

MONTHLY

FACTLY

EXCLUSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR

PRELIMS

APRIL 2020

ForumIAS

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

#	Topic	Page No.
Chapter 1: Polity		
1	No 100% quota for tribal teachers: Supreme Court	1
2	Government issues new Jammu and Kashmir domicile rule	1
3	Cabinet Approves Ordinance to Amend Epidemic Diseases Act,1897	2
4	Covid-19 lockdown: What are red, orange and green zones?	2
5	Constitutional Crisis in Maharashtra	3
6	NEET applies to minority colleges: SC	3
Chapter 2: Policy		
1	New Initiatives under DIKSHA Platform:	5
2	Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR)	5
3	Govt sanctions Rs 15000 cr for COVID-19 Emergency response	6
4	Govt issues list of National Directives for COVID-19 management	6
5	Aarogya Setu App	6
6	Govt frees exports of all APIs, formulations except paracetamol	7
7	GoI launches "Containment Plan for Large Outbreaks"	7
8	IMD releases new list of cyclone names	8
Chapter 3: International Relation		
1	World Health Organization (WHO) Funding	9
2	Aden – Yemen's Port City	10
3	USCIRF downgrades India in 2020 list	10
4	Dispute over Parcel and Spratly Islands	11
Chapter 4: Economy		
1	FDI from neighbouring countries	12
2	RBI announces second set of measures to preserve financial stability	12
3	Developing Country Status	12
4	India, US in talks for dollar swap line	13
5	What is helicopter money?	13
6	Countercyclical Capital Buffer (ccyb)	14
7	West Texas Intermediate (WTI)	15
8	International Financial Services Centres Authority	15
Chapter 5: Environment		
1	Uranium Contamination in Groundwater	16
2	Amendments to EIA Notification, 2006	16
3	Record sea temperatures cause third mass bleaching of Great Barrier Reef	17
4	Petersberg Climate Dialogue	17
5	Amur Falcon	17
6	Explained: How the ozone layer hole over Arctic closed	18
Chapter 6: Science and Technology		
1	Feluda- Coronavirus Test	20
2	TriboE masks	20
3	Sahyog App to bolster Arogya Setu app	20
4	Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data	21
5	World Chagas Disease Day	21
6	Pooled Testing	22
7	CollabCAD Network	22
8	Primordial Black Holes	23
9	NASA announces SUNRISE Mission	23
10	What is Geo-fencing?	24
11	GRACE-FO Mission	24
12	COVID-19: Scientific initiatives and Organizations in News	24
13	What is cytokine storm?	25

14	Rapid Test	25
15	Hubble Marks 30 Years in Space and releases picture of Cosmic Reef	26
Chapter 7: Security		
1	Maze ransomware	27
2	US Approves Sale of Military Hardware	27
Chapter 8: Social		
1	Government launches the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India	28
2	Jyotiba Phule	28
3	Ambedkar Jayanti	29
4	Tablighi Jamaat	30
5	Who are Nihangs?	30
6	Basava Jayanthi	31
7	Jharkhand's Chhau dancers and artisans take a battle stance against COVID-19	31
8	Raja Ravi Varma, the painter who helped Indians bring their gods home	31
Chapter 9: Miscellaneous		
1	Lebanon legalises marijuana cultivation for medicinal use	33
2	Global Report on Food Crises 2020	33
3	Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)	34
4	Spring Harvest Festivals in India	34
5	6 theme-based microsites to promote tourism spots	34
6	Darbar Move	35
7	World Economic Outlook	35
8	Trade and Development Report	36
Chapter 10: Pointly		
1	Global Education Coalition (GEC)	37
2	Anthurium:	37
3	Khongjom Day:	37
4	International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace:	37
5	NOOR:	37
6	World Press Freedom Index 2020:	37
7	COVID India Seva:	37
8	Saiyam app	37
9	Milk Tea Alliance:	37
10	World Earth Day:	37
11	Trimeresurus salazar:	37
12	'Assess Koro Na' app	37
13	Krishi Rath app:	38
14	Thrissur Pooram festival:	38
15	ASEAN Special Summit	38
16	Journalism Emergency Relief Fund	38
17	COVSACK	38
18	JUICE Mission	38
19	Meru Jatra Festival	38
20	Danda Nata Festival	38
21	"Dekho Apna Desh" webinar series	38
22	CovidGyan	38
23	Wormivet	38
24	Anak Krakatau	38
25	Bharat Padhe Online Campaign	39
26	Operation Shield	39
27	Lifeline Udan	39
28	SAFE PLUS Scheme	39
29	Patriot air defence missile:	39
30	Cluster Transmission	39
31	Shukrayaan-1 Mission	39
32	World Health Day	39

33	SnowEx Programme	39
34	Madhuvan Gajar	39
35	World Creativity and Innovation Day	39
36	Centre for Augmenting WAR with COVID-19 Health Crisis(CAWACH):	39
37	Covid Warriors	40
38	Consumer- farm (Confarm) Initiative	40
39	Young India Combating COVID with Knowledge, Technology and Innovation (YUKTI) Portal	40
40	Science and Technology of Yoga and Meditation(SATYAM) programme	40
41	Equitable access to vaccines	40
42	Organisation of Islamic Cooperation(OIC):	40
43	Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme	40
44	Myristica swamps	40
45	Cyclone Harold	40
46	Dhauladhar range	40
47	Technology Development Board (TDB)	40
48	World Wide Help(WWH)	41
49	GoCoronaGo:	41
50	Sampark-o-Meter	41
51	Corontine	41
52	Covid-19 Feedback	41
53	Demo 2 Mission	41
54	Operation Sanjeevani:	41
55	Mobile Viral Research Lab (MVRL)	41
56	Kasowal Bridge	41
57	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime(UNODC)	41
58	Matterhorn mountain	41
59	United States Virgin Islands	41
60	Mobile Viral Research Lab	41
61	World Day for Safety and Health at Work	41
62	Global Terrorism Index (GTI):	41
63	Commodity Markets Outlook report	42
64	UN75 Initiative	42
65	Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator	42
66	Migration and Development Brief	42
67	Tianwen:	42
68	Military Expenditure Database report	42
69	Exercise Pitch Black	42
70	Ruhdaar	42
71	Bill Lading	42
72	eGram Swaraj	42
73	Swamitva Yojana	42
74	Transmission of Covid-19	42
Chapter 11 : Questions		
1	STATIC	43
2	CURRENT AFFAIRS	58

Polity

1. No 100% quota for tribal teachers: Supreme Court

News: The Supreme Court has ruled that the order of the erstwhile state of Andhra Pradesh in 2000 providing 100% reservation to Scheduled Tribes(ST) candidates in posts of school teachers in Scheduled Areas is unconstitutional.

Facts:

Key Highlights of the Judgement:

- 100% reservation is not permissible under the Constitution as the upper limit is 50% as specified in Indra Sawhney case, 1992.
- The citizens have equal rights and the total exclusion of others by creating an opportunity for only one class is against the Constitution.
- Equality of opportunity and pursuit of choice under Article 51-A cannot be deprived of unjustly and arbitrarily.
- It is also arbitrary and violative of rights under Articles 14 (equality before law), 15(1) (discrimination against citizens) and 16 (equal opportunity) of the Constitution.

Additional Facts:

Indra Sawhney & Others vs Union of India, 1992:

- Upheld the 27% caste-based reservation for the Other Backward Classes(OBCs).
- Upheld the principle that combined reservation beneficiaries should not exceed 50% of India's population.
- The court had also said the creamy layer of OBCs should not get the benefits of reservation.
- Rejected the idea of reservation in promotions.

2. Government issues new Jammu and Kashmir domicile rule

News: The Ministry of Home Affairs has promulgated the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization (Adaptation of State Laws) Order, 2020 which defined the Domicile Criteria for UT of J&K.

Facts:

Domicile: It is the status or attribution of being a lawful permanent resident in a particular jurisdiction.

Domicile Criteria: A person have to fulfill the following conditions to be deemed to be a domicile of the Union Territory(UT) of J&K:

- The person has resided in J&K for 15 years or has studied in the state for seven years and appeared in either the Class 10 or the Class 12 examination in J&K (or)
- The person is registered as a migrant by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) in the UT of J&K (or)
- They are children of Central Government Officials, Officials of PSUs and among others who have served in J&K for a total period of ten years (or)
- The children of residents of J&K who reside outside the Union Territory in connection with employment or business but whose parents fulfil any of the above conditions will also be entitled to domicile status.

Benefits for Domicile:

- No person shall be eligible for appointment to a post of Level-4 (non-gazetted posts) unless he is a domicile of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- However, the order has said that all Indian citizens including J&K domiciles would be eligible for remaining non-gazette and gazette posts.

3. Cabinet Approves Ordinance to Amend Epidemic Diseases Act,1897

News: Union Cabinet has approved promulgation of an Ordinance to amend the Epidemic Diseases Act,1897 in order to protect healthcare service personnel as well as the property against the violence during epidemics.

Facts- Key Provisions:

- **Defines Healthcare service personnel:** It comprises public and clinical healthcare service providers including doctors, nurses, paramedical workers and community health workers or any other persons empowered by the Act to take measures in order to prevent the outbreak of the disease.
- **Cognizable and Non-Bailable:** Violence against the healthcare workers has been made cognizable and non-bailable offences.
- **Compensation:** It contains a provision of providing compensation for injury to healthcare service personnel or for causing damage or loss to the property.
- If the damage is done to the vehicles or clinics of healthcare workers then a compensation amounting to twice the market value of the damaged property will be taken from the accused.
- **Investigation:** The investigation into the cases of attack on healthcare workers will be completed within 30 days and judgment will be pronounced within one year.
- **Punishment:** The accused of the attack can attract a punishment ranging from 3 months to 5 years and a fine from 50 thousand rupees to 2 lakh rupees.
- In case of grievous injuries, the accused can be sentenced from 6 months to 7 years and they can also be penalized from one lakh to 5 lakh rupees.

4. Covid-19 lockdown: What are red, orange and green zones?

News: The Government of India is considering demarcating the country into three zones – red, yellow and green depending on the scale of the Covid-19 outbreak.

Facts:

- The health ministry used two criteria to classify the districts as hotspots — the absolute number of cases and the speed of growth in cases.
- **Red Zone:** The districts with substantial numbers of positive cases would fall under the red zone. This zone will see no activity.
 - **Inclusion Criteria:** Highest case-load districts contributing to over 80% of cases in India **(or)** Highest case-load districts contributing to more than 80% of cases for each state in the country **(or)** Districts with doubling rate at less than four days.

- **Orange Zone:** It is a zone where only a few cases have been found and there has been no increase in the number of positive cases. Here, activities like opening of limited public transport, harvesting of farm products will be allowed.
 - **Inclusion Criteria:** A Red zone can turn into Orange zone if no new confirmed cases have been reported for the last 14 days.
- **Green Zone:** It is a zone where there were no COVID-19 cases. It will see further relaxation such as MSME industries will be allowed to function with in-house lodging facilities for employees with proper maintenance of social distance.
 - **Inclusion Criteria:** A Red zone can turn into Green zone if no new confirmed cases have been reported for the last 28 days.

5. Constitutional Crisis in Maharashtra

News: A constitutional crisis has occurred in Maharashtra that threatens the position of incumbent Chief Minister.

Facts:

- **Issue:** The current Chief Minister took the oath of office without being a member of either the State legislature or council. Hence, he has to become a member of either House within six months.
- However, the Election Commission has postponed all elections due to the coronavirus outbreak.
- **Governor's quota:** The state cabinet has recommended that the present Chief Minister be nominated to the Legislative Council from the Governor's quota. However, the Governor has not taken any decision yet.

Constitutional Provisions related to the Issue:

- **Article 164(4):** It allows a person to become a Minister without being a member of either House of State legislature for the period of six months from the date of oath.
- **Article 171(5):** It mandates the Governor to nominate members to the Legislative Council who have special knowledge or practical experience in literature, science, art, cooperative movement and social service.
- **Article 163(1):** It says that the Governor must follow recommendations of the Council of Ministers in all situations except insofar as he is by or under this Constitution required to exercise his functions or any of them at his discretion.
- **Section 151A of Representation of the People Act 1951:** It mandates the Election Commission to fill the vacancies in the Houses of Parliament and State Legislatures through bye elections within six months from the date of occurrence of the vacancy provided that nothing contained in this section shall apply if a) remainder of the term of a member in relation to a vacancy is less than a year or b) Election Commission in consultation with the Central Government certifies that it is difficult to hold the bye-election within the said period.

6. NEET applies to minority colleges: SC

News: The Supreme Court ruled that the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) is mandatory for admission to medical colleges run by religious and linguistic minority communities.

Facts:

Background: Minority educational institutions had filed petitions arguing that imposition of NEET would violate their fundamental rights of religious freedom, to manage their religious affairs, to administer their institutions.

Key takeaways from SC Judgement:

- The rights available under Article 30 are not violated by introduction of NEET.
- NEET is important for better administration in view of many instances of maladministration by several private colleges.
- Minority institutions are equally bound to comply with conditions imposed under the relevant Acts and Regulations to enjoy affiliation and recognition.

Additional Facts:

Minority Educational Institution: It is a college or institution established or maintained by a person or group of persons from amongst the minorities.

Constitutional safeguard: Article 30(1) gives linguistic and religious minorities a fundamental right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions:

- It is a statutory body established in 2004 by the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions Act.
- Its main responsibility is to safeguard the educational rights of the minorities enshrined in Article 30(1).
- It is important to note that the linguistic minorities do not come under the ambit of the NCMEI Act, 2004
- Religious minorities: 6 minorities: Buddhist, Jains, Parsis, Muslims, Christians, Zoroastrians
- Case: TMA Pai Foundation. - States can regulate minority education institutions to ensure academic excellence.

Policy

1. New Initiatives under DIKSHA Platform:

News: Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD) launched the VidyaDaan 2.0 programme and the Department of Personnel and Training has launched a portal named iGOT — Integrated Government Online Training platform to fight against COVID-19 under the DIKSHA platform.

Facts:

- **VidyaDaan 2.0:** Aims to contribute e-learning content and help children continue their learning anywhere and anytime. Academicians and organisations will develop and contribute e-learning content aligned to the curriculum.
- **iGOT:** is an E-learning platform to promote capacity building among the frontline workers to handle CoVID-19 pandemic. Target Group: Doctors, Nurses, ASHA workers, Civil Defence Officers etc
- Both initiatives will be hosted on the DIKSHA platform.

Additional Facts - Digital Infrastructure for Knowledge Sharing(DIKSHA) Platform:

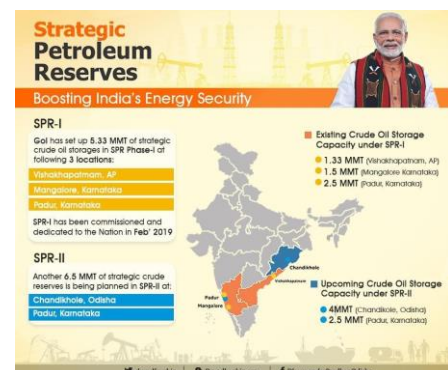
- **Launched Year:** 2017
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Human Resource and Development.
- **Aim:** To provide a digital platform to teachers by giving them an opportunity to learn and train themselves and connect with the teacher community.

2. Strategic Petroleum Reserves(SPR)

News: Ministry for Petroleum & Natural Gas has allowed the public sector refiners to use the strategic Petroleum reserves(SPR) for storing their oil purchases.

Facts:

- **Strategic Petroleum Reserves(SPR):** These are stockpiles of crude oil maintained by countries or private industries which are meant to tackle emergency situations to counter short-term supply disruptions.
- **Management:** Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited(ISPRL), a Special Purpose Vehicle which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Oil Industry Development Board(OIDB) under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.
- ISPRL has established Strategic Petroleum Reserves(SPR) facilities at three locations namely Visakhapatnam, Mangalore and Padur.
- Government has approved the establishment of two additional SPR facilities at Chandikhol in Odisha and Padur in Karnataka.



