite, which has a high-resolution imaging capability. After the launch, the satellite will be placed in an orbit, which will be 509 km from the Earth.

Objective

- ISRO is launching the earth observation satellite, Cartosat-3, to boost the country's border security by stationing "more eyes in the sky".

Way Forward:

- After Cartosat-3, ISRO will be launching two more surveillance satellites— Risat-2BR1 and Risat-2BR2 aboard PSLVC48 and C49 rocket from Sriharikota in December 2019.

- The launches of operational satellites come almost six months after the previous launches, due to the launch of Chandrayaan-2 mission.
- The previous two operational satellites to be launched by ISRO include surveillance satellite Risat-2B, which was launched on May 22 and electronic intelligence satellite EMISAT, which was launched on April 1.

Links:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/science/isro-to-launch-cartosat-3-13-commercial-nano-satellites/articleshow/72127009.cms?from=mdr>

Exercise TIGER TRIUMPH

Question: Where was the exercise Tiger Triumph organized between India and US recently?

(a) Bikaner (b) Jaisalmer (c) Pokharan (d) Visakhapatnam

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- In consonance with the growing partnership between India and the US, the maiden India US joint Tri services Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise named 'TIGER TRIUMPH' is being organised on the Eastern seaboard from 13 to 21 November 2019.
- Indian Naval ships Jalashwa, Airavat and Sandhayak, Indian Army troops from 19 Madras and 7 Guards, and Indian Air Force MI-17 helicopters and Rapid Action Medical Team (RAMT) are participating in the exercise.
- The US is being represented by US Navy Ship Germantown with troops from US Third Marine Division. The Exercise is aimed to developing interoperability for conducting HADR operations.

Events of the exercise:

- The Harbour Phase was done at Visakhapatnam from 13 to 16 November 2019. The Opening Ceremony along with a Joint Flag Parade and Media Interaction was held onboard INS Jalashwa.
- Personnel from both navies also participated in Training Visits, Subject Matter Expert Exchanges, Sports Events and social interactions. On completion of the Harbour Phase, the ships, with troops embarked, would sail for the Sea Phase and undertake Maritime, Amphibious and HADR operations. On reaching the HADR area at Kakinada, the landing of Relief Forces would be undertaken to the Exercise scenario.
- At the HADR Exercise Area, a Joint Command and Control Centre, would be established jointly by the Indian Army and US Marines.
- The IAF RAMT and the US Navy Medical Team would establish a Medical Facility Camp for providing medical aid to victims, who would have been previously evacuated by road and air to the Camp.
- The Exercise would culminate with a Closing Ceremony onboard US Naval Ship Germantown on 21 November 2019.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591367>

Exercise Indra- 2019

Question: Exercise Indra- 2019 is scheduled between which of the following countries?

(a) India and Russia (b) India And Japan (c) India And France (d) India and USA

Answer: (a)

Related fact:

- Exercise Indra 2019, a joint tri-service exercise between India and Russia, has been scheduled to be held in December 2019.
- In the exercise, the mechanized contingents, fighter and transport aircraft and ships of the armed forces of India and Russia will be participating.
- For preparation of this exercise, a joint planning conference was held from 7-10 November in two phases.
- Phase one of the conference was conducted on 7-8 November at the respective service locations of Babina, Pune, and Goa.
- The conference was held to discuss service-specific modalities.
- The second phase was held in New Delhi from 9-10 November.
- It was aimed to tune the joint service for the smooth execution of the drill.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-russia-tri-service-exercise-next-month/article29932982.ece>

Exercise Samudra Shakti

Question: Exercise Samudra Shakti took place with the Navy of which of the following country recently at the Bay of Bengal?

(a) Thailand (b) Indonesia (c) Jamaica (d) Sri Lanka

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Exercise Samudra Shakti took place from 4-7 November, 2019 between Indian navy and the navy of Indonesia.
- INS Kamorta, an Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette jointly exercised with Indonesian Warship KRI Usman Harun, a multi-role Corvette in the Bay of Bengal as part of the Indian Navy – Indonesian Navy Bilateral Exercise ‘Samudra Shakti’
- The joint exercises include manoeuvres, Surface Warfare exercises, Air Defence exercises, Weapon firing drills, Helicopter Operations and Boarding Operations.
- KRI Usman Harun arrived at Visakhapatnam on 4 November 2019 to participate in the second edition Ex ‘Samudra Shakti’.
- The Harbour Phase which was conducted on 04 and 05 November included professional interactions in the form of Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEE), cross deck visits, simulator drills, planning conferences, sports fixtures and social interactions.
- Sidharto Reza Suryodipuro, Indonesian Ambassador to India witnessed some of the activities of the Harbour Phase at Visakhapatnam.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1590856>

New dielectric capacitor

Question: The researchers have recently developed a new dielectric capacitor that stores Energy like a battery. It has been developed by researchers in the country-

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

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The researchers have developed a new dielectric capacitor, a device that stores energy (like battery).
- The study about this capacitor carried over by some researchers including those from Queen Mary institute of London in United Kingdom (UK).
- The study was published in journal Nature Communications.

Base and Inspiration for the experiment:

- The researchers found that by pressing and folding a polymer film capacitor, they were able to store 30 times more energy than best-performing commercially available dielectric capacitor.
- The researchers took the inspiration for this new energy storage device from a French pastry called croissant which is made by folding multiple layers of dough.
- The study noted that dielectric capacitors in general have ultrahigh power density which makes them suitable for energy accumulation.
- In this way these capacitors are useful for technologies that require accumulating energy over a period of time and then releasing it very quickly like motor drives and even space vehicle power systems.
- Until now, such capacitors had limitation of storing low amounts of energy but this new finding promise a significant impact on the field of pulse power applications.
- Now this could produce a step-change in field of dielectric capacitors, which was so far limited by their low energy storage density.
- As this is the highest energy density ever reported in a polymer film capacitor, so the advances in technology may pave a way for low-cost, efficient, and environmentally-friendly electric energy storage systems for wind as well as solar sources.
- It should be known that storing of energy from renewable energy sources is very expensive, but with this technique, large amounts of renewable energy can be stored.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/researchers-develop-new-croissant-inspired-energy-storage-system-119101900295_1.html

MOSAiC Arctic Observatory

Question: MOSAiC is the multidisciplinary drifting observatory, which will move to a long expedition for the Study of the climate of which region?

(a) Arctic (b) Equatorial (c) Antarctica (d) Mediterranean

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- In November 2019; MOSAiC, the multidisciplinary drifting observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate will start its expedition.
- It is a one-year-long expedition into the Central Arctic, planned to take place from 2019 to 2020.
- The largest ever Arctic expedition in history will be the first to conduct a study of this scale at the North Pole for an entire year.
- MOSAiC observatory is unique in terms of the logistical challenges involved, the total number of participants, and the number of participating countries.
- Mr. Vishnu Nandan will be the only Indian among 300 scientists in this drifting observatory.
- 32-year-old polar researcher Mr. Nandan is a native of Kerala's capital Thiruvananthapuram.
- He will be aboard the German research vessel Polar stern, anchored on a large sheet of sea ice in the Central Arctic, drifting along with it during the pitch-black Polar winter.
- MOSAiC will help the researchers better understand the impact of climate change and aid in improved weather projections.

- The aim of the expedition will be to parameterise the atmospheric, geophysical, oceanographic and all other possible variables in the Arctic.
- The lead organisation in expedition MOSAiC is Alfred Wegener Institute in Germany.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/indias-vishnu-nandan-among-300-researchers-to-join-largest-ever-arctic-expedition/article29612285.ece>

India-France joint Army Exercise

Question: Exercise SHAKTI held 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 exercise focused on counter terrorism operations in semi-desert terrain.
- The exercise aims at enhancing understanding, cooperation and interoperability between the two armies.

Link:

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

Exercise Eastern Bridge V

Question: The Exercise Eastern Bridge V was a bilateral joint exercise of the air forces of India and which country?

(a) Thailand (b) Myanmar (c) Kuwait (d) Oman

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Indian Air Force is participated in a Bilateral Joint exercise with Royal Air Force Oman (RAFO), named EX EASTERN BRIDGE-V. This is fifth edition of the exercise.
- The exercise held from 17 to 26 October 2019, at Air Force Base Masirah. The last exercise, EX EASTERN BRIDGE-IV was held in 2017 at Jamnagar.
- For the first time, MiG-29 fighter aircraft participated in an International Exercise outside India.
- IAF contingent comprises of MiG-29 and C-17 aircraft. MiG-29 exercised with Royal Air Force Oman's Eurofighter Typhoon, F-16 and Hawk.
- The exercise seeks to enhance inter-operability during mutual operations between the two Air Forces and provides an opportunity to learn from each other's best practices.
- The participation of Indian Air Force in the exercise seeks to promote professional interaction, exchange of experience and operational knowledge.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588360>

Semi-Dirac Metals

Question: Recently researchers from which of the following institutions have discovered Semi-Dirac metals that have some special properties?

(a) IIT Kharagpur (b) IIT Bombay (c) IISc (d) TIFR

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- According a research study published in October 2019; Researchers from IIT Bombay have discovered special properties in a class of materials called semi-Dirac metals.
- Prof Bhaskaran Muralidharan and Dr Alestin Mawrie associated to the IIT have researched these specific category of two-dimensional nanomaterials
- Their theoretical studies show that it is possible to engineer semi-Dirac materials to make optical filters and efficient thermoelectric nanodevices.
- This study is published in the journal Physical Review B.
- These semi- Dirac materials are titanium dioxide and Vanadium oxide ($\text{TiO}_2/\text{V}_2\text{O}_3$) nanostructures.
- The researchers have proved that such materials would be transparent to light of a given frequency and polarisation when it is incident along a particular direction.
- The material would be opaque to the same light when it falls on it from a different direction.

Dirac metals:

- The term Dirac matter refers to a class of condensed matter systems which can be effectively described by the Dirac equation.
- The quality of conduction in normal metals like gold and silver depends on the way energy depends on the momentum of electrons.
- Dirac metals differ from normal metals in that the energy depends linearly on the momentum. This difference is responsible for their unique properties.
- Example: Graphene, topological insulators, Dirac semimetals, Weyl semimetals and liquid Helium-3.

Semi-Dirac Metals:

- Semi-Dirac metals behave like Dirac metals in one direction and like normal metals in the perpendicular directions (since their microscopic structure is different along the two directions).
- Within any material, charge carriers, such as electrons, acquire an effective mass which is different from their bare mass depending on the nature of the material.
- The effective mass and the number of states available for the electron to occupy when it is excited by an electric field, for example, determine the conductivity and other such properties.
- This is also true of a semi-Dirac metal. In particular, the effective mass becomes zero for conduction along a special direction.
- Oxides of Titanium and Vanadium ($\text{TiO}_2/\text{V}_2\text{O}_3$) are the best examples of semi-Dirac metals
- Nano size particles of TiO_2 and V_2O_3 have the property to align into the form of Dirac metals.

Application:

- The researchers show theoretically that semi-Dirac materials can display such thermoelectric properties.
- There are many known applications for transparent conducting films – the common example being touch screens used in mobiles.
- The study of thermoelectric dwells on the heat-to electricity conversion efficiency, for which there has been recent and tremendous interest due to the advent of nanomaterials and quantum materials.
- Thermoelectricity is a clean energy technology that uses waste heat to produce electricity typically in low power applications.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/new-class-of-quantum-materials-for-clean-energy-technology/article29807363.ece>

Formation of individual viruses observed for the first time

Question: Virus is a small infectious agent that replicates only in the-

(a) Water (b) Air (c) Nitrogen (d) Living cells of an organism

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- For the first time researchers of USA have observed the direct images of the formation of individual viruses.
- The research provided a detailed view of mechanism with which the particles self – assembled to form a parasite. The study was performed on single stranded RNA virus.
- Single-stranded RNA viruses are the most abundant type of virus on the planet that is responsible for various diseases like the West Nile fever, gastroenteritis, hand, foot, and mouth disease, polio, and the common cold.
- This is an advance discovery that may help humankind to find new treatment approaches for viral diseases.
- It should be known that a virus is a small infectious agent that replicates only inside the living cells of an organism.
- The study, published in the journal PNAS, looked at the formation of single-stranded RNA viruses.
- To unravel this mystery, the researchers used a viewing technique known as interferometric scattering microscopy, in which the light scattered by an object created a dark spot in a larger field of light.
- The technique, the study noted, does not show the virus' structure, but reveals its size and how that changed with time.
- According to the present study the virus was about 30 nanometers in diameter (thousands of times smaller than the width of a single human hair), and had one piece of RNA with about 180 identical proteins.
- The researchers explained that the proteins arranged themselves into hexagons and pentagons to form a soccer-ball-like enveloping structure around the RNA, called a capsid.
- The researchers mentioned that until now, scientists had not been able to observe how proteins formed the capsid structure in real time since the parasites and their components were very small, and their interactions were very weak.
- When the researchers, attached viral RNA strands to a medium, and flowed proteins over the surface, they could see dark spots appear and grow steadily until they were the size of full-grown viruses.
- As the researchers recorded the intensities of the growing spots, they could determine how many proteins were attaching to each RNA strand over time.

Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/science/researchers-see-individual-virus-formation-for-the-first-time/article29602935.ece>

Nomadic Elephant XIV

Question: The exercise Nomadic Elephant takes place between India and which country?

(a) Oman (b) Mongolia (c) Nigeria (d) Sri Lanka

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The fourteenth edition of joint military training exercise between Indian Army and Mongolian Army named EX NOMADIC ELEPHANT 2019.
- It was commenced on 05 October 2019 and concluded at Foreign Training Node (FTN), Bakloh on 18 October 2019.
- The primary focus of the exercise was to train and equip the contingents to undertake joint counter insurgency and counter terrorist operations in mountainous terrain under United Nations mandate.
- The contingents honed their tactical and technical skills in a wide spectrum of counter insurgency operations including joint training on weapons and equipment, cross training exercises and field training exercises.
- Both sides jointly planned and executed a series of well-developed tactical operations based on scenarios that are likely to be encountered in mountainous terrain.
- The exercise provided an ideal platform for both contingents to share their operational experience and expertise while also being instrumental in broadening the interoperability and cooperation between the armies of India and Mongolia.
- The joint exercise fosters the spirit of friendship and enhances the strategic military relationship between India and Mongolia to higher levels.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588499>

Elastocaloric Effect

Question: Elastocaloric effect, which was recently in news, is related to?

(a) Cooling (b) Heating (c) Food calories (d) None of the above

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Recently researchers have shown that elastocaloric effect ultimately leads to cooling. This is an important research published in the Journal Science.
- The elastocaloric effect, if harnessed, may be able to do away with the need of fluid refrigerants used in fridges and air-conditioners.
- Nowadays everybody knows that the fluids like Chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) are susceptible to leakages, and can contribute to global warming.
- Caloric effects refer to the entropy changes when applied external fields, such as stress, electric or magnetic fields, change.
- It should be known that there is a strong demand in the world for efficient and environmentally friendly refrigeration technologies. Therefore the materials with giant caloric effects, including elastocaloric, have been widely investigated.
- Elastocaloric effect can be perceived in rubber bands, when rubber bands are twisted and untwisted, it produces a cooling effect.
- Elastocaloric effect is defined as the isothermal change of entropy or the adiabatic change in temperature of a material subjected to a uniaxial strain.

- Basically, elastocaloric materials are solids capable of stress-induced reversible phase transformations during which latent heat is released or absorbed.

Link:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/this-word-means-elastocaloric-effect-6065022/>

Discovery plastic-eating bacteria

Question: At which place researchers of India have discovered plastic-eating bacteria?

(a) Greater Noida (b) Kolkata (c) Pune (d) Kanpur

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Recently Researchers in India have discovered plastic-eating bacteria from the wetlands of Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.
- Team of Researchers during the study of samples at Shiv Nadar University has discovered two strains of this plastic-eating bacterium.
- These bacterial species are *Exiguobacterium sibiricum* strain DR11 and *Exiguobacterium undae* strain DR14.
- It is believed that this eco-friendly alternative might be used as a clean-up method for plastic waste worldwide.
- This discovery came as a boon for India in the background of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement to eliminate single-use plastic by 2022.
- The bacteria have the potential to decompose polystyrene, a key component in Single-Use Plastic items such as disposable cups, cutlery, toys, packaging materials etc.
- Polystyrene, a type of plastic, is quite resistant to degrade due to its high molecular weight and long-chain polymer structure.
- The bacterial species are isolated from the unexplored wetlands adjoining the university.
- The research team found the newly-discovered bacteria used plastic as a carbon source and created biofilms. This alters the physical properties of polystyrene, and initiates a process of natural degradation with the release of enzymes to break the polymer chains – a prospective solution to the plastic waste piling up.
- The research has been published in the scientific journal RSC (Royal Society of Chemistry) Advances.

Plastic Hazard in India:

- The Central Pollution Control Board conducted a study in 60 major cities of India in 2018.
- It observed that approximately 4000 tonnes of plastic waste is generated from these cities a day.

Links: <http://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/bengaluru/2019/oct/11/researchers-find-plastic-eating-bacteria-bbmp-wont-use-it-2045792.html>

Discovery of a new Antibiotic Phazolicin

Question: Recently an international team of scientists have discovered a new antibiotic phazolicin in the forests of?

(a) Myanmar (b) Mexico (c) Madagascar (d) South Africa

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- In October 2019; an international team of scientists have discovered a new antibiotic in the forests in Mexico.

- This new antibiotic named as phazolicin produced by a soil bacterium found at a tropical forest in Mexico.
- These new findings may help develop new ways to tackle bacterial infections in both plants and humans.
- The study, published in the journal Nature Communications.
- It was noted that the soil bacterium could act as a plant probiotic, providing friendly support to plants against infectious microbes, and contribute to their health.
- The researchers, including those from Rutgers University in the US, said that the new antibiotic phazolicin prevented harmful bacteria from getting into the root systems of bean plants.
- Researchers are expecting that the bacterium can be used as a 'plant probiotic' because phazolicin will prevent other, potentially harmful bacteria from growing in the root system of agriculturally important plants.
- It should be noted that the current global trends of bacteria becoming resistant to antibiotics posed a crisis situation both in medicine and agriculture.
- The researchers said that phazolicin was produced by an unidentified species belonging to a class of microbes called Rhizobium, present in the roots of plants.
- The study noted that the microbe was found in a tropical forest in Los Tuxtlas, Mexico, in the soil and roots of wild beans called Phaseolus vulgaris.
- The researchers said that the phazolicin-producing microbe formed nodules on bean plant roots, and provided plants with nitrogen, making them grow more robustly than others. The microbes also defended plants from harmful bacteria sensitive to phazolicin.
- The researchers said that the ability of the bacteria could eventually be exploited in beans, peas, chickpeas, lentils, peanuts, soybeans, and other legumes.
- Using computer simulations, the researchers found the atomic structure of the antibiotic, and found that it targeted the bacteria's ribosome, the protein manufacturing component in cells.

Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/variety/researchers-discover-new-antibiotic-in-mexican-forest/article29618223.ece>

Oldest Protocluster Galaxy Discovered

Question: Recently Astronomers have discovered an earliest ever observed galaxy cluster of forming galaxies located at the distance of-

(a) 11 billion light-years (b) 12 billion light-years (c) 13 billion light-years (d) 8 million light-years

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Astronomers have discovered an earliest ever observed galaxy cluster of forming galaxies (cluster of protogalaxies).
- Astronomers say that this elementary galaxy cluster is located at the distance of 13 billion light years from us meaning it is observed as it looked 13 billion years ago.
- This discovery has been made by an international team of astronomers, led by the National Astronomical Observatory of Japan and including researchers from Imperial College London. The team was led by Yuichi Harikane.
- A galaxy protocluster is a rare and special system with an extremely high density and this one is a collection of 12 galaxies.
- The researchers used the wide viewing field of the Subaru telescope in Hawaii to map a large area of the sky in their search.
- The Subaru telescope had previously spotted a giant gaseous nebula called Himiko in the region.
- This time closer inspection of this same region, revealed Himiko is a massive galaxy, accompanied by 11 other complete galaxies.

- This discovery suggests that large cosmic structures were present in the very early stages of the universe.
- It should be known that scientists believe that universe was born 13.8 billion years ago. The study of the protocluster, named z66OD, is published on 27th September, 2019, in The Astrophysical Journal.

Links:

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/192972/earliest-cluster-forming-galaxies-discovered-13/>

New species of spider named after Sachin Tendulkar

Question: New species of spider was named after which of the following cricketers?

(a) Sachin Tendulkar (b) Virat Kohli (c) Rahul Dravid (d) Sourav Ganguly

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Dhruv Prajapati, an Ahmedabad Ecologist, has discovered two new species of spider.
- He named one the two species as Marengo Sachin Tendulkar after Sachin Tendulkar.
- The other one he found was named after Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara as Inomarengo Chavarapatera.
- He is a researcher in the Gujarat Ecological Education & Research (GEER) Foundation.
- As per the report, both the species belonged to Asian jumping spiders.
- Inomarengo Chavarapatera spider was found in Kerala while Marengo Sachin Tendulkar was found in Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Link:

<https://www.india.com/sports/new-species-of-spider-named-after-sachin-tendulkar-marengo-sachintendulkar-3838710/>

Defence of Andaman and Nicobar Islands exercise 2019 (DANX-19)

Question: DANX-19 exercise held at which place?

