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NAVATRA

Monthly Magazine on Current Events

Vol. - 4 Issue - 2 August, 2020



“Induction of
Rafale in
Indian Airforce”



National
Education Policy
2020



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 29th 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 July to 31st July) will benefit our beloved readers.

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

National

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) The National Education Policy 2020 is based on the recommendations of a committee chaired by former Isro chief K Kasturirangan.

(2) NEP 2020 replaces former 10+2 structure of school curricula by a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure.

(3) NEP 2020 aims to raise Gross Enrollment Ratio in higher education from current 26.3% to 50 % by 2035.

(4) NEP 2020 increases the public investment in Education sector to 6% of GDP from current 4.6 percent.

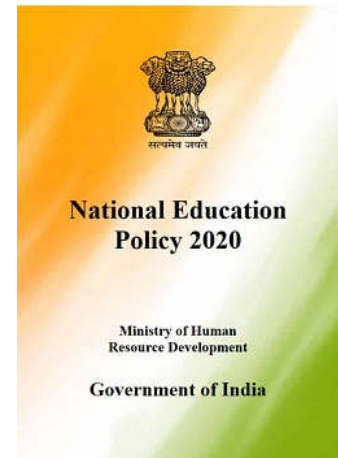
Of the above incorrect statement/s is/are:

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

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 29 July 2020, the Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the National Education Policy 2020.
- The policy targets making way for large scale, transformational reforms in both school and higher education sectors.
- The policy aims to make “India a global knowledge superpower”.
- This policy will replace the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986.
- Prior to 1986, the first National Education Policy was released in 1968 on the basis of recommendations of Kothari Commission.



Consultations:

- The National Education Policy 2020 is based on the recommendations of a committee chaired by former Isro chief K Kasturirangan.

Renaming of MHRD:

- The Cabinet has also approved the renaming of the Ministry of Human Resource Development to the Ministry of Education.

School Education:

- Universalization of Education from pre-school to secondary level with 100 % GER in school education by 2030.
- NEP 2020 will bring 2 crore out of school children back into the main stream.
- The 10+2 structure of school curricula is to be replaced by a 5+3+3+4 curricular structure corresponding to ages 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years respectively.
- This will bring the hitherto uncovered age group of 3-6 years under school curriculum, which has been recognized globally as the crucial stage for development of mental faculties of a child.

- The new system will have 12 years of schooling with three years of Anganwadi/ pre schooling.
- NCERT will develop a National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) for children up to the age of 8.
- NEP 2020 calls for setting up of a National Mission on Foundational Literacy and Numeracy by MHRD as a necessary prerequisite to learning.
- There will be no rigid separation between academic streams, extracurricular, vocational streams in schools; Vocational Education to start from Class 6 with Internships.
- A new and comprehensive National Curricular Framework for School Education, NCFSE 2020-21, will be developed by the NCERT.
- Teaching upto at least Grade 5 is to be in mother tongue/ regional language.
- Assessment reforms has been made with 360 degree Holistic Progress Card, tracking Student Progress for achieving Learning Outcomes.
- All students will take school examinations in Grades 3, 5, and 8 which will be conducted by the appropriate authority. Board exams for Grades 10 and 12 will be continued, but redesigned with holistic development as the aim.
- A new National Assessment Centre, PARAKH (Performance Assessment, Review, and Analysis of Knowledge for Holistic Development), will be set up as a standard-setting body .
- Special emphasis will be given on Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs).
- This includes setting up of Gender Inclusion Fund and also Special Education Zones for disadvantaged regions and groups.
- Every state/district will be encouraged to establish “BalBhavans” as a special day-time boarding school, to participate in art-related, career-related, and play-related activities.

Higher Education:

- Gross Enrollment Ratio in higher education to be raised to 50 % by 2035 from current 26.3%; 3.5 crore seats to be added in higher education.
- There will be Holistic Multidisciplinary Education with flexible curricula, creative combinations of subjects, integration of vocational education and multiple entry and exit points with appropriate certification.
- UG education can be of 3 or 4 years with multiple exit options and appropriate certification within this period. For example, Certificate after 1 year, Advanced Diploma after 2 years, Bachelor’s Degree after 3 years and Bachelor’s with Research after 4 years.
- M.Phil courses will be discontinued and all the courses at undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD level will now be interdisciplinary.
- An Academic Bank of Credit is to be established for digitally storing academic credits earned from different HEIs so that these can be transferred and counted towards final degree earned.
- Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs), at par with IITs, IIMs, to be set up as models of best multidisciplinary education of global standards in the country.
- The National Research Foundation will be created as an apex body for fostering a strong research culture and building research capacity across higher education.

- Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) will be set up as a single overarching umbrella body for the entire higher education, excluding medical and legal education.
- HECI to have four independent verticals – National Higher Education Regulatory Council (NHERC) for regulation, General Education Council (GEC) for standard setting, Higher Education Grants Council (HEGC) for funding, and National Accreditation Council (NAC) for accreditation.
- Affiliation of colleges is to be phased out in 15 years and a stage-wise mechanism to be established for granting graded autonomy to colleges.
- Over a period of time, every college is expected to develop into either an autonomous degree-granting College, or a constituent college of a university.

Teacher Education:

- A new and comprehensive National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2021, will be formulated by the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) in consultation with National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
- By 2030, the minimum degree qualification for teaching will be a 4-year integrated B.Ed. degree.
- A common National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST) will be developed by the National Council for Teacher Education by 2022, in consultation with NCERT, SCERTs, teachers and expert organizations from across levels and regions.

Other Significant Reforms:

- An autonomous body, the National Educational Technology Forum (NETF), will be created to provide a platform for the free exchange of ideas on the use of technology to enhance learning, assessment, planning, administration.
- NEP recommends setting an Indian Institute of Translation and Interpretation (IITI), National Institute (or Institutes) for Pali, Persian and Prakrit to ensure the preservation, growth, and vibrancy of all Indian languages.
- Internationalization of education will be facilitated through both institutional collaborations, and student and faculty mobility and allowing entry of top world ranked Universities to open campuses in our country.
- Increase the public investment in Education sector to 6% of GDP. Currently, India spends around 4.6 % of its total GDP on education.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1642049>

First five Rafale jets land at Ambala air force station

Question: In July 2020, France supplied first batch of 5 Rafale fighter jets to India. Which of the facts is not correct in this regard?

- On 27 July 2020, first five out of 36 Rafale fighter aircraft took off from Dassault Aviation Facility, Merignac, France.
- On July 29, 2020, these aircrafts touch down at Ambala Air Force Station.
- These aircraft has been inducted into the IAF as part of its Ambala-based No 17 Squadron, also known as the 'Golden Arrows'.

(d) The batch of first five fighter jets includes two single-seater and three twin-seater aircraft.

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On 27 July 2020, first five out of 36 Rafale fighter aircraft took off from Dassault Aviation Facility, Merignac, France.
- On July 29, 2020, these aircrafts touch down at Ambala Air Force Station.
- Rafale jets were escorted by two Sukhoi 30 MKI supersonic fighters as they entered Indian airspace.
- After entering Indian Airspace, Indian Rafale contingent was welcomed by establishing radio contact with Indian Navy warship INS Kolkata, deployed in the Western Arabian Sea.
- The Rafale aircraft covered a distance of nearly 7,000 km from France to India with air-to-air refuelling and a single stop at a French airbase in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- The batch of first five fighter jets includes three single-seater and two twin-seater aircraft.
- These aircraft has been inducted into the IAF as part of its Ambala-based No 17 Squadron, also known as the 'Golden Arrows'.
- IAF's 17 Squadron was resurrected on September 10, 2019.
- The 17 squadron, which operated from Bhatinda air base, was disbanded in 2016 after the IAF started gradual phasing out of Russian-origin Mig 21 jets.
- No. 17 Squadron was raised in Ambala on 1 October 1951 under the command of Flight Lieutenant D.L. Springett. It initially flew Harvard-II B.
- A formal induction ceremony of Rafale aircraft in 17 Squadron is scheduled to be held in the second half of Aug 2020.
- India & France signed an inter-governmental deal in September 2016 for procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets.
- Under this deal, India agreed to buy 36 Rafale aircraft from France for Rs 59 thousand crores.
- All aircraft will be delivered to India by the year 2021.
- The fighter jets were piloted by Group Captain Harkirat Singh who is the Commanding Officer of the 17 squadron, Wing Commander MK Singh, Group captain R Kataria, Wing Commander Abhishek Tripathi, Wing Commander Siddhu and Wing Commander Arun.



Rafale-The Omnirole fighter:

- The Dassault Rafale is a French twin-engine, canard delta wing, multirole fighter aircraft designed and built by Dassault Aviation.
- The Rafale is intended to perform air supremacy, interdiction, aerial reconnaissance, ground support, in-depth strike, anti-ship strike and nuclear deterrence missions. The Rafale is referred to as an "omnirole" aircraft by Dassault.
- Rafale is equipped with MICA air-to-air (range 80 km), SCALP air to ground missiles (range of over 300 km), Meteor air-to-air missiles (range of over 100 km) and

HAMMER, short form of Highly Agile and Manoeuvrable Munition Extended Range Missile, an air-to-ground precision guided missile to destroy bunker-type hardened targets within the range of 70 km.

- The state-of-the-art 4.5 Generation Rafale jet can reach almost double the speed of sound, with a top speed of 1.8 Mach.
- With its multi-role capabilities, including electronic warfare, air defence, ground support and in-depth strikes, the Rafale lends air superiority to the Indian Air Force.
- In addition to the above equipment, the Rafale carries the 30 mm GIAT 30 revolver cannon and can be outfitted with a range of laser-guided bombs, nuclear weapons and ground-attack munitions.
- Rafale is able to operate from both an aircraft carrier and a shore base.
- It is believed to be an expert in dodging radars.
- Once fuelled, Rafale can fly up to a range of 3,700 km.
- India will be the fourth country, after France, Egypt and Qatar, to fly the Rafale.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-rafale-fighter-jets-india-specs-speed-range-6528893/>

PM Modi, Mauritian counterpart Pravind Jugnauth jointly inaugurate new Supreme Court building in Port Louis

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Mauritian counterpart Pravind Jugnauth jointly e-inaugurated the new Supreme Court building in Port Louis, Mauritius.

(2) SAGAR, Security And Growth for All in the Region, is an Indian concept to give priority to the countries in Indian Ocean region.

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:

- On 30 July 2020, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Mauritian counterpart Pravind Jugnauth jointly e-inaugurated the new Supreme Court building in Port Louis, Mauritius.
- The structure is the first India-assisted infrastructure project in the capital of Mauritius.
- It has been constructed with Indian grant assistance of 30 US million dollars.
- The building, spread over more than 4700 sq m with 10 floors and a built-up area of 25,000 sq m, has green features and high energy efficiency. It will house all divisions and offices of the Supreme Court.
- The Supreme Court building is one of five projects implemented under a \$353-million special economic package extended by India in 2016.
- The Project is a successful implementation of vision SAGAR of PM Narendra Modi and reflects New Delhi's sharpened focus on its "neighbourhood first" policy.

SAGAR:

- SAGAR, which means "ocean" stands for – Security And Growth for All in the Region.

- The vision was enunciated by PM Narendra Modi in 2015.
- It is a new Indian concept to give priority to the countries in Indian Ocean region.
- SAGAR emphasizes on actively pursuing and promoting geo-political, strategic and economic interests on the seas, in particular the Indian Ocean.
- This will build up a network of growing political and economic maritime partnerships, and will strengthen regional frameworks helping in pursuing goals.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=PM-Modi%2c-Mauritian-counterpart-Pravind-Jugnauth-jointly-inaugurate-new-Supreme-Court-building-in-Port-Louis&id=396066>

Pawan Hans's first UDAN-RCS service launched in Uttarakhand

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Hardeep Singh Puri flagged off the first helicopter service by Pawan Hans in Uttarakhand under the UDAN-RCS scheme.

(2) UDAN-RCS, UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) is a regional airport development and "Regional Connectivity Scheme" (RCS) of Government of India, launched in 2017.

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:

- On 29 July 2020, Minister of State, Independent Charge, Civil Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri flagged off the first helicopter service by Pawan Hans in Uttarakhand under the UDAN-RCS scheme.
- This service will enable connectivity between Dehradun, New Tehri, Srinagar and Gauchar.
- Commencement of the new heli services will enhance the aerial connectivity between hilly regions in Uttarakhand and bring down the average travel time to 20-25 minutes. This will also assist the Chaar Dhaam Yatra pilgrims.
- Pawan Hans Ltd. will operate thrice-weekly helicopter services on this route.
- Viability Gap Funding (VGF) is provided to both operators and passengers under the UDAN scheme to keep the fares affordable for the common people.
- Accordingly the fare for these routes is Rs. 2900 per seat. MoCA awarded the Dehradun- New Tehri – Srinagar – Gauchar route to Pawan Hans Ltd. under the UDAN 2 bidding process.
- Two more networks connecting Dehradun to Ramnagar, Pantnagar, Nainital, Almora, Pithoragarh, and Dehradun to Mussoorie will also be operationalized soon by Pawan Hans Ltd.
- Three rounds of UDAN have already been undertaken and so far close to 50 lakh passengers have travelled in UDAN flights covering airports in 19 States and 2 UTs. The fourth round of UDAN is under process.
- The Scheme has been able to fulfill the vision of Prime Minister and keep up the motto of "Sab Uden, Sab Juden"
- 274 UDAN routes have been operationalized so far connecting 45 airports and 3 heliports since the launch of the first UDAN flight in April 2017 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Shimla to Delhi.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1642079>

Namami Gange project included in 'Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration'

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) The Namami Gange project has been included in the prestigious 'Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration' in July 2020.

(2) The Government of India instituted "The Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration" in the year 2006.

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:

- The Namami Gange project has been included in the prestigious 'Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration'.
- National Mission for Clean Ganga, NMCG, DG Rajiv Ranjan Mishra today instructed District Magistrates and other officials associated with the District Ganga Committees to submit their nominations for this year's prestigious award.

PM's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration:

- Restructured Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration 2020 scheme was launched on July 17 2020.
- The Scheme has been revamped to recognize the performance of the District Collectors towards outcome indicators, economic development, peoples' participation and redressal of public grievances.
- This year, for the very first time, the PM's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration seeks to recognize the efforts of District level officials involved in the Namami Gange Programme.
- This is an exemplary recognition for the initiatives being taken up under the Namami Gange Mission. Under this award category, one award shall be given to a district out of the 57 notified District Ganga Committees under the Namami Gange Programme.
- Nominations have been called in four major categories – District Performance Indicators Programme, Innovation General Category, Aspirational Districts Program and Namami Gange Program.

Background:

- The Government of India instituted "The Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration" in the year 2006 to acknowledge, recognize and reward the extraordinary and innovative work done by Districts/ Organizations of the Central and State Governments.
- The Scheme was restructured in 2014 for recognizing the performance of District Collectors in Priority Programmes, Innovations and Aspirational Districts.
- For the year 2020, the scope of the awards has been expanded to identify areas of overall outcome-oriented performance in the districts across sectors.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=210146>

India Report- Digital Education 2020

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has launched India Report on Digital Education, 2020.

(2) Diksha portal will enable, accelerate and amplify solutions in realm of teacher education.

Of the above correct statement/s is/are:

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

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Union Minister for HRD Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' virtually launched India Report on Digital Education, 2020 on July 28.
- The report elaborates on the innovative methods adopted by Ministry of HRD, Education Departments of States and Union Territories for ensuring accessible and inclusive education to children at home and reducing learning gaps.

MHRD initiatives on Digital Education:

- The Ministry has initiated many projects to assist teachers, scholars and students in their pursuit of learning like DIKSHA platform, Swayam Prabha TV Channel, On Air – Shiksha Vani, e-PathShala and telecast through TV channels.
- MHRD has released PRAGYATA': Guidelines on Digital Education for school heads, teachers, parents, and students.
- MHRD has also launched MANODARPAN initiative to provide psychosocial support to students for their Mental Health and Well-being

State government initiatives:

- Social Media Interface for Learning Engagement (SMILE) in Rajasthan.
- Project Home Classes in Jammu.
- Padhai Tunhar Duvaar (Education at your doorstep) in Chhattisgarh.
- Unnayan Initiatives in Bihar.
- Mission Buniyaad in NCT of Delhi.
- Kerala's own educational TV channel (KITE VICTERS).
- E-scholar portal as well as free online courses for teachers in Meghalaya.
- Some of them were using social media tools like WhatsApp Group, Online classes through YouTube channel and Google meet to connect to the students.
- To ensure inclusive learning in remote areas where internet connectivity and electricity is poor, States and UTs have also distributed textbooks at children's doorsteps.
- Digital education initiatives are also enabling enhanced support for students preparing for competitive exams.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1641850>

Mumbai Sero Survey

Question : A recent serological survey in Mumbai conducted by the —

- (a) Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (b) Niti Ayog
- (c) Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (d) All of the above

Answer : (d)

Related facts

Context

- A serological survey conducted by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, Niti Aayog and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research showed that 16% of the people living in apartment buildings had been infected by the virus that causes Covid-19.
- Findings of the survey is declared in July, 2020.

Other findings

- An estimated 57% of the people surveyed in slums in three wards of Mumbai have already been exposed to the coronavirus and have recovered from the infection.
- With 60% of Mumbai's population living in slums, the study is likely to provide pointers on opening up the economy, herd immunity and fatality rates.
- Infection levels in women were higher than in men.
- It showed that the infection fatality rate is quite low at 0.05% to 0.1%, meaning the virus is not as fatal in the city as it has been worldwide.
- The findings also suggest that Mumbai could possibly have the highest level of infections in the world because most serological surveys globally show a prevalence 14% to 25%.

Survey method & procedure

- The serological survey, which looks for antibodies in the blood, was carried out in the Chembur, North Wadala and North Dahisar areas in the first week of July and 6,936 samples were collected.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/healthcare/mumbai-sero-survey-shows-57-of-those-in-slums-already-infected/articleshow/77226163.cms?from=mdr>

Financial Management Index for Rural Development Programmes

Question: Union Minister of Rural Development has released the “Financial Management Index for Rural Development Programmes”. Which of the following are parameters of index:

- (1) Preparation of annual plan and projecting the requirement of funds for the financial year.
- (2) Expeditious release of State's share;
- (3) Timely utilization of the funds and submission of the Utilization Certificates.
- (4) Internal Audit .
- (5) Social Audit.

(a) 1,3 and 5 (b) 2,3,4 and 5 (c) 1,2 and 3 (d) 1,2,3,4 and 5

Answer:(d)

- **Context:**
- The Union Minister of Rural Development has released the “Financial Management Index for Rural Development Programmes”.
- **Aim:**
- To rank states on efficient management of financial resources allocated for implementing rural development programmes.
- **Parameters:**
- The index will rank the States on the basis of following parameters:
- Preparation of annual plan and projecting the requirement of funds for the financial year;
- Expeditious release of State’s share;
- Timely utilization of the funds and submission of the Utilization Certificates;
- Optimum implementation of Public Financial Management System (PFMS) & Direct Benefit Transfer(DBT);
- Internal Audit and
- Social Audit.
- **Significance:**
- The performance of the States in the Index would promote the spirit of competitive, cooperative federalism amongst States.

Link:

<https://rural.nic.in/#:~:text=AS%26FA%2C%20DoRD%2C%20Shri%20Sanjeev%20Kumar,ji%20on%2024th%20July%2C%202020.>

<https://www.pib.nic.in/PressReleseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1641167>

India hands over 10 broad gauge locomotives to Bangladesh

Question:Gede railway station of India borders which of the following country?

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

Answer:(c)

- **Context:**
- Bangladesh received 10 broad-gauge locomotives from India. These locomotives will help handle the increasing volume of passenger and freight train operations in Bangladesh.
- **Facts:**
- The locomotives arrived at the Darshana station of Bangladesh after being flagged off at the Gede railway station on the Indian side.
- Railway cooperation between India and Bangladesh has grown substantially over the years. India has extended a Line of Credit (LoC) worth over 2.4 billion dollars for 17 railway projects out of which 9 have been completed.
- Recently, parcel and container train services have also commenced between India and Bangladesh.
- The railway link from Agartala to Akhaura in Bangladesh is also being built under grant in aid scheme to connect Tripura with Bangladesh by railways.
- **Gede railway station:**

- Gede is the last railway station and border checkpoint on the Indian side of the Bangladesh-India border in Nadia district of West Bengal. The corresponding station on the Bangladesh side is Darshana.

Link:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-hands-over-10-broad-gauge-locomotives-to-bangladesh-6526629/#:~:text=India%20on%20Monday%20handed%20over,operations%20in%20the%20neighbouring%20country.&text=The%20movement%20of%20freight%20via,the%20supply%20of%20essential%20commodities%E2%80%A6>

Largest Solar Power Plant of Navy Commissioned

Question: The largest Solar power plant of Navy is to be installed at Indian Naval Academy, Ezhima. What will be the capacity of this plant?

(a)4 MW (b)3 MW (c)2 MW (d)7 MW

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Vice Admiral Anil Kumar Chawla, Southern Naval Command commissioned a 3 MW Solar Power Plant at Indian Naval Academy, Ezhimala, Kerala on 22 July 2020.
- This will be installed under the Govt of India initiative of 'National Solar Mission' to achieve 100GW of solar power by 2022.
- It is largest in the Indian Navy and has an estimated life of 25 years.
- All components have been indigenously sourced, including 9180 highly efficient monocrystalline solar panels employing the latest technology.
- The project has been executed by Kerala State Electronics Development Corporation Ltd (KELTRON).
- The Solar Power Plant project will reduce the carbon foot print.
- Surplus power generated will also feed the KSEB electricity grid.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1640686>

Oxygen Concentrators received by Health Minister

Question: Consider the following statements and choose the correct option:

(1) India received the first tranche of 4,475 Oxygen Concentrators on July 22, 2020.

(2) It was donated by Temasek Foundation, Singapore.

(3) The foundation has promised to donate a total of 10000 Oxygen concentrators to India.

Correct option:

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

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare received the first tranche of 4,475 Oxygen Concentrators from Temasek Foundation, Singapore on July 22, 2020.

- The Foundation has offered to donate total of 20,000 Oxygen Concentrators to India.
- The remaining Oxygen Concentrators will be received in the month of August 2020.
- These Oxygen concentrators will be given to States and UTs for managing moderate cases of COVID-19.
- The Oxygen Concentrators will substantially aid the fight against COVID-19 in the country.
- The Indian Red Cross Society facilitated the import of devices in short time.
- Usage of these device:
- The Oxygen Concentrators are helpful devices for moderate cases of COVID-19 patients, who may require low oxygen support.
- They convert atmospheric air to therapeutic oxygen that has a concentration of 90%-95%.
- These machines can be used at COVID Care Centres and the Railway Coaches that have been repurposed as COVID Care centres.
- Given the spread of COVID in India, these devices will be highly useful in remote areas where logistical constraints may hinder continuous supply of Oxygen cylinders.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1640426>

MAUSAM

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) launched the app MAUSAM to communicate the weather information and forecasts.

(2) The mobile app MAUSAM has been designed and developed jointly by ICRISAT's Digital Agriculture & Youth (DAY) team, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune and India Meteorological Department.

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:

- On 27th July 2020, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, union minister for Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Science and Technology (DST) and Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) launched the app MAUSAM and a Knowledge Resource Centre Network (KRCN) on the occasion of 14th foundation day of MoES.
- This Mobile App is dedicated to the general public and designed to communicate the weather information and forecasts in a lucid manner without technical jargons.
- The app will provide current weather of a location that will be updated eight times in a day; share city-wise forecast for upcoming seven days; issue Nowcast warnings of severe weather events likely to occur in the immediate future along with radar-based images and information for tracking of approaching weather events.

- The mobile app has been designed and developed jointly by ICRISAT's Digital Agriculture & Youth (DAY) team, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune and India Meteorological Department.
- KRCN will be a one-point stop to access research, publications, e-resources of all institutions functioning under MoES.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1641501#:~:text=To%20further%20enhance%20this%20initiative,Mausam%E2%80%9D%20for%20India%20Meteorological%20Department.&text=The%20MAUSAM%20mobile%20App%20has,updated%208%20times%20a%20day.>

Kashmir Saffron

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) Kashmir Saffron is the only one spice in the world grown at an altitude of 1,600 metres.
- (2) Karewas (high lands) of Jammu and Kashmir, is famous for cultivation and exclusive harvesting of saffron.

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:

- On 27th July 2020, Kashmir Saffron has been granted GI (Geographical Indication) tag.
- The recognition would help Kashmir Saffron to acquire more prominence in the export market and would help the farmers get the best remunerative price.
- Kashmir Saffron is the only one spice in the world grown at an altitude of 1,600 metres, making it a one-of-a-kind variant that is known for its unique characteristics such as natural deep-red colour, aroma, bitter flavor, etc.
- The spice is grown in some regions of Kashmir, including Pulwama, Budgam, Kishtwar and Srinagar.
- Karewas (high lands) of Jammu and Kashmir, is famous for cultivation and exclusive harvesting of saffron.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/kashmir-saffron-gets-gi-tag/article31484569.ece>

PM laid foundation stone for Water Supply project in Manipur

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Manipur Water Supply Project under the Jal Jeevan Mission-Har Ghar Jal Scheme.
- (2) Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India.

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:

- On 23 July 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Manipur Water Supply Project under the Jal Jeevan Mission-Har Ghar Jal Scheme.

Objective:

- The project would reduce the water problems of the state and would be especially providing a huge relief to the women of the State.
- It has been designed to provide safe drinking water to every household of the State for the next 20-22 years.
- The project will also provide employment through installation of water containing systems.

Outlay proposed:

- The project outlay is about Rupees 3054.58 Crores with a loan component funded by New Development Bank (formerly the BRICS Development Bank).

Coverage:

- The Centre has provided funds to Manipur for Freshwater Household Tap Connections (FHTCS) to cover 1,185 habitations with 1,42,749 households, while the state government is planning to cover the remaining households through additional sources of funding, including from the Department for Development of North Eastern Region.
- An externally funded project, the Manipur Water Supply project was designed to provide FHTCS to remaining households in Greater Imphal Planning area, 25 Towns and for 1,731 rural habitations, covering 2,80,756 households in 16 districts of the state.

Jal Jeevan Mission:

- Jal Jeevan Mission aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections by 2024 to all households in rural India.
- It was launched in August 2019.
- The goal of JJM is to provide functional household tap connection to every household with service level at the rate of 55 litres per capita per day (lpcd).
- The fund sharing pattern between the Centre and states is 90:10 for Himalayan and North-Eastern States, 50:50 for other states, and 100% for Union Territories.
- The project will be governed by Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/north-east-india/manipur/pm-modi-lays-foundation-stone-of-manipur-water-supply-project-worth-rs-3000-crore-6520584/>

SBM EnKash RuPay Business Card

Question : Which bank is the first Foreign Bank to receive the license to set up universal banking business in India through Wholly Owned Subsidiary (WOS) mode ?

(a)HSBC India (b)Citi bank (c)DBS Bankc (d) None of the above

Answer (d)

Related facts —

Context

- SBM Bank India, EnKash, YAP and RuPay joined hands today(23 July 2020) to launch India's most comprehensive business credit card, the SBM EnKash RuPay Business Card.
- This corporate credit card would utilise the RuPay network and will be available upon immediate issuance through digital and paperless on-boarding for SMEs, MSMEs and Start-ups at any SBM Bank touch point.

SBM Bank India

- SBM Bank is the first Foreign Bank to receive the license to set up universal banking business in India through Wholly Owned Subsidiary (WOS) mode.

Rupay

- RuPay is a domestic card payment scheme, conceived and launched by the National Payments Corporation of India on 26 March 2012.

National Payments Corporation of India

- National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) was incorporated in 2008 as an umbrella organization for operating retail payments and settlement systems in India.
- It has changed the way payments are made in India through a bouquet of retail payment products such as RuPay card, Immediate Payment Service (IMPS), Unified Payments Interface (UPI), Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM), BHIM Aadhaar, National Electronic Toll Collection (NETC Fastag) and Bharat BillPay.

EnKash

- EnKash- as a B2B Fintech, started with an objective of increasing spends, penetration and distribution through cards. As the country's fastest growing B2B fintech today, EnKash provides state-of-the-art Commercial Card issuance mechanism, as well as accelerate spends module to multiple banks and financial institutions in the country.

YAP

- YAP is the leading API infrastructure company that helps businesses to connect and roll out their own branded products. The company works with banks and financial institutions as product providers and offers end-to-end program

management services over a bundle of API's that covers, Bank Accounts, Term deposits and a wide gamut of payments products including Debit, Credit, Prepaid, Travel card, QR, UPI, NETC toll payments.

API

- API stands for — application programming interface.
- An application programming interface is a computing interface which defines interactions between multiple software intermediaries.

Link:

<https://www.npci.org.in/sites/default/files/RuPay-Commercial-Card.pdf>

RestartIndia platform

Question : Consider the following statement related to RestartIndia platform —

1. The website provides details of various MSME-focused governmental/institutional support and resources on how to run or set up a sustainable business venture.
 2. It will offer solutions to the problems faced by a large number of women entrepreneurs making a livelihood by setting up very small businesses.
- Which of the statement given above is/are correct?

(a)only 1(b)only 2 (c) both 1. & 2 (d) none of the above

Answer : (c)

Related facts —

Context

- Nitin Gadkari, the minister for micro, small and medium enterprise sector on Thursday(23 July 2020) launched www.restartindia.in, a mentoring platform primarily aimed at aiding the sector to restart businesses across the country.

Muthoot Fincorp and INKtalks

- Muthoot Fincorp and INKtalks, an innovation platform for young professionals jointly conceptualised “RestartIndia”, which is an open platform for advisory support.

The platform

- The platform designed is to address the needs of the MSME sector, particularly the nano and micro enterprises. It will offer solutions to the problems faced by a large number of women entrepreneurs making a livelihood by setting up very small businesses, following the pandemic crisis.
- The website also provides details of various MSME-focused governmental/institutional support and resources on how to run or set up a sustainable business venture.

Objective

- The objective is to raise the self-confidence primarily of small businesses by creating an environment for the re-establishment and progress of their businesses.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/small-biz/sme-sector/nitin-gadkari-launches-advisory-platform-restartindia/articleshow/77128226.cms>

Huge rural-urban gap in education expenditure & internet access, reveals NSO survey

Question: Consider the following statements with respect to “Household Social Consumption: Education”:

(1) Report is released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) report.
 (2) The rural-urban gap remains significant in literacy, accessibility to schools and household expenditure on education.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None of these

Answer:(c)

- **Context:**
- The National Statistical Office (NSO) released a report on “Household Social Consumption: Education” in which it surveyed 1.13 lakh households spread across over 8,000 villages and 6,000 urban blocks between July 2017 and June 2018.
- **Key Findings:**
- The rural-urban gap remains significant in literacy, accessibility to schools and household expenditure on education.
- **On Accessibility to schools,** 7% of the rural households have a primary school within 1 km as compared to 87.2% in urban areas. But only 38% of the rural household have access to secondary school as compared to 70% in the urban areas on similar parameters.
- **The all India literacy rate** among persons aged 7 years and above is 77.7%. However, for the same age group, the rural literacy is 73.5% and in the urban areas it is 87.7%.
- There is a digital divide, too, with just 4% of the rural households having **access to computers** as compared to 23% in urban areas. While 15% surveyed population in the rural cluster has **internet access**, 42% of the surveyed students in the urban areas have access to the internet.
- **Annual average expenditure per student** at secondary and senior secondary level in a rural household stands at Rs 5,856 and Rs 9,148 respectively. An urban household for the same classes spends Rs 17,518 and Rs 23,832 respectively.
- Around 76% of the rural children are attending primary and middle **school run by the government**, while only 38% of the urban children are attending government schools and instead prefer private schools.

Links:

<http://www.edristi.in/>

India's first of its kind public EV Charging Plaza inaugurated by Union Power Minister

Question: Consider the following statements with respect to RETROFIT OF AIR-CONDITIONING TO IMPROVE INDOOR AIR QUALITY FOR SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY (RAISE):

- (1) It is a joint initiative of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) and USAID.
(2) EESL has undertaken a retrofit of its office air-conditioning and ventilation system, in partnership with US Agency for International Development's (USAID) MAITREE programme.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) None of these

Answer: (c)

- **Context:**
- Union Minister for Power launched Retrofit of Air-conditioning to improve Indoor Air Quality for Safety and Efficiency (RAISE) national programme. It is a joint initiative of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) and USAID.
- **Facts:**
- As people return to their offices and public spaces, maintaining good indoor air quality is essential for occupant comfort, well-being, productivity and the overall public health.
- In that context, the EESL has undertaken a retrofit of its office air-conditioning and ventilation system, in partnership with US Agency for International Development's (USAID) MAITREE programme.
- EESL's corporate office in Scope Complex has been taken up as a pilot for this initiative. It focuses on improving indoor air quality (IAQ), thermal comfort, and energy efficiency (EE) in its office's air conditioning system.

Links:

[https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1639976#:~:text=Union%20Power%20Minister%20Shri%20R%20K,%E2%80%9D%20\(RAISE\)%20national%20programme.&text=The%20pilot%20focuses%20on%20improving,EESL%20office's%20air%20conditioning%20system.](https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1639976#:~:text=Union%20Power%20Minister%20Shri%20R%20K,%E2%80%9D%20(RAISE)%20national%20programme.&text=The%20pilot%20focuses%20on%20improving,EESL%20office's%20air%20conditioning%20system.)

Hyderabad Airport : Multi ULD Cool Dolly (a device)

Question : Which airport launched "Multi ULD Cool Dolly" (a device) for unbroken cold chain ?

- (a) Hyderabad Airport
(b) Mumbai Airport
(c) Kolkata Airport
(d) Chennai Airport

Answer : (a)
Related facts —

Context

- GMR Hyderabad International Airport (GHIAL) on Tuesday(21 July 2020) announced ramping up its cargo capabilities by inducting a unique Multi Unit Load Device (ULD) Cool Dolly to maintain unbroken cold chain for time and temperature sensitive (TSS) shipments that include pharmaceuticals and perishables.

Significance

- The new facility of multi ULD Cool Dolly will help the Hyderabad International Airport to serve its customers with a seamless and controlled environment at the airport for handling their critical and highly temperature-sensitive commodities.

Characteristics

- Comprising of a steel trailer and an aluminum insulated container, the Cool Dolly acts as a mobile storage unit from Air Cargo Terminal to the Aircraft.
- It can handle around 7 tons of cargo in a single trip.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airlines/-aviation/hyderabad-airport-launches-multi-uld-cool-dolly-for-unbroken-cold-chain/articleshow/77086599.cms>

National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange : ‘Options in Goods’ contracts

Question : The National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) on Tuesday(21 July,2020) said it will launch the ‘Options in Goods’ contracts on rapeseed, wheat and maize from —

(a) July 27 (b) August 14 (c) April 2021 (d) September 16

Answer : (a)
Related facts —

Context

- The National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) on Tuesday(21 July,2020) said it will launch the ‘Options in Goods’ contracts on rapeseed, wheat and maize from July 27.
- SEBI in January 2020 had allowed exchanges to launch ‘Options in Goods’ in their commodity derivatives segment.

NCDEX

- The National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) is a commodities exchange dealing primarily in agricultural commodities in India.

- NCDEX has become the first exchange in the country to launch Options in Goods contracts in agri derivatives space after the permission given by the regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- The contracts of the three commodities, expiring in October and November 2020, would be available for trading from July 27 onwards.

Option Contract

- An Option Contract confers the right, but not the obligation, to buy (Call) or sell (Put) a specific underlying instrument or asset at a specific price – the strike or exercise price – up until or on a specific future date – the expiry date.
- Call option – It gives the holder the right but not the obligation to buy an asset by a certain date for a certain price.
- Put option – A It gives the holder the right but not the obligation to sell an asset by a certain date for a certain price.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/stocks/news/ncdex-to-launch-options-on-goods-contracts-of-3-commodities-from-july-27/articleshow/77094117.cms>

Solar Power Plant Inaugurated at Naval Station Karanja, Uran

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar inaugurated the first Two Mega Watt Capacity Solar Power Plant at Naval Station Karanja.

(2) The Plant is one of the largest solar plants in the region.

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:

- Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar, ADC Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, e-inaugurated the first Two Mega Watt Capacity Solar Power Plant of the Western Naval Command on 20 Jul 2020.
- The Plant has been installed at Naval Station Karanja and is one of the largest solar plants in the region.
- The Solar Plant comprises of 100% indigenously developed solar panels, tracking tables and inverters.
- The plant is grid interconnected utilising the state of art single axis sun tracking technology with computerised monitoring & control.
- The project is a significant step by the Indian Navy towards harnessing Solar energy and use of renewable source of energy for meeting the power supply requirement of Naval Station.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1640258>

Kakrapar Atomic Power Plant-3

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) The UNIT-3 of Kakrapar Atomic Power Project in Gujarat achieved its first criticality on July 22,2020.

(2) KAPP-3 is a first of a kind,indigenous 700 MW Pressurised Heavy Water Reactor(PHWR).