3. Govt. sanctions Rs 15000 cr for COVID-19 Emergency response

News: The Centre has sanctioned 15 thousand crore rupees for India COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health System Preparedness Package.

Facts:

- The funds sanctioned will be utilized for immediate COVID-19 Emergency Response (amount of Rs.7774 crores) and rest for medium-term support (1-4 years).
- **Objectives:**
 - Development of diagnostics and COVID-19 dedicated treatment facilities,
 - centralized procurement of essential medical equipment and drugs required for treatment of infected patients,
 - strengthen and build resilient National and State health systems to support prevention and preparedness for future disease outbreaks,
 - setting up of laboratories and improve surveillance activities,
 - biosecurity preparedness,
 - pandemic research and conduct risk communication activities.
- **Implementing Agency:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

4. Govt. issues list of National Directives for COVID-19 management

News: Ministry of Home Affairs issued National Directives for COVID-19 management

Facts:

- Wearing of face cover in workplaces and public places compulsory.
- Fine for spitting in public places.
- Ban on sale of tobacco products and alcohol
- Gatherings of more than five people not allowed in public spaces or in any organisation
- District magistrates have been asked to regulate events like marriages and funerals.
- Workplaces have been asked to implement specific measures-staggered lunch breaks, a gap of one hour between shifts, and encouraging work-from-home arrangements for some employees
- A standard operating procedure on social distancing has been created for workplaces, factories and other establishments
- District magistrates will enforce the new National Directives. Penal action, including fines, will be based on the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

5. Aarogya Setu App

News: The National Informatics Center (NIC), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology(MeitY) has launched a mobile app named Aarogya Setu.

Facts:

- The app uses Bluetooth technology, algorithms and artificial intelligence to enable people to assess the risk of catching the Corona Virus infection based on their interaction with others.

Additional Facts:

- **Corona Kavach:** It has been developed by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology in association with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to track the location of COVID-19 infected people and alert subscribers when they come near their locations.
- **Pragyaam app:** It has been developed by Jharkhand Government for issuance of e-passes to those working in essential services and to support the concerned officials in verifying the details of the person.

6. Govt. frees exports of all APIs, formulations except paracetamol

News: Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) removed the export restrictions on 24 active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) and formulations. These include Vitamins B6, B1, B12, Neomycin, Erythromycin among others.

Facts:

- **Background:** Amid COVID-19 pandemic, the government had earlier restricted exports of 26 bulk drugs and their formulations to curb shortages in India.

Additional Facts - Directorate General of Foreign Trade:

- It is an attached office of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and is headed by the Director -General of Foreign Trade.
- It is responsible for implementing the Foreign Trade Policy with the main objective of promoting India's exports.
- **Bulk Drugs:** The active chemical substances in powder form, the main ingredient in pharmaceuticals – chemicals having therapeutic value, used for the production of pharmaceutical formulations.
- **Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API):** It is the part of any drug that produces the intended therapeutic effects.

7. GoI launches “Containment Plan for Large Outbreaks”

News: The government of India has released a containment plan for large outbreaks. The plan is based on the Bhilwara model — Rajasthan government's strategy in the Bhilwara district, which is a Covid-19 hotspot.

Facts:

- **Containment:** Specified geographical areas will be quarantined under this model.
- **Laws:** The Disaster Management Act of 2005 and the Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897 can be used to implement the model. CrPc and IPC sections can be used to book violators.
- **Procedure:** People will be checked for influenza-like symptoms. They will be monitored actively and tested. Labs will give results in 12 to 24 hours.
- **Prevention:** All healthcare workers should use hydroxychloroquine as prophylactic.
- If there are no cases for four weeks, normalcy can be declared.

8. IMD releases new list of cyclone names

News: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) released a new list of names of tropical cyclones over the north Indian Ocean.

Facts

- The World Meteorological Organization maintains rotating lists of names which are appropriate for each Tropical Cyclone basin.
- The naming of the tropical cyclones over the north Indian Ocean basin started in 2004.
- The Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre (RSMC) of Tropical Cyclones in New Delhi is responsible for naming the cyclones in the northern Indian ocean region.
- The eight countries along the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea suggest names that are sequentially listed. The nations suggest names alphabetically – Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Significance of naming cyclones:

- It helps in the quick identification of storms in warning messages
- Names are presumed to be far easier to remember than numbers and technical terms.
- Giving names to storms makes it easier for the media to report on tropical cyclones,
- heightens interest in warnings and increases community preparedness

International Relations

1. World Health Organization (WHO) Funding

News: The US President has threatened to freeze US funding to the World Health Organization (WHO) due to negligence on coronavirus pandemic and for its China Centric approach.

Facts:

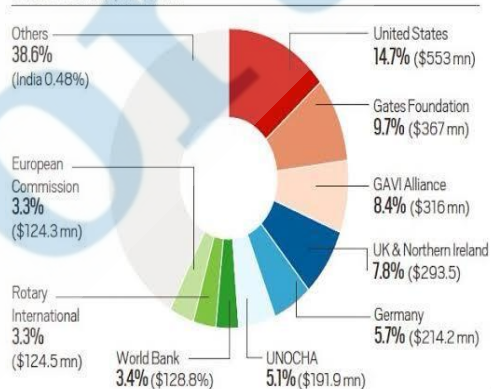
Funding: There are four kinds of contributions that make up funding for the WHO which are:

- **Assessed contributions:** These are the dues countries pay in order to be a member of the Organization. The amount each Member State must pay is calculated relative to the country’s wealth and population.
- **Voluntary contributions:** It comes from Member States (in addition to their assessed contribution) or from other partners. They can range from flexible to highly earmarked.
- **Core voluntary contributions:** It allows less well-funded activities to benefit from a better flow of resources and ease implementation bottlenecks that arise when immediate financing is lacking.
- **Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Contributions:** It was started in 2011 to improve and strengthen the sharing of influenza viruses with human pandemic potential and to increase the access of developing countries to vaccines and other pandemic related supplies.

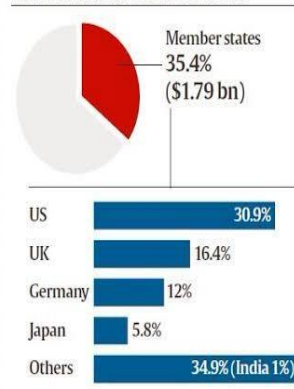
Additional Facts:

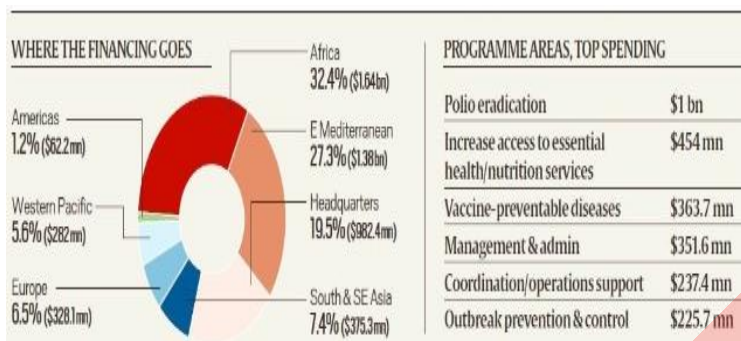
- Currently, the United States is the WHO’s biggest contributor making up 14.67% of total funding.
- The next big contributors are the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and GAVI Alliance.
- The biggest programme area where the money is allocated is polio eradication (26. 51 per cent).

CONTRIBUTORS, OVERALL



MEMBER STATES PROVIDE OVER 35%





2. Aden – Yemen’s Port City

News: The Southern Transitional Council (STC), a separatist group in Yemen has declared self-rule in the Port city of Aden and other southern provinces.

Facts:

- Aden is situated along the north coast of the Gulf of Aden and lies on a peninsula enclosing the eastern side of Al-Tawāhī Harbour.
- In 2015, it was declared as the temporary capital of Yemen.

Additional Facts:

- **Gulf of Aden:** It is located in the Middle East with Yemen to the north, Somalia to the south and the Arabian Sea to the east. It is connected to the Red Sea by the Bab el Mandeb strait.
- **Bab el-Mandeb Strait:** It is a chokepoint between the horn of Africa and the Middle East. It is located between Yemen, Djibouti and Eritrea and connects the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea.
- **Socotra Island:** It is part of North Indian Ocean located between the Guardafui Channel and the Arabian Sea. It is officially part of Yemen. In 2008, it was recognised as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



3. USCIRF downgrades India in 2020 list

News: The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has downgraded India to the lowest ranking, “countries of particular concern” (CPC) in International Religious Freedom Report, 2020.

Facts:

- CPC status is a status under International Religious Freedom Act enacted by USA in 1998. It is given to countries which engage in or tolerate systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom.
- The other countries in the CPC category in 2020 report are China, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Nigeria, Russia, Syria, Vietnam, Eritrea, Iran, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan
- In 2019, India was placed in Tier 2 country category.

- Tier 2 countries are those in which violations engaged in or tolerated by the government during the concerned time period are serious and meet at least one of the elements of the “systematic, ongoing, egregious” standard for designation as CPC

Additional Facts:

USCIR: It is an independent, bipartisan U.S. federal government commission which seeks to defend the universal right to freedom of religion or belief abroad.

4. Dispute over Parcel and Spratly Islands

News: China has again increased its presence in the South China Sea by unilaterally renamed 80 islands around the two disputed archipelagos of the Spratly Islands and the Paracel Islands.

Facts:

Spratly Islands:

- Spratly Islands are a disputed archipelago in the South China Sea. It is largely uninhabited.
- **Countries in Dispute:** China, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines and Malaysia. Brunei has also claimed the south-eastern part of the Spratly.

Paracel Islands:

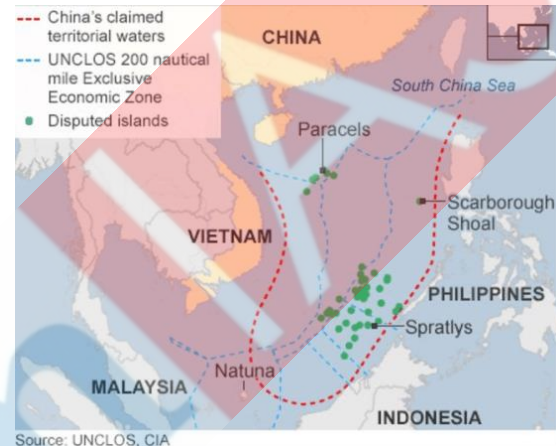
- The Paracel Islands is a disputed archipelago located in the South China Sea. It is almost equidistant from China and Vietnam.
- **Countries in Dispute:** China and Vietnam.

Additional Facts:

- **Natuna Islands:** It is located in Indonesia’s Riau Islands province, the west side of the South China Sea. It is claimed by China.
- **Scarborough Shoal:** It is located between the Macclesfield Bank and Luzon island in the South China Sea. It is claimed by China, Taiwan and the Philippines.

South China Sea:

- The South China Sea is an arm of western Pacific Ocean in Southeast Asia.
- **Border Countries:** People’s Republic of China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam.
- **Importance:** It holds tremendous strategic importance for its location as it is the connecting link between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean (Strait of Malacca).
- **Dispute:** China claims the South China Sea based on the nine-dash line which stretches hundreds of miles south and east from its most southerly province of Hainan covering the strategic Paracel and Spratly island



Economy

1. FDI from neighbouring countries

News: The Government of India has revised its existing Foreign Direct Investment policy in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

Facts:

- **New FDI Policy:** It has made prior government approval mandatory for foreign direct investments (FDI) from countries which share a land border with India or where the beneficial owner of an investment is situated in such country.
- **Earlier FDI Policy:** The prior government approval policy was previously applied to only the investments from Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- **Implication:** It will curb opportunistic takeovers/acquisitions of Indian companies due to the current COVID-19 pandemic.

2. RBI announces second set of measures to preserve financial stability

News: Reserve Bank of India has come out with the second set of monetary policy measures to preserve financial stability after the government has extended the lockdown.

Facts:

- **Reverse Repo Rate:** It is the short-term borrowing rate at which RBI borrows money from banks. It has been cut to 3.75% from 4%.
- **Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR):** It refers to the proportion of highly liquid assets held by financial institutions to ensure their ongoing ability to meet short-term obligations. The LCR requirement has been reduced to 80% from 100%.
- **Long Term Repo Operations (LTRO):** It is a tool under which the RBI provides one-year to three-year money to banks at the prevailing repo rate accepting government securities as collateral will inject Rs 50,000 crore via LTRO so that banks provide liquidity to non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) and micro-finance institutions.
- **Special Finance assistance:** Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will provide Rs 50,000 crore financial assistance to institutions such as SIDBI, NABARD, NHB.
- **Ways and means Advances (WMA):** These are temporary loan facilities provided by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to the central and state governments to meet mismatches in the receipts and payments. The limit on WMA has been increased to 60%.

3. Developing Country Status

News: The US President has accused China of taking advantage of the US through the World Trade Organisation (WTO) saying that if China is considered a 'developing country', the US should be called one too.

Facts:**Developing Country Status in WTO:**

- There are no WTO definitions of developed and developing countries. Members announce for themselves whether they are developed or developing countries.
- However, other members can challenge the decision of a member to make use of provisions available to developing countries.

Benefits: The WTO Agreements contain Special and Differential Treatment (S&D) provisions which give developing countries special rights which include:

- Longer time periods for implementing Agreements and commitments,
- Measures to increase trading opportunities for developing countries,
- Provisions requiring all WTO members to safeguard the trade interests of developing countries,
- Support to help developing countries build the capacity to carry out WTO work, handle disputes and implement technical standards among others.

4. India, US in talks for dollar swap line

News: India is working with the United States to secure a dollar (currency) swap line that would help in providing an additional comfort in an event of any abrupt outflow of funds.

Facts:**Dollar Swap arrangement:**

- Under this, the US Federal Reserve will provide dollars to a foreign central bank.
- At the same time, the foreign central bank provides the equivalent amount of funds in its currency to the Fed based on the market exchange rate at the time of the transaction.
- The parties agree to swap back these quantities of their two currencies at a specified date in the future which is the next day or as far ahead as three months using the same exchange rate as in the first transaction.
- These swap operations carry no exchange rate or other market risks as transaction terms are set in advance.

Additional Facts:**Currency Swap arrangement:**

- The word swap means exchange. It is an arrangement to exchange currencies with predetermined terms and conditions.
- Governments engage in currency swaps with foreign counterparts to meet short term foreign exchange liquidity requirements or to ensure adequate foreign currency to avoid Balance of Payments (BOP) crisis till longer arrangements can be made.

5. What is helicopter money?

News: Telangana Chief Minister has suggested RBI to adopt the concept of Helicopter Money to help state governments tide over the current crisis and kickstart economic activity in India.

Facts:

- **Origin:** The term Helicopter Money was given by American Economist Milton Friedman in his paper “The Optimum Quantity of Money”.
- **Helicopter money:** It refers to an unconventional monetary policy tool which is aimed at bringing the economy back on track by printing large sums of money and distributing it to the public.
- **Benefits:** a) Increase in Demand Growth b) Increase in inflation among others.
- **Challenges:** a) It may lead to Hyperinflation b) Devaluation of currency among others.

6. Countercyclical Capital Buffer (CCyB)

News: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has deferred implementation of countercyclical capital buffers (CCyB). RBI had put in place the framework on countercyclical capital buffer (CCyB) in 2015.

Facts:

- **Capital Buffers:**
 - These are mandatory capital (Common Equity Tier 1 capital) that financial institutions are required to hold above the prescribed regulatory minimum.
 - They were mandated under the Basel III regulatory reforms.
 - Significance: It increases the resilience of banks to losses, restricts the distribution of capital.
- **Capital conservation buffer:**
 - It is the additional layer of usable capital that banks should build in favourable economic conditions so that they can be drawn down when losses are incurred.
 - In India, CCB would be 2.5 percentage points over and above the minimum capital requirement which is 9%.
- **Countercyclical Capital Buffer:** It creates an additional buffer of Common Equity Tier 1 capital during periods of excessive credit growth. The aim is to improve the resilience of the banking sector and reduce the possibility of a financial crisis outbreak.