(a) Andaman and Nicobar (b) Odisha (c) Lakshadweep (d) Rajasthan

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) has conducted the second edition of Defence of Andaman & Nicobar Islands 2019 (DANX-19), a large scale joint services exercise from 14th to 18th October, 2019.
- Spanning over a period of five days, components of the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard carried out mobilization and field manoeuvres to validate defensive plans of Headquarters ANC towards pursuance of the Command's responsibility, namely ensuring territorial integrity of the A&N Islands.
- In addition to internal forces from ANC, accretional forces from Mainland comprising ships and aircraft, Special Forces from the newly formed Armed Forces Special Operations Division (AFSOD), also participated in this edition.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193871>

Discovery of a Catalyst that changes carbon dioxide to fuels

Question: From which of the following element researchers have made a new catalyst that turns carbon dioxide into the fuel gases?

(a) Ruthenium (b) Platinum (c) Copper (d) Palladium

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The Engineers at the Stanford University have developed a new catalyst that helps to turn carbon dioxide from cars into fuels like propane or natural gas.
- Catalysts induce chemical reactions without being used up in the reaction.
- In this new research scientists have combined ruthenium and iron oxide nano particles to form the new catalyst.
- The ruthenium nuggets sit in the core of the catalyst surrounded by an outer sheath of iron.
- This arrangement activates the hydrocarbon formation from Carbon-Dioxide.
- This method produces propane and other higher hydro carbons including natural gas.
- The earlier methods invented so far have only produced the simplest hydrocarbon methane from effluents of vehicles.
- Also, earlier methods involve two steps of processes, they first reduce carbon dioxide to carbon monoxide and then the second step involves combining carbon monoxide and hydrogen to form hydrocarbons.

Links:

<https://currentaffairs.gktoday.com/a-new-catalyst-to-convert-carbon-dioxide-into-natural-gas-102019319246.html>

Discovery 6 new lizard species

Question: Recently six new lizards' species of which family has been discovered by scientists in Western Ghats?

(a) Anguidae (b) Xenosauridae (c) Anniellidae (d) Dravidogecko

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- A group of scientists led by Bengaluru-based herpetologist R Chaitanya have discovered the six new lizard species of Dravidogecko family in the Western Ghats.
- The research paper describing the new species was published in the Zootaxa journal of New Zealand on 21st October, 2019.
- The six new species have been named as Dravidogecko septentrionalis, D janakiae (after botanist Janaki Ammal from Kerala), D tholpalli, D meghamalaiensis, D douglasadamsi (after British author and satirist Douglas Noel Adams) and D smithi (in honour of British herpetologist Malcolm Arthur Smith).
- Till recently, only one species (of Dravidogecko anamallensis described in 1875 by German-born British zoologist Albert Gunther) was recognised under this genus, which was perceived to be widespread across the Western Ghats
- The study indicates the importance of Western Ghats, the world heritage mountain range traversing the states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat, as a biodiversity hotspot.
- Dravidogecko is a small size lizard restricted to wet forests in mid to high elevations.
- The reptile is found in the mountain range from Wayanad (Kerala) in north up to Tirunelveli (Tamil Nadu) in south along the length of the southern Western Ghats.
- Dravidogecko anamallensis evolved around 58 million years ago when the Indian sub-continent was separated from the African land.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/6-new-lizard-species-found-in-western-ghats-by-scientists-119102200248_1.html

Discovery of New, Stable form of radioactive Plutonium

Question: Consider the following statements regarding the discovery of new, stable Plutonium:

(1) Researchers have discovered a stable form of plutonium, a radioactive chemical famously unstable for transport, storage and disposal.

(2) This new and accidental discovery could lead to new ways to tackle some of the challenges in handling the powerful compound.

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:

- On 20th October 2019, a team of scientists has discovered a new, stable form of plutonium.
- Plutonium is a radioactive chemical element with the symbol Pu and atomic number 94.
- The team of scientists led by Kristina Kvashnina at the Helmholtz Centre Dresden-Rossendorf.

Quality of New Plutonium:

- The famously unstable element is tricky to transport, store and dispose of, but the find could lead to new ways to tackle those problems.

Impact of Plutonium waste with their storage:

- The plutonium waste produced by nuclear power plants is securely stored deep underground; it can eventually leak out into the surrounding environment.
- This happens when waste interacts with materials in the ground including clay and mineral ores to form suspended liquid mixtures.
- The current discovery could provide new and crucial information that could help scientists predict the changing properties of harmful nuclear waste over millions of years.
- Current Action Plan:
- Plutonium research today is focussed on ensuring scientists learn as much as we can about creating, using, transporting, storing and disposing of plutonium as safely as possible.

Links:

<https://physicsworld.com/a/surprisingly-stable-plutonium-compound-could-affect-nuclear-waste-storage/>

Dustlik-2019

Question: Dustlik Exercise is being held between which two countries?

(a) India-Uzbekistan (b) India-Myanmar (c) India-Bangladesh (d) India- Sri Lanka

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Dustlik, 2019 is the first-ever India-Uzbekistan Joint Exercise began on 4th November, 2019. The ten-day exercise is being held at the Chirchiq Training Area near Tashkent.
- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Uzbekistan counterpart Major General Bakhodir Nizamovich Kurbanov presided over the Curtain Raiser of the military drill yesterday.

- The exercise will enable sharing of best practices and experiences between the Armed Forces of the two countries and would lead to greater operational effectiveness.
- The primary focus will be on counter terrorism.

Link:

<http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=373960>

Air Independent Propulsion system for Indian Naval Submarines

Question: Naval Materials Research Laboratory (NMRL) is an Indian defence laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) located in?

(a) Kerala (b) Karnataka (c) Maharashtra (d) Andhra Pradesh

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 30th October, 2019; Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh witnessed Operation of the land-based prototype engineered to the form-and-fit of a submarine.
- This was a part of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)'s programme to build a fuel cell-based Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system for Indian Naval Submarines.
- This operation was performed at the Naval Materials Research Laboratory in Ambarnath, Maharashtra.
- Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman DRDO Dr G. Satheesh Reddy were also present on the occasion.
- Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) has a force multiplier effect on lethality of a diesel electric submarine as it enhances the submerged endurance of the boat, several folds.
- Fuel cell-based AIP has merits in performance compared to other technologies.
- The DRDO Chairman assured that all efforts will be made to meet the performance standards and timelines of the programme.
- He also said that induction of DRDO AIP into operational Submarines could be achieved as per Indian Navy schedule.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=194100>

World's oldest known Natural pearl discovered

Question: The oldest known Natural Pearl is discovered recently in which of the following country?

(a) China (b) Japan (c) UAE (d) Australia

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The oldest known natural pearl in the world has been discovered by Abu Dhabi archaeologists working at a Neolithic site on Marawah Island which is just off the coast of Abu Dhabi.
- The pearl is dubbed as 'Abu Dhabi Pearl'. It was found in layers that have been radiocarbon dated to 5,800-5,600 BCE, during the Neolithic period.
- This discovery proves that pearls and oysters were being used in the UAE nearly 8,000 years ago, and represents the earliest known evidence for pearling yet discovered anywhere in the world.
- Prior to the Abu Dhabi Pearl discovery, the earliest known pearl in the UAE came from a Neolithic site in Umm Al Qaiwain.

- Ancient pearls have also been found at a Neolithic cemetery close to Jebel Buhais, in the Emirate of Sharjah.

Links:

<https://gulfnews.com/uae/worlds-oldest-known-natural-pearl-discovered-on-abu-dhabi-island-1.1571578188392>

Whole Genome Sequencing of over 1,000 Indians for Biomedical Applications

Question: Which of the following institution has conducted the whole genome sequencing of over 1,000 Indian for Biomedical Application recently?

(a) IIT Delhi (b) IISc Bengaluru (c) CSIR (d) JNU

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) has conducted Whole Genome Sequencing of 1,008 Indians from different populations across the country.
- Announcing details of the IndiGen Genome project, the Union Minister for Science & Technology, Health & Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan said that the whole genome data will be important for building the knowhow, baseline data and indigenous capacity in the emerging area of Precision Medicine.
- The outcomes of the IndiGen will have applications in a number of areas including predictive and preventive medicine with faster and efficient diagnosis of rare genetic diseases.

IndiGen:

- The IndiGen initiative was undertaken by CSIR in April 2019, which was implemented by the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), Delhi and CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad.
- This has enabled benchmarking the scalability of genome sequencing and computational analysis at population scale in a defined timeline.
- The ability to decode the genetic blueprint of humans through whole genome sequencing will be a major driver for biomedical science.
- On the occasion, Dr Harsh Vardhan unveiled the IndiGenome card and accompanying IndiGen mobile application that enables participants and clinicians to access clinically actionable information in their genomes.
- This ensures privacy and data security, which is vital for personal genomics to be implemented at scale.
- The outcomes of the IndiGen will be utilized towards understanding the genetic diversity on a population scale, make available genetic variant frequencies for clinical applications and enable genetic epidemiology of diseases.
- The whole genome data and knowhow for the analysis of largescale genomic data is expected to enable evidence and aid in the development of technologies for clinical and biomedical applications in India.

CSIR and Human Genomic Science:

- CSIR has led human genomic sciences in India and has made major contributions in understanding the “Indian Genome Variation”.
- Pioneering collaborations in genomics has been fostered by CSIR both nationally and internationally. Furthermore, CSIR contributed towards the first personal human genome in

India and in understanding ancestral population in India and early migrations that led to what we know today on distinct ethnic groups.

- CSIR also pioneered the application of genomics in clinical settings in the area of rare genetic diseases in India by means of DNA/Genome based diagnostics and interaction with large number of clinical collaborators.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1589221>

Genetic study of the evolution of Blackbuck

Question: As per the recent study done by IISc Bengaluru, blackbuck of which region is claimed to be the ancestors of blackbuck in India?

(a) Eurasian plateau (b) Saharo-Arabian region (c) Mongolian region (d) None of the above

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, has done a study of four genera of 'true antelopes': Gazella, Nanger, Eudorcas and Antelope revealing that the blackbuck's (Antelope cervicapra) ancestors came into India from the Saharo-Arabian region about two million years ago.
- Antelopes were part of the fauna coming through the northwest gateway into India.

Diverged in India

- The paper states that there is a lack of blackbuck fossils outside India which allows to speculate that they diverged from their ancestors only after reaching India, long after the intensification of aridification in the Indian subcontinent.
- Blackbucks are largely found in the scrubland regions of India except for the Terai region, northeast and the Western Ghats.

Reclassification need:

- Antelope, another true antelope was found not to be a sister of Gazella as believed previously.
- Research team used nuclear DNA with genetic material from both parents. They used 12 different nuclear markers for the study.
- Evolution of chinkara:
 - The another 'true antelope' of India, chinkara (Gazella bennetti) evolved much more recently about 7,00,000 years ago, probably after the establishment of the Thar desert.
 - They are also found in the hilly terrains of Iran. Being facultative drinkers, they were better adapted to the drier, semi-arid region.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/genetics-reveals-origin-and-evolution-of-blackbuck-chinkara/article29477449.ece?homepage=true>

First Indigenous Fuel Cell System launched on CSIR Foundation Day

Question: Who unveiled the first indigenous Fuel Cell System launched on CSIR foundation Day i.e. September 26 2019?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Ram Nath Kovind (c) Ramesh Pokhriyal (d) Pranab Mukherjee

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind 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)".
- It was inaugurated on the occasion of CSIR Foundation Day at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

Fuel System Cell:

- 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.
- The 5.0 kW fuel cell system generates power in a green manner using methanol / bio-methane, with heat and water as bi-products for further use; amounting to greater than 70% efficiency, which otherwise may not be possible by other energy sources.
- The Fuel Cells developed are based on High Temperature Proton Exchange Membrane (HTPEM) Technology. The development is most suitable for distributed stationary power applications like; for small offices, commercial units, data centers etc.; where highly reliable power is essential with simultaneous requirement for air-conditioning.
- This system will also meet the requirement of efficient, clean and reliable backup power generator for telecom towers, remote locations and strategic applications as well. This development would replace Diesel Generating (DG) sets and help reduce India's dependence on crude oil.
- The developed technology is world class and the development has placed India in the league of developed nations which are in possession of such a knowledgebase.
- CSIR has an impressive portfolio of global patents on these developments. In the field of clean energy, Fuel Cell distributed power generation systems are emerging as promising alternative to grid power.
- The Fuel Cells fit well in India's mission of replacing diesel with green and alternate fuels. The development of fuel cell technology is indigenous and carries immense national importance in terms of non-grid energy security.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1586289>

Svalbard

Question: Recently in news Svalbard Island, which is facing extreme consequences of climate change on the Earth is located in?

(a) Maldives (b) Sri Lanka (c) Norway (d) Indonesia

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- According to the recent findings Svalbard located in Norway is facing extreme consequences of climate change.
- Svalbard's main town Longyearbyen which is northern-most town on the planet is the fastest-warming town on the earth.
- It is the result of rising sea level of Arctic sea due to Global Warming
- Longyearbyen is the de facto capital of the Svalbard archipelago located between Norway and the North Pole.

- According to a report by the Norwegian Environment Agency released in February-2019, temperatures in the town have risen by 4 degrees Celsius since 1971.
- That is five times faster than the global average. During winters, the temperature has gone up by 7°C.
- Researchers have estimated that Longyearbyen and Svalbard's temperature will increase by 10°C by 2100, according to current trends.
- The recent heat wave in Europe is an example that can explain the condition of Svalbard.
- Experts are blaming it on the disruption of a system known as the jet stream.
- Since 1979, the Arctic sea ice extent has declined by nearly 12% per decade, with the most pronounced winter reduction in Svalbard and the Barents Sea area.

Links:

<https://in.reuters.com/article/climate-change-svalbard/on-the-front-lines-of-climate-change-in-the-worlds-northernmost-town-idINKCN1VO1A3>

World's Largest Amphibian

Question: Recently researchers from which of the following countries have discovered a new species of giant Chinese salamander, which is now considered to be the world's largest amphibian?

(a) China (b) New Zealand (c) France (d) England

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- In September 2019; researchers have discovered a new species of giant Chinese salamander, which is now considered to be the world's largest amphibian.
- Researchers from the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) and London's Natural History Museum took the initiative in this discovery.
- The study of this species is mentioned in the journal Ecology and Evolution and its scientific name is *Andrias sligoi*.
- In this journal it has been described that there are 3 distinct species of Chinese salamanders which are now considered as critically endangered species.
- Apart from *Andrias sligoi*, the other salamander species is named as *Andrias davidianus* while the third is yet to be named.
- Giant salamanders, which typically live in rocky, mountainous river systems, were once widespread across central, southern and eastern China.

Links:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/giant-salamander-chinese-world-largest-amphibian-china-zsl-a9108101.html>

Protodontopteryx ruthae -world's oldest bird species

Question: Recently in which of the following country world's oldest bird species, named as *Protodontopteryx ruthae*, has been discovered?

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

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- In September 2019; palaeobotanists from England discovered the world's oldest bird species' fossils in Waipara, New Zealand.
- It was a sea bird, and is named as *Protodontopteryx ruthae* and the details of its discovery were published in the journal Palaeontology.

- Team of scientists from the Canterbury Museum (England) undertook the project of studying the fossils of bird species' fossils in Waipara region of New Zealand.
- They confirmed that the bird lived 62 million years ago and it was a sea bird. The bird which was smallest in size of its family, maintained size of an average sea gull while its descendants had wingspans more than five metres.
- It was first found by paleontologist Leigh Love at the Waipara Greensand fossil site in 2018. They had bony tooth like projections on their beaks' edge and had evolved in the southern hemisphere.
- The Waipara Greensand site where the Protodontopteryx skeleton was found has yielded several important scientific discoveries in recent years, including ancient penguins and the world's oldest tropicbird fossil.

Links:

<http://www.sci-news.com/paleontology/protodontopteryx-ruthae-07603.html>

Air-to-Air missile Astra successfully flight-tested

Question: Recently Indian Air Force successfully flight-tested air-to-air missile Astra from which of the following fighter aircraft?

(a) Su-30 MKI (b) Rafael (c) Mig-21 (d) Mirage 2000

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 17th September, 2019, the Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully flight-tested air-to-air missile Astra from Su-30 MKI.
- This test was done as a part of user trials from the Bay of Bengal off the coast of Odisha.
- It is India's first air-to-air missile which is engaged accurately with the live aerial target demonstrating its capability.

Astra Missile:

- Astra is an indigenously developed sophisticated Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM).
- It is capable of engaging targets of different ranges and altitudes including long-range and short-range targets.
- It has a range of over 70 km and can fly towards its target at a speed of over 5,555 kilometers per hour.
- With highly advanced features like Electronic Counter- Counter Measures (ECCM), it has a 15-kilogramme high-explosive pre-fragmented warhead.
- Astra is India's first beyond-visual-range (BVR) air-to-air missile indigenously designed and developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- Modifications of the Sukhoi-30 MKI jets to accommodate Astra missiles were done by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).
- The missile test was tracked by different Radars, Sensors and Electro-Optical Tracking System (EOTS).

Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/indian-air-force-air-to-air-missile-astra-drdo-defence-ministry-1600084-2019-09-17>

Submarine Khanderi handed over to the Indian Navy

Question: Recently which submarine was handed over to the Indian Navy by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL)?

(a) INS Khanderi (b) INS Karanj (c) INS Kalvari (d) INS Vikram

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL) handed over the second Scorpene submarine Khanderi to the Indian Navy on 19th September, 2019.
- The third Scorpene Karanj at MDL was started on 31st January, 2018. It is currently undergoing the rigorous phase of sea trials.
- The fourth Scorpene Vela was recently launched in May and is being prepared for sea trials.
- The remaining two submarines — Vagir and Vagsheer — are in various stages of outfitting.
- The Scorpene class of submarines can undertake multifarious tasks typically undertaken by any modern submarine that include anti-surface as well as anti-submarine warfare.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/mdl-hands-over-scorpene-class-submarine-khanderi-to-navy/articleshow/71206804.cms?from=mdr>

Indo-Thai CORPAT

Question: Which of the following Indian Naval Ship participated in the 28th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT)?

(a) INS Kalvari (b) INS Trishul (c) INS Rana (d) INS Kesari

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- 28th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) between the Indian Navy (IN) and the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) was conducted from 05 – 15 September, 2019.
- Detailed discussions were held towards scheduling and conduct of the CORPAT along with joint exercises between ships or aircraft of both the navies.
- Indian Naval (IN) Ship Kesari and Thailand Ship (HTMS) Kraburi along with Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both the navies are participated in the CORPAT.
- Since 2003, Indian Naval ships and aircraft of Andaman and Nicobar Command has been participating in the biannual Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) with the Royal Thai Navy (RTN).
- The Objectives of the Indo-Thai CORPAT are to ensure effective implementation of United Nations Conventions on Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- These laws specify regulations on following matters:-
- Protection and conservation of natural resources
- Conservation of marine environment.
- Prevention and suppression of illegal, unregulated fishing activity.
- Drug trafficking piracy, exchange of information in prevention of smuggling, illegal immigration and conduct of Search and Rescue operations at sea.

Links:-

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193027>

Water found on an Exoplanet

Question: Astronomers recently discovered water in the atmosphere of K2-18b, a planet orbiting a red dwarf star K2-18b. This star is located in-

(a) Constellation Leo (b) Constellation Libra (c) Constellation Sagittarius (d) Constellation Aries

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Astronomers have for the first time discovered an Exoplanet with presence of water in its atmosphere.
- Details regarding the discovery of such planet were published in September 2019 in the scientific journal Nature Astronomy.
- Its atmosphere was studied by astronomers at the University College London (UCL) and ultimately the results are published in the journal.
- This planet is orbiting a red dwarf star K2-18 located about 110 light years from Earth in the constellation Leo.
- The new planet is just over twice in the size and eight times the mass of the Earth.
- It is a planet in the category known as a “super Earth” – and has a temperature cool enough to have liquid water, between zero and 40C.
- The lead scientist, Prof Giovanna Tinetti of University College London (UCL), described the discovery as mind blowing.
- The exoplanet also lies within the habitable zone of its star, which means it will have the right temperature for liquid water to exist on the surface of the planet and potentially support life.

Background of the Discovery of K2-18b:

- The planet was first discovered by NASA’s Kepler spacecraft in 2015.
- The K2-18b exoplanet completes one orbit around its star every 33 days.
- The super-Earth is much closer to its star than the Earth is to the sun. However, the red dwarf star is much cooler than the Sun.
- Researchers therefore based on the calculations speculated that the exoplanet could have a temperature, similar to that of the Earth.
- It is also emphasised on the point that the temperature range upon the planet, however, could include temperatures much colder and warmer than Earth.
- Conclusion is that though the actual conditions on the surface of the planet are not known, the red dwarf star it orbits is quite active.
- This means that the planet will be exposed to ultraviolet radiation.
- However, the study reveals that K2-18b receives about the same amount of radiation from its star as the Earth does from the sun.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/science/water-found-for-first-time-on-potentially-habitable-planet/article29397908.ece>

New species of snake discovered

Question: In which of the following state Sahyadri tiger reserve is located?

(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Maharashtra (c) Karnataka (d) Tamil Nadu

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- A new species of snake has been discovered in the Western Ghats in Maharashtra’s Sahyadri tiger reserve.

- This species usually falls in the category of cat snake or cat-eyed snakes and belongs to the genus Boiga.
- New Snake Species Named after Uddhav Thackeray's Younger Son, Tejas; Thackeray's cat snake, who contributed to this discovery.
- Tejas Thackeray first observed this species in 2015 and studied its behavior in detail.
- A research paper describing the new species and regarding this new discovery was published in the journal of the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS).

Habitat and description about the new snake:

- These snakes belonging to this genus are found all over India, but some species are found only in the Western Ghats.
- The new Snake is non-venomous and arboreal species (living in trees and active mostly during the night).
- It has tiger-like stripes on its body & a light yellow texture, dotted with black marks from its head to the mid-section & it turns pink colour towards the other half of its body.
- The species have unique feature of feeding eggs of Frog.