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:

- The UNIT-3 of Kakrapar Atomic Power Project(KAPP-3-700 MW),located at Kakrapar,Gujarat achieved its first criticality(controlled self-sustaining nuclear fission chain reaction for the first time) on July 22,2020.
- KAPP-3 is a first of a kind,indigenous 700 MW Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor(PHWR),thus giving a boost to the 'Make in India' initiative in the reactors sector.
- The indigenous 700 MW PHWRs have advanced features like steel lined inner containment,Passive Decay Heat Removal System,Containment Spray system,Hydrogen management systems etc.
- The task is achieved with the coordination and cooperation among NPCIL,Contracting Agencies,DAE units and various Central,State and local authorities.
- The unit is the 23rd nuclear power reactor of the country.
- KAPP-3 is the front runner in the series of sixteen indigenous 700 MW PHWRs which have been accorded administrative approval and financial sanction by the government and are at various stage of implementation.
- NPCIL has seven more reactors,KAPP 4(700 MW),RAPP 7&8(2x700 MW),KKNPP 3&4(2x1000MW) and GHAVP 1&2(2x700 MW) under construction.
- The fourth unit of the KAPS is likely to be commissioned by 2021.

Links:

https://www.npcil.nic.in/writereaddata/Orders/202007220324143941331News_22jul2020_01.pdf

Consumer Protection Act, 2019

Question: Consider the following statement regarding Consumer Protection Act, 2019:

(1) The Consumer Protection Act,2019 establishes Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers.

(2) The Act seeks to replace the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

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 Consumer Protection Act, 2019 comes in to force from 20th July 2020.
- The Act seeks to replace the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.
- This new Act will empower consumers and help them in protecting their rights through its various notified Rules and provisions like Consumer Protection Councils, Consumer Disputes Redressal Commissions, Mediation, Product Liability and punishment for manufacture or sale of products containing adulterant / spurious goods.

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA):

- The Act includes establishment of the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers.
- The CCPA will be empowered to conduct investigations into violations of consumer rights and institute complaints / prosecution, order recall of unsafe goods and services, order discontinuance of unfair trade practices and misleading advertisements, impose penalties on manufacturers/endorsers/publishers of misleading advertisements.

E-Commerce rules:

- Every e-commerce entity is required to provide information relating to return, refund, exchange, warranty and guarantee, delivery and shipment, modes of payment, grievance redressal mechanism, payment methods, security of payment methods, charge-back options, etc. including country of origin which are necessary for enabling the consumer to make an informed decision at the pre-purchase stage on its platform.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1639925>

Ministry of Tourism conducts its 42nd webinar

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Ministry of Tourism conducted its 42nd webinar covering the Mystical Triangle- Maheshwar, Mandu & Omkareshwar of Madhya Pradesh.

(2) Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is an effort to showcase India's rich diversity under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.

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:

- Ministry of Tourism, Government of India's DekhoApna Desh Webinar Series titled, "The Mystical Triangle- Maheshwar, Mandu & Omkareshwar" was organised on 18th July 2020.
- The 42nd webinar showcased the richness of the destinations covered under the mystical triangle and acquainted the viewers with the serene, captivating

getaways in State of Madhya Pradesh namely Maheshwar, Mandu & Omkareshwar.

Dekho Apna Desh:

- Dekho Apna Desh Webinar Series is an effort to showcase India's rich diversity under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.
- The webinars are an on-going feature of the Tourism Ministry.
- The Ministry showcases the diverse and remarkable history and culture of India including its natural landscapes, monuments, cuisine, arts, dance forms, festivals and many other aspects of the rich Indian civilization.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1639884>

MANODARPAN Initiative

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Manodarpan initiative will provide psycho-social support to students, teachers and parents and address their issues related to mental health and emotional well being.

(2) Manodarpan initiative has been launched under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

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:

- On 21 July 2019, Human Resource and Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishak virtually launched the Manodarpan initiative under Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- This initiative will provide psycho-social support to students, teachers and parents and address their issues related to mental health and emotional well being.
- As part of MANODARPAN initiative, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched a National Toll-free Helpline (8448440632), a special web page of MANODARPAN on the portal of HRD Ministry, and a Handbook on MANODARPAN.
- The helpline number can be accessed from morning 8 AM to 8 PM.
- The MANODARPAN initiative includes the components such as Advisory Guidelines, Web page on the MHRD website, National level database and directory of counsellors at School and University level, National Toll-free Helpline, Handbook on Psychosocial Support, Interactive Online Chat Platform and Webinars, audio-visual resources including videos, posters, flyers, comics, and short films.
- In that sphere around 33 crore students in the country can access to be benefitted.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1640208>

India's first public EV charging plaza

Question:Where was the India's first public EV (Electric Vehicle) charging plaza inaugurated?

(a) New Delhi (b) Bangalore (c) Chennai (d) Ahmedabad

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Minister for Power, New and Renewable Energy, RK Singh inaugurated India's first public EV (Electric Vehicle) charging plaza at Chelmsford Club in New Delhi on July 20, 2020.
- The EV charging plaza is a new avenue for making e-mobility ubiquitous and convenient in India. Such innovative initiatives are imperative for the creation of a robust e-mobility ecosystem in the country.
- Energy Efficiency Services Limited EESL is spearheading the EV ecosystem development in India by undertaking demand aggregation for procuring EVs and identifying innovative business models for implementation of Public Charging Station.
- EESL in collaboration with NDMC has established the public EV Charging Plaza in Central Delhi.
- It is the first of its kind in India. The plaza will host 5 Electric Vehicle Chargers of different specifications.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=RK-Singh-inaugurates-India%e2%80%99s-first-public-EV-charging-plaza-in-New-Delhi&id=395291>

Plea Bargaining

Question:Consider the following statements with respect to Plea Bargaining:

(1) It refers to a person charged with a criminal offence negotiating with the prosecution for a lesser punishment than what is provided in law by pleading guilty to a less serious offence.

(2) In India, the concept was not part of law till today.

Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer:(a)

- **Context:**
- Many members of the Tablighi Jamaat belonging to different countries have obtained release from court cases in India in recent days by means of plea bargaining.
- **Plea Bargaining:**
- Plea bargaining refers to a person charged with a criminal offence negotiating with the prosecution for a lesser punishment than what is provided in law by pleading guilty to a less serious offence.
- **Benefits:**
- The practice would ensure speedy trial, end uncertainty over the outcome of criminal cases, save litigation costs and relieve the parties of anxiety. It could also increase the conviction rates as seen in the United States where the practise is common. It may help offenders make a fresh start in life.

- **Case of India:**
- In India, the concept was not part of law until 2006. Plea bargaining was introduced in 2006 as part of a set of amendments to the CrPC as Chapter XXI-A, containing Sections 265A to 265L.
- In India, the process of plea bargaining can be initiated only by the accused; further, the accused will have to apply to the court for invoking the benefit of bargaining.
- Only someone who has been charge sheeted for an offence that does not attract the death sentence, life sentence or a prison term above seven years can make use of the scheme. It is also applicable to private complaints of which a criminal court has taken cognisance.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/the-hindu-explains-what-is-plea-bargaining-and-how-does-it-work/article32126364.ece>

NISHTHA

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) The first on-line NISHTHA programme for 1200 Key Resources Persons of Andhra Pradesh was launched by Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriya 'Nishank' virtually in New Delhi.

(2) NISHTHA is a flagship programme of MHRD to improve learning outcomes at the elementary stage under Samagra Shiksha.

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:

- The first on-line NISHTHA programme for 1200 Key Resources Persons of Andhra Pradesh was launched by Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriya 'Nishank' virtually in New Delhi on July 16 2020.

NISHTHA:

- NISHTHA is a National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement at the elementary stage under Samagra Shiksha -a flagship programme of MHRD to improve learning outcomes.
- NISHTHA in face-to-face mode was launched on 21st August, 2019.
- Thereafter, 33 states/UTs have launched this programme in their states/UTs in collaboration under Samagra Shiksha, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- In 29 States/UTs, the NISHTHA training programme has been completed by the NCERT at the state level.
- In 4 States/UTs (Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, J&K and Bihar), the training at the state level is still in progress. In two states, it is yet to be launched.
- District level teacher training programme has been initiated in 23 States/UTs.
- Around 23,000 Key Resource Persons and 17.5 lakh teachers and school heads have been covered under this NISHTHA face to face mode till date.

- In NISHTHA-face-to-face, first level training had been provided by the National Resource Group (NRG) to the Key Resource Persons (KRPs) and State Resource Persons-Leadership (SRPs-L) identified by the states/UTs.

Need for the online-portal:

- Due to COVID-19 pandemic situation, sudden lockdown has affected the conduct of this programme in face-to-face mode.
- Therefore, for providing training to remaining 24 lakh teachers and school heads, NISHTHA has been customized for online mode to be conducted through DIKSHA and NISHTHA portals by the NCERT.
- These Key Resource Persons will play a role of mentors for the teachers who will take take on-line NISHTHA training on DIKSHA later on.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1639103>

15th India-EU Summit

Question: Consider the following statements:

(a) India and European Union have adopted a Roadmap 2025 towards a global partnership.

(b) EU is India's largest trading partner.

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:

- The 15th Summit between India and the European Union (EU) was held in virtual format on 15th July 2020.
- India was represented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The EU was represented by Charles Michel, President of the European Council, and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission.

India-EU Strategic Partnership:

- The leaders adopted the "India-EU Strategic Partnership: A Roadmap to 2025" to guide cooperation between India and the EU over the next five years.
- The roadmap covers cooperation over numerous issues such as Foreign Policy, Security, Human rights, Trade and investment, Business & Economy, Climate change and clean energy, Environment, Urban Development, Information and communications technology, Transport, Health and Food Security, Research & Innovation, Artificial Intelligence and Global governance.

Trade:

- India and EU agreed to establish a regular High Level Dialogue at ministerial level to provide guidance to the bilateral trade and investment relations and to address multilateral issues of mutual interest.

- India and the EU agreed to keep the global trading system open, with the WTO as the bedrock of the rules-based multilateral trading system and to step up cooperation to preserve, strengthen and reform the WTO.
- On 28th June 2007, India and the EU began negotiations on a broad-based Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA) in Brussels, Belgium.
- The negotiations cover Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Investment, Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Technical Barriers to Trade, Trade Remedies, Rules of Origin, Customs and Trade Facilitation, Competition, Trade Defence, Government Procurement, Dispute Settlement, Intellectual Property Rights & Geographical Indications, Sustainable Development.
- However, the talks came to halt in 2013 over differences on market access and movement of professionals.
- The EU is India's largest trading partner grouping (USA-countrywise), while India is the EU 's ninth biggest trading partner.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation:

- Both countries have signed the India-EURATOM Agreement on research and development cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Defence and Security Cooperation:

- Both sides have launched a maritime security dialogue as part of efforts to expand defence and security cooperation.
- India briefed EU on the situation at the Line of Actual Control, including the June 15 incident in Galwan Valley in which 20 Indian Army personnel were killed in clashes with PLA troops.
- India's Central Bureau of Investigations and Europol of European Nations have launched negotiations to support law enforcement authorities of India and the Member States of the EU in preventing and combating organised crime and terrorism.

Other ratifications:

- India-EU adopted a Joint Declaration on Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy.
- A circular economy is an economic system aimed at eliminating waste and the continual use of resources.
- The countries welcomed the upcoming renewal of the India-EU Science and Technology Agreement for another five years.

Links:

[https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/32827/Joint Statement of the 15th IndiaEU Summit July 15 2020](https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/32827/Joint_Statement_of_the_15th_IndiaEU_Summit_July_15_2020)

Cochin Shipyard Limited signs contract for construction of Autonomous electric vessels

Question: Consider the following statement and choose the correct option:

- (1) Cochin Shipyard Limited has signed contract for construction of two nos Autonomous electric ferry.
- (2) It will be constructed and supplied to ASKO Maritime AS, Norway.
- (3) CSL is the second largest commercial shipbuilder in India.

Correct option:

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

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi signed contracts for construction and supply of Two nos Autonomous Electric Ferry for ASKO Maritime AS, Norway with an option to build 2 more identical vessels on July 16, 2020.
- CSL won the bid of contract competing with several other shipbuilders. It is the largest commercial shipbuilder in India.
- ASKO Maritime AS is the subsidiary group of Norges Gruppen ASA, one of the largest players in the Norwegian retail segment.
- Highlights of the contract: This Autonomous Electrical vessel project is an ambitious project in Norway partially funded by the Norwegian Government aimed at emission-free transport of goods across the Oslo fjord.
- These vessel will create a new bench mark for the merchant shipping world in the field of Autonomous Vessels with Zero Carbon Emission.
- The 67 Mtr long vessels will initially be delivered as a Full-Electric Transport Ferry, powered by 1846 kWh capacity battery.
- After commissioning of autonomous equipment and field trials in Norway, it will operate as a fully autonomous ferry of ASKO that can transport 16 fully loaded Standard EU trailers in one go across the fjords.
- The Vessels are designed by Naval Dynamics Norway using Kongsberg Maritime systems, with detailed engineering to be carried out by CSL.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1639079>

IIT Kanpur develops UV sanitizing device SHUDDH

Question: Which institution has developed UV sanitizing device SHUDDH?

- (a) IIT Kanpur (b) IIT Delhi (c) IIT Guwahati (d) IISc Bangalore

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- To get over with the problem of disinfecting surfaces, Imagineering Laboratory department of IIT Kanpur has developed an Ultraviolet (UV) sanitizing product named SHUDDH.
- Smartphone operated Handy Ultraviolet Disinfection Helper that is SHUDDH has six UV lights of 15 Watts each that can be individually monitored from a distance.
- Initial testing has proved that the device at its full operation can disinfect a 10×10 squared feet room in about 15 minutes.

- The on/off, speed, and location of the product can be controlled remotely using your available smartphone while installing an android application.
- SHUDH can assist in killing the spread of corona virus at the highly prone places such as hospitals, hotels, malls, offices and schools.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=IIT-Kanpur-develops-UV-sanitizing-device-%26%2339%3BSHUDDH%26%2339%3B-to-make-your-room-COVID-free&id=393689>

First trial container ship from Kolkata to Agartala via Chattogram port flagged off

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Shipping Minister Mansukh Mandaviya flagged off the first trial container ship from Kolkata to Agartala through Chattogram Port of Bangladesh.

(2) India and Bangladesh agreed on to use Chattogram and Mongla ports of Bangladesh to get feasible goods delivery to the India's North East Region.

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:

- On 16 July 2020, Shipping Minister Mansukh Mandaviya flagged off the first trial container ship from Kolkata to Agartala through Chattogram Port of Bangladesh, in a virtual ceremony.
- The waygoing has been done under the Agreement on use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports for movement of India's transit cargo through Bangladesh.
- This will provide the alternative and shorter route to connect the North East Region through Bangladesh.
- The facilitation will make utilization of Chattogram and Mongla Port for movement of India's transit cargo.
- During the visit of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to India in October 2019, the Standard Operating Procedures for the use of Chattogram and Mongla ports for movement of goods to and from India were concluded.
- This movement further strengthens long standing partnership between India and Bangladesh.
- It will reduce distance and time taken in transportation of goods for India and is a win-win for both the economies.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=First-trial-container-ship-from-Kolkata-to-Agartala-via-Chattogram-port-flagged-off&id=393932>

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Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=First-trial-container-ship-from-Kolkata-to-Agartala-via-Chattogram-port-flagged-off&id=393932>

Second Tranche of Bharat Bond ETF

Question : Edelweiss AMC has recently (July,2020) launched the second series of Bharat Bond ETF that seeks to raise upto —

(A) Rs 14,000 crore (B) Rs 90,000 crore (C) Rs 80,000 crore (D) Rs 70,000 crore

Answer (A)

Related facts

- Edelweiss AMC has recently (July,2020) launched the second series of Bharat Bond ETF that seeks to raise upto Rs 14,000 crore.

The first tranche of Bharat Bond

- The first tranche of Bharat Bond ETF raised over Rs 12,400 crore from a diverse set of investors in December 2019.

- Bharat Bond ETF, designed and managed by Edelweiss AMC, is an exchange-traded fund and will have a defined maturity tenure and will invest in AAA-rated bonds of public sector companies.

exchange-traded fund

- An exchange-traded fund (ETF) is an investment fund traded on stock exchanges, much like stocks.
- ETFs had their genesis in 1989 with Index Participation Shares, an S&P 500 proxy that traded on the American Stock Exchange and the Philadelphia Stock Exchange.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/markets/bonds/edelweiss-amc-launches-second-tranche-of-bharat-bond-etf/articleshow/76766537.cms#:~:text=NEW%20DELHI%3A%20Edelweiss%20AMC%20on,and%20close%20on%20July%2017.>

PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Education

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Union HRD Minister Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' released PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Education in New Delhi.

(2) The PRAGYATA guidelines include eight steps of online/ digital learning that is, Plan- Review- Arrange- Guide- Yak(talk)- Assign- Track- Appreciate.

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:

- On 14 July 2020, Union Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' released PRAGYATA Guidelines on Digital Education through online medium in New Delhi.
- PRAGYATA guidelines have been developed from the perspective of learners, with a focus on online/blended/digital education for students who are presently at home due to lockdown.
- These guidelines on Digital/ Online Education provide a roadmap or pointers for carrying forward online education to enhance the quality of education.
- The guidelines will be relevant and useful for a diverse set of stakeholders including school heads, teachers, parents, teacher educators and students.
- The guidelines stress upon the use of alternative academic calendar of NCERT, for both, learners having access to digital devices and learners having limited or no access.

8 Steps of Digital Learning:

- The PRAGYATA guidelines include eight steps of online/ digital learning that is, Plan- Review- Arrange- Guide- Yak(talk)- Assign- Track- Appreciate.

- These steps guide the planning and implementation of digital education step by step with examples.
- PRAGYATA guidelines will provide a safe and secure digital learning environment.

Suggestions to stakeholders:

- The guidelines outlines suggestions for administrators, school heads, teachers, parents and students on the following areas:
- Need assessment
- Concerns while planning online and digital education like duration, screen time, inclusiveness, balanced online and offline activities etc level wise
- Modalities of intervention including resource curation, level wise delivery etc.
- Physical, mental health and wellbeing during digital education
- Cyber safety and ethical practices including precautions and measures for maintaining cyber safety
- Collaboration and convergence with various initiatives

Recommended screen time:

Class	Recommendation
Pre Primary	On a given day for interacting with parents and guiding them, not more than 30 minutes.
Classes 1 to 12	Recommended to adopt/adapt the alternative academic calendar of NCERT at http://ncert.nic.in/aac.html
Classes 1 to 8	Online synchronous learning may be undertaken for not more than two sessions of 30-45 minutes each on the days the States/UTs decide to have online classes for primary sections
Classes 9 to 12	Online synchronous learning may be undertaken for not more than four sessions of 30-45 minutes each on the days as decided by States/UTs.

- The Guidelines also emphasize the need to unify all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education, benefitting school going children across the country.
- The initiative includes DIKSHA, SWAYAM Prabha, SWAYAM MOOCS, Radio Vahini, Shiksha Vaani, Special content for children with special needs and ITPAL.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1638541>

New economic corridor projects worth about Rs 20,000 crore in Haryana

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Nitin Gadkari inaugurated and laid foundation stones of new economic corridor projects worth about Rs 20,000 crore in Haryana.

(2) The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has conceived Rs 100 lakh crore worth of infrastructure development towards achieving the five trillion economy.

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:

- On 14 July 2020, Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of 11 highway projects in Haryana worth over 20,000 crore rupees in Haryana.
- The projects are part of new economic corridors in the state and were unveiled through a web based program presided over by Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal.
- These projects will benefit people of Haryana in big way by providing smooth connectivity within State, as well as to other States like Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh.
- The projects will also save on time, fuels and cost, as also boost development in backward areas of the State.
- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has conceived Rs 100 lakh crore worth of infrastructure development towards achieving the five trillion economy.

Details of Projects:

- 3 projects worth over 2,240 crore rupees were inaugurated and foundation stones for 8 projects worth over 17,000 crore rupees were laid.
- The projects inaugurated include the 35.45 km 4-lane Rohna/Hasangarh to Jhajjar section of NH 334B costing Rs 1183 crore, the 70 km 4-laning of Punjab-Haryana Border to Jind section of NH 71 costing Rs 857 crore, and the 85.36 km 2-lane with paved shoulders Jind-Karnal Highway on NH 709 costing Rs 200 crore.
- Foundation stones were laid for projects including the 227 km 6-lane access controlled Greenfield expressway from Ismailpur to Narnaul on NH 152D in 8 packages costing Rs 8650 crore, the 46 km 4-lane Gurugram Pataudi-Rewari section of NH 352W costing Rs 1524 crore, the 14.4 km 4-lane Rewari Bypass costing Rs 928 crore, the 30.45 km 4-lane Rewari-Ateli Mandi section of NH 11 costing Rs 1057 crore, the 40.8 km 6-lane Narnaul Bypass on NH 148B, NH 11 and Narnaul to Ateli Mandi section of NH 11 costing Rs 1380 crore, the 40.6 km 4-lane Jind-Gohana (Pkg 1, Greenfield alignment) of NH 352A costing Rs 1207 crore, the 38.23 km 4-lane Gohana-Sonipat section of NH 352A costing Rs 1502 crore, and the 40.47 km 4-lane UP-Haryana Border to Roha on NH 334B costing Rs 1509 crore.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1638545>

Indian Railways transport dry chillies from Guntur to Benapole in Bangladesh for first time

Question:In a first Indian Railways has transported special Parcel train with dry chillies to which country?

- (a) Bangladesh
- (b) Myanmar
- (c) Bhutan
- (d) Afghanistan

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- For the first time Indian Railways has loaded special Parcel train beyond the country borders to Benapole in Bangladesh with dry chillies from Andhra Pradesh.
- Guntur and its surrounding areas in Andhra Pradesh are well known for chilli cultivation. The quality of this farm produce is internationally renowned for its uniqueness in taste and brand.
- Earlier, the farmers and merchants in and around Guntur area have been transporting dry chillies by road to Bangladesh in small quantities and that was costing around Rs 7,000 per tonne.
- During the lockdown period, they could not move this essential commodity by road.
- The cost per tonne for carrying by Special Parcel Express is only Rs 4,608, which is very cheap and economical as compared to road transport.
- This has helped the farmers and merchants of Guntur to market their farm produce beyond the country border by transporting the dry chillies in small quantities through Special Parcel Express.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Indian-Railways-transport-dry-chillies-from-Guntur-to-Benapole-in-Bangladesh-for-first-time&id=393515>

Indian Railways develops Post Covid Coach to fight Covid 19

Question:Which of the following factories has designed a Post Covid Coach to fight Covid 19?

- (a) Integral Coach Factory (ICF)
- (b) Modern Coach Factory (MCF)
- (c) Rail Coach Factory (RCF)
- (d) None of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Indian Railways has developed a Post Covid Coach to fight Covid 19.
- This Post Covid Coach is designed with handsfree amenities, copper-coated handrails and latches, plasma air purification and titanium di-oxide coating for Covid-free passenger journey.
- The Coach has been designed by Rail Coach Factory at Kapurthala to prevent the spread of Covid 19.

- This Post Covid Coach includes handsfree amenities like foot operated water tap and soap dispenser, foot operated lavatory door, foot operated flush valve, outside washbasin with foot operated water tap and soap dispenser.
- This Coach has the provision of plasma air equipment in AC duct. This equipment will sterilize the air and surfaces inside the AC coach using ionised air to make the coach Covid-19 and particulate matter resistant.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Indian-Railways-develops-Post-Covid-Coach-to-fight-Covid-19&id=393757>

Google announces \$10 billion investment in India

Question: What is the amount announced by Google CEO Sundar Pichai to be invested in India to accelerate its digital economy?

- (a) ₹75,000 crores (b) ₹80,000 crores
(c) ₹76,000 crores (d) ₹70,000 crores

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On 13 July 2020, Google CEO Sundar Pichai announced a Google for India Digitization Fund worth ₹75,000 crores, or approximately \$10 billion in India at the Google for India virtual live-stream event.
- The event focused on contributing to accelerate India's digital economy with this investment over the next five to seven years.
- The investment will be done through a mix of equity investments, partnerships, and operational, infrastructure and ecosystem investments.
- The investment will focus on help in enabling affordable access and information to every Indian irrespective of the language.
- This will support India's unique needs to be met by products and services.
- The huge investment will also help local businesses to move towards digital transformation.
- Also, it will work towards using Artificial Intelligence (AI) in areas like health, education, etc.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/technology/tech-news-technology/google-ceo-sundar-pichai-10-billion-dollar-investment-india-6503529/>

PM dedicated Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Power project to the Nation

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated 750 MW Solar Project set up at Rewa, Madhya Pradesh to the nation on July 10, 2020
(2) The project is in line with India's commitment to attain the target of 175 GW of installed renewable energy capacity by 2022.

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:

- On 10 July 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated 750MW Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Power project to the Nation.
- It is Asia's largest power project.
- The Rewa Project exemplifies India's commitment to attain the target of 175 GW of installed renewable energy capacity by the year 2022, including 100 GW of Solar installed capacity.
- This Project comprises of three solar generating units of 250 MW each located on a 500 hectare plot of land situated inside a Solar Park (total area 1500 hectare).
- The Solar Park was developed by the Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL), a Joint Venture Company of Madhya Pradesh UrjaVikas Nigam Limited (MPUVN), and Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), a Central Public Sector Undertaking.
- Central Financial Assistance of Rs. 138 crore has been provided to RUMSL for development of the Park.
- This project will reduce carbon emission equivalent to approx. 15 lakh ton of CO₂ per year.
- The Rewa Project has been acknowledged in India and abroad for its robust project structuring and innovations.
- Its payment security mechanism for reducing risks to power developers has been recommended as a model to other States by MNRE.
- It has also received World Bank Group President's Award for innovation and excellence and was included in the book "A Book of Innovation: New Beginnings" released by Prime Minister.
- The project is also the first renewable energy project to supply to an institutional customer outside the State, i.e. Delhi Metro, which will get 24% of energy from the project with remaining 76% being supplied to the State DISCOMs of Madhya Pradesh.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1637549>

Indian Railways targets to achieve net zero carbon emission by 2030

Question: What is the target year set by Indian Railways to achieve net zero carbon emission?

(a) 2032 (b) 2028 (c) 2027 (d) 2030

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Indian Railways has stepped up its efforts to become a Green Railway within a span of 10 years.
- It has set the target to achieve net zero carbon emission by the year 2030.
- Railways has taken a number of initiatives for mitigation of global warming and combating climate change to achieve the Green Railway status.
- Electrification of lines, improving energy efficiency of trains, green certification for installation and stations, fitting bio toilets in coaches and switching to renewable sources of energy are parts of Railways' strategy for achieving net zero carbon emission.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Indian-Railways-targets-to-achieve-net-zero-carbon-emission-by-2030&id=393669>

India Tiger Estimation 2018

Question:With respect to All India Tiger Estimation 2018 consider the following statements:

- (1) The All India Tiger Estimation done annually is steered by the National Tiger Conservation Authority with technical backstopping from the Wildlife Institute of India.
- (2) India now has an estimated 2967 tigers out of which 83% individual tigers have been photo captured.
- (3) It also states that India is home to nearly 75% of the global tiger population.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer : (b)

Context:

- The fourth cycle of the All India Tiger Estimation 2018, results of which were declared to the nation on Global Tiger Day last year has entered the Guinness World Record for being the world's largest camera trap wildlife survey.

About:

- The citation at the Guinness World Record website reads- "The fourth iteration of the survey – conducted in 2018-19 – was the most comprehensive to date, in terms of both resource and data amassed.
- The All India Tiger Estimation done quadrennially is steered by the National Tiger Conservation Authority with technical backstopping from the Wildlife Institute of India and implemented by State Forest Departments and partners.
- The latest results of 2018 had shown that India now has an estimated 2967 tigers out of which 2461 individual tigers have been photo captured, a whopping 83 % of the tiger population, highlighting the comprehensive nature of the survey.
- With this number, India is home to nearly 75% of the global tiger population and has already fulfilled its resolve of doubling tiger numbers, made at St. Petersburg in 2010, much before the target year of 2022.

Link:

<https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/indias-2018-tiger-census-makes-it-to-guinness-book-of-world-records-2261049>

India Global week 2020

Question: Consider the following statements with respect to the India Global week 2020:

- (1) It is a three-day virtual conference, being organised in the USA.
- (2) It will also feature a 100th birth anniversary concert in tribute to the sitar maestro

Ravi Shankar.

(3) It's theme is "Be The Revival: India and a Better New World".

Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3

Answer:(b)

Context:

- Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the India Global week 2020, an international event on India's globalisation. It's theme is "Be The Revival: India and a Better New World".

About:

- The three-day virtual conference, being organised in the UK, is being held from 9 to 11 July.
- India Global Week- 2020 will have 5,000 global participants from 30 nations. In all, 250 global speakers will address the virtual conference in 75 sessions.
- It will also feature a special 100th birth anniversary concert in tribute to the sitar maestro Ravi Shankar by three of his most eminent students.

India Global Week

- It is an annual flagship event organised by India Inc., a London based media house to re-energise and ignite optimism at global level.
- It brings about an action-oriented focus by giving a forum to global deliberations from geopolitics to business, arts & culture to emerging technologies, banking and finance, pharma, defence and security, social impact and the diaspora dividend.
- India Inc. also produces incisive contents and events on investment, trade and policy matters related to India's increasingly globalised economic and strategic agenda.
- Its flagship publication: India Global Business.
- Diaspora news network: iGlobal.

Significance for India:

- Global Revival: As India is playing a leading role in the global revival, it has brought India's ancient culture (AYUSH), universal, peaceful ethos and the beauty of classical music to the world.
- Global Audience: The event as a forum has helped to bring the opportunities in India to a global audience and made the links between India and UK stronger.
- Trade and Investment: It would focus on India's trade and foreign investment processes as it has done many reforms e.g. private investment in the space sector. Reforms in agriculture would provide an opportunity to invest in storage and logistics.
- Invest India Programme: It will help in improving the Invest India programme. India has recently been reviewing 50 investment proposals

from China under its new screening policy which is being done under the new rules.

Link:

<https://indiaglobalweek.com/indiaglobalweek/>

Reliance BP Mobility (RBML)

Question: RIL, BP recently launched fuel and mobility joint venture. After the initial agreements in 2019, BP paid RIL \$1 billion for—

- (a) 49 per cent stake in the joint venture
- (b) 51 per cent stake in the joint venture
- (c) 35 per cent stake in the joint venture
- (d) 65 per cent stake in the joint venture

Answer- (a)

Related facts

Context

- RIL, BP recently launched fuel and mobility joint venture.
- After the initial agreements in 2019, BP paid RIL \$1 billion for a 49 percent stake in the joint venture.

Key points

- The JV will operate under the “Jio-BP” brand and aims to become a leading player in India’s fuels and mobility markets.
- The venture will leverage RIL’s presence across 21 states and its millions of consumers through the Jio digital platform, while BP will bring its extensive global experience in high-quality differentiated fuels, lubricants, retail and advanced low carbon mobility solutions.
- JV has received the marketing authorization for transportation fuels, among other necessary regulatory and statutory approvals, and will begin selling fuels and Castrol lubricants with immediate effect from its existing retail outlets, which will be rebranded to “Jio-BP” in due course.
- RBML aims to expand from its current fuel retailing network of over 1,400 retail sites to up to 5,500 over the next five years, and this will require a four-fold increase in staff employed in service stations – growing from 20,000 to 80,000 in this period.
- The JV also aims to increase its presence from 30 to 45 airports in the coming years.

Link:

<https://m.economictimes.com/markets/stocks/news/ril-bp-launch-fuel-and-mobility-joint-venture/articleshow/76878668.cms>

India’s external debt

Question : India’s external debt till March 2020, rose to —

- (a) 558.5 billion dollar
- (b) 580 billion dollar
- (c) 590 billion dollar
- (d) none of the above

Answer : (a)
Related facts

Context

- Latest external debt data released on Jun 30, 2020.
- Issuer – Reserve Bank of India.

Highlights

- At end-March 2020, India's external debt was placed at US\$ 558.5 billion, recording an increase of US\$ 15.4 billion over its level at end-March 2019.
- Commercial borrowings remained the largest component of external debt, with a share of 39.4 per cent, followed by non-resident deposits (23.4 per cent) and short-term trade credit (18.2 per cent).
- At end-March 2020, long-term debt (with original maturity of above one year) was placed at US\$ 451.7 billion, recording an increase of US\$ 17.0 billion over its level at end-March 2019.
- US dollar denominated debt continued to be the largest component of India's external debt, with a share of 53.7 per cent at end-March 2020, followed by the Indian rupee (31.9 per cent), yen (5.6 per cent), SDR (4.5 per cent) and the euro (3.5 per cent).

Link:

https://m.rbi.org.in/Scripts/BS_PressReleaseDisplay.aspx?prid=50021

World Bank provides assistance for Ganga rejuvenation

Question: World Bank has signed a loan agreement with the Indian government to support Ganga rejuvenation. What is the amount of loan sanctioned?

(a)\$300 million (b)\$500 million (c)\$400 million (d)\$100 million

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On July 7, 2020 World Bank and the Government of India signed a loan agreement to enhance support for the Namami Gange programme that seeks to rejuvenate the Ganga river.
- The amount of loan sanctioned is \$400 million. This comprises a loan of \$381 million and a proposed Guarantee of up to \$19 million.
- The Second National Ganga River Basin Project will help stem pollution in the iconic river and strengthen the management of the river basin.
- The government has launched Namami Gange program which seeks to ensure that the river returns to a pollution-free, ecologically healthy state.
- The World Bank has been supporting the government's efforts since 2011 through the ongoing National Ganga River Basin Project.
- Ongoing National Ganga River Basin Project:
- World Bank has helped set up the National Mission for Clean Ganga, helping build sewage collection and treatment infrastructure in 20 towns along the mainstem of the Ganga
- 1,275 MLD sewage treatment capacity created
- 3,632 km of sewage network was also built.

- Important aspects of the project:
- The Project will build on the innovative Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM) of public private partnership introduced under the ongoing NGRBP.
- The \$400 million operation includes a proposed Guarantee of up to \$19 million to backstop the government's payment obligations for three Hybrid-Annuity-Model Public Private Partnership (HAM-PPP) investments on the Ganga's tributaries.
- The \$381 million variable spread loan has a maturity of 18.5 years including a grace period of 5 years. The \$19 million Guarantee Expiry Date will be 18 years from the Guarantee Effectiveness Date.
- Importance of Ganga basin:
- The Ganga Basin provides over one-third of India's surface water, includes the country's largest irrigated area, and is key to India's water and food security.
- Over 40 percent of India's GDP is generated in the densely populated Basin.
- Over 80 per cent of the pollution load in the Ganga comes from untreated domestic wastewater from towns and cities along the river and its tributaries.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1636999>

Nimu

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Nimu is a small village situated some 45 kms from Leh in the South East part of Ladakh.

(2) Nimu is located at the confluence of the Indus and Zaskar Rivers.

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:

- On 4 July 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed Indian armed forces at Nimu near Leh, Ladakh and paid rich tributes to the soldiers martyred defending the Galwan Valley in clash with Chinese troops.

Nimu:

- Nimu or Nimmu is a small village situated some 45 kms from Leh in the South East part of Ladakh.
- As per the 2011 census, Nimu village, with a population of 1100 people, is located at the confluence of the Indus and Zaskar Rivers.

Nimu in context of Tourism:

- It is a popular tourist attraction as one can see the picturesque confluence of River Indus and Zaskar.
- Also, Nimu is known as the starting point of the famed All India Rafting Expedition that takes place on River Indus.
- The monasteries of Alchi, Liki and Basgo and the Pathar Sahab Gurudwara are situated in the proximity of this destination.

- There is also a run-of-the-river power project called Nimoo Bazgo Hydroelectric Plant.
- The months between July and September are ideal to visit Nimu, as the weather remains quite pleasant then.

Magnet Hill:

- Magnet Hill is a “Cyclops hill” 7.5 km southeast of Nimu.
- The layout of the area and surrounding slopes create the optical illusion of a hill.
- The hill road is actually a downhill road. Objects and cars on the hill road may appear to roll uphill in defiance of gravity when they are, in fact, rolling downhill.

Strategic importance of Nimu:

- Aside natural beauty, Nimu is also of strategic value.
- Situated at 11,000 feet, Nimu, near Kargil, this proved its worth during the 1999 war.
- It served the Indian Army well when Pakistan attacked Kargil and resources at the highest level had to be mobilised at very short notice.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/highlights-from-pm-modis-address-to-soldiers-in-ladakh/article31979717.ece>

Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) The Assam government has decided to upgrade Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary into a national park.

(2) Dehing Patkai was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 2004.

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:

- The Assam government has decided to upgrade Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary into a national park.
- The announcement comes just months after the National Board of Wildlife's (NBWL) conditional clearance to a coal mining project by Coal India Limited (CIL) in the Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve sparked a spate of virtual protests in the state.
- Subsequently, North Eastern Coalfields (NEC), the CIL subsidiary, temporarily suspended all mining operations in the region.

Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary:

- The 111.942 sq km Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary is located within the larger Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve, which spreads across the coal- and oil-rich districts of Upper Assam (Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Sivasagar).
- It is believed to be the last remaining contiguous patch of lowland rainforest area in Assam.

- While wildlife sanctuaries are protected areas which permit some activities such as grazing, national parks call for a complete protection status under The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- The first proposal to accord national park status was made in 1995.
- Dehing Patkai was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 2004.
- In its current status, the Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary includes parts of the Upper Dihing, Joypur and Dirak Reserve Forests.
- The site of NEC's mining project is 9.19 km from the sanctuary.
- Post upgradation, Dehing Patkai will be the sixth national park in Assam — the other five being Kaziranga, Nameri, Manas, Orang and Dibru-Saikhowa.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/north-east-india/assam/assam-govt-to-upgrade-dehing-patkai-wildlife-sanctuary-to-national-park-6493214/>

FDI inflow to India

Question : What is the rank of India in terms of recipient of FDI in 2019 ?

