

MONTHLY

FACTLY

EXCLUSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR

PRELIMS

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ForumIAS

TABLE OF CONTENTS		
#	Topic	Page No.
Chapter 1: Polity		
1	Lok Sabha	1
2	Anglo-Indians Left Out as Bill to Extend Quota in Legislature Gets Nod	1
3	Lok Sabha Speaker Caps Private Member Bills	2
4	Good Governance Index	2
5	Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019	3
6	Assam Accord 1985	3
7	Disha Bill	4
8	Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System (PPRTMS)	4
9	Santhali Used for The First Time in Rajya Sabha	5
Chapter 2: Economy		
1	Draft Bill Proposes Empowerment of National Statistical Commission	6
2	GST Council to Set Up Grievance Redressal Mechanism for Taxpayers	6
3	RBI Released Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2018-19 Report	7
4	Financial System Stable Despite Slowdown: RBI Financial Stability Report	7
5	Operation Twist	8
6	Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019	8
7	India to Collate E-Database to Track Economic Offenders	9
8	Cabinet Approves Launch of Bharat Bond Exchange Traded Fund	10
9	RBI Lays Down Guidelines for Payments Banks' SFB Licence	10
10	OECD Released Its Economic Survey of India Rep	11
11	International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019	12
Chapter 3: International Relations		
1	The First Global Refugee Forum (GRF) Was Held in Geneva, Switzerland	13
2	The 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) And Delhi Dialogue Hosted by Mea in Delhi	13
3	Eight West African Nations Rename Common Currency From 'CFA FRANC' To 'ECO'	14
4	US Congress Consents to Designate India's NAVIC As Allied System	15
5	Saudi Arabia Takes Over G20 Presidency from Japan	15
6	Power of Siberia Gas Pipeline Cements China-Russia Bond	16
7	Visit of Swedish Royals to India	16
8	OPEC Countries, Russia To Cut Oil Output, Pushing Up Prices	16
Chapter 4: Environment		
1	UNFCCC Cop25 Concluded in Madrid, Spain	18
2	Global Carbon Budget 2019	18
3	India Suffered Maximum Number of Climate-Related Fatalities In 2018	19
4	Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2020 At UNFCCC Cop25 In Madrid	19
5	EU's Climate Neutrality 2050 Plan	20
6	Climate Emergency Cop25: New Platform Linking Oceans and Climate Launched in Madrid	20
7	State of Global Climate 2019	21
8	Rhinos to Be Re-Introduced in Uttarakhand	21
9	India Had Most Deaths Caused by Pollution In 2017: New Report	22
10	Odisha Awarded 'World Habitat Award' For Jaga Mission	22
11	India State of Forest Report 2019	23
12	Odisha Launches 'JALSATHI' Programme	24
13	India To Host 36th International Geological Congress in March 2020	24
14	Avartansheel Kheta Changing Lives with Periodic, Proportionate Farming	25
15	Development of Loktak Inland Waterways Project in Manipur	25
16	Operation 'Clean Art'	26
17	Energy Conservation Week Held from December 14th To December 20th, 2019	27
18	Ocean Deoxygenation: Everyone's Problem Report Released by IUCN	27
19	Carbon Markets	28
20	Initiatives to Promote Environmental Awareness	29
21	International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems for BIMSTEC Countries Held in Delhi	30
22	Heavy Metals Contaminating India's Rivers	30
Chapter 5: Science and Technology		
1	Star Named After Indian Scientist, Exoplanet Gets a Sanskrit Name	32