Link:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/pune/newly-discovered-cat-snake-species-named-after-uddhav-thackerays-son/articleshow/71342810.cms>

Methane-powered rocket engines

Question: ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre spread across two campuses in India, one is at Trivandrum (Kerala) and another is located at-

(a) Chennai (b) Bengaluru (c) Hyderabad (d) Kochi

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is developing methane-powered rocket engines.
- The space agency is developing two 'LOx methane' engines (liquid oxygen oxidiser and methane fuel) engines.
- ISRO in its endeavour to develop cutting-edge technologies that is on par with elsewhere in the world is developing these methane-powered rocket engines.
- Methane, which can be synthesised with water and carbon dioxide in space, is often described as the space fuel of the future.
- One of the two projects is trying to convert the existing cryogenic engine, which uses liquid hydrogen for fuel, into a LOx methane engine.
- The other is a smaller engine of 3 tonnes thrust, which will feature an electric motor.
- These are being developed at ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre at Trivandrum.
- It should be known that ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre spread across two campuses in India one is at Trivandrum (Kerala) and another is located in Bengaluru Karnataka.

Link:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/national/isro-is-developing-a-methane-powered-rocket-engine/article29483292.ece>

Discovery of second interstellar object

Question: Recently International Astronomical Union (IAU) has confirmed about the discovery of second interstellar object. This has been named as-

(a) Oumuamua (b) 2 I/Borisov (c) 101955 Bennu (d) 25143 Itokawa

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- 2 I/Borisov the second interstellar object has been discovered in the solar system.
- It was discovered by amateur astronomer Gennady Borisov from MARGO observatory, Crimea on August 30, 2019.
- The new name 2I/Borisov has been simplified; in 2I, I stand for interstellar, and 2 for being the second interstellar object ever discovered, after Oumuamua, which was detected in October 2017.
- Astronomers declared that comet 2I/Borisov which has a hyperbolic orbit will make its closest approach to the sun on 7 December 2019.
- The conclusions of the discovery have been supported by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) Solar System Dynamics (SSD) Group.

Interstellar object:

- Those celestial bodies which are not gravitationally bound to any star and wanders in the vast space between stars are known as interstellar object.
- Object like an asteroid, comet or possibly planet may behave as an interstellar object if they are not under the gravitational influence of any star or substar.

Links:

<https://www.space.com/interstellar-comet-borisov-officially-from-beyond-solar-system.html>

ICGS Varaha

Question: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh commissioned which among the following vessels on September 25, 2019 at the Chennai port?

(a) Varaha (b) Vamana (c) Vyapak (d) Varma

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The ICGS Varaha, the fourth in the series of seven 98-m Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) of the Indian Coast Guard (ICG), was commissioned on September 25, 2019 by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.
- The ship, which was commissioned at the Chennai port, would be based at New Mangalore under the administrative and operational control of Commander Coast Guard region (west).
- The ship will have on board 14 officers and 89 men.
- The ship has been designed and built indigenously by Larsen & Toubro (L&T) at its Katupalli ship building yard in North Chennai.

Features:

- It is fit with the latest navigation and communication equipment.
- It also has some of the most advanced sensors and machinery as well as a 33-millimetre (mm) gun.
- It will be fitted with 12.7 mm gun with fire control system.

- The ship's special features include the integrated Bridge System, Automated Power Management System and indigenously built Integrated Platform Management System and Halo Traversing System.
- It ship is also designed to carry one twin engine helicopter and four high speed boats.
- Singh stated that the ship will operate from the port of New Mangalore covering up to Kanyakumari.
- The ship will add to the ICG's strength in responding to the threats of maritime terrorism, smuggling and challenges of maritime enforcement.

Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/defence-minister-rajnath-singh-commissions-icgs-varaha/article29506552.ece>

Sports

Tennis

2019 Davis Cup

Question: Which country has won the 2019 Davis Cup?

(a) Spain (b) Canada (c) Sweden (d) Serbia

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 25 November 2019, world number one Rafael Nadal has clinched sixth Davis Cup title for Spain.
- He defeated Denis Shapovalov of Canada 6-3, 7-6 (9-7) in the match played at the Caja Magica Stadium in Madrid, Spain.
- Spain won their sixth title (their first since 2011), defeating Canada in the final 2–0.
- In 2019 among majors, Nadal has won the French Open and the US Open, made the Australian Open final, and also reached the Wimbledon semifinals.
- Rafael Nadal has won 19 Grand Slam singles titles, the second-most in history of a male player.
- He holds a record 35 ATP Tour Masters 1000 titles, 20 ATP Tour 500 titles and the 2008 Olympic gold medal in singles. Nadal won five Davis Cup titles with the Spain Davis Cup team.

About Davis Cup:

- Davis Cup is a premier international team event between national teams in men's tennis.
- It is described by the organizers as the "World Cup of Tennis", and the winners are referred to as the World Champion team
- The 2019 Davis Cup is the 108th edition of the Davis Cup.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=375066>

Cricket

Rohit Sharma has created a new record in test cricket

Question: Recently which Indian cricketer has created a new record in test cricket by breaking the Bradman's record of highest average in Test cricket on home soil?

(a) Rohit Sharma (b) Virat Kohli (c) Ravindra Jadeja (d) R Ashwin

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Rohit Sharma broke Australian cricketer Don Bradman's record of highest average in Test cricket on home soil during the Day 2 of India's third test against South Africa at JSCA International Stadium Complex, Ranchi on October 20, 2019.
- Rohit Sharma scored 212 runs during India's first innings in the third test.
- This is his first double hundred in Test cricket. With the score, Sharma recorded an average of 99.84 on home soil, which is higher than Don Bradman's average of 98.22 on home soil in test cricket.
- Rohit Sharma along with Ajinkya Rahane set up an over 200-run partnership to steer India to a total of 497 runs in India's first innings in the third test against South Africa.
- Ajinkya Rahane with his 115 runs scored his 11th test century during the match.
- Rohit Sharma hit 28 fours and 6 sixes to bring up his huge total. Soon after he crossed the milestone, Sharma was caught by Lungi Ngidi off Kagiso Rabada's ball.

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/sports/cricket/south-africa-in-india/rohit-sharma-breaks-don-bradmans-71-year-old-record/articleshow/71674412.cms>

Rohit Sharma becomes 3rd Indian batsman to reach top 10 in all formats

Question: Which Indian batsman has become the 3rd Indian to reach top 10 in all formats?

(a) Rohit Sharma (b) Shikhar Dhawan (c) MS Dhoni (d) Ravindra Jadeja

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Rohit Sharma has become the third Indian batsman to reach the top 10 in all three formats after a memorable series against South Africa in which he donned the new role of Test opener.
- He remains the third-best Indian batsman in terms of Test rankings after Kohli and Cheteshwar Pujara.
- Rohit emulated Captain Virat Kohli and retired opener Gautam Gambhir as his knock of 212 in the third Test in Ranchi helped him advance 12 places to 10th position in the ICC Test Player Rankings.
- Rohit's player of the series effort of 529 runs helped him make huge strides from 44th place before the series. The 'Hitman' has held a career-high ranking of second in ODIs in February 2018 and seventh in T20 in November 2018.
- Ajinkya Rahane's knock of 116 in Ranchi has helped him equal his career-high rank of fifth place, achieved earlier in November 2016.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Rohit-Sharma-becomes-3rd-Indian-batsman-to-reach-top-10-in-all-formats&id=373414>

Football

Qatar unveils 2022 FIFA World Cup logo

Question: 2022 World Cup will be held in which of the following place?

(a) Qatar (b) UAE (c) France (d) England

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 4th September, 2019, Qatar unveiled the logo for the 2022 World Cup which will be hosted by the Gulf emirate, displaying it in public spaces in Doha and cities around the world. The event will be held in the month of November and December.
- The design is a stylized Arabic white unisex shawl with maroon patterning, which is displayed in a figure-of-eight symbolizing infinity while creating a heart shape above the words FIFA WORLD CUP Qatar 2022.
- It was projected onto the vast facade of the country's National Archives in the capital's southern Msheireb district to fanfare that included a procession of soldiers on horseback watched by a crowd of hundreds.

Link:

<https://www.thehindu.com/sport/football/qatar-unveils-2022-fifa-world-cup-logo-round-the-globe/article29328840.ece>

Badminton

Indian pair bagged Egypt International mixed doubles title

Question: Who won the mixed doubles title in badminton at the Egypt International 2019 in Cairo?

(a) Kuhoo Garg-Dhruv Rawat (b) Utkarsh Arora-Karishma Wadkar

(c) Ahmed Salah-Hadia Hosny (d) Koceila Mammeri-Linda Mazri

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 20 October 2019, Kuhoo Garg and Dhruv Rawat won the mixed doubles title in badminton at the Egypt International 2019 in Cairo.
- The unseeded Garg and Rawat held victory over the third seeds Utkarsh Arora and Karishma Wadkar by 21-16, 22-20 in an all-Indian final.
- Garg and Rawat showed excellent understanding as they had accounted for the second seeds Ahmed Salah and Hadia Hosny 21-16 21-15 of Egypt in the second round.
- However, the pair followed it up with a comeback 16-21 21-16 21-9 win over fourth seeds Cecelia Mammary and Linda Mari of Algeria in the semi-finals.

Links:

<http://newsonair.nic.in/News?title=Kuhoo-Garg-Dhruv-Rawat-win-Egypt-International-mixed-doubles-title&id=373248>

Boxing

Asian Junior Championship

Question: Which of the following country finished the Asian Junior Championship of Boxing held recently with the best medal tally?

(a) China (b) Iran (c) UAE (d) India

Answer: (d)

Related Fact :

- In the Asian Junior Championship ending recently, India emerged as the country with best medal tally. It was held in Fujairah, UAE.
- Indian boxers at the championship clinched a bumper tally of 21 medals, including six golds and nine silvers, to end with the best medal haul among 26 competing countries.
- The Indian men's squad fetched two golds, three silvers and three bronze, while the women claimed four gold, six silver and three bronze medals.
- The team ended top in terms of medals won but finished second behind Uzbekistan (20) which had a better gold count of eight.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Indian-boxers-clinch-bumper-tally-of-21-medals%2c-including-six-golds-at-Asian-Junior-C%e2%80%99ships&id=373164>

Billiards, Snooker & Squash

Pankaj Advani clinches record 22nd world title

Question: Which of the following player has won IBSF Billiards Championship?

(a) Pankaj Advani (b) Nay Thway (c) Sourav Kothari (d) None of the above

Answer:(a)

Related facts:

- One of India's most consistent sportspersons, Pankaj Advani, has clinched a record 22nd world titles by winning a fourth straight final in the 150-up format at the IBSF World Billiards Championship in Myanmar.
- Advani yesterday defeated Nay Thway of Myanmar.
- The 34-year-old has brought home a world trophy every year ever since returning from a professional stint in the UK in 2014.
- In the short format of billiards, this is Advani's fifth title in the last six years.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has congratulated Pankaj Advani for winning a fourth straight final at World Billiards Championship.

Links:

<https://sportstar.thehindu.com/pool/pankaj-advani-world-billiards-championship-final-22nd-title/article29418331.ece>

Athletics

Sandeep Chaudhary and Sumit set new world records at World Para Athletics Championships

Question: Recently which player won Gold Medal in the World Para Athletics Championships?

(a) Sandeep Chaudhary (b) Raju Rakshitha (c) Sumit (d) Jadhav Suyash Narayan

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Sandeep Chaudhary and Sumit Antil set new world records, and won gold and silver respectively in ongoing World Para Athletics Championships.
- Sandeep hurled the javelin to a distance of 66.18m to better his own world record of 65.80m in F44 category, while Sumit sent the spear to a distance of 62.88m to clinch the silver and better his own F64 world record of 60.45m.
- The F44 category athletes have leg amputations or reduced function in one or both legs and they compete without prosthesis.
- The F64 category athletes have limb deficiency and leg length difference, and they compete with prosthesis.

Links:

<http://www.ddinews.gov.in/sports/sandeep-chaudhary-and-sumit-set-javelin-records-win-gold-and-silver-respectively-world-para>

First athlete to run a marathon in less than two hours

Question: Who became the first athlete to complete the marathon in less than two hours making a world record recently?

(a) Usain Bolt (b) Geoffrey Mutai (c) Eliud Kipchoge (d) Rosa Mota

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Eliud Kipchoge, a Kenyan runner became the first athlete to run a marathon in less than two hours.
- The Olympic champion world record holder finished the marathon of 26 miles in 1 hour, 59 minutes and 40 seconds at the INEOS 1:59 Challenge in Vienna, Austria on October 12 2019.
- He ran at a consistent average pace of 2:50 minutes per kilometer (4:33.5 minutes per mile), Kipchoge was 11 seconds ahead of schedule halfway through his run.
- Kipchoge was supported by 36 pacemakers and so it will, however be not counted as a world record.
- Kipchoge won Olympic gold in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. He has also won 10 of his 11 marathons, holding the official world record of 2:01:39.

Links:

<https://www.bbc.com/sport/athletics/50025543>

Vinesh Phogat becomes first Indian wrestler to qualify for 2020 Tokyo Olympics

Question: Who became first Indian wrestler to qualify for 2020 Tokyo Olympics?

(a) Vinesh Phogat (b) Babita Phogat (c) Deepa malik (d) None of the above

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On September 18, 2019, India's star wrestler Vinesh Phogat qualified for the 2020 Olympics after beating fancied American Sarah Hildebrandt in the World Championships in Nur Sultan, Kazakhstan.
- She scored an impressive 8-2 win over the world championship silver medalist to secure her place at the Tokyo Games.
- Vinesh won wrestle in the bronze-medal bout against Maria Prevolaraki of Germany.
- Earlier, she had stormed to a 5-0 win over Ukraine's Yuliya Khalvadzhy in the first round of repechage in the 53kg category to remain in contention for an Olympic quota and a bronze medal.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Vinesh-Phogat-becomes-first-Indian-wrestler-to-qualify-for-2020-Tokyo-Olympics&id=371739>

Sports ministry de-recognises PCI for Sports Code violation

Question: Which Committee has been de-recognised recently for violation of Sports Code?

(a) National Olympic Committee (b) Paralympic Committee of India
(c) Empowered Steering Committee (d) Physical Education Committee

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Union Sports Ministry recently derecognised the Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) for violating the National Sports Code by sacking the PCI President Rao Inderjit Singh.
- The Committee was penalised for misgovernance.
- The PCI had also been suspended in 2015 over governance issues and re-recognised in 2016.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/sports-ministry-de-recognises-pci-for-sports-code-violation-119091000467_1.html

Sports Miscellaneous

Vivo Pro Kabaddi League, 2019

Question: Who won the Vivo Pro Kabaddi League, 2019 title concluded on October 19th, 2019?

(a) U Mumba (b) Patna Pirates (c) Puneri Paltan (d) Bengal Warriors

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The seventh season of 2019 Vivo Pro Kabaddi League was organised between 20 July 2019 and 19 October 2019 in eleven different cities of India.
- A total of 12 teams participated in the Kabaddi league.

- The league was administrated by Mashal Sports Pvt. Ltd.
- Bengal Warriors lifted its first maiden title by defeating Dabang Delhi by 39-34 at EKA Arena Stadium in Ahmedabad.
- In the final standings, Dabang Delhi stood first with 85 points while Bengal Warriors were second with 83 points.
- The winning team was awarded Rs 3 crore and the runner up team received Rs 1.8 crore.
- Pawan Sehrawat of Bengaluru Bulls has been conferred the Best Raider while Fazel Atrachali of U Mumba got the Best Defender.

Team Bengal Warriors:

- Bengal Warriors is a Kolkata based franchise owned by Future Group promoted by Kishore Biyani.
- Captain- Maninder Singh
- Coach-BC Ramesh

Links:

<https://www.prokabaddi.com/teams/bengal-warriors-profile-4>

Short Notes

Personalities

Citizen revoked of Telangana MLA

Question: Recently home ministry has revoked the citizenship of MLA Ramesh Chennamaneni on the ground of misrepresentation of facts about his citizenship. To which state he belongs?

(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Telangana (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Kerala

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 20 November 2019, the Home Ministry has revoked the citizenship of Telangana MLA Ramesh Chennamaneni on *the ground of misrepresentation of facts at the time of applying for citizenship in 2008*.
- Ramesh, who had been living in Germany since 1993, applied for Indian citizenship on March 31, 2008 and was granted the same on February 4, 2009.
- When the MLA applied for Indian Citizenship, he was holding Germany's citizenship and never stayed in India for more than 12 months as required for a foreign national in *the Foreigners Act*.

Citizenship Act of 1955:

- *Sections 5(1)(f) and 10(2) of the act deal with grant of citizenship and the authority of the government to cancel the same.*
- According to *Section 5(1)(f)*, "the Central Government may, on an application made in this behalf, register as a citizen of India any person if a person of full age and capacity who, or either of his parents, was earlier citizen of independent India, and *has been residing in India for one year immediately before making an application for registration.*"
- *Section 10(2) says: "Subject to the provisions of this section, the Central Government may, by order, deprive any such citizen of Indian citizenship, if it is satisfied that the registration or*

certificate of naturalisation was obtained by means of fraud, false representation or the concealment of any material fact.”

- *Protection against arbitrary action:* Section 10(3) of the Act says, “The Central Government shall not deprive a person of citizenship under this section unless it is satisfied that it is not conducive to the public good that person should continue to be a citizen of India.”

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/why-the-govt-has-stripped-a-telangana-mla-chennamaneni-ramesh-of-his-indian-citizenship-6130947/>

Colathur Gopalan

Question: Colathur Gopalan, who died recently, was?

(a) Tamil Musician (b) Nutrition Scientist (c) Space scientist (d) Film director

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 3rd October, 2019; popular nutrition scientist Colathur Gopalan passed away in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. He was 101.
- He was former Director General of Indian Council of Medical Research (1974-1979). He was born in the year 1918, at Salem, Tamil Nadu.
- Gopalan earned doctorate from University of London in 1949 and headed the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, from 1961 to 1974.
- He was conferred Padmashri in 1970 & Padma Bhushan in 2003.
- Some of the prestigious awards he received are- WHO's Health for All medal in 1988; the International Union of Nutrition Sciences (IUNS) award for path breaking work on nutritional problems in developing countries in 1989. This union also recognised him as a Living legend in nutrition science in 2013. Federation of Asian Nutrition Societies (FANS) conferred him the Living Legend Award in August 2019.

Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/news/doyen-of-nutrition-research-dr-colathur-gopalan-passes-away/article29582479.ece>

Debayan Saha

Question: Recently; Debayan Saha an IIT Kharagpur graduate, was in news due to his invention of device for the control of?

(a) Pollution from Vehicle exhaust (b) Mosquito (c) High Blood pressure (d) Air Pollution

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Debayan Saha an IIT Kharagpur graduate has invented a device which can neutralise the pollution from exhaust of vehicles.
- Debayan Saha, who is a mechanical engineering graduate from IIT Kharagpur claims that his device (named PM 2.5) when fitted (near the silencer pipe) with one car can neutralise the pollution emitted from 10 cars in its vicinity.
- The technology used in the device PM 2.5 is a combination of electric energy and wave energy to influence the pollutants like PM 2.5.
- When due to action of electrical and wave energy pollutant of grade 2.5 act like a magnet they start attracting other particulate pollutants from the ambient atmosphere to get attached to it.
- As they grow bigger in size they become heavy and fall off safely on the ground like soil.

- According to Mr. Saha by the thorough research into the problem they found main culprit is not PM- 2.5 but its tiny size because of which it can easily enter into our lungs and bloodstream.
- Heading forward Saha is in talks with various organisations, to commercialise the product.

Links:

https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/news/story/iit-kharagpur-s-debayan-saha-develops-device-for-vehicles-to-curb-air-pollution-1610190-2019-10-17?utm_source=it_sticky_footer

Christine Lagarde

Question: In October 2019 European leaders confirmed the appointment of Christine Lagarde as the next president of?

(a) WTO (b) IMF (c) FATF (d) ECB

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 18th October, 2019; European leaders confirmed the appointment of Christine Lagarde as the next president of the European Central Bank.
- It should be noted that on 17th September, 2019, the European Parliament voted via secret ballot to recommend her to the position, with 394 in favor, 206 opposed, and 49 abstentions.
- Lagarde, who was the former managing director of the International Monetary Fund, will take office on 1st November, 2019 after the incumbent Mario Draghi steps down on 31st October, 2019.
- Lagarde will be the first woman to become the ECB chief.

Links:

<https://markets.businessinsider.com/news/interestrates/european-council-confirms-christine-lagarde-as-next-ecb-chief-1028611074>

Actress Geetanjali

Question: Actress Geetanjali who was passed away recently, originally belonged to which of the following cinema?

(a) Tamil (b) Telugu (c) Marathi (d) Hindi

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On October 31, 2019, Popular Telugu veteran actress Geetanjali passed away in Hyderabad.
- She died due to the cardiac arrest. She was 74.
- In a south Indian film Sitarama Kalyanam she got the fame due to her role as Goddess Sita Sitarama Kalyanam.
- She also acted in nearly 500 hundred films, ranging in Tamil, Malayalam and Hindi languages, for a long period
- Some of her other memorable films are Doctor Chakravarti, Letha Manasulu and Sambarala Rambabu

Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/movies/regional-cinema/story/telugu-actress-geetanjali-ramakrishna-dies-at-72-in-hyderabad-1614384-2019-10-31>

Climate activist Greta Thunberg refused to accept an environmental award

Question: Teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg, who recently refused to accept an Environmental Award, belongs to which of the following countries?