Additional Facts:

- **Basel III norms:** It is an internationally agreed set of measures developed by the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS) in response to the financial crisis of 2007-09. The measures aim to strengthen the regulation, supervision and risk management of banks.
- **Types of Capital**
 - **Tier 1 capital:** It is a bank's core capital. It includes disclosed reserves that appear on the bank's financial statements and equity capital. This money is the funds a bank uses to function on a regular basis and forms the basis of a financial institution's strength.
 - **Tier 2 capital:** It is a bank's supplementary capital. Undisclosed reserves, subordinated term debts, hybrid financial products, and other items make up these funds.
 - **Tier 3 capital:** It is tertiary capital, which many banks hold to support their market risk, commodities risk, and foreign currency risk, derived from trading activities.

7. West Texas Intermediate (WTI)

News: The United States oil markets created history when the prices of West Texas Intermediate (WTI) fell to minus \$40.32 a barrel in interlay trade in New York.

Facts:

- West Texas Intermediate (WTI) is a specific grade of crude oil and one of the main three benchmarks in oil pricing along with Brent and Dubai Crude.
- It is sourced primarily from Texas and is one of the highest quality oils in the world which is easy to refine.
- This grade is described as light crude oil because of its relatively low density and sweet because of its low sulfur content.
- It is the underlying commodity of New York Mercantile Exchange's oil futures contracts.

Additional Facts:

- **Negative Oil Pricing:** It means the commodity producers are willing to pay purchasers to take oil off their hands amid fears that most storage facilities will run out of space.

8. International Financial Services Centres Authority

News: Government of India has notified the establishment of International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA).

Facts:

- IFSCA was established to regulate the financial services market in the International Financial Services Centres set up under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005.
- **Composition:** It consists of nine members: **a)** Chairperson **b)** members each from the RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, PFRDA **c)** two members from the Ministry of Finance and **d)** two other members appointed on the recommendation of a Search Committee.
- **Tenure:** The members will have a term of three years subject to reappointment.
- **Functions:** It will regulate financial products such as securities, deposits or contracts of insurance, financial services and financial institutions which have been approved by an appropriate regulator in an IFSC.
- **Powers:** All powers exercisable by the respective financial sector regulatory (RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, and PFRDA) under the respective Acts can be exercised by the Authority in the IFSCs.

Additional Facts:

International Financial Services Centres (IFSC):

- An IFSC caters to customers outside the jurisdiction of the domestic economy. Such centres deal with flows of finance, financial products and services across borders.
- GIFT (Gujarat International Finance Tec-City) located in Gandhinagar is India's first International Financial Services Centre.

Environment

1. Uranium Contamination in Groundwater

News: A new study conducted by the University of Manchester and Mahavir Cancer Institute and Research Centre, Bihar has found uranium contaminating the groundwater in 10 districts of Bihar.

Facts:

- **Uranium:** It is a mildly radioactive, naturally occurring element that is commonly found in rocks, soil and water.
- **Uses:** a) fuel for nuclear power reactors for electricity generation b) manufacture of radioisotopes for medical applications c) nuclear science research among others.
- **Uranium acceptable limit:** World Health Organisation (WHO) has set 30 parts per billion as the provisional safe drinking water standard for uranium.
- **Reasons for Uranium Contamination:** a) Human factors such as groundwater-table decline b) interaction of the extracted uranium with other chemicals in the groundwater c) Water-rock interactions that cause the uranium to be extracted from those rocks among others.

2. Amendments to EIA Notification, 2006

News: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, has made an amendment to EIA Notification 2006 to fasten availability/production of various drugs against COVID-19.

Facts:

- All projects or activities in respect of bulk drugs and intermediates, manufactured for addressing various ailments, have been re-categorized from the existing Category 'A' to 'B2' category.
- Projects falling under Category B2 are exempted from requirement of collection of Baseline data, EIA Studies and public consultation.

Additional Facts:

Environment Impact Assessment (EIA)

- EIA is a process which studies all aspects of the environment and seeks to anticipate the impact (positive and/or negative) of a proposed project or development on the environment.
- EIA is mandatory under the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 for 29 categories of developmental activities involving investments of Rs. 50 crores and above.
- **Industrial Categorization:**
 - Industrial Sectors having Pollution Index score of 60 and above – Red category
 - Industrial Sectors having Pollution Index score of 41 to 59 – Orange category
 - Industrial Sectors having Pollution Index score of 21 to 40 – Green category
 - Industrial Sectors having Pollution Index score incl. & up to 20 – White category

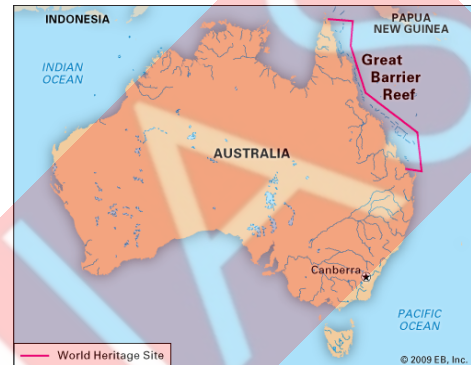
Note: The Pollution Index PI is a number from 0 to 100. Higher value of PI denotes the high degree of pollution load from the industrial sector. Pharmaceutical industry lies in the Red category.

3. Record sea temperatures cause third mass bleaching of Great Barrier Reef

News: Great Barrier Reef has suffered its most widespread coral bleaching on record.

Facts:

- Great Barrier Reef is the world's largest and longest coral reef system.
- It is located in the Coral Sea, off the coast of Queensland, Australia.
- It stretches for 2,300km from the tip of Cape York in the north to Bundaberg in the south in Australia.
- It is a World Heritage Area since 1981 (the world's first reef ecosystem to be recognised by UNESCO)



Additional Facts:

- **Corals:** They are small (0.25-12 inches), soft-bodied marine organisms that live in colonies called reefs that they build using a limestone skeleton (calicle) lying at their base.
- **Mass bleaching:** Mass bleaching is when the entire reef tracts or regions completely bleach. It occurs when sea temperatures rise 1-2° C above normal summer maximum temp. for an extended period and is accompanied by strong sunlight
- **Coral bleaching:** It occurs when corals lose the highly productive algae (termed zooxanthellae) from their tissues due to stress from high sea temperatures and solar radiation. Corals then turn white in colour.

4. Petersberg Climate Dialogue

News: The 11th session of 'Petersberg Climate Dialogue' was held for the first time through video conferencing.

Facts:

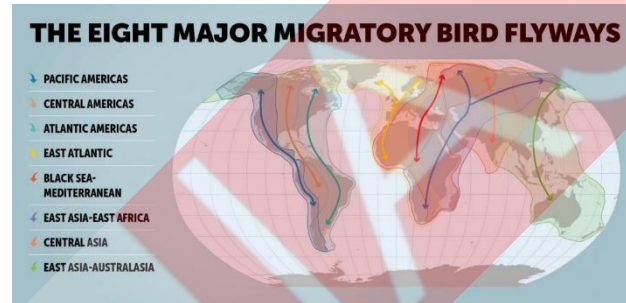
- Petersberg Climate Dialogue has been organized by the Government of Germany since 2010.
- **Aim:** To provide a forum for informal high-level political discussions, focusing both on international climate negotiations and the advancement of climate action.
- The 11th Dialogue was co-chaired by Germany and the United Kingdom, the incoming Presidency of 26th Conference of Parties (COP 26) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- Union Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Prakash Javadekar represented India in the virtual Dialogue.

5. Amur Falcon

News: The radio tagged Amur falcons have started to arrive in India for further destination to their breeding grounds in Northern China.

Facts:

- Amur falcons (*Falco amurensis*) are the world's longest travelling migratory raptors.
- They migrate annually during winter from their breeding grounds in Mongolia, South-east Russia and northern China to warmer South Africa through India and across the Arabian Sea.
- Doyang Lake in Nagaland is known as a stopover for the Amur falcons during their annual migration.
- **IUCN Status:** Least Concern
- It is also protected under the Indian Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 and the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) to which India is a signatory.
- Nagaland Government organises Amur Falcon festival to spread awareness about the need to provide safe passage to Amur falcons.



Additional Facts: India has three flyways (flight paths used by migratory birds): The Central Asian flyway, East Asian flyway and East Asian–Australasian flyway.

6. Explained: How the ozone layer hole over Arctic closed

News: European Union's Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service(CAMS) has announced that a hole in the Arctic ozone layer believed to be the biggest reported over the Arctic has closed.

Facts:

- **Ozone Hole:** It refers to a region in the stratosphere where the concentration of ozone becomes extremely low in certain months.
- **Reason for Ozone Hole:** Cold temperatures (below -80°C), sunlight, wind fields and substances such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) were responsible for the degradation of the Arctic ozone layer.
- **Closing of Ozone Hole:** Scientists believe that the closing of the hole is because of the polar vortex and not because of the lower pollution levels during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Additional Facts:**Ozone:**

- Ozone layer also called ozonosphere is a layer in the stratosphere lying between roughly 15 and 35 km above Earth's surface containing relatively high concentrations of ozone molecules(O_3).
- By absorbing the harmful ultraviolet radiations from the sun, the ozone molecules protect earth from harmful UV rays which can cause skin cancer and other diseases and deformities in plants and animals.

Polar Vortex:

- It is a large area of low pressure and cold air that surrounds the North pole. This air flows in a counter clockwise direction around the Arctic and helps keep the cold air in the North.
- The Polar vortex always exists near the poles but weakens in summer and strengthens in winter.
- Hence, during winter, the polar vortex at the North Pole expands, sending cold air southward with jet stream. This happens fairly regularly and is often associated with outbreaks of cold temperatures in the United States.

ForumIAS

Science and Technology

1. Feluda- Coronavirus Test

News: Scientists at the CSIR's Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) have developed a coronavirus test named Feluda.

Facts:

- Feluda is a low-cost paper strip test which can detect the presence of coronavirus within an hour.
- It uses the gene editing tool CRISPR-CAS9 to target and identify the genome sequences of the novel coronavirus in the samples of suspected individuals.

Additional Facts:

CRISPR-Cas9(Clustered Regularly Interspaced Palindromic Repeats):

- It is a tool used for gene editing. The technique involves a DNA cutting enzyme and a small tag which tells the enzyme where to cut.
- Cas9 stands for CRISPR-associated protein 9 and is the nuclease part that cuts the DNA.

2. TriboE masks

News: Researchers at the Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences(CeNS), Karnataka have developed TriboE masks which can hold electric charges to restrict the entry of infections without any external power.

Facts:

- The mask is based on electrostatics which works on the principles of triboelectric effect.
- The mask is a three-layered structure –a layer of nylon cloth sandwiched between polypropylene layers.
- When the layers are rubbed against each other, static electricity is produced which is expected to restrict the possible transmission of infections.

Additional Facts:

- **Triboelectric effect:** It is a type of contact electrification in which certain materials become electrically charged after they are separated from a different material with which they were in contact.
- **Example:** Rubbing of a plastic pen on a sleeve of almost any typical material like cotton, wool or blended fabric used in modern clothing. Such an electrified pen would readily attract and pick up pieces of paper less than a square centimetre when the pen approaches.

3. Sahyog App to bolster Arogya Setu app

News: The Department of Science and Technology (DST), has created an Integrated Geospatial Platform to help government agencies and healthcare professionals take vital decisions during the Covid-19 outbreak

Facts:

- The platform will have information on biomedical waste disposals, containment areas, available hospitals for Covid-19 cases, ICMR testing laboratories, and quarantine camps.
- Mobile app SAHYOG, prepared & managed by the Survey of India (SoI), has been customized to collect COVID-19 specific geospatial datasets. It will help collect location specific data with the help of community workers.
- SAHYOG will complement the “AAROGYA-SETU” mobile application.

Additional Facts:**Survey of India**

- Survey of India is the national survey and mapping organization of India. It functions under the Department of Science & Technology, Ministry of Science and Technology.
- It was set up in 1767 and is the oldest scientific department of India.
- It provides user focused, cost effective, and reliable and quality geospatial data, information and intelligence to meet the needs of national security, sustainable national development and information markets.

4. Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data

News: India has shared nine whole genome sequences of the coronavirus with the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID).

Facts:

- The Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID) Initiative was launched on the occasion of the 61st World Health Assembly in 2008.
- In 2010, Germany became the official host of the GISAID Initiative through a public private partnership.
- **Aim:** To promote international sharing of all influenza virus sequences related clinical and epidemiological data to understand how the viruses evolve, spread and potentially become pandemics.
- **Headquarters:** Munich, Germany.

Additional Facts:

- **Genome sequencing:** It is a technique that allows us to read and interpret genetic information found within DNA or RNA.

5. World Chagas Disease Day

News: World Chagas Disease Day is being celebrated for the **first** time on April 14,2020.

Facts:

- Chagas disease also known as American trypanosomiasis is caused by the protozoan parasite Trypanosoma cruzi (T. cruzi).
- It is classified as a neglected tropical disease (NTD) which means it mostly affects the poorest countries of the developing world.

- **Transmission:** The main route of transmission is through the insect called triatomine bug which carries the *Trypanosoma cruzi*.
- **Other routes of transmission:** oral transmission, blood transfusion, mother-to-child, organ transplantation transmissions or even laboratory accident transmission.
- **Distribution:** Mexico, Central America, and South America.
- **Symptoms:** a) Initial Phase: Purplish swelling of the lids of one eye, fever, difficulty in breathing among others
b) Later Phase: cardiac disorders, digestive problems, neurological or mixed alterations which can lead to sudden death.
- **Treatment:** It is curable if treatment is initiated soon after infection.

6. Pooled Testing

News: Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) issued an advisory for using pooled samples for testing of COVID-19.

Facts:

- Pooled testing, also known as group testing, is a procedure where individual specimens (e.g., urine or blood) are combined into a common pool.
- If the pooled test turns out to be positive, individual samples are tested- pool de-convolution. If there's no positive result, all individual samples in the pool are regarded as negative.

Significance:

- Helps to reduce the cost of screening a large number of individuals for infectious diseases.
- Can also help in tracing asymptomatic cases of the disease, thereby tracking community transmission.

7. CollabCAD Network

News: Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog and National Informatics Centre(NIC) have jointly launched Collaborative CAD Software(CollabCAD).

Facts:

- **Aim:** To provide a platform to students of Atal Tinkering Labs(ATLs) across the country to create and modify 3d designs with free flow of creativity and imagination.
- **CollabCAD:** It is a collaborative network, computer-enabled software system providing a total engineering solution from 2D drafting & detailing to 3D product design.

Additional Facts:

Tinker from Home Campaign: It is an initiative of Atal Tinkering labs program which aims to harness the creativity and innovativeness of Children by encouraging them to learn online through self-initiation.

Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL):

- They have been established under the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).

- **Aim:** To foster curiosity, creativity and imagination in young minds and inculcate skills such as design mindset, computational thinking, adaptive learning, physical computing etc.
- **Funding:** AIM will provide grant-in-aid that includes a one-time establishment cost of Rs.10 lakh and operational expenses of Rs.10 lakh for a maximum period of 5 years to each ATL.
- **Eligibility:** Schools (minimum Grade VI – X) managed by Government, local body or private trusts/society can set up ATL.

8. Primordial Black Holes

News: Recently, researchers from Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA) have studied primordial black holes (PBH).

Facts:

- Primordial blackholes are hypothetical objects that formed just seconds after the Big Bang during the radiation dominated era.
- **Significance:** They are considered principal candidates in explaining the nature of dark matter.

Additional Facts:

- **Dark Matter:** Dark matter is a form of matter thought to be non-baryonic (not composed primarily of baryons- protons, neutrons and all the objects composed of them) in nature. They are possibly composed of some as-yet undiscovered subatomic particles. They thought to account for approximately 85% of the matter in the universe and about 25% of its total energy density.
- **Black Hole:** A black hole is a region of space which consists of a huge amount of matter packed densely into a small area, giving it an immense gravitational pull. Even light cannot pass through a black hole. Black holes are thought to be formed when very massive stars collapse at the end of their life cycle.