(a)9th largest (b) 8th largest (c)7th largest (d)6th largest

Answer : (a)

Related facts

Context

- The UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) released a report on 15 June, 2020.

Highlights

- India was the 9th largest recipient of FDI in 2019, with 51 billion dollars of inflows during the year, an increase from the 42 billion dollars of FDI received in 2018, when India ranked 12 among the top 20 host economies in the world.
- The report noted that investors concluded deals worth over \$650 million in the first quarter of 2020, mostly in the digital sector in India.
- The report said that global FDI flows are forecast to decrease by up to 40 per cent in 2020, from their 2019 value of USD 1.54 trillion.
- This would be for the first time since 2005 that global FDI falls below the USD 1 trillion mark.
- In the “developing Asia” region, India was among the top five host economies for FDI.
- Foreign direct investment to developing economies in Asia, hit hard by the economic downturn caused by the coronavirus pandemic, are projected to decline by up to 45 per cent in 2020.
- In South Asia, FDI is also expected to contract sharply in 2020.
- FDI to India, the largest South Asian recipient, increased 20 per cent to USD 51 billion, sustaining the country's upward FDI trend, the report said.

Link:

<https://m.economictimes.com/news/economy/indicators/india-9th-largest-recipient-of-fdi-in-2019-will-continue-to-attract-investments-un/articleshow/76400055.cms>

India's growth projection

Question : Fitch Ratings on Tuesday(30th June,2020) cut India's growth forecast for 2021-22 fiscal to _ from 9.5 per cent projected last month.

- (a) 8percent
- (b) 7 percent
- (c) 6 percent
- (d) 5 percent

Answer : (a)

Related facts

- Fitch Ratings has recently (30th June,2020) slashed India's growth forecast for 2021-22 fiscal to 8 per cent from 9.5 per cent projected last month.
- It retained its projection of Indian economy contracting by 5 per cent in the current fiscal.
- Indian economic growth stood at an estimated 4.2 per cent in 2019-20.
- In its June update of Global Economic Outlook, Fitch projected Indian economy to grow 5.5 per cent in 2022-23.
- In May update to the outlook, Fitch had projected 9.5 per cent growth in 2021-22.

Link:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/fitch-slashes-india-s-growth-projection-from-9-5-to-8-for-fy22-120063001577_1.html

Dispute panel on India's import duties on ICT products

Question : ICT stands for —

- (a)Infrared CommunicationsTechnology
- (b) Information and Communications Technology
- (c)Internet CommunicationsTechnology
- (d)none of the above

Answer : (b)

Related facts

- WTO has recently(June, 2020) agreed to a second request from the EU to establish an dispute panel on India's import duties on ICT products, including mobile phones.
- ICT stands for —Information and Communications Technology.
- The EU complained that India had taken the commitment (as part of the IT Agreement signed in December 1996) not to apply import duties on ICT products but that for several years India has adopted measures to reinforce and regularly increase import duties on those products, up to 20 per cent.
- India said the complaints seriously undermine its sovereignty as it goes beyond its commitments under the first ITA agreement (ITA-I).
The dispute is crucial for India as losing it will directly benefit China, from where India imported telecom equipment parts worth \$3.4 billion and mobile phones worth \$665.21 million in the April-February period of 2019-20.

Link:

<https://m.economictimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/wto-sets-up-dispute-panel-on-indias-import-duties-on-ict-products/articleshow/76694198.cms>

House Price Index

Question : The all-India HPI contracted by (-)0.2 per cent on a sequential basis (q-o-q), largely due to decline in the house prices in —

- (a) Delhi and Bengaluru
- (b) Ahmedabad and Jaipur
- (c) both (a) and (b)
- (d) none of the above

Answer : (c)

Related facts

Context

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released its quarterly house price index (HPI) for the fourth quarter of 2019-20.
- It is based on transaction level data received from housing registration authorities in ten major cities (viz., Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kochi, Kolkata, Lucknow and Mumbai).
- The HPI is calculated on base year 2010-11.

Highlights

- The all-India HPI contracted by (-)0.2 per cent on a sequential basis (q-o-q), largely due to decline in the house prices in Delhi, Bengaluru, Ahmedabad and Jaipur; Mumbai recorded the highest sequential rise.
- On an annual basis (y-o-y), however, the all-India HPI increased by 3.9 per cent in Q4:2019-20 from 3.0 per cent in the previous quarter and 3.6 per cent a year ago: it varied widely across cities and ranged from 22.6 per cent (in Jaipur) to (-)13.8 per cent (in Kochi).

Link:

https://www.rbi.org.in/Scripts/BS_PressReleaseDisplay.aspx?prid=50024

Launch of new DGFT platform and Digital delivery of IEC related services

Question : The first phase of a new digital platform of DGFT is scheduled to Go-Liveon —

- (a) 13th July 2020
- (b) 15th July 2020
- (c) 17th July 2020
- (d) none of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

Context

- The first phase of a new digital platform of DGFT is scheduled to Go-Liveon 13th July 2020.
- The platform will become accessible through the existing website : <https://www.dgft.gov.in>

Related facts

- Objective – As part of Digital India programme and for Ease of Doing Business, DGFT has undertaken an initiative to revamp its services delivery mechanisms to promote and facilitate for eitrade.
- First phase – In the first phase, the website will be catering to the services related to the IEC issuance, modification, amendments etc. processes along with a Chatbot (a virtual assistant) catering to queries of users.
- Next phase – Other online modules relating to Advance Authorisation, EPCG, and Exports Obligation Discharge which are part of next phase will be rolled out subsequently after the first phase stabilizes.

Link:

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

MATSYA SAMPADA

Question : Who launched the first edition of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Newsletter “MATSYA SAMPADA” ?

- (a) Giriraj Singh
- (b) Pratap Chandra Sarangi
- (c) Narendra Singh Tomar
- (d) None of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

Context

- Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, Shri Giriraj Singh today (30th June, 2020) launched the first edition of the Fisheries and Aquaculture Newsletter “MATSYA SAMPADA”.
- **Matsya Sampada**
- The Newsletter “MATSYA SAMPADA” is an outcome of the endeavours of the Department of Fisheries to reach out to the stakeholders especially fishers and fish farmers through various means of communication, and to inform and educate them about the latest developments in the fisheries and aquaculture sector.
- It would be published on a quarterly basis starting from the first quarter of the year 2020-21.

Matsya Sampda & PMMSY (Pradhan Mantri MatsyaSampada Yojana)

- Matsya Sampda is associated with PMMSY.
- Releasing the Operational Guidelines of the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana, Shri Giriraj Singh termed the launch of PMMSY as the most important moment in the journey of fisheries and aquaculture development.
- The Government of India in May, 2020 launched a new Flagship Scheme i.e. the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) for sustainable and responsible development of fisheries sector at an investment of Rs. 20050 crore.
- The PMMSY with an array of 100 diverse activities is by far the largest ever investment in fisheries sector.

- Achieving the ambitious targets under PMMSY of an additional 70 lakh tons fish production, rupees one lakh crores fisheries exports, generation of 55 lakh employment over next five years, etc.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1635365>

Index of Eight Core Industries

Question : How much Index of Eight Core Industries declined for May 2020 ?

- (a) declined by 23.4% (provisional)
- (b) declined by 40.5% (provisional)
- (c) declined by 50% (provisional)
- (d) declined by 60% (provisional)

Answer : (a)

Related facts

Context

- Index of Eight Core Industries released on 30th June, 2020.
- Issuer – The Office of Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade released this index.

Summary

- The growth rate of Index of Eight Core Industries for May 2020 declined by 23.4% (provisional) compared to decline of 37 percent (provisional) in previous month of April 2020.
- Its cumulative growth during April to May, 2020-21 was -30.0 per cent.
- In view of nationwide lock down during April & May 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic, various industries viz. Coal, Cement, Steel, Natural Gas, Refinery, Crude Oil etc. experienced substantial loss of production.
- Final growth rate of Index of Eight Core Industries for February'2020 is revised at 6.4%.

Industries

- **Coal**- Coal production (weight: 10.33 per cent) declined by 14.0 percent in May, 2020 over May, 2019.
- **Crude Oil**- Crude Oil production (weight: 8.98 per cent) declined by 7.1 percent in May, 2020 over May, 2019.
- **Natural Gas**- The Natural Gas production (weight: 6.88 per cent) declined by 16.8 percent in May, 2020 over May, 2019.
- **Refinery Products**- Petroleum Refinery production (weight: 28.04 per cent) declined by 21.3 percent in May, 2020 over May, 2019.
- **Fertilizers**- Fertilizers production (weight: 2.63 per cent) increased by 7.5 percent in May, 2020 over May, 2019.
- **Steel**- Steel production (weight: 17.92 per cent) declined by 48.4 percent in May, 2020 over May, 2019.
- **Cement**- Cement production (weight: 5.37 per cent) declined by 22.2 percent in May, 2020 over May, 2019.

- **Electricity-** Electricity generation (weight: 19.85 per cent) declined by 15.6 percent in May, 2020 over May, 2019.

Link :

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=209814>

Updated clinical management protocol for managing COVID-19 cases

Question : The Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has recently released an updated clinical management protocol for managing COVID-19 cases. The updated protocol includes the advice to use Dexamethasone as an alternative choice to —

- (a) Ozurdex
- (b) Dextenza
- (c) Methylprednisolone
- (d) None of the above

Answer : (c)

Related facts

Context

- The Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has today (27th June, 2020) released an updated clinical management protocol for managing COVID-19 cases.
- The last update to the clinical management protocol was done on 13th June, 2020.

Advice

- The updated protocol includes the advice to use Dexamethasone as an alternative choice to Methylprednisolone for managing moderate to severe cases of COVID-19.

Dexamethasone

- Dexamethasone is a corticosteroid drug used in a wide range of conditions for its anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressant effects. The drug is also a part of the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) and is widely available.
- **Trade names** — Dextenza, Ozurdex, others.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1634725>

New process for MSME registration

Question : In a historic move, the MSME Ministry on 26th June, 2020 came out with a consolidated notification. According to the notification, An enterprise can be registered just on the basis of —

- (a) Aadhaar number
- (b) Pan number

- (c) Tan number
(d) None of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

Context

- In a historic move, the MSME Ministry on 26th June, 2020 came out with a consolidated notification in the form of guidelines for classification and registration of MSMEs.
- It will be effective from 1st July, 2020.
- According to the notification, An enterprise can be registered just on the basis of Aadhaar number.
- It is a paperless exercise in true sense.

Highlights

- **Udyam** — The notification also says that hereafter, an MSME will be known as Udyam, as this is more closer to the word Enterprise. Accordingly, the registration process will be known Udyam Registration.
- **Classification** — As declared earlier, Investment in 'Plant and Machinery or Equipment' and 'Turnover' are the basic criteria for classification of MSMEs now; notification clarifies that Exports of goods or services or both shall be excluded while calculating the turnover of any enterprise whether Micro, Small or Medium;
- **Registration** — The process of registration can be done online through the portal which will be made known to the public before 1st July, 2020, the date from which this new arrangement is going to be effective.
- **Facilitation** — In another first, the Ministry of MSME has established a strong facilitation mechanism for the MSMEs. This process is in the form of Single Window Systems at the district level and regional level. It will help those entrepreneurs who are not able to file the Udyam Registration for any reason. At the district level, the District Industry Centres have been made responsible for facilitating the entrepreneurs. Similarly, Ministry's recent initiative of Champions Control Rooms across the country have been made legally responsible for facilitating such Entrepreneurs in registration and even thereafter.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1634558>

Sanskritik Sadbhav Mandap

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) **Union Minister of Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi laid the foundation stone for “Sanskritik Sadbhav Mandap” at Rampur, Uttar Pradesh**
- (2) **It is being constructed under Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karykram Of the above correct statements/s is/are:**

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

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- On 29 June 2020, Union Minister of Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi laid the foundation stone for “Sanskritik Sadbhav Mandap” at Rampur, Uttar Pradesh.
- The “Sanskritik Sadbhav Mandap” is being constructed with the cost of Rs 92 crore by Union Minority Affairs Ministry under Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karykram (PMJVK).
- This community centre will be utilized for various socio-economic-cultural activities, skill development training, coaching, relief activities during disaster such as Corona and different sports activities.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karykram- PMJVK:

- The erstwhile Multi-sectoral Development Programme (MsDP) has been restructured and renamed as Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram for effective implementation.
- The scheme is designed to address the development deficits of the identified Minority Concentration Areas.
- The restructured scheme is to be implemented during the remaining period of the 14th Finance Commission.
- It will be implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.

Objective of PMJVK:

- Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK) seeks to provide better socio economic infrastructure facilities to the minority communities particularly in the field of education, health & skill development which would further lead to lessening of the gap between the national average and the minority communities with regard to backwardness parameters.
- Under PMJVK, 80% of the resources would be utilized for projects related to education, health and skill development of which at least 33-40% will be earmarked for creation of assets/facilities for women/girls.
- Government conceived the Multi-sectoral Development Programme (MsDP) in the year 2008-09. The scheme continued till 31.3.2018.

Links: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1635101> <https://www.india.gov.in/spotlight/pradhan-mantri-jan-vikas-karyakram> <https://vikaspedia.in/social-welfare/minority-welfare-1/pradhan-mantri-jan-vikas-karyakram>

Nasha Mukht Bharat: Annual Action Plan (2020-21)

Question: When is the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking observed?

(a) 26 June (b) 25 June (c) 27 June (d) 28 June

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking was observed globally on June 26 2020.
- The day is observed by the United Nations as an expression of its determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse.
- 2020 Theme for the day is Better Knowledge for Better Care.
- On this day, in India, Rattan Lal Kataria, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment e-launched Nasha Mukta Bharat: Annual Action Plan (2020-21) for 272 Most Affected Districts.
- Nasha Mukta Bharat Annual Action Plan for 2020-21 would focus on 272 most affected districts (list in Annexure) and launch a three-pronged attack combining efforts of Narcotics Bureau, Outreach/Awareness by Social Justice and Treatment through the Health Dept.
- The Action Plan has the following components: Awareness generation programmes; Focus on Higher Educational institutions, University Campuses and Schools; Community outreach and identification of dependent population; Focus on Treatment facilities in Hospital settings; and Capacity Building Programmes for Service Provider.

National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction:

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has prepared a National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) for the period 2018-2025 which aims at reduction of adverse consequences of drug abuse through a multi-pronged strategy involving education, de-addiction and rehabilitation of affected individuals and their families.
- The Action Plan includes components for preventive education and awareness generation, capacity building, treatment and rehabilitation, setting quality standards, focussed intervention in vulnerable areas, skill development, vocational training and livelihood support of ex-drug addicts, State/UT specific interventions, surveys, studies, evaluation and research etc.

Constitutional relevancy:

- Article 47 of the Constitution provides that “The State shall regard the raising of the level of nutrition and the standard of living of its people and the improvement of public health as among its primary duties and, in particular, the State shall endeavor to bring about prohibition of the consumption except for medicinal purposes of intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health.”

Links: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1634574>

Mukhyamantri Matru Pushti Uphaar scheme

Question: Which State has launched the Mukhyamantri Matru Pushti Uphaar scheme?

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

Answer: (c)

Related facts: ·

- In an effort to combat infant and maternal mortality and malnutrition, Tripura announced Mukhyamantri Matru Pushti Uphaar scheme.
- This is an ambitious scheme to provide nutrition kits to pregnant and lactating women.
- Under the scheme, pregnant women would be tested four times in nearby Primary Health Centers (PHC), and be given a nutrition kit after each test.
- The kit, costing Rs500, would have food items and grocery supplies, such as peanuts, soyabeans, mixed pulses, jaggery and ghee.
- As many as 40,000 women will benefit annually under the scheme.
- The state government estimates to incur an expense of around Rs 8 crore for the scheme.
- The state scheme will be in addition to the Pradhan Mantri Matru Bandana Yojana.
- **Facts and Figures:**
- A 2019 report suggests that maternal mortality in India is slowing, down from 130 per 1 lakh live births in 2014-16 to 122 in every 1 lakh live births in 2015-17.
- Tripura registered an infant mortality rate of 51 in the 2016 reports, while more recent reports are not available.

Links: <https://indianexpress.com/article/north-east-india/tripura/tripura-announces-schemes-to-combat-infant-maternal-mortality-malnourishment-6474728/>

Govt to setup UPSSF on lines of CISF

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) Uttar Pradesh govt will setup UPSSF on lines of CISF
- (2) Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) set up in 1969 guards sensitive places such as industrial units, government infrastructure projects, establishments, metro rail projects, airports.

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:

- Uttar Pradesh government has decided to set up the Uttar Pradesh Special Security Force (UPSSF) to ensure security of important establishments and buildings.
- The security force which will be constituted on the lines of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) will be deployed at places like metro rail, airports, industrial institutions, courts, religious places, banks and other financial institutions.

- The force would be headquartered in Lucknow.
- In the first phase, five battalions of this force will be formed from Uttar Pradesh Police's Special Forces PAC(Provincial Armed Constabulary).

Links: <https://www.timesnownews.com/india/article/adityanath-govt-to-set-up-cisf-like-special-security-force-to-guard-metro-rail-airports-banks-in-up/612795>

Decarbonizing Transport Project in India

Question: Which organization has launched the Decarbonizing Transport in Emerging Economies (DTEE) project in India on June 24, 2020?

- (a) DRDO
- (b) ISRO
- (c) NITI Aayog & ITF
- (d) CSIR

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- NITI Aayog and the International Transport Forum (ITF) of OECD jointly launched the 'Decarbonizing Transport in Emerging Economies' (DTEE) project in India on June 24 2020.
- This ambitious five-year project will help India develop a pathway towards a low-carbon transport system through the development of modelling tools and policy scenarios.
- The ITF project team will work in close cooperation and coordination with India's government agencies, local decision-makers, researchers, experts, and civil society organisations.
- This project is part of the Decarbonizing Transport in Emerging Economies family of projects, which supports transport decarbonization across different world regions.
- India, Argentina, Azerbaijan and Morocco are current participants.
- DTEE is a collaboration between the ITF and the Wuppertal Institute, supported by the International Climate Initiative of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

Emission by Transportation:

- In India, CO₂ emitted per inhabitant was just about a twentieth of that of an average OECD country, yet, India's transport CO₂ emissions are likely to increase by almost 6% annually to 2030.
- India is actively taking a number of measures to tackle its emissions, including newer fuel emission norms as well as the promotion of electric vehicles in the country.
- NITI Aayog has been at the helm for the promotion of electric vehicles and sustainable mobility through its 'National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage'.

Links: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1634052>

COVAXIN, first potential COVID-19 Vaccine developed in the country

Question: On June 29, 2020, Central Drug Standard Control Organisation has granted approval to conduct human clinical trials for Corona Vaccine called 'Covaxin'. By whom it has been developed?

- (a) Glenmark
- (b) Cipla
- (c) Lupin
- (d) NIV, Pune & Bharat Biotech

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The Central Drug Standard Control Organisation, the National regulatory body for Indian Pharmaceuticals and medical devices, has granted approval to Bharat Biotech India to conduct human clinical trials for Corona Vaccine called 'Covaxin'.
- It is the first indigenous COVID-19 vaccine to receive the approval.
- The Covaxin has been developed in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune.
- The Drug Controller General of India approved Bharat Biotech's application to conduct phase I and II clinical trials for Covaxin. The permission was granted after the company submitted results from pre-clinical studies of the vaccine that demonstrated its safety and immune response.
- The SARS-CoV-2 strain was isolated in NIV, Pune and transferred to Bharat Biotech.
- The indigenous, inactivated vaccine developed and manufactured at the Bio-safety level 3 lab of the Bharat Biotech located in Genome Valley in Hyderabad.

Links: <http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=DGCI-gives-approval-for-human-clinical-trials-of-COVAXIN%2C-first-potential-COVID-19-Vaccine-developed-in-the-country&id=392580>

India sends Tri-Service contingent in 75th Victory Day Parade of World War II

Question: Where will the 75th Victory Day Parade of World War II be held?

- (a) Moscow
- (b) London
- (c) Berlin
- (d) Paris

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- India has sent Tri-Service contingent to participate in 75th Victory Day Parade of World War II in Moscow, Russia.
- Defence Minister of Russia Sergey Shoygu has invited an Indian contingent to take part in the Victory Day Parade scheduled to be held on June 24, 2020.
- Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has agreed to send a 75-member Tri-Service contingent to participate in the parade.

Victory Day Parade:

- Victory Day Parade commonly known as Russian parade is held every year on May 9, which marks the surrender of Nazi Germany in 1945.
- This military parade is organized to honour the heroism and sacrifices made by the Russian and other friendly people.

Links: <https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1632097>

International

Poland Considers Leaving Treaty on Domestic Violence, Spurring Outcry

Question: Istanbul Convention is related to which of the following:

- (a) Child Abuse
- (b) Domestic Violence
- (c) Human Trafficking
- (d) Drug Abuse

Answer: (b)

- **Context:**
- Poland has decided to withdraw from Istanbul Convention- a treaty aimed at preventing violence against women.
- **Facts:**
- **Istanbul Convention:**
- It is also known as the Council of Europe convention on combating and preventing violence against women and domestic violence.
- **When was the convention adopted?**
- It was adopted by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in 2011. It came into force in 2014.
- **What does the convention say?**
- The convention sets minimum standards for governments to meet when tackling violence against women. When a government ratifies the Convention, they are legally bound to follow it.
- **Additional Facts:**
- **Council of Europe:** It is an international organisation whose aim is to uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law in Europe.
- **Members:** The council was founded in 1949 and it has 47 member states, 27 of which are members of European Union (EU). However, the organisation is distinct from the EU.

Link:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/27/world/europe/poland-domestic-violence-treaty.html>

Trump launches ‘Operation Legend’ which has federal agents move into U.S. cities to fight violent crime

Question.Operation Legend sometimes seen in news is related to which country?

(a) Russia (b) France (c) USA (d) India

Answer : (c)

- **Context:**
- US President Donald Trump announced a “surge of federal law enforcement” in cities run by Democrats, including Chicago, as part of an expanded ‘Operation Legend’.
- **Facts:**
- Operation Legend is a federal law enforcement operation in the U.S. initiated by the administration of President Donald Trump.
- The operation was named after four-year-old LeGend Taliferro, who was shot and killed in Kansas City, Missouri, on June 29, 2020.
- It was implemented after President Trump began deploying federal law enforcement agents to help the local police crack-down on violent crime in the wake of the George Floyd protests.
- Since the killing of George Floyd at the hands of the police in Minneapolis on May 25, anti-racism protesters have been protesting on the streets of the city to seek police reforms.

Link:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/trump-launches-operation-legend-which-has-federal-agents-move-into-us-cities-to-fight-violent-crime/article32167087.ece>

Environment Performance Index (EPI 2020)

Question.Environment Performance Index (EPI 2020) is released by which institution?

(a) UNESCO (b) Yale University
(c) University of Oxford
(d) United Nations Environment Program

Answer : (b)

- **Context:**
- The 12th edition of the Environment Performance Index (EPI 2020) – released by Yale University – ranked India at 168 out of the 180 countries analysed, behind all South Asian nations, except Afghanistan, with a score of 27.6.
- **Facts:**
- The index is based on 32 performance indicators across 11 categories—biodiversity & habitat, air quality, water and sanitation, etc—based on which countries are ranked on environmental health and ecosystem vitality.

- The 2020 rankings include for the first time a waste management metric and a pilot indicator on CO2 emissions from land cover change.
- **Rankings:**
- Denmark is ranked First, followed by Luxembourg and Switzerland. Liberia is ranked last at 180.
- India is ranked 168 with a score of 27.6. India performed the worst regionally on all five key parameters for environmental health—sanitation, drinking water, air quality, heavy metals, and waste management.

Link:

<https://epi.yale.edu/>

China Mars Mission

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) China successfully launched its first Mars probe Tianwen -1.

(2) Till now, USA Russia, European Union and India have reached the Mars.

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:

- China successfully launched its first Mars probe aboard a Long March 5 rocket from the Wenchang Satellite Launch Center on Hainan Island on July 23 2020.
- The mission is termed Tianwen -1 (formerly Huoxing 1), which means “Questions to Heaven”.
- It is China’s first solo mission to Mars after a previous attempt with Russia failed in 2011.

Objective:

- The scientific goals of the mission include studying Martian topography and geology and determining the composition of the surface material, climate and environment.

Spacecraft and Subsystems:

- The spacecraft consists of an orbiter, a lander and a rover.
- The orbiter will use high-resolution cameras to search for a suitable landing site somewhere in the Utopia Planitia region.
- It weighs around 240 kg and will carry cameras, a subsurface radar, a spectrometer, a magnetometer, and atmospheric sensors.
- Tianwen-1 will reach the Red Planet’s orbit in February 2021. The rover will land on Mars in May.

Utopia Planitia region:

- Utopia Planitia region on Mars indicates the area where a large subsurface deposit rich in water ice was assessed.
- Also, ice caps at the north and south poles lead to the presence of water which needs to be explored comprehensively.

Countries on Mars Mission:

- Till now, USA, Russia, European Union and India have reached the Mars.
- The United States and the Soviet Union are the only two countries to land a spacecraft on Mars.
- India through its Mars Orbiter Mission (MOM), also called Mangalyaan, became the first country to orbit Mars in its very first attempt.
- MOM was launched by ISRO in 2013.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/china-mars-mission-tianwen-1-explained-6521179/>

Turkmenistan gets observer status in World Trade Organization

Question: Recently which country has been granted Observer status by the World Trade Organization (WTO) General Council?

- (a) Kyrgyzstan
- (b) Turkmenistan
- (c) Afghanistan
- (d) Kazakhstan

Answer: (b)

Related Fact :

- Turkmenistan has been granted Observer status by the World Trade Organization (WTO) General Council.
- Turkmenistan has become the last former Soviet republic to establish formal ties with the trade body.
- The Central Asian country filed a request for Observer status in May and expressed willingness to trigger the talks on accession to the WTO within five years.
- Neighbouring Central Asian countries — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Afghanistan — have acceded to the WTO, while Uzbekistan has been in on-and-off negotiations on WTO accession since 1994.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Turkmenistan-gets-observer-status-in-World-Trade-Organization&id=395475#:~:text=Turkmenistan%20gets%20observer%20status%20in%20World%20Trade%20Organization,-Tweeted%20by%20%40wto&text=Turkmenistan%20has%20been%20granted%20Observer,a%20WTO%20Spokesperson%20said%20yesterday.>

Suspected case of bubonic plague found in China's Inner Mongolia

Question: Consider the following statements with respect to plague:

- (1) Plague is an infectious disease caused by the bacteria *Yersinia pestis*, a zoonotic bacteria, usually found in small mammals and their fleas.
- (2) It is transmitted between animals through fleas.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer: (c)

- **Context:**
- A hospital in China's Inner Mongolia reported a case of suspected bubonic plague.
- **Cause:**
- Plague is an infectious disease caused by the bacteria *Yersinia pestis*, a zoonotic bacteria, usually found in small mammals and their fleas.
- **Transmission:**
- It is transmitted between animals through fleas. Humans can be infected through:
 - the bite of infected vector fleas
 - unprotected contact with infectious bodily fluids or contaminated materials
 - the inhalation of respiratory droplets/small particles from a patient with pneumonic plague.
- **Types:** Two main forms of plague infection, depending on the route of infection are –
- **Bubonic plague** is caused by the bite of an infected flea. Plague bacillus, *Y. pestis*, enters at the bite and travels to the nearest lymph node where it replicates itself. The lymph node then becomes inflamed, tense and painful, and is called a '**bubo**'. Human to human transmission of bubonic plague is rare.
- **Pneumonic plague, or lung-based plague**, is the most virulent form of plague. Any person with pneumonic plague may transmit the disease via droplets to other humans.
- **Where is plague found:**
- As an animal disease, plague is found in all continents, except Oceania. Since the 1990s, most human cases have occurred in Africa. The three most endemic countries are the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, and Peru.
- **Treatment:**
- Nowadays, plague is easily treated with antibiotics and the use of standard precautions to prevent acquiring infection.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/suspected-case-of-bubonic-plague-found-in-chinas-inner-mongolia/article31998748.ece>

GLOBAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX (MPI) 2020

Question: With reference to GLOBAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX (MPI) 2020 consider the following :

- (1) The global MPI is composed of three dimensions (health, education, and living standards) and five indicators.
- (2) A person is identified as multidimensionally poor if they are deprived in at least one

fourth of the weighted indicators.

Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer : (d)

- **Context:**
- The 2020 global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) was recently released by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- **Key findings of the report:**
- Around 1.3 billion people are still living in multidimensional poverty.
- Children show higher rates of multidimensional poverty. Half of multidimensionally poor people (644 million) are children under age 18. One in three children is poor compared with one in six adults.
- About 84 % of multidimensionally poor people live in Sub-Saharan Africa (558 million) and South Asia (530 million).
- Four countries halved their MPI value. India (2005/06–2015/16) did so nationally and among children and had the biggest reduction in the number of multidimensionally poor people (over 270 million).

Global MPI:

- The global MPI is a measure of acute multidimensional poverty. It measures the acute deprivations in health, education, and living standards that a person may face simultaneously.
- The global MPI is composed of three dimensions (health, education, and living standards) and ten indicators. A person is identified as multidimensionally poor if they are deprived in at least one third of the weighted indicators.
- 2020 marks the ten year anniversary since the global MPI was first launched in partnership with the UNDP's Human Development Report Office (HDRO).

Links:

<http://hdr.undp.org/en/2020-MPI#:~:text=2020%20MPI%3A%20dimensions%2C%20indicators%2C,of%20living%2C%20comprising%2010%20indicators.>

World Intellectual Property Indicators-2019 Report

Question: Consider the following statements with respect to the World Intellectual Property Indicators-2019 Report :

- (1) India has emerged as the top third nation in the ranking of the total Intellectual Property filing activity.
- (2) With schemes like 'Make in India', 'Skill India' and now 'Atma-nirbhar Bharat', IP Filing and grant activity is likely to increase.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None of these

Answer:(b)

- **Context:**
- As per World Intellectual Property Indicators-2019 Report, India has emerged as the top tenth nation in the ranking of the total (resident and abroad) Intellectual Property (IP) filing activity.
- **Facts :**
- With government push to schemes like 'Make in India', 'Skill India' and now 'Atma-nirbhar Bharat', IP Filing and grant activity is likely to increase.
- IP-intensive industries have been identified as an important and integral part of a country's economy and account for more jobs and a larger share of its GDP.
- The National IPR Policy, launched in May 2016, to promote strong IP regime in the country encourages innovation to achieve Country's industrial and economic development goals. This will provide efficient IP ecosystem and build up pace of industrial growth in the country.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=India-among-top-ten-nations-in-intellectual-property-filings&id=393931>

Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

Question: Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Artsakh is a disputed region between which two countries?

- (a) Armenia and Turkey
- (b) Georgia and Armenia
- (c) Russia and Azerbaijan
- (d) Armenia and Azerbaijan

Answer : (d)

- **Context:**
- For approximately four decades, territorial disputes and ethnic conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in Central Asia have impacted the Nagorno-Karabakh region in the South Caucasus. Recently, tensions escalated at the border between the two countries.
- **Facts:**
- Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Artsakh, is a landlocked region in the South Caucasus, within the mountainous range of Karabakh.
- Nagorno-Karabakh is a disputed territory, internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, but mostly governed by the Republic of Artsakh, a de facto independent state with an Armenian ethnic majority established on the basis of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast of the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.
- Azerbaijan has not exercised political authority over the region since the advent of the Karabakh movement in 1988. Since the end of the Nagorno-Karabakh War in 1994, representatives of the governments of Armenia and Azerbaijan have been holding peace talks on the region's disputed status.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/armenia-azerbaijan-nagorno-karabakh-6505740/>

UN designates Pakistan Taliban leader Noor Mehsud as global terrorist

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) The United Nations has designated Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terror group's leader Noor Wali Mehsud, as a global terrorist.**
- (2) Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) had claimed responsibility for an attempted bombing in Times Square on May 1, 2010.**

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:

- The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) terror group's Noor Wali Mehsud has been designated as a global terrorist by the United Nations for participating in the financing, planning and perpetrating acts on behalf of and in support of entities associated with al-Qaida.
- The Pakistani national was added to the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions List by the UN Security Council's Sanctions Committee, subjecting him to an assets freeze, travel ban and arms embargo.
- Mehsud was named the leader of Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan in June 2018, following the death of former TTP leader Maulana Fazlullah.
- The TTP was blacklisted by the UN on July 29, 2011 for its association with al-Qaida.
- Under Noor Wali's leadership, TTP has claimed responsibility for numerous deadly terrorist attacks across Pakistan, including an attack targeting Pakistani security forces in North Waziristan in July 2019 and a bomb attack against Pakistani soldiers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in August 2019.
- The group had claimed responsibility for an attempted bombing in Times Square on May 1, 2010.
- In April 2010 it had launched a multi-pronged assault against the United States Consulate in Peshawar, killing at least six Pakistanis and wounding 20 others.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=UN-designates-Pakistan-Taliban-leader-Noor-Mehsud-as-global-terrorist&id=393994>

The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2020 report

Question: Consider the following statements in reference to The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2020 report:

- (1) 8.9 percent of the world population went hungry in 2019.**
- (2) The majority of the world's undernourished are found in Africa.**
- (3) In 2019, 21.3 percent (144.0 million) of children under 5 years of age were stunted.**

Of the above correct statement/s is/are:

- (a) Only 1,2
- (b) Only 2,3
- (c) Only 1,3

(d) All of the above

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The state of food security and nutrition in the world 2020 report is released.
- This joint report is issued annually by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the International Fund for Agricultural Development, UNICEF, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization.
- The report presents latest estimates on food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition at the global and regional levels.
- **Findings 2020:**
 - The world is not on track to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030.
 - Almost 690 million people around the world went hungry in 2019(up by 1 crore in 2018).
 - This is 8.9 percent of the world population.
 - The COVID-19 pandemic may add between 83 and 132 million people to the total number of undernourished in the world in 2020.
 - The number of people affected by hunger globally has been slowly on the rise since 2014.
 - The majority of the world's undernourished – 381 million – are still found in Asia. More than 250 million live in Africa, where the number of undernourished people is growing faster than in any other region of the world.
 - The cost of a healthy diet exceeds the international poverty line (established at USD 1.90 or Rs 143 purchasing power parity (PPP) per person per day), making it unaffordable for the poor.
 - The cost also exceeds average food expenditures in most countries in the Global South: around 57 percent or more of the population cannot afford a healthy diet throughout sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia.
- **Data on Children:**
 - In 2019, 21.3 percent (144.0 million) of children under 5 years of age were stunted.
 - 6.9 percent (47.0 million) wasted and
 - 5.6 percent (38.3 million) overweight

Links:

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/nutritionlibrary/publications/state-food-security-nutrition-2020-inbrief-en.pdf?sfvrsn=65fbc6ed_4

The Lancet report on Global Population Scenarios,2020

Question: Consider the following statements in reference to a report published by the Lancet on population scenarios:

(1) India will be the largest working-age population in the world by 2100.

(2) The global Total Fertility Rate is forecasted to be 1.66 in 2100.

(3) USA will be the country with the largest immigration in 2100.

Of the above correct statement/s is/are:

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

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- According to a study published by the Lancet on July 14 2020, India will be the world's most populous country in 2100.
- India's population is forecasted to peak in 2048 at around 1.6 billion, up from 1.38 billion in 2017.
- This waygoing will be followed by a 32 per cent decline to around 1.09 billion in 2100.
- The five largest countries in 2100 to be India, Nigeria, China, the USA, and Pakistan.
- India will become the fourth largest economy in 2030, sliding up to number three in 2050 and 2100.
- The number of working-age adults (20–64 years) in India is projected to fall from around 748 million in 2017 to around 578 million in 2100.
- However, this will be the largest working-age population in the world by 2100.
- In the mid-2020s, India is expected to surpass China's workforce population (950 million in 2017, and 357 million in 2100).

World Findings:

- The global population was projected to peak in 2064 at 9.73 billion people and decline to 8.79 billion in 2100.
- 23 countries in the reference scenario, including Japan, Thailand, and Spain, were forecasted to have population declines greater than 50% from 2017 to 2100.
- China was forecasted to become the largest economy by 2035 but in the reference scenario, the USA was forecasted to once again become the largest economy in 2098.

Report on Immigration:

- The countries with the largest immigration forecasts in absolute numbers in 2100 were the USA, India, and China.
- Whereas emigration was forecasted to be largest in Somalia, the Philippines, and Afghanistan.

Total Fertility Rate:

- India reached a TFR lower than replacement level in 2018.
- Thereafter, India was forecasted to have a continued steep decline until about 2040, reaching a TFR of 1.29 in 2100.
- The global TFR was forecasted to be 1.66 in 2100.
- Total Fertility Rate (TFR) lower than 2.1 leads to a decline in a country's population.

Mortality:

- Among the ten countries with the largest populations in 2017 or 2100, China, Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, the USA, and Nigeria were forecasted to have the highest life expectancies in 2100.
- DR Congo, Pakistan, India, and Indonesia were forecasted to have the lowest life expectancies.

- India is projected to have one of the lowest life expectancies (79.3 years in 2100, up from 69.1 in 2017).

Reason behind population decline:

- Continued trends in female educational attainment and access to contraception will hasten declines in fertility and slow population growth.