(a) Denmark (b) Finland (c) Norway (d) Sweden

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- As per report dated 30th October, 2019; Swedish teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg refused to accept the Nordic Council Environment Prize.
- Thunberg was honoured at a Stockholm ceremony by the Nordic Council, which is a regional body for inter-parliamentary cooperation.
- In an Instagram post from the United States, she emphasized that the climate movement needed people in power to start to listen to science and not awards.
- Two fellow activists spoke on Thunberg's behalf at the award ceremony.
- She gave clear message to world leader that the climate movement needed people in power to listen to science and not any more prizes.
- It should be known that the Nordic countries are generally referred to Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, including their associated territories Greenland, the Faroe Islands and the Åland Islands.

The Nordic Council Environment Prize:

- The Nordic Council Environment Prize is awarded each year to a Nordic company, organization or individual.
- This award is given to recognize exemplary efforts to integrate respect for the environment or for some other form of extraordinary initiative on behalf of the environment.
- The nominees and winner are chosen by a 13-person committee consisting of two representatives each from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Iceland, as well as one each from the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland.
- The inaugural prize was awarded in 1995. Since 2005, the committee has chosen a theme each year for the nominations and award.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Greta-Thunberg-refuses-to-accept-environmental-award&id=373690>

Ilham Tohti

Question: Ilham Tohti who is a Uyghur economist serving a life sentence in China, on separatism-related charges, has recently won which of the following award?

(a) Nobel Prize (in Economics) (b) Sakharov Prize for Human Rights

(c) Tang Prize (d) The International Booker Prize

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The European Union (EU) Parliament awarded the 'Sakharov Prize for Human Rights' to Uyghur intellectual Ilham Tohti (49).
- Tohti has been jailed and sentenced to life imprisonment in China for separatism.
- The award was announced by European Parliament head David Sassoli, who also urged China to immediately release Ilham Tohti as well as called for the respect of minority rights in China.

Sakharov Prize:

- It was constituted in memory of Soviet physicist and dissident Andrei Sakharov and is awarded by the European Union (EU) Parliament annually for free speech.
- The prize was established in December 1988 by the European Parliament.

Ilham Tohti:

- Ilham Tohti born October 25, 1969 is a Uyghur economist serving a life sentence in China, on separatism-related charges.
- He was a former Professor of economics at a Beijing university. In 2014, he was sentenced to life in prison following a show trial.
- He has worked for more than 20 years on the situation of Uighur minority and on fostering inter-ethnic dialogue and understanding in China.
- In September 2019 he also won another of Europe's top human rights awards called Vaclav Havel prize.
- He was also nominated by US lawmakers for Nobel Peace Prize, amid growing scrutiny of China's treatment of Uighurs.

Some other past Winners of Sakharov Prize:

- Cuban dissident Guillermo Farinas (2010).
- Pakistani schoolgirl and girl education campaigner Malala Yousafzai (2013)
- Nadia Murad Basee and Lamiya Aji Bashar who escaped Islamic State (2016).

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/jailed-uyghur-intellectual-wins-sakharov-prize/article29789471.ece>

Vice Chairman of World Steel

Question: Who Indian businessman has been appointed as the Vice Chairman of World steel recently?

(a) Sajjan Jindal (b) Rahul Bajaj (c) Laxmi Mittal (d) Rattan Tata

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- World Steel Association (World Steel), global body of steel has elected Jindal Steel Works (JSW) Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) Sajjan Jindal as its vice chairman on October 16 2019.
- He is appointed to this post for one year i.e. 2019-20 session.
- The association has also appointed ArcelorMittal Chief Laxmi Niwas Mittal and Tata Steel CEO and MD T V Narendran as members.
- The board has elected Yu Yong, Co Chairman of HBIS Group as its Chairman. The board also elected a 14-member Executive Committee.
- Worldsteel Association is one of the largest industry representations in the world representing approximately 85 per cent of the world's steel production which includes over 160 steel producers, national and regional steel industry associations and steel research institutes.
- It is a not for profit organization headquartered at Brussels, Belgium.

Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/companies/jindal-is-vice-chairman-of-worldsteel/article29712123.ece#>

First female player to complete 20 yrs in international cricket

Question: Which player became the first female cricketer to complete a time period of 20 years in active International Cricket?

(a) Mithali Raj (b) Sana Meer (c) Charlotte Edwards (d) Ellyse Perry

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- India women's cricket captain Mithali Raj has become the first female player to complete a time of over 20 years in international cricket.
- She achieved the feat leading India to an eight-wicket win over South Africa Women in the first ODI at Vadodara on October 9 2019.
- So far, only three male cricketer namely Sachin Tendulkar (22 years and 91 days), Sanath Jayasuriya (21 years and 184 days) and Javed Miandad (20 years and 272 days) have had longer careers (in terms of number of years played) in international cricket.
- Mithali, 36 year old made her ODI debut against Ireland on June 26, 1999. She completed 20 years and 105 days in the 50-over format.
- The right-handed batswoman has played 204 ODIs till now, the most by a female.
- Mithali retired from T20 cricket last month and had played 10 Tests and 89 T20 Internationals for India.

Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/sports/cricket/story/mithali-raj-20-years-international-cricket-1st-woman-sachin-tendulkar-javed-miandad-1607625-2019-10-09>

47th Chief Justice of India

Question: Who has been recently appointed as the 47th Chief Justice of India?

(a) DY Chandrachud (b) Arvind Bobde (c) Indira Jaisingh (d) Prashant Bhushan

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde was appointed as the 47th Chief Justice of India.
- Justice Bobde will take oath as the CJI on 18th November 2019, a day after incumbent Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi demits office.
- He will have tenure of 17 months and would demit office on April 23rd, 2021.
- His Warrant of Appointment was signed by President Ram Nath Kovind following which the Law Ministry issued a notification announcing Justice Bobde's appointment as the next head of the Indian judiciary.
- A judge since 2000, Justice Bobde joined the Bombay High Court as an additional judge.
- He was appointed as the chief justice of the Madhya Pradesh High Court on October 2012. In April 2013, he was elevated to the Supreme Court.
- As per established procedure, Justice Gogoi had earlier this month written to the Law Minister recommending the name of Justice Bobde, the senior most judge as his successor.

Links:

<http://ddnews.gov.in/national/justice-sharad-arvind-bobde-appointed-47th-cji>

Kim Clijsters announced her return

Question: Recently which of the following has announced her return to professional tennis after seven years?

(a) Kim Clijsters (b) Sania Mirza (c) Naozami Okuhara (d) Sarena Williams

Answer :(a)
Related facts:

- Kim Clijsters, former World no. 1 and four-time Grand Slam Winner has announced her return to professional tennis, seven years after her retirement.
- Kim Clijsters announced her comeback through a video on twitter.
- Clijsters was ready to come back in 2020.

Links:

<https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/kim-clijsters-news-retirement-wta-2020-tour-latest-a9102536.html>

Madhukar Kamath new chairman of the Audit Bureau of Circulations

Question: Who has been elected as the Chairman of the Audit Bureau of Circulations?

(a) Madhukar Kamath (b) Ranjan Gogoi (c) Arvind Subramaniam (d) Devendra V Darda

Answer :(a)

Related facts:

- Madhukar Kamath, chairman emeritus of DDB Mudra group and mentor of Interbrand India, has been elected chairman of the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) for 2019-20.
- Kamath has also been the president of Advertising Agencies Association of India.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/madhukar-kamath-elected-chairman-of-the-audit-bureau-of-circulations-119092001421_1.html

Akila Dananjaya

Question: Which country's bowler has been banned by ICC in September 2019 for his suspected bowling action?

(a) India (b) Sri Lanka (c) Bangladesh (d) Pakistan

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On September 19, 2019, Akila Dhananjaya was banned to play International Cricket by the International Cricket Council (ICC).
- Dhananjaya who is Sri Lankan off-spinner banned for 12 months for illegal bowling action.
- On August 29, 2019 an independent investigation was carried out in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, it was revealed in this investigation that his bowling action was illegal.
- His questionable bowling action came into the light, during 14-18 August, 2019, in a test match between Sri Lanka and New Zealand.
- It should be known that, earlier in December 2018 he was suspended from bowling.
- After the end of the one-year period, Dhananjaya can appeal an action investigation in the ICC.
- About ICC:
- ICC was founded in 15 June 1909 and is Headquartered in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Links:-

<https://www.icc-cricket.com/media-releases/1349580>

Former Andhra Pradesh Speaker Kodela Siva Prasad Rao commits suicide

Question: Recently Kodela Siva Prasad Rao committed suicide. He was Former speaker of which state?

(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Tamil nadu (c) Karnataka (d) Uttrakhand

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Former Andhra Pradesh Assembly Speaker Kodela Siva Prasad Rao, who was at the centre of a row over alleged theft of assembly property, have committed suicide.
- Kodela Prasad Rao was recently booked by the Andhra Pradesh police for shifting furniture from the assembly to his home in Guntur.
- He had won the seat with a margin of about 900 seats in the 2014 elections.
- Kodela Rao was reportedly upset over the number of cases registered against him and his family members over different issues.

Links:

<https://www.livemint.com/politics/policy/former-ap-speaker-kodela-siva-prasad-rao-commits-suicide-in-hyderabad-1568623313050.html>

Chairmanship of Association of World Election Bodies

Question: Who assumed the charge of Chairmanship of Association of World Election Bodies recently?

(a) Sunil Arora (b) Sushil Chandra (c) Umesh Sinha (d) Amit Tyagi

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora assumed the Chairmanship of 'Association of World Election Bodies' (AWEB) on September 3, 2019, Arora will serve the post during 2019-21.
- His appointment came after India took over the Chair of AWEB from Romania.

About Association of World Election Bodies (AWEB)

- The Association of World Election Bodies, commonly referred to as 'A-WEB,' was established on October 14, 2013 in Song-do, South Korea.
- A-WEB is the first global organization of election management bodies, and the membership currently consists of 97 organizations from 94 countries.

Links:

<https://www.pib.nic.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1583786>

Awards & Honors

The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development

Question: Which of the following personalities has been nominated for this years' The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development?

(a) James Lovelock (b) David Attenborough. (c) Ben Goldsmith (d) Emily Williamson

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for 2019 will be conferred on renowned naturalist and broadcaster Sir David Attenborough.
- His name was selected for the prize by an international jury chaired by former president Pranab Mukherjee.
- "Few individuals have come to be as identified with the well being of our planet, of all living creatures, and their relationship with human beings, as Sir David," the Trust said in a statement.
- The 2019 prize, it added, is awarded to Attenborough for a lifetime of doing more to reveal the wonders of the natural world to us than perhaps any other individual.

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/naturalist-and-broadcaster-david-attenborough-to-get-indira-gandhi-peace-prize-for-2019/articleshow/72122002.cms>

Swachh Survekshan Grameen Awards 2019

Question: Which of the following state ranked first in the state category of the Swachh Survekshan Grameen Awards 2019?

(a) Kerala (b) Sikkim (c) Himachal Pradesh (d) Tamil Nadu

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The Union Minister of the Ministry of Chemical and Fertilizers, D.V. Sadananda Gowda and the Union Minister of State of the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Rattan Lal Kataria, conferred the Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2019 awards to top ranked states, union territories, and districts in the various categories on the occasion of World Toilet Day.
- The awards were given at Pravasi Bhartiya Kendra, New Delhi on November 20 2019.
- The top ranked state was Tamil Nadu and the top ranked district was Peddapalli (Telangana).
- The award of the state with the maximum citizen participation was felicitated to Uttar Pradesh by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, at the Swachh Bharat Diwas event commemorating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in Ahmedabad on 2nd October, 2019.
- Corporates were also felicitated for their contribution under the Swachhata Hi Seva campaign this year, for their efforts towards effective plastic waste management. These were: the Cement Manufacturers Association (CMA), Hindustan Unilever Limited and AMUL.

Swachh Survekshan Grameen Awards 2019:

- The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) had commissioned "Swachh Survekshan Grameen-2019" (SSG 2019) through an independent survey agency to develop

ranking of all districts of India on the basis of quantitative and qualitative sanitation (Swachhata) parameters.

- This ranking was done based on a comprehensive set of parameters including surveys of public places like schools, Anganwadis, PHCs, Haat/ Bazaars, Panchayat and citizen's perception of Swachhata and their recommendations for improvement of the program and data from the SBM-G IMIS.
- As part of SSG 2019, 17209 villages in 683 Districts across India were covered. 60,459 public places namely schools, anganwadis, government schools, public health centres, haat/ bazaars and religious places in these villages were visited.
- Around 174,121 key informants were interviewed on SBM-G related issues.

The top ranked States and Districts:

- Top 3 States – Tamil Nadu, Haryana, Gujarat
- Top 3 Districts – Peddapalli(Telangana), Faridabad(Haryana), Rewari(Haryana)

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1592512>

BRICS-Young Innovator Prize 2019

Question: Who has recently won the BRICS Young Innovator Prize 2019?

(a) Shri Prakash (b) Ravi Prakash (c) Sukumar Sahu (d) Jainendra singh

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Indian PhD scholar Ravi Prakash has won the BRICS-Young Innovator Prize worth \$ 25,000. It was awarded to him for inventing an affordable indigenous milk chilling unit for smaller and marginal rural dairy farmers.
- Prakash is a PhD scholar of ICAR-National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI), Bangalore. He was a part of 21-member delegation sent to Brazil by the Department of Science and Technology for the 4th BRICS-Young Scientist Forum (YSF), 2019.
- The technology can be used for chilling milk from the point of production by bringing down the temperature of raw milk from 37C to 7C within 30 minutes using nano-fluid based phase change materials.
- This innovation will have a great socio-economic impact for all the developing countries by preserving quality and safety of milk just after production.
- The BRICS Young Innovator Prize is to reward the best work related to research, development and innovation projects representing technological innovation and a potential contribution to the science and technology sector of the BRICS countries.

Links:

<http://www.millenniumpost.in/nation/indian-wins-brics-young-innovator-prize-384934>

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) honoured 46 biomedical scientists

Question: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) honoured how many scientists who have done pioneering work in the area of health research to solve various health issues?

(a) 46 (b) 36 (c) 45 (d) 41

Answer :(a)

Related facts:

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) honoured 46 biomedical scientists who have done pioneering work in the area of health research to solve various health issues.
- A total 39 awards for 2017 and 2018 were presented to 46 scientists, including 14 women scientists.
- Of the 39 awards, two were given to scientists belonging to underprivileged communities and one to a scientist who has conducted research in under-developed areas.
- The awardees belong to ICMR, CSIR-labs, AIIMS, New Delhi, PGI, Chandigarh, SGPGI, Lucknow, IITs, JIPMER, Puducherry, SCTIMST, Thiruvananthapuram, Lady Hardinge Medical College, New Delhi, state and central universities and other reputed institutions.
- The need to strengthen innovation for developing new technologies and carry out research to reduce out-of-pocket expenditure and help in reducing disease burden highlighted in this award show.
- The minister appreciated ICMR's efforts in tackling the emerging and re-emerging infections like Zika and Nipah and congratulated its scientists for excellent work.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/icmr-awards-for-excellence-in-biomedical-research-given-to-46-scientists-119101601460_1.html

2019 Nansen Refugee Award

Question: Who has been conferred the 2019 Nansen Refugee Award?

(a) Azizbek Ashurov (b) Filippo Grandi (c) Danny Ocean (d) Flèche Love

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 7th October 2019, Human rights lawyer from Kyrgyzstan Azizbek Ashurov was awarded the 2019 UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) prestigious Nansen Award.
- The UNHCR hailed Azizbek Ashurov for helping Kyrgyzstan become the world's first country to end statelessness, working through his organisation Ferghana Valley Lawyers Without Borders (FVLWB).
- He and his organisation have helped more than 10,000 people gain Kyrgyz nationality after they became stateless following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.
- The award comprised a commemorative Nansen medal and a cash prize of USD 150,000.

About UNHCR Nansen Award:

- The UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award is awarded annually by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to an individual, group, or organization in recognition of outstanding service to the cause of refugees, displaced or stateless people.
- It was established in 1954.
- The award is named after the intrepid Norwegian polar explorer, statesman and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Fridtjof Nansen.

Links:

<https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2019/10/5d97215e4/2019-nansen-refugee-award-symbol-hope-worlds-stateless.html>

Award-Ezhuthachan Puraskaram

Question: Ezhuthachan Puraskaram, is being recently awarded to the eminent writer P. Satchidanandan (Anand), this award is instituted by which State Government?

(a) Karnataka (b) Kerala (c) Telangana (d) Tamil Nadu

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 1st November, 2019; eminent writer from Kerala, P. Satchidanandan (Anand), won the 27th Ezhuthachan Puraskaram.
- Ezhuthachan Puraskaram award is the top literary award instituted by the Government of Kerala.
- A jury chaired by Kerala Sahitya Akademi's President, Vaisakhan, selected Anand for the award considering his contributions to the language and its literature.
- The prize, named after Ezhuthachan, the father of Malayalam language, consists of a purse of Rs. 5 lakh and a citation.
- Anand was born at Irinjalakuda, in Thrissur, Kerala in 1936. He graduated from the Thiruvananthapuram College of Engineering in Civil Engineering.
- He served in the Army for about four years and retired from the Central Water Commission, Delhi, as a planning director.
- A sculptor as well, Anand's repertoire includes over 30 books ranging from novels, short stories, dramas and essays.
- His work Govardhanante Yaathrakal won the Kendra Sahitya Akademi award, while Veedum Thadavum and Jaiva Manushyan bagged the Kerala Sahitya Akademi awards.

Link:

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2019/nov/02/anand-bags-coveted-ezhuthachan-award-2055879.html>

Kayakalp Awards

Question: The Kayakalp Awards has been given by Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan to Private and Public Health facilities for maintaining high standards of:

(a) Efficiency (b) Sanitation and hygiene (c) Large admission of patients (d) None of the above

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare gave the Kayakalp Awards to the public and private health facilities during the national felicitation ceremony of Kayakalp awardees (2018-19) for their work in maintaining high standards of sanitation and hygiene.
- Kayakalp has played a pivotal role in reinstating and reconfirming trust and confidence of the community in public health facilities.
- At the function, the Health Ministers released the Kayakalp Coffee Table book documenting the success journeys of the award winning health facilities, and also gave away the awards to the winners under various categories.

The Awards:

- Under the Central Government Hospitals A category, the first prize of Rs. 3 crore was given to the All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi.

- JIPMER, Puducherry was judged as the runner-up in this category with Rs. 1.5 crore prize money, and Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER), Chandigarh and Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi won the Commendation Award of Rs. 50 Lakh each.
- In the group B category, the winner was VBCH, Silvassa winning Rs. 2 crore, with AIIMS Bhubaneswar as the runner-up winning Rs. 1 crore.
- NEIGRIHMS, Shillong, LGBRIMH, Tezpur and AIIMS, Bhopal each won Rs. 50 lakhs as Commendation Award.
- In the current year, for the holistic and comprehensive improvement across the health sector, the Kayakalp scheme was extended to private sector health facilities; 11 private health facilities were felicitated at the event.

Kayakalp Awards:

- The Kayakalp Award was instituted as part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan on 15th May 2015 as a national initiative to recognize and felicitate public health facilities that demonstrate high levels of cleanliness, hygiene and infection control measure on promoting cleanliness in public spaces.
- Over the period, the number of facilities under Kayakalp rose from 750 health facilities in 2015-16 to more than 26000 facilities in 2018-19.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1587869>

Most Eminent Senior Citizen Award

Question: Who has been awarded with the Most Eminent Senior Citizen Award recently?

(a) KK Venugopal (b) Mukul Rohtagi (c) K Parasaran (d) VK Singh

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Vice President of India M Venkaiah Naidu presented 'Most Eminent Senior Citizen Award' to legal luminary, scholar and former Attorney General of India, K. Parasaran on October 20 2019.
- The award was given at a function at the India International Centre in New Delhi.
- Shri Parasaran was honored with the Award on the occasion of the Elder's Day celebration of Age Care India, an organization working for the welfare of the elderly.
- He said that the Award was a fitting recognition of Parasaran's exceptional contribution to the field of law and justice as well as his extra ordinary personality.
- Former Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, N.N Vohra and the President of Age Care India, Dr. Kartikeyan were present on the occasion.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588543>

Professor Yusuf awarded by Vatican

Question: Nobel Laureate Professor Muhammad Yusuf was conferred the 'Lamp of Peace of Saint Francis ' award by the Vatican. Which country does he belong to?

(a) Pakistan (b) Indonesia (c) USA (d) Bangladesh

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Nobel Laureate from Bangladesh Professor Muhammad Yunus was conferred the 'Lamp of Peace of Saint Francis' award by the Vatican for his contribution towards establishing peace and harmony on September 3, 2019.
- The award is recognition for distinguished work by an individual for promoting peace and dialogue among people.
- The ceremony took place at the historical Papal Basilica of Assisi in Italy.
- The Lamp of Peace award was first given to the Polish trade union leader Lech Walesa in 1981.
- Dalai Lama, Mikhail Gorbachev and Angela Merkel are a few other prominent persons who received this award earlier.

Links:

<http://ddnews.gov.in/international/nobel-laureate-professor-yunus-conferred-award-vatican>

Sonu Nigam has been honoured 21st Century Icon Award

Question: which singer has got 21st century Icon Award?

(a) Ranu Mondal (b) Sonu Nigam (c) Himesh Reshamiya (d) Kumar Sanu

Answer: (b)

- On 20th September, 2019, popular Bollywood playback singer Sonu Nigam has been honoured with the Magnificent Performing Arts Award at the annual 21st Century Icon Awards in London.
- Nigam was among a host of winners across a range of categories at a gala awards ceremony, devised as a celebration of dynamic entrepreneurs and successful individuals chosen from hundreds of nominations from around the world.
- The nominations were from 22 different countries.