9. NASA announces SUNRISE Mission

News: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has announced the Sun Radio Interferometer Space Experiment (SunRISE) Mission.

Facts:

- **Objective:** To study how the Sun generates and releases solar particle storms into planetary space.
- SunRISE contains six CubeSats which will observe radio images of low-frequency emission from solar activity and create 3D maps to locate the origin place of a solar particle storm on the Sun.
- **Significance:** understanding of the solar system and safeguard astronauts from solar storms during interplanetary travel.

Additional Facts:

Solar storms: Also called geomagnetic storms, they're caused by disturbances in the Sun that send charged particles into space.

10. What is Geo-fencing?

News: The Government of India has planned to use the 'Geo-Fencing App' to locate quarantine violators.

Facts:

- **Geo-fencing:** It is a location-based service which uses GPS, RFID, Wi-Fi or cellular data to trigger a pre-programmed action when a person or device enters or exits a virtual boundary set up around a geographical location known as a geofence.
- **Authorisation:** Section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 authorises State or Centre to access information of a user's phone data in case of occurrence of any public emergency or in the interest of public safety.

Additional Facts:

- **Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID):** It is the use of radio waves to read and capture information stored on a tag attached to an object. A tag can be read from up to several feet away and does not need to be within the direct line-of-sight of the reader to be tracked.
- **Wi-Fi:** It is a radio transmission technology that allows digital devices to use high-speed internet without direct cable connections.
- **Global Positioning System (GPS):** It is a U.S.-owned satellite-based radio navigation system that provides users with positioning, navigation, and timing (PNT) services.

11. GRACE-FO Mission

News: NASA has released new global maps mapping groundwater, soil wetness using GRACE-FO mission satellites.

Facts:

- The Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment Follow-On (GRACE-FO) mission was launched in 2018. It is a successor to the original GRACE mission which orbited Earth from 2002-2017.
- **Bodies involved:** It is a partnership project between NASA and the German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ).
- **Objective:** To map Earth's gravity field every 30 days in order to monitor changes in underground water storage, the amount of water in lakes, soil moisture, ice sheets, glaciers and sea level.

12. COVID-19: Scientific initiatives and Organizations in News

Intensification of Research in High Priority Area (IRPHA) scheme:

- It was launched by the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) to support projects in high priority areas from the viewpoint of advances in fundamental science.

Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB):

- It is a statutory body established through an Act of Parliament in 2008.
- It is chaired by the Secretary to the Department of Science and Technology and has other senior government officials and eminent scientists as members.
- **Aim:** To promote basic research in science and engineering and to provide financial assistance to scientists, academic institutions and other agencies for such research.

National Innovation Foundation (NIF):

- It was set up in 2000 as an autonomous body under the Department of Science and Technology.
- **Aim:** To help India become a creative and knowledge-based society by expanding policy and institutional space for grassroots technological innovators.
- **Situated at:** Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Initiatives by NIF:

- **INSPIRE Award – MANAK:** It is being executed by the Department of Science & Technology and NIF to motivate school children in the group of 10-15 years and studying in classes 6 to 10 for original ideas/ innovations rooted in science and societal applications.
- **Micro Venture Innovation Fund (MVIF):** It was established by NIF with support from Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to provide risk capital to innovation based enterprise projects.
- **IGNITE:** It is an annual competition for student's ideas and innovations conducted by NIF in partnership with the Central Board of Secondary Education(CBSE).

13. What is cytokine storm?

News: Several infected patients are developing severe COVID-19 because of an overreaction of their immune systems which triggers what is known as a cytokine storm syndrome(CSS).

Facts:

- **Cytokine Storm:** It occurs when the body's immune system overreacts to an intruder such as a virus by producing high levels of cytokines.
- However, overproduction of cytokines can be harmful as it can attack healthy tissues as well.
- **Symptoms:** High fever, inflammation (redness and swelling), severe fatigue and nausea.

Additional Facts:

- **Cytokines:** They are a large group of proteins, peptides or glycoproteins that are secreted by specific cells of the immune system to mediate and regulate immunity and inflammation response.
- **Immune System:** It is a complex network of cells, organs and tissues that work in tandem to protect the body from infection.

14. Rapid Test

News: Kerala government has announced 'rapid test' to tackle the suspicion of whether the novel coronavirus has spread into the community.

Facts:

- A rapid test is a speedy test conducted to detect the presence of antibodies in blood, serum or plasma samples indicating a viral infection. It is conducted usually to check for community transmission of a virus during an epidemic.
- Difference between the two tests involved in detecting Covid-19 is given below:

Differences	Swab test (PCR)	Blood test (antibody)
Biggest difference	Can detect early and onset infection with most accuracy	Quicker to get results, not as sensitive as PCR test for early infection
How does it work?	Directly detects the presence of the virus' genetic material (RNA)	Indirectly detects the virus by measuring our body immune response (IgM, IgG) to the virus
Sample needed	Nasopharyngeal (nose/throat) swab, could be uncomfortable	2-3 drops of blood using finger prick
Time to get result	Typically a few days or week (if sent to a lab), or less than an hour (rapid test)	In an hour or less (rapid test)

15. Hubble Marks 30 Years in Space and releases picture of Cosmic Reef

News: Hubble Space Telescope captured picture of NGC 2014 and NGC 2020. The picture has been dubbed as Cosmic Reef

Facts:

- Giant red nebula (called NGC 2014) and a smaller blue nebula (called NGC 2020) are part of a star-forming complex located in the Large Magellanic Cloud.
- The structure is often called the Cosmic Reef because of coral-like appearance.

Hubble Space Telescope

- It is a space-borne observatory and is part of NASA's "Great Observatories. It was deployed in 1990.
- It was built by NASA with contributions from the European Space Agency. It is the largest optical telescope ever launched into space.

Additional Facts:

Nebula:

- It is a giant cloud of dust and gas in space.
- Some nebulae come from the gas and dust thrown out by the explosion of a dying star, such as a supernova.
- Other nebulae are regions where new stars are beginning to form. For this reason, they are also called "star nurseries."

NASA's series of Great Observatories satellites:

- They are four large, powerful space-based astronomical telescopes.
- The telescopes other than Hubble Space Telescope, are Spitzer Space Telescope, Compton Gamma Ray Observatory, and the Chandra X-ray Observatory.

Security

1. Maze ransomware

News: Cognizant, an IT services provider, has said that it has faced a **Maze** ransomware attack that has caused disruptions to its clients.

Facts:

- Maze Ransomware infects computers it finds, encrypts data and demands payment (usually in cryptocurrency) in exchange for the safe recovery of encrypted data.
- The Maze ransomware was discovered in 2019 and has since increased its presence.

Additional Facts:

- **Malware (malicious software):** It refers to any kind of software that is designed to cause damage to a single computer, server or computer network.
- **Spyware:** It is a malware that functions by spying on user activity without their knowledge
- **Trojan horse:** It is a malware that disguises itself as a normal file or program to trick users into downloading and installing malware.
- **Virus:** It is malware that is capable of copying itself and spreading to other computers.

2. US Approves Sale of Military Hardware

News: The US State Department has approved the sale of missiles and torpedoes worth \$155 million to India.

Facts:

- **Harpoon Block II Missile:** It is an anti-ship missile capable of performing both land-strike and anti-ship missions. It would be integrated into the P-8I aircraft to conduct anti-surface warfare missions in defence of critical sea lanes.
- **MK 54 Torpedoes:** It will provide India the capability to conduct anti-submarine warfare missions.

Additional Facts:

- **P-8I Aircraft:** It is used by the Navy to enhance its capabilities for maritime coastal surveillance, Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) and Anti-Surface Vessel (ASV) strikes.
- **Torpedo:** It is a cigar-shaped, self-propelled underwater missile launched from a submarine or warships for destroying other surface vessels and submarines.
- **Submarine:** It is a warship that can remain submerged and navigate underwater for a stipulated period of time. They are usually built for warfare and armed with torpedoes or guided missiles.

Social

1. Government launches the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India

News: Ministry of Culture launched National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of India

Facts:

- **Aim:** To raise awareness about the various intangible cultural heritage elements from different states of India at national and international level and ensure their protection.
- **Classification- based on criteria set by UNESCO:**
 - Oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;
 - Performing arts;
 - Social practices, rituals and festive events;
 - Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;
 - Traditional craftsmanship
- **Sanctioned:** under the scheme for ‘Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India’ formulated in 2013.
- Presently the list has more than 100 elements, including the 13 elements of India that have already been inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List.

Additional Facts:

- **Intangible cultural heritage:** It means the traditions or living expressions inherited from our ancestors and passed through generations as a way of life.
- **Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Heritage:** It was adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2003 and entered into force in 2006.
- **Intangible Cultural Heritages from India included in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**
 - Kutiyattam, the tradition of Vedic chanting, Ramlila, Ramman, Mudiyetu, Kalbelia folk songs and dances, Chauu Dance, Buddhist chanting of Ladakh, Sankritana, Craft of the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Nowruz, Yoga, and Kumbh Mela.

2. Jyotiba Phule

News: The Vice President of India has paid homage to Jyotiba Phule on the occasion of Phule’s Jayanti.

Facts:

- Mahatma Jyotirao Govindrao Phule also known as Jyotiba Phule was an Indian social activist, thinker, anti-caste social reformer and writer from Maharashtra.

Contributions:

- **Female Education:** Jyotiba Phule and his wife, Savitribai Phule were pioneers of women education in India as they started the first school for girls in 1848 in Pune.
- **Satyashodhak Samaj (Truth Seekers Society):** It was founded in 1873 with the main aim of a) Social Service and b) to give education to the lower castes and make them aware of the exploiting tradition of society.
- **Dalit word:** He introduced the Marathi word dalit (broken, crushed) as a descriptor for those people who were outside the traditional varna system. The terminology was later popularised in the 1970s by the Dalit Panthers.
- **Published works:** a) Tritiya Ratna b) Gulamgiri c) Manav Mahammand (Muhammad) among others.

Additional Facts:

Deenbandhu: It was a weekly Marathi-language newspaper founded by Krishnarao Pandurang Bhalekar in 1877 which served as an outlet for Jyotirao Phule's Satyashodhak Samaj.

3. Ambedkar Jayanti

News: On 14 April 2019, the birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has been celebrated.

Facts:

- B.R. Ambedkar was born on 14 April 1891 in Mhow, Central Province (now Madhya Pradesh).
- He was India's first Law Minister and was Chairman of the Drafting Committee for the new Constitution.

Contributions:

- **Mahad Satyagraha:** It was led by B. R Ambedkar in 1927 to allow the untouchables to use water in a public tank in Mahad, Maharashtra.
- He participated in all three round-table conferences.
- **Poona Pact:** In 1932, Ambedkar agreed on Poona pact with Mahatma Gandhi and an agreement was signed between Ambedkar and Madan Mohan Malviya which abandoned the idea of separate electorates for the depressed classes (Communal Award).
- **Organisations** – Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha (1923), Independent Labor Party (1936), Scheduled Castes Federation (1942).
- **Books** – Annihilation of Caste, Buddha Or Karl Marx, Buddha and His Dhamma, who were the Shudras, The Rise and Fall of Hindu Women among others.
- **Journals** – Mooknayak, Bahishkrit Bharat, Samatha, Equality Janata among others.

Additional Facts:**Panchteerath:**

- The Indian Government has decided to develop five places as Panchteerth in honour of Dr. B R Ambedkar.
- Panchteerath include **a)** Amedbkar's birthplace in Mhow **b)** The place in London where he stayed while studying in the UK **c)** Deeksha Bhoomi in Nagpur, where he took education **d)** Mahaparinirvan Sthal in Delhi and **e)** Chaitya Bhoomi in Mumbai.

4. Tablighi Jamaat

News: Several people have tested positive for COVID-19 from among 4,000 who had gathered in Delhi's Markaz Nizamuddin, the headquarters of the Tablighi Jamaat.

Facts:

- **Tablighi Jamaat:** It is a conservative Muslim organisation which aims to reach out to ordinary Muslims and revive their faith particularly in matters of ritual, dress and personal behaviour.
- **Origin:** Launched by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas in 1926 in Mewat (Haryana) with its roots in the Deobandi version

Additional Facts:

Deoband Movement:

- It was a revivalist movement founded in 1867 by Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi.
- **Aim:** To propagate pure teachings of Quran and Hadis among Muslims and to keep alive the spirit of Jihad against the foreign rulers.

Aligarh Movement:

- It was a reformist movement founded by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan.
- **Aim:** To reform social, political and educational aspects of the Muslim community.
- He founded the Mohammedan Anglo Oriental College (Aligarh Muslim University) in 1875.
- **Journal:** Tahdhib-ul-Akhlaq.

5. Who are Nihangs?

News: In Punjab, a group of Nihangs attacked police personnel in the wake of lockdown due to Coronavirus pandemic.

Facts:

- **Nihang:** It is an order of Sikh warriors characterised by blue robes, antiquated arms and decorated turbans.
- **Origin:** They are believed to have originated either from Akali Dal started by Guru Hargobind or from Fateh Singh and the attire he wore.
- **Significance:** They had a major role in defending the Sikh panth after the fall of the first Sikh rule (1710-15) when Mughals were killing Sikhs and during the onslaught of Afghan invader Ahmed Shah Durrani (1748-65).

Additional Facts:

Sikh Reform Movements:

- **Singh Sabha movement:** It began in 1873 in Amritsar with the aim a) to make available modern education to Sikhs and b) to counter the proselytising activities of Christians, Hindu reform movements and Muslim Maulvis.
- **Akali movement:** It was a campaign which began during the early 1920s to liberate Sikh gurdwaras from the control of the Udasi Mahants (the post having become hereditary) who were loyalists to the British Government.

6. Basava Jayanthi

News: The Prime minister has greeted the people on the occasion of Basava Jayanthi, the Birth anniversary of Lord Basaveshwara.

Facts:

- Basavanna was a 12th-century philosopher, founding saint of the Lingayat sect, Kannada poet and social reformer during the reign of the Kalachuri-dynasty king Bijjala I in Karnataka.

Contributions:

- He rejected gender or social discrimination, superstitions and rituals by advocating that every human being was equal, irrespective of caste and that all forms of manual labour was equally important.
- **Anubhava Mantapa (hall of spiritual experience):** It was a public institution founded by Basavana to welcome men and women from all socio-economic backgrounds to discuss spiritual and mundane questions of life in open.
- **Literary works:** He spread social awareness through poetry (Vachanas) such as Shat-sthala-vachana (discourses of the six stages of salvation), Kala-jnana-vachana (forecasts of the future) and Mantra-gopya.
- He is known for introducing the **Ishtalinga** (a necklace with a pendant that contains a small Shiva Linga).

Recognition:

- He was the first Kannadiga in whose honour a commemorative coin has been minted in recognition of his social reforms.
- In 2015, Indian Prime Minister inaugurated his statue along the bank of the river Thames at Lambeth, London.

7. Jharkhand's Chhau dancers and artisans take a battle stance against COVID-19

News: In Jharkhand, Chhau Dancers are making traditional masks to fight against COVID-19 instead of celebrating chhau Dance.

Facts:

- Chhau dance is a martial folk-dance tradition from eastern India that enacts episodes from epics including the Mahabharata and Ramayana, local folklore and abstract themes.
- **Types:** Its three distinct styles hail from the regions of Seraikella (Jharkhand), Purulia (West Bengal) and Mayurbhanj (Odisha), the first two using masks.
- **Origin:** indigenous forms of dance and martial practices. It is also intimately connected to regional festivals notably the spring festival Chaitra Parva.
- **Features:** The dance is performed at night in an open space to traditional and folk melodies played on the reed pipes mohuri and shehnai.
- In 2010, it was inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

8. Raja Ravi Varma, the painter who helped Indians bring their gods home

News: 29th April is the birth anniversary of the famed Indian Painter Raja Ravi Varma (1848-1906).