2	Annular Eclipse of The Sun On 26 December	32
3	SNOWEX	32
4	ISRO To Launch Spy Satellite, 9 Foreign Customer Satellites	33
5	Planet Orbiting White Dwarf Star Is A Breakthrough Discovery	33
6	Union Cabinet Approved Introduction of Personal Data Protection Bill in Parliament	34
7	BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation	34
8	Carbon Dots Help Detect Herbicide Pollution	34
9	Hydroponics May Provide Better Agricultural Solutions	35
10	MoRT Amends MV Rules Mandating Adherence to Ais-155	35
11	ISRO Sets Up Space Technology Cells in IITS, IISC And Other Colleges	35
12	ISRO Begins Preparations for Setting Up Third Rocket Launchpad	36
13	India Tests Swedish Technology to Reduce Stubble Burning	36
14	Barcode	37
15	ICMR Sets Up A Task Force on Gene Therapy Research	37
16	Who Launches First Biosimilar Medicine to Treat Breast Cancer	37
Chapter 6: Policy		
1	Government Aims to Provide Broadband Access to All Villages By 2022	39
2	Echo Network Launched to Catalyze Cross-Disciplinary Leadership in India	39
3	Prime Minister Releases Operational Guidelines for The Implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)	40
4	JIGYASA Program	40
5	UGC Issues Norms for Ethics in Higher Education	41
6	Centre Urged to Treat Klip As A National Project	41
7	Explained: The Silver Line Project	42
8	Government Approves Future Skilling Programme	42
9	Gem Launches National Outreach Programme - Gem Samvaad	43
10	Amrut Mission Extended by 2 More Years Till 2022	43
11	Development A World Class Research Facilities in India: HRD Minister	44
12	Pradhan Mantri Yuva Udyamita Vikas Abhiyaan (PM YUVA) Yojana	44
13	Government Procured Just 3% Of Pulses, Seeds Targeted Under PM-AASHA Scheme	45
14	North East Rural Livelihood Project	45
15	Goal - 'Going Online as Leaders' Programme	46
16	Ministry of Tourism Has Identified 17 Sites In 12 Clusters in The Country for Development as Iconic Tourist Sites	46
17	Accessible India Campaign's Deadline Extended to March 2020	47
18	Ministry of Civil Aviation Launches Round 4 Of RCS- UDAN	47
19	National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR), 2018-2025	48
Chapter 7: Social		
1	WEF Gender Gap Index: India Slips To 112th Rank	49
2	India Has One of The Highest Unemployment Rates in Women	49
3	WCD Ministry Invites Application for Nari Shakti Puraskar	50
4	Minister of Health & Family Welfare Inaugurates 2nd Edition Of "Eat Right Mela"	50
5	Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGS) Scheme	51
6	20th Edition of Hornbill Festival Begins in Nagaland	51
7	The Paika Memorial	52
Chapter 8: Internal Security		
1	India Conducts 1st Night Trial of Nuclear Capable AGNI-III Missile	53
2	Hand-In-Hand Military Exercise Between India And China -2019	53
3	Exercise Indra 2019	53
4	Philippines Likely to Finalise Brahmos Deal by Next Year	54
5	Russian AVANGARD Missile	54
Chapter 9: Miscellaneous		
1	DPIIT Invites Applications for First-Ever National Startup Awards 2020	55
2	India Corruption Survey 2019	55
3	Prime Minister Launched Fit India School Grading System	55
4	Davi Kopenawa Wins Right Livelihood Award	56
5	International Anti-Corruption Day	56
6	Fit India Plogging Run	56
7	2.95 Crore Released For 'Gandhi Encyclopedia' For Promotion of Appropriate Gandhian	57

8	Philosophy	
9	44,000-Year-Old Cave Art in Indonesia Is 'World's Oldest'	57
10	Portal to Showcase Indian Culture Unveiled Ministry of Culture	57
11	UNESCO'S List of Intangible Cultural Heritage	57
12	The Drake Passage	58
13	Odisha Government Scheme to Merge With 'PM-KISAN' Yojana	59
14	Kerala State Youth Welfare Board Organised Kalaripayattu Training for Young Women	59
15	UNDP Released Human Development Index 2019- India Up One Rank	59
16	World Health Organization Released the Annual Global Malaria Report.	60
17	International Migrants Day Celebrated On 18th December	60
18	BRICS' NDB Pledges \$100 Million To NIIF	61
19	Cabinet Authorises NHAI To Set Up Infrastructure Investment Trust (INVITS)	61
20	India Ranks 73rd In Global E-Commerce Ranking	62
21	India's Forex Reserves Cross \$450 Billion For the First Time	62
22	India Skills Report Finds 46.21% Of Students Employable	62
23	Economic Census Flagged Off in Delhi	63
24	'EBKRAY' Online Auction Platform	63
25	Prepaid Payment Instrument Launched by RBI	63
Chapter 10: Pointly		
1	Macau Celebrates 20 Years of Chinese Rule	65
2	Six European Nations Join Iran Barter System	65
3	New Zealand Volcano Eruption: White Island	65
4	SHEHRI SAMRIDHI UTSAV	65
5	Land Records In 90% Of Indian Villages Have Been Computerised	65
6	Wi-Fi Calling	66
7	International Day of Persons with Disabilities -3rd December 2019	66
8	The World Observes Human Rights Day Celebrated On 10th December	66
9	International Universal Health Coverage Day- 12th December	66
10	Blue Water Force	66
11	International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)	66
12	MOSPI Constitutes Committee on Economic Statistics	66
13	Seeds Bill	67
14	Indian Peacekeepers in South Sudan Receive Prestigious Un Medal	67
15	Wildlife Institute of India (WII)	67
16	Atal Bhujal Yojana	67
17	To Control Strays, Centre Pushes New Technology to Produce Only Female Calves	68
18	Aerial Seeding	68
19	Lysosomal Storage Disorders	68
20	Rare Diseases	68
21	Hydrogen Fuel Cells	68
22	Social Activism Against Mob Lynching	69
Chapter 11: MCQ		
1	MCQ-STATIC	70
2	MCQ-CA	84

Polity

1. LOK SABHA

News: Former President said that the number of seats in Lok Sabha should be increased to 1,000 from the present 543 as every MP represents an average 16-18 lakh Indians which is too large a number to be kept in touch.