Links:

<https://www.thelancet.com/action/showPdf?pii=S0140-6736%2820%2930677-2>

Iran drops India from Chabahar Rail Project

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (a) Iran had decided to proceed with the Chabahar port rail project by itself which involves construction of 628 km rail line from Chabahar port to Zahedan.
 (b) Developing Chabahar port provides an alternate trade route to Afghanistan and Central Asia bypassing Pakistan.

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:

- Iran had decided to proceed with the Chabahar port rail project by itself citing funding delays from India.
- The construction of 628 km rail line is proposed from Chabahar port to Zahedan in Iran, along the border with Afghanistan.
- The rail line will be extended to Zaranj across the border in Afghanistan.
- The entire project will be completed by March 22 with \$400 million sanctioned by the Iranian National Development Fund.
- **Background:**
 - In May 2016, India, Iran and Afghanistan have signed pact for Trilateral Transport & Transit Corridor through Afghanistan that could help halve the time and cost of doing business with Central Asia and Europe.
 - This entails the development of strategic port of Chabahar in Iran as one of the regional hubs for sea transportation.
 - The railway project was meant to be part of India's vow to the trilateral deal between India, Iran and Afghanistan to develop an alternate trade route to Afghanistan and Central Asia bypassing a hostile Pakistan.
 - Earlier for the so purpose, IRCON had signed an MoU with the Iranian Rail Ministry.
 - Indian Railways Construction Ltd (IRCON) had promised to provide all services, superstructure work, and financing for the project (around \$1.6 billion).
 - The port is being considered crucial for trade among the three countries in the wake of Pakistan denying transit access to India.
- **Reasons for the expulsion:**

- India never began the work, fearing of sanctions by the USA.
- Although the U.S. had provided a sanctions waiver for the Chabahar port and the rail line to Zahedan, but it has been difficult to find equipment suppliers and partners due to worries that they could be targeted by the U.S.
- India has already “zeroed out” its oil imports from Iran due to U.S. sanctions.
- Another reason of the expulsion being the Iranian move to finalise a sweeping 25-year economic and security partnership with China worth \$400 billion.
- The partnership would vastly expand Chinese presence in banking, telecommunications, ports, railways and dozens of other projects.
- In exchange, China would receive a regular — and, according to an Iranian official and an oil trader, heavily discounted — supply of Iranian oil over the next 25 years.
- Also, Iran proposed a tie-up between the Chinese-run Pakistani port at Gwadar and Chabahar in 2019 and offered interests to China in the Bandar-e-Jask port 350 km away from Chabahar, as well as in the Chabahar duty-free zone.
- **Chabahar Port:**
- Chabahar Port is a seaport in Chabahar located in southeastern Iran, on the Gulf of Oman.
- It serves as Iran’s only oceanic port, and consists of two separate ports named Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti.
- **Importance of Chabahar Port to India:**
- The foremost significance of the Chabahar port is the fact that India can bypass Pakistan in transporting goods to Afghanistan. Chabahar port will boost India’s access to Iran, the key gateway to the International North-South Transport Corridor that has sea, rail and road routes between India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia.
- Chabahar port will be beneficial to India in countering Chinese presence in the Arabian Sea which China is trying to ensure by helping Pakistan develop the Gwadar port. Gwadar port is less than 400 km from Chabahar by road and 100 km by sea.
- With Chabahar port becoming functional, there will be a significant boost in the import of iron ore, sugar and rice to India. The import cost of oil to India will also see a considerable decline. India has already increased its crude purchase from Iran since the West imposed ban on Iran was lifted.
- Chabahar port will ensure in the establishment of a politically sustainable connectivity between India and Afghanistan. This is will, in turn, lead to better economic ties between the two countries.
- From a diplomatic perspective, Chabahar port could be used as a point from where humanitarian operations could be coordinated.
- The Zaranj-Delaram road constructed by India in 2009 can give access to Afghanistan’s Garland Highway, setting up road access to four major cities in Afghanistan – Herat, Kandahar, Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/iran-drops-india-from-chabahar-rail-project-cites-funding-delay/article32072428.ece>

Maldives, Sri Lanka eliminate measles & rubella ahead of 2023 target

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Maldives and Sri Lanka have become the first two countries in the South-East Asia region to eliminate both measles and rubella ahead of the 2023 target.

(2) India stood fourth among 194 countries in the number of measles cases registered between July 2018 and June 2019.

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:

- Maldives and Sri Lanka have become the first two countries in the South-East Asia region to eliminate both measles and rubella ahead of the 2023 target.
- The announcement was made by WHO South-East Asia's Regional Director, Dr Poonam Khetrpal Singh after the fifth meeting of the regional verification commission for measles and rubella elimination, held virtually.
- **Parameters for recognition:**
 - A country is verified as having eliminated measles and rubella when there is no evidence of endemic transmission for over three years by a well-performing surveillance system.
 - Maldives reported its last endemic case of measles in 2009 and of rubella in October 2015, while Sri Lanka reported last endemic case of measles in May 2016 and of rubella in March 2017.
- **Target year for elimination:**
 - Member countries of WHO South-East Asia region had set 2023 as the target for elimination of measles and rubella. Bhutan, DPR Korea and Timor-Leste are other countries in the region who have eliminated measles.
- **Measles:**
 - Measles is a serious and highly contagious disease that can cause debilitating or fatal complications, including encephalitis, severe diarrhoea and dehydration, pneumonia, ear infections and permanent vision loss.
 - The disease is preventable through two doses of a safe and effective vaccine.
- **Rubella:**
 - Rubella, more commonly known as German measles, can have severe consequences during pregnancy.
 - An infection just before conception and in early pregnancy may result in miscarriage, foetal death or congenital defects known as congenital rubella syndrome (CRS).
 - A woman infected with the rubella virus early in pregnancy has a 90% chance of passing the virus to the foetus.
- **Status in India:**
 - India stood fourth among 194 countries in the number of measles cases registered between July 2018 and June 2019 as per the World Health Organization (WHO).

- India reported 47,056 measles cases and 1,263 rubella cases during these 12 months.
- India, as part of the global initiative, has targeted elimination of measles and control of rubella by 2020.
- Rubella control is achieved when a country reduces the number of rubella cases by 95% as compared to cases in 2008.
- India has initiated the world's largest Measles-Rubella (MR) Campaign targeting vaccination of 410 million children and adolescents aged between 9 months and 15 years.
- The MR campaign began in February 2017, and as of November 2018, 135 million children have been vaccinated in 28 states/UTs.
- Under the programme, two doses of measles and rubella vaccines are to be given at ages 9-12 months and 16-24 months.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Maldives%2c-Sri-Lanka-eliminate-measles-%26-rubella-ahead-of-2023-target&id=393273>

UNESCO World Heritage site Hagia Sophia

Question: UNESCO World Heritage site Hagia Sophia allowed for the conversion from a museum into a mosque is located in which country?

- (a) Iraq
- (b) Iran
- (c) Armenia
- (d) Turkey

Answer: (d)

Context:

- Turkey's highest court allowed for the conversion of the nearly 1,500 year-old Hagia Sophia from a museum into a mosque.
- **About:**
- The centuries-old structure, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, was originally a cathedral in the Byzantine empire before it was turned into a mosque in 1453, when Constantinople fell to Sultan Mehmet II's Ottoman forces.
- In the 1930s, however, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, shut down the mosque and turned it into a museum in an attempt to make the country more secular.
- Turkey's Council of State had declared in its ruling that the conversion of the Hagia Sophia from a mosque into the museum by the country's founder was illegal.
- The decision was in line with the Turkish president's calls to turn the hugely symbolic world heritage site into a mosque despite widespread international criticism, including from UNESCO, the United States and Orthodox Christian leaders.

Link:

<https://en.unesco.org/news/unesco-statement-hagia-sophia-istanbul>

Bhasan Char

Question:Bhasan Char, also known as Char Piya, is an island in :

- (a) India
- (b) Sri Lanka
- (c) Maldives
- (d) Bangladesh

Answer : (d)

Context:

Bangladesh has announced that it will not move the Rohingyas settled on the Bhashan char island amid Corona pandemic.

- **About:**
- Bhasan Char, also known as Char Piya, is an island in Hatiya Upazila, Bangladesh. It is located in the Bay of Bengal, 37 miles from the coast. The island was formed with Himalayan silt in 2006.
- Bhashan char is an uninhabited island where the government of Bangladesh has made shelter houses for one lakh Rohingya refugees. In June 2015, the Bangladeshi government suggested resettling Rohingya refugees on the island.
- However, environmentalists say that the Bhashan Char falls in an ecologically fragile area prone to floods, erosion and cyclones. The issue of forced relocation and lack of mobility on the island has also been raised by organisations working among the Rohingyas.

Link:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=Rohingyas-to-remain-at-Bhashan-char%2C-Bangladesh&id=393425>

WHO announced that Measles and rubella have been eradicated from Sri Lanka and the Maldives

Question:Consider the following with respect to Measles and Rubella:

- (1) Measles is caused by Rubeola virus and Rubella is caused by Rubella virus.
- (2) Maldives and Indonesia became first two countries in WHO South-East Asia Region to achieve measles and rubella elimination.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None of these

Answer : (a)

Context:

- The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that Measles and rubella have been eradicated from Sri Lanka and the Maldives.
- **About:**
- With this, Maldives and Sri Lanka became the first two countries in **WHO South-East Asia Region** to achieve measles and rubella elimination ahead of the 2023 target.
- A country is verified as having eliminated measles and rubella when there is no evidence of endemic transmission of the measles and rubella viruses for over three years in the presence of a well performing surveillance system.
- In September 2019, member countries of WHO South-East Asia Region set 2023 as target for elimination of measles and rubella, revising the goal of the flagship programme that since 2014 had focused on measles elimination and rubella control.
- **Facts:**
- **Criteria:** A country is verified as having eliminated measles and rubella when there is no evidence of endemic transmission of the respective viruses for over three years in the presence of a well-performing surveillance system.
- **Other Countries:**
 - Bhutan, DPR Korea and Timor-Leste are countries in the region which have eliminated measles.
- **Related Facts:**
- **WHO SEAR:** It has 11 member countries- Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan, DPR Korea, Myanmar, Maldives and Timor-Leste.
 - **Measles and Rubella(German measles):** They are a contagious viral diseases that spread by contact with an infected person through coughing and sneezing. Both of them can be entirely prevented with a two-dose of MMR (Measles, Mumps and Rubella) vaccine.
 - **Difference between Measles and Rubella:**
 - Measles is caused by Rubella virus and Rubella is caused by Rubella virus.
 - Rubella causes a milder illness than measles but it is of particular concern because if a pregnant woman becomes infected, the virus can cause severe birth defects known as Congenital Rubella Syndrome(CRS).

Link:

<https://www.who.int/southeastasia/news/detail/08-07-2020-maldives-sri-lanka-eliminate-measles-and-rubella-ahead-of-2023-target#:~:text=New%20Delhi%20%2D%20Maldives%20and%20Sri,ahead%20of%20the%202023%20target.>

International Day of Cooperatives 2020

Question: 'International Day of Cooperatives 2020 was celebrated on...

(a) July 2 (b) July 3 (c) July 1 (d) July 4

Answer- (d)

Related facts

Context

- 'International Day of Cooperatives 2020 was celebrated on 4th July. Theme for this year's International day of cooperatives was – 'Let's cooperate and invite everyone to fight for climate action'.
- The International Day of Cooperatives is an annual celebration of the cooperative movement that takes place on the first Saturday of July since 1923.
- Since 1995, the United Nations and the International Cooperative Alliance have been setting the theme for the celebration of the Day.

Aim

- The aim of this celebration is to increase awareness of cooperatives.
- The event underscores the contributions of the cooperative movement to resolving the major problems addressed by the United Nations and to strengthening and extending the partnerships between the international cooperative movement and other actors.

Link:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/cooperatives-day>

zoonotic disease

Question: Consider the following with respect to zoonotic disease:

- (1) It is a disease that passes into the human population from an animal source directly or through an intermediary species.
- (2) It can be bacterial, viral but not parasitic in nature.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None of these

Answer : (a)

- **Context:**
- United Nations Environment Programme(UNEP) and the International Livestock Research Institute(ILRI) has released a report titled "Preventing the Next Pandemic: Zoonotic diseases and how to break the chain of transmission".

Aim:

The report focuses on the context and nature of potential future zoonotic disease outbreaks during the Covid-19 pandemic by identifying the anthropogenic (changes in environment due to human activity) factors.

Anthropogenic Factors:

(a) Increased Use of Wildlife **b)** Changes in Food Supply Chains **c)** Increased Demand for Animal Protein **d)** Intense and Unsustainable Farming and **e)** Use of Antimicrobials in farm settings contributing to the burden of antimicrobial resistance(AMR).

Other Facts:

Zoonoses or Zoonotic Disease:

- It is a disease that passes into the human population from an animal source directly or through an intermediary species.
- Zoonotic infections can be bacterial, viral or parasitic in nature, with animals playing a vital role in maintaining such infections.

Examples of zoonoses include HIV-AIDS, Ebola, Malaria, and the current Covid-19 disease.

UNEP:

- It was founded by the UN General Assembly as a result of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference) in 1972.

Reports: Emission Gap Report, Global Environment Outlook among others.

Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya.

Links:

<https://www.unenvironment.org/resources/report/preventing-future-zoonotic-disease-outbreaks-protecting-environment-animals-and>

Global E-waste Monitor 2020 report

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) As of Global E-waste Monitor 2020 report a record 53.6 million metric tonnes (Mt) of e-waste was reportedly generated worldwide in 2019.

(2) Asia generated the highest quantity of e-waste in 2019.

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:

- The third edition of the Global E-waste Monitor 2020 was launched in July 2020.
- This report provides comprehensive insight to address the global e-waste challenge.
- The Global E-waste Monitor is a collaborative effort between the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Sustainable Cycles (SCYCLE) Programme currently co-hosted by the United Nations University (UNU) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and the International Solid Waste Association (ISWA).

Report findings:

- A record 53.6 million metric tonnes (Mt) of e-waste – discarded products with a battery or plug such as computers and mobile phones – is reported generated worldwide in 2019, up 9.2 Mt in five years.

- The new report also predicts global e-waste will reach 74 Mt by 2030, almost double the 2014 figure.
- However, in 2019, only 17.4 per cent of e-waste was officially documented as formally collected and recycled.
- Asia generated the highest quantity of e-waste in 2019 at 24.9 Mt, followed by the Americas (13.1 Mt) and Europe (12 Mt), while Africa and Oceania generated 2.9 Mt and 0.7 Mt, respectively.
- The value of raw materials in the global e-waste generated in 2019 is equal to approximately \$57 billion USD. Iron, copper, and gold contribute mostly to this value.
- The number of countries that have adopted a national e-waste policy, legislation or regulation has increased from 61 to 78 between 2014 and 2019 including India.
- ITU Member States also set a target to raise the percentage of countries with an e-waste legislation to 50 per cent – or 97 countries – by 2023.

Links:

http://ewastemonitor.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/GEM_2020_def_july1_low.pdf#.

US Position on CAATSA unchanged

Question: India has joined which of the following defence pacts with US to obtain cutting-edge weapons and communications systems from the US

- (1) Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement .
- (2) Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation.
- (3) Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 2 and 3
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (c)

- **Context:**
- The United States will not change its position on putting sanctions against India under Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) for buying fighter jets from Russia.
- **Facts:**
- **CAATSA:** It is a US federal law enacted in 2017 to impose sanctions on Iran, North Korea and Russia.
- The Act empowers the US President to impose sanctions against countries that engage in a significant transaction with Russian defence and intelligence sectors.
- **Concerns:** India could face US sanctions for purchasing high-value military defense items, in particular the S-400 Triumf missile defense system from Russia under the act.
- **Additional Facts:**
- **S-400:** It is an advanced air defence system that can simultaneously track numerous incoming objects — all kinds of aircraft, missiles and UAVs in a radius of a few hundred kilometres and launch appropriate missiles to neutralise them.
- India has signed the COMCASA, or Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement, Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) with the

US. LEMOA, COMCASA and BECA, or Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation, are the three foundational defence pacts that a country needs to sign to obtain cutting-edge weapons and communications systems from the US. India hopes to move ahead on BECA too in near future.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/us-position-on-caatsa-unchanged-despite-chinas-actions-in-neighbourhood/article32010144.ece>

The Sustainable Development Report 2020

Question: The Sustainable Development Report 2020 presents the SDG Index. Broad transformations under this index includes which of the following:

- (1) Education and skills
- (2) health and wellbeing
- (3) clean energy and industry
- (4) sustainable land use

Which is /are correct?

- (a) 1,2 and 3 (b) 2,3 and 4 (c) 1,3 and 4 (d) 1,2,3 and 4

Answer : (d)

- **Context:**
- The Sustainable Development Report 2020 presents the SDG Index and Dashboards for all UN member states. It was prepared by teams of independent experts at the Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and the Bertelsmann Stiftung.
- **About:**
- The SDG index frames the implementation of 17 SDG goals among UN member states in terms of **six broad transformations:** (1) Education and skills, (2) health and wellbeing, (3) clean energy and industry, sustainable land use, sustainable cities, and digital technologies.
- Among 193 countries for which the SDG index was prepared, India stands at the 117th position with an overall score of 61.92. China is ranked at 48, Brazil at 53 and Russia at 57.
- In south Asia, Maldives is ranked at 91, Sri Lanka at 94, Nepal at 96 Bangladesh at 109 and Pakistan at 134.
- Sweden is placed at the top of the latest SDG index for year 2020 with an overall score of 84.7.

Links:

<https://www.sdgindex.org/reports/sustainable-development-report-2020/>

Microsoft Initiative

Question : Microsoft Corp has recently announced a new global skills initiative aimed at bringing more digital skills to —

- (a) 25 million people world wide
- (b) 30 million people world wide
- (c) 35 million people world wide
- (d) 45 million people world wide

Answer : (a)
Related facts

Context

- Microsoft Corp has recently (June, 2020) announced a new global skills initiative aimed at bringing more digital skills to 25 million people worldwide by the end of the year.

Initiative

- The comprehensive technology initiative will build on data and digital technology.
- It will give people access to data on jobs and skills from the LinkedIn Economic Graph, provide free access to content in LinkedIn Learning, Microsoft Learn, and the GitHub Learning Lab, and couple these with Microsoft Certifications and LinkedIn job-seeking tools.
- These resources will be available online in four languages: English, French, German and Spanish.
- The announcement comes in response to the global economic crisis caused by the covid-19 pandemic and will bring together every part of the company, combining existing and new resources from LinkedIn, GitHub and Microsoft.
- Microsoft also announced that it is creating a new learning app in Microsoft Teams designed to help employers skill and upskill new and current employees as people return to work and as the economy adds jobs.

Link:

<https://blogs.microsoft.com/blog/2020/06/30/microsoft-launches-initiative-to-help-25-million-people-worldwide-acquire-the-digital-skills-needed-in-a-covid-19-economy/>

G4 virus

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Chinese researchers have discovered a new type of swine flu virus 'G4' that can infect humans and has the potential to cause a future pandemic.

(2) Swine flu (H1N1) virus was first identified in Mexico in April 2009.

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:

- Chinese researchers have discovered a new type of swine flu virus 'G4' that can infect humans and has the potential to cause a future pandemic
- The virus strain has been named G4 EA H1N1.
- The new strain of swine flu virus is a descendant of H1N1 virus, with properties similar to the European avian-like (EA) H1N1 virus which had led to a terrifying pandemic in Mexico in 2009.
- Chinese researchers based at several institutions, including Shandong Agricultural University and the Chinese National Influenza Center, discovered the G4 virus during a pig surveillance program.
- Scientists identified the virus through surveillance of influenza viruses in pigs that they carried out from 2011 to 2018 in ten provinces of China.

- During this time, more than 29,000 nasal swabs were collected from slaughtered pigs and over 1,000 swabs or lung tissues were collected from farmed pigs that had signs of respiratory disease.
- Out of these samples, the researchers isolated 179 swine flu viruses, the majority of which belonged to the newly identified G4 strain.
- They also found that the G4 strain has the capability of binding to human-type receptors (like, the SARS-CoV-2 virus binds to ACE2 receptors in humans), was able to copy itself in human airway epithelial cells, and it showed effective infectivity and aerosol transmission in ferrets.
- But so far there is no evidence of person-to-person transmission of the virus.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/explained-what-is-g4-flu-virus-with-pandemic-potential-found-by-chinese-researchers-6483634/>

Alliance for Poverty Eradication

Question: Which of the following organization has launched Alliance for Poverty Eradication?

- (a) European Union
- (b) United Nations
- (c) SAARC
- (d) ASEAN

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- India has become a founding member of an Alliance for Poverty Eradication at the United Nations.
- The alliance aimed at focussing on efforts to boost global economy in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- This will serve as a forum for Member States to raise awareness about the danger that poverty poses to world peace, human rights and sustainable development.
- India has joined the alliance as a founding member and stressed that ending poverty is not just about monetary compensation but guaranteeing access of the poor to quality education, healthcare, clean water, sanitation, decent housing and social security.
- President of the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly Tijjani Muhammad-Bande will formally launch the 'Alliance for Poverty Eradication' on June 30.

Need:

- While the extent of the damage wrought by COVID-19 to world economy is yet to be determined, the pandemic threatens not only to erase past gains but also to force an additional half a billion of the world population into poverty

- COVID-19 practically shut down socio-economic activities across the globe, the number of people classified as poor was approximately 2.1 billion. Of this number, 767 million were found to be living in extreme poverty.
- The regions that are most at risk are Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia.

Indian Context:

- According to United Nations Development Programme, between 2006-2016 over 271 million people in India moved out of poverty, recording the fastest reductions in the multidimensional poverty index values during the period.

SDG 2.0:

- Goal 1 of Sustainable Development Goals aims to end poverty. In this regard it targets to end extreme poverty for all people everywhere by 2030.

Links: <https://www.outlookindia.com/newsscroll/india-joins-alliance-for-poverty-eradication-at-un-as-founding-member/1876703>

Economics

Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020

Question Consider the following statements with respect to Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020:

- (1) The rules will be applicable to all electronic retailers registered in India only and offering goods and services to Indian consumers.
- (2) E-commerce companies are not allowed to “manipulate the price” of the goods and services.
- (3) The new rules do not permit any inventory e-commerce entity to “falsely represent itself as a consumer and post reviews about goods and services

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer : (b)

- **Context:**
- The government has notified the ‘Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020’ on 23rd July, 2020. These are the new rules and regulations for e-commerce companies under the Consumer Protection Act 2019.
- **Features:**
- It aims to protect the rights of consumer by establishing authorities for timely and effective administration and settlement of consumers’ disputes.
- The rules will be applicable to all electronic retailers registered in India or abroad but offering goods and services to Indian consumers.
- The violation of the rules will attract penal action under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.
- The e-commerce players will have to display the total price of goods and services offered for sale along with the break-up of other charges.

- They are also required to mention the 'expiry date' of goods offered for sale and the 'country of origin' of goods and services that are necessary for enabling the consumer to make an informed decision at the pre-purchase stage.
- It empower the central government to act against unfair trade practices in e-commerce and direct selling. They require e-tailers to facilitate easy returns, address customer grievances and prevent discriminating against merchants on their platforms.
- Marketplaces as well as sellers would be required to have grievance officers who have to respond in a time-bound manner.
- E-commerce companies are not allowed to "manipulate the price" of the goods and services offered on their platforms to gain unreasonable profit and discriminate between consumers of the same class.
- The new rules do not permit any inventory e-commerce entity to "falsely represent itself as a consumer and post reviews about goods and services or misrepresent the quality or the features of any goods and services".

Link:

<http://ddnews.gov.in/business/government-notifies-new-rules-regulations-e-commerce-companies>

SPECIAL WINDOW FOR AFFORDABLE AND MID INCOME HOUSING (SWAMIH)

Question: With reference to the Special Window for Affordable and Mid Income Housing (SWAMIH), consider the following statements:

- (1) It has formed to complete construction of stalled, RERA-registered affordable and mid-income category housing projects.
- (2) The Sponsor of the Fund is the Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer: (c)

- **Context:**
- Union Finance Minister reviewed the performance of Special Window for Affordable and Mid Income Housing (SWAMIH). The fund has so far approved 81 projects with an investment of Rs 8767 crore.
- **Facts:**
- SWAMIH Investment Fund has been formed to complete construction of stalled, RERA-registered affordable and mid-income category housing projects which are stuck due to paucity of funds.
- The fund has a target corpus of Rs 12,500 crore with a greenshoe option of Rs 12,500 crore.
- The Investment Manager of the Fund is SBICAP Ventures, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SBI Capital Markets, which in turn is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the State Bank of India.
- The Sponsor of the Fund is the Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India on behalf of the Government of India.
- In November 2019, the Union Cabinet cleared a proposal to set it up.
- **Greenshoe option?**

- A greenshoe option is an over-allotment option. In the context of an initial public offering (IPO), it is a provision in an underwriting agreement that grants the underwriter the right to sell investors more shares than initially planned by the issuer if the demand for a security issue proves higher than expected.

Link:

<https://realty.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/finance-ministry-approves-rs-8767-crore-for-81-stressed-projects/77134310#:~:text=NEW%20DELHI%3A%20The%20finance%20minister,for%2081%20stressed%20residential%20projects.&text=The%20approved%20fund%20will%20enable,almost%2060%2C000%20homes%20across%20India.>

India Ideas Summit

Question: Consider the following statement and choose the correct statement in relation to India Idea summit:

- (1) This summit was organised by the US-India Business Council (USIBC).
- (2) The theme for the summit was “Building a better future”.
- (3) USIBC also completed 50 years of its formation.
- (4) US Secretary of state Mike Pompeo participated in the summit.

Correct option:

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

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered the keynote address at the India Ideas Summit organised on July 22, 2020.
- The Summit was hosted by the US-India Business Council (USIBC).
- Major highlights of the summit:
 - The theme for this year's Summit is 'Building a Better Future'.
 - This year marks 45th year of the formation of USIBC.
 - US Secretary of state Mike Pompeo participated in the summit from US.
 - India offers a perfect combination of openness, opportunities and options in the coming time offering a perfect combination of openness, opportunities and options. Various measures were undertaken to make Indian economy more open and reform oriented which have ensured competitiveness, transparency and more policy stability.
 - India has about half a billion active internet users in the country having opportunities in the frontier technologies of 5G, Big Data analytics, and Internet of Things.
 - The healthcare sector in India is growing faster than 22% every year making it one of the best sectors to invest.
 - India has raised the FDI cap for investment in defence sector to 74%, two defence corridors have been established to encourage production of defense equipments.
 - India and US are working together including the Quad and the World Intellectual Property Organisation elections earlier this year.

Links:

<http://www.edristi.in/>

G20 Digital Minister's Meet

Question: Who represented India in the G2P Digital Minister's Meet held on July 22, 2020?

(a)Prakash Javadekar (b)Ravishankar Prasad (c)Piyush Goyal (d)Nirmala Sitharaman

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- A virtual meeting of G20 Digital Economy Ministers under the presidency of Saudi Arabia took place on July 22, 2020.
- Ravi Shankar Prasad, Union Minister for Electronics and Information Technology represented India during this virtual meeting.
- Representative from all the member countries participated in the virtual meet.
- Highlights of the meeting:
 - The management of COVID19 crisis by India was explained by minister being far better than many other countries.
 - Decisions like early nationwide lockdown helped in the country in curbing the spread of the virus as well as prepare for the upcoming challenges effectively.
 - India's digital innovations that helped in fight against COVID19 was also shared.
 - Initiatives like Aarogya Setu mobile app, geo-fencing system for monitoring quarantined patients and COVID19 Savdhan bulk messaging systems helped in containing COVID 19 spread.
 - Digital innovations like Direct Benefit Transfers and digital payments were used to provide various financial relief to poor during the lockdown.
 - The need for building trustworthy Artificial Intelligence systems that can transform the society was also emphasized.
 - India's plan about placing a robust personal data protection law which will not only address the data privacy related concerns of citizens but also ensure availability of data for innovation and economic development was also told.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1640482>

Capital infusion in three Public Sector General Insurance Companies

Question: The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has (recently) approved the capital infusion for an overall value of Rs.12,450 crore; (including Rs. 2,500 crore infused in FY 2019-20) in the three Public Sector General Insurance Companies. These companies are —

(a) OICL, NICL & UIICL (b) GIC, AIC & NIACL (c) OICL, GIC & AIC
(d) none of the above

Answer- (a)

Related facts

Context

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has recently (08-July-2020) approved the capital infusion for an overall value of Rs.12,450 crore; (including Rs. 2,500 crore infused in FY 2019-20) in the three Public

Sector General Insurance Companies (PSGICs) namely Oriental Insurance Company Limited (OICL), National Insurance Company Limited (NICL) and United India Insurance Company Limited (UIICL) but of which Rs.3,475 crore will be released immediately; while the balance Rs,6475 crore will be infused later.

- Authorised share capital of NICL – Cabinet also approved increase in authorised share capital of NICL to Rs.7,500 crore and that of UIICL and OICL to Rs 5,000 crore respectively to give effect to the capital infusion.
- Further, the process of merger has been ceased so far in view of the current scenario and instead, the focus shall be on their profitable growth.
- **Impact**
- The capital infusion will enable the three PSGICs to improve their financial and solvency position, meet the insurance needs of the economy, absorb changes and enhance the capacity to raise resources and improved risk management.

Link.

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=209968>

RBI : Open market operation

Question : The last open market operation was done in —

(a) July 2, 2020 (b) June 2,2020 (c) May 2,2020 (d) none of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

- The last open market operation was done in July2, 2020.
- The RBI took the decision of open market operation after considering the current liquidity and market situation.
- OMO is abbreviated as Open Market Operations.
- The OMOs are conducted by the RBI in the form of sale and purchase of Government Securities (G-Secs) to adjust liquidity in the market.
- If there is excess liquidity, then RBI undertakes sale of G-Secs and if there is liquidity crunch, then RBI conducts purchase of G-Secs.
- Government Securities : – Government Securities are financial instruments or bonds – securities that are issued at face value by Central Government for raising a loan from public.
- The Government Securities are issued to finance important projects and manage budget deficits. The Government securities can be:

Bearer Bonds

Promissory Notes

Bonds in Bond Ledger Account

Treasury Bills

Cash Management Bills

State Development Loans

Link:

https://m.rbi.org.in//Scripts/BS_PressReleaseDisplay.aspx?prid=50012

World Bank \$750 million agreement with india for the MSME Emergency Response Programme.

Question:The Government of India signed the \$750 million agreement for the MSME Emergency Response Programme with which organization?

- (a) Asian Development Bank (b) World Bank (c) International Monetary Fund
(d) None of these

Answer:(b)

- **Context:**
- The World Bank and the Government of India signed the \$750 million agreement for the MSME Emergency Response Programme.
- **About:**
- The World Bank's MSME Emergency Response Programme will address the immediate liquidity and credit needs of some 1.5 million viable MSMEs to help them withstand the impact of the current shock and protect millions of jobs.
- The \$750 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), has a maturity of 19 years including a 5-year grace period.
- **Facts:**
- It will infuse liquidity to the MSME sector by de-risking lending from banks and Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) to MSMEs through a range of instruments, including credit guarantees.
- Improving the funding capacity of key market-oriented channels of credit, such as the NBFCs and Small Finance Bank (SFBs), will help them respond to the urgent and varied needs of the MSMEs.
- The program will incentivize and mainstream the use of fintech and digital financial services in MSME lending and payments.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1636790>

FDI & Portfolio investment data

Question : How much fdi increased in financial year 2020?

- (a)19 billion dollar (b) 25 billiondollar (c)28 billiondollar (d)35billiondollar

Answer : (a)

Related facts

Context

- Direct investment into the country rose by \$19 billion while portfolio investment declined by \$13.7 billion during 2019-20, according to the data on the International Investment Position (IIP) released by the Reserve Bank on 30th June,2020.

Highlights

- International financial assets of Indian residents increased by \$73.9 billion due to the rise in reserve assets and overseas direct investment by \$64.9 billion and

\$13.0 billion, respectively, though other investments declined marginally during the year.

- Overseas assets of Indian residents' rose mainly due to a surge of \$17.9 billion in reserve assets, supported by an increase in overseas direct investments even as other investments declined marginally during the quarter
- Overall, net claims of non-residents on India declined by \$57.6 billion during the year.
- As regards the variation during the January-March 2019-20 quarter, the RBI said that net claims of non-residents on India lowered by \$45.8 billion to \$379.3 billion in March 2020.

Link:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/economy-policy/fdi-up-by-19-bn-in-fy20-portfolio-investment-down-by-13-7-bn-rbi-120063002057_1.html

Info exchange on tax matters

Question : What is the rank of India in Information exchange on tax matters?

- (a) India among Switzerland's top-3 partners for info exchange on tax matters
- (b) India among Switzerland's top-10 partners for info exchange on tax matters
- (c) India is Switzerland's top partner for info exchange on tax matters
- (d) None of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

Context

- India figures among the top-three countries getting detailed information from Switzerland about bank accounts and beneficiary ownership of entities established by their residents in the Alpine nation, according to the latest study on transparency and exchange of information for tax purposes.
- The other two countries were France and Germany.

Important facts of the study

- Report – The name of the report is Peer Review report.
- Issuer – The issuer of the report is OECD's Global Forum.
- Period – The latest peer review by the Global Forum, referring to the period from July 2015 to June 2018, named India among the top-three jurisdictions to which Switzerland provided information on request.

500 cases

- With regard to India itself, Switzerland has shared detailed information in more than 500 cases over the past one year regarding the accounts in Swiss financial institutions of Indian individuals and enterprises suspected to have indulged in tax frauds and other financial irregularities, while the numbers increase multi-fold after taking into account such cases from across the world.

Pacts

- Switzerland has entered into pacts with more than 100 countries, including India, for automatic exchange of information on tax matters.

Link:

<https://m.economictimes.com/news/economy/finance/india-among-switzerlands-top-3-partners-for-info-exchange-on-tax-matters-global-forum/articleshow/76671272.cms>

Scientific

Bureau of Indian Standard(BIS) Mobile App named “BIS-Care”

Question: Mobile app ‘BIS-Care’ is launched by which ministry?

- (a) Ministry of Consumer Affairs (b) Ministry of Commerce
(c) Ministry of textiles and industry (d) None of these

Answer: (a)

- **Context:**
- Union Consumer Affairs Minister has launched the Bureau of Indian Standard(BIS) Mobile App named “**BIS-Care**”.
- **Facts:**
- **BIS-Care:** The app aims to allow consumers to check the authenticity of the ISI-marked and hallmarked products and also lodge complaints using the application.
- **Additional Facts:**
- **BIS:** It came into existence in 1986 under BIS Act, 1986 and was established as the National Standard Body of India under the BIS Act 2016 for the harmonious development of the activities of standardization, marking and quality certification of goods.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
- **President:** Union Consumer Affairs Minister is the ex-officio President of the BIS.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1641559#:~:text=Union%20Minister%20for%20Consumer%20Affairs,.manakonline.in%20for%20consumers.>

Mausam, India’s own app for weather forecasts

Question: Consider the following with respect to Mausam App:

- (1) It is launched by Ministry of Earth Sciences.
(2) It aims to provide current weather of a location, issue warnings of severe weather events that are likely to occur in the immediate future .

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer: (c)

- **Context:**
- Ministry of Earth Sciences(MoES) has launched Mausam app and Knowledge Resource Centre Network(KRCN) on the occasion of 14th foundation day of MoES.
- **Facts:**

- **Mausam App:** It aims to provide current weather of a location, issue warnings of severe weather events that are likely to occur in the immediate future and provide tracking of approaching weather events.
- **Developed by:** It has been designed and developed jointly by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics(ICRISAT), Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune and India Meteorological Department (IMD).
- **Knowledge Resource Centre Network(KRCN):** It will be a one-point stop to access research, publications, e-resources of all institutions functioning under the Ministry of Earth Sciences(MoES).

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1641494>

Dare to Dream 2.0

Question.The ‘Dare to Dream 2.0’ is an open challenge to promote the individuals & startups for innovation in defence and aerospace technologies in the country is launched by:

(a) ISRO (b) DRDO (c) Ministry of HRD (d) PMO

Answer : (b)

- **Context:**
- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has launched its innovation contest ‘Dare to Dream 2.0’ on the 5th death anniversary of APJ Abdul Kalam.
- **About:**
- The ‘Dare to Dream 2.0’ is an open challenge to promote the individuals & startups for innovation in defence and aerospace technologies in the country.
- Award money, up to Rs 10 lakh for startup and Rs five lakh to individual category, will be given to the winners.

Link:

<https://www.financialexpress.com/education-2/dare-to-dream-2-0-drdo-launches-innovation-contest-in-honour-of-dr-abdul-kalam-all-you-need-to-know/2037221/#:~:text=The%20Defence%20Research%20and%20Development,Defence%20said%20in%20a%20statement.>

Indian Naval ships conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the U.S. Navy’s

Question:Indian Naval ships conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the navy of which country?

(a) France (b) Japan (c) USA (d) All the above

Answer:(d)

- **Context:**
- Indian Naval ships conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the U.S. Navy’s USS Nimitz carrier strike group near the Andaman and Nicobar islands as it is transiting the Indian Ocean.