Facts:

- Raja Ravi Varma was born in Travancore (Kerala). He was patronised by Ayilyam Thirunal, the then ruler of Travancore.

Contributions:

- He is remembered for giving Indians their western, classical representations of Hindu gods and goddesses.
- He gave birth to affordable sacred images that can be found in puja rooms, public spaces and homes.
- He was one of the first Indian artists to use oil paints and to master the art of lithographic reproduction of his work.
- In 1904, the British colonial government awarded Varma with the Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal.
- **Famous works:** Damayanti Talking to a Swan, Shakuntala Looking for Dushyanta, Nair Lady Adorning Her Hair, Shantanu and Matsyagandha.

Achievements:

- In 1873, the painting of Nair Lady Adorning Her Hair won the Governor's Gold Medal when it was presented in the Madras Presidency.
- In 1904, the British colonial government awarded Varma with the Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal.
- In 2013, a crater on the planet Mercury was named in his honour.

Miscellaneous

1. Lebanon legalises marijuana cultivation for medicinal use

News: Lebanon has become the first Arab country to legalise Marijuana Cultivation for medical and industrial purposes.

Facts:

- Marijuana is a psychoactive drug from the Cannabis plant used for medical, recreational & religious purposes.
- According to the United Nations, Lebanon is the third largest supplier of cannabis in the world after Morocco and Afghanistan.
- Further, there are two other regions namely Golden Triangle and the Golden Crescent which are known for use of cannabis plants in opium production.



Lebanon:

- Lebanon is a country in Western Asia. It is bordered by Syria to the north and east and Israel to the south while Cyprus is west across the Mediterranean Sea.

Additional Facts:

- **Golden Crescent:** It is located in Southwest Asia and consists of three contiguous countries of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran.
- **Golden Triangle:** It is located in Southeast Asia comprising three contiguous countries of Laos, Thailand and Myanmar.

2. Global Report on Food Crises 2020

News: The Global Report on Food Crises 2020 has been released by the Global Network against Food Crises.

Facts:

- **Aim:** To provide an analysis of the drivers that are contributing to food crises across the globe and examines how the COVID-19 pandemic might contribute to their perpetuation or deterioration.

Additional Facts:

Global Network against Food Crises:

- It was launched by European Union, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) during the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS).
- **Aim:** To combat food crises from humanitarian and development perspectives and tackle its root causes by promoting coordination among stakeholders and by projects implementation.

3. Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)

News: The Indian Council for Cultural Relations(ICCR) is celebrating its 70th Foundation Day.

Facts:

- The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) is an autonomous body under the administrative control of the Ministry of External Affairs.
- It was founded in 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad who was the first Education Minister of independent India.
- **Objectives:** a) formulate and implement policies and programmes pertaining to India's external cultural relations b) strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries and c) promote cultural exchanges with other countries and people and to develop relations with nations.
- ICCR has also been assigned the responsibility of facilitating the celebration of the International Day of Yoga by Indian Missions/Posts abroad since 2015.

4. Spring Harvest Festivals in India

News: Vaisakhi, Vishu, Rongali Bihu, Naba Barsha, Vaisakhadi and Puthandu Pirappu celebrated across India

Facts

<i>Festival</i>	<i>State</i>
Puthandu	Tamil Nadu
Poila Boishakh	West Bengal
Vishu	Kerala
Bikhoti	Uttarakhand
Jurshital	Bihar
Mahabishuva/Pana Sankranti	Odisha
Rongali Bihu	Assam

5. 6 theme-based microsities to promote tourism spots

News: Kerala has put forward six theme-based microsities in the official website to promote destination and tourism products.

Facts:

- **Aim:** To boost tourism post COVID-19 pandemic

- **Featured Microsites:** Ayurveda, Yoga, Kalaripayattu (an ancient martial art indigenous to Kerala), Temples of Kerala, Judaism in Kerala and Discovering Malabar

Additional Facts:

Iconic Tourist Sites Initiative

- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Tourism.
- **Aim:** To develop the selected sites into world-class tourist destinations to serve as a model for other tourism sites.
- **Selected Sites:** Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri (Uttar Pradesh), Ajanta & Ellora (Maharashtra), Humayun's Tomb, Red Fort and Qutub Minar (Delhi), Colva (Goa), Ajmer Fort (Rajasthan), Somnath and Dholavira (Gujarat), Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh), Hampi (Karnataka), Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu), Kaziranga (Assam), Kumarakom (Kerala) and Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar).

6. Darbar Move

News: For the first time in 144 years, the Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) administration has decided to halt the 'Darbar move' due to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

Facts:

- **Darbar move:** It is the name for the bi-annual shift of the secretariat and all other government offices in J&K from Srinagar (state's summer capital) to Jammu (state's winter capital).
- **Duration:** The secretariat is located in Srinagar from May to October and in Jammu from November to April.
- **Origin:** The practice was started by Dogra King Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1872 to escape extreme weather conditions in these places.

7. World Economic Outlook

News: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has released the World Economic Outlook Report.

Facts:

- The report is published twice a year.
- **Aim:** To provide analysis and forecasts of economic developments of member countries and highlights risks and uncertainty.

Additional Facts:

International Monetary Fund (IMF):

- It is an organization of 189 countries which seeks to ensure the stability of the International monetary system.
- **Headquarters:** Washington, US.
- **Other Reports:** a) Global Financial Stability Report and b) Fiscal Monitor (FM).

8. Trade and Development Report

News: The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development(UNCTAD) has released its updated Trade and Development Report.

Facts:

- The Trade and Development Report (TDR) is issued every year since 1981.
- **Aim:** To analyse current economic trends and major policy issues of international concern and make suggestions for addressing these issues at various levels.

Additional Facts:

UNCTAD:

- It is a permanent intergovernmental body established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1964.
- It is part of the UN Secretariat and also the United Nations Development Group(UNDP).
- It reports to the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council but has its own membership, leadership, and budget.
- **Headquarters:** Geneva, Switzerland
- **Reports:**
 - The Trade and Development Report
 - The World Investment Report
 - Technology and Innovation Report
 - Digital Economy Report

Pointly

1. **Global Education Coalition (GEC):** The Global Education Coalition has been launched by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization(UNESCO). It aims to facilitate inclusive learning opportunities for children and youth during this period of sudden and unprecedented educational disruption.
2. **Anthurium:** National Innovation Foundation-India has facilitated mass multiplication and large scale production of Anthurium, which is one of the best domestic flowering plants in the world. It is known to purify the surrounding air and remove harmful airborne chemicals like formaldehyde, ammonia, toluene, xylene and allergens.
3. **Khongjom Day:** Manipur government has commemorated ‘ Khongjom Day’ at Khongjom War Memorial Complex. It is marked to pay tribute to the warriors who fought in the 1891 Anglo-Manipur war. The battle was fought at Kheba hills of Khongjom in Manipur which resulted in the victory of British.
4. **International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace:** is celebrated every year on 24th April. This day was established by the UN through a resolution in 2018 and was first observed in 2019.
5. **NOOR:** It is Iran’s first military satellite.
6. **World Press Freedom Index 2020:** has been released by the Reporters Without Borders(RSF). It ranks 180 countries based on following parameters a) pluralism, b) media independence c) environment and self-censorship d) legislative framework e) Transparency f) Infrastructure and g) Abuses. India ranked at 142.
7. **COVID India Seva:** It is an interactive e-governance platform launched for establishing a direct channel of communication via twitter between the government and citizens by providing real time solutions to COVID-19 related queries. Launched by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
8. **Saiyam app :** The mobile application Saiyam has been developed by the Pune Municipal Corporation under the Smart Cities Mission. It aims to effectively track the home-quarantined citizens and ensure that they are staying in the home.
9. **Milk Tea Alliance:** It is a term used to describe an online democratic solidarity movement made up of social media users from Thailand, Hong Kong and Taiwan against the authoritarianism of the Chinese Government and its supporters.
10. **World Earth Day:** is celebrated every year on 22nd April. The activities on Earth Day are led and coordinated by Earth Day Network. It is a US based international environmental NGO and has presence in 195 countries. The theme for 2020 is Climate Action.
11. **Trimeresurus salazar:** It is a new species of green pit viper discovered in the Pakke Tiger Reserve in Arunachal Pradesh. It lies in the Eastern Himalayas of Arunachal Pradesh surrounded by the Nameri National Park of Assam in the south, Pakke River to the east and Kameng River to the west.
12. **‘Assess Koro Na’ app :** It has been launched in COVID-19 containment zone in Delhi for conducting door-to-door surveys. With this app, the data collected can be uploaded on the servers in real-time and immediately analyse.

13. **Krishi Rath app:** The application has been developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC). It aims to facilitate farmers and traders in searching transport vehicles for movement of Agriculture and Horticulture produce to Mandis.
14. **Thrissur Pooram festival:** has been cancelled for the first time due to Coronavirus pandemic. Also known as the mother of all festivals, it is a seven day annual Hindu festival conducted in Kerala. It was started in the 18th Century by Sakthan Thampuran, the Maharaja of erstwhile Kochi.
15. **ASEAN Special Summit :** Vietnam is chairing a Special Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit via video-conference due to Coronavirus pandemic.
16. **Journalism Emergency Relief Fund :** Google has launched a global Journalism Emergency Relief Fund. It aims to support small and medium-sized news organizations producing original news for local communities in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.
17. **COVSACK :** COVID Sample Collection Kiosk(COVSACK) has been developed by DRDO. It can be used by healthcare workers to collect the samples from suspected Coronavirus patients without the need for change of Personal Protective Equipment(PPE) as the kiosk gets automatically disinfected without the need for human involvement making the process free of infection spread.
18. **JUICE Mission :** European Space Agency has announced its plan to launch JUPITER ICy moons Explorer(JUICE) mission by 2022. It aims to spend at least three years making detailed observations of the giant gaseous planet Jupiter and three of its largest moons, Ganymede, Callisto and Europa.
19. **Meru Jatra Festival :** Odisha's Ganjam district administration has banned the Meru Jatra festival and congregations due to Covid-19. Meru Jatra marks the end of the 21-day-long festival of penance named 'Danda Nata'.
20. **Danda Nata Festival :** is a 21-day long seasonal folk dance festival that is celebrated in the month of 'Chaitra' in Odisha. During the festival, people who participate in the festival(Danduas) undergo self-inflicted pain to pay their obeisance to the lord Kali. It is also a form of worshipping the lord Shiva and his consort Parvati.
21. **"Dekho Apna Desh" webinar series :** Ministry of Tourism launched "DekhoApnaDesh" webinar series. The webinar series will provide information on different destinations and the culture and heritage of India.
22. **CovidGyan :** Ministry of Science and Technology launched CovidGyan. It is a science based website for information on Covid-19 that aims to fight misinformation around coronavirus disease and generate public awareness. It is developed by Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Indian Institute of Science (IISc), and Tata Memorial Centre (TMC).
23. **Wormivet :** Wormivet is an indigenous herbal medicine(dewormer) developed by the National Innovation Foundation(NIF), an autonomous body under the Department of Science and Technology.It can be used by livestock owners as an alternative to chemical methods for the treatment of endoparasite worms in livestock.
24. **Anak Krakatau :** Anak Krakatau volcano witnessed the longest eruption since its explosive collapse in 2018. Anak Krakatau Island is a caldera situated in the Sunda Strait between the islands of Java and Sumatra in Indonesia. It first appeared in 1927 and has been growing ever since. It is part of the Ujung Kulon National Park, listed in UNESCO's World Heritage site.

25. **Bharat Padhe Online Campaign :** The Ministry of Human Resource Development(MHRD) has launched a 'Bharat Padhe Online' campaign. It aims to invite experts from across India to share suggestions or solutions to overcome the challenges and constraints of online education while promoting the existing digital education platforms.
26. **Operation Shield :** Operation Shield has been announced by the Delhi Government to fight against Coronavirus. Under this,a six pronged strategy "SHIELD" has been prepared which stands for a) sealing b) home quarantine c) isolation and tracing d) essential supply e) local sanitation and f) door-to-door checks.
27. **Lifeline Udan :** Under the Lifeline Udan initiative, 167 flights have transported over 248 tonnes of essential medical supplies across the country during Covid-19 lockdown. Lifeline Udan is a government initiative for air transport of medical cargo and essential supplies across India at the time of the Covid-19 crisis. It has been launched by Ministry of Civil Aviation
28. **SAFE PLUS Scheme :** The Small Industries Development Bank of India(SIDBI) has launched the SIDBI Assistance to Facilitate Emergency response against Coronavirus (SAFE PLUS) Scheme. It aims to provide financial assistance of up to Rs 1 crore to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises(MSMEs) that are involved in making essential items to combat COVID-19 pandemic.
29. **Patriot air defence missile:** The United States has deployed Patriot air defence missiles in Iraq. It is a long-range, all-altitude, all-weather air defence system to counter tactical ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and advanced aircraft.
30. **Cluster Transmission:** It is defined as an aggregation of cases of an infection in an identifiable subpopulation. The word 'cases' in the definition stands for people with similar symptoms and 'subpopulation' points to those who share or belong to the same space, time, family or workplace.
31. **Shukrayaan-1 Mission:** Scheduled to be launched in 2023, Shukrayaan-1 is a proposed mission of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) which seeks to study the surface and atmosphere of Venus.
32. **World Health Day:** World Health Day is celebrated every year on 7th April since 1950 to mark the establishment of the World Health Organization (WHO) **2020 Theme** is "Support nurses and midwives". 2020 has also been designated by the World Health Assembly as the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife
33. **SnowEx Programme:** Launched by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA, in 2016, it is a five year programme which seeks to address the most important gaps in snow remote sensing knowledge and thus lay the groundwork for a future snow satellite mission. The geographical focus of the programme is proposed as the North America region.
34. **Madhuvan Gajar:** A farmer Scientist from Gujarat has been awarded Padma Shri for developing Madhuvan Gajar- a biofortified carrot variety.
35. **World Creativity and Innovation Day:** was celebrated on the 21st April. It was started by the United Nations(UN) in 2018. It aims to raise awareness around the importance of creativity and innovation in problem solving with respect to advancing the United Nations sustainable development goals.
36. **Centre for Augmenting WAR with COVID-19 Health Crisis(CAWACH):** Setup by Department of Science and Technology(DST), it aims to evaluate and support the innovations and start-ups that address COVID-19

challenges. It will be implemented by Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SINE), a technology business incubator at IIT Bombay supported by DST.