21st Century Icon Awards:

- The 21st Century Icon Award is the brainchild of UK-based Indian-origin entrepreneurs Tarun Ghulati and Preeti Rana, co-founders of Squared Watermelon Ltd. The Judges included personalities across varied fields who decided on the final 18 winners.
- Among some of the other winners at the ceremony included Kalli Purie, Vice-Chairperson of India Today Group who won the Outstanding Media and Entertainment Award; Charlotte Crosswell, CEO of Innovate Finance UK, who won the Specialist Professional Award; Asha De Vos who is a Marine Biologist, Ocean Educator and Pioneer Blue Whale Research within the Indian Ocean, won the Inspirational Icon Award; and Rachael Burford, Rugby Player and Founder of Burford Academy UK, won the Competitive Sports Award.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/sonu-nigam-wins-21st-century-icon-award-in-uk-119092000706_1.html

National Tourism Awards-2019

Question: Which state has been conferred the Best State award for overall growth in tourism?

(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Madhya Pradesh (c) Uttarakhand (d) Goa

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 27 September 2019 (World Tourism Day), Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu conferred the National tourism awards in various categories at a function in New Delhi.

- Andhra Pradesh has bagged the Best State award for overall growth in tourism category while Goa and Madhya Pradesh were joint winners in Adventure Tourism category.
- Uttarakhand was awarded best film promotion friendly state and Telangana for the best state in innovative use of IT category.

World Tourism Day:

- In order to raise awareness on the role of tourism within the international community and to demonstrate how it affects social, cultural, political and economic values worldwide.
- World Tourism Day is celebrated on 27th September every year since the inception of World Tourism Organization in 1980.
- 2019 Theme for the day is “Tourism and Jobs — A Better Future for All”.

Facts & Figures:

- As per World Travel and Tourism Council, tourism generated ₹16.91 lakh crore (US\$240 billion) or 9.2% of India’s GDP in 2018 and supported 42.673 million jobs, 8.1% of its total employment.
- Similarly, international tourism revenues earned by destinations around the world have grown from 2 billion US dollars in 1950 to 1260 trillion in 2015. The sector represents an estimated 10% of the world’s GDP and 1 in 10 jobs globally.

Links:

<http://newsonair.nic.in/News?title=Vice-Prez-confers-National-Tourism-Awards-on-occasion-of-World-Tourism-Day&id=372138>

IIFA Awards 2019

Question: Which film has won best film award in IIFA Awards 2019?

(a) Raazi (b) Hellaro (c) Kabir singh (d) Kedarnath

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On September 18, 2019 ,Director Meghna Gulzar’s Raazi claimed Best Film Award while Alia Bhatt bagged Best Actress Award for the film.
- The film Raazi won four awards Andhadhun and Padmaavat received two awards for each film.
- The Best Actor (Male) Award was received by Ranveer Singh for the film Padmaavat.
- Ishan Khattar was awarded the Best Debut (Male) Award for the film Dhadak, while Sara Ali Khan was awarded the Best Debut Female for the film Kedarnath.
- This was the 20th edition of IIFA Awards.
- Actress Alia Bhatt and actor Vicky Kaushal’s film Raazi received the award for the Best Film.
- This film is the story of an Indian detective and the role was played by Alia Bhatt.

Winners of IIFA Awards 2019:

- Best Actor (Male): Ranveer Singh for Padmaavat
- Best Actor (Female): Alia Bhatt for Raazi
- Best Film: Raazi
- Best Director: Sriram Raghavan for Andhadhun
- Best Story Award: AndhaDhun
- Best Supporting Actor (Female): Aditi Rao Hydari for Padmaavat
- Best Supporting Actor (Male): Vicky Kaushal for Sanju

- Best Lyrics: Amitabh Bhattacharya for Dhadak
- Best Playback Singer (Male): Arijit Singh for Ae Watan from Raazi
- Best Debut Award (Female): Sara Ali Khan for Kedarnath
- Best Debut Award (Male): Ishaan Khatter for Dhadak
- 20 Years Best Actor (Female): Deepika Padukone
- Best Playback Singer (Female): Harshdeep Kaur and Vibha Saraf for Dilbaro from Raazi
- Outstanding performance by a director in last 20 years: Rajkumar Hirani for Sanju
- 20 Years Best Actor (Male): Ranbir Kapoor.
- Best Music: Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweety
- Best music in the last 20 years: Pritam
- Best film of the past 20 years: Kaho Na Pyaar Hai
- Lifetime Achievement Award: Legendary actor and comedian Jagdeep Jaffery

International Indian Film Academy Awards(IIFA):

- The International Indian Film Academy Awards (also known as the IIFA Awards) are a set of awards presented annually by the International Indian Film Academy to honour both artistic and technical excellence of professionals in Bollywood, the Hindi language film industry.
- Instituted in 2000, the ceremony is held in different countries around the world every year with the most recent one being held at Mumbai on 18 Sept. 2019.

Links:

<https://www.news18.com/news/movies/iifa-awards-2019-alia-bhatt-ranveer-singh-bag-top-acting-honours-raazi-declared-best-film-2314347.html>

Bangladesh PM Hasina receives Dr. Kalam Smriti International Excellence Award

Question: Who has been conferred the Dr Kalam Smriti International Excellence Award 2019?

(a) Sheikh Hasina (b) K. Siavan (c) Narendra Modi (d) Arvind Subramaniam

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On September 16, 2019, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was conferred the Dr Kalam Smriti International Excellence Award 2019 in Dhaka.
- The award has been instituted in the memory of former Indian President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam.
- Chief Adviser of Dr Kalam Smriti International Advisory Council and former Ambassador T.P. Sreenivasan handed over the award to Sheikh Hasina.
- The award citation lauded Prime Minister Hasina for her vision of a peaceful and prosperous South Asia, free of tension, conflicts and terrorism. It acknowledged her contribution to fostering cooperation between India and Bangladesh.
- After receiving the award, Sheikh Hasina said, it will inspire her government to strive for achieving greater inclusive development of the people.
- The award is given every year to honour statesmen or leaders who have shown excellence in their fields to achieve the best for their countries.
- Earlier, the Presidents of the Maldives, Ghana and Mauritius received the prestigious award since its introduction in 2015.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Bangladesh%3A-PM-Hasina-receives-Dr-Kalam-Smriti-International-Excellence-Award&id=371650>

Planning & Project

Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh

Question: Which of the following ministry has launched the scheme called Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh recently?

- (a) Ministry of Food Processing Industries (b) Ministry of Human Resource and Development
(c) Ministry of Women and Child Development (d) Ministry of Health

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Union Minister of Women and Child Development (WCD) and Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani, along with Bill Gates, co-chair of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation launched the Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh (BPKK) in New Delhi on November 18 2019.
- The BPKK will be a repository of diverse crops across 128 agro-climatic zones in India for better nutritional outcomes. It is launched by Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD).

Five-point action plan to make India nutrition secure:

- On this occasion, eminent agricultural scientist, Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, in his address, said that to make India nutrition secure a five-point action programme has to be implemented. These are:
- Ensure calorie rich diet for women, expectant mothers and children.
- Ensure intake of proteins in the form of pulses to eradicate protein hunger in women and children
- Eradicate hidden hunger due to deficiency of micro nutrients like vitamin A, vitamin B, Iron and Zinc.
- Ensure clean drinking water supply.
- Spreading nutrition literacy in every village particularly in mothers with children less than 100 days' old.

Initiatives so far to attain the milestone:

- The Government has created a separate Ministry of Jal Shakti which is now working on providing clean drinking water to every household in the country. In September this year POSHAN Maah was celebrated and in one month 36 million POSHAN related activities were held across the country.
- The Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana Scheme (PMMVY) has reached out to 10 million beneficiaries by compensating for wage losses and since 2013 maternal mortality rate has come down by 26.9%.
- The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation would like to solve in India it is the problem of malnutrition among women, expectant mothers and children.
- Solving this problem will bring about a dramatic change in the development of India and help the country to attain the SDGs.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591912>

ECGC Introduces scheme of loan availability for Exporters

Question: What is the name of the scheme launched recently by Ministry of Commerce to enhance loan availability for Exporters?

(a) Nirvana (b) Nirvik (c) Nirmaan (d) Nishpadan

Answer: (b)

Related fact:

- Ministry of Commerce & Industry through Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) has introduced a new Export Credit Insurance Scheme (ECIS) called NIRVIK Scheme to enhance loan availability and ease the lending process.
- The details of the scheme were shared by the Commerce & Industry and Railways Minister, Piyush Goyal in a press conference in New Delhi on September 16 2019. It was announced by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to boost exports on 14th September 2019 in New Delhi.

The Scheme:

- The gems and diamond (GJD) sector borrowers with limit of more than Rs. 80 crore will have a higher premium rate as compared to non-GJD sector borrowers of this category due to the higher loss ratio. The ECGC cover provides additional comfort to banks as the credit rating of the borrower is enhanced to AA rated account.
- Enhanced cover will ensure that Foreign and Rupee export credit interest rates will be below 4% and 8% respectively for exporters.
- Under ECIS, insurance cover percentage has also been enhanced to 90% from the present average of 60% for both Principal and Interest.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/news-cm/ecgc-introduces-nirvik-to-enhance-loan-availability-for-exporters-119091700145_1.html

Revival plan of BSNL/MTNL

Question: The Government has decided for the capital infusion of how much crore to the MTNL/BSNL in its revival plan?

(a) 20, 140 crore (b) 30,140 crore (c) 40,140 crore (d) 10,140 crore

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The Union Cabinet approved the proposal for revival of BSNL and MTNL by administrative allotment of spectrum for 4G services, debt restructuring by raising of bonds with sovereign guarantee, reducing employee costs, monetisation of assets and in-principle approval of merger of BSNL & MTNL on October 23 2019.

The following was approved by the cabinet:-

- Administrative allotment of spectrum for 4G services to BSNL and MTNL so as to enable these PSUs to provide broadband and other data services.

- The said Spectrum will be funded by the Government of India by capital infusion in these PSUs at a value of Rs 20,140 Cr in addition; the GST amount of Rs 3,674 Cr to this spectrum value will also be borne by the Government of India through Budgetary resources.
- BSNL and MTNL will also raise long-term bonds of Rs 15,000 Cr for which sovereign guarantee will be provided by the Government of India (GoI).
- BSNL and MTNL will also offer Voluntary Retirement to their employees, aged 50 years and above through attractive Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS), the cost of which will be borne by the Government of India through budgetary support.
- The ex-gratia component of VRS will require Rs. 17,169 Cr in addition, GoI will be meeting the cost towards Pension, Gratuity and Commutation. Details of the scheme will be finalised by BSNL/MTNL.
- BSNL and MTNL will monetise their assets so as to raise resources for retiring debt, servicing of bonds, network upgradation, expansion and meeting the operational fund requirements.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588850>

Loan agreement between India and World Bank

Question: The Government of India, World Bank and a state of India has recently signed an agreement to support smallholder farmers strengthen the resilience of their production systems for increased income. Which state is that?

(a) Bihar (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Orissa (d) Assam

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Government of India, Government of Odisha and the World Bank signed a US\$165 million loan agreement to support smallholder farmers strengthen the resilience of their production systems as well as diversify and improve the marketing of their produce, for increased income on October 24 2019.
- \$165 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), has a 6-year grace period, and a maturity of 24 years.

The project:

- The Odisha Integrated Irrigation Project for Climate Resilient Agriculture will be implemented in rural areas vulnerable to droughts and largely dependent on rainfed agriculture.
- It will benefit about 125,000 smallholder farmer households from 15 districts of Odisha managing 128,000 ha of agricultural land.
- The project will strengthen the resilience of smallholder farmers against adverse climate by improving access to resilient seed varieties and production technologies, diversifying towards more climate-resilient crops, and improving access to better water management and irrigation services.
- The Government of India is implementing several missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change, which also extensively leverages adaptation of climate-smart agricultural practices and technologies.
- The project in Odisha is among several such initiatives supported by the government in our commitment to achieve the sustainable agriculture-related targets of the SDGs by 2030.

Agriculture in Odisha:

- In recent years, climate variability has seriously affected agriculture in Odisha, where farming is largely dominated by farmers with landholdings of less than two hectares.

- Since 2009, the frequency of droughts in the state has increased from 1 in 5 years to 1 in 2 years. Around 70 percent of total cultivated area is prone to droughts compared to 40 percent in the 1970s.
- The project will support the rehabilitation of 532 water tanks – expected to irrigate 91,435 ha; promote productivity improvements at the farm level; support farmers to reduce the current emphasis on food grains (especially paddy and wheat) and increase the share of high-value and more nutritious products like fruits and vegetables.
- The project will also support aquaculture in rehabilitated tanks, help farmers access affordable and quality fingerlings, and disseminate improved aquaculture practices and post-harvest management.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1589085>

Food Safety Mitra (FSM) launched on World Food Day

Question: The Food Safety Mitra Scheme was launched by Government on World Food Day. Which two more schemes were launched on the same day?

(a) Eat Right Jacket (b) Eat Right Bag (c) Eat Right Jhola (d) Eat Right Bora

Correct option:

(a) 1 and 3 (b) 1 and 4 (c) 1 and 2 (d) 2 and 4

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- World Food Day 2019(16th October) was celebrated in India. Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan commemorated the occasion.
- The theme for this day was 'Healthy Diets for a Zero Hunger World'.
- To mark the occasion, Dr Harsh Vardhan also launched the 'Food Safety Mitra (FSM)' scheme, along with the 'Eat Right Jacket', and 'Eat Right Jhola'.
- These schemes were launched to strengthen food safety administration and scale up the 'Eat Right India' movement.
- The Eat Right India movement is a crucial trigger for the much needed social and behavioural change. This campaign along with the 'Fit India' Movement' can achieve huge success if the right strategy is adopted and efforts are made to reach out to every section of the society.

Food Safety Mitra Scheme:

- The 'Food Safety Mitra (FSM)' scheme will support small and medium scale food businesses to comply with the food safety laws and facilitate licensing and registration, hygiene ratings and training.
- This scheme would also create new employment opportunities for youth, particularly with food and nutrition background. The FSMs would undergo training and certification by FSSAI to do their work and get paid by food businesses for their services.
- Eat Right Jacket Scheme:
 - The 'Eat Right Jacket' scheme will be used by the field staff. This jacket has a smart design to hold tech devices like tablets/smart phone, a QR code and RFID tag for identification and tracking.
 - Apart from providing safety to field staff on duty, this would bring in efficiency, professionalism and transparency in food safety administration and bring in a sense of ownership & visibility of FSOs.

Eat Right Jhola Scheme:

- The 'Eat Right Jhola', a reusable cloth bag shall replace plastic bags for grocery shopping in various retail chains.
- These cloth bags are being provided on rental basis through a private textile rental service company.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588275>

ADB, India sign \$190 million loan

Question: Asian Development Bank (ADB) & India has recently signed \$190 million loan for the improvement of road connectivity in which of the following state?

(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Rajasthan (c) Bihar (d) Sikkim

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The Asian Development Bank and the Government of India signed a \$190 million loan to upgrade 754 kilometres of state highways and major district roads (MDRs) to two-lane or intermediate-lane standards that will benefit about 26 million people in 14 districts of Rajasthan on October 11 2019.
- The Tranche 2 roads pass through mostly rural areas of Rajasthan that lack reliable connectivity and will help improve access to health, education facilities and markets leading to increased job opportunities.
- The ADB value-addition will consist in financing part of the construction costs for the annuity-based public private partnership (PPP) concessions and EPC contracts and ensure good governance during project implementation, particularly on procurement and safeguards.

Annuity based PPP Model:

- The annuity-based PPP model attracts private sector financing to address capital investment requirements, where a proportion of initial capital expenditure is paid during construction while the balance is serviced by annuity payments during the operation and maintenance phase.
- The toll collection rights will remain with the state public works department to bring sustainability in operation and maintenance of the project.
- For the benefit of commuters and pedestrians, particularly women and children, the project provides for constructing more than 200 bus stops, 70 km of hard shoulder, and 2 km of raised sidewalk on project roads.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1587929>

Plan to monitor Sunderban with drones

Question: The Sunderban delta forest is a kind of:

(a) Tropical Rainforest (b) Tropical Evergreen Forest (c) Mangrove Forest
(d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The forest department of Bangladesh has planned to use drones for monitoring poaching and other illegal activities in the Sundarban area.

- The department is also considering to erect net-fence around the forest to prevent the intrusion of tigers into the nearby human habitations.
- It has been also mentioned that if the sources of drinkable water and food for tigers can be ensured, they will not invade localities.
- These methods have been used successfully by India in checking poaching and tiger attacks on people.
- Illegal activities like poaching of tigers and deer, felling of trees and fish catching take place regularly in the Sundarban area.
- According to some reports a total of 14 tigers have been beaten to death by locals after they entered into human habitat over the last two decades.
- Sunderban is the largest mangrove forest in the World. It is also a UNESCO world heritage site.

Links:

<https://www.thedailystar.net/country/sundarbans-monitoring-with-drones-plan-underway-1797751>

ADB committed over \$12 billion debt to India

Question: Who is the President of Asian development Bank (ADB) currently?

(a) Christine Lagarde (b) Takehiko Nakao (c) David R. Malpass (d) Xiangmin Liu

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On 29th August, 2019, Asian Development Bank (ADB) President Takehiko Nakao met India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.
- On this occasion Nakao committed over \$12 billion lending to India over the next 3 years (2020-22).
- This debt is being offered by ADB in support of new flagship initiatives, averaging annually over \$3 billion for sovereign operations and \$1 billion for non sovereign operation.
- ADB President also met Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways and Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) and others.
- Nakao also announced a \$100 million investment in the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).

Project focus by ADB:

- ADB's sovereign and nonsovereign operations will focus on the government's following major initiatives:
- Jal Jeevan Mission: extending drinking water for all, water conservation and more crop per drop
- East Coast Economic Corridor: program promoting competitiveness of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) by connecting to global value chains.
- Supporting national road safety programs.
- Constructing a rapid rail transit system to connect Delhi with neighboring satellite cities, starting from Delhi to Meerut.
- Assistance in secondary education and the universal health system.

Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/adb-willing-to-lend-over-12-billion-to-india-over-the-next-three-years/article29291266.ece>

Project Cyberdome

Question: Consider the following statements related to Project Cyberdome.

(1) It makes a collective coordination among the Government departments, research groups, individual experts from the community and other law enforcement agencies with an aim of providing a safe and secure cyber world.

(2) It is jointly launched by Ministry of Home Affairs and NITI Aayog to replace the CCTNS and NATGRID.

Select the correct option from below:

a) 1 only b) 2 only c) Both 1 and 2 d) Neither 1 and 2

Answer: a

Related facts:

- Cyberdome is a technological and development centre of Kerala police department, conceived as cyber centre of excellence in cyber security.
- It will make technology augmentation for effective policing.
- It envisages as a high tech public-private partnership centre of collaboration for different stakeholders in the domain of cyber security and handling of cyber crimes in a proactive manner.
- One of the main objectives of the Cyberdome is to prevent cyber crimes through developing a cyber threat resilient ecosystem in the state to defend against the growing threat of cyber attacks by synergizing with other departments and nodal agencies of the state.
- Cyberdome makes a collective coordination among the Government departments and agencies, academies, research groups, non-profitable organizations, individual experts from the community, ethical hackers, private organizations, and other law enforcement agencies in the country with an aim of providing a safe and secure cyber world for each and every citizen in the state.
- The primary objective of Cyberdome is to prevent cyber crimes and ensure that our cyber resources are secured.
- As of it is in place with the Assam and Kerala police.

Links:

<https://in.linkedin.com/company/kerala-police-cyberdome>

Union Government to draw frame work of National Infrastructure Pipeline

Question: As measure to tide over economic slowdown in the country the Union government in recent decision has now set a target of spending how much money in infrastructure development during the fiscal year 2019-20 to 2024-25?

(a) Rs. 5000 crore (b) Rs. 10,000 crore (c) Rs. 100 lakh crore (d) Rs. 10 lakh crore

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The government has set up a task force to speed up infrastructure development to identify projects on which 100 lakh crore is to be spent.
- The task force in this regard has been constituted by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, which will be headed by Economic Affairs Secretary Atanu Chakraborty.
- It will draw up National Infrastructure Pipeline of Rs 100 lakh crore (\$1.4 trillion) for the fiscal year 2019-20 to 2024-25.
- The government has set a target of spending 100 lakh crores on infrastructure by the year 2024-25 to become a five-trillion dollar economy.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the task force:

- To identify technically feasible and financially/ economically viable infrastructure projects that can be initiated in FY 2019-20;
- To list the projects that can be included in the pipeline for each of the remaining 5 years between FY 2021-25;
- To estimate annual infrastructure investment/capital costs;
- To guide the Ministries in identifying appropriate sources of financing and to suggest measures to monitor the projects so that cost and time overrun is minimized.
- The National Infrastructure Pipeline will include Greenfield and Brownfield projects costing above Rs 100 crore.
- It enables robust marketing of the pipeline of projects requiring private investment through the India Investment Grid and National Investment & Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).
- The Task Force will submit its Report on Pipeline by 31st of October for the fiscal year 2019-20 and on the indicative pipeline for fiscal years 2021- 25 by 31st of December 2019.

Links:

<https://m.economictimes.com/news/economy/infrastructure/task-force-to-draw-national-infrastructure-pipeline-worth-1-4-trillion/articleshow/71021425.cms>

International Speed Post service commenced

Question: Which of the following country is not covered under the recently launched International Speed Post service?

(a) Bosnia (b) Herzegovina (c) Brazil (d) Canada

Answer :(d)

Related facts:

- Department of Posts has announced commencing of International Speed Post (EMS) Service to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Ecuador, Kazakhstan, Brazil and North Macedonia.
- EMS or Express Mail Service is a premium service that enables its users to send documents and merchandise faster and with the added facility of being able to track the movement of the item on the internet.
- This facility is expected to augment people to people contact with these countries and foster trade as EMS is popular channel for small and medium enterprises.
- The EMS service to these countries will henceforth be available at major Post offices across India.