- **About:**
- The maritime drill, PASSEX, aims at further enhancing interoperability between Navies of both the countries. The Nimitz Carrier Strike Group is on its way to be deployed in the Gulf region from the South China Sea.
- With regular large-scale exercises deferred due to the COVID-19 pandemic, The Indian Navy had conducted similar PASSEXs with Japanese and French Navy in the recent past.
- **Additional Facts:**
- The exercise comes amid a high alert by the Navy in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) due to the stand-off with China along the border in Ladakh.
- The Navy is keeping a close watch on the movement in the IOR of Chinese naval ships, whose presence has gone up considerably over the years in the name of anti-piracy patrols.
- In 2017, China opened its first overseas military base in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa.

Link:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indian-navy-holds-passage-exercise-with-uss-nimitz-carrier-group/article32140656.ece>

High Throughput COVID testing facilities launched

Question: Consider the following statement and choose the correct option:

- (1) PM Modi launched three high throughput COVID-19 testing facilities via video conferencing.
- (2) These facilities have a testing capacity of almost 10,000 tests per day.
- (3) These centres are located in Mumbai, Kolkata and Noida.

Correct option:

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

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched three high throughput COVID-19 testing facilities via video conferencing on July 27, 2020.
- Chief ministers of Maharashtra, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh also participated in the event.
- **Highlights of the testing facility:**
- These facilities are installed at the National Institutes of Indian Council of Medical Research, at Kolkata, Mumbai and Noida.
- They are hi-tech state-of-the-art testing facilities having capacity by almost 10,000 daily tests.
- These labs in future will also be able to test for Hepatitis B and C, HIV, Dengue and several other diseases.
- India now has more than 11,000 COVID facilities and more than 11 lakh isolation beds.
- India has also become the second largest PPE kit manufacturer.
- These labs will also reduce turn-around-time and exposure of lab personnel to infectious clinical materials.

Links:

<http://www.edristi.in/>

India-Russia joint R&D and cross-country technology adaptation

Question: The Department of Science and Technology has launched the India-Russia Joint Technology Assessment and Accelerated Commercialization Programme on July 23 2020. What amount of money is allocated for the project?

(a) ₹ 30 crore (b) ₹ 20 crore (c) ₹ 25 crore (d) ₹ 15 crore

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The Department of Science and Technology has launched the India-Russia Joint Technology Assessment and Accelerated Commercialization Programme on July 23 2020.
- This has been launched in partnership with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Foundation for Assistance to Small Innovative Enterprises (FASIE) of the Russian Federation.
- Major highlight of the project:
- ₹ 15 crore fund has been given by the Department of Science and Technology to support this initiative for a period of 2 years.
- The programme will connect Indian, and Russian Science & Technology (S&T) led SMEs and Start-ups for joint R&D for technology development and for cross-country technology adaptation.
- India and Russia have been working for many decades in areas of science & technology cooperation resulting into knowledge generation, proto-type development and institution built up.
- The programme will run through two annual cycles with up to five projects to be funded under each cycle. On behalf of DST, FICCI will implement the program in India.
- The programme is accepting applications under two broad categories, i.e. Joint Partnership Projects and Technology Transfer/Adaptation.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1640841>

Bengaluru tech firm : CuraSigna

Question : CuraSigna is in an advanced stage of manufacturing of which thing ?

- (a) NASA -designed and FDA-approved multi-functional ventilators
(b) NASA –designed Jet engine (c) NASA –designed Computer Processor
(d) None of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts —

Context

- Bengaluru-based tech company in medical equipment design, CuraSigna, said on Thursday(23 JULY 2020) it is going into the production of NASA -designed and FDA-approved multi-functional ventilators.
- **Ventilator**

- The name of this ventilator is VITAL(Ventilator Intervention Technology Accessible Locally).
- **CuraSigna**
- It is among a handful of Indian companies licenced by NASA for meeting the worldwide acute shortage of ventilators needed in treating COVID-19 patients.
- CuraSigna, promoted by Sushil Swabhiman Trust (SST), is in an advanced stage of manufacturing the ventilators first for meeting Indias needs in the COVID-19 situation and then for exports.
- CuraSigna has its manufacturing resources at Non-Ferrous Material Technology Development Centre (NFTDC), Hyderabad, an autonomous “non-grant-in-aid institution” under the Ministry of Mines, Government of India.
- **NFTDC**
- NFTDC has been engaged in the design and development of vital medical equipment for the last two decades.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/small-biz/startups/newsbuzz/nasa-designed-us-fda-authorized-ventilators-from-bangaluru-tech-firm/articleshow/77125351.cms>

Apple announced target for becoming carbon neutral

Question: Recently gadgets manufacturing company Apple has announced target of becoming carbon neutral. What is the target year fixed for it?

(a)2035 (b)2030 (c)2028 (d)2025

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- US based Apple has announced it's firm to become carbon neutral across its entire business and manufacturing supply chain by 2030.
- This will make its devices having “zero climate impact” at point of sale. It will be 100% renewable for Apple.
- It follows climate-focused pledges by other technology giants.
- Amazon too eyes 2040 as target to go carbon neutral, reflecting the challenges it faces in converting its home-delivery vehicles to more eco-friendly energy sources.
- The Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change's target for net-zero carbon-dioxide emissions is the year 2050. This is necessary to limit global warming.
- Under this plan, Apple will invest in new eco-friendly projects as well as the purchase of green energy offsets.
- Other efforts announced:
- In the 10-year roadmap planned by Apple, it include the use of a new robot named Dave.
- It will be used to recover materials from the vibrating Taptic Engine of devices returned for recycling.
- It has also announced the increased use of recycled raw materials in its own products and new solar-panel projects in Scandinavia, to power its own data centres.
- It will also work on eco-friendly energy projects to benefit local communities.

Links:

<https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2020/jul/21/apple-promises-to-become-fully-carbon-neutral-by-2030>

AirBridge : a Emergency Breathing Assist System

Question : Which company launched AirBridge (a emergency breathing assist system) ?

- (a)Wipro 3D, in collaboration with SCTIMST
(b)TCS (c)INFOSYS Technologies (d)None of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

Context

- Wipro 3D, a business of Wipro Infrastructure Engineering, in technical collaboration with Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST, Trivandrum, an Institute of National Importance under the Department of Science and Technology, GoI), has recently (July,2020) launched AirBridge, the Wipro Chitra Emergency Breathing Assist System (EBAS).
- **Characteristics**
 - In the scenario of non-availability of adequate numbers of mechanical ventilators, an emergency breathing assist device like the Air Bridge can be used in the short term (hours to a few days) till mechanical ventilation can be provided in an ICU.
 - The battery backed device is operator-friendly and it is also easy to train the operators.
 - It is portable and has low running cost. This automatic device will minimize the need of nursing staff to continuously monitor the device and enables a safe, and effective temporary respiratory support to COVID patients for whom access to mechanical ventilator is not immediately available.
 - It works as a bridge device before mechanical ventilation.

Link:

<https://www.wiproinfra.com/news-and-events/wipro-3d-in-collaboration-with-sree-chitra-tirunal-institute-for-medical-sciences-and-technology-launches-airbridge-a-emergency-breathing-assist-system/>

MoD inks contract with BEML for procurement of 1,512 Mine Plough for T-90 tanks

Question: Ministry of Defence signed a Contract with Bharat Earth Movers Limited, BEML for procurement of 1,512 Mine Plough for Tank T-90 S/SK.This tank is of which country origin?

- (a) Russia (b) Israel (c) USA (d) Germany

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- With an aim to boost 'Make in India' initiative of the Government, Acquisition Wing of Ministry of Defence signed a Contract with Bharat Earth Movers Limited, BEML for procurement of 1,512 Mine Plough for Tank T-90 S/SK on July 20, 2020.
- The procurement costs approximately Rs. 557 crore.
- The contract has Buy and Make (Indian) categorisation with a minimum of 50 per cent indigenous content in make portion of the contract.
- These mine ploughs will be fitted on T-90 Tanks of Indian Armoured Corps which will facilitate individual mobility to Tanks while negotiating mine field.
- Mobility of Tank Fleet will enhance manifold, which in turn would extend the reach of Armoured Formation deep into enemy territory without becoming mine causality.
- With the induction of these 1,512 mine ploughs, planned to be completed by 2027, the combat capability of the Army will be further enhanced.
- The T-90 S/SK Tanks Bheeshma is a Russian technology Indian made tank named after a character in Mahabharata epic.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1639963#:~:text=With%20an%20aim%20to%20boost,SK%20at%20an%20approximate%20cost>

Biocon gets DCGI nod for use of Itolizumab for treatment of COVID-19 patients

Question: Consider the following statements with respect to Monoclonal antibodies:

- (1) They are proteins cloned in the lab to mimic antibodies produced by the immune system to counter an infection.
- (2) They have their genesis in serum, the red colour constituent of blood that contains antibodies.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer:(a)

- **Context:**
- Pharma major Biocon announced has received the approval of the DCGI to market Itolizumab for treatment of cytokine release syndrome (CRS) in COVID-19 patients. Itolizumab is a monoclonal antibody which is used to treat acute psoriasis.
- **Facts:**
- Monoclonal antibodies are proteins cloned in the lab to mimic antibodies produced by the immune system to counter an infection.
- They have their genesis in serum, the colourless constituent of blood that contains antibodies.
- These proteins bind to an antigen, the fragment of an infectious virus in the case of SARS-CoV-2, and either destroy it or block its action.

Links:

New Android malware BlackRock

Question:BLACKROCK recently seen in the news is a:

(a) Cryptocurrency (b) Malware (c) Newly discovered asteroid (d) Human robot

Answer:(b)

- **Context:**
- new Android malware named BlackRock has been discovered that steals data such as password and credit card details from 337 apps including some of the popular ones like Gmail, Amazon, Netflix, Uber, and more.
- **Facts:**
- The BlackRock malware is based on the leaked source code of another malware strain Xerxes which in turn is based on other malware strains. The new malware is enhanced with more features related to stealing passwords and credit card details.
- The malware steals login credentials including username and passwords) and sends prompt to users to enter payment credit card details.
- It collects data through a technique called “overlays”. It basically detects when a user interacts with a legitimate app and places a fake window on top that asks for login and credit card details before the user enters the actual app.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/technology/tech-news-technology/blackrock-android-malware-steals-data-337-apps-6510642/>

UAE Mars mission

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) United Arab Emirates has launched unmanned Mars mission Hope Probe.

(2) Hope probe is Arab world’s first interplanetary mission.

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:

- The United Arab Emirates successfully launched its unmanned Mars mission named Hope Probe on July 19 2020.
- The Hope Probe (Al Amal probe in Arabic)took off aboard H-IIA rocket from the Tanegashima Space Center in Japan.
- Hope probe is Arab world’s first interplanetary mission.
- Following a journey of several months, the probe is expected to enter the Red Planet’s orbit in February 2021, coinciding with the Golden Jubilee of the UAE.
- **Spacecraft and Subsystems:**
- Hope is a 1,350-kilogram satellite developed and executed by the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) in the UAE.
- It will carry three scientific instruments mounted on one side of the spacecraft. Of these:

- The Emirates eXploration Imager (EXI) is a high resolution multiband (visible and UV) camera, the Emirates Mars Ultraviolet Spectrometer (EMUS), a far-UV imaging spectrograph, and the Emirates Mars InfraRed Spectrometer (EMIRS), and FTIR scanning spectrometer.
- **Objectives:**
 - The Hope Probe will be the first probe to provide a complete picture of the Martian atmosphere and its layers.
 - It will help answer key questions about the global Martian atmosphere and the loss of hydrogen and oxygen gases into space over the span of one Martian year.
 - It will create a global picture of how the martian atmosphere varies throughout the day and year.
- **Other Mars missions:**
 - Hope is the first of three Mars missions scheduled to launch over the next two weeks.
 - China is expected to launch its Tianwen-1 Mars mission, which features an orbiter, lander and rover, on a Long March 5 July 23.
 - NASA will launch its Mars 2020 mission, carrying the rover Perseverance, on July 30 on an Atlas 5 from Cape Canaveral, Florida.

Links:

<https://www.emiratesmarsmission.ae/mission/about-emm>

APT29 also known as Dukes or Cozy Bear

Question:APT29 also known as Dukes or Cozy Bear, recently seen in the news is related to which of the following?

(a) Cryptocurrency (b) Ransomware (c) Cyber espionage group (d) Bear Robot

Answer : (c)

- **Context:**
- APT29 also known as Dukes or Cozy Bear is a cyber espionage group believed to be associated with Russian intelligence.
- The group uses a variety of tools and techniques to predominantly target governmental, diplomatic, think-tank, healthcare and energy targets for intelligence gain.
- APT29 is using custom malware known as **‘WellMess’** and **‘WellMail’** to target a number of organisations globally.
- Now, it is accused of trying to steal vaccine data.

Links:

<https://www.firstpost.com/tech/world/cozy-bear-everything-we-know-about-the-hackers-reportedly-targeting-covid-19-vaccine-research-8609341.html>

Airborne or not: CSIR to conduct study on transmission of Covid-19

Question:Consider the following statements :

(1) Aerosol refers to particles suspended in the air and could include fine dust, mist, or smoke.

(2) Droplet transmission is caused by the dissemination of droplet nuclei (aerosols) particles $<5\mu\text{m}$ in diameter that remain infectious when suspended in air over long distances and time.

Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer:(a)

- **Context:**
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has formally acknowledged the possibility that the novel coronavirus can remain in the air in crowded indoor spaces, where “short-range aerosol transmission cannot be ruled out”.
- **Aerosols:**
- Aerosol is a term used to broadly refer to particles suspended in the air; they could include fine dust, mist, or smoke.
- In the context of transmission of viruses, as in this case, aerosols are read as micro droplets, much smaller (5 microns or lesser) than respiratory droplets, and take a longer time to drop to the floor.
- They will be expelled by people breathing, laughing or singing, as against respiratory droplets that are expelled with forceful acts such as sneezing or coughing.
- **Airborne transmission:**
- Airborne transmission is defined as the spread of an infectious agent caused by the dissemination of droplet nuclei (aerosols) that remain infectious when suspended in air over long distances and time.
- It is different from droplet transmission as it refers to the presence of microbes within droplet nuclei, which are generally considered to be particles $<5\mu\text{m}$ in diameter, can remain in the air for long periods of time and be transmitted to others over distances greater than 1 m.
- **Spread:**
- Airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2 can occur during medical procedures that generate aerosols (“aerosol generating procedures”).
- Theories suggest that 1) a number of respiratory droplets generate microscopic aerosols ($<5\mu\text{m}$) by evaporating, and 2) normal breathing and talking results in exhaled aerosols.
- Thus, a susceptible person could inhale aerosols, and could become infected if the aerosols contain the virus in sufficient quantity to cause infection within the recipient.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/coronavirus-can-be-airborne-indoors-who-confirms-now-what-6499397/>

IIT-M team conducts research on cancer-curing properties of turmeric

Question:Consider the following statements with respect to TNF-related apoptosis-inducing ligand (TRAIL):

- (1) It is an agent with the ability to programme cell growth.
- (2) The active compound from the common household spice turmeric “ curcumin” can enhance cancer .

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer:(d)

- **Context:**
- Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras have shown that the active compound from the common household spice turmeric 'curcumin' can enhance cancer cell death.
- **About:**
- TNF-related apoptosis-inducing ligand (TRAIL) is an agent with the ability to programme cell death (apoptosis) and has triggered many preclinical studies the world over.
- The IIT-M research team chose curcumin as it is known to inhibit carcinogenesis and induce apoptosis in various cancer cells.
- The researchers isolated leukaemia cells from cancer patients and found that non-toxic concentrations of curcumin can significantly increase the efficiency of TRAIL-induced cell death.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/iit-m-team-conducts-research-on-cancer-curing-properties-of-turmeric/article32071234.ece>

India's first indigenously developed Pneumonia vaccine

Question: Which of the following firm has developed the first indigenously developed Pneumonia vaccine which received DCGI nod recently?

(a)Zydus Wellness (b)Biocon (c)Serum Institute of India (d) Abott Pharmaceuticals

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) has given its approval to the first fully indigenously developed conjugate vaccine for pneumonia developed by Serum Institute of India Pvt. Ltd.
- The vaccine is named as Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Conjugate Vaccine. Serum Institute first obtained the approval of DCGI to conduct Phase I, Phase II and Phase III clinical trials of Pneumococcal Polysaccharide Conjugate Vaccine in India.
- These trials have since been concluded within the country.
- The said Company has also conducted these clinical trials in another country i.e. Gambia.
- Pneumonia vaccine in India:This is the first indigenously developed vaccine in the field of pneumonia.
- Such vaccine are imported by licensed importers in the country since the manufacturers were all vaccine companies based outside India.
- This vaccine is used for active immunization against invasive disease and pneumonia caused by "Streptococcus pneumonia" in infants.

Links:

Itolizumab Receives DCGI Nod

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Itolizumab is the first novel biologic therapy to be approved anywhere in the world for treating patients with moderate to severe COVID-19 complications.

(2) Itolizumab is repurposed form of ALZUMAb launched in India in 2013 for treating chronic plaque psoriasis.

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:

- Drugs Controller General of India's (DCGI) has given market approval to the Itolizumab Injection.
- The medicine will be used for the treatment of 'cytokine' release syndrome in moderate to severe acute respiratory distress syndrome patients due to COVID-19.
- Itolizumab is the first novel biologic therapy to be approved anywhere in the world for treating patients with moderate to severe COVID-19 complications.
- It will be manufactured and formulated as an intravenous injection at Biocon's bio-manufacturing facility at Biocon Park, Bengaluru.
- Itolizumab is repurposed form of ALZUMAb launched in India in 2013 for treating chronic plaque psoriasis.
- Clinical trial of the Itolizumab was conducted at multiple hospitals in Mumbai and New Delhi.

Links:

https://www.biocon.com/biocon_press_release_20200711.asp

Device for emergency breathing support

Question: Which company has launched a device for emergency breathing support ?

(a) Wipro 3D, a business of Wipro Infrastructure Engineering

(b) TCS (c) Infosys (d) none of the above

Answer- (a)

Related facts

- **Context**
- Wipro 3D, a business of Wipro Infrastructure Engineering, in technical collaboration with Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST, Trivandrum, an Institute of National Importance under the Department of Science and Technology, GoI), has recently (July, 2020) launched AirBridge, the Wipro Chitra Emergency Breathing Assist System (EBAS).
- **Highlights**

- This automatic device will minimize the need of nursing staff to continuously monitor the device and enables a safe, and effective temporary respiratory support to COVID patients for whom access to mechanical ventilator is not immediately available.
- It works as a bridge device before mechanical ventilation.
- The device has all the essential features to perform this function and is compliant with national/international standards and guidelines.
- It is manufactured with components sourced from established supply chains within the country.

Link:

<https://www.wiproinfra.com/news-and-events/wipro-3d-in-collaboration-with-sree-chitra-tirunal-institute-for-medical-sciences-and-technology-launches-airbridge-a-emergency-breathing-assist-system/>

New species of fan-throated lizard

Question: NCBS stands for —

- (a) National Centre for Biological Sciences
- (b) National Council for Biological Sciences
- (c) National Centre for Botanical Sciences
- (d) none of the above

Answer- (a)

Related facts

- **Context**
- Two Mumbai researchers recently (July, 2020) discovered new species of fan-throated lizard.
- National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS)- Two Mumbai researchers were part of a three-member team of Bengaluru-based National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) that discovered a new species of a fan-throated lizard, *Sitana dharwarensis*, from the barren lands of northern Karnataka's Bagalkot district.
- Researchers – The study, authored by Mayuresh Ambekar (24), Zeeshan Mirza (32), from Mumbai, and Mangaluru-resident Arya Murthy (17), was published in Bonn zoological Bulletin.
- Other similar species – The new species is similar to a fan-throated lizard species *Sitana laticeps*. But *Sitana dharwarensis* bears a much larger throat fan or dewlap.
- Distinctness criteria – Its distinctness was confirmed after comparing the DNA sequences and micro-CT-scans of the two species.
- *Hemidactylus vijay raghavani* – This is the second species to be discovered from the open scrub and rock terrain of northern Karnataka after *Hemidactylus vijay raghavani*, a gecko.

Link:

https://indianexpress.com/article/india/two-mumbai-researchers-discover-new-species-of-fan-throated-lizard-6495113/lite/#aoh=15944861968994&referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com&_tf=From%20%251%24s

Zealandia

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Scientists from New Zealand have released new maps of Continent Zealandia.

(2) Roughly 94% of the area of Zealandia is submerged.

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:

- A team of scientists from GNS Science, New Zealand's, has created new bathymetric (shape of the ocean floor) and tectonic maps of Zealandia, Earth's eighth continent.
- Zealandia — or Te Riu-a-Māui, as it's referred to in the indigenous Māori language — is a 2 million-square-mile (5 million square kilometers) continent east of Australia, beneath modern-day New Zealand.
- About 94 percent of Zealandia is underwater with the only above water landmasses making up a few Pacific islands including New Zealand.
- The submerged continent of Zealandia broke away from the supercontinent Gondwanaland 83–79 million years ago.
- Gondwana was formed by splitting up of ancient supercontinent Pangaea .
- Even after the formation of Gondwana, the surface of the fragmented part continued to rearrange. Zealandia is one such rearranged structure.
- Until the year 2017, Zealandia was classified as a 'micro-continent' (like Madagascar Island) but due to its boundaries defined and located over an area of one million square kilometers and elected above the ocean crust, in the year 2017, it was formally given a Continent status.
- **Conditions for being a Continent:**
 - Elevation above surrounding area
 - Distinctive geology
 - Well-defined area
 - Crust much thicker than that found on the ocean floor.

Links:

<http://www.sci-news.com/othersciences/geography/bathymetric-tectonic-maps-continent-zealandia-08591.html>

Sports

Table Tennis

Ceat Ultimate Table Tennis, 2018

Question: Which of the following team won the title of the Ceat Ultimate Table Tennis Championship, 2018, held on July 1st, 2018?

(a) Warriors TTC (b) Maharashtra United (c) Dabang Smashers TTC
(d) Empowerji Challengers

Answer: (c)

Related Facts:

- Final round of Ultimate Table Tennis, 2018 Sponsored by CEAT concluded in Kolkata. (July 1, 2018)
- Six teams participated in competition namely- Dabang Smashers TTC, Empowerji Challengers, Falcons TTC, Maharashtra United, RP-SG Mavericks and Warriors TTC.
- **Competition Results:**
- Winner – Dabang Smashers TTC (by 11-7), prize money – Rs. 1 crore
- Runner Up – Falcons TTC, prize money – Rs. 75 lakhs
- **Competition award:**
- Standout Indian player – Manika Batra (Dabang Smasher)
- Most Valuable Players (MVP), Women – Elizabeta Samara (Maharashtra United)
- CEAT Most Valuable Player (Male) – Liam Pitchford (Falcons)
- Super Saver – Matilda Ekholm (Falcons)
- Ultimate 1 – Yoshida Masaki (Dabang Smashers)

See also the links below:

<https://www.ultimatetabletennis.in/news/sathiyam-manika-power-smashers-to-ceat-utt-finale-triumph>

Athletics

4th Khelo India Youth Games

Question:Where will the 4th Khelo India Youth Games be held?

(a) Haryana (b) Punjab (c) Maharashtra (d) Gujarat

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Haryana will host the 4th Khelo India Youth Games in 2021.
- The Games will be held at Panchkula in Haryana.
- Khelo India Youth Games is scheduled to take place after Tokyo Olympics next year.
- Khelo India Youth Games take place in January every year but due to Covid 19 was postponed.
- Khelo India Games, envisioned by the Prime Minister, has been instrumental in identifying grassroot level talent from across the country.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Haryana-to-host-4th-Khelo-India-Youth-Games&id=395730>

Sports Personality

Human Growth Hormone

Question: Consider the following with respect to human Growth Hormone (hGH):

- (1) It is produced in the body and secreted by the pituitary gland near the base of the brain.
- (2) Secretion of a protein IGF-1 from the liver ultimately stimulates the growth of bones, muscle, and other tissues.
- (3) hGH is banned in-competition but not out of competition by the World Anti- Doping Agency.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer : (a)

Context:

- Pardeep Singh, who is a 2018 Commonwealth Games silver medallist, has been handed a provisional four-year suspension after his blood sample tested positive for human Growth Hormone (hGH).
- **About:**
- Human Growth Hormone (hGH) is produced in the body and secreted by the pituitary gland near the base of the brain. hGH helps in bone, organ and cartilage growth and also helps in repairing damaged muscles.
- When the gland releases the growth hormone, it results in the secretion of a protein called IGF-1 from the liver. The IGF-1 protein is what ultimately stimulates the growth of bones, muscle, and other tissues.
- hGH is banned both in-competition as well as out-of-competition by the World Anti- Doping Agency (WADA) as hGH is known to increase muscle mass, strength as well as tissue-repairing effects.

Links:

[https://indianexpress.com/article/sports/sport-others/pardeep-singh-cwg-weightlifter-human-growth-hormone-doping-first-case-6506021/#:~:text=Pardeep%20Singh%2C%20who%20is%20a,human%20Growth%20Hormone%20\(hGH\).&text=%E2%80%9CThis%20is%20the%20first%20instance,started%20testing%2C%E2%80%9D%20Agarwal%20said.](https://indianexpress.com/article/sports/sport-others/pardeep-singh-cwg-weightlifter-human-growth-hormone-doping-first-case-6506021/#:~:text=Pardeep%20Singh%2C%20who%20is%20a,human%20Growth%20Hormone%20(hGH).&text=%E2%80%9CThis%20is%20the%20first%20instance,started%20testing%2C%E2%80%9D%20Agarwal%20said.)

Forbes: The World Highest Paid Athletes 2019

Question: Who is the highest paid athlete in the Forbes 2019 list?

- (a) Virat Kohli (b) Lionel Messi (c) Cristiano Ronaldo (d) Roger Federer

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Argentinean football star Lionel Messi topped the Forbes 2019 list of 100 world's highest-paid athletes announced on June 11, 2019.

- Virat Kohli is the only Indian in the Forbes 2019 list of 100 world's highest-paid athletes. His ranking was 100th down from 83rd ranking last year despite increase in the earnings by \$1 million.
- Forbes 2019 list: Key Facts:
- Lionel Messi has topped the Forbes 2019 list as the world's highest-paid athlete (total earnings \$127million) for the first time, dethroning boxing world champion Floyd Mayweather.
- Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo was at the second spot (total earnings \$109 million) and Brazilian footballer Neymar was spotted on the third place (total earnings \$105 million).
- It is the first time since Forbes began tracking athlete earnings in 1990 that footballers have taken up the top three spots. 35 basketball players appear in the top 100 athletes.
- Roger Federer was at the fifth place in the list with (total earnings \$93.4 million).
- Other major names in the top 25 of the Forbes 2019 list include Tiger Woods, F1 racer Lewis Hamilton, tennis great Novak Djokovic and Irish martial artist and boxer Conor McGregor. Serena Williams sole woman on Forbes 2019 list with earnings of \$29.2 million.

Links:

<https://www.forbes.com/athletes/#7885059b55ae>

Short Notes

Personalities

Thierry Bolloré

Question : Jaguar Land Rover is a subsidiary of Indian automotive company —

(a)Tata Motors (b)Bajaj Auto (c)Hero Motocorp (d)None of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

- N Chandrasekaran, Chairman of Tata Sons, Tata Motors and Jaguar Land Rover plc recently announced Thierry Bolloré as the new Chief Executive Officer of Jaguar Land Rover, effective 10 September 2020.
- Jaguar Land Rover Automotive PLC is the holding company of Jaguar Land Rover Limited, a British multinational automotive company with its headquarters in Whitley, Coventry, United Kingdom, and a subsidiary of Indian automotive company Tata Motors.
- Bolloré succeeds Prof Sir Ralf Speth, who will take up the previously announced position of Non-Executive Vice Chairman of Jaguar Land Rover plc.
- A former CEO of Groupe Renault, Bolloré has extensive expertise in the automotive business including senior position at global automotive supplier Faurecia.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/auto/auto-news/thierry-bollor-appointed-as-the-new-chief-executive-officer-of-jaguar-land-rover/articleshow/77217713.cms>

Varun sridhar

Question : Who is the newly appointed CEO of Paytm Money ?

(a) Varun Sridhar (b) Tapan Sikdar (c) Shravan Joshi (d) None of the above

Answer (a)

Related facts

- Investment and wealth management subsidiary of Paytm – Paytm Money – has recently (July,2020) appointed Varun Sridhar as its new CEO to head and launch their foray into the equity brokerage business.
- He will lead the launch & development of the equity brokerage other than growing the already successful mutual funds, NPS and Gold services.
- Previously the CEO of FinShell India where he launched the realme PaySa – a fintech platform on mobile, Sridhar also has worked with BNP Paribas where he oversaw the acquisition of brokerage ShareKhan.
- Paytm Money also announced that Amit Kapoor, who was the ex-CFO of Aviva India, has joined as the new CFO & Vice President of the company.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/small-biz/startups/newsbuzz/paytm-money-appoints-varun-sridhar-as-their-new-ceo/articleshow/77222397.cms>

Amala Shankar Passed Away

Question:Recently Amala Shankar passed away in Kolkata at the age of 101.Who was she?

(a) An eminent dancer and choreographer (b) An eminent jurist
(c) First women padma shri awardee (d) An athlete

Answer:(a)

- **Context:**
- Eminent dancer and choreographer Amala Shankar passed away in Kolkata. She was 101.
- **About:**
- Amala was the wife of legendary dancer-choreographer Uday Shankar and sister-in-law of sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar.
- She also acted in the film Kalpana (1948) written and directed by her husband Uday Shankar.
- She was awarded the Banga Bibhusan by the West Bengal government in 2011 for her contribution in the field of arts.

Link:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/kolkata/dancer-choreographer-amala-shankar-dies-at-the-age-of-101/articleshow/77140535.cms>

Siddi community gets its first lawmaker in Karnataka

Question:The Siddis, an ethnic group in India, are said to have descended from the Bantu peoples of the East African region. They are mostly found in which state?

(a) Odisha (b) Karnataka (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Andaman and Nicobar

Answer:(b)

- **Context:**
- The Siddi community in Karnataka got its first lawmaker as Governor of Karnataka nominated five persons, including Shantharama Budna Siddi, to the Karnataka Legislative Council.
- **About:**
- The Siddis, an ethnic group in India, are said to have descended from the Bantu peoples of the East African region.
- They are included in the list of Scheduled Tribes (ST) in Karnataka.
- Karnataka, Gujarat and Hyderabad are the main population centres of the Siddi community in India.

Link:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/siddi-community-gets-its-first-lawmaker-in-karnataka/articleshow/77119745.cms>

Riva Ganguly Das

Question:Who has been appointed Secretary East, in the Ministry of External Affairs?

(a) Riva Ganguly Das (b) Rajiv Sahu (c) Ashish Jain (d) Komal Sharma

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Riva Ganguly Das is appointed by the Government as the Secretary East, in the Ministry of External Affairs.
- She will succeed Ms. Vijay Thakur Singh after her retirement on 30th September this year.
- She is an Indian Foreign Service officer of 1986 batch.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Riva-Ganguly-Das-appointed-as-Secretary-East-in-MEA&id=395509>

Rajesh Bhushan

Question:Who has been appointed Health Secretary in the Union Health Ministry?

(a) Rajesh Bhushan (b) Rajiv Sahu (c) Vijay Thakur Singh (d) Sushil Kumar

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Rajesh Bhushan, IAS officer of 1987 Batch, Bihar Cadre has been appointed as the new Health Secretary in the Union Health Ministry.
- He will succeed Preeti Sudan upon completion of her tenure on 31st July.
- Rajesh Bhushan was earlier holding the post of OSD in the Health Ministry.

- He was granted an extension for three months as Health Secretary in April this year.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=Rajesh-Bhushan-appointed-as-new-Health-Secretary&id=395589>

Shiv Pratap Shukla

Question : Former Union Minister and BJP MP Shiv Pratap Shukla has been appointed the party's chief whips in —

- (a) Rajya Sabha (b) Lok Sabha (c) Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly
(d) None of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

Context

- Former Union Minister Shiv Pratap Shukla and BJP MP Rakesh Singh have been appointed the party's chief whips in Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, respectively.
- Shukla, the Rajya Sabha MP from Uttar Pradesh will replace Narayan Panchariya who recently retired from the upper house.
- While Singh will replace Sanjay Jaiswal, party's Bihar unit chief in compliance of the BJP's 'one person, one post' criterion.
- **Whip**
 - A whip is an official of a political party whose task is to ensure party discipline in a legislature.
 - In India, the concept of the whip was inherited from colonial British rule. Every major political party appoints a whip who is responsible for the party's discipline and behaviours on the floor of the house.
 - Usually, they direct the party members to stick to the party's stand on certain issues and directs them to vote as per the direction of senior party members.
 - However, there are some cases such as Indian Presidential elections where whips cannot direct a Member of Parliament (MP) or Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) on whom to vote.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/bjp-appoints-new-chief-whips-shiv-pratap-shukla-mp-rakesh-singh-in-rajya-sabha-lok-sabha/articleshow/77082697.cms>

Lalji Tandon

Question: Lalji Tandon who passed away recently was governor of which Indian state?

- (a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Bihar (c) Jharkhand (d) Gujarat

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Madhya Pradesh Governor Lalji Tandon passed away on July 21 2020 at the age of 85.

- Earlier he served as Governor of Bihar.
- In his career spanning five decades, Tandon served in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council for two terms from 1978 to 1984, and 1990-1996.
- He served as an MLA in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly for three terms between 1996 to 2009.
- He remained the Leader of Opposition in the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, 2003–07.
- He became the Member of Parliament in the 15th Lok Sabha(2009-14) from Lucknow constituency.
- He had also served as Urban Development minister in the Uttar Pradesh cabinet under Mayawati (in the BSP-BJP combine), and also in the Kalyan Singh ministry earlier.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/india/madhya-pradesh-governor-lalji-tdon-dies-6515792/>

Kris Gopalakrishnan

Question:The committee headed by Kris Gopalakrishnan is related to which field?

- (a) Banking Reforms (b) Non-personal data governance
(c) Small scale industries and Trade Policy Reform (d) Microfinance

Answer:(b)

- **Context:**
- A government committee headed by Infosys co-founder Kris Gopalakrishnan has suggested that non-personal data generated in the country be allowed to be harnessed by various domestic companies and entities.
- **About:**
- Non-personal data is any set of data which does not contain personally identifiable information. This in essence means that no individual or living person can be identified by looking at such data.
- Unlike personal data, which contains explicit information about a person's name, age, gender, sexual orientation, biometrics and other genetic details, non-personal data is more likely to be in an anonymised form.
- For example, while order details collected by a food delivery service will have the name, age, gender, and other contact information of an individual, it will become non-personal data if the identifiers such as name and contact information are taken out.
- **Categories:** The committee has classified non-personal data into three main categories:
- **Public Non-Personal Data:** All the data collected by government and its agencies such as census, data collected by municipal corporations on the total tax receipts in a particular period or any information collected during execution of all publicly funded works
- **Community Non-Personal Data:** Any data about a set of people who have either the same geographic location, religion, job or other common social interests. For example, the data collected by ride-hailing apps, electricity distribution companies among others.

- **Private non-personal data:** It can be defined as those which are produced by individuals which can be derived from application of proprietary software or knowledge.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/non-personal-data-explained-6506613/>

Ashok Lavasa

Question: Who has been appointed the Vice President of Asian Development Bank (ADB)?

(a) Ashok Lavasa (b) Diwakar Gupta (c) Sushil Chandrac (d) Deepak Ahuja

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has appointed Ashok Lavasa as Vice-President for Private Sector Operations and Public–Private Partnerships.
- He will succeed Diwakar Gupta, whose term will end on 31 August.
- He is currently one of the Election Commissioners of India.
- Lavasa still has over two years left in his term at the Election Commission and would have retired as the Chief Election Commissioner in October 2022.
- Philippines based Asian Development Bank was established in 1966 to promote social and economic development in Asia.
- It is owned by 68 members—49 from the region.

Links:

<https://www.adb.org/news/adb-appoints-ashok-lavasa-new-vice-president>

Saroj Khan

Question: Saroj Khan passed away on 3 July 2020. She was-

(a) Musician (b) Actress (c) Choreographer (d) Fashion Designer

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Famous Bollywood choreographer Saroj Khan (born Nirmala Nagpal) passed away on 3 July 2020. She was 71.
- She was born on 20 November 1948 in Maharashtra.
- She choreographed more than 3000 songs in his career.
- She got her break as an independent choreographer in Geeta Mera Naam (1974).
- She gained immense popularity with the song 'Hawa Hawaii' from Mr. India (1987).
- Other popular choreography of her that gained acclaims are Main Teri Dushman, Dushman Tu Mera in Nagina (1986) and Mere Haathon Mein in Chandni (198).
- Later with Madhuri Dixit, she given the hit Ek Do Teen in Tezaab (1988), Tamma Tamma Loge in Thanedaar (1990) and Dhak Dhak Karne Laga in Beta.
- Her last film was Kalank (2019) in which he choreographed the song 'Tabah Ho Gaye' featuring Madhuri Dixit.

- Saroj Khan was the recipient of the most National Film Awards for Best Choreography with three wins.

Links:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saroj_Khan#Awards_and_recognitions

Mícheál Martin

Question: On 27 June 2020, Mícheál Martin became the Prime Minister of which country?