Facts:**Strength of Lok Sabha:**

- Article 81 of the Constitution defines the composition of the Lok Sabha. It states that the House shall not consist of more than 550 elected members of whom not more than 20 will represent the Union Territories.
- At present, the strength of the Lok Sabha is 543 of which 530 have been allocated to the states, and the rest to the Union Territories.
- Article 81 also mandates that the number of Lok Sabha seats allotted to a state would be such that the ratio between that number and the population of the state is the same for all states as far as possible. This is to ensure that every state is equally represented. However, this logic does not apply to small states whose population is not more than 60 lakhs.
- As per Article 81(3), population for the purpose of allocation of seats, means the population as ascertained at the last published Census.

Additional Facts:

Delimitation - Delimitation is the process of redrawing the boundaries of Lok Sabha and State Assembly seats to incorporate changes in the population.

- The strength of Lok Sabha hasn't always been 543 seats. Originally, Article 81 provided that the Lok Sabha shall not have more than 500 members. The first House constituted in 1952 had 497 members. The last time the strength of the Lok Sabha was revised to 543 was based on the 1971 census.
- In 1976, a temporary freeze was imposed on delimitation until 2001. The freeze that should have been lifted in 2001 was extended till 2026 by another amendment to the constitution.

2. ANGLO-INDIANS LEFT OUT AS BILL TO EXTEND QUOTA IN LEGISLATURE GETS NOD

News: Union Cabinet has approved the abolition of reservation of two seats for the Anglo-Indian community in the Lok Sabha while extending the reservation to Scheduled Castes (SC) and Schedule Tribes (ST) by 10 years.

Facts:

- The term Anglo Indian as defined in Article 366 (2) of the Indian constitution refers to a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors is or was of European descent but who is a native of India.
- Article 331 of the Constitution provides that the President may, if he is of the opinion that the Anglo-Indian community is not adequately represented in the House of the People, nominate not more than two members of that community to the House of the People.
- In the same way for the state Assemblies, Article 333 has provided for the Governor to nominate the members.

- Article 334(b) extended the reservation of the Anglo-Indian community in the Legislative bodies for 40 years through the insertion of this article. Subsequently, the reservation for the Anglo-Indian community was extended till the year 2020 through the 95th Amendment, 2009.

3. LOK SABHA SPEAKER CAPS PRIVATE MEMBER BILLS

News: The number of bills that a private member can introduce in a session of the Lok Sabha has been limited to three.

Facts:

- The government bills can be introduced and discussed on any day but private member's bills can be introduced and discussed only on Fridays.
- The admissibility of a private member's Bill is decided by the Rajya Sabha Chairman or the Lok Sabha Speaker.
- The Member must give at least a month's notice before the Bill can be listed for introduction; the House secretariat examines it for compliance with constitutional provisions and rules on legislation before listing.
- The last time a private member's bill was passed by both Houses was in 1970. The bill was the Supreme Court (Enlargement of Criminal Appellate Jurisdiction) Bill, 1968.

Additional Facts:

Private members bill: A Member of Parliament who is not a Minister or not a member of the Government is regarded as a Private Member. A Bill introduced in either house of the Parliament by any such member is called a Private Members Bill. Bills introduced by Ministers are called Government Bills.

4. GOOD GOVERNANCE INDEX

News: Minister of State for Public Grievances and Pensions launched the Good Governance Index on the occasion of Good Governance Day.

Facts:

- The Good Governance Index is a uniform tool to assess the status of governance and the impact of various interventions taken up by the State governments and the Union Territories.
- The index was launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and the Centre for Good Governance.
- The States are assessed on performance in 10 sectors namely (1) agriculture and allied sectors (2) commerce and industries (3) human resource development (4) public health (5) public infrastructure and utilities (6) economic governance (7) social welfare and development, (8) judicial and public security (9) environment and (10) citizen-centric governance.

Key takeaways from the index: The index has divided States and UTs into three groups namely Big States, North-East and Hill States and Union Territories.

- **Big States:** Tamil Nadu has topped the Good Governance Index among the Big states. It was followed by Maharashtra, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh.
- **North East and Hill States:** Himachal Pradesh was ranked first followed by Uttarakhand, Tripura, Mizoram and Sikkim.
- The **worst performers** in this group are Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh coming last.

- **Union Territories:** Puducherry is the best governed Union Territory followed by Chandigarh and Delhi. Lakshadweep is the worst performing UT.

5. CITIZENSHIP (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2019

News: The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019 received President Ram Nath Kovind's nod.