Links:

<https://pib.nic.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1585407>

Treaty & Agreements

India and Finland sign an MoU

Question: India has signed a MoU with Finland for strengthening cooperation in which of the following sector?

(a) Trade (b) Tourism (c) Education (d) Research and technology

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Government of Finland on 21 November 2019 for strengthening cooperation in the field of Tourism.
- The MOU was signed by Prahlad Singh Patel, Minister for Culture and Tourism (Independent Charge), and Minister of Economic Affairs and Employment, Government of Finland Timo Harakka.
- India and Finland have enjoyed a strong diplomatic and long economic relationship. The two countries now desiring to strengthen and further develop the established relationship have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for strengthening cooperation in the field of Tourism.
- Finland is one of the important inbound source market for India. In 2018, 21239 Finnish tourists visited India. The signing of Memorandum of Understanding with Finland will be instrumental in increasing tourist arrivals from this source market.
- The signing of Memorandum of Understanding is expected to establish the basis for a cooperative relationship to encourage and promote successful bilateral cooperation in the field of tourism, sharing data, knowledge, expertise etc. related to tourism and sharing experiences in making policies, regulation and standards in planning, implementation and development of tourism policy etc.
- India and Bulgaria had also discussed the ways and means to promote and develop tourism between nations on November 20 2019.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1592957>

Visionary Indo – French Collaboration in Railway

Question: What is the amount signed by the Indian Railway in its largest FDI agreement to manufacture 800 electric locomotives for freight service and its associated maintenance with French company Alstom?

(a) 1 billion Euro (b) 2 billion euro (c) 3 billion euro (d) 3.5 billion euro

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Indian Railways has entered into Procurement cum Maintenance Agreement with Madhepura Electric Locomotive Pvt. Ltd. (MELPL), a joint venture of Indian Railways and M/s Alstom
- As part of largest Foreign Direct Investment project of Indian Railways, Ministry of Railways and Alstom came together in 2015 to transform the heavy freight transportation landscape of the country.
- A landmark agreement worth 3.5 billion Euro was signed to manufacture 800 electric locomotives for freight service and its associated maintenance.

Procurement and production:

- M/s Alstom has delivered prototype locomotive in March 2018. Based on the test results, Alstom has redesigned the complete locomotive including bogies.
- The new design of locomotive has been inspected by RDSO at Madhepura factory and cleared for dispatch from factory. After test and trials M/s Alstom will accelerate the delivery schedule and supply 10 locomotives in FY 2019-20 and 90 locomotives in FY 2020-21 and 100 locomotives per year beyond March 2021 as per their recovery plan.
- This is the first time such High Horse Power locomotive is being tested on Broad Gauge network in the World by any Railways.

- As part of the project, factory along with township has been set up in Madhepura, Bihar with capacity to manufacture 120 locomotives per year.
- The project will create more than 10,000 direct and indirect jobs in the country. More than Rs 2000 Crores invested in the project already by the company. One Maintenance Depot already established in Saharanpur.
- Work starting on the second Depot at Nagpur. More than 300 Engineers from India and France are working in Bangalore, Madhepura and France on the Project.
- This is a truly Make in India project and even the first loco has been assembled in Madhepura factory. In two years time, more than 90% parts will be manufactured in India.

Benefits of Project

- Indian Railways have taken decision to have 12000 horse power twin Bo-Bo design Locomotive with 22.5 T (Tonnes) axle load upgradable to 25Tonnes with design speed of 120 kmph.
- This locomotive will be game changer for further movement of coal trains for Dedicated Freight Corridor. With the success of this project it will boost the “Make in India” programme of the Government of India. This will further develop ancillary units for locomotive components.
- The project will allow faster and safer movement of heavier freight trains. It will haul 6000T trains at maximum speed of 100 kmph. With 100% electrification, the new locomotive will not only bring down operational cost for Railways, the locomotive will also reduce the congestion faced by Indian Railways.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591616>

US university to collaborate with AIIMS, Kasturba Medical College in India

Question: The US University will collaborate with AIIMS, Kasturba Medical College for which process?

(a) Genome sequencing (b) DNA testing (c) Drug developing (d) Genetic testing

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- A top US university will expand genetic testing in India in partnership with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi and the Kasturba Medical College in Manipal.
- A 2.3 million US dollar grant from the National Institute of Health over five years will help the University of Michigan and Indian geneticists identify and confirm genetic changes that are the basis of developmental disorders.
- Noting that seven out of 10 children with developmental disorders in India do not receive genetic testing. The university, in a media release said the children with disorders of genetic origin will be more likely to receive a molecularly confirmed diagnosis.
- Advanced genetic tests like exome sequencing are often out of reach of many Indian patients because of the cost. Integrating genetic counselling into the continuum of genetic testing is an important part of increasing access to genetic testing

Links:

<https://health.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/us-university-to-collaborate-with-aiims-kasturba-medical-college-on-genetics/71951628>

Third round Kartarpur talk between India & Pakistan

Question: Where did the third round of talk over Kartarpur Corridor take place on September 4 2019?

(a) Islamabad (b) New Delhi (c) Chandigarh (d) Amritsar

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The third round of talks with Pakistan on the modalities for operationalisation of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor was held on September 4, 2019 at Attari, Amritsar.
- Indian delegation comprised of representatives from the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Defence, Government of Punjab, Land Ports Authority of India, National Highways Authority of India, in addition to Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The meeting reviewed the progress reached in the two rounds of Joint Secretary Level meetings and four rounds of Technical Level meetings, held earlier.

Understanding reached by Parties:

- Agreement on visa free travel of Indian pilgrims, without any restrictions based on their faith. Persons of Indian origin holding OCI card too can visit Holy Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib using the Corridor.
- 5,000 pilgrims can visit Holy Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib using the Corridor every day. Additional pilgrims, over and above the figure of 5,000, can visit on special occasions, subject to capacity expansion by Pakistan side. Pakistan has conveyed its assurance to increase this number.
- The Corridor will be operational throughout the year, seven days a week. Pilgrims will have a choice to visit as individuals or in groups, and on foot.
- Both sides agreed to build the bridge at Budhi Ravi Channel. Pending the construction of the bridge on Pakistan side, both sides agreed to the crossing point coordinates of the temporary service road being built.
- The Pakistan side has agreed to make sufficient provision for preparation and distribution of 'Langar' and 'Prasad' for the pilgrims.
- However, owing to inflexibility shown by Pakistan, the agreement could not be finalised.
- Pakistan has insisted on charging a service fee for allowing Pilgrims to visit Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib, which is repugnant to the spirit of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor.
- Pakistan has also shown its unwillingness to allow the presence of Protocol officials at the Gurdwara premises to accompany the pilgrims for their facilitation. Pakistan side was strongly urged to reconsider its position.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/kartarpur-corridor-third-round-of-talks-between-india-pak-underway/article29329827.ece>

DRDO signed MoU to set up Kalam Centre for Science and Technology

Question: DRDO, along with Ministry of Defence has recently signed MoU with which of the following institution to set up Kalam Centre for Science and Technology?

(a) IIT Delhi (b) University of Hyderabad (c) IISc Bengaluru (d) Central University of Jammu

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO), Ministry of Defence and Central University of Jammu (CUJ) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the establishment of Kalam Centre for Science and Technology (KCST) at the university.

- The MoU signing held in the presence of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on September 26, 2019.
- The MoU:
 - The main objective of the MoU is to undertake and facilitate multidisciplinary directed basic and applied research and technology development in the identified research verticals namely; Computational System Security and Sensors.
 - The centre will be equipped with state-of-the-art facilities and equipment leading to increase in research scholars in these areas.
 - The CUJ is a Central Government funded University, established under Central Universities Act 2009, with the vision to contribute knowledge and technology innovation to the country and the world.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1586289>

MeitY and Google tie up to Build for Digital India

Question: Consider the following statement regarding “Build for Digital India”:

- (1) It will give engineering students a platform to develop market-ready, technology-based solutions that address key social problems.
- (2) Students across the country will be invited to transform their bright ideas into real-world solutions.

From the above correct statement/s is/are:

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

Answer : (c)

Related facts:

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Google on August 31 2019 signed a statement of intent to roll-out ‘Build for Digital India’.
- This programme will give engineering students a platform to develop market-ready, technology-based solutions that address key social problems.
- As part of the programme, engineering students across the country will be invited to apply and join in a learning journey that will help them transform their bright ideas into real-world solutions.
- Applicants will take part in online and offline learning opportunities on key technologies such as machine learning, cloud and android.
- These will be offered through Google’s Developer Student Club network and other Google Developer networks.
- Google will also offer mentorship sessions in product design, strategy and technology to the most promising products and prototypes.
- This initiative will motivate college students across India to innovate and produce some good technology solutions for major social challenges of India.
- The programme will invite bright ideas and solutions from students to focus on areas of healthcare, agriculture, education, smart cities and infrastructure, women safety, smart mobility and transportation, environment, accessibility and disability and digital literacy.

Links:

<https://www.livemint.com/news/india/meity-and-google-tie-up-to-build-for-digital-india-1567249514749.html>

MoU Signed between Department of Social Justice and Empowerment and National AIDS Control Organization

Question: For which of the following sectors a MoU between Department of Social Justice & Empowerment and National AIDS Control Organisation was signed?

- (a) Inclusion of target groups of NACO and National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) in the programmes of NAPDDR & NACO for awareness generation.
- (b) Enhanced linkages and effective co-ordination between Injecting Drug Users Targeted Intervention (IDUs-TI) supported by NACO and Integrated rehabilitation center for Addicts (IRCA) supported by DSJE.
- (c) Develop human resources and build capacity in order to strengthen the service delivery mechanisms for drug addiction treatment.
- (d) All of the above.

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on August 24, 2019 between the Department of Social Justice, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and National AIDS Control Organization (NACO), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- The MoU was signed by Additional Secretary Upma Srivastava and Special Secretary & Director General NACO Sanjeev Kumar in the presence of Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan.

Salient points of MoU are as follows:

- Inclusion of target groups of NACO and National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) in the programmes of NAPDDR & NACO for awareness generation.
- Enhanced linkages and effective co-ordination between Injecting Drug Users Targeted Intervention (IDUs-TI) supported by NACO and Integrated rehabilitation center for Addicts (IRCA) supported by DSJE.
- Create awareness and educate people about the ill-effects of drugs abuse on the individual, family, workplace and the society at large and reduce stigmatization of and discrimination against, groups and individuals dependent on drugs in order to integrate them back into the society.
- Develop human resources and build capacity in order to strengthen the service delivery mechanisms for drug addiction treatment.
- Developing welfare scheme aiming at social inclusion and empowerment of Transgender which face extreme social alienation enhancing their vulnerability to HIV and drug abuse.
- Address risk of HIV transmission among all substance users through preventive risk reduction messaging on HIV/STI and linkages with Integrated Testing and Counseling Centre (ITCC) and other services.
- Working towards empowerment of discriminated and vulnerable groups like victims of HIV/AIDS, victims of drug abuse, female sex workers, Persons engaged in Begging and transgender by nurturing a supportive and congenial environment which promotes human development by safeguarding human rights of all, providing social protection and rendering psycho-social care.
- Include female sex workers and transgender as target group for social defence and drug addicts as a target group for NACO.
- Reduced incidence of social stigma and discrimination against victims of drug abuse and Children and People Living with HIV/AIDS through programme education setting.

Links:

<http://naco.gov.in/mou-signed-naco-ministriesdepartments>

Conference

Global Bio-India Summit, 2019

Question: Which edition of the Global Bio India Summit was organized in New Delhi from 21 to 23 November 2019?

(a) Second (b) Fourth (c) Seventh (d) First

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- India's first largest biotechnology stakeholders conglomerate, – the Global Bio-India (GBI) Summit, 2019 concluded on November 23 2019 in New Delhi.
- The three-day event was organized by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science & Technology, Government of India along with its Public Sector Undertaking, Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC).
- The associated partners for this event were Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE) and Invest India.
- The Summit provided an opportunity to showcase the potential of India's biotech sector to the international community, identify, create opportunities and deliberate on the key challenges in the areas of Bio-pharma, Bio-Agri, Bio-Industrial, Bio-Energy and Bio-Services and allied sectors.
- The Biotechnology Department plans to turn the GBI into an annual event with support from all stakeholders.
- Biotechnology is recognized as the sunrise sector– a key driver for contributing to India's USD 5 Trillion economy target by 2025.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1593248>

World Conference on Access to Medical Products

Question: Which of the following country will host the World Conference on Access to Medical Products 2020 from 23rd to 25th September 2020?

(a) Finland (b) Denmark (c) India (d) Bangladesh

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Union Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare chaired the closing ceremony of 2019 World Conference on Access to Medical Products, along with Zahid Maleque, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Bangladesh and others in New Delhi on November 21, 2019.
- India will host the World Conference on Access to Medical Products 2020 from 23rd to 25th September 2020.
- India has always been a health aware country as we have always believed in the 'panchtatva' (agni, jal vaayu, prithvi and aakash) that make up the universal space around us all.
- India is the leader of the global pharmaceutical industry and generic medicines.
- The ambitious program in public health, Ayushman Bharat rolled out across the country with its two pillars i.e. Health & Wellness Centres (HWCs) & Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojna

(PMJAY), is contributing towards reducing catastrophic out of pocket expenditure and expanding Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

- He further stated that with National Health Policy 2017 India has given priority to preventive, promotive and affordable healthcare.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1592924>

International Symposium on Lighting (iSoL)

Question: Who inaugurated the International Symposium on Lighting (iSoL) on November 14 2019?

(a) Amit Shah (b) Ramesh Pokhariyal (c) Arjun Ram Meghwal (d) Prakash Jawadekar

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises and Parliamentary Affairs, Arjun Ram Meghwal inaugurated the International Symposium on Lighting (iSoL) on November 14 2019 at International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT), Manesar in Gurugram.
- Speaking at the Symposium, Arjun Ram Meghwal reiterated the need to promote the Make in India initiative on the three pillars of 4th industrial revolution: Artificial Intelligence, robotics and 3-D printing technology. The Minister also suggested widespread implementation of LED technology to save energy and improve illumination all over the country.
- ICAT was congratulated for its emergence as a world class centre for testing and R&D in the field of automobiles and appreciated the newly built 850 seater auditorium and expo facilities.
- Director ICAT, Dinesh Tyagi, spoke about the new technological developments in the field of automotive lighting and the advancements that ICAT has made in the field of automotive testing and R&D.
- In iSoL 2019 an exhibition is being held with more than 30 stalls for automotive components with special focus on lighting components and vehicle display of more than 14 new models from 14 OEMs.
- This exhibition has provided networking opportunities to the component and equipment suppliers, manufacturers and OEMs.
- There was a panel discussions on Intelligent Lighting: The Road Ahead and Road Safety in Dark hours: Assisting and Alarming Technologies. Several awards were also distributed for Innovation and Excellence. More than 800 delegates are participating in iSoL-2019.
- The International Symposium on Lighting (iSoL) from 2009 has grown and transformed itself into a global event. ICAT has been associated with the field of lighting research and testing since 2006. Taking this commitment to a greater height, iSoL-2019 is aimed at creating a knowledge sharing platform ensuring the flow of information.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591573>

International Conference on Yoga

Question: Where was the two day International Conference on Yoga organized on 15-16 November 2019?

(a) Hyderabad (b) Hrishikesh (c) Rorkee (d) Mysuru

Answer:

Related facts:

- Union Minister of State for AYUSH and Defence, Shripad Yesso Naik inaugurated two days International Conference on Yoga at Mysuru, Karnataka on November 15 2019.
- The theme of the conference is 'Yoga for Heart Care'. More than 700 national and international delegates participated in the conference spread over ten technical sessions involving fifty resource persons & experts.
- The Government has introduced several schemes for promotion of Yoga among the people of our country. He said that the rewards of Yoga are so immense that people are easily motivated to adopt Yoga in their lives once they learn about its benefits.
- There is a need to introduce Yoga in the schools in the curriculum of physical education. The Ministry has constituted a Yoga Certification Board to address to certify individual trainers and accredit Yoga Training institutions.
- The Board's programme is essentially a Voluntary scheme of Certification and will increase quality and standards in Yoga teaching and promote Yoga as a career skill.
- Yoga is an integral part of the 1.5 lakh primary health care centres under AYUSHMAN BHARAT. This will make learning Yoga and practicing it easier for the people all across the country.
- This conference is fifth in the series to commemorate the unanimous adoption of Resolution by the United Nations General Assembly during its 69th Session for observing 21st June as International Day of Yoga. After the UN declaration of International Day of Yoga since 2014, overwhelming interest towards Yoga has been witnessed from the international communities across the globe.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591713>

27th Conference of Central and State Statistical Organizations (COCSSO) organized

Question: Where did the 27th Conference of Central and State Statistical Organizations (COCSSO) organized on November 11 2019?

(a) Kolkata (b) Chennai (c) Lucknow (d) Chandigarh

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Prof. Bimal K Roy, Chairman, National Statistical Commission inaugurated the 27th Conference of Central and State Statistical Organizations (COCSSO) at Kolkata, West Bengal on 11th November, 2019 in the presence of Pravin Srivastava, Chief Statistician of India-cum- Secretary, Ministry Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Government of India.
- The theme of this event was Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Dr. G. C. Manna, Member, National Statistical Commission, Vijay Kumar, Director General (Surveys), National Statistical Office etc. were also present on the occasion. Representatives from Central Government Ministries, State Governments, international agencies, academic institutions, corporate sector, community organizations and other stakeholders participated in the conference.
- COCSSO is an important platform to bring all stakeholders together to discuss statistical matters of interest. He also highlighted dynamically changing role of the professional statisticians in the context of the technological advancements and transformations which eventually lead to the well being of the society.
- The theme of this year's conference has been aptly chosen at a time when MoSPI is taking several steps towards putting in place a robust monitoring mechanism for SDGs. Achieving SDGs is a commitment of the country following the spirit of leaving no one behind.

- There is a need for developing State Indicator Frameworks for SDGs at the State/UT level on the lines of National Indicator Framework developed by MoSPI for monitoring indicators at national level.

Conference of Central and State Statistical Organizations (COCSSO):

- COCSSO is a Conference organized by MoSPI, Government of India every year. COCSSO is a major national forum for coordination between the Central and State Statistical Agencies with the objectives of putting in coordinated efforts for making available reliable and timely statistics to planners and policy makers.
- A number of presentations and discussion relating to theme by Central Ministries/Departments as well as representatives from various national and international agencies namely, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare etc. was presented during the Conference. In addition, various States/UTs, Directorate of Economics and Statistics will also share their experiences in this area.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591233>

Mid Planning Conference (MPC) for MILAN

Question: Where did the Mid Planning Conference (MPC) for MILAN 2020 take place from 6 to 8 November 2019?

(a) New Delhi (b) Dehradun (c) Bengaluru (d) Visakhapatnam

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The Mid Planning Conference (MPC) for MILAN exercise took place at HQENC Visakhapatnam. The three-day conference from 6 to 8 November 2019. It was attended by 29 delegates from 17 friendly Foreign Navies.
- Delivering the Opening Address, Commodore Sanjiv Issar, Commodore Milan briefed on the broad programme of MILAN 2020 scheduled to be conducted at Visakhapatnam in March 2020.
- The scope of exercise planned during the harbour and sea phase of MILAN 2020 was discussed in detail with the delegates of the participating countries during the conference.

MILAN:

- MILAN series of biennial a multilateral naval exercise which commenced in 1995, was conducted at Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) until last year, is being conducted for the first time on the mainland at Eastern Naval Command (ENC) with increased scope and complexity of the Exercise.
- MILAN 2020 is aimed to enhance professional interaction between friendly foreign navies and learn from each other's strengths and best practices in the maritime domain.
- The event would also provide an excellent opportunity for Operational Commanders of friendly foreign navies to interact with each other in areas of mutual interest.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591096>

11th Nuclear Energy Conclave

Question: Consider the following statement regarding 11th Nuclear Energy Conclave 2019?

(1) This conclave was held in New Delhi.

(2) The theme of the Conclave was: Economics of Nuclear Power- Innovation towards Safer & Cost Effective Technologies.

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 11th Nuclear Energy Conclave, organized by the India Energy Forum, was held in New Delhi on 18th October, 2019.
- The theme of the Conclave was: Economics of Nuclear Power- Innovation towards Safer & Cost Effective Technologies.

Important Facts:

- The Minister of State for Atomic Energy highlighted some steps taken by the Government with respect to nuclear energy:
- Earlier the Atomic power plants were restricted in Southern India, now the Government is setting up the nuclear plants in other parts of the country.
- A nuclear plant is coming up in the Gorakhpur of Haryana.
- A Hall of Nuclear Energy was opened in Pragati Maidan, Delhi to educate the students and the general public about the applications of nuclear energy.
- Use of nuclear energy in diverse fields such as medicine, especially cancer care.
- Other steps highlighted include early movement on Fast Breeder Reactors (FBR) deployment and early deployment of indigenous Light Water Reactors (LWRs).
- Light-water reactors (LWRs) are power reactors that are cooled and moderated with ordinary water. There are two basic types: the Pressurized-Water Reactor (PWR) and the Boiling-Water Reactor (BWR).
- PWR is a power reactor in which the heat is dissipated from the core using highly pressurized water (about 160 bar) to achieve a high temperature and avoid boiling within the core.
- BWR is a nuclear reactor with water as a coolant and as a moderator, boiling in the core. The resulting steam is generally used directly to drive a turbine.
- It was underlined that owing to the waiver of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) to India in 2008, the nuclear programme now has much less constraints.
- Access to the imported uranium can accelerate the nuclear program size as well as large scale thorium deployment

Links:

<http://pibarchive.nic.in/newsite/erelease.aspx?relid=193863>

Curtain Raiser: DEFCOM 2019

Question: Consider the following statement regarding DEFCOM 2019:

(1) It was held at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi.