(a) Ireland (b) Mexico (c) Poland (d) Netherlands

Answer:(a)

Related facts:

- Mícheál Martin has been elected Ireland's Taoiseach or Prime Minister on June 27 2020.
- He replaced Leo Varadkar.
- He has been the leader of the Fianna Fáil party since 2011.
- Mícheál Martin will lead a three-party coalition consisting of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party.
- Former Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, leader of Fine Gael Party, became the Deputy Prime Minister of the country.
- Under an agreement struck by the parties, Martin will lead the country until December 2022. Afterwards, he will be replaced by Leo Varadkar.

Links: <https://www.euronews.com/2020/06/27/ireland-to-form-new-coalition-government-with-micheal-martin-as-taoiseach>

First woman Chief Secretary of Punjab

Question: Who became the first woman Chief Secretary of Punjab?

(a) Aruna Sundararajan (b) Vini Mahajan (c) Smita Sabharwal
(d) Ritu Maheshwari

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Vini Mahajan became the first woman bureaucrat in the history of Punjab to be elevated to the top post of the state's Chief Secretary.
- She is a 1987-batch IAS officer.
- She took charge replacing Karan Avtar Singh.
- Also, she was the first woman Deputy Commissioner in Punjab when she was appointed as DC, Ropar, in 1995.

Links: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/punjab-gets-its-first-woman-chief-secy-vini-mahajan-6478266/>

Sethuraman Panchanathan

Question: Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan was appointed the Head of the National Science Foundation of which country?

(a) Japan (b) Australia (c) America (d) Germany

Answer:(c)

Related facts:

- Eminent Indian-American scientist Dr. Sethuraman Panchanathan was appointed as the Director of the National Science Foundation.
- He is currently the Executive Vice President and the Chief Research and Innovation Officer at the Arizona State University.
- He would replace France Cordova.
- The NSF is a top American body supporting fundamental research in non-medical fields of science and engineering.

Links: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/us-senate-confirms-indian-american-scientist-sethuraman-panchanathan-as-head-of-national-science-foundation/article31875976.ece>

Hamza Koya

Question: Hamza Koya died of COVID-19 in Kerala.He was-

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

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Former Indian footballer Hamza Koya has died of COVID-19 in Kerala.He was 61.
- He was Indian team member in Nehru trophy.
- He had also represented Maharashtra at the Santhosh Trophy.
- Rovers Cup,Durand Cup,F.A. Shield,Federation Cup,Kalinga Cup,D C M Trophy are the other prominent football tournaments in India.

Links: <http://newsonair.com/News?title=Former-India-footballer-Hamza-Koya-died-of-COVID-19-in-Kerala&id=390583>

Awards & Honors

MoES National Awards for excellence in Earth System Science

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) Life Time Excellence Award has been conferred to Professor Ashok Sahni.

(2) The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) plays a nodal role for Antarctic/Arctic/Himalayas and Southern Ocean research.

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:

- The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) has announced National Awards for excellence in Earth System Science on July 29 2020.
- The award recognizes major scientific contributions made by eminent scientists/engineers in various fields of Earth System Science.
- In view of above, the Ministry has instituted the Life Time Excellence Award, National Awards in the field of Atmospheric Science & Technology; Ocean Science; Geoscience & Technology; and Ocean Technology/Polar Science, Two Young Researcher awards and Dr. Anna Mani National Award for Woman Scientist.
- **Awardees:**
 - Life Time Excellence Award-Professor Ashok Sahn
 - National Award for Ocean Science & technology-Dr. V. V. S. S. Sarma
 - National Award for Atmospheric Science & technology- Dr. S. Suresh Babu
 - National award for Geoscience & technology- N. V. Chalapathi Rao
 - National Award for Ocean Technology-Dr. M. A. Atmanand
 - Anna Mani award for woman scientist-Dr. Lidita D. S. Khandeparker
 - Young Researcher Award-Dr. Indra Sekhar Sen
- **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES):**
 - The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) is mandated to provide the nation with the best possible services for weather, climate, ocean, coastal and natural hazards, for the Public Safety and socio-economic benefits.
 - The Ministry also deals with exploration and sustainable harnessing of ocean resources (living and non-living) and plays a nodal role for Antarctic/Arctic/Himalayas and Southern Ocean research.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1641981>

National Award of Excellence for Outstanding Research in Forestry

Question: Who has been conferred the National Award of Excellence for Outstanding Research in Forestry for the year 2019?

- (a) K.S. Verma
- (b) Pankaj Panwar
- (c) Rajesh Kaushal
- (d) Kannan C S Warriar

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) has conferred the National Award of Excellence for Outstanding Research in Forestry for the year 2019 on scientist Kannan C S Warriar.
- Kannan C.S. Warriar is Senior Principal Scientist at the Institute of Forest Genetics and Tree Breeding, Coimbatore.

- The award was conferred on him for releasing three productive clones of casuarina, known as kattadi and savukku, that are suitable for salt affected soils for the first time in the country.
- India has around 6.73 million hectares of salt-affected land.
- The clones he released are expected to boost ICFRE's agro forestry initiatives.
- Warriar has also been the recipient of the Rolla S Rao National Award for his extensive research on conservation of endangered sacred groves, also called koil kadu.
- The scientist in his 27 years of forestry research published 232 research articles.
- **Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE):**
- ICFRE is an apex body in the national forestry research system.
- ICFRE was recently declared as the Centre for Excellence in addressing issues related to land degradation by the Prime Minister.

Links:

<https://www.indiadailymail.com/cities/coimbatore/ifgtb-scientist-gets-award-from-indian-council-of-forestry-research-and-education-coimbatore-news-india-daily-mail/>

NTPC wins prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Awards 2019

Question: Consider the following statements:

- (1) NTPC Ltd has won the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Award 2019.
- (2) Girl Empowerment Mission is a flagship CSR program of NTPC Ltd to support school going girls from underprivileged background in their overall development.

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:

- NTPC Ltd, a central PSU (Public Sector Undertaking) under Ministry of Power, has won the prestigious CII-ITC Sustainability Award 2019, under Outstanding Accomplishment in Corporate Excellence Category.
- Also, the company has received Commendation for Significant Achievement in category of CSR.
- **About NTPC:**
- NTPC Limited is India's largest energy conglomerate engaged in the business of generation of electricity and allied activities.
- It was founded in 1975.
- **Girl Empowerment Mission-GEM:**
- It is NTPC's flagship program under its CSR initiatives.
- It is a 4 weeks residential program that has been institutionalized in the vicinity of its power stations for benefit of school going girls from underprivileged background to support in their overall development.
- **Contractors' Labour Information Management System (CLIMS):**
- NTPC has also initiated Contractors' Labour Information Management System (CLIMS)
- Through this initiative payment to contract labourers is paid on the last day of the month at project sites.

- **Installed Capacity:**
- With a total installed capacity of 62110 MW, NTPC Group has 70 Power stations comprising of 24 Coal, 7 combined cycle Gas/Liquid Fuel, 1 Hydro, 13 Renewables along with 25 Subsidiary & JV Power Stations.
- **CII-ITC Sustainability Awards:**
- Instituted in 2006, the CII-ITC Sustainability Awards recognise and reward excellence in businesses that are seeking ways to be more sustainable and inclusive in their activities.
- The Awards are a part of the continued efforts of CESD(Center of Excellence for Sustainable Development)to create awareness on sustainability practices and to create capacities in business. More than recognition, the Awards measure performance and provide detailed feedback for opportunities to excel.
- The CII-ITC Sustainability Award is the most credible sustainability Award in the country.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1638150>

Operations & Campaign

National Statistical Office (NSO) released a report on immunisation among children

Question Consider the following statements regarding NSO report on immunization among children:

- (1) Around 60% of children under five years of age were fully immunised.
- (2) Majority of the children received vaccination from private hospitals or clinics.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer : (a)

- **Context:**
- National Statistical Office (NSO) released a report on immunisation among children. The survey was conducted during July 2017-June 2018.
- **Findings of the Report:**
- Around 60% of children under five years of age were fully immunised. This includes about 59% of boys and 60% of girls across the country who had been fully immunised with all eight prescribed vaccinations — BCG, OPV- 1, 2,3, DPT- 1,2,3 and measles.
- In rural India, about 58% (57% boys and 60% girls) children under five years, and about 62% (62% boys and 61% girls) children in urban India had been fully immunised.
- Majority of the children received vaccination from government hospitals or clinics.
- About 95% of children in rural India and 86% of children in urban India had received some vaccination from government hospitals including primary and community health centres or even Anganwadi centres.

- Private sector catered to about 5% of children in rural India, though the percentage was slightly higher at 14% of children in urban India who received any vaccination.
- **Additional Facts :**
- The Intensified Mission Indradhanush, launched by PM Modi in 2017, aims to reach each and every child under two years of age and all pregnant women who have been left uncovered under the routine immunisation programme.
- The government had set a target to achieve 90% immunisation coverage this year. However, the programme has suffered a big blow due to the pandemic.

Link:

[http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/mospi Annual Report 2017-18.pdf](http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/publication_reports/mospi%20Annual%20Report%202017-18.pdf)

Tree Plantation Campaign 2020

Question: Consider the following statement and choose the correct option in relation to the recently launched Tree Plantation Campaign 2020.

- (1) The Tree plantation Campaign was launched by Union Home Minister Amit Shah.
- (2) Three Eco parks foundation was also laid by Union Minister.
- (3) The campaign was initiated by Ministry of Coal.

Correct option:

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

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Union Home Minister Amit Shah launched the Tree Plantation Campaign “Vriksharopan Abhiyan” of the Ministry of Coal on July 23, 2020.
- Union Minister also inaugurated and laid the Foundation stone of 6 Ecoparks/ Tourism sites.
- Highlight of the event:
- The tree plantation campaign was conducted at more than 130 locations spread in 38 Districts of 10 coal/lignite bearing States through Video Conferencing.
- Around 6 lakh seedlings are being planted across 600 acres in 38 districts of 10 States today. Additional 5 lakh seedlings will be distributed to the local people on the occasion.
- The total cost involved in the 5 Eco-Parks and 1 Sal Plantation project is Rs. 27.60 crores.
- A District Mineral Fund has been set up with a corpus of Rs.39,000 crore for the development of the mining areas and 35,000 minor projects have been completed.
- The Government has also set an ambitious target of one billion tonnes (annual) production of coal by 2023-24 and zero coal import.
- Coal PSUs have also launched steps to enhance production, while an investment of Rs.1,25,000 crore is envisaged under the Infrastructure Investment Scheme during the period 2020-24 for which 534 projects have been identified.
- Two Eco-parks inaugurated today have been developed in Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu.

- The Eco-Park in Jharkhand named Parasnath Udhyan has been developed by CIL subsidiary Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL) and is spread across 3.5 hectares.
- The Eco-Park in Tamil Nadu has been developed by NLC India Limited and is spread across 15 acres.
- Three Eco-Parks for which foundation stone was laid are Eco-Park in Uttar Pradesh to be developed by CIL subsidiary Northern Coalfields Limited, Lilari Eco-Park in Odisha to be developed by CIL subsidiary Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) and Eco-Park in Jharkhand to be developed by CIL subsidiary Central Coalfields Limited (CCL).
- Foundation stone was also laid for a Sal Plantation Project in Odisha to be developed by NLC (India) Lt

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1640707>

locust control operations

Question: Union Government has launched locust control operations. Which of the following methods can be used to control Desert Locusts?

- (1) Conventional pesticides
- (2) Biopesticides
- (3) Insect growth regulators

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: (d)

- **Context:**
- Union Government today said that locust control operations have been carried out in more than 3.5 lakh hectares area of nine states till July 16, 2020.
- **Facts:**
- **What is a Desert Locust?** The Desert locusts (*Schistocerca gregaria*) is one of about a dozen species of short-horned grasshoppers (Acridoidea).
- **Where do they breed?** For laying eggs, they require bare ground, which is rarely found in areas with dense vegetation. So, they can breed in Rajasthan but not in the Indo-Gangetic plains or Godavari and Cauvery delta.
- **Where are they found?**
- During quiet periods, known as recessions, Desert Locusts are usually found only in the semi-arid and arid deserts of Africa, the Near East and South-West Asia that receive less than 200 mm of rain annually.
- When weather and habitat conditions are right for reproduction, multiple generations of locusts can be born and form swarms that invade countries that don't usually have locust problems.
- **What harm do locusts do?**
- Desert Locusts are polyphagous and feed on leaves, shoots, flowers, fruit, seeds, stems and bark. They can eat massive quantities of vegetation – wild

plants, shrubs, trees and grass. This can badly erode the food security of communities.

- Locusts do not attack people or animals. There is no evidence to suggest that they carry diseases that could harm humans.
- **What methods are used to control Desert Locusts?**
- There are three types of commonly accepted standard practices in locust control: (1) Conventional pesticides, (2) Biopesticides and (3) Insect growth regulators.
- The primary method of controlling them is with mainly organophosphate chemicals applied in small concentrated doses, referred to as ultra-low volume (ULV) formulation.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1639357>

Operation Samudra setu completed

Question: Consider the following statements in relation to Operation Samudra Setu and choose the correct option.

(1) It was an airforce rescue mission for stranded Indian in other countries due to COVID 19 lockdown.

(2) It was launched on May 5, 2020.

(3) A total of 3992 Indian were brought back by this mission.

Correct option:

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

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- Operation Samudra Setu, which was launched on 05 May 2020 as part of the national effort to repatriate Indian citizens from other countries during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown has got successfully completed on July 8, 2020.
- This operation was conducted by Indian Navy through sea routes.
- Major highlights of the operation:
 - A total of 3,992 Indian citizens were brought back to their homeland by sea.
 - Indian Naval Ships Jalashwa, and Airavat, Shardul and Magar participated in this operation and traversed more than 23,000 kilometers by sea.
 - Rigorous measures were planned and implemented to avoid any outbreak during the operation.
 - Indian were brought back from neighbouring countries like Sri Lanka, Maldives, Iran.
 - Ships used for the operation were specially provisioned and the Sick Bay or the clinic onboard was especially equipped with COVID-19 related equipment and facilities.
 - Indian Navy has previously undertaken similar evacuation operations as part of Operation Sukoon in 2006 (Beirut) and Operation Rahat in 2015 (Yemen).

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1637314>

Vice President of India launched an indigenous mobile app 'Elyments'

Question:With reference to the mobile app 'Elyments', consider the following statements:

- (1) It is an initiative of Ministry of Commerce.
- (2) Their data will not be shared with third party without the user's consent.
- (3) The app also aims to promote Indian brands.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 only (c) 2 and 3 (d) 1 and 3

Answer(c)

- **Context:**
- The Vice President of India launched an indigenous mobile app 'Elyments', a new social media platform under Aatmanirbhar Bharat campaign.
- **About:**
- The new Made in India app, created by Sumeru Software Solutions, is available for download worldwide both on iOS and Android platforms.
- The app is available in eight different regional languages. The app lets the users make audio and video calls including conference calls. Elyments has basic features of popular social networking apps such as feeds, the discover option where you can follow celebrities.
- The app also aims to promote Indian brands on the platform, similar to the Facebook marketplace along with Elyments Pay for secure payments.
- One of the main selling points of the app is privacy. Elyments' creators claim that their data will not be shared with third party without the user's consent.
- **Important Info :**
- A day before Elyments launch, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat App Innovation Challenge' urging the Indian tech community and start-ups to create homegrown apps and create an Indian ecosystem of apps.
- The Elyments app has completed 500,000 downloads on Google Play Store in a short span of time. Elyments app review is of 4.4 stars, as of writing this article, with several users congratulating the launch of this incredible social media application.

Links:

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/technology/elyments-mobile-app-features-free-video-calls-private-chat-india-social-media-app-details/2013851/#:~:text=Elyments%20mobile%20app%20features%3A%20Vice%20President%20M%20Venkaiah%20Naidu%20on,India%20during%20the%20virtual%20launch.>

Commission & Committee

SASHIKANT AGARWAL COMMISSION

Question:The Uttar Pradesh government has setup SASHIKANT AGARWAL COMMISSION for which of the following ?

- (a) Corona pandemic situation (b) Bikru ambush and encounter killing

(c) Employment opportunities for migrants (d) None of these

Answer:(b)

- **Context:**
- The Uttar Pradesh government announced that the killing of Vikas Dubey allegedly while trying to escape from police custody on July 10 will be probed by a single-member commission.
- **Facts:**
- Retired Allahabad High Court judge Sashi Kant Agarwal will head the commission, which will be based out of Kanpur, and have two months to submit its report.
- The decision comes a day after a series of petitions were filed in the Supreme Court seeking an independent probe into the killing of Dubey and his associates by the police following the Bikru ambush.
- The commission will also investigate the Bikru ambush as well as all the cases of 'encounters' between the police and Dubey's associates. Eight policemen were killed in the ambush while five associates linked to Dubey were killed later by the police in alleged exchange of fire.

Links:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/up-govt-forms-judicial-commission-to-probe-kanpur-ambush-vikas-dubey-encounter/story-odRx9RjUwBHaK6BkrkC6NO.html>

Planning & Project

Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana

Question:With respect to Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana , consider the following statements:

- (1) It is a an initiative of Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- (2) It provides training for advanced pottery products,latest new technology pottery equipments like the electric chaak and access to market linkages .

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer:(b)

- **Context:**
- Union Home Minister distributed 100 electric potter wheels to 100 trained artisans from Gandhinagar under Kumhar Sashaktikaran Yojana of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
- **About:**
- Kumbhar Sashaktikaran Program is an initiative of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) for empowerment of potters community in the remotest of locations in the country. It was launched in 2018.
- This program provides the following support to potters:
- Training for advanced pottery products
- Latest, new technology pottery equipments like the electric Chaak
- Market linkages and visibility through KVIC exhibitions

Link:

[http://ddnews.gov.in/national/hm-amit-shah-distributed-100-electric-potter-wheels-under-kvic%E2%80%99s-kumhar-sashaktikaran#:~:text=Seeking%20to%20empower%20and%20associate,Village%20Industries%20Commission%20\(KVIC\).](http://ddnews.gov.in/national/hm-amit-shah-distributed-100-electric-potter-wheels-under-kvic%E2%80%99s-kumhar-sashaktikaran#:~:text=Seeking%20to%20empower%20and%20associate,Village%20Industries%20Commission%20(KVIC).)

Generation Unlimited India (YuWaah)

Question: Generation Unlimited India (YuWaah) which aimed to promote volunteerism among the youth of India as well as to help them transition from education and learning to productive work is an initiative of?

(a) UNICEF (b) UNESCO (c) UNDP (d) Niti Aayog

Answer: (a)

- **Context:**
- Union Ministry of Youth Affairs signed a Statement of Intent with YuWaah to work in partnership to promote volunteerism among the youth of India as well as to help them transition from education and learning to productive work, skilling and being active citizens.

About YuWaah:

- UNICEF had launched Generation Unlimited India (YuWaah) in November 2019.
- It is a multi-stakeholder alliance which aims to facilitate youth to gain relevant skills for productive lives and the future of work. The target age group of YuWaah includes adolescent girls and boys.
- Its key mission is to promote among youth foundational skills, life skills and flexible learning and identifying and scaling impactful delivery models.
- YuWaah intends to create platforms to guide youth to market opportunities (career guidance, mentorship, internships, apprenticeships) and facilitate integration of career guidance in school education.

Link:

[https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1639995#:~:text=In%20a%20step%20to%20realise,YuWaah%20\(a%20multi%20stakeholder%20platform](https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1639995#:~:text=In%20a%20step%20to%20realise,YuWaah%20(a%20multi%20stakeholder%20platform)

First INDSAT exam conducted under ‘ Study in India’ Programme

Question: The first ever INDSAT exam was recently conducted under Study in India programme. This program has been started by which of the following ministry?

(a) Ministry of Culture (b) Ministry of External Affairs
(c) Ministry of Human Resource Development (d) University Grants Commission

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The Ministry of HRD conducted the first ever Indian Scholastic Assessment (Ind-SAT) Test 2020 under its ‘Study in India’ programme on July 22, 2020.

- Around 5000 candidates from 12 countries, namely Nepal, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Sri-Lanka, Kenya, Zambia, Indonesia and Mauritius appeared for the exam conducted by National Testing Agency.
- Study in India Programme:
- Ind-SAT is an exam for grant of scholarships and admissions to foreign students for studying in select Indian universities for undergraduate and postgraduate courses under the Study in India programme.
- The exam was held in 12 countries on a pilot basis this year.
- The Study in India is a programme of MHRD under which
- The selection of the students is based on their merit in the class 12 / school leaving exam.
- About top 2000 students are given scholarships, while some others are given fee discounts by the institutions.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1640822>

Godhan Nyay Yojana

Question: Government has launched 'Godhan Nyay Yojana' on the occasion of Hareli festival in which state?

(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Chhattisgarh (c) Rajasthan (d) Uttar Pradesh

Answer:(b)

- **Context:**
- Chhattisgarh Government has launched 'Godhan Nyay Yojana' on the occasion of Hareli festival.
- **Facts:**
- **Aim:** To put money in the pockets of people living in the rural areas and also solve the problem of stray cattle.
- **Features:**
- Under the scheme, the government will procure cow dung from farmers at a fixed procurement rate.
- The procured cow dung will be utilised for the production of vermicompost fertilizer which will be sold through cooperative societies to meet the fertilizer requirement of the farmers.
- **Additional Facts:**
- **Hareli Festival:** It is an agricultural festival celebrated by the rural farming communities in Chhattisgarh.

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/raipur/first-of-its-kind-godhan-nyay-yojana-launched-in-chhattisgarh/articleshow/77063907.cms>

Mukhyamantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana

Question: Which of the following state has announced Mukhyamantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana to provide door step delivery of ration?

(a)Punjab (b)Kerala (c)Sikkim (d)New Delhi

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On July 21, 2020, Chief Minister of Delhi Arvind Kejriwal launched the 'Mukhya Mantri Ghar Ghar Ration Yojana'.
- This scheme will provide the doorstep delivery of ration to the beneficiary residents.
- The scheme will be implemented within 6-7 months.
- New Delhi has also announced to implement the center's 'One Nation One Ration Card' initiative along with this scheme.
- **Procedure for delivery:**
- Wheat grains taken from FCI godowns will be grinded and turned into flour to be delivered instead of wheat.
- Flour, sugar, rice and other items will be packed and will be delivered to the homes of the people.
- Beneficiaries will be given an option of taking ration from shops or getting it delivered to their homes.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Delhi/cm-okays-doorstep-delivery-of-ration/article32155188.ece/amp/>

Approval granted to Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone Master Plan

Approval granted to Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone Master Plan

Question: The Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone whose zonal master plan has been recently approved. It is part of which of the following project?

- (a) Uttarakhand Darshan
(b) Bharat Darshan Project
(c) Himalayan Forest Conservation Project
(d) Chaardham Road Project

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- The Zonal Master Plan(ZMP) of the Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone prepared by the Government of Uttarakhand and appraised by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, has been accorded approval by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change on 16 July, 2020 in a review meeting of Chaardham Road Project.
- Key highlights of Bhagirathi Eco Sensitive Zone:The Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone notification from Gaumukh to Uttarakashi covering an area of 4179.59 sq. kilometer was issued by the Ministry on 18th December 2012.
- The Zonal Master Plan was subsequently prepared by the state govt keeping in view the requirements of the local people and also ensuring eco-friendly development for their livelihood security.
- The ZMP is based on watershed approach and includes governance in the area of forest and wildlife, watershed management, irrigation, energy, tourism, public health and sanitation, road infrastructure, etc.

- The approval of ZMP will give a boost to conservation and ecology of the area and also to undertake developmental activities as permitted under ZMP.
- The approval will also pave way for faster execution of the ChaarDhaam Project.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1639387>

Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration Scheme 2020

Question: Union Minister of Personnel launched the revamped PM's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration, with respect to this consider the following:

- (1) District Performance Indicators Programme
- (2) Innovation General Category
- (3) Aspirational Districts Program
- (4) Namami Gange Program

Which of the above categories is used for nominations?

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

Answer: (d)

- **Context:**
- Union Minister of Personnel launched the revamped PM's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration and the web portal www.pmawards.gov.in, which for the very first time seeks to recognize the efforts of District level officials in the Namami Gange Programme.
- **Background:**
- The Government of India instituted "The Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration" in the year 2006 to recognize the extraordinary work done by Districts/ Organizations of the Central and State Governments.
- In the meeting of the National Ganga Council held in December, 2019 at Kanpur under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, it was decided to create a "Good Performance for Ganga Rejuvenation" award for the Ganga districts under the Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence for Public Administration Scheme.
- **Facts:**
- The Scheme has been revamped to recognize the performance of the District Collectors towards outcome indicators, economic development, peoples' participation and redressal of public grievances.
- **Nominations have been called in four major categories:**
- District Performance Indicators Programme
- Innovation General Category
- Aspirational Districts Program
- Namami Gange Program.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=210146>

Reliance Jio 5G

Question:With reference to 5G Technology , consider the following statements:

- (1) 5G or fifth generation networks chiefly operate on two spectrum bands :High and Low.
(2) It uses beam tracking to follow all devices on the network to ensure consistent connection in real-time .
(3)5G networks are also designed to multiple-input multiple-output (MIMO) efficient which improves signal.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3

Answer : (b)

- **Context:**
- Reliance Industries CMD Mukesh Ambani announced that the company's telecom venture Jio has designed and developed from scratch, a complete indigenous 5G solution ready for deployment. This will enable Jio to export 5G solutions to other telecom players globally.
- **Facts:**
- 5G or fifth generation is the latest upgrade in the long term evolution (LTE) mobile broadband networks.
- All 5G networks chiefly operate on three spectrum bands:
 - The low-band spectrum has been proven to have great coverage but the maximum speed limit on this band is 100 Mbps (Megabits per second).
 - In the mid-band spectrum, though the speeds are higher, but has limitations related to coverage area and penetration of telephone signals into buildings.
 - The high-band spectrum offers the highest speed but has extremely limited network coverage area and penetration capabilities.
- The 5G networks will have even faster speeds with latency down to between 1-10 milliseconds. Latency is the time a device takes to communicate with the network, which stands at an average of up to 50 milliseconds for 4G networks across the world.
- It uses beam tracking to follow all devices on the network to ensure consistent connection in real-time for the device.
- 5G networks are also designed to multiple-input multiple-output (MIMO) efficient which improves signal throughput for all devices on the network.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/jio-5g-what-does-the-solution-mean-to-reliance-and-its-users-6509088/>

AtmaNirbhar Nidhi(PM SVANidhi) App

Question:PM SVANidhi App is launched by which of the following ministry?

- (a) Ministry of Jal Shakti (b) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
(c) Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
(d) Ministry of Micro,Small and Medium Enterprise

Answer:(c)

- **Context:**

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched the PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi(PM SVANidhi) App.
- **Objective:**
- To provide a user-friendly digital interface for lending institutions (LIs) and their field functionaries for sourcing and processing loan applications of street vendors under the PM SVANidhi scheme.
- **Facts:**
- **PM SVANidhi scheme:**
- It is a Central Sector Scheme to facilitate street vendors to access affordable working capital loan for resuming their livelihoods activities after easing of lockdown.
- **Features:**
- Initial working capital of up to 10,000/.
- Interest subsidy on timely/ early repayment @ 7%.
- Higher loan eligibility on timely repayment of the first loan.
- **Beneficiaries:** Street vendors/ hawkers vending in urban areas as on or before March 24,2020 including the vendors of surrounding peri-urban and rural areas.
- **Lending Institutions:** Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Small Finance Banks, Cooperative Banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies, Micro-Finance Institutions and SHG Banks.
- **Tenure:** The Scheme shall be implemented up to March, 2022.

Links:

<https://www.timesnownews.com/business-economy/economy/article/pm-svanidhi-app-launched-to-street-vendors-apply-for-micro-loans/623172>

E-portal “ASPIRE”

Question:Government of India has launched e-portal named “ASPIRE” for which of the following:

- (a) Higher Educational Research (b)Automotive Technology
(c) Tribal girls for technology innovation (d) Online teaching for students

Answer : (b)

- **Context:**
- The International Centre of Automotive Technology(ICAT) has launched its e-portal named “ASPIRE”(Automobile Solutions Portal for Industry, Research & Education).
- **Facts:**
- **Objective:** To facilitate the Indian Automotive Industry to become self reliant by assisting in innovation and adoption of global technological advancements by bringing together the stakeholders from various associated avenues.
- **Key Activities Includes:** Research and Development, Product Technology Development, Technological Innovations, Manufacturing and Process Technology Development, Hosting Challenges for Technology Development among others.
- **ICAT:**
- It is a leading world-class automotive testing,certification and R&D service provider located in Haryana.It works under the aegis of National Automotive Testing and R&D Infrastructure Project(NATRiP).
- **NATRiP:**

- It is a fully Government of India funded project. It aims at creating core global competencies in the automotive sector by facilitating seamless integration of Indian Automotive industry with the world through setting up state-of-the-art automotive testing, R&D infrastructure facilities.

Links:

<https://auto.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/industry/icat-launches-automotive-technology-e-portal-aspire/77030152>

Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF)

Question: Consider the following with respect to Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF):

- (1) Eligible beneficiaries under the Scheme would be Farmer Producer Organizations , MSMEs, Section 8 Companies, Private Companies.
- (2) Government of India will provide 2% interest subvention to eligible beneficiaries.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None of these

Answer:(a)

• **Context:**

- Union Minister of Animal Husbandry launched the Implementation Guidelines for Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF), a first type of scheme for private sector.

• **Facts:**

- The INR 15,000 crore AHIDF and the interest subvention scheme for private investors will ensure availability of capital to meet upfront investment required for these projects and also help enhance overall returns/ pay back for investors.
- The eligible beneficiaries under the Scheme would be Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), MSMEs, Section 8 Companies, Private Companies and individual entrepreneurs with minimum 10% margin money contribution by them. The balance 90% would be the loan component to be made available by scheduled banks.

• **Additional Facts:**

- Government of India will provide 3% interest subvention to eligible beneficiaries.
- There will be 2 years moratorium period for principal loan amount and 6 years repayment period thereafter.
- Government of India would also set up Credit Guarantee Fund of Rs. 750 crore to be managed by NABARD. Credit guarantee would be provided to those sanctioned projects which are covered under MSME defined ceilings. Guarantee Coverage would be upto 25% of Credit facility of borrower.
- The beneficiaries intending to invest for establishing dairy and meat processing and value addition infrastructure or strengthening of the existing infrastructure can apply for loan in the scheduled bank through “Udyami Mitra” portal of SIDBI.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1639069#:~:text=by%20PIB%20Delhi>

ENERGY MODELLING FORUM (IEMF)

Question: Consider the following statements with respect to ENERGY MODELLING FORUM (IEMF) :

- (1) India Energy Modelling Forum (IEMF) was launched in the meeting of the Sustainable Growth Pillar.
- (2) Ministry of New and Renewable energy will initially coordinate the activities of the forum and finalizing its governing structure.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer:(a)

- **Context:**
- An India Energy Modelling Forum was launched on July 2, 2020.
- **Facts:**
- Sustainable Growth Pillar is an important pillar of India–US Strategic Energy Partnership co-chaired by NITI Aayog and USAID. The SG pillar entails energy data management, energy modelling and collaboration on low carbon technologies as three key activities.
- In the joint working group meeting of the Sustainable Growth Pillar on July 2, 2020, an India Energy Modelling Forum (IEMF) was launched.
- NITI Aayog will initially coordinate the activities of the forum and finalizing its governing structure. The forum would include knowledge partners, data agencies and concerned government ministries.
- **Additional Fact:**
- **Energy Modelling Forum (EMF)?**
- The Energy Modelling Forum (EMF) in USA was established in 1976 at Stanford University to connect leading modelling experts and decision makers from government, industry, universities, and other research organizations.
- The forum provides an unbiased platform to discuss the contemporary issues revolving around energy and environment.

Links:

<https://energy.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/power/india-energy-modelling-forum-to-facilitate-exchange-of-ideas-niti-aayog/76990533>

Bharatmala Pariyojna

Question: Consider the following statements with respect to Bharatmala Pariyojna:

- (1) It is an umbrella initiative under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- (2) It subsumed unfinished projects of National Highways Development Project.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer:(c)

- **Context:**

- The Expert Appraisal Committee of the Environment Ministry has recommended the grant of Environmental Clearance for the development of Satellite Town Ring Road (STRR).
- **Facts:**
- **Satellite Town Ring Road(STRR):** It is an economic corridor that encompasses two states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- The project is part of Bharatmala Pariyojna and will be implemented by the National Highways Authority of India(NHAI).
- **Bharatmala Pariyojna:**
- It is an umbrella initiative under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
- **Aim:** To subsume unfinished projects of National Highways Development Project(NHDP) launched in 1998 and also focus on new initiatives like development of roads for better connectivity.
- **Implementation:** National Highways Authority of India(NHAI) has been tasked with implementing the programme.

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/satellite-town-ring-road-between-tn-karnataka-gets-expert-committee-nod/article32064523.ece>

Dream Kerala Project

Question: On July 1, 2020, the Government of Kerala decided to start the ‘Dream Kerala Project’ with the objective of rehabilitation of which of the following?

- (a) Wild animals (b) Persons with Disabilities (c) Keralites returned from abroad
(d) Marginalized group

Answer – (c)

Related facts:

- The Kerala government on July 1, 2020 started "Dream Kerala Project" for those who came back to kerala from abroad and other states after losing their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Highlights of the project: Various steps has been taken by Kerala govt to utilise the investments of Non-Resident Investors for the state's development with a stable income in return. The Lok Kerala Sabha was established for harnessing the knowledge and skills of the NRIs for the development of Kerala. It will be implemented jointly by various departments of the state government in contributing to Kerala future. A committee of young civil service officers will give expert opinion on the implementation of each idea given by these group of people.
- Remittance to Kerala: Rs 85,000 crore was sent by the expatriates to the state in the year 2018 which has now touched over Rs 1 lakh crore. Their remittances in banks stand Rs 1,69,944 crore. Kerala's high per capita income in the state is the remittances sent by these expatriates.

Links:

<https://www.ndtv.com/kerala-news/dream-kerala-project-kerala-announces-project-to-help-expats-who-lost-jobs-due-to-coronavirus-2255564>
<https://frontline.thehindu.com/dispatches/article31964965.ece>

CORONA KAVACH' health insurance policies

Question: Consider the following statements with respect to 'CORONA KAVACH' health insurance policies :

- (1) The policy cover pre hospitalisation expenses for 15 days and post hospitalisation expenses of 30 days due to coronavirus disease.
- (2) The sum insured amount of the policy ranges between Rs. 5000 to Rs. 50,000.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer : (a)

- **Context:**

- Given the rapid increase in COVID-19 cases in the country, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India, IRDAI, has allowed 30 general and health insurers to launch short-term 'Corona Kavach' health insurance policies.

- **About:**

- IRDAI has designed a standard Covid specific product addressing basic health insurance needs of insuring public with common policy wordings across the industry.
- The policy will cover medical expenses occurred due to coronavirus disease. The policy shall also cover pre hospitalisation expenses for 15 days and post hospitalisation expenses of 30 days.
- The sum insured amount of the policy ranges between Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 5 Lakh.
- This policy can be availed by persons between the age of 18 to 65 years. People can avail the Corona Kavach policy for Self, spouse, parents, parents-in-law and dependent children up to 25 years of age.

Link:

<http://newsonair.com/Main-News-Details.aspx?id=393474>

NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has launched the 'ATL App Development Module'

Question: Consider the following statements with respect to 'ATL App Development Module':

- (1) It is an initiative of Department of School Education & Literacy.
- (2) Objective is to hone the skills of school students and transforming them from App users to App makers.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer:(b)

- **Context:**

- NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has launched the 'ATL App Development Module' for school children all across the country.
- **Facts:**
- The ATL App Development modules have been launched in collaboration with Indian homegrown start-up Plezmo.
- Objective of launching it is to hone the skills of school students and transforming them from App users to App makers in the times to come under AIM's flagship Atal Tinkering Labs initiative.
- The ATL App Development module is an online course and is completely Free. Through 6 project-based learning modules and online mentoring sessions, young innovators can learn to build mobile Apps in various Indian languages and showcase their talent.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1637998>

Family planning initiatives of India

Question: Consider the following statements with respect to Family planning initiatives of India:

(1) The National Family Planning Program has introduced the Injectable Contraceptive in the public health system under the "Antara" program.

(2) In the last decade alone, India's Crude Birth Rate has reduced while the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has increased.

Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer : (a)

- **Context:**
- Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare chaired the virtual meeting on the occasion of World Population Day. He highlighted that the strategy of putting family planning at the core has helped to achieve remarkable results.
- **About:**
- In the last decade alone, India's Crude Birth Rate (CBR) has reduced from 21.8 (SRS 2011) to 20 (SRS 2018) while the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has declined from 2.4 (SRS 2011) to 2.2 (SRS 2018).
- The teenage fertility has halved from 16 (NFHS III) to 7.9 (NFHS IV).
- These efforts have taken India closer to reaching the replacement fertility level of 2.1 and 25 out of 36 States/UTs have already achieved replacement level fertility.
- Use of contraceptives has helped in averting 5.5 crore unintended pregnancies, 1.1 crore total births, 18 lakh unsafe abortions and 30,000 maternal deaths in 2019 alone.

- About 50 percent of the country's population falls in the reproductive age group of 15-49 years.
- **Family Planning initiatives:**
 - The major initiatives under Family Planning include Mission Parivar Vikas, Injectable Contraceptive MPA, Family Planning – Logistics Management Information System (LMIS), Family Planning Communications Campaign.
 - The National Family Planning Program has introduced the Injectable Contraceptive in the public health system under the “Antara” program.