Facts:

- The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 amended the definition of illegal immigrant for Hindu, Sikh, Parsi, Buddhist and Christian immigrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who have lived in India without documentation.
- They will be granted fast-track Indian citizenship in six years. Till now, 12 years of residence has been the standard eligibility requirements for attainment of citizenship by naturalisation.
- **Eligibility criteria:**
 - The Act applies to all those illegal immigrants (religious minorities) who have entered India or will enter India in future.
 - The cut-off date for citizenship is December 31, 2014, which means the applicant should have entered India on or before that date.
- **Exemptions from CAA:** The Act excludes the areas under the Sixth Schedule and the North Eastern parts covered by the Inner Line Permit regime- which includes the whole of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, most of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Tripura, and certain pockets of Assam. The Inner Line Permit (ILP) regime has been extended to Manipur.

Additional Facts:

About Inner Line Permit (ILP): Inner Line Permit (ILP) is an official travel required by Indian citizens residing outside certain protected states while entering them. The aim of the ILP is to regulate movement to certain areas located near the international border of India.

- The origin of ILP dates back to the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations, 1873. The regulations prohibited British subjects or Indians from entering certain protected areas (such as areas with tea, oil and elephant trade). In 1950, the word British subjects was replaced by Citizens of India.
- Currently, the ILP is in force in (a)Arunachal Pradesh (b)Mizoram and (c)Nagaland (d) Manipur.

Protected Area Permit (PAP) - It is a legal travel certificate issued to foreign nationals (except Bhutan) for entering certain areas near the international border of India. It is issued under the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958.

- Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan are required to seek prior approval from the Ministry of Home Affairs to visit the protected areas
- Protected Areas are located in Arunachal Pradesh, parts of Himachal Pradesh parts of Jammu & Kashmir, parts of Rajasthan, parts of Sikkim and parts of Uttarakhand.

Restricted Area Permit (RAP): It is a legal travel certificate issued to foreign nationals for entering certain areas in Sikkim and the whole of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It is issued under the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958.

6. ASSAM ACCORD 1985

News: The debate on the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) passed by Parliament has repeatedly flagged the alleged violation of the Assam Accord by the new law.

Facts:

- The Assam Accord was a Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed between representatives of the Government of India and the leaders of the Assam Movement in 1985.
- **What did the accord contain?**
 - All those foreigners who had entered Assam between 1951 and 1961 were to be given full citizenship including the right to vote.
 - The entrants between 1961 and 1971 were to be denied voting rights for ten years but would enjoy all other rights of citizenship.
 - Foreigners who came to Assam on or after March 25, 1971 shall continue to be detected, deleted and practical steps shall be taken to expel such foreigners.
 - Clause 6 of the accord talks about providing constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people.
- In July 2019 Government of India has constituted a high-level panel to suggest ways to implement Clause 6 of the 1985 Assam Accord. The panel is headed by former Guwahati high court judge Justice Biplab Kumar Sarma.

7. DISHA BILL

News: The Andhra Pradesh Assembly enacted the A.P. Disha Act, 2019 (A.P. Criminal Law (Amendment) Act, 2019).

Facts:

- The Act allows for death penalty for heinous offences such as rape and gang-rape.
- The Act also amended the Code of Criminal Procedure for serious rape cases so that if sufficient conclusive evidence was available the investigation should be done in seven working days.
- The trial is expected to be completed within 14 working days taking the total time for a judgement in the case to 21 working days from the existing 4 months.

8. POLITICAL PARTIES REGISTRATION TRACKING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (PPRTMS)

News: The Election Commission of India (ECI) is set to implement the Political Parties Registration Tracking Management System (PPRTMS).

Facts:

- The registration tracking system is being through an online portal to track the status of the application for registration of a political party. This system will be effective from January 1, 2020.

Registration of Political Parties: The Registration of Political parties is governed by the provisions of Section 29A of the Representation of People's Act, 1951.

- The application should be as per the guidelines prescribed by the Election Commission in the exercise of the powers conferred by Article 324 and Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Additional Facts:

Representation of the People Act, 1951 - An Act to provide for the (a) conduct of elections of the Houses of Parliament and to the House or Houses of the Legislature of each State, (b) the qualifications and disqualifications for membership of those Houses, (c) the corrupt practices and other offences at or in connection with such elections and (d) the decision of doubts and disputes arising out of or in connection with such elections.

9. SANTHALI USED FOR THE FIRST TIME IN RAJYA SABHA

News: Recently, Santhali language has been spoken for the first time in the Rajya Sabha.

Facts:

- Santhali is a language from the North Mundari group of the Austro-Asiatic Munda family.
- Santhali is written in Ol Chiki script which was developed by Pdt. Raghunath Murmu in 1925.
- The language is primarily spoken in India (Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Assam), Bangladesh and Nepal.
- By 92nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003, Santhali along with Bodo, Maithili and Dogri were added to the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

Additional Facts:

Santhals: Santhals form the third largest tribal group in India. They call themselves Hor ko (Man) or Horhopon ko (sons of Man)

- Santhals follow the Sarna religion. Their God and Goddess are Marangburu, Jaheraera, and Manjh.
- Sohrai is the principal festival of Santal community. Besides that, Baha, Karam, Dansai, Sakrat, Mahmore, Rundo and Magsim are important festivals.
- Chadar Badar, a form of puppetry known also as Santal puppetry is a folk show involving wooden puppets placed in a small cage which acts as the stage.