37. **Covid Warriors:** It is an online datapool of human resources containing information on available healthcare professionals and volunteers at state and district level.
38. **Consumer- farm (Confarm) Initiative:** It was started in 2018 in Telangana by Deccan Development Society (DDS) and Disha Collective. Under this, consumers support a group of farmers in the beginning of a farming season with about Rs 12,500 per acre for their farming needs. In return, at the time of harvest, consumers are given products according to the value they invested leaving the middlemen out.
39. **Young India Combating COVID with Knowledge, Technology and Innovation (YUKTI) Portal:** Launched by the Ministry of Human Resources Development, the portal aims to monitor and record the initiatives of MHRD which have been taken in the wake of COVID-19.
40. **Science and Technology of Yoga and Meditation(SATYAM) programme:** It was launched by the Department of Science and Technology(DST) under its Cognitive Science Research Initiative(CSRI) in 2015. It aims to foster scientific research on the effects of yoga and meditation on physical & mental health and on cognitive functioning in people.
41. **Equitable access to vaccines:** The UNGA adopted the International cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19. it calls for equitable, efficient and timely access to any future vaccines developed to fight coronavirus.
42. **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation(OIC):** OIC requests Indian government to protect Muslim minorities in the counrrt. Established in 1969, OIC is the second largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations. It aims to work as a collective voice of the Muslim world by safeguarding the interests of the muslims. It has 57 member states and is headquartered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.
43. **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme:** Ministry of External Affairs will launch a training programme on management of coronavirus pandemic for healthcare professionals from SAARC countries under the ITEC programme. Instituted in 1964, ITEC programme is a bilateral assistance programme which focuses on addressing the needs of developing countries through innovative technological cooperation between India and the partnering nation.
44. **Myristica swamps:** Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI) launched a project for the restoration and conservation of Myristica swamps. These are a type of freshwater swamp forests predominantly composed of species Myristica, the most primitive of the flowering plants on earth. They are found in Western Ghats of India.
45. **Cyclone Harold:** It is a tropical cyclone that affected Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji, and Tonga in April 2020
46. **Dhauladhar range:** A part of a lesser Himalayan chain of mountains, it rises from the Indian plains to the north of Kangra and Mandi in Himachal Pradesh and ends near Badrinath, Uttarakhand. Its highest peak is Hanuman Tibba.
47. **Technology Development Board(TDB):** TDB will fund Mylab Discovery Solutions to develop Covid-19 kits. TDB is a statutory body established in 1996 under the Technology Development Board Act,1995. It functions

under the Ministry of Science and Technology. It aims to promote development and commercialization of indigenous technology and adaptation of imported technology

48. **World Wide Help(WWH):** It is a platform developed by IIT Bombay to connect people seeking medical help with helpers such as doctors.
49. **GoCoronaGo:** It is an app developed by Indian Institute of Science(IISc) to help identify people who may have crossed paths with COVID-19 suspects.
50. **Sampark-o-Meter:** It is an app developed by IIT Ropar students which can indicate areas on maps with maximum coronavirus infection possibility.
51. **Corontine:** It is an app developed by IIT Bombay to help the authorities in tracking the suspected asymptomatic patients of coronavirus if they leave their quarantine zone.
52. **Covid-19 Feedback:** It has been launched by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to gather information from users about any treatment or tests they may have gone through.
53. **Demo 2 Mission:** It is a part of NASA's Commercial Crew Program. It envisions sending a crew of two astronauts on a 14-day test mission to the International Space Station (ISS).
54. **Operation Sanjeevani:** Conducted by Indian Airforce with assistance from Indian Army, it aims to supply essential medicines and hospital consumables to Maldives.
55. **Mobile Viral Research Lab (MVRL):** Developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), it is the combination of a BSL 3 lab and a BSL 2 lab built as per WHO and ICMR Bio-safety standards
56. **Kasowal Bridge:** It connects Kasowal enclave in Punjab along the India – Pakistan border to the rest of India. It has been built under Project Chetak by Border Roads Organization (BRO)
57. **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime(UNODC):** Established in 1997 through a merger between the United Nations Drug Control Programme and the Centre for International Crime Prevention, it aims to assist Member States in addressing the issues of drugs, crime and terrorism.
58. **Matterhorn mountain:** The Matterhorn is a mountain of the Alps situated on the border of Switzerland and Italy. The tricolor was projected as solidarity towards the fight against Covid-19.
59. **United States Virgin Islands:** It is an unincorporated organized territory of the United States of America, located between the Caribbean Sea and the North Atlantic Ocean.
60. **Mobile Viral Research Lab:** Union Defence Minister inaugurated a Mobile Viral Research Lab (MVRL). It's been developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and is used to carry out diagnosis, drug screening, Convalescent plasma derived therapy, comprehensive immune profiling of COVID-19 patients. The lab is built as per WHO and ICMR BioSafety standards.
61. **World Day for Safety and Health at Work:** World Day for Safety and Health at Work is observed every year on 28th April by the International Labour Organization. The theme for 2020 is *Stop the Pandemic*
62. **Global Terrorism Index (GTI):** Published by Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)- an Australia-based think-tank, it provides a comprehensive summary of the key global trends and patterns in terrorism since 2000. In 2019, India was ranked the seventh worst terrorism affected country.

63. **Commodity Markets Outlook report:** It is published by the World Bank every year in the month of April and October. It provides market analysis for major commodity groups such as energy, metals, agriculture, precious metals, oil, fertilizers among others.
64. **UN75 Initiative:** Launched by the United Nations in 2019, it aims to build a global vision for the year 2045 by initiating a dialogue and action on how we can build a better world despite the many challenges we face
65. **Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator:** It is a Global Collaboration to speed up the development, production of COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines and ensure equal access to treatments for rich and poor. It is led by the World Health Organization.
66. **Migration and Development Brief:** It report is prepared by the Migration and Remittances Unit- the research and data arm of the World Bank. It is released twice a year. It provides an update on key developments in the area of migration and remittance flows and related policies over the past six months.
67. **Tianwen:** It is China's first Mars exploration mission to be launched in 2020. It aims to complete orbiting, landing and roving in one mission.
68. **Military Expenditure Database report:** It is released by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). Top five largest Military Spenders in 2019 were United States, China, India, Russia and Saudi Arabia
69. **Exercise Pitch Black:** It is a biennial multilateral air combat exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force(RAAF) since 1981. The Indian Air Force had taken part in the exercise for the first time in 2018.
70. **Ruhdaar:** It is a low-cost mechanical ventilator developed by a team from IIT Bombay, NIT Srinagar and Islamic University of Science & Technology (IUST), Jammu and Kashmir.
71. **Bill Lading:** is the key legal document in the global trade. It is issued by a carrier to a shipper that details the type, quantity, and destination of the goods being carried. The government planning to implement electronic Bill of Lading(eBL) to facilitate business continuity in the trade documentation process.
72. **eGram Swaraj:** It will provide panchayats a single interface to complete development projects. The app will help in accelerating projects in villages from planning to completion.
73. **Swamitva Yojana:** It will use drones in mapping of properties in villages. This will help in reducing disputes over property and help villagers to avail loans from banks.
74. **Transmission of Covid-19:** World Health Organization(WHO) recognises three stages of COVID-19 transmission — symptomatic (from a person while they are experiencing symptoms), presymptomatic (spreads the disease before symptoms appear) and asymptomatic (transmission of the virus from a person who does not develop any symptoms)

Static Syllabus Questions

Q.1) Consider the following statements about India in the 18th century:

1. India imported foreign goods on a large scale through European Companies.
2. The regional kingdoms that arose after the decline of the Mughals provided stable conditions for development of trade with the Europeans.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.2) In 1720, the British government enacted the Calico Act. What is it related to?

- a) Disallowing Indians from entering Civil Services
- b) Compulsory use of English language in Company affairs
- c) Banning the use of printed cotton textile imported from India.

Q.3) Consider the following statements regarding Bal Gangadhar Tilak:

1. He started the practice of using traditional religious festivals to propagate nationalist ideas.
2. He was opposed to bringing peasants into the national movement.

3. He organized a campaign for foreign cloth boycott.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.4) Consider the following statements regarding the Brahmo Sabha:

1. Its purpose was to purify Hinduism and to preach theism.
2. Tarachand Chakravarti was the first secretary of the Brahmo Sabha.
3. It was opposed to idolatry.
4. The new society was to be based on the Vedas only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.5) With respect to Swadesh Bandhab Samiti set up during the Swadeshi Movement, which of the following statements is correct?

- a) It was active in Chittagong.
- b) It was set up by Surya Sen.

- c) It was able to generate a mass following predominantly among the muslim peasantry of the region.
- d) It was set up only to spread the message of Swadeshi to the people.

Q.6) Consider the following statements about the Climate Action Network (CAN):

1. It is an intergovernmental body of African Nations.
2. It promotes individual action to limit human-induced climate change.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.7) Consider the following statements about the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD):

1. It is a legally binding international agreement.
2. National action programmes (NAPs) are the key instruments to implement the Convention.
3. It is committed to a centralised and national approach in combating desertification.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.8) Which of the following agreements/conventions/protocols have a bearing on the protection of the Ozone Layer?

1. Montreal Protocol
2. Copenhagen Amendment
3. Beijing Amendments

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Q.9) With Reference to the 'Biological Diversity Act', consider the following statements:

1. Biological resources under the act include human genetic material.
2. One of the objectives of the act is to provide equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.10) Consider the following statements about the Global Tiger Forum (GTF):

1. It is a network of Non-Government Organisations.
2. It is the only international body campaigning to save Tigers worldwide.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.11) Consider the following statements:

1. The highest peak of peninsular India, Anamudi, lies on the border of Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
2. Meghalaya- Mikir uplands forms a part of Peninsular India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.12) With reference to Glaciers, consider the following statements:

1. Piedmont glacier is formed by the convergence of several glaciers at the foot of mountain ranges.
2. Plucking and Abrasion are two of the erosional processes performed by Glaciers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.13) Which of the following factors determine the rate of erosion due to glacial activity?

1. Gradient of the slope
2. Weight of the glacier
3. Temperature of the Ice

4. Velocity of flow

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Q.14) Arrange the following hills from North to South:

1. Javadi Hills
2. Shevaroy Hills
3. Anaimalai
4. Nilgiri Hills
5. Cardamom Hills

Select the correct answer using the code below:

- a) 3-1-2-4-5
- b) 1-2-4-3-5
- c) 4-1-3-2-5
- d) 3-1-2-5-4

Q.15) Recently, there has been an upsurge in the NPAs of the public sector banks, which of the following is/are *not* the factor(s) responsible?

1. Lower economic growth in the country.
2. Aggressive lending by banks in the past, especially during the high growth period.
3. Lack of legal provisions for loan- recovery.
4. Banks switching over to a system based identification of NPAs.
5. Natural calamities.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

Q.16) Consider the following statements regarding 'Marginal Cost of funds based Lending Rate' (MCLR):

1. It aims to improve the transmission of policy rates into the lending rates of banks.
2. It helps the banks to become more competitive and enhance their long run value.
3. It ensures availability of bank loans at interest rates which are fair to the borrowers as well as the banks.
4. It aims to improve transparency in the methodology followed by banks for determining interest rates.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.17) Which of the following were the features of 'Deficit Financing' in India during the period 1970-1991?

1. Excessive employment creation by PSUs.
2. Centralised planned development.
3. High burden of subsidies.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 3 only

- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.18) Fiscal Policy in India is formulated by which of the following?

- a) The Reserve Bank of India
- b) NITI Aayog
- c) Ministry of Finance
- d) The Finance Commission

Q.19) Consider the following statements regarding Election Commission of India (ECI):

1. It is an independent body that conducts elections for all three tiers of the government.
2. The constitution specifies the term of the members of the commission.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.20) With reference to the process of amendment of Indian Constitution, consider the following statements:

1. A Bill to amend the Constitution requires prior assent of the President before being introduced in the Parliament.
2. All provisions regarding the amendment of the Constitution come under Article 368.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only

- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.21) With reference to the ‘Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities’, consider the following statements:

1. The Constitution originally included the provision for the office of the Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities.
2. The Constitution specifies the procedure for removal of the Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q.22) Which of the following can be considered as unitary feature(s) of the Indian federal system?

- a) Supremacy of Constitution
- b) Independent judiciary
- c) Division of Power
- d) Emergency provisions

Q.23) With reference to the right to freedom of religion, consider the following statements:

1. No person shall be compelled to pay any tax or fee for promotion of religion.
2. Religious denominations have the right to acquire property as a fundamental right.

3. Right to profess a religion is available to citizens only.

Which of the statements given above is/are *not* correct?

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

Q.24) With reference to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, consider the following statements:

1. It conducts regular military exercises between member states to maintain regional peace and stability.
2. It aims to establish a democratic and rational new political order.
3. India became a full member in the 2017 Astana Summit.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.25) Consider the following statements regarding SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation):

1. Secretariat for SAARC acts as Secretariat for Mekong-Ganga Cooperation also.
2. A South Asian Free Trade Area agreement has been signed between SAARC nations, which will come into force by 2020.

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

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

STATIC SYLLABUS – ANSWER KEY

1	D	8	D	15	D	22	D
2	C	9	B	16	B	23	A
3	C	10	B	17	D	24	D
4	B	11	B	18	C	25	D
5	C	12	C	19	D		
6	B	13	D	20	D		
7	A	14	B	21	D		

STATIC SYLLABUS – EXPLANATION

Q.1)

Answer: d

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect. Around the 18th century, India enjoyed balance of trade in her favour. India did not require any goods from outside, rather Indian goods had a very good market outside.

Statement 2 is incorrect. After Mughals, political conditions became unstable which had a detrimental effect on trade as well.

Source) A history Textbook for class XII, Modern India

Q.2)

Answer: c

Explanation:

The Calico Act banned the import of most cotton textiles into England, followed by the restriction of sale of most cotton textiles. It was a form of economic protectionism, largely in response to India (particularly Bengal), which dominated world cotton textile markets at the time. The Act was a precursor to the Industrial Revolution, when Britain eventually surpassed India as the world's leading textile manufacturer in the 19th century.

Source) Modern Indian History Bipin Chandra

Q.3)

Answer: c

Explanation:

Statements 1 and 3 are correct. In 1893, Bal Gangadhar Tilak started the practice of using the traditional religious ganpati festival to propagate nationalist ideas through patriotic songs and speeches. In 1896, he started the Shivaji festival to stimulate nationalism among the young maharashtrians. In the same year, he organized an all Maharashtra campaign for the boycott of foreign cloth.

Statement 2 is incorrect. He was perhaps the first among the nationalist leaders to grasp the important role that the lower middle classes, peasants, artisans and workers could play in national movement.

Source) Bipin Chandra NCERT

Q.4)

Answer: b

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. In 1829 Rammohun Roy founded a new religious society, the Brahmo Sabha, later known as the Brahmo Samaj.

Statement 2 is correct. Rammohun Roy was the brightest star in the Indian sky during the first half of the 19th century, but he was not a lone star. He had many distinguished associates, followers, and successors. In the field of education, he was greatly helped by the Dutch watchmaker David Hare and the Scottish missionary Alexander Duff. Dwarkanath Tagore was the foremost of his Indian associates. His other prominent followers were Prasanna Kumar Tagore, Chandrashekhar Deb, and Tarachand Chakra- varti, the first secretary of the Brahmo Sabha.

Statement 1 is correct. the purpose was to purify Hinduism and to preach theism or the worship of one God.

Statement 3 and 4 are incorrect. The new society was to be based on the twin pillars of reason and the Vedas and Upanishads. It was also to incorporate the teachings of other religions. The Brahmo Samaj laid emphasis on human dignity, opposed idolatry, and criticised such social evils as the practice of Sati.

Source) Modern Indian History Bipin Chandra, Chapter VI

Q.5)

Answer: c

Explanation:

The Swadesh Bandhab Samiti set up by Ashwini Kumar Dutt, a school teacher, in Barisal was the

most well-known volunteer organization of them all.

Through the activities of this Samiti, whose 159 branches reached out to the remotest corners of the district, Dutt was able to generate an unparalleled mass following among the predominantly Muslim Peasantry of the region. The samitis took the Swadeshi message to the villages through magic lantern lectures and Swadeshi songs, gave physical and moral training to the members, did social work during famines and epidemics, organized schools training in Swadeshi craft and arbitration courts.

By August 1906 the Barisal Samiti reportedly settled 523 disputes through eighty-nine arbitration committees.

Source) Bipin Chandra NCERT

Q.6)

Answer: b

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect. The Climate Action Network (CAN) is a worldwide network of over 1300 Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in over 120 countries.

Statement 2 is correct. It is working to promote government and individual action to limit human-induced climate change to ecologically sustainable levels. CAN members work to achieve this goal through information exchange and the coordinated development of NGO strategy on international, regional, and national climate issues.

Source)

<http://www.climatenetwork.org/about/about-can>

Q.7)

Answer: a

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management. The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.

Statement 3 is incorrect. The UNCCD is particularly committed to a bottom-up approach, encouraging the participation of local people in combating desertification and land degradation.

Statement 2 is correct. National action programmes (NAPs) are the key instruments to implement the Convention. They are often supported by action programmes at sub-regional (SRAP) and regional (RAP) levels. The NAPs are developed through a participatory approach involving various stakeholders, including relevant governmental offices, scientific institutions and local communities.

The permanent secretariat of the Convention is located in Bonn, Germany.