(2) The theme of this exercise "Communications as a Decisive Catalyst for Jointness".

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:

- DEFCOM seminar, jointly organised by the Corps of Signals and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has evolved over the years to become a landmark symposium for collaboration between the Indian armed forces, academia, research and development organizations, and the Industry on aspects pertaining to Information and Communications Technology.

- DEFCOM 2019 to be held on 26th and 27th November. 2019 at Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi will seek to deliberate on the theme, “Communications as a Decisive Catalyst for Jointness”.
- The curtain raiser ceremony for the event was held on 22nd October, 2019 at India Habitat Centre and attended by senior officers of the Indian armed forces, academia and industry.
- Lieutenant General JP Nehra (Retd), Principal Advisor (Defence) of CII highlighted the crucial role played by DEFCOM over the years in promoting collaboration between the armed forces and the industry in the Information and Communications Technology domain.
- He also encouraged the industry to actively participate in the DEFCOM exhibition with their solutions and products to enhance defence communications.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=194024>

Rising Himachal 2019

Question: Where was the Global Investor Meet Rising Himachal 2019 organised recently?

(a) Dehradun (b) Dharamshala (c) Shimla (d) Dalhousie

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

null

- The State Government of Himachal Pradesh is organizing Global Investors’ Meet 2019, a flagship business event at Dharamshala on November 7 -8, 2019.

Major events in the summit:

- This event will showcase the policy and regulatory environment, investment opportunities in eight focus sectors to boost manufacturing and employment generation in the State.
- The eight focus sectors are agri-business and post-harvest technology, manufacturing and pharmaceuticals, tourism and hospitality, civil aviation, hydro and renewable energy, wellness, healthcare and AYUSH, housing and urban development, IT-ITeS and electronics, education and skill development.
- Commerce and Industry and Railway Minister, Piyush Goyal will attend the Rising Himachal Global Investors’ Meet 2019 and inform about the investment and policies of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry for promoting investment in Himachal Pradesh and the hill states of India.
- The Global Investors’ Meet will be attended by diplomats, leaders from corporate sector, senior policy makers, development agencies and investors from across the world.
- Invest India, the National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, is promoting Rising Himachal Summit through the India Investment Grid (IIG).
- The exhibit space will have different elements that introduce Invest India as the national investment facilitation agency and showcase the investment potential of Himachal Pradesh.
- During the two days Global Investors’ Meet there will be a session on ‘Growing economic ties between Invest India and UAE’.
- There will also be parallel sectoral sessions on Ease of Doing Business, tourism, wellness and AYUSH.
- Himachal Pradesh has implemented online Single Window System which provides approvals and renewals for investment in all the sectors.
- The State Government of Himachal Pradesh has brought HP MSME (Facilitation of Establishment and Operation) Ordinance, 2019, that allows implementation of project for MSME’s without waiting for approvals/ NoCs/ permissions in order to strengthen the MSME sector which is the backbone of the State.

- The State Government has also notified HP Tourism Policy 2019 to promote development of new tourist destinations by providing Capital Investment Subsidy.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1590412>

National Workshop on CPGRAMS Reforms

Question: Who presided the National Workshop on Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) Reforms, organized by Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) on November 5, 2019?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Prakash Javdekar (c) Amit Shah (d) Dr. Jitendra Singh

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The MoS Dr Jitendra Singh addressed the National Workshop on Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) Reforms, organized by Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions on 05 November 2019.
- During the event, Dr Jitendra Singh launched the CPGRAMS reforms for Departments of Financial Services and Telecommunications (DoT). He also launched the 'Online Hackathon on Data-Driven Innovation for Citizen Grievance Redressal'.
- The Minister also inaugurated an exhibition on CPGRAMS. Dr Jitendra Singh emphasized that Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has adopted the mantra of 'Maximum Governance, Minimum Government', since the very beginning.
- The Minister added that the Government has taken many 'out of box' decisions, which were to benefit the last man in the queue. The Minister also mentioned about many initiatives that have been taken by the DARPG during the last five years.
- The format of PM Excellence Awards has been changed substantially, which has encouraged almost all district collectors to participate in it. The practice of posting young IAS officers as Assistant Secretaries in the Central Ministries and Departments for the initial 3 months of their service has been started by the Government.
- Other initiatives such as Shillong Declaration and regional conferences on good governance conducted by the department in various parts of the country.
- The number of grievances lodged with the Government have increased 8 fold, from about 2 lakh in the beginning of the Government to about 16 lakh at present, which depicts the pro-activeness, sincerity and timely response of the Department.
- During the event, two Technical sessions were also held. The first Technical session was on CPGRAMS Reforms by Posts, Financial Services, Telecom, Railways and Health & Family Welfare. The second Technical session was on Public Grievances Redressal System in the States vis-a-vis CPGRAMS and presentations were given by Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1590513>

Regional Labour conference

Question: Where did the Regional Labour Conference take place On October 22, 2019?

(a) Bhubaneswar (b) Rajkot (c) Udaipur (d) New Delhi

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The Regional Labour Conference took place in Bhubaneswar on October 22 2019. Minister of State for Labour and Employment Santosh Kumar Gangwar chaired the conference.
- The category of 'Labour' comes under Concurrent list and Central and State Governments makes coordinated efforts for welfare of workers..
- Labour Ministers and senior officials of six states Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Andaman & Nikobar along with senior officials of Labour Ministry participated in the conference.
- Regional Conferences help in creating better coordination between Central and State Governments. Central Labour Laws are framed by Central Government but States implement them and bring changes in them keeping in view their special geographical and demographic situation after consultation with the centre.

Major programs of government for Labour welfare:

- Government of India has taken many steps for the welfare of workforce of the country. Code on Wages has been passed by Parliament in August 2019 and now State Governments should frame rules regarding Code on Wages, fix minimum wages and organize awareness campaign so that maximum number of unorganized sector workers may be benefitted.
- Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions has been sent to Parliamentary Standing Committee after being introduced in the Lok Sabha.
- This is also an important legislation which subsumes 13 central labour laws and covers health, security and working conditions issues of the workers.
- Apart from simplifications of Labour laws, Government of India has launched Pension Scheme for unorganized sector workers and small traders and self employed persons.
- Approximately 33 lakh unorganized sector workers have associated themselves for Pension Scheme.
- There is however a need of the coordination from all the State Governments to link around 40 crore unorganized sector workers.
- Enhanced usage of information technology to improve services of EPFO and ESIC and bring more transparency and accountability in them.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588731>

India International Cooperatives Trade Fair

Question: Which edition of the India International Trade Fair 2019 take place from 13 to 15 October 2019 in New Delhi?

(a) Third (b) Fifth (c) First (d) Seventh

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The first edition of 'India International Cooperatives Trade Fair'(IICTF) was organized at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.
- This 3 day event took place from 11 to 13 October, 2019. It was inaugurated by the Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar.
- As 94% of total farmers in India are members of at least one cooperative institution, IICTF aims at furthering Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government's vision and goal of doubling farmers' income by promoting cooperative-to-cooperative trade within India & abroad.

Main Highlights of the fair:

- IICTF offers huge opportunity for the industry and business houses from India and abroad to build alliances, business networking, product sourcing and interacting with the primary producers of a wide range of products and service providers.
- 35 countries around the world participated in this fair.
- YuvaSahakar-↯Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme 2019 formulated by National Cooperative Development Corporation(NCDC) was also launched at the fair.
- Sahakar Bharati, the single largest organisation focusing on enlightening masses about the benefit of cooperative movement also showcased and launched their brand 'Simplydesi' which will provide good marketing and branding opportunities for cooperatives.
- At the 3 day IICTF 75 MoUs were signed. Thematic sessions were held on Globalisation of Cooperative Trade, Cooperative Banking and Financial Inclusion, Empowerment of Youth and Women through Cooperatives, Agro-processing Ecosystem through Cooperatives, etc.

Facts about cooperative:

- Over one billion people around the world are members of a cooperative. More than 12% of humanity is part of any of the 3 million cooperatives in the world.
- Financial cooperatives serve 13 % of the world population while agricultural cooperatives produce 50% of global agriculture output implying immense potential that exists in the sector for global trade.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1587841>

Asia Health- 2019 Conference

Question: Where did the Asia Health 2019 Conference take place recently?

(a) Hyderabad (b) New Delhi (c) Dhaka (d) Colombo

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The Asia Health 2019 Conference was organized in New Delhi from 16 to 18 October 2019 in association with CII.
- It was chaired by Union Minister of State Dr. Jitendra Singh.
- Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Aarogya Yojana was described as a unique and successful health insurance scheme launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2018.
- Over 50 lakh people have benefited from this scheme and the government is taking healthcare protection to a new aspirational level. It is the “world’s largest government funded healthcare program” targeting more than 50 crore beneficiaries.
- Dr. Jitendra Singh suggested that in a heterogeneous and dynamic nation like India the fundamental priorities need to be considered while determining the spectrum of healthcare and disease. He said that India is evolving state and the disease and healthcare spectrum should be determined according to it.
- The developed and new technology is needed but there is no alternative for human interface in the healthcare.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588401>

25th edition of DST-CII India Netherlands Technology Summit

Question: Where did the 25th edition DST-CII India Netherlands Technology Summit take place recently?

(a) Mumbai (b) Kolkata (c) New Delhi (d) Jaipur

Answer: (c)
Related facts:

- The 25th edition of DST-CII India Netherlands Technology Summit was organized at New Delhi on 15 October 2019.
- It was inaugurated by King Willem-Alexander of The Netherlands and Union Minister for Science & Technology and Health Dr. Harsh Vardhan.
- The two day Summit (15-16 October) provides a high profile and wide-ranging platform for businesses, knowledge institutions and government to forge partnership and boost innovation, investment and trade.
- 'NEXUS' is the central theme of the summit, discussing how to co-create on pioneering innovative solutions for global challenges related to water, food and good health for all.
- Among the many themes during the Summit, the core focus was on Cross-cutting Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), NEXUS of Water-Agriculture-Health, Entrepreneurship, Enabling Technologies, Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, etc.
- The shared heritage and common beliefs between both countries that has led to further intensify cooperation and build a sound bilateral relationship.
- A booklet titled "Science, Technology and Innovation Partnership" was also released by Mona Keijzer, Dutch State Secretary for Economic Affairs and Climate Policy and Dr. Harsh Vardhan.

Relation between India and Netherlands:

- India and the Netherlands are celebrating 10 years of cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation space, especially in areas such as Urban Water Management, Smart Energy Grids etc.
- Netherlands is India's 28th largest trading partner globally and 6th largest trading partner from the European Union. The country has been the gateway for over 20% of all of India's exports to the European Union.
- Between 2000 and 2017, the Netherlands invested \$24.31 billion in India, ranking amongst the top 5 investors in the country.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588181>

2nd Indo French Knowledge Summit

Question: Where did the second Indo French Knowledge Summit take place on October 17-18,2019?

(a) Hyderabad (b) Lyon (c) Paris (d) New Delhi

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The second edition of the Indo-French Knowledge Summit took place at the University of Lyon, France on October 17-18,2019.
- The summit is dedicated to higher education, research and innovation.
- This two-day summit was organised by the Embassy of France in India in association with the Ministry of Science and Technology and the HRD Ministry.
- The first Knowledge Summit took place in 2018 state visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to India.
- It is an essential step to develop and structure the collaborations in education and research, stimulate connections between research and industry, and encourage the mobility of students and scholars between France and India. These matters are a fundamental aspect of our partnership with India.

- Around 15 agreements are signed between French and Indian participants during this summit.
- Over 300 participants from the Indian and French academia, research organisations, corporate houses, competitive clusters and start-ups, as well as public authorities took part in the second Knowledge Summit in Lyon.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/2nd-indo-french-knowledge-summit-in-lyon-on-october-17-18-119101601379_1.html

National Conference on Agriculture- Rabi Campaign 2019

Question: Where did the National Conference on Agriculture- Rabi Campaign 2019 take place recently?

(a) Pune (b) Patna (c) New Delhi (d) Ranchi

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The National Conference on Agriculture for Rabi Campaign 2019 was organized on 20 September 2019 at NASC, Pusa, New Delhi.
- The conference was inaugurated by Parshottam Rupala, Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.
- The record production is achieved for food grains (285 million tonnes). There is also all time high production of rice (116 million tonnes), wheat (102.5 million tonnes), pulses and oilseeds.
- It was mentioned that the shortage of oilseeds will be tackled by launching a separate mission to increase capacity and reduce import of edible oils.
- The State Agriculture Departments should furnish their fertilizer demands to Centre in time so that availability can be ensured to farmers at crucial stages of crops.
- The department has decided to distribute seed mini-kits for Rabi crops, pulses and oilseed with active involvement of State Agriculture Departments.
- As far as Kisan Credit Card is concerned, major changes in terms of waiver of registration fee, minimum time for issuance of KCC, widening the range of loans etc have been made for covering large number of farmers.
- 45 biofortified varieties have been released with enhanced percentage of nutrients, protein etc. The State Agriculture Departments have been asked to provide support for strengthening the seed hubs. There is need to strengthen the Lab to Land connect for maximum benefit of farmers.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1585689>

APEDA holds International Conference-Cum-Buyer seller meet

Question: Where did APEDA organized the International Conference cum Buyer Seller meet on September 26 2019?

(a) New Delhi (b) Mumbai (c) Agartala (d) Shillong

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India, in cooperation with government of Tripura organised an International Conference-cum-Buyer Seller Meet in Agartala on September 26,2019.

- The event was inaugurated by Dr. U. Venkateswarlu, Chief Secretary, Government of Tripura.
- It was organized to showcase the export potential of agricultural products from North East Region (NER) and Tripura in particular.
- Twenty international buyers from 8 countries – Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Indonesia, UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait and Greece participated in it.
- More than 30 exporters and representatives of FPC/FPO from Tripura, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh also participated. APEDA has taken various initiatives to facilitate exports from the region, which has been identified as a major thrust area for increasing agri exports.
- Tripura has some very specific commodities like pineapple, ginger, turmeric among horticultural produce and aromatic rice, corn and some oilseeds among the agricultural produce and the State Government is trying its best to create infrastructure and logistics facilities.
- Importers and buyers also spoke about their business, commodities of interest and promised to explore import of commodities especially perishable items from the North East region.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1586302>

46th National Management Convention

Question: Who chaired the 46th National Management Convention organized by All India Management Association (AIMA) on September 17, 2019?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Prakash Javadekar (c) Amit Shah (d) Venkaiah Naidu

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Union Minister for Home Affairs, Amit Shah chaired the 46th National Management Convention held by All India Management Association (AIMA), New Delhi.
- He addressed the meeting addressing distinguished on the topic of 'New India, Great India'

Important highlights of the meeting:

- Shah stated that India was well on way to becoming 5 trillion dollar economy by 2024 and that a strong foundation has been laid in the direction by the Modi Government.
- The National per capita income increased from about Rs. 78,000 to over Rs. 1,26,000;
- Agricultural Growth rate has picked up pace after the government has increased the budget substantially.
- National highways construction increased 2.5 times; near total rural electrification has been achieved; 1,20,000 gram panchayats have been linked with broadband; 99.4% citizens have bank accounts today; Health cover was given to 50 crore people under Aayushman Bharat are major success of the NDA government.
- NDA government also built 83 lakh houses in last 5 years, 8 crore LPG connections given; houses to 2.5 crore people were given and 8 crore people have access to toilets now.
- Ease of doing business, global competitiveness, foreign investments, innovation index; among other global benchmarks have seen immense progress in the last 5 years.
- The Government has been focusing on giving the youth a platform to encourage entrepreneurial spirit in the country
- The 'Rule of Law' is imperative for economic growth and in India becoming a global leader. Organizations like AIMA are responsible to provide the industry a direction and platform to make India a global trade leader.

- There is a need to setup sector-based R&D clusters, bring in investments and take 'Make in India', 'Start up India' forward so that India does not need to look towards the world for anything.
- There is need to ensure that the benefits of intellectual property rights remain in India and India is able to reap the benefits of the rich demographic dividend available in the country.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1585302>

Joint Naval Annual Quality Conclave (JNAQC)

Question: Consider the following statement regarding Joint Naval Annual Quality Conclave (JNAQC)

(1) Joint Naval Annual Quality Conclave (JNAQC) was held in Visakhapatnam.

(2) The Theme of the conclave was 'Transformation of QA Paradigm: Opportunities and Challenges'.

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:

- Joint Naval Annual Quality Conclave (JNAQC) was held in Visakhapatnam on September 05, 2019.
- The Theme of the conclave is 'Transformation of QA Paradigm: Opportunities and Challenges'.
- It was hosted by the Naval Quality Assurance Establishments under the aegis of Director General Quality Assurance (DGQA), Ministry of Defence.
- Vice Admiral Atul Kumar Jain, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command was the Chief Guest for the annual event.
- It provides a vibrant environment for stimulating discussions on all aspects pertaining to Transformation of QA Paradigm and will benefit all stakeholders by enabling cross-fertilisation of ideas and best practices from diverse fields.

Links:

<http://www.uniindia.com/~joint-naval-annual-quality-conclave-to-be-held-in-visakhapatnam-on-sept-5/India/news/1716749.html>

Associations & Organizations

Acquisition of Fitbit brand

Question: Which of the following company has recently acquired the smart watch making brand Fitbit for \$2.1 billion?

(a) Microsoft (b) Amazon (c) Google (d) Fossil

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 1st November, 2019, Google announced to buy smart watch making company Fitbit for USD 2.1 billion in a deal giving the US tech giant a fresh entry in the wearable technology space.
- Fitbit is a trusted brand that supports more than 28 million active users around the globe.

- Google aspires to create tools that help people enhance their knowledge, success, health and happiness. This goal is closely aligned with Fitbit's long-time focus on wellness and helping people live healthier, more active lives.
- The companies said the Fitbit platform would remain platform-agnostic and continue to serve Apple's iOS devices as well as those powered by the Google Android system.
- The Alphabet, Google parent company is largely absent from wearables gadgetry, following its failed Google Glass project, but produces the WearOS software used by makers of these devices.
- Analysts have however pointed out that Google may benefit from the large Fitbit database for health Apps and Artificial Intelligence.

Links:

<http://ddnews.gov.in/sci-tech/google-eyes-expansion-wearable-tech-buy-fitbit>
<http://ddnews.gov.in/sci-tech/google-eyes-expansion-wearable-tech-buy-fitbit>

Law & Justice

The Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2019

Question: Consider the following statement:

- (1) The Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2019 seeks to amend the Jallianwala Bagh Memorial Act 1951.
- (2) The central government can now remove the trustees before completing their term for any reason.

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 Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2019 was passed by a voice vote in the Rajya Sabha on November 20, 2019.
- Earlier, the Lok Sabha has passed this bill on 2nd August 2019.
- It amends the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951. The bill seeks to alter the regulation and composition of Jallianwala Bagh Memorial Trust which was established in Amritsar, Punjab in 1951.

Composition of Trust:

- Under the 1951 Act, the Trustees of the Memorial include: (i) the Prime Minister, as Chairperson, (ii) the President of the Indian National Congress, (iii) the Minister in-charge of Culture, (iv) the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, (v) the Governor of Punjab, (vi) the Chief Minister of Punjab, and (vii) three eminent persons nominated by the central government.

Changes made:

- The Bill amends this provision to remove the President of the Congress party as a permanent trustee.
- Also, it clarifies that when there is no Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, then the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha will be the Trustee.
- The Act provides that the three eminent persons nominated by the central government will have a term of five years and will be eligible for re-nomination. Now, the Bill empowers the

Central Government to remove a nominated member without any reason before his term ends.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=194647>

Books

Book: The Unquiet River

Question: A book titled The Unquiet River authored by noted historian Arupjyoti Saikia, is based upon the biography of which river?

(a) Ganga (b) Yamuna (c) Brahmaputra (d) Narmada

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- A book titled The Unquiet River: A biography of the Brahmaputra is going to be released in November 2019.
- It has been published by Oxford University Press (OUP) and authored by historian Arupjyoti Saikia.
- Placing the river Brahmaputra at the centre the book has recreated the sequential history of Assam.
- The Brahmaputra River geologically is the youngest among the major rivers in the world yet it is known as a moving ocean.
- The river Brahmaputra travels 2880 km from its origin in the young Himalayan range through the Tibet and played major role in shaping the landscape of the Assam valley.
- Before finally merging with the sea in Bangladesh, the river gives many things to the people of Assam as well as providing them livelihoods.
- The book claims to combine a range of disciplinary scholarship to unravel the geological forces as well as human endeavour which have shaped the river into what it is today.
- The book describes the river's long journey from past to the present time and its central role in the beat of Assam.

Links:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/pti-stories/new-book-deep-dives-into-brahmaputra-s-history-119102800518_1.html

Loktantra Ke Swar

Question: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has published which book, a compilation of speeches delivered by President?

(a) Loktantra Ke Swar (b) Jantantra Ke Swar (c) Janta Ki Awaz (d) President speech

Answer : (a)

Related facts:

- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has published two books on selected speeches of President of India, Ram Nath Kovind.
- These books are – Loktantra Ke Swar and The Republican Ethic.
- These two books are a compilation of 95 speeches delivered by President Kovind during his second year in office.
- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu released the book at Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra, New Delhi.