Santhal rebellion: The Santhal rebellion commonly known as Santhal Hool was a native rebellion in Jharkhand against both the British colonial authority and zamindari system.

- The rebellion was led by the four Murmu Brothers - Sidhu, Kanhu, Chand and Bhairav.
- The rebellion was a revolt against the oppression of the British rule propagated through a distorted revenue system, enforced by the local zamindars, the police and the courts of the legal system.
- The rebellion was started in 1855. However, the revolt was brutally crushed when the two celebrated leaders Sidhu and Kanhu were killed by the British.

Economy

1. DRAFT BILL PROPOSES EMPOWERMENT OF NATIONAL STATISTICAL COMMISSION

News: Government released the draft National Statistical Commission (NSC) Bill for public comments.

Facts:

- The draft bill is aimed at empowering the National Statistical Commission (NSC) to become the nodal body for all core statistics in the country like GDP, jobs data, industry data and budgetary transactions data.

Features of the Bill:

- It proposes a statutory NSC with an independent secretariat headed by a secretary rank officer.
- The commission will have a Chairperson, five whole time members along with Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Chief Statistician of India (CSI) as other members and Chief Economic Advisor, Ministry of Finance as the ex-officio member.
- The Chairman and the members of the Commission shall be appointed by the central government on the recommendation of a search committee.
- The Bill envisages financial autonomy for the commission through an independent National Statistical Fund.

Additional Facts:

NSC: The National Statistical Commission (NSC) of India formed in 2005 is an autonomous body.

- The objective of its commission is to reduce the problems faced by statistical agencies in the country in relation to collection of data.

2. GST COUNCIL TO SET UP GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM FOR TAXPAYERS

News: The GST Council has decided to set up a grievance redressal mechanism for taxpayers.

Facts:

- The Grievance Redressal Committee (GRC) at zonal and state levels will be set up as a redressal mechanism for taxpayers.
- It will consist of both central tax and state tax officers, representatives of trade and industry and other goods and services tax (GST) stakeholders.
- The committee will be constituted for a period of 2 years and the term of each member will be likewise.
- The functions of the committee include examining and resolving all the grievances and issues being faced by the taxpayers, including procedural difficulties and IT-related issues pertaining to GST, both specific and general nature.

Additional Facts:

GST Council: Goods & Services Tax (GST) Council was constituted by the President as a constitutional body under Article 279(1) for making recommendations to the Union and State Government on issues related to Goods and Service Tax.

The council consists of the following members: **(a)** The Union Finance Minister is the Chairperson **(b)** The Union Minister of State in-charge of Revenue of finance and **(c)** The Minister In-charge of finance or taxation or any other Minister nominated by each State Government.

3. RBI RELEASED TREND AND PROGRESS OF BANKING IN INDIA 2018-19 REPORT

News: The Reserve Bank of India has released a report titled Trend and Progress of Banking in India 2018-19.

Facts:

- In 2018-19, the asset quality of scheduled commercial banks turned around after a gap of seven years with the overhang of stressed assets declining and fresh slippages arrested.
- Due to the declining provisioning requirement and recapitalisation, the banking sector returned to profitability in the first half of 2019-20.
- **Concerns according to the report:** The GDP growth for the second quarter of the current financial year has dipped to a six-year low of 4.5%.
 - Despite the improvement in some of the important parameters, the risk-averse nature among lenders was worrisome.
 - The waning of confidence among the borrowers is leading to credit slowdown and is affecting the overall economic activity.
- **Recommendations:** The capital infusion by the government in public sector banks is just not enough to meet the regulatory minimum. Hence, the banks might require more recapitalization.
 - The financial health of PSBs should also be assessed by their ability to access capital markets rather than looking to the government as a recapitalizer of the first and last resort.

4. FINANCIAL SYSTEM STABLE DESPITE SLOWDOWN: RBI FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT

News: The Reserve Bank of India has released its biannual Financial Stability Report, 2019.

Facts:

The Financial Stability Report are bi-annual reports published by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It reviews the nature, magnitude and implications of risks that may have a bearing on the macroeconomic environment, financial institutions, markets and infrastructure.

Key takeaways from the report:

- **On India's Economic Growth:**
 - The country's financial system remains stable despite slowing economic growth.
 - The aggregate demand has slowed down in the second half of the current financial year ending March 2020.
 - The Global factors such as a delay in Brexit deal, trade tensions, impending recession, oil-market disruptions and geopolitical risks has caused uncertainties leading to a significant deceleration in growth.
 - The reviving of the twin engines of India's economic growth namely private consumption and investment while being vigilant about developments in global financial markets remains a critical challenge for RBI.
- **On Banking Sector:** The Banks capital adequacy ratio has improved significantly after the recapitalisation of PSB.
 - RBI has also taken several policy measures to improve the condition of the financial system such as (a) introducing a liquidity management regime for NBFCs (b) improving the banks'

governance culture (c) resolution of stressed assets and (d) for the development of payment infrastructure.