Link:

<https://www.timesnownews.com/india/article/family-planning-provides-dignity-to-women-it-is-a-human-right-issue-dr-harsh-vardhan/620193#:~:text=Dr.%20Harsh%20Vardhan%2C%20Union%20Minister,RMNC AH%2BN%20programme%20ensured%20success.>

India Cycles4Change Challenge opens

Question: Consider the following with respect to Cycles4Change Challenge:

- (1) The challenge was launched by the Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare.
- (2) Its aim is to help cities connect with their citizens as well as experts to develop a unified vision to promote cycling.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) **None of these**

Answer : (b)

- **Context:**
 - The Smart Cities Mission opened the registration for India Cycles4Change Challenge on 10th July, 2020. The challenge was launched on 25th June, 2020 by Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- **About:**
 - The Challenge aims to help cities connect with their citizens as well as experts to develop a unified vision to promote cycling.
 - The Challenge is open to all cities under the Smart Cities Mission, capital cities of States/UTs, and all cities with a population of more than 5 lakh population.
- **Stages:**
 - The Challenge will run in two stages.
 - Stage One will run until October where cities will focus on piloting quick interventions to promote cycling and developing a scale-up strategy.
 - In October 2020, 11 cities will be shortlisted and will receive Rs. 1 Crore award and guidance from national and international experts to further scale-up the initiatives in Stage Two, which will be held until May 2021.
- **Additional Facts:**
- **Smart Cities Mission:**

- **Launched Year:** 2015
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Housing and Urban affairs.
- **Aim:** To develop 100 smart cities across the country by 2022 making them citizen-friendly and sustainable.
- **Objective:** To promote sustainable and inclusive cities that provide core infrastructure and give a decent quality of life to its citizens a clean and sustainable environment and application of 'Smart' Solutions.

Link:

<https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/india/covid-19-impact-plan-afoot-to-make-cities-cycle-friendly-registration-for-india-cycles4change-challenge-opens-5534161.html>

‘Atma Nirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping’(ASEEM) portal

Question:ASEEM portal, recently seen in news, is launched by which ministry?

- (a) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
- (b) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
- (c) Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- (d) Ministry of Human Resource and Development

Answer:(a)

- **Context:**
- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship(MSDE) has launched ‘Atma Nirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping’(ASEEM) portal.
- **About:**
- ASEEM portal will provide employers a platform to assess the availability of skilled workforce and formulate their hiring plans.
- The portal will map details of workers based on regions and local industry demands and will bridge demand-supply gap of skilled workforce across sectors.
- The Artificial Intelligence-based platform will also provide real-time granular information by identifying relevant skilling requirements and employment prospects.
- **Developed by:**
- The portal has been developed by the National Skill Development Corporation(NSDC) in collaboration with BetterPlace.
- **Additional Facts:**
- **NSDC:** It is a not-for-profit public limited company incorporated in 2008 under section 25 of the Companies Act, 1956
- The Government of India through the Ministry of Skills Development & Entrepreneurship(MSDE) holds 49% of the share capital of NSDC while the private sector has the balance 51% of the share capital.
- **Aim:** To create training capacity in the country, fund vocational training initiatives and create a market ecosystem for skill development.

Link:

<http://www.edristi.in/>

Prime Minister dedicated to the nation the 750 MW Solar Project

Question: Consider the following statements regarding Clean Technology Fund ?

(1) It's aim is to transfer low-carbon technologies with a significant potential for long-term greenhouse gas emissions savings.

(2) Asian Development Bank is the Trustee and administering unit of CTF Fund.

Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer:(a)

- **Context:**

- Prime Minister Modi dedicated to the nation the 750 MW Solar Project set up at Rewa, Madhya Pradesh on July 10, 2020.

- **About:**

- This Project comprises of three solar generating units of 250 MW each located on a 500 hectare plot of land situated inside a Solar Park (total area 1500 hectare).
- The Solar Park was developed by the Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL), a Joint Venture Company of Madhya Pradesh UrjaVikas Nigam Limited (MPUVN), and Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), a Central Public Sector Undertaking.
- The Rewa Solar Project was the first solar project in the country to break the grid parity barrier.
- The project is also the first renewable energy project to supply to an institutional customer outside the State, i.e. Delhi Metro, which will get 24% of energy from the project with remaining 76% being supplied to the State DISCOMs of Madhya Pradesh.
- It has also received World Bank Group President's Award for innovation and excellence.

- **Facts:**

- **Significance:** It is the first solar park of India to receive funding from the World Bank and also the first project to get funding from Clean Technology Fund in India.

- **Impact:** The project would lead to avoiding 15.4 lakh tonnes of carbon dioxide generation every year.

- **Additional Facts:**

- **Clean Technology Fund:** It is one of two multi-donor Trust Funds within the Climate Investment Funds(CIFs),the other being the Strategic Climate Fund.It's aim is to provide scaled up financing to contribute to the demonstration, deployment and transfer of low-carbon technologies with a significant potential for long-term greenhouse gas emissions savings.

- **Trustee:** The World Bank is the Trustee and administering unit of CTF Fund.

Link:

<https://www.financialexpress.com/infrastructure/rewa-solar-power-project-asia-largest-solar-power-plant-pm-modi-inauguration-madhya-pradesh/2019361/#:~:text=projects%20on%20time-,Rewa%20solar%20power%20project%20inauguration%20by%20PM%20Modi%3A%20Prime%20Minister,the%20state%20of%20Madhya%20Pradesh.>

Special liquidity scheme for NBFCs and HFCs

Question : The Government has recently (20th May 2020) approved a special liquidity scheme for NBFCs and HFCs through SPV. What is SPV?

- (a) Special Purpose Vehicle (b) Special Protection Venture
(c) Special Protection Vigilance (d) none of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

Context

- The Government has recently approved a special liquidity scheme for NBFCs and HFCs through SPV.
- Its eligibility criteria unveiled on 1st July, 2020.
- **Details of the Scheme:**
 - The Government has proposed a framework for addressing the liquidity constraints of Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) through a Special Liquidity Scheme.
 - An SPV would be set up to manage a Stressed Asset Fund (SAF) whose special securities would be guaranteed by the Government of India and purchased by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) only.
 - The proceeds of sale of such securities would be used by the SPV to acquire short-term debt of NBFCs/HFCs.
- **Eligibility Criteria**
 - a) The Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFCs), including Microfinance Institutions that are registered with the RBI, under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, excluding those registered as Core Investment Companies
 - b) Housing Finance Companies that are registered under the National Housing Bank Act, 1987
 - c) CRAR/CAR of NBFCs/HFCs should not be below the regulatory minimum, i.e., 15% and 12% respectively as on March 31, 2019
 - d) The net non-performing assets should not be more than 6% as on March 31, 2019
 - e) They should have made net profit in at least one of the last two preceding financial years (i.e. 2017-18 and 2018-19)

- f) They should not have been reported under SMA-1 or SMA-2 category by any bank for their borrowings during last one year prior to August 01, 2018
- g) They should be rated investment grade by a SEBI registered rating agency
- h) They should comply with the requirement of the SPV for an appropriate level of collateral from the entity, which, however, would be optional and to be decided by the SPV.

Link:

<https://www.livemint.com/>

PM FME Scheme

Question : Who launched the PM Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM FME) scheme on 29th June 2020 ?

- (a) Harsimrat Kaur Badal
- (b) Smriti Irani
- (c) Menaka Gandhi
- (d) none of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

- **Context**
- Minister for Food Processing Industries Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal launched the PM Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PM FME) scheme on 29th June 2020 as a part of “Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan”.
- The importance of these local units and their role has been amply emphasised by the Hon’ble Prime Minister in his Address to the Nation on 12.5.2020.
- Union Minister said that the Scheme would generate total investment of Rs 35,000 crore and generate 9 lakh skilled and semi-skilled employment and benefit 8 lakh units through access to information, training, better exposure and formalization.
- **Highlights of the scheme**
- **Implemention period** – Five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25 with an outlay of Rs 10,000 crore.
- **Sponsorship** – The expenditure under the scheme would to be shared in 60:40 ratio between Central and State Governments, in 90:10 ratio with North Eastern and Himalayan States, 60:40 ratio with UTs with legislature and 100% by Centre for other UTs.
- **Approach** – The Scheme adopts One District One Product (ODODP) approach to reap benefit of scale in terms of procurement of inputs, availing common services and marketing of products.
- **Subsidy** – Existing Individual micro food processing units desirous of upgradation of their unit can avail credit-linked capital subsidy @35% of the eligible project cost with a maximum ceiling of Rs.10 lakh per unit.
- **Seed Capital** – Seed capital @ Rs. 40,000/- per SHG member would be provided for working capital and purchase of small tools. FPOs/ SHGs/ producer cooperatives would

be provided credit linked grant of 35% for capital investment along the value chain.

- Support would be provided through credit linked grant @ 35% for development of common infrastructure including common processing facility, lab, warehouse, cold storage, packaging and incubation center through FPOs/SHGs/cooperatives or state owned agencies or private enterprise to use by micro units in the cluster.
- Support for marketing & branding would be provided to develop brands for micro units and groups with 50% grant at State or regional level which could benefit large number of micro units in clusters.
- Training provider – NIFTEM and IIFPT, two academic and research institutions under MOFPI along with State Level Technical Institutions selected by the States would be provided support for training of units, product development, appropriate packaging and machinery for micro units.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1635088>

Second National Ganga River Basin Project

Question : The World Bank recently enhanced its support for the Government of India's program to rejuvenate the Ganga River with a __ operation.

(a) 400 million dollar (b) 200 million dollar (c) 100 million dollar (d) None of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

- **Context**

- Ganga river basin is the home to more than 500 million people. World Bank recently enhanced its support for rejuvenating the Ganga river.

- **Second National Ganga River Basin Project (SNGRBP) & World Bank**

- The Second National Ganga River Basin Project (SNGRBP) has been approved by the World Bank's Board of Executive Directors on 25th June, 2020.
- Project will support the government's Namami Gange program and its long-term vision for controlling pollution in the river and restoring its water quality.
- The World Bank has been supporting the government's efforts since 2011 through the ongoing National Ganga River Basin Project, which helped set up the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) as the nodal agency to manage the river, and financed sewage treatment infrastructure in several riverside towns and cities.

- **Loan amount**

- The Second National Ganga River Basin Project comprises a loan in the amount of \$381 million and a proposed Guarantee in the amount of up to \$19 million.
- The variable spread loan has a maturity of 18.5 years including a grace period of 5 years.
- The Guarantee Expiry Date will be 18 years from the Guarantee Effectiveness Date.

Link:

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/06/24/world-bank-enhances-support-for-rejuvenating-the-ganga>

Goa Maritime Cluster

Question : For which purpose Goa government has allotted land to MSME units ?

- (a)for setting up Goa Maritime Cluster (b) for setting up pam oil plant
(c)for setting up Goa handloom Cluster (d)None of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

- **Context**
- The Goa government has recently (June, 2020) allotted land to the consortium of 49 Goan MSME units for setting up Goa Maritime Cluster.
- **Purpose**
- The cluster aims at creating world class facilities for ship designers, ship and boat builders, ship repairers and marine equipment manufacturers.
- **Some important facts**
- Ships built in Goa are serving the entire coastline of India and are being exported to European and Asia- Pacific regions.
- Goa holds one of the largest and most competent force in terms of skill, manpower and experience in maritime field in the form of 150 strong enterprises spread over two generations

Link:

<https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/govt-allots-land-to-msme-units-to-set-up-go-maritime-cluster/1879287>

Treaty & Agreements

PFC signs agreement with IIT-Kanpur for research, training in smart grid technology

Question:With whom Power Finance Corporation,a PSU,has signed an agreement for Training, Research, and Entrepreneurship Development in Smart Grid Technology?

- (a) IIT-Kanpur (b) IIT-Bombay (c) IIT-Delhi (d) IISc Bangalore

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- Power Finance Corporation, PFC, a PSU under Ministry of Power has signed an agreement with Indian Institute of Technology- Kanpur for Training, Research, and Entrepreneurship Development in Smart Grid Technology.
- Under the agreement, PFC will provide financial assistance of worth two crore thirty eight lakhs and ninety seven thousand rupees to IIT-Kanpur.
- The objective of the pact is to provide support to IIT-Kanpur in developing infrastructure for research and development on smart grid technology.

- As part of project, IIT-K will also provide training on smart grid technology to 90 participants and provide fellowship to 9 selected candidates.
- The fellows will be assisted by Start-up Innovation and Incubation Centre of IIT-Kanpur and encouraged to take up entrepreneurial activities.

Links:

<http://newsonair.com/News?title=PFC-signs-agreement-with-IIT-Kanpur-for-research%2c-training-in-smart-grid-technology&id=396027>

India-UK tie up for new medicinal research

Question : With how many new projects India and the UK will be enhancing their science and research collaboration ?

(a)FIVE (b)SEVEN (c)EIGHT (d)TEN

Answer : (a)

Related facts

- **Context**
- India and the UK will be enhancing their science and research collaboration with five new projects worth 8 million pounds to tackle anti-microbial resistance, which could lead to important advances in the global fight against antibiotic-resistant bacteria and genes.
- The new tie-up was announced on Tuesday(28 July 2020) as Tariq Ahmad, UK Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth, as he conducted a so-called “virtual visit” to India.
- **Contribution Pattern**
- The UK will contribute 4 million pounds from the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Fund for International Collaboration, which India will match with its own resources – resulting in the total funding of 8 million pounds.
- **Other partnership**
- The UK has already partnered with India’s Serum Institute to manufacture the vaccine for COVID-19, if clinical trials are successful, with plans to distribute to a billion people across the developing world.
- **Indian pharmaceutical industry**
- India is a major producer of antimicrobials in the pharmaceutical industry global supply chain, and the research projects aim to develop a better understanding of how waste from antimicrobial manufacturing could be inadvertently fuelling anti-microbial resistance (AMR).

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/healthcare/biotech/pharmaceuticals/india-uk-tie-up-for-new-8-million-pounds-medicinal-research/articleshow/77216539.cms?from=mdr>

Renewal of India-European Union Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation

Question: The India-European Union Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation has been recently renewed for a period upto?

(a)2022v (b)2025 (c)2030 (d)2021

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- India and European Union have renewed its Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation for the next five years (2020-2025) on July 25, 2020.
- This was done at the 15th India-EU Summit, a virtual one which was led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from India and European Council President Charles Michel from EU.
- Originally, the agreement was signed in on 23 November 2001 and renewed two times in past in 2007 and 2015.
- Importance of the agreement:
- This will expand the cooperation in scientific and technological research and strengthen the conduct of cooperative activities in areas of common interest.
- The cooperation has been focused on water, green transport, e-mobility, clean energy, circular economy, bio-economy, health, and ICT.
- Highly qualified workers will be integrated into Indian and EU-led innovation systems industries and help maintain technology-based leadership and sharing of best practices.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1641228>

MoU signed for Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA)

Question: Consider the following statement in reference to Unnat Bharat Abhiyan and choose the correct option:

(1) TRIFED under Ministry of Tribal Affairs has signed a MoU with IIT Delhi and Vijnana Bharti for Unnat Bharat Abhiyan.

(2) Unnat Bharat Abhiyan is a flagship national programme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).

Correct option:

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

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- TRIFED under Ministry of Tribal Affairs has entered into a partnership with IIT Delhi for the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA), a flagship national programme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.
- For this, MOU was signed between TRIFED, IIT Delhi(on behalf of the UBA, as the National Coordinating Institute) and Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA, a Swadeshi Science Movement) at IIT, Delhi on July 24, 2020.
- Significance of the agreement:

- Tribal entrepreneurs under TRIFED's Van Dhan programme will now be able to get access to the expertise of the entire network of 2600 + academic and research institutions under Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA).
- This partnership will help promote enhancing livelihoods through the Van Dhan Vikas Kendras established under the Van Dhan Yojana.
- IIT Delhi and Unnat Bharat Abhiyan will provide tribal forest dwellers engaged in Minor Forest Produces with exposure to newer processing technologies, product innovation, mentorship etc.
- The IIT Delhi-TRIFED partnership will also benefit from the expertise and experience of Vijnana Bharati (VIBHA) which will map and reach out to various stakeholders to strengthen Van Dhan Yojna (VDY).
- Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) is a flagship national programme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), for transformational change in rural development processes by leveraging knowledge institutions to help build the architecture of an Inclusive India.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1641191>

SBM Bank India – Mastercard deal

Question : What is the purpose of SBM Bank – Mastercard deal ?

- (a) Car loan (b) Personal loan (c) cross-border payments and remittances services
(d) none of the above

Answer : (c)

Related facts

- Government of Mauritius-promoted SBM Bank India and global payments technology major Mastercard has recently (July,2020) joined hands to facilitate cross-border payments and remittances services.
- Mastercard Send – The SBM Bank India customers will be able to make real-time domestic business-to-consumer transfers quickly and efficiently using 'Mastercard Send'.
- Mastercard Send is a secured and innovative solution – crafted to modernize domestic and cross-border payments and remittances.
SBM Bank – Remittances and payments businesses is the cornerstone of SBM Bank India's growth strategy.
- SBM Bank India is the first bank to receive universal banking licence from the RBI to set up and operate as a scheduled commercial bank through the wholly-owned subsidiary mode.

Link:

<https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/banking-finance/sbm-bank-india-mastercard-to-facilitate-cross-border-transactions-remittances/2014938/>

U.S.-India Strategy Energy Partnership

Question: Partnership to Advance Clean Energy(PACE), Hydrogen Task Force, Solar Decathlon recently seen in the news are part of India's partnership with which of the following nation?

(a) Japan (b) Russia (c) USA (d) Australia

Answer:(c)

- **Context:**
- India and the United States have issued a joint statement on the U.S.-India Strategy Energy Partnership.
- **Facts:**
- **U.S.-India Strategic Energy Partnership(SEP):**
- It was established in 2018 to build upon energy partnership and set the stage for meaningful engagements through robust government-to-government cooperation and industry engagement. The SEP organizes inter-agency engagement on both sides across four primary pillars of cooperation: (1) Power and Energy Efficiency; (2) Oil and Gas; (3) Renewable Energy; and (4) Sustainable Growth.
- **Partnership to Advance Clean Energy(PACE):**
- It was launched in 2009 by India and the United States to accelerate inclusive, low carbon growth by supporting research and deployment of clean energy technologies.
- **Hydrogen Task Force:**
- It is a public-private initiative launched by India and US to help scale up technologies to produce hydrogen from renewable energy and fossil fuel sources and to bring down the cost of deployment for enhanced energy security and resilience.
- **Solar Decathlon:**
- The two countries signed an MOU to collaborate on India's first-ever Solar Decathlon® India in 2021 establishing a collegiate competition to prepare the next generation of building professionals to design and build high efficiency buildings powered by renewables.
- **Retrofit of Air Conditioning to Improve Air Quality for Safety and Efficiency(RAISE):**
- It is a joint initiative of USAID and Energy Efficiency Services Ltd(EESL) for healthy and energy efficient buildings.
- **India Energy Modeling Forum:**
- It was launched jointly by USAID and NITI Aayog to provide a platform for policy makers to study important energy and environmental issues and ensure induction of modelling and analysis in informed decision making process.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1639482#:~:text=Joint%20Statement%20on%20U.S.%2DIndia%20Strategy%20Energy%20Partnership&text=The%20two%20countries%20are%20also,relability%20of%20the%20electric%20grid.>

Azad Pattan hydel power project.

Question: Consider the following :

Dams	Rivers
(1) Azad Pattan hydel power project	Jhelum
(2) Kohala hydropower project	Chenab
(3) Diamer-Bhasha Dam	Indus

(Which is/are correctly matched?)

(a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer : (c)

- **Context:**
- Pakistan and China have signed an agreement for the Azad Pattan hydel power project.
- **Facts:**
- **Azad Pattan hydel power project:** It is a 700 MW hydroelectric project on the Jhelum River in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- **Additional Facts:**
- **Kohala hydropower project:** It is a Hydroelectric power project to be built on the Jhelum river. It is being set up by China under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- **Diamer-Bhasha Dam:** It is located on the Indus River in northern Pakistan between Kohistan district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Diamer district in Gilgit Baltistan. It is being built with the help of China,
- **Jhelum River:**
- It is one of the tributaries of the Indus River. It rises from Verinag Spring situated at the foot of the Pir Panjal in the southeastern part of the Kashmir Valley.

Links:

a <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/azad-pattan-pok-hydel-project-pakistan-china-6507640/>

NTPC does pact to explore business opportunities in India

Question: NTPC, the Maharatna PSU has recently signed a pact with which of the following institute to explore business opportunities in India?

(a) Skill Indiac (b) National Investment and Infrastructure Fund
(c) Atal Innovation Mission (d) IIM Ahmedabad

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- NTPC Ltd, a central PSU under Ministry of Power and Country's largest power generation company has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) on July 16, 2020.
- The agreement has been done to explore opportunities for investments in areas like renewable energy, power distribution among other areas of mutual interest in India.
- Highlights of the MoU: NTPC and NIIF aim to collaborate to further help India's vision of building sustainable and robust energy infrastructure in the country under this agreement.
- This partnership aims to bring together NTPC's technical expertise and NIIF's ability to raise capital and bring in global best practices by leveraging its existing relationships with leading players.
- NTPC & NIIF: NTPC Group has 70 Power stations comprising of 24 Coal, 7 combined cycle Gas/Liquid Fuel, 1 Hydro, 13 Renewables along with 25 Subsidiary & JV Power Stations with a total installed capacity of 62110 MW.
- NTPC targets to have nearly 30 GW of its overall power generation capacity from renewable energy sources by 2032. NIIF Limited manages over USD 4.3 billion of equity capital commitments across its three funds – Master Fund, Fund of Funds and Strategic Opportunities Fund, each with its distinct investment strategy.
- NIIFL is a collaborative investment platform for international and Indian investors, anchored by the Government of India.
- The NIIF Master Fund is the largest infrastructure fund in the country and invests in core infrastructure sectors such as transportation and energy.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1639087>

CCI approves acquisition by Aceso Company Pte. Ltd.

Question: The Competition Commission of India has approved the acquisition of which of the following healthcare enterprise by Aceso Company Pte. Ltd?

- (a) Healthcare Global Enterprise (b) Sun Pharma (c) Zydus Wellness
(d) Cipla Pharmaceutical

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- On July 15 2020, Competition Commission of India (CCI) approved the acquisition by Aceso Company Pte. Ltd. (Aceso) in HealthCare Global Enterprises Limited (HCG), under Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002.
- Acquisition deal:
- The Proposed Combination relates to an acquisition of upto 58.92% stake in HCG by Aceso by way of
- subscription to equity shares and warrants
- an open offer to the public shareholders as per the regulations of SEBI.
- HCG and its group are engaged in the business of providing services through cancer treatment clinics, multi-specialty hospitals, fertility treatment centres.

Links:

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetailm.aspx?PRID=1638864>

The National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) has signed an MoU with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB)

Question: Consider the following statements with respect to National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB):

- (1) It is an attached office of the Ministry of Defence.
- (2) It is responsible for collecting and analysing crime data as defined by the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Special and Local Laws (SLL).

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer: (b)

- **Context:**
- The National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) has signed an MoU with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) to access the centralised online database on FIRs and stolen vehicles.
- **About:**
- The MoU will give NATGRID access to the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) database, a platform that links around 14,000 police stations. All State police are mandated to file FIRs in the CCTNS.
- NATGRID seeks to become the one-stop destination for security and intelligence agencies to access database related to immigration entry and exit, banking and telephone details of a suspect on a “secured platform”.
- The project First conceptualised in 2009 under then Home Minister P. Chidambaram, has got a renewed push under Home Minister Amit Shah. The project aims to go live by December 31.
- It will be a medium for at least 10 Central agencies such as the Intelligence Bureau and the Research and Analysis Wing to access data on a secured platform. The data will be procured by NATGRID from 21 organisations such as the telecom, tax records, bank, immigration etc.
- **Facts:**
- **NATGRID:** It is an integrated intelligence grid that connects databases of core security agencies with an aim to collect comprehensive patterns of intelligence that can be readily accessed by intelligence agencies.
- **Need of NATGRID:** The necessity for the NATGRID came after India’s terror attack in Mumbai in 2009 which exposed the deficiency of the security agencies who have no mechanism to look for vital information in real-time.
- **What is NCRB?**
- It is an attached office of the Ministry of Home Affairs that is responsible for collecting and analysing crime data as defined by the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Special and Local Laws (SLL).

Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/natgrid-to-have-access-to-database-that-links-around-14000-police-stations/article32058643.ece>

Bilateral trade

Question: Ministry of Commerce and Industry has released the data on Bilateral trade between India-US for 2019-20. Consider the following statements:

- 1) US has surpassed China to become India's top trading partner.
- 2) Bilateral trade between the US and India increased from 2018-19 to 2019-20.
- 3) The trade deficit between India and China has also increased.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer : (a)

- **Context:**
- Ministry of Commerce and Industry has released the data on Bilateral trade between India-US for 2019-20.
- **Takeaways:**
- **Largest Trading Partner:** United States(US) has remained India's top trading partner for the second consecutive fiscal in 2019-20. The bilateral trade between the US and India stood at \$ 88.75 billion in 2019-20 as against \$87.96 billion in 2018-19.
- **Trade Surplus:** US is one of the few countries with which India has a trade surplus. The trade gap between the countries has increased to \$17.42 billion in 2019-20 from \$16.86 billion in 2018-19.
- **China:** In 2018-19, US first surpassed China to become India's top trading partner. The bilateral trade between India and China has dipped to \$81.87 billion in 2019-20 from \$87.08 billion in 2018-19.
- **Trade deficit:** The trade deficit between India and China has also declined to \$48.66 billion in 2019-20 from \$53.57 billion in 2018-19.
- **Facts:**
- **Trade Surplus:** It is an economic measure of a positive balance of trade, where a country's exports exceed its imports.
- **Trade Deficit:** It occurs when a country's imports exceed its exports during a given time period. It is also referred to as a negative balance of trade (BOT).

Links:

<https://www.businesstoday.in/current/economy-politics/india-us-inch-closer-to-signing-limited-trade-deal-bilateral-free-trade-agreement-a-possibility/story/410148.html>

Acquisition activities in Indian pharma sector : KKR & JB Chemicals agreement

Question : Which company has entered into an agreement to acquire 41.7 million equity shares of JB Chemicals ?

- (a) KKR (b) UBS (c) Fidelity (d) Vanguard group

Answer : (a)

Related facts

- KKR has recently (July, 2020) entered into an agreement to acquire 41.7 million equity shares of JB Chemicals, representing 54 per cent, from the promoters of the company.

- After this transaction, an open offer will be launched to acquire 20.93 million fully paid-up equity shares of JB Chemicals, representing 26 per cent.
- The open offer, too, is being made at a price of Rs 745 per share, said the company statement.
- The deal size is estimated to be around \$500 million (Rs 3,750 crore).
- This is the second KKR investment in the past two months.
- In May, it agreed to invest Rs 11,367 crore (\$1.5 billion) in Reliance Industries' digital assets subsidiary Jio Platforms to acquire 2.32 per cent stake — its largest investment in Asia to date.
- **KKR**
- KKR & Co. Inc. is an American global investment firm that manages multiple alternative asset classes, including private equity, energy, infrastructure, real estate, credit, and, through its strategic partners, hedge funds.
- **JB Chemicals**
- JB Chemicals that started as an API maker in the late Seventies owns some of the top brands in the Indian market — Rantac, Cilacar, and Metrogyl.
- With a salesforce of around 2,000, it had a turnover of Rs 1,640 crore in 2019-20. It ranks among the top 40 companies in the domestic market.

Link:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/kkr-to-acquire-controlling-stake-in-jb-chemicals-for-about-500-million-120070201917_1.html

BSIP – UTTR PRADESH deal

Question: BSIP stands for —

- (a) Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeoscienc (b) Bhaskar Sahni Institute of Palaeoscienc
(c) Bhimsen Sahni Institute of Palaeoscienc (d) none of the above

Answer- (a)

Related facts

Context

- Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology, has recently (7th JUL 2020) joined hands with the Government of Uttar Pradesh to combat COVID-19 in the state.
- BSIP, as one of the five Central Government Research Institutes in Lucknow, took initial steps to start laboratory testing of COVID-19.
- The availability of the ancient DNA BSL-2A laboratory in the Institute itself made it possible to prepare for testing immediately.
- BSIP received the first batch of suspected COVID samples to test on 2nd May 2020, from district Chandauli.
- Since then, the lab is running 24×7 to test approximately 400 samples per day from various districts of Uttar Pradesh, as decided by the nodal authorities.
- Till date, more than 12,000 samples have been tested, out of which about 400+ samples have been reported positive for SARS-CoV-2.

Link :

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1636948>

India signed \$3 billion deal for USA

Question: India signed \$3 billion deal for purchase of 15 Chinook heavylift and 22 Apache attack helicopters with which country?

(a) France (b) Israel (c) Russia (d) USA

Answer : (d)

Context:

- Boeing handed over the last of the five AH-64E Apache attack helicopters to the Indian Air Force (IAF), completing the contract for 22 Apaches. The Apaches were deployed at the Leh air base as part of the forward movement of assets, amid the stand-off with China in Ladakh.
- **About:**
- The IAF inducted the first batch of Apaches in September 2019 and based them at Air Force Station, Pathankhot, Punjab.
- India contracted 22 Apache helicopters and 15 Chinook helicopters from Boeing through the Foreign Military Sales programme of the U.S. government in September 2015 under a \$3 billion deal. During the India visit of President Donald Trump in February, India and the U.S. signed a deal for six additional Apaches for the Army.
- Boeing's joint venture in Hyderabad, Tata Boeing Aerospace Limited, has been producing aero-structures for the AH-64 Apache helicopter for both the U.S. Army and international customers.

Link:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/iaf-gets-last-of-five-apache-attack-helicopters-from-boeing/article32042881.ece>

Maharashtra government – SBI partnership

Question: The Maharashtra government is set to pump in around ₹700 crore- ₹1,000 crore as 'stress funds' to revive —

(a) slum projects (b) Road projects (c) Irrigation projects (d) none of the above

Answer- (a)

Related facts

- **Context**
- The government of Maharashtra along with the State Bank of India is setting up a stress fund to restart stuck slum rehabilitation projects in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and other urban areas of the state.
- The Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) will tie up with the State Bank of India (SBI) in this venture.
- Infusement of capital – The government will infuse Rs 700 crore to Rs 1,000 crore in this fund aimed at providing financial support to revive such projects. SBI will bring in a much larger amount and also be responsible for managing the fund.

- Certifying agency (nodal agency under the Housing Ministry) – Slum Rehabilitation Authority will act as a certifying agency.
- It has so far issued approvals to total 1,856 such projects aimed at providing over 5 lakh homes to slum dwellers.
- Around 540 projects of these have been completed, while 370 are stuck for various reasons including financial difficulties.

Link:

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/>

Year, Day & Week

World Hepatitis Day

Question: Consider the following with respect to World Hepatitis Day:

- (1) It is being celebrated on 27 July.
- (2) This year's theme is "Hepatitis-free future".

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer: (b)

- **Context:**
- World Hepatitis Day is being celebrated on 28 July. This year's theme is "Hepatitis-free future," with a strong focus on preventing hepatitis B among mothers and newborns.
- **About:**
- World Hepatitis Day is commemorated each year on 28 July to enhance awareness of viral hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver that causes a range of health problems, including liver cancer.
- The date of 28 July was chosen because it is the birthday of Nobel-prize winning scientist Dr Baruch Blumberg, who discovered hepatitis B virus (HBV) and developed a diagnostic test and vaccine for the virus.
- **Additional Facts:**
- There are five main strains of the hepatitis virus – A, B, C, D and E. Together, hepatitis B and C are the most common cause of deaths, with 1.3 million lives lost each year.
- WHO is calling on all countries to work together to eliminate viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030.

Link:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/events/detail/2020/07/28/default-calendar/world-hepatitis-day-28072020>

World Hepatitis Day

Question: When is the World Hepatitis Day observed?

- (a) 28 July (b) 12 July (c) 18 July (d) 10 July

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- World Hepatitis Day was observed across the world on July 28 2020.
- The day is observed to enhance awareness of viral hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver that causes a range of health problems, including liver cancer.
- 2020 theme for the day is “Hepatitis-free future,” with a strong focus on preventing hepatitis B among mothers and newborns.
- The date, 28 July marks the birthday of Nobel-prize winning scientist Dr Baruch Blumberg, who discovered hepatitis B virus (HBV) and developed a diagnostic test and vaccine for the virus.
- **Hepatitis:**
 - Hepatitis is an inflammation of the liver.
 - There are five main strains of the hepatitis virus – A, B, C, D and E.
 - Hepatitis viruses are the most common cause of hepatitis in the world but other infections, toxic substances (e.g. alcohol, certain drugs), and autoimmune diseases can also cause hepatitis.
 - Hepatitis A and E are typically caused by ingestion of contaminated food or water.
 - Hepatitis B, C and D usually occur as a result of parenteral contact with infected body fluids.
- **Modes of Transmission:**
 - Common modes of transmission for these viruses include receipt of contaminated blood or blood products, invasive medical procedures using contaminated equipment and for hepatitis B transmission from mother to baby at birth, from family member to child, and also by sexual contact.
- **Symptoms:**
 - Acute (short term) infection may occur with limited or no symptoms, or may include symptoms such as jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes), dark urine, extreme fatigue, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain.
- **Facts and figures:**
 - Worldwide there are approximately 1.3 million deaths annually due to viral hepatitis, 300 million people are living with the disease unaware.
 - In 2016, the WHO adopted the global hepatitis strategy for the elimination of viral hepatitis by 2030.
 - Screening and early detection are the only ways to deal with the disease because liver damage occurs in chronic viral hepatitis until it reaches the stage of incurable cancer or liver cirrhosis.
 - However, vaccination is available for Hepatitis A and B viruses.
- **2nd Empathy e-Conclave:**
 - On the occasion of “World Hepatitis Day”, 2nd Empathy e-Conclave was organised in India.
 - The event was organised by Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) in collaboration with Airport Authority of India (AAI) for creating awareness among the parliamentarians.
 - The theme of this year’s conclave was “Keep your Liver Safe in COVID times”.
 - In India, Individuals with viral B & C hepatitis are at increased risk for liver cancer and chronic liver disease, yet an estimated 80 percent of persons with chronic viral hepatitis do not know that they are infected.

- **Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences- ILBS:**

- The Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) is a mono-superspeciality hospital for liver and biliary diseases located at New Delhi, India.
- It has been established in 2018 under the Societies Registration Act – 1860.
- ILBS is also a WHO collaborative centre.
- It helped in the development of the National Viral Hepatitis Program which was launched on July 28, 2018. It is the largest program for Hepatitis B and C diagnosis and treatment in the world.
- Currently, India's first plasma bank to treat Covid 19 started functioning at the state-run Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS).

Links:

<https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-hepatitis-day/2020>

National Broadcasting Day

Question: When is the National Broadcasting Day observed?

(a) 23 July (b) 12 July (c) 18 July (d) 10 July

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- National Broadcasting Day is observed on July 23 every year.
- On this day in 1927, the first ever radio broadcast in the country went on air from the Bombay Station under a private company, the Indian Broadcasting Company.
- Broadcasting is the distribution of audio or video content to a dispersed audience via any electronic mass communications medium.
- In India Prasar Bharati is the largest public broadcasting agency. It is a statutory autonomous body set up by an Act of Parliament and comprises the Doordarshan Television Network and All India Radio.
- Currently, Shashi Shekhar Vempati is the CEO of Prasar Bharati.

Links:

<http://www.newsonair.com/News?title=National-Broadcasting-Day-being-observed-today&id=395479>

World Turtle Day

Question. A mobile-based application called KURMA was launched recently.

It is related to which of the following:

(a) Indian Turtle Conservation (b) Indian Tiger Conservation
(c) Indian Vulture Conservation (d) Indian Elephant Conservation

Answer : (a)

- **Context:**
- On May 23, 2020, World Turtle Day, a mobile-based application called KURMA was launched for turtle conservation, which has been hailed by the Government.
- **Facts:**

- The application has been developed by the Indian Turtle Conservation Action Network (ITCAN) in collaboration with the Turtle Survival Alliance-India and Wildlife Conservation Society-India.
- It serves as a digital database, with a built-in digital field guide covering 29 species of freshwater turtles and tortoises of India, and information on turtle identification, distribution, vernacular names, and threats.
- A report released in 2019 by TRAFFIC, an international wildlife trade monitoring organisation, showed that at least 11,000 tortoises and freshwater turtles fall prey to illicit poaching and smuggling every year, adding up to over 1,11,130 turtles poached or smuggled between September 2009 and September 2019.

Links:

<https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/world-turtle-day-2020-7-amazing-facts-about-turtles-you-should-know-1681132-2020-05-23>

NELSON MANDELA INTERNATIONAL DAY

Question: Consider the following with respect to NELSON MANDELA INTERNATIONAL DAY:

- (1) The day was officially declared by the UN in November 2009, with the first UN Mandela Day held on 18 July 2010.
- (2) The Day celebrates the idea that each individual has the power to transform the world.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer: (c)

- **Context:**
- Nelson Mandela International Day is an annual international day in honour of Nelson Mandela, celebrated each year on 18 July, Mandela's birthday.
- **Facts:**
- The day was officially declared by the United Nations in November 2009, with the first UN Mandela Day held on 18 July 2010.
- The Day is a global call to action that celebrates the idea that each individual has the power to transform the world, the ability to make an impact.
- **Nelson Mandela:**
- Nelson Mandela (1918 – 2013) was a South African anti-apartheid revolutionary who served as President of South Africa from 1994 to 1999. He was the country's first black head of state and the first elected in a fully representative democratic election.
- He also served as Secretary-General of the Non-Aligned Movement from 1998 to 1999.
- He was awarded Bharat Ratna (in 1990) and Nobel Peace Prize (in 1993).
- United Nations has recognized the period from 2019 to 2028 as the Nelson Mandela Decade of Peace.
- **Nelson Mandela Prize 2020:**
- The United Nations Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela Prize aims to recognize the achievements of those who dedicated their lives to the service of humanity as guided by the UN principles, while honouring Mandela's legacy of reconciliation, political transition and social transformation.