- The books are also available in e-version on Kindle and App Store.
- Various online shopping websites are also providing these books on demand.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193033>

Book: India in the Persianate Age: 1000-1765

Question: A new book, India in the Persianate Age: 1000-1765, which has been released recently, is written by-

(a) Ranajit Guha (b) M. G. S. Narayanan (c) Richard M Eaton (d) Thomas R. Metcalf

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On September 24, 2019 a new book named “India in the Persianate Age: 1000-1765” was released.
- The book is written by United States (US) based professor and author, Richard M Eaton.
- In the book Mr. Eaton traces the rise of Persianate culture, a many-faceted trans-regional world connected by ever-widening networks across much of Asia.
- The book tells how dynasties based in eastern Afghanistan, Introduced to India in the eleventh century and progressively indigenized during sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.
- Eaton brilliantly elaborates the complex encounter between India’s Sanskrit culture—an equally rich Persian culture which helped shape the Sultanate, the Mughal Empire, and a host of regional states.
- Eaton says that this long-term process of cultural interaction is profoundly reflected in the languages, literatures, cuisines, attires, religions, styles of ruler-ship and warfare, science, art, music, and architecture—and more—of South Asia.

Link:

<https://www.ucpress.edu/book/9780520325128/india-in-the-persianate-age>

Year, Day & Week

World Fisheries Day

Question: When is the World Fisheries Day celebrated every year?

(a) 20 November (b) 22 November (c) 21 November (d) 19 November

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- World Fisheries Day is celebrated every year on November 21 2019. The theme of this year is Social responsibility in the fisheries value chain.
- The fishing communities held rallies, workshops, public meetings, cultural programs and exhibition to highlight the importance of maintaining the world’s fisheries.
- Department of Fisheries organized a function to celebrate the World Fisheries Day in New Delhi. Union Minister for Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries Giriraj Singh mentioned that there is a tremendous amount of opportunities in the fisheries sector.
- The annual production of fisheries has reached up to 13 million metric tonnes and the Ministry is working on achieving target of 20 million metric tonne in the next five years.

Links:

<http://www.edristi.in/>

National Press Day

Question: Consider the following statement:

- (1) National Press Day 2019 was observed across India on November 16.
- (2) The Press Council of India is an autonomous body.

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:

- National Press Day 2019 was observed across India on November 16.
- Addressing an event on this day Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized that a free press is the cornerstone of a vibrant democracy.

National Press Day:

- National Press Day is celebrated every year on 16 November. The day marks the presence of an independent and responsible press in India.
- The media is called the fourth pillar of democracy. It is said that journalists are a mirror of society, which brings out the truth even in adverse circumstances.
- This day symbolizes freedom of the press and its responsibilities towards the society. The Press Council of India started functioning on this day.
- Today, around 50 countries in the world have the Press Council or Media Council.

Press day celebration reason:

- The First Press Commission (in 1956) had envisioned a 'Press Council' to protect freedom of the press in India and a higher ideal in journalism.
- After that, the Press Council was established on 4 July 1966 in India which started its work from 16 November 1966. It is a statutory and quasi-judicial institution.
- The Press Council of India ensures the independent work and high standards of the press in India.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.nic.in/News?title=Today-is-National-Press-Day&id=374599>

International Men's Day

Question: Consider the following statement:

- (1) International Men's Day is celebrated annually on 19 November.
- (2) The 2019 theme of International Men's Day is "Making a Difference for Men and Boys."

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:

- International Men's Day is celebrated annually on 19 November.
- This day is mainly celebrated to protect men from discrimination, exploitation, oppression, violence and inequality and to give them their rights.
- The theme of the 2019 International Men's Day is "Making a Difference for Men and Boys".

- Recognizing the significance of men in the society, the day is celebrated in almost 80 countries and is also supported by UNESCO.
- In 2007, India celebrated International Men's Day for the first time.
- It is not that much popular in India but gradually the emphasis of celebrating this day has started catching up.
- Private organizations, NGOs and civil societies are encouraging people to come forward to raise their voice for the rights of men.

Links:

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/international-mens-day-theme-history-significance-messages-quotes-wishes-quotes-images-messages-wall-2134794>

National Unity Day

Question: When the National Unity day was observed?

(a) October, 10 (b) October ,31 (c) August ,10 (d) August ,31

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- National Unity Day was celebrated on 31st of this month to mark the birth anniversary of Ironman Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Kevadia in Gujarat to pay homage to the great leader at the Statue of Unity.
- To celebrate the spirit of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat, celebrations were held in more than 600 districts of the country.
- Home Minister Amit Shah flagged off the commemorative Run for Unity from New Delhi's Major Dhyanchand National Stadium.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=National-Unity-Day-to-be-celebrated-on-Oct-31&id=373451>

World Mental Health Day

Question: Consider the following statement regarding World Mental Health Day 2019:

(1) It was observed on October 10, 2019.

(2) The theme of this day is 'suicide prevention'.

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:

- World Mental Health Day is observed across the world on October 10, 2019.
- The day aims to raise awareness regarding mental health issues and mobilize efforts to support mental health.
- World mental health day theme for 2019 is 'suicide prevention'.
- The main objective behind making suicide prevention the key focus this year is to attract the government's attention to the issue so that it is given priority in public agendas across the world.
- The World mental health day 2019 gives an opportunity to all those who work in the field of mental health issues to talk about their work and raise awareness regarding what more can be done to make mental health care a reality for people across the globe.
- According to WHO, almost every 40 seconds, someone loses their life. Hence, WHO has launched an awareness campaign called "40 seconds of action" to raise awareness of the

large scale of suicide around the world and the role that each of us can play to help prevent it

Links:

<https://wfmh.global/world-mental-health-day-2019/>

World Science Day for Peace & Development

Question: Consider the following statement:

(1) World Science Day for Peace & Development was observed on 10 November.

(2) The theme for the year 2019 is Open science, leaving no one behind.

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:

- World Science Day for Peace & Development is observed on 10th November every year.
- The day ensures that citizens are informed of the importance and the relevance of science and they are engaged the wider public in debates on emerging scientific issues.
- It also highlights the role of scientists in broadening people's understanding of the earth and making societies more sustainable.
- The main aim of the day are to promote international and national solidarity for shared science between countries, strengthen the public awareness on the role of science for peaceful and sustainable societies, renew international and national commitment for the use of science for the benefit of societies and focus on the challenges faced by science and raising support for the scientific endeavor.
- The theme for the year 2019 is Open science, leaving no one behind.
- The first World Science Day for Peace and Development was celebrated worldwide on 10th November, 2002 under UNESCO auspices.

Links:

<https://www.un.org/en/events/scienceday/>

Uttarakhand statehood day

Question: When was the Uttarakhand statehood day celebrated?

(a) 7 November (b) 8 November (c) 10 November (d) 9 November

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Uttarakhand celebrated its statehood day on 9 November 2019.
- Uttarakhand was formed on 9 November 2000 by joining some districts from the Northwestern part of Uttar Pradesh and some portion Himalayan Mountain.
- This year was the 19th Uttarakhand Foundation Day.
- The name of state was changed from Uttaranchal to Uttarakhand in 2007.
- Uttarakhand capital is Dehradun.
- It has rich natural resources including glaciers, rivers, dense forests, and snow-clad mountain peaks.
- The capital of the state is Dehradun and is situated in the Nainital the High Court.
- It is also known as Land of Gods.
- The government is celebrating a week-long "Foundation Week" from 3 November to 9 November 2019.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1591144>

World Food Day

Question: When is the World Food Day celebrated every year?

(a) October 14 (b) October 16 (c) October 17 (d) October 18

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- World Food Day is celebrated every year on October 16.
- The theme of this year was Our Actions Are Our Future. Healthy Diets for A #ZeroHunger World.
- There have been a dramatic change in diet in recent decades as a result of globalization, urbanization and income growth with a shift from seasonal, mainly plant-based and fibre-rich dishes to diets that are high in refined starches, sugar, fats, salt, and other animal-source products.
- Also less time is spent preparing meals at home, and consumers, especially in urban areas, increasingly rely on supermarkets, fast food outlets etc.
- A combination of unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles has sent obesity rates soaring, not only in developed countries, but also low-income countries, where hunger and obesity often coexist.
- Now over 670 million adults and 120 million girls and boys (5-19 years) are obese, and over 40 million children under 5 are overweight, while over 820 million people suffer from hunger.
- Over 30,000 edible plant species are known but only 200 are cultivated at the farm level. Around 50 per cent of humans' calorie intake comes from just eight major crops namely wheat, maize, rice, barley, beans, groundnut, maize, potatoes, and sorghum.
- There is a need to cultivate more seasonal, indigenous crops to meet nutritional needs.

Unhealthy diet:

- An unhealthy diet is the leading risk factor for deaths from non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and certain cancers. It is linked with one fifth of deaths worldwide.
- Unhealthy eating habits are also taking a toll on national health budgets costing up to \$2 trillion per year.
- Obesity and other forms of malnutrition affect nearly one in three people. Projections indicate that the number will be one in two by 2025.

A healthy diet:

- A healthy diet is one that meets the nutritional needs of individuals by providing sufficient, safe, nutritious and diverse foods to lead an active life and reduce the risk of disease.
- Eating a healthy diet would help in reaching the target of zero Hunger as decided in the "UN Sustainable Development Goals".
- It includes, among others, fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, seeds and whole grains, and foods that are low in fats (especially saturated fats), sugar and salt.

Links:

<https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/food/world-food-day-2019-fao-calls-for-healthy-diets-to-build-zero-hunger-world-67260>

Police Commemoration Day

Question: Who presided over as the chief guest on the occasion of the Police Commemoration Day which was celebrated on October 21 2019?

(a) Raj Nath Singh (b) Amit Shah (c) VK Singh (d) Jitendra Singh

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Union Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah presided over the occasion of the Police Commemoration Day and paid homage to the police personnel martyred in the line of duty at the National Police Memorial, in New Delhi on October 20 2019.
- Home Minister commended all police personnel and called them the silent sentinels of the nation.
- From the guarding of borders to traffic management and fighting the menace of illicit drugs to battling terrorism, police personnel have played a quiet yet seminal role in the nation's development.
- 34844 police personnel have laid down lives in the line of duty till now.
- It was mentioned that police forces in India are severely understaffed, with an actual strength of 144 police personnel per one lakh population as opposed to the sanctioned strength of 222.

Police Commemoration Day:

- Police Commemoration Day owes its origin to the unflinching dedication and commendable courage of CRPF men.
- It was on this very day in 1959 when CRPF scripted a saga of valour and sacrifice in the snow-laden, inaccessible, inhospitable terrain of Hot Springs in Ladakh. A patrol party of twenty personnel of CRPF and Intelligence Bureau had gone to search for a missing reconnaissance party when it was ambushed by PLA (Chinese Army).
- In spite of the sudden attack and disadvantageous tactical position, they fought valiantly against the Chinese army personnel who were in large numbers and heavily armed.
- In this battle, ten CRPF men were martyred in defense of the country. Since then, Police Commemoration Day is observed on 21st October every year to honor the loyalty and supreme sacrifice of police personnel for the nation.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588575>

International Day of Girl Child

Question: When is the International Day for Girl Child celebrated every year?

(a) October 10 (b) October 12 (c) October 11 (d) October 15

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The International Day of Girl Child is celebrated every year on October 11.
- The theme for this year is 'Girl Force: Unscripted and Unstoppable'.
- In the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, it was determined to recognize the rights of women and girls as human rights. The conference culminated in the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: the most comprehensive policy agenda for the empowerment of women.
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing the rights of not only women but girls.

The Platform for Action specifically calls on the global community to:

- Eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls.
- Eliminate negative cultural attitudes and practices against girls.
- Promote and protect the rights of girls and increase awareness of their needs and potential.
- Eliminate discrimination against girls in education, skills development and training.
- Eliminate discrimination against girls in health and nutrition.
- Eliminate the economic exploitation of child labour and protect young girls at work.
- Eradicate violence against girls.
- Promote girls' awareness of and participation in social, economic and political life.
- Strengthen the role of the family in improving the status of girls.

Links:

<https://www.unicef.org/gender-equality/international-day-girl-2019>

76th Year of Formation of Azad Hind Government

Question: Where did the commemoration event of Azad Hind Government take place on October 21 2019?

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

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Union Minister of State for Culture & Tourism (IC), Prahlad Singh Patel took part in the commemoration event of 76th anniversary of the formation of Azad Hind Government on October 21 2019 at Red Fort, Delhi.
- Union Minister congratulated the nation on the proud occasion of 76th anniversary of formation of Azad Hind Government.
- Azad Hind government represented the vision laid down by Subhas Chandra Bose. Azad Hind government was actively involved in nation building and had even started its own bank, currency, postal stamps and army.
- The Minister emphasized to bring back the audio clip of Netaji Subhas from Singapore in which he can be heard declaring the formation of Azad Hind Government.
- The nation salutes Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose whose supreme sacrifice and leadership continues to guide young generation.
- Last year on 21st October 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisted the National Flag at Red Fort and also unveiled the plaque commemorating the 75th Anniversary of formation of Azad Hind Government, formed by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588627>

73rd Infantry Day Celebration

Question: When is Infantry Day celebrated by the Infantry every year?

(a) October 18 (b) October 20 (c) October 25 (d) October 27

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Infantry celebrates 27th October each year as Infantry Day to commemorate the first engagement with armed adversary post independence.
- In response to the threat posed to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of our nation, on this day in 1947, the leading elements of the Indian Army air landed at Srinagar and fought Pakistani tribesmen from the erstwhile North West Frontier Province gallantly.

- To honour the gallant actions of the Infantry soldiers, a wreath laying ceremony is being organised at the National War Memorial. Army Chief Bipin Rawat, and other senior generals of Infantry will pay homage to the bravehearts in a solemn ceremony.
- To honour the Next of Kin and disabled soldiers, 'The Ultimate Run' involving 1.2 Km Run/ Walk for Next of Kin, wheel chair bound disabled soldiers (assisted by Army Public School students) and ASHA School Children is being organised on 19 October.
- Field Marshal KM Cariappa Memorial Lecture is also planned at Manekshaw Centre, Delhi Cantonment on 25 October.
- A Talk on 'The Strategic Dimensions of Kashmir Issue, will be delivered by well known military analyst Mr Maroof Raza followed by release of commemorative postal stamp 'Siachen Warrior', to commemorate the selfless contributions of the indomitable Indian Army soldier, who participated in OPERATION MEGHDOOT.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588512>

60th 'World Standard Day'

Question: Who inaugurated the 60th World Standard Day celebration by Bureau of Indian Standards on October 14, 2019 in New Delhi?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Amit Shah (c) Ram Vilas Paswan (d) Ashwini Chaubey

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan inaugurated the celebrations of 'World Standard Day' by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in New Delhi.
- The theme of the celebration was "Video Standards create a global stage" being highly relevant in the Indian context as India is the fastest growing entertainment and media market globally and is expected to keep up the momentum by growing at a compounded annual growth rate of more than 11%.
- The Media and entertainment industry in India will become a Rs. 4,51,373 crore industry by 2023.
- Delivering his Presidential address, Union Minister Shri Ram Vilas Paswan congratulated everyone on the occasion of 60th 'World Standards Day' and appreciated the efforts of all officials of BIS and said that we have some of the best laboratories in the world.
- With the target of providing tap water to all households by 2024, BIS which sets quality standards for piped water, has a huge role to play in this regard.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1588021>

26th foundation day of the National Human Rights Commission

Question: Who presided the 26th foundation day celebration of the National Human Rights Commission on October 12 2019?

(a) Narendra Modi (b) Ram Nath Kovind (c) Amit Shah (d) Dipak Mishra

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India celebrated its 26th Foundation Day on the 12th October, 2019 and organized a function in New Delhi to mark the occasion.

- Union Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah presided over the 26th foundation day celebrations of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) as Chief Guest. HL Dattu, Chairperson, NHRC was also present.
- The concept of human rights violation is not limited only custodial torture or deaths. There is also a need to focus on elimination of poverty and lack of basic amenities, which result in grave human rights violations.
- There have been efforts to further strengthen the National Human Rights Commission and State Human Rights Commissions.
- The recent amendment to the PHR, Act is an affirmative step bringing the Women, Children, Backward Class Commissions in the decision making process of the National Human Rights Commission to encourage wider participation of all sections of society.
- The NHRC Chairperson highlighted various activities of the Commission and the new initiatives taken as part of its consistent endeavour to make people aware of the importance of the promotion and protection of human rights.
- He said that the Commission has cleared almost all cases registered prior to 2016. He said that the enormous increase in the number of complaints is indicative of the awareness of Human Rights among the people and as also their growing faith in the Commission.

NHRC:

- The Commission was set up on the 12th October, 1993, under the Protection of Human Rights Act, passed by Parliament. The mandate of the NHRC is to work for the promotion and protection of human rights and take cognizance of such complaints wherein the actions, inactions and omissions of government functionaries, prima facie or allegedly, cause human rights violation.
- It is a recommendatory quasi-judicial body, having powers of a civil court to call for any documents and summon any public authority in a case of human rights violation. In a case of human rights violation, its recommendations are twofold: relief to the victim and punishment to the guilty.

Links:

<http://nhrc.nic.in/media/press-release/curtain-raiser-nhrc-celebrate-its-26th-foundation-day-12th-october-2019-11102019>

International Day of Peace

Question: When is the International Day of Peace celebrated every year?

(a) September 20 (b) September 21 (c) September 18 (d) September 25

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Each year the International Day of Peace is observed around the world on 21 September. The General Assembly has declared this as a day devoted to strengthening the ideals of peace, both within and among all nations and peoples.
- The theme of this year was “Climate Action for Peace” which draws attention to the importance of combating climate change as a way to protect and promote peace throughout the world.
- Climate change causes clear threats to international peace and security. Natural disasters displace three times as many people as conflicts, forcing millions to leave their homes and seek safety elsewhere.
- The salinization of water and crops is endangering food security, and the impact on public health is escalating. The growing tensions over resources and mass movements of people are affecting every country on every continent.

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Links:

<https://www.un.org/en/events/peaceday/>

Teacher's Day

Question: Teacher's Day is being celebrated across India to honour which of the following personality?

(a) Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (b) C V Raman (c) Homi Jahangir Bhabha (d) None of the above

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 5th September, 2019, Teacher's Day is being celebrated across India to honour Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan on his 131st birth anniversary. He was born on 5th September, 1888.
- Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan was India's first Vice President and second President.
- Teachers' Day was first celebrated in 1962, the year he became the second President of India.
- Since then, the day has been celebrated every year. Dr. Radhakrishnan highly believed that teachers should be the best minds in the country.
- Dr. Radhakrishnan was awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, in 1954.

Links:

<https://www.indiacelebrating.com/events/teachers-day/>

World Rhino Day 2019

Question: The World Rhino Day is celebrated every year on-

(a) September 11 (b) September 22 (c) October 22 (d) August 22

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- On September 22, 2019 World Rhino Day was observed in various wild life sanctuaries related to the conservation of rhinoceros species in the world.
- The purpose of celebration of this day is mainly focused upon world's five rhinoceros species, and to reflect on the challenges faced by them.
- It is an international ecological observance to raise awareness on the protection of 5 existing species of rhinoceros.
- It was first observed in 2010 by WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) South Africa.
- On this occasion Rohit Sharma had launched "Rohit4Rhinos campaign" in partnership with WWF India and Animal Planet (wildlife channel) to spread awareness about the need for conservation of one-horned rhinos.

5 SPECIES OF RHINO:

- There are five species of rhino, white rhino, black rhino, Indian rhino, Javan rhino, and Sumatran rhino that still survive in the world today.
- Two of the species come from Africa and three from Asia but all of them have one thing in common their very existence in our world is under threat, thanks mainly to a massive increase in poaching.

Facts common to all species of rhino:

- Rhino horn is made of keratin, the same substance that makes up human hair and fingernails.
- The collective term for a group of rhinos is a 'crash' of rhinos.
- All rhinos are herbivores (meaning they do not eat meat).
- All species of rhino can weigh over a tone.
- All 5 species of rhino have an excellent sense of hearing and smell but very poor sight.

Links:

<https://www.ecotraining.co.za/world-rhino-day-22-september-2019/>

Miscellaneous

POK belongs to India, Foreign Minister S Jaishankar

Question: Recently who said "POK is part of India and we expect one day that we will have the physical jurisdiction over it"?

(a) Rajnath Singh (b) Amit Shah (c) S Jaishankar (d) Narendra Modi

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Recently Union External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar stated that the "POK is and has always been a part of India and also said that India expects to have physical jurisdiction over the area one day".
- Foreign Minister S Jaishankar asserted while addressing a press meeting on the occasion of 100 days of the Modi government also said "Our position on POK (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir) has always been and will always be very clear.

Links:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/pok-belongs-to-india-will-have-jurisdiction-over-that-area-one-day-foreign-minister-s-jaishankar/articleshow/71169028.cms>

PM Modi asks for speech suggestions for 'Howdy, Modi' address

Question: What is the meaning of the term "Howdy"?

(a) How are you? (b) How do you do? (c) Whats up (d) None of the above

Answer : (b)

- PM Narendra Modi had invited ideas from the people for his speech at the 'Howdy Modi' event in Houston, US on September 22, 2019.
- Modi urged the people to express their thoughts on the special open forum on the NaMo application.
- US President Donald Trump will also be present in the 'Howdy Modi' event.
- Modi has asked earlier to the people for ideas for his Independence Day speech and 'Mann Ki Baat' monthly radio programme.
- More than 50,000 Indian-Americans from across the US have registered for the September 22 "Howdy, Modi! Shared Dreams, Bright Futures" event to be held at the NRG Stadium in Houston.
- "Howdy", short for 'How do you do?' is a friendly greeting commonly used in southwestern United States.

Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/pm-modi-speech-suggestions-for-howdy-modi-address-1599908-2019-09-17>