- The banks gross non-performing asset (GNPA) ratio is expected to increase from 9.3% in September 2019 to 9.9% by September 2020.
- The frauds reported by the banks touched an all-time high of around Rs 1.13 lakhs in the FY19.
- **About Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR):** Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) is the ratio of a bank's capital in relation to its risk weighted assets and current liabilities and is decided by the central bank.
 - The risk weighted assets take into account (a) credit risk (b) market risk and (c) operational risk while deciding Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR).

5. OPERATION TWIST

News: The Reserve Bank of India has announced that it will carry out US-style 'Operation Twist' to bring down interest rates.

Facts:

- Under Operation Twist, RBI will conduct simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities under Open Market Operations (OMO) for ₹10,000 crore each.
- It will purchase the longer-term maturities which are government bonds maturing in 2029 and simultaneously sell the shorter duration ones which are short-term bonds maturing in 2020.
- This simultaneous purchase and sale will bring down interest on long term loans which can lead to increase in economic spending and become a driving factor for long-term economic activity.
- Operation Twist first appeared in 1961 as a way to strengthen the U.S. dollar and stimulate cash flow into the economy. US implemented it again in late 2011 and 2012 to stimulate the economy hit by the global financial crisis, later it was replaced by policy of "quantitative easing".

Additional Facts:

Open Market operations: Open market operations is the sale and purchase of government securities and treasury bills by RBI or the central bank of the country with an aim to regulate the money supply in the economy.

- The central bank carries out the OMO through commercial banks and does not directly deal with the public.
- When the RBI wants to increase the money supply in the economy, it purchases the government securities from the market, and it sells government securities to out liquidity from the system.

6. INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY CODE (SECOND AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019

News: The Union Cabinet approved the amendments in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 through the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019.

Facts:

The amendments aim to remove certain difficulties being faced during insolvency resolution process to realise the objects of the code and to further ease doing of business.

Key features of the bill:

- The amendment includes a provision to protect the successful resolution applicants from criminal proceedings with regard to offences committed by previous promoters of a company.

- It also removes bottlenecks, streamline Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) and protect last mile funding in order to boost investment in financially distressed sectors of the country.
- The bill also introduces additional thresholds for Financial Creditors represented by an authorized representative due to large numbers in order to prevent frivolous triggering of Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP).
- The amended Act would also ensure that the substratum of the business of a corporate debtor is not lost. It can continue as a going concern by clarifying that the licences, permits, concessions, clearances cannot be terminated or suspended or not renewed during the moratorium period.

Additional Facts:

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC):

- It is the bankruptcy law of India that administers the insolvency proceedings for individuals and companies.
- It establishes the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India.
- The board oversees the insolvency proceedings in the country and regulates the entities registered below it. The Board has 10 members, which includes representatives from the Ministries of Finance and Law, and the Reserve Bank of India.
- The Code creates time-bound processes of 180 (extended to 330) days for all insolvency resolution.
- The resolution processes have to be conducted by licensed **insolvency professionals (IPs)**.
- **Information utilities (IUs)** are also established to collect, collate and disseminate financial information to facilitate insolvency resolution.
- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) adjudicates insolvency resolution for companies. The Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) adjudicates insolvency resolution for individuals.

7. INDIA TO COLLABORATE E-DATABASE TO TRACK ECONOMIC OFFENDERS

News: The Central Government has proposed a comprehensive database of economic offenders called the National Economic Offence Records (NEOR).

Facts:

- The National Economic Offence Records (NEOR) will be a web portal that will disseminate information to grassroots level officers of enforcement and investigating agencies.
- The database will help in coordinated actions by multiple agencies against corrupt officials and corporate houses indulging in financial frauds and money laundering.
- The database is being prepared by the Central Economic Intelligence Bureau (CEIB), an arm of the finance ministry along with National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- Currently, the Central Economic Intelligence Bureau (CEIB) runs a captive database called Secured Information Exchange Network (SIEN). The SIEN operates on intranet (not available online) and information on economic offenders are shared with headquarters of 13 select central agencies.

Additional Facts:

Central Economic Intelligence Bureau (CEIB): Central Economic Intelligence Bureau (CEIB) was setup in the year 1985 under Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance.

- It is the nodal agency for economic intelligence mandated to ensure effective interaction and coordination among all the concerned agencies in the area of economic offences.
- It is headed by a Director General who carries the designation of Special Secretary to the Government of India.

National Informatics Centre (NIC): The National Informatics Centre (NIC) is an institute set up by the Indian government in 1976 to drive its technology and e-governance initiatives in the country.

- The institute is part of the Indian Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's Department of Electronics & Information Technology.
- NIC has the mandate to set up, implement and support all the information technology led programs of the central and state governments and other government organizations in India.