- It is awarded every five years and was first awarded in 2015.
- No current staff member of any organization of the United Nations system shall be eligible for the Prize.

Links:

<https://www.un.org/en/events/mandeladay/>

World Youth Skills Day

Question: When is the World Youth Skills Day observed?

(a) 15 July (b) 12 July (c) 18 July (d) 10 July

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- World Youth Skills Day was observed globally on July 15, 2020.
- The aim of WYSD is to recognize the strategic importance of equipping young people with skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship.
- This day highlights the crucial role of skilled youth in addressing current and future global challenges.
- The day was designated by the United Nations General assembly in 2014.
- The vision of the Incheon Declaration: Education 2030 covers the Sustainable Development Goal 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”.
- **Skill Education in India:**
 - The National Skill Development Mission (NSDM) was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15th July, 2015 on the occasion of World Youth Skills Day to provide a strong institutional framework to implement and scale up skill development efforts across the country.
 - The mission aims to train a minimum of 300 million skilled people by the year 2022.
 - Under the Mission, 20 Central Ministries/Departments including Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship are involved in the implementation of more than 40 schemes/programmes on Skill Development.
 - Further, the National Skill Development Fund has been set up by the Government of India with an initial corpus of Rs. 995.10 crore for skill development in the country.
- **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana:**
 - The Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship is implementing its flagship scheme Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY 2.0) 2016-20 with an objective to provide skill training to one crore prospective youth pan India over four years with a budgetary outlay of Rs. 12,000 crore.
 - Under the scheme, as on 11.11.2019, 69.03 lakhs candidates have been trained.
- **Budget Allocation 2020-21:**
 - The Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship have been allocated Rs 3,002.21 crore for the year 2020-21.

Links:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/world-youth-skills-day>

National Fish Farmers Day

Question: When is the National Fish Farmers Day observed?

(a) 10 July (b) 02 July (c) 13 July (d) 8 July

Answer: (a)

Related facts:

- The ICAR-Central Inland Fisheries Research Institute, Barrackpore, Kolkata virtually celebrated the National Fish Farmers Day.
- National Fish Farmers Day is celebrated on 10th July every year in remembrance of scientists Dr. K. H. Alikunhi and Dr. H.L. Chaudhury who successfully demonstrated the technology of induced breeding (Hypophysation) in Indian Major Carps on 10th July, 1957.
- They rolled out the technology at the erstwhile 'Pond Culture Division' of CIFRI at Cuttack, Odisha (presently Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, CIFA, Bhubaneswar).
- On this occasion, a webinar was hosted by the Department of Fisheries in association with the National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB).
- The occasion was graced by Giriraj Singh, Union Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, and other dignitaries.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=210029#:~:text=National%20Fish%20Farmers%20Day%20is,Alikunhi%20and%20Dr.%20H.L.>

National Doctor's Day

Question: When is the National Doctor's Day observed?

(a) 29 June (b) 1 July (c) 26 June (d) 3 July

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- National Doctor's Day was observed across the country on 1 July 2020.
- This day offers an opportunity to express gratitude towards doctors for round the clock service they offer.
- In India, this day marks the birth as well as the death anniversary of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy who was one of the most renowned physicians in India.
- He has also served as the second Chief Minister of West Bengal.
- Dr. Roy was born on July 1, 1882.
- He was awarded Bharat Ratna on 4 February 1961, India's highest civilian honour.
- He played an important role in the formation of the Indian Medical Association in the year 1928.
- The Medical Council of India instituted Dr. B.C. Roy National Award Fund in 1962 to perpetuate his memory. It is the highest recognition for medical practitioners in India.
- The First Doctor's Day was celebrated in India in the year 1991.

Links:

<https://www.ndtv.com/health/national-doctors-day-2020-celebrates-medical-professionals-know-theme-significance-and-more-2254525>

World Population Day

Question. Consider the following statements with respect to World Population Day:

- (1) It is established in 1989 by United Nations Development Programme.
(2) Theme of 2020 is “How to safeguard the health and rights of women and girls now.”
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer : (c)

- **Context:**

- This year’s World Population Day calls for global attention to the unfinished business of the landmark 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, which recognized that reproductive health and gender equality are essential for achieving sustainable development.

- **About:**

- World Population Day, which is annually observed on 11 July, seeks to focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues.
- It was established by the then-Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme in 1989, an outgrowth of the interest generated by the Day of Five Billion, which was observed on 11 July 1987. The Day was first marked on 11 July 1990 in more than 90 countries.

- **Population Trends:**

- Current estimates indicate that roughly 83 million people are being added to the world’s population every year.
- Even assuming that fertility levels will continue to decline, the global population is expected to reach 8.6 billion in 2030, 9.8 billion in 2050 and 11.2 billion in 2100, according to the medium-variant projection.

- **Facts:**

- **Aim:** To focus attention on the urgency and importance of population issues.
- **Origin:** The day was established in 1989 as an initiative taken by the Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- **Theme:** “How to safeguard the health and rights of women and girls now.”
- **Additional Facts:**
 - **UNFPA:** It is the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency. It aims to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.
 - **Headquarters:** New York, United States.
 - **Report:** State of World Population Report.
 - **International Conference on Population and Development(ICPD):** It was held in 1994 in Cairo, Egypt where 179 governments adopted a revolutionary

Programme of Action and called for women's reproductive health and rights to take centre stage in national and global development efforts.

Link:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/red-button-day-light/world-population-day-2020-indias-concerns/>

International Asteroid Day

Question: When is the International Asteroid Day celebrated?

(a) 26 June (b) 28 June (c) 16 June (d) 30 June

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- On June 30, 2020, 'International Asteroid Day' was observed all over the world.
- The day aims to raise public awareness about the asteroid impact hazard and to inform the public about the crisis communication actions to be taken at the global level in case of a credible near-Earth object threat.
- In December 2016, the United Nations General Assembly announced to celebrate this day on 30 June every year.
- This day marks the Tunguska impact over Siberia, Russian Federation, on 30 June 1908.
- The Tunguska event was a large explosion which occurred near the Podkamennaya Tunguska River in Russia.
- This is the Earth's largest asteroid impact in recorded history.

Links:

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/asteroid-day>

Statistics Day

Question: On 29th June, 2020, 14th Statistical Day was celebrated in recognition of the contributions made by Late Professor Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis in the fields of statistics, statistical system and economic planning. What was the theme of this day?

- (a) Agriculture and Agriculture Welfare
- (b) Quality assurance in official statistics
- (c) SDG-3 & SDG-5
- (d) Social welfare

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- The 14th 'Statistics Day' was celebrated across the country on 29 June 2020 by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation. This day is celebrated to create public awareness about the importance of statistics in socio-economic planning and policy formulation.
- Theme of Statistics Day, 2020 is SDG- 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages) & SDG- 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls).
- This day is celebrated on the birth anniversary of Prof. P C Mahalanobis, in recognition of his invaluable contribution in establishing the National Statistical System.
- The day was designated by Government of India in 2007.
- The Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) was set up by Prof. Mahalanobis in 1931 in Kolkata. It was declared an autonomous "Institute of National Importance" through an act of Parliament in 1959.
- Prof. P C Mahalanobis was one of the members of the first Planning Commission of free India.
- For his contributions, Mahalanobis has been considered the father of modern statistics in India.

Links: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1634923>

Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day

Question: When is the Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day observed?

- (a) 26 June
- (b) 25 June
- (c) 20 June
- (d) 27 June

Answer: (d)

Related facts:

- Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day was observed on 27 June 2020 across the world.
- United Nations General Assembly in its 74th plenary session held on 6 April 2017 declared 27 June Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day, to raise public awareness of their contribution to sustainable development and the global economy.
- MSMEs which generally employ fewer than 250 persons, are the backbone of most economies worldwide and play a key role in developing countries.
- According to the data provided by the International Council for Small Business (ICSB), formal and informal Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) make up over 90% of all firms and account, on average, for 70% of total employment and 50% of GDP.
- **Role of MSME in India:**

- The Indian MSME sector is the backbone of the national economic structure and has unremittingly acted as the bulwark for the Indian economy, providing it resilience to ward off global economic shocks and adversities.
- It is the second largest employer after agriculture.
- MSME sector accounts for 45 percent of total exports and contributes very significant about 25 percent to the GDP.
- **Classification of micro, small and medium enterprises:**
 - On 1st June 2020 Government has revised the scales of categorization of MSMEs. As of now:
 - A micro enterprise is one where the investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment does not exceed one crore rupees and turnover does not exceed five crore rupees
 - A small enterprise is defined as the enterprise where the investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment does not exceed ten crore rupees and turnover does not exceed fifty crore rupees
 - An enterprise will be considered a medium, where the investment in Plant and Machinery or Equipment does not exceed fifty crore rupees and turnover does not exceed two hundred and fifty crore rupees.

Links: <https://www.un.org/en/observances/micro-small-medium-businesses-day#:~:text=That%20is%20why%20the%20General,development%20and%20the%20global%20economy.>

Books

Book – His Holiness The Fourteenth Dalai Lama: An Illustrated Biography

Question: Who is the author of the book His Holiness The Fourteenth Dalai Lama: An Illustrated Biography ?

- (a) Trisong Detsen
- (b) Lobsang Sangay
- (c) Tenzin Geyche Tethong
- (d) Tenzin Delek Rinpoche

Answer: (c)

Related facts:

- A book titled 'His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama: An Illustrated Biography' will be released in October 2020 by Roli Books.
- The book is written by Tenzin Geyche Tethong.
- Tenzin Geyche Tethong has been associated with the Dalai Lama for over four decades as his close aide and advisor.
- The biography features a personal message by the spiritual leader decorated with some 400 rare pictures and documents.
- The book illustrates the journey of Dalai Lama leading from the early years, when he led a sheltered yet rigorous existence spent between the Potala and Norbulingka palaces, to the complex and increasingly dangerous relationship with communist China.

- The book gives us a glimpse into an important slice of history before the Dalai Lama was forced to flee to India in March 1959.
- The Dalai Lama, who now lives in Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh, fled from Tibet and came to India at the age of 23.
- His teachings of peace and non-violence and freedom has won him the prestigious Nobel Peace Prize in the year 1989.

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/life-style/books/features/his-holiness-dalai-lamas-biography-to-release-in-2020/articleshow/76876165.cms>

Book- Tangams: An Ethnolinguistic Study Of The Critically Endangered Group of Arunachal Pradesh

Question: Who released the book Tangams: An Ethnolinguistic Study Of The Critically Endangered Group of Arunachal Pradesh?

- (a) Sarbananda Sonowal
- (b) Pema Khandu
- (c) Biplab Kumar Deb
- (d) N. Biren Singh

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu released a book titled Tangams: An Ethnolinguistic Study Of The Critically Endangered Group of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The book will help the future generations of the Tangam community.
- **Who are the Tangams?**
- Tangams are a little-known community within the larger Adi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh which reportedly 253 speakers.
- They are concentrated in one small hamlet of Kugging in Upper Siang district's Paindem circle.
- In bureaucrat Tarun Kumar Bhattacharjee's book, Tangams (1975), the community's population was pegged at 2,000 spread across 25 villages.
- **Critically Endangered Language:**
- As per the UNESCO World Atlas of Endangered Languages (2009), Tangam — an oral language that belongs to the Tani group, under the greater Tibeto-Burman language family — is marked 'critically endangered'.
- **Reasons for Language Loss:**
- Cultural erosion is the reason of Language loss.
- Kugging is surrounded by a number of villages inhabited by Adi subgroups such as Shimong, Minyongs, as well as the Buddhist tribal community of Khambas, among others.
- To communicate with their neighbours over the years, the Tangams have become multilingual, speaking not just Tangam, but other tongues such as Shimong, Khamba and Hindi.
- Their neighbours are various Adi subgroups, so they have picked up other Adi languages and their own is slowly disappearing.

- **Languages in Arunachal Pradesh:**

- The languages of Arunachal Pradesh have been classified under the Sino-Tibetan language family, and more specifically under the Tibeto-Burman and Tai group of languages, such as Lolo-Burmish, Bodhic, Sal, Tani, Mishmi, Hruishh and Tai.
- While the education system has introduced Devanagari, Assamese and Roman scripts for most tribal languages, new scripts such as Tani Lipi and Wancho Script have been developed by native scholars.
- Despite there being a plethora of languages in the state, almost all are endangered.
- According to the UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger (2009) more than 26 languages of Arunachal Pradesh have been identified as endangered.
- The degrees range from 'unsafe', 'definitely endangered' to 'critically endangered'.

Links:

<https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/the-language-of-the-tangams-with-just-253-speakers-6503165/#:~:text=Last%20week%20Arunachal%20Pradesh%20Chief,Endangered%20Group%20of%20Arunachal%20Pradesh.>

Miscellaneous

Restrictions on Public Procurement from certain countries

Question : Central Government amended the General Financial Rules 2017 on —

- (a) 23 July 2020
- (b) 25 July 2020
- (c) 27 July 2020
- (d) None of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

- The Government of India today(23 July 2020) amended the General Financial Rules 2017 to enable imposition of restrictions on bidders from countries which share a land border with India on grounds of defence of India, or matters directly or indirectly related thereto including national security.
- As per the Order any bidder from such countries sharing a land border with India will be eligible to bid in any procurement whether of goods, services (including consultancy services and non-consultancy services) or works (including turnkey projects) only if the bidder is registered with the Competent Authority.
- The Competent Authority for registration will be the Registration Committee constituted by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT). Political and security clearance from the Ministries of External and Home Affairs respectively will be mandatory.
- The Order takes into its ambit public sector banks and financial institutions, Autonomous Bodies, Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and Public Private

Partnership projects receiving financial support from the Government or its undertakings.

- State Governments too play a vital role in national security and defence of India. The Government of India has written to the Chief Secretaries of the State Governments invoking the provisions of Article 257(1) of the Constitution of India for the implementation of this Order in procurement by State Governments and state undertakings etc.
- For State Government procurement, the Competent Authority will be constituted by the states but political and security clearance will remain necessary.
- Relaxation has been provided in certain limited cases, including for procurement of medical supplies for containment of COVID-19 global pandemic till 31st December 2020.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1640778>

COVID-19: DGHS cautions against use of N-95 valved respirator masks

Question: With reference to the N95 masks, consider the following statements:

- (1) Union Health Ministry cautioned against the use of N-95 stating that it does not prevent the novel Coronavirus from spreading out of the mask.
- (2) The valve is basically a 'one-way valve' that only protects the person wearing it and doesn't filter the aerosols coming out.

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) None of these

Answer: (c)

• **Context:**

- The Union Health Ministry cautioned against the use of N-95 valved respirator/masks – which is basically the raised plastic disk that is embedded in the fibre – stating that it does not prevent the novel Coronavirus from spreading out of the mask.

• **Facts:**

- N95 masks are personal protective equipment that protects the wearer from airborne particles and from liquid contaminating the face. N95 masks are worn mostly by healthcare workers.
- N95 masks filter about 95 per cent of particles smaller than 300 nanometres (1 nm is a billionth part of a metre). SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, however, is in the size range of 65-125 nm.

• **Valve in N95 mask:**

- The valve or the raised plastic gasket found in some N95 mask models basically filters the air inhaled by the person and blocks the entry of pathogens suspended in the air.

• **Significance:**

- The valves allow easier exhalation than traditional masks, prevent humidity, reduce heat and carbon dioxide build-up inside the mask.

• **Concern raised:**

- The valve is basically a 'one-way valve' that only protects the person wearing it and doesn't filter the aerosols coming out. Hence, an asymptomatic carrier of the novel coronavirus can easily spread the infection to others when the valve releases the unfiltered exhaled air in the immediate surroundings.

Link:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/covid-19-dghs-cautions-against-use-of-n-95-valved-respirator-masks/article32146008.ece>

Waterways usage charges waived

Question: The Ministry of Shipping in a recent decision has waived off the waterways usage charge for a period of?

(a)1 year (b)3 years (c)5 years (d)2 years

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The Ministry of Shipping has announced the waiving off of waterway usage charges for a period of three years.
- It has been announced for bringing more cargo to waterways.
- Water usage charge was paid by vessels using the national waterways.
- The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) levies the waterway usage charges at a rate of ₹0.02 per gross registered tonnage (GRT) per kilometer for inland cargo vessels and ₹0.05 per GRT for cruise vessels.
- Aim of the decision:
- The decision will increase the inland waterway traffic movement from 72 mt in 2019-20 to 110 million tonnes in 2022-23.
- Only two per cent of total cargo traffic moves through waterways as per the current estimate.

Links:

<https://www.thehindubusinessline.com/economy/logistics/shipping-ministry-waives-inland-waterways-charges-for-3-years/article32184794.ece/amp/>

Honey Testing Lab

Question : In 12 years(2005-06 to 2017-18), India's honey production grows by —
(a) 200 % (b) 250 % (c) 300 % (d) 350 %

Answer : (a)

Related facts —

Context

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Narendra Singh Tomar today(24 July 2020) inaugurated the 'World Class State of Art Honey Testing Laboratory' established by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB)in Anand(Gujarat) with support of National Bee Board.

- **Characteristic**

- Based on the parameters notified by FSSAI, the NDDDB has set-up this world class lab with all the facilities and developed the test methods/protocols, which have been accredited by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL).
- FSSAI has now notified new standards of Honey, Bee Wax and Royal Jelly.
- **Honey Statistics in India**

- Honey production in India has seen a 200 per cent increase in the last 12 years.
- As per the data from the National Bee Board, under the Department of Agriculture, the country's total honey production reported in 2017 – 2018 was 1.05 lakh metric tonnes (MTs), compared to the 35,000 metric tonnes in 2005-2006.
- While the per capita honey consumption is as low as 50 grams per year in India, globally it ranges from 250 to 300 grams, with Germany topping in per capita honey consumption, with a whopping 2 kg per year. In Asia, Japan is the biggest consumer of honey, with per capita consumption of up to 700 grams per year.
- India, during 2017 – 2018, exported a total of 51,547 (MTs) whereas the exports were 16,769 MTs during 2005 – 2006.

Link:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1640961>

Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary into a national park

Question. Which government has decided to upgrade Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary into a national park :

- (a) Arunachal Pradesh
- (b) Tripura
- (c) Assam
- (d) Meghalaya

Answer : (c)

- **Context:**

- The Assam government has decided to upgrade Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary into a national park. Dehing Patkai was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 2004.

- **About:**

- The 112 km² Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary is located within the larger Dehing Patkai Elephant Reserve, which spreads across the coal- and oil-rich districts of Upper Assam (Dibrugarh, Tinsukia and Sivasagar).
- It is believed to be the last remaining contiguous patch of lowland rainforest area in Assam. It is also the place with the highest concentration of the rare endangered White Winged Wood Duck can be found.
- Post upgradation, Dehing Patkai will be the sixth national park in Assam — the other five being Kaziranga, Nameri, Manas, Orang and Dibru-Saikhowa.
- **Wildlife Sanctuaries vs National Parks?**
- As a national park, its importance will increase and new rules will bring increased vigilance.

- While wildlife sanctuaries are protected areas which permit some activities such as grazing, national parks call for a complete protection status under The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.
- Some human activities can be allowed inside a wildlife sanctuary, but no human activity is allowed in a national park.

Links:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/assam-to-upgrade-dehing-patkai-wildlife-sanctuary-into-national-park/articleshow/76820603.cms>

Amarnath yatra cancelled

Question: The government has notified the cancellation of Amarnath Yatra this year due to Covid 19 pandemic. Amarnath shrine is situated in which of the following district of Kashmir?

(a)Baramula (b)Anantnag (c)Sopore (d)Kashmir

Answer: (b)

Related facts:

- The Jammu and Kashmir government on July 21, 2020 announced the cancellation of this year's Amarnath Yatra in wake of the coronavirus pandemic.
- Amarnath shrine is one of the holiest Hindu pilgrimages devoted to lord Shiva.
- It is located at a height of 13,000 feet from the sea level in the Anantnag district of Kashmir.
- This decision was taken in the 39th Board meeting of the shrine chaired by Lieutenant Governor Girish Chandra Murmu.
- More than 5,000 pilgrims each were allowed to participate in the yatra last year from Baltal and Pahalgam routes.
- However, there will be a virtual darshan of the pilgrimage will continue to be telecast live for the morning and evening prayers.
- The yatra takes place into the months of July August every year.

Links:

https://m.hindustantimes.com/india-news/amarnath-yatra-cancelled-due-to-covid-19-arthi-to-be-broadcast-live/story-OAMfJ2HODtcjCMTtni0SZM_amp.html

Zoram Mega Food Park

Question: Consider the following statements:

(1) Zoram Mega Food Park is the first Mega Food Park operationalized in the State of Mizoram.

(2) Under the Mega Food Park Scheme, Government of India provides financial assistance upto Rs. 50.00 Crore per Mega Food Park project.

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:

- Union Minister of Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal e-inaugurated the Zoram Mega Food Park Ltd in Mizoram on July 20 2020.
- The Mega Food Park at Village-Khamrang in Kolasib District, Mizoram is promoted by M/s Zoram Mega Food Park Pvt. Ltd.
- This is the first Mega Food Park operationalized in the State of Mizoram.
- **About:**
 - M/s Zoram Mega Food Park Pvt. Ltd. has been set up in 55.00 acre of land at a project cost of Rs. 75.20 crore.
 - This will provide direct and indirect employment to 5,000 persons and benefit about 25,000 farmers in the CPC (Core Processing Centre) and PPC (primary processing Centre) catchment area.
 - The facilities created by the developer at Central Processing Centre (CPC) of this Mega Food Park include Cold Storage-1000MT, Drywarehouse-3000 MT, Aseptic pulp line with canning, aseptic and tetra packing-2 MT/Hr, Ripening Chambers-40MT/Hr, Spices drying facility-2MT/Hr, Food Testing Laboratory besides state of art enabling infrastructure.
 - The Park will leverage an additional investment of about Rs. 250 Crore in about 30 food processing units in the park and would eventually lead to a turnover of about Rs. 450-500 Crores annually.
 - This Mega Food Park will benefit the people of Kolasib-District as well as nearby Districts of Mamit& Aizawl of Mizoram and nearby districts of Hailakandi, Cachar of Assam.
- **Mega Food Park Scheme:**
 - The Scheme of Mega Food Park aims at providing a mechanism to link agricultural production to the market by bringing together farmers, processors and retailers so as to ensure maximizing value addition, minimizing wastage, increasing farmers income and creating employment opportunities particularly in rural sector.
 - It is based on “Cluster” approach.
 - Under the Mega Food Park Scheme, Government of India provides financial assistance upto Rs. 50.00 Crore per Mega Food Park project.
 - Presently, 18 Mega Food Park Projects are under implementation in various states and 19 Mega Food Parks have already become functional in the States.
 - 6 of them are in the North eastern region. 2 MFPs in North eastern Region are operational at Assam and Mizoram.
- **Mega Food Park Scheme in North Eastern Region:**
 - So far, a total of 88 MoFPI supported projects have been sanctioned in the North Eastern Region and 41 have been implemented.
 - 88 projects when fully completed, would create processing and preservation capacity for 8.66 Lakh MT to handle Agro produce worth Rs. 2,166 Crores.

Links:

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1639896>

KAZI 106F

Question: KAZI 106F recently seen in the news is related to which of the following?

- (a) One horned rhino of kaziranga forest
- (b) India's covid vaccine in trial
- (c) Countries only golden tiger
- (d) None of these

Answer:(c)

- **Context:**

- 'Kazi 106F', described as the country's only Golden Tiger, has emerged as the social media sensation right after its picture tweeted by an IFS officer went viral.

- **About:**

- Kazi 106 F, the tigress, resides in world heritage Kaziranga National Park of Assam. It is also known as 'Tabby tiger' or 'Strawberry tiger'.
- The skin of tigers is orange-yellow with black stripes and whitish abdominal region.
- The yellowish background is controlled by a set of 'agouti genes' and their alleles and the black colour stripes are controlled by 'tabby genes' and their alleles. Suppression of any of these genes may lead to colour variation in tiger.
- Agouti genes interacts with the pigment cells to produce yellow to red or brown to black expression. This interaction is responsible for making distinct light and dark bands in the hairs of animals such as the agouti here same is happening in our tigress – Kazi 106 F.

Links:

<https://www.news18.com/news/india/why-indias-only-golden-tiger-is-a-matter-of-both-pride-and-concern-for-kaziranga-national-park-2715077.html>

Himalayan Viagra

Question:Consider the following statements with respect to Himalayan Viagra:

- (1) It has entered the International Union for Conservation of Nature's(IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.
- (2) It is locally known as Kira Jari and used as a tonic and a therapeutic medicine

Which is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) None of these

Answer : (c)

- **Context:**

- The world's costliest fungus — Ophiocordyceps sinensis — also known as Himalayan Viagra, which sells in international markets for upwards of Rs 20 lakh per kg, has entered the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.

- **About:**

- The list has placed the fungus, known for its aphrodisiac and rejuvenation properties, in the 'vulnerable' category.
- Citing the reason for placing the fungus in the vulnerable category, IUCN said "its spread has declined by at least 30% over the past 15 years as a result of overharvesting."

- **Facts:**

- *Ophiocordyceps sinensis*: It is a caterpillar fungus endemic to the Himalayan and Tibetan plateau and found in China, Bhutan, Nepal and India. In India, it is primarily found in Uttarakhand in the higher reaches of districts ke Pithoragarh and Chamoli.
- Other Names: It is locally known as Kira Jari (in India), Yartsagunbu (in Tibet) and Yarsagumba (in Nepal).
- Significance: It is used as a tonic and a therapeutic medicine in Tibet and China. In recent times, it has also been widely traded as an aphrodisiac.
- Conservation Status: It has been listed under the 'vulnerable category' as per IUCN Red List.

Links:

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/dehradun/himalayan-viagra-which-sells-for-rs-20-lakh-a-kg-now-in-iucns-red-list-as-vulnerable-species/articleshow/76927963.cms#:~:text=DEHRADUN%3A%20The%20world's%20costliest%20fungus,the%20world's%20most%20comprehensive%20information>

Saudi Arabian action plan to combat Covid

Question : Saudi Arabia recently launched

- (a) a six-point plan designed to combat Covid
- (b) a seven-point plan designed to combat Covid
- (c) a eight-point plan designed to combat Covid
- (d) none of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

- Saudi Arabia recently (July,2020) launched a six-point plan designed to combat Covid.
- The proposed areas of focus of the six-point plan, entitled Jump-starting the Global Economy Post-COVID-19 Phase, are wide ranging and include: Building health resilience; Safeguarding human capital; Prevent financial instability; Unclog global supply chains; Revive productive sectors and Digitize responsibly and inclusively.

Link:

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/g-20-chair-saudi-arabia-launch-action-plan-to-combat-covid-through-its-business-platform/articleshow/76820171.cms>

E-waste dumping :Global Scenario

Question : How much e-waste was produced globally in 2019 ?

- (a) 53.6 million tonnes (Mt)
- (b) 40.8 million tonnes (Mt)
- (c) 35.2 million tonnes (Mt)
- (d) 23.8 million tonnes (Mt)

Answer : (a)
Related facts

Highlights

- A record 53.6 million tonnes (Mt) of e-waste was produced globally in 2019 — the weight of 350 cruise ships the size of the Queen Mary 2; \$57 billion in gold and other components discarded — mostly dumped or burned
- The new report released on 28 June, 2020 also predicts global e-waste – discarded products with a battery or plug – will reach 74 Mt by 2030, almost a doubling of e-waste in just 16 years.
- Only 17.4 per cent of 2019's e-waste was collected and recycled.
- This means that gold, silver, copper, platinum and other high-value, recoverable materials conservatively valued at US \$57 billion — a sum greater than the gross domestic product of most countries – were mostly dumped or burned rather than being collected for treatment and reuse.
- According to the report, Asia generated the greatest volume of e-waste in 2019 — some 24.9 Mt, followed by the Americas (13.1 Mt) and Europe (12 Mt), while Africa and Oceania generated 2.9 Mt and 0.7 Mt respectively.
- E-waste is a health and environmental hazard, containing toxic additives or hazardous substances such as mercury, which damages the human brain and / or coordination system.

Link:

<https://www.who.int/news-room/feature-stories/detail/global-e-waste-surging-up-21-per-cent-in-5-years>

Snakebite Mortality in India

Question: Consider the following statements with respect to the recent study on Snakebite Mortality in India:

- (1) The World Health Organization (WHO) recognises snakebite as a top-priority neglected tropical disease.
 - (2) India recorded 1.2 million snakebite deaths in the 10-year period from 2009 to 2019
 - (3) The numbers for annual snakebite deaths is highest in the Uttar Pradesh
- Which is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3

Answer:(c)

Context:

- The Centre for Global Health Research (CGHR) at the University of Toronto, Canada recently released a study titled 'Snakebite Mortality in India: A Nationally Representative Mortality Survey'.
- **Findings of the Report:**
 - India recorded 1.2 million snakebite deaths in the 20-year period from 2000 to 2019 with an average of 58,000 deaths caused by snakebite annually.
 - Around 70% of these deaths occurred in low altitude, rural areas of eight States — Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh,

Telangana, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

- Half of all the snakebite deaths occurred during the monsoon period from June to September.
- Snakebite deaths occurred mostly in rural areas (97%), were more common in males (59%) than females (41%), and peaked in the age group of 15-29 years (25%).
- The numbers for annual snakebite deaths were highest in the States of Uttar Pradesh (8,700), Andhra Pradesh (5,200) and Bihar (4,500).
- **Additional Fact:**
- The World Health Organization (WHO) recognises snakebite as a top-priority neglected tropical disease.
- Indian anti-venoms neutralise venom from only the spectacled cobra (there are three other Indian cobra species), common krait (there are seven other krait species), Russell's viper and saw-scaled viper, whereas there are 12 other snake species causing fatal bites in the country.

Link:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-recorded-12-million-snakebite-deaths-in-the-past-two-decades/article32043389.ece>

Tamil Nadu : Top market borrower

Question: Which state is the top market borrower in the fiscal 2020-21?

(a) Tamil nadu (b) Kerala (c) Uttrakhand (d) Gujarat

Answer- (a)

Related facts

- **Context**
- Recent (Jul,2020) RBI data shows that Tamil nadu is the top market borrower in the fiscal 2020-21.
- Amount – Tamil Nadu has so far raised Rs/-30,500 crore in the fiscal 2020-21.
- Borrowing through bonds – Tamil Nadu has accounted for 17% of the borrowings done through the issue of bonds, known as state development loans.
- **Other States**
- With borrowings of Rs/-25,500 crore, Maharashtra accounted for 14%, followed by Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh at 17% each, as per the data.

Link:

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/tamil-nadu-tops-market-borrowings-among-states-so-far-in-2020-21/article32019834.ece>

Nasscom Platform

Question: 'Nasscom Launchpad' has been launched for —

(a) promotion of cross border trade through partnerships

- (b) promotion of innovative block chain technologies
- (c) both (a) & (b)
- (d) none of the above

Answer- (a)

Related facts

- **Context**

- The National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom) has recently (July, 2020) launched Nasscom Launch pad in New Jersey, to promote cross border trade through partnerships.

- **Key points**

- Through this platform, jointly with VentureLink@NJIT and Choose New Jersey, Nasscom aims to facilitate partnerships between New Jersey and India and promote technology-based foreign direct investment between the two regions.
- Participants – So far companies such as Batoi Systems, Eminenture, Mucheo, NeenOpal Inc, ITSYS Solutions have participated in the Launch pad.
- Platform for member companies – Nasscom would focus on providing a platform for member companies to use as a home base while exploring opportunities to do business in New Jersey and the greater New York area.
- New Jersey tech ecosystem – Member companies will gain a hands-on understanding of market opportunities within the New Jersey tech ecosystem, assistance with site selection, government regulations, incentives, and tax planning to establish permanent operations in the region while operating out of their home location in India.
- Business partner matchmaking – This initiative would also facilitate business partner matchmaking and assistance with introductions with prospective clients.
- Significance – This is a milestone programme for Nasscom that will act as a prominent catalyst for the global expansion of Indian IT companies.

Link:

<https://m.economictimes.com/news/economy/foreign-trade/nasscom-launches-platform-to-promote-partnerships-between-indian-and-us/articleshow/76857276.cms>

Carlyle Group

Question :Nxtra Data Ltd is a wholly-owned subsidiary of —

- (a) Bharti Airtel
- (b) Reliance Jio
- (c) Vodafone
- (d) none of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

Context

- The Carlyle Group on Wednesday (1st July, 2020) announced that it will invest \$235 million for approximately 25 per cent stake in Nxtra Data Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bharti Airtel engaged in the data centre business.

- US-based Carlyle has prior experience in data centre ownership through investments in Coresite in the US and Itconic in Spain.
- Head quartered in New Delhi, Nxtra offers secure data centre services to leading Indian and global enterprises, hyperscalers, start-ups, SMEs and governments.
- The post-money enterprise valuation of Nxtra is approximately \$1.2 billion and Carlyle will hold a stake of approximately 25% in the business upon completion of the transaction, with Airtel continuing to hold the remaining stake of approximately 75%.

Link:

https://www.business-standard.com/article/companies/carlyle-group-to-acquire-25-stake-in-airtel-s-data-centre-business-120070100149_1.html

Golden Birdwing

Question: Golden Birdwing recently seen in the news is:

- (a) recently become extinct
- (b) largest butterfly of India
- (c) smallest butterfly of India
- (d) Invasive species

Answer:(b)

- **Context:**

- A Himalayan butterfly named golden birdwing is now India's largest, a record the southern birdwing held for 88 years. It is found in northern India, Nepal, Burma, China, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Taiwan, Cambodia, peninsular Malaysia and Indonesia.

- **About:**

- With a wingspan of 194 mm, the female of the species is marginally larger than the southern birdwing (190 mm). But the male golden birdwing (*Troides aeacus*) is much smaller at 106 mm.

- While the female golden birdwing was recorded from Didihat in Uttarakhand, the largest male was from the Wankhar Butterfly Museum in Shillong.

- According to the authors of the study, the only measurement used in the study of Lepidoptera is wingspan — a simple concept with various interpretations of the term.

- **Context:**

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Links:

<https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/energy-and-environment/himalayan-butterfly-is-indias-largest-after-88-years/article32012652.ece>

Indian marine fish production data

Question : A study report on annual marine fish landings estimates in the country during the last year released by the CMFRI showed that Tamil Nadu took the first position with 7.75 lakh tonnes followed by —

- (a)Gujarat
- (b)Kerala
- (c)West Bengal
- (d)Andhra Pradesh

Answer : (a)

Related facts

- **Context**
- A study report on annual marine fish landings estimates in the country during the last year released by the CMFRI on June,2020.
- The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute(CMFRI) was established by Government of India on 3 February 1947 under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and later, in 1967, it joined the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) family and emerged as a leading tropical marine fisheries research institute in the world “.
- **Highlights**
- India’s marine fish production recorded a marginal rise of 2.1% in 2019 from previous year at 3.56 million tonnes in total landings from across the coasts.
- Tamil Nadu took the first position with 7.75 lakh tonnes followed by Gujarat at 7.49 lakh tonnes.
- Gujarat was holding the first position for the past few years.
- Kerala (5.44 lakh tonnes) retained the third position.
- While the states such as West Bengal (55%), Andhra Pradesh (34%), Odisha (14.5%), Karnataka (11%) and Tamil Nadu (10.4%) recorded increase in the landings, the marine fish catch decreased in Maharashtra (32%), Goa (44%) and Kerala (15.4%) compared with that in the previous year.
- Fish landings across the coasts of the country
- Red toothed trigger fish (2.74 lakh tonnes) registering a huge increase in the landings across the coasts of the country.
- The second highest landings at national-level is ribbon fish (2.19 lakh tonnes) followed by penaeid prawns (1.95 lakh tonnes) and non-penaeid prawns (1.80 lakh tonnes).

Link:

<https://m.economictimes.com/news/economy/agriculture/indian-marine-fish-landings-rise-marginally-in-2019/articleshow/76709135.cms>

World Bank aid for Improvement in education

Question : Which one of the following is related to improvement in education?

- (a) STARS
- (b) MOON
- (c) SUN
- (d) None of the above

Answer : (a)

Related facts

- **Context**

- The World Bank approved a loan for Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS) on June 24, 2020.
- Loan amount – The loan amount is USD 500 million (about Rs 3,700 crore).
- STARS program – The STARS program builds on the long partnership between India and the World Bank (since 1994), for strengthening public school education and to support the country's goal of providing Education for All.
- Prior to STARS, the bank had provided a total assistance of more than USD 3 billion towards this goal.

- **Maturity & Grace period**

- The USD 500 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), has a final maturity of 14.5 years, including a grace period of five years.

Link:

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/business/2020/jun/28/world-bank-clears-usd-500-million-to-improve-quality-of-education-system-in-six-indian-states-2162601.html>