Source)

<https://www.unccd.int/convention/about-convention>

<https://www.unccd.int/about-us/secretariat>

Q.8)

Answer: d

Explanation:

Vienna Convention - It acts as a framework for the international efforts to protect the ozone layer however, it does not include legally binding reduction goals for the use of CFCs. The Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and its Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer are dedicated to the protection of the earth's ozone layer.

Montreal Protocol -The Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer was designed to reduce the production and consumption of ozone depleting substances in order to reduce their abundance in the atmosphere, and thereby protect the earth's fragile ozone Layer.

The treaty has been amended in, 1990 (London), 1991 (Nairobi), 1992 (Copenhagen), 1993 (Bangkok), 1995 (Vienna), 1997 (Montreal), and 1999 (Beijing).

Source)-<https://www.epa.gov/ozone-layer-protection/international-treaties-and-cooperation-about-protection-stratospheric-ozone>

Q.9)

Answer: b

Explanation:

The Biological Diversity Act 2002 was born out of India's attempt to realize the objectives enshrined in the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) 1992 which recognizes the sovereign rights of states to use their own Biological Resources.

Statement 1 is incorrect. Biodiversity has been defined under Section 2(b) of the Act as "the variability among living organisms from all sources and the ecological complexes of which they are part, and includes diversity within species or between species and of ecosystems". The Act also defines Biological resources as "plants, animals and micro-organisms or parts thereof, their genetic material and by-products (excluding value added products) with actual or potential use or value, but does not include human genetic material."

Objectives:

- Conservation of biological diversity;
- Sustainable use of its components; and
- Statement 2 is correct. Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources.

Source)

<http://vikaspedia.in/energy/environment/biodiversity-1/biodiversity-legal-acts>

Q.10)

Answer: b

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect: The Global Tiger Forum (GTF) is an inter-governmental and international body established with members from willing countries to embark on a worldwide campaign, common approach, promotion of appropriate programmes and controls to save the remaining five subspecies of tigers in the wild distributed over 14 tiger range countries of the world.

Statement 2 is correct: It was established in 1994 with its secretariat at New Delhi, GTF is the only inter-governmental & international body campaigning to save the TIGER worldwide

Source) <http://globaltigerforum.org/>

Q.11)

Answer: b

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect. Anaimudi is the highest peak of peninsular India. Peninsular India comprises Deccan Plateau and the mountain ranges – Aravali, Vindhya, Satpura, Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats. Anaimudi/Anaimudi Peak of Munnar is Located at the junction of the Cardamom Hills, Anaimalai Hills and Palani Hills in Kerala. It is the highest peak of western Ghats. It has an elevation of 2,695 metres above sea level. The name Anaimudi literally translates to "elephant's forehead".

Statement 2 is correct. Meghalaya includes the Khasi, Garo, Jaintia hills and the Assam ranges at its border. Meghalaya represents the extension of peninsular India towards the north-east. The height of the dissected Meghalaya Plateau is 150m to 1961m above sea level. This place is detached from the Indian peninsula by the Malda Gap.

Q.12)

Answer: c

Explanation:

Statement 1 is correct. Piedmont glacier is formed when several glaciers or a single glacier converge and

spill out at the foot of a mountain range forming an extensive ice-mass. The best-known piedmont glacier in the world is Malaspina glacier of Alaska.

Glaciation generally leads to erosion in the Highlands and deposition in lowlands.

Statement 2 is correct. Glaciers not only transport material as they move, but they also sculpt and carve away the land beneath them. A glacier's weight, combined with its gradual movement, can drastically reshape the landscape over hundreds or even thousands of years. The ice erodes the land surface and carries the broken rocks and soil debris far from their original places, resulting in some interesting glacial landforms.

Plucking and Abrasion are two Erosion processes performed by Glaciers.

Plucking- When Glacier freezes the joints and beds of the underlying rocks. Tears out the Individual blocks and drags them away, this process of erosion is known as plucking erosion.

Abrasion- When Glaciers scratches, scraps, polishes and scours the valley floor with the debris frozen into it, this process is known as abrasion erosion.

Q.13)

Answer: d

Explanation:

Option (d) is the correct answer.

All of the above factors determine the rate of erosion of a glacier.

Glaciation gives rise to erosional feature in highlands and depositional features in lowlands.

A glacier erodes its valley by two process known as plucking and abrasion.

The rate of flow of the glacier is more in the middle because of less obstruction and this is the reason most of the glacier assumes tongue shape.

The rate of Erosion by glaciers depends upon various factors like

- 1) Weight of the glacier
- 2) Velocity of the flow of glacier
- 3) Temperature of the ice
- 4) Gradient of the slope
- 5) Geological structure of the valley
- 6) Climatic condition and so on.

The rate of erosion is generally more in uplands or highlands and less in lowlands. All glaciers move (generally few inches) every day.

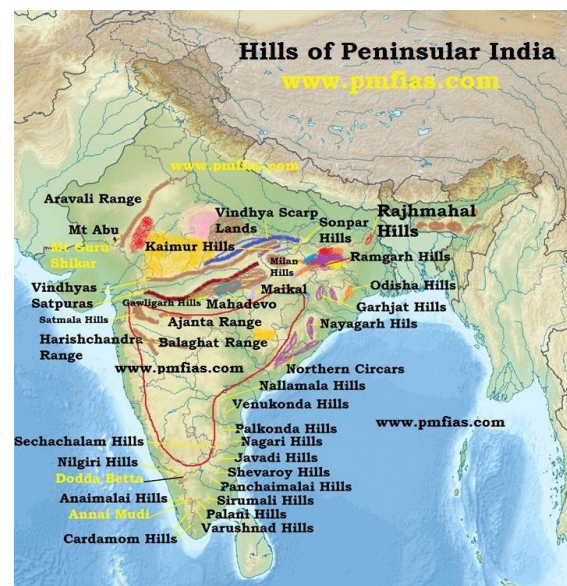
Source) GC Leong

Q.14)

Answer: b

Explanation:

Option (b) is the correct answer.



Source) Geography of India by Majid Hussain,

Q.15)

Answer: d

Explanation:

The recent upsurge in the NPA has been factored by:

- Low economic growth: The borrowers have not been able to get the desired returns from the investments. Investments have stalled due to 'regulatory cholesterol' and due to the time taken in obtaining clearances. This has led to an increase in non-payment of loans and thus created stressed and Non-performing assets.
- Aggressive lending in good times: High growth rate lured the banks for unreasonably high lending, which later turned into NPAs. This aggressive lending happened during the high growth years in the previous decade.
- Switching over to new identification technique. RBI under Raghuram Rajan adopted a new strategy of detecting NPAs in the banking system known as the "Asset Quality Review", this led to more disclosure of NPAs and stressed assets and further stressed the banks' balance sheets leading to the 'Twin Balance Sheet Problem'. Earlier banks were opting for 'evergreening' of loans and the actual percentage of stressed and non-performing assets was not known.

Legal provisions such as the SARFAESI Act were there since 2002. Other Acts such as Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Repeal Act have

also been there since 2003. Some new legal provisions, such as Insolvency and bankruptcy code, have also been introduced in 2016. IBC 2016 has amended Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Repeal Act, 2003.

Natural calamities do contribute to the forming of NPAs as large scale droughts, floods, etc. disturb the outcome estimates of agriculture, infrastructure turning the farm loans and project loans into NPA. However, natural calamities are not a new phenomenon. The shares of their impact on NPA's are very limited and are not directly affecting the recent NPA upsurge.

In solving such questions always go for the direct linkage of a statement with the question, as indirect linkages can be many and vague.

Source) Indian Economy; Ramesh Singh

Q.16)

Answer: b

Explanation:

The marginal cost of funds based lending rate (MCLR) refers to the minimum interest rate of a bank below which it cannot lend, except in some cases allowed by the RBI. It is an internal benchmark or reference rate for the bank. MCLR actually describes the method by which the minimum interest rate for loans is determined by a bank - on the basis of marginal cost or the additional or incremental cost of arranging one more rupee to the prospective borrower.

All are the objectives of the new methodology. RBI decided to shift from base rate to MCLR because the

rates based on marginal cost of funds are more sensitive to changes in the policy rates. This is very essential for the effective implementation of monetary policy. Prior to MCLR system, different banks were following different methodology for calculation of base rate /minimum rate – that is either on the basis of average cost of funds or marginal cost of funds or blended cost of funds.

Thus, MCLR aims:

- Statement 1 is correct. To improve the transmission of policy rates into the lending rates of banks.
- Statement 4 is correct. To bring transparency in the methodology followed by banks for determining interest rates on advances.
- Statement 3 is correct. To ensure availability of bank credit at interest rates which are fair to borrowers as well as banks.
- Statement 2 is correct. To enable banks to become more competitive and enhance their long run value and contribution to economic growth.

Q.17)

Answer: d

Explanation:

Whenever the expenditure of the government exceeds its revenue then the government undertakes the process of deficit financing. So the temporary arrangement of the funds through various methods to fulfil the fiscal deficit is known as deficit financing.

Deficit Financing in India can be classified into 3 phases:

- 1) The First Phase: 1947-1970
- 2) The Second Phase: 1970-1991
- 3) The Third Phase: 1991 onwards

The Second Phase: 1970-1991: This is considered to be the period of deficit financing, followed by implementation of unsound fundamentals of economics and finally culminating in severe financial crisis by the year 1990–91. Some of its features are:

- This phase saw nationalisation policy being implemented and simultaneously increased emphasis on expansion of Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs).
- Statement 1 is correct. Existing PSUs were being overloaded—the illogical employment creation excessively increased the burden of salaries, pensions and PF; many of them had started fetching huge losses.
- Statement 2 is correct. Planned development remained highly centralised and devoid any place for local aspirations—frustrations of masses started showing up in the form of extremist and radical organisations raising their heads creating a law and order problem which resulted in excessive expenditure on them.
- Statement 3 is correct. The governments had failed on both fronts—checking population rise and mass employment generation—the burden of different subsidies went on increasing making them unmanageable.

There were no well-functioning and efficient Self-employment programmes as well.

Finally, all these along with some external factors like the Kuwait invasion of Iraq, the Gulf war and the Oil crisis resulted in BoP crisis in India which ultimately led to the Liberalization-Privatization-Globalisation (LPG) reforms.

Source) Indian Economy – Ramesh Singh

Q.18)

Answer: c

Explanation:

Option (c) is the correct answer.

Fiscal policy is defined as ‘the policy of the government with regard to the level of government purchases, the level of transfers, and the tax structure’. It defines the changes in government expenditures and taxes that are designed to achieve macroeconomic policy goals (such as growth, employment, investment, etc.). Therefore, ‘fiscal policy’ denotes the use of taxes and government expenditures. It is formulated by the Ministry of Finance (Central Government).

Source) Indian Economy – Ramesh Singh,

Q.19)

Answer: d

Explanation:

The Election Commission is a permanent and an independent body established by the constitution of India directly to ensure free and fair elections in the country.

Article 324 of the Constitution provides that the power of superintendence, direction and control of elections to parliament, state legislatures, the office of president of India and the office of vice president of India shall be vested in the election commission. Thus, the Election Commission is an all-India body in the sense that it is common to both the Central government and the state governments.

Statement 1 is incorrect. It must be noted here that the election commission is not concerned with the elections to panchayats and municipalities in the states. For this, the Constitution of India provides for the formation of separate State Election Commissions.

Statement 2 is incorrect. The constitution has provided many safeguards to ensure the independence of the commission however it falls short on some accounts. The Constitution does not provide the qualifications of the members and also does not specify the term of the members of the Commission.

The constitution also does not debar members of the commission from further appointment by the government.

Source) Indian Polity By M. Laxmikant,

Q.20)

Answer: d

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect: A bill for amendment of the Constitution does not need prior permission of the President. It can be introduced in either house of

Parliament, by either a minister or a private member, but it cannot be introduced in the State Legislature.

Statement 2 is incorrect: A number of provisions in the Constitution can be amended by a simple majority of the two houses of Parliament, and are outside the scope of Article 368. Some of these are - formation of new states and alteration of name, areas and boundaries of existing states, Citizenship, election to Parliament and State Legislatures, Delimitation of Constituencies etc.

Q.21)

Answer: d

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect. Originally, the Constitution of India did not make any provision with respect to the Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities. Later, the States Reorganisation Commission (1953-55) made a recommendation in this regard.

The Seventh Constitutional Amendment Act of 1956 inserted a new Article 350-B in Part XVII of the Constitution. This article contains the following provisions:

- 1) There should be a Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities. He is to be appointed by the President of India.
- 2) It would be the duty of the Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided for linguistic minorities under the Constitution. He would report to the President upon those matters at such intervals as the President may direct. The President should place all such

reports before each House of Parliament and send to the governments of the states concerned.

Statement 2 is incorrect. The Constitution does not specify the qualifications, tenure, salaries and allowances, service conditions and procedure for removal of the Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities.

Q.22)

Answer: d

Explanation:

The constitution contains all the usual features of a federation, viz., two governments, division of powers, written Constitution, supremacy of Constitution, rigidity of Constitution, independent judiciary and bicameralism.

However, the Indian Constitution also contains a large number of unitary or non-federal features, viz., a strong Centre, single Constitution, single citizenship, flexibility of Constitution, integrated judiciary, appointment of state governor by the Centre, all-India services, emergency provisions, and so on.

Source) Indian Polity, M Laxmikanth

Q.23)

Answer: a

Explanation:

Statement 1 is incorrect: Article 27 lays that no person shall be compelled to pay any taxes for promotion or maintenance of any particular religion or religious denomination. But it does not prohibit

levying a fee as the purpose of a fee is for the secular administration of a religious denomination.

Statement 2 is correct: Article 26 states that every religious denomination has the right to own and acquire movable and immovable property.

Statement 3 is incorrect: Article 25 gives all persons the freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice and propagate religion. All persons include foreigners as well.

Source) Indian Polity - M Laxmikanth

Q.24)

Answer: d

Explanation:

Option (d) is the correct answer.

Statement 1 is correct. Military exercises are regularly conducted among members to promote cooperation and coordination against terrorism and other external threats, and to maintain regional peace and stability.

Statement 2 is correct. SCO's goals include moving towards the establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order.

Statement 3 is correct. The historical meeting of the Heads of State Council of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation was held on 8-9 June 2017 in Astana. At the meeting, the status of a full member of the Organization was granted to the Republic of India and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Q.25)

Answer: d

Explanation:

Option (d) is the correct answer.

Statement 1 is incorrect. SAARC secretariat is based in Kathmandu, Nepal. In The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, the country which serves as chair shall act as the Secretariat to carry out coordination and implementation of the Cooperation plan. Its chairmanship is rotated in alphabetical order.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The SAFTA Agreement was signed on 6 January 2004 during Twelfth SAARC Summit held in Islamabad, Pakistan.

- The Agreement entered into force on 1 January 2006, and the Trade Liberalization Programme commenced from 1 July 2006.
- Under this agreement, SAARC members will bring their duties down to 20 percent by 2009.
- Following the Agreement coming into force the SAFTA Ministerial Council (SMC) has been established comprising the Commerce Ministers of the Member States.

Current Affairs Questions

Q.1) Which of the following planets would the recently launched “Shukrayaan-1” mission study ?

- a) Neptune
- b) Venus
- c) Saturn
- d) Mercury

Q.2) Which of the following best describes the term “herd immunity”?

- a) Improving the immunity functions of a community.
- b) A high percentage of a population in a community is immune to a disease.
- c) When a large percentage of the population has lost immunity to a disease.
- d) None of the above

Q.3) Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR)”, recently in the news, is located between which of the following states?

- a) Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat
- b) Maharashtra and Chattisgarh
- c) Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh
- d) Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra

Q.4) Consider the following statements regarding the Epidemics Act, 1897 :

- 1. The act includes paramedic workers and community health workers under the definition of healthcare services professionals.
- 2. Violence against the healthcare workers has been made cognizable and non-bailable offences.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

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

Q.5) Consider the following statements regarding Hydroxychloroquine;

- 1. It is used to treat malaria, lupus, and rheumatoid arthritis diseases.
- 2. ICMR has recommended its usage against SARS-COV-2 as a treatment drug.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Q.6) ‘VidyaDaan 2.0’ is related to :

- a) E-learning content.
- b) Training of bank employees.
- c) Industry-Academia collaboration.
- d) Skill Development.