8. CABINET APPROVES LAUNCH OF BHARAT BOND EXCHANGE TRADED FUND

News: The Union Cabinet approved the launch of India's first corporate bond- Bharat Bond exchange-traded funds (ETF).

Facts:

- The objective of the fund is to create an additional source of funding for Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs), Central Public Financial Institutions (CPFIs) and other Government organizations.
- The index will be managed by an independent index provider, National Stock Exchange.
- The fund will have a fixed maturity of three and ten years and will trade on the stock exchanges.
- It will invest in a portfolio of bonds of state-run companies and other government entities. It will provide retail investors easy and low-cost access to bond markets with smaller amount as low as ₹1,000.

Benefits of the fund:

- It will provide safety (underlying bonds are issued by CPSEs and other Government owned entities), liquidity (tradability on exchange) and predictable tax efficient returns (target maturity structure).
- It will increase participation of retail investors who are currently not participating in bond markets due to liquidity and accessibility constraints.
- The tax efficiency is higher compared to Bonds as coupons from the Bonds are taxed at marginal rates.

Additional Facts:

Bonds: A bond is a debt instrument in which an investor loans money to an entity (typically corporate or government) which borrows the funds for a defined period of time at a variable or fixed interest rate.

- Bonds are used by companies, municipalities, states, etc. to raise money to finance a variety of projects and activities.

Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF): An ETF is a fund that comprises a group of stocks that are listed on an exchange and can be simply traded like any other listed security.

- Usually, ETFs are passive funds where the fund manager doesn't select stocks on your behalf. The fund simply copies an index and endeavours to accurately reflect its performance.
- The ETFs trading value is based on the net asset value of the underlying stocks that it represents.
- The ETF is aimed at helping speed up the government's disinvestment programme.

9. RBI LAYS DOWN GUIDELINES FOR PAYMENTS BANKS' SFB LICENCE

News: The Reserve Bank of India released final Guidelines for the 'on tap' Licencing for Small Finance Banks (SFBs).

Facts:**About the Guidelines for 'on-tap' Licencing:**

- The minimum paid-up voting equity capital / capital requirement shall be Rs 200 crores.
- For Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks (UCBs), who voluntarily wants to transition into SFBs initial requirement of net worth shall be at ₹ 100 crores which will have to be increased to ₹ 200 crores within 5 years from the date of commencement of business.
- The payment banks can also apply for conversion into Small Finance Banks (SFBs) after 5 years of operations if they are otherwise eligible as per these guidelines.
- Small Finance Banks (SFBs) will also be given scheduled bank status immediately upon commencement of operations. Also, SFBs will have general permission to open banking outlets from the date of commencement of operations.
- The listing of Small Finance Banks (SFB) will be made mandatory within three years after it reaches the net worth of Rs 500 crore for the first time.

SMALL BANKS CAN GO PAN-INDIA

	PAYMENTS BANKS	SMALL BANKS
WHO CAN PROMOTE	Prepaid card issuers, telecom companies, NBFCs, business correspondents, supermarket chains, corporates, realty sector co-ops & PSUs	Individuals/professionals with 10 years experience in finance, NBFCs, microfinance cos, local area banks
WHAT THEY MUST DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a minimum capital of Rs 100cr Maintain 75% of deposits in govt bonds Maintain 25% of deposits in other banks Have at least 26% investment by Indians Get listed if net worth crosses Rs 500cr Have 25% of branches in unbanked areas Be fully networked and technology driven Have Rs 1 lakh cap for deposits in one a/c 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a minimum capital of Rs 100cr Extend 75% of loans to priority sector Have 25% of branches in unbanked areas Maintain reserve requirements Cap loans to individuals and groups at 10% and 15% of net worth Have a business correspondent network
WHAT THEY CAN DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer internet banking Sell mutual funds, insurance, pensions Offer bill payment service for customers Have ATMs and business correspondents (BC) Can function as BC of another bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sell forex to customers Sell mutual funds, insurance, pensions Can convert into a full-fledged bank Expand across the country
WHAT THEY CAN'T DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer credit cards Extend loans Handle cross-border remittances Accept NRI Deposits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend large loans Float subsidiaries Cannot deal in sophisticated financial products

Additional Facts:

Small finance Bank: Small finance Banks are niche banks that focus and serve the needs of a certain demographic segment of the population. They primarily undertake basic banking activities of acceptance of deposits and lending to unserved and underserved sections including small business units, small and marginal farmers, micro and small industries and unorganised sector entities.

10. OECD RELEASED ITS ECONOMIC SURVEY OF INDIA REP

News: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has released its Economic Survey of India report.

Facts:

The report has projected GDP growth in the current fiscal (2019-20) at 5.8% lower than 6.8 per cent in 2018-19. However, it estimated the GDP to grow at 6.2% during 2020-21 and further to 6.4% during 2021-22.