Q.7) “SnowEx” programme, recently in the news, was launched by which of the following space agency?

- a) European Space Agency
- b) ROSCOSMOS
- c) JAXA
- d) NASA

Q.8) Which of the following acts is/are used to contain large outbreaks in India?

- 1. The Disaster Management Act of 2005.
- 2. The Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897.
- 3. The National Security Act, 1980.

Choose the correct answer using the code given below :

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

Q.9) Consider the following statements with respect to “COVID Sample Collection Kiosk (COVSACK)”:

- 1. It is developed by Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR).
- 2. It can be used by healthcare workers to collect the samples from suspected Coronavirus patients without the need for change of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

d) None of the above

Q.10) Consider the following statements with respect to ‘Integrated Govt. Online training’ (iGOT) portal:

- 1. It is developed and launched by NITI Aayog.
- 2. Its objective is to promote capacity building among the frontline workers to handle CoVID-19 pandemic.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.11) Which of the following has launched “#iStandWithHumanity Initiative”?

- a) NITI Aayog
- b) Akshaya Patra Foundation
- c) Art of Living Foundation
- d) FICCI

Q.12) “Anak Krakatau volcano” is recently in the news, is located near to which of the following straits?

- a) Malacca Strait
- b) Sunda Strait
- c) Bass Strait
- d) Bearing Strait

Q.13) Which of the following MNCs has launched the “Global Journalism Emergency Relief Fund”?

- a) IBM

- b) Microsoft
- c) Google
- d) Facebook

Q.14) Which of the following freedom fighters is the author of “Tritiya Ratna, Gulamgiri & Manav Mahammand” ?

- a) Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar
- b) Jyotiba Phule
- c) Vasudev Balwantrao Phadke
- d) Raja Ram mohan Roy

Q.15) “Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary” is recently in news, is located in which of the following state?

- a) Telangana
- b) Odisha
- c) Chattisgarh
- d) Andhra Pradesh

Q.16) Consider the following statements regarding Science and Technology of Yoga and Meditation (SATYAM) program :

1. It has been launched by the Ministry of AYUSH.
2. The program has invited applications for research projects on Yoga intervention against COVID-19.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Q.17) Consider the following statements regarding Pana Sankranti :

1. It is a traditional new year festival of the Ahom tribe.
2. Danda Nata is performed during the festival.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

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

Q.18) With reference to the Indian Red Cross Society, consider the following statements:

1. It is a voluntary organization which provides relief in times of emergencies and promotes health & care of the vulnerable people.
2. The President of India is the President of the Indian Red Cross Society.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.19) Which of the following is/are to organize first-ever live fitness sessions (“Fit India Active Day Programme”) for school students in the second phase of lockdown?

- a) UGC
- b) CBSE
- c) NCERT
- d) IB

Q.20) Consider the following statements with respect to “Global Network against Food Crises”:

1. Global Report on Food Crisis is released by Global Network against Food Crises.
2. Global Network against Food Crises was launched by the European Union, FAO and WFP.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.21) Consider the following statements regarding Zero Yield nuclear test :

1. It refers to a full-fledged nuclear test but with no overground effect.
2. There is no explosive chain reaction in zero yield nuclear test.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Q.22) The term ‘Feluda’, recently seen in the news, is associated with

- a) CoVID-19 test
- b) Covid-19 vaccine trials by Israel.
- c) Cruise missile of Iran.
- d) None of the above

Q.23) The annual AmbubachiMela is held at :

- a) Vaishno Devi Temple, Jammu & Kashmir
- b) Kamakhya Temple, Assam
- c) Dakshineswar Kali Mandir, Kolkata
- d) Bajreshwari Mata Temple, Kangra

Q.24) Consider the following statements regarding Sodium Hypochlorite Solution that has been in news recently :

1. It is used as disinfectant and bleaching agent.
2. Dakin’s Solution is a dilute solution containing Sodium hypochlorite.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

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

Q.25) Consider the following statements with respect to the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization (Adaptation of State Laws) Order, 2020 :

1. It has defined the domicile criteria for the union territory of J & K.
2. A person who has resided in J&K for 15 years is deemed to be a domicile of J&K.
3. Children of Central Government Officials who have served in J&K for a total period of seven years are also deemed to be domiciles of J & K.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

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

CURRENT AFFAIRS – ANSWER KEY

1	B	8	B	15	D	22	A
2	C	9	B	16	B	23	B
3	D	10	B	17	B	24	C
4	C	11	C	18	C	25	B
5	A	12	B	19	B		
6	A	13	C	20	C		
7	D	14	B	21	B		

CURRENT AFFAIRS – EXPLANATION**Q.1)****Answer : b****Explanation :**

Venus is often called Earth's twin sister, as the two planets are similar in many ways in terms of size, densities, composition, and gravity. Also called the morning star and evening star, the planet is 30 percent closer to the sun than Earth, and has much higher exposure to solar radiation, solar flares, and other solar phenomena, which could help ISRO study the atmosphere. Mission Shukrayaan aims to study the dense atmosphere of Venus. As per ISRO's website, the proposed satellite would weigh around 175 kg with 500W of power, but these values will be further tuned based on the final configuration.

Q.2)**Answer : c****Explanation :**

About Herd Immunity: Herd immunity is when a large number of people are vaccinated against a disease, lowering the chances of others being

infected by it. However, this type of immunity is usually viewed as a preventive strategy in vaccination programmes. Since, we don't have a vaccine for COVID-19 – achieving herd immunity would require a significant proportion of the population to be infected and recover from COVID-19. This will allow us to retain an immunological memory of the disease that enables us to fight off that same disease in the future.

Q.3)**Answer : d****Explanation :**

The death of a tiger in the Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) has raised concerns whether the tiger should be tested for the coronavirus disease.

Pench Tiger Reserve (PTR) is an interstate tiger reserve spanning across two states of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. The portion of the reserve that is in Madhya Pradesh is located in the Satpura ranges. The reserve comprises the Indira Priyadarshini Pench National Park, the Pench Mowgli Sanctuary and a buffer. The tiger reserve is named after the Pench River that flows through. The Meghdoot dam built across Pench River falls both in M.P. and Maharashtra.

Q.4)**Answer : c****Explanation :**

About Epidemics Act, 1897 :

- **Defines Healthcare service personnel:** It comprises public and clinical healthcare

service providers including doctors, nurses, paramedical workers and community health workers or any other persons empowered by the Act to take measures in order to prevent the outbreak of the disease.

- **Cognizable and Non-Bailable:** Violence against the healthcare workers has been made cognizable and non-bailable offences.
- **Compensation:** It contains a provision of providing compensation for injury to healthcare service personnel or for causing damage or loss to the property. If the damage is done to the vehicles or clinics of healthcare workers, then a compensation amounting to twice the market value of the damaged property will be taken from the accused.
- **Investigation:** The investigation into the cases of attack on healthcare workers will be completed within 30 days and judgment will be pronounced within one year.
- **Punishment:** The accused of the attack can attract a punishment ranging from 3 months to 5 years and a fine from 50 thousand rupees to 2 lakh rupees. In case of grievous injuries, the accused can be sentenced from 6 months to 7 years and they can also be penalized from one lakh to 5 lakh rupees.

Q.5)

Answer : a

Explanation :

Statement 1 is correct: Hydroxychloroquine is used to prevent or treat malaria caused by

mosquito bites. It is also used to treat certain auto-immune diseases (lupus, rheumatoid arthritis).

Statement 2 is incorrect: ICMR and the National Task Force on COVID-19 has recommended Hydroxychloroquine as a prophylaxis (preventive drug) for SARS-COV-2 and not as a treatment drug.

Q.6)

Answer : a

Explanation :

The Ministry of Human Resource and Development(MHRD) launched the Vidya Daan 2.0 programme under its DIKSHA platform. It aims to contribute e-learning content and help children continue their learning anywhere and anytime. Academicians and organisations will develop and contribute e-learning content aligned to the curriculum. The content will be monitored by a panel of academic experts and released for use on the DIKSHA app to help millions of children across the country continue learning.

Q.7)

Answer : d

Explanation :

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has launched a programme called SnowEx. SnowEx is a five-year programme launched in 2016. The objective of the programme is to address the most important gaps in snow remote sensing

knowledge and thus lay the groundwork for a future snow satellite mission

Q.8)

Answer : b

Explanation :

The government has drawn a plan for containment of the virus in hotspots based on the steps taken in Bhilwara. Geographical areas will be quarantined under this model. Clusters of infections will be identified within the quarantined area and steps, which were taken in Bhilwara, will be taken in these clusters. The Disaster Management Act of 2005 and the Epidemic Diseases Act of 1897 can be used to implement the model. CrPc and IPC sections can be used to book violators. People will be checked for influenza-like symptoms. They will be monitored actively and tested. Labs will give results in 12 to 24 hours. People with respiratory infections will be reported to a central database. Additionally, according to the plan, all healthcare workers should use hydroxychloroquine as prophylactic. Very ill patients should be given a combination of hydroxychloroquine & azithromycin. If there are no cases for four weeks, normalcy can be declared.

Q.9)

Answer : b

Explanation :

The Defence Research and Development Laboratory, Hyderabad has added another product to the portfolio of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to combat the

coronavirus by developing the 'COVID-19 Sample Collection Kiosk' (COVSACK). The COVSACK is a kiosk through which healthcare workers can take coronavirus samples from suspected infected patients. The patient walks into the kiosk and a nasal/oral swab is taken by healthcare professional from outside through the built-in gloves, according to a statement. The kiosk is automatically disinfected without the need for human involvement, making the process free of infection spread. The shielding screen of the kiosk cabin protects the healthcare worker from the aerosols/droplet transmission while taking the sample. This reduces the need of frequent PPE change by healthcare workers.

Q.10)

Answer : b

Explanation :

India is fighting against covid-19 Pandemic and India's first line of workers is already engaged in COVID relief and doing commendable job. However, a larger force will be needed to replace the first line and to tackle the exponential or geometric increase in positive COVID cases in the subsequent stages of the pandemic. Accordingly, to take care of the training needs of the frontline workers, the Government of India has launched a training module for management of COVID-19 named 'Integrated Govt. Online training' (iGOT) portal on Ministry of HRD's DIKSHA platform for the capacity building of frontline workers to handle the pandemic efficiently. Courses on iGOT have been

launched for Doctors, Nurses, Paramedics, Hygiene Workers, Technicians, Auxiliary Nursing Midwives (ANMs), State Government Officers, Civil Defence Officers, Various Police Organisations, National Cadet Corps (NCC), Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), National Service Scheme, Indian Red Cross Society, Bharat Scouts and Guides and other volunteers at the stage.

Q.11)

Answer : c

Explanation :

TRIFED has reached out to the Art of Living Foundation's #iStandWithHumanity Initiative with a Stand With Tribal Families component in providing much needed food and ration for survival of the tribal community.

Q.12)

Answer : b

Explanation :

Anak Krakatau volcano witnessed the longest eruption since its explosive collapse in 2018. Anak Krakatoa Island is a caldera situated in the Sunda Strait between the islands of Java and Sumatra in Indonesia. The island emerged from the area once occupied by Krakatau which was destroyed in 1883 by an explosive volcanic eruption. It first appeared in 1927 and has been growing ever since. It is part of the Ujung Kulon National Park, listed in UNESCO's World Heritage site.

Q.13)

Answer : c

Explanation :

Google has launched a global Journalism Emergency Relief Fund. Its aim is to support small and medium-sized news organizations producing original news for local communities in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Q.14)

Answer : b

Explanation :

Mahatma Jyotirao Govindrao Phule also known as Jyotiba Phule was an Indian social activist, thinker, anti-caste social reformer and writer from Maharashtra. His published works include : a) Tiritiya Ratna b) Gulamgiri c) Manav Mahamand (Muhammad) among others.

Q.15)

Answer : d

Explanation :

Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary is the only sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh with a population of Asian elephants. An Asian Elephant from Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary has been rescued by the forest officials.

Q.16)

Answer : b

Explanation :

Statement 1 is incorrect. SATYAM is a program of the Department of Science and Technology,

Ministry of Science and Technology under its Cognitive Science Research Initiative (CSRI). The programme is aimed to foster scientific research on the effects of yoga and meditation on physical & mental health.

Statement 2 is correct. DST has invited concept notes under SATYAM for appropriate intervention of yoga and meditation to fight against COVID-19 and other similar kinds of viruses.

Q.17)

Answer : b

Explanation :

Statement 1 is incorrect. Pana Sankranti is the traditional new year day festival of Buddhists and Hindus in Odisha.

Statement 2 is correct. Danda nata is performed during this festival celebration, it is one of the most ancient forms of performance art of the region. In Southern Odisha, the Meru Yatra festival is celebrated at the end of the month-long Danda nata dance festival.

Q.18)

Answer : c

Explanation :

Statement 1. The Indian Red Cross is a voluntary humanitarian organization providing relief in times of disasters/emergencies and promotes health & care of the vulnerable people and communities.

Statement 2 : The President of India is the President and the Union Health Minister is the Chairman of the Society.

Q.19)

Answer : b

Explanation :

Fit India Active Day Programme is an initiative of Fit India in partnership with CBSE to ensure fitness of all school children through live sessions which will cover all aspects of fitness from daily workouts to yoga, nutrition to emotional well-being.

Q.20)

Answer : c

Explanation :

Statement 1 is correct: The Global Report on Food Crises 2020 has been released by the Global Network against Food Crises.

Statement 2 is correct: The Global Network Against Food Crises was launched by the European Union, FAO and WFP during the 2016 World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) to respond to the WHS's call for new approaches to tackle protracted crises and recurrent disasters, reduce vulnerability, and manage risk, by bridging the divide between development and humanitarian partners.

Q.21)

Answer : b

Explanation :

Statement 1 is incorrect. There is no official definition for the term but it generally refers to a nuclear test where there is no explosive chain reaction of the sort caused by an atomic bomb nuclear warhead, therefore statement 2 is correct.

Q.22)

Answer : a

Explanation :

A team led by Dr Souvik Maiti and Dr Debojyoti Chakraborty at the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB) in New Delhi have developed a test for detecting coronavirus in people. Indian scientists have developed an affordable and easy test for Covid-19 and have named it after the Indian fictional detective, Feluda, a character created by Satyajit Ray.

Q.23)

Answer : b

Explanation :

AmbubachiMela is a festival to mark the annual menstruation of the goddess which is held at Kamakhya temple, Assam. The Ambubachi Melasymbolises the fertility cult of goddess Kamakhya.

Q.24)

Answer : c

Explanation :

Statement 1 is correct. Sodium Hypochlorite is commonly known as liquid bleach or simply bleach, it is a household chemical widely used as a disinfectant or a bleaching agent.

Statement 2 is correct. Dakin's solution is a dilute solution of sodium hypochlorite (0.4% to 0.5%) and other stabilizing ingredients, traditionally used as an antiseptic.

Q.25)

Answer : b

Explanation :

News: The Ministry of Home Affairs has promulgated the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization (Adaptation of State Laws) Order, 2020 which defined the Domicile Criteria for UT of J&K.

Domicile: It is the status or attribution of being a lawful permanent resident in a particular jurisdiction.

Domicile Criteria: A person have to fulfill the following conditions to be deemed to be a domicile of the Union Territory(UT) of J&K:

- The person has resided in J&K for 15 years or has studied in the state for seven years and appeared in either the Class 10 or the Class 12 examination in J&K (or)
- The person is registered as a migrant by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) in the UT of J&K (or)
- They are children of Central Government Officials, Officials of PSUs and among others who have served in J&K for a total period of ten years (or)
- The children of residents of J&K who reside outside the Union Territory in connection with employment or business but whose parents fulfil any of the above conditions will also be entitled to domicile status.