Key Highlights from the report:

- Income has increased fast in recent years, but private investment has lagged behind.
- The recent loosening in monetary policy, combined with fiscal rectitude, will lower the cost of borrowing for the corporate sector.
- Reforms to improve the ease of doing business including recent measures to liberalise FDI and efforts to improve judicial services and contract enforcement will also help.

Concerns Highlighted by the report:

- Economic growth has been strong but social and governance challenges remain.
- The public debt-to-GDP ratio remains relatively high
- Ambitious reforms have been passed but implementing them fully would boost incomes and wellbeing.
- Addressing domestic structural bottlenecks is key to supporting India's competitiveness.
- Air pollution is high and will increase in the absence of bold action.

- International oil prices have come down, but they remain volatile and pose risks for inflation, the current account and public finances.

Additional Facts:

OECD: The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an intergovernmental economic organisation with 36 member countries, headquartered in Paris, France.

- It was founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade.
- India is not a member of OECD but has been a key economic partner.

11. INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES CENTRES AUTHORITY BILL, 2019

News: The Union Finance Minister recently introduced the International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019 in Lok Sabha. The Bill seeks to set up a unified authority for regulating all financial services in international financial services centres (IFSCs) in the country.

Facts:

Key Features of the International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019

- The Bill will be applicable to all International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) set up under the Special Economic Zones Act, 2005.
- **Management of the Authority:** The International Financial Services Centres Authority shall consist of 9 members:
 - A Chairperson
 - One Member each to be nominated by the RBI, SEBI, IRDAI and PFRDA (Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority)
 - Two members to be dominated by the Central Government
 - Two other whole-time or full-time or part-time members
- **Functions of the Authority:**
 - Regulation of all such financial services, financial products and FIs in an IFSC which has already been permitted by the Financial Sector Regulators for IFSCs or notified by GOI.
 - Recommendation to the Central Government such other financial products, financial services and financial institutions which may be permitted in the IFSCs.
- **Powers of the Authority:** All powers exercisable by the respective financial sector regulatory (viz. RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, and PFRDA etc.) under the respective Acts shall be solely exercised by the Authority in the IFSCs.
- **Transactions in foreign currency:** The transactions of financial services in the IFSCs shall be done in the foreign currency as specified by the Authority in consultation with the Central Government.

Additional Facts:

IFSCs in India: The first IFSC in India was set up at GIFT City, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

- An IFSC seeks to bring to India, those types of financial services and transactions that are currently carried on outside India by overseas financial institutions and overseas branches/ subsidiaries of Indian financial institutions.
- The policy objective behind establishing an IFSC in India is providing a platform for international financial services to operate from and to specialize in exports of high value-added International Financial Services.

Regulation of IFSCs: Presently, Banking, Capital markets and Insurance sectors in IFSCs are regulated by multiple regulators - the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI), the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), respectively.

International Relations

1. THE FIRST GLOBAL REFUGEE FORUM (GRF) WAS HELD IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

News: The first Global Refugee Forum (GRF), a two-day gathering of United Nations member states was held in Geneva, Switzerland.

Facts:

It was jointly hosted by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the government of Switzerland. It is guided by the Global Compact on Refugees.

- It will be held every four years at the Ministerial level.

Focus of first GRF: The first GRF was organised around the following areas of focus namely:

- Burden and responsibility-sharing
- Education,
- Jobs and livelihoods,
- Energy and infrastructure solutions and
- Protection capacity.

Additional Facts:

Global Compact on Refugees (GCR): It is a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation.

- It emerged from the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016. It was formally adopted in 2018.

Objectives of GCR: The main objectives of GCR are - Ease the pressure on host countries; Enhance refugee self-reliance; Expand access to third-country solutions; Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR): It was created in 1950. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. Its mandate is to protect refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people, and assist in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country.

India's stand on Refugees: India does not have a national refugee framework. It is also not a signatory to the UN Refugee Convention of 1951 or the 1967 Protocol relating to the status of refugees.

- The legal status of refugees in India are defined by - The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939; Foreigners Act, 1946, and the Passport Act, 1967.

2. THE 6TH INDIAN OCEAN DIALOGUE (IOD) AND DELHI DIALOGUE HOSTED BY MEA IN DELHI

News: Union Ministry of External Affairs will be hosting the 6th Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) and Delhi Dialogue at Delhi, India.

Facts:

Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD)- IOD is a flagship initiative of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) held with the assistance of the Indian Council for World Affairs (ICWA).

- The theme for the 2019 Indian Ocean Dialogue is- 'Indo-Pacific: Re-imagining the Indian. Ocean through an Expanded Geography'.

Delhi Dialogue: The Delhi Dialogue is a premier annual track 1.5 event to discuss politico-security, economic and socio-cultural engagement between India and ASEAN.

- The theme for the 2019 Delhi Dialogue is- ‘Advancing Partnership in Indo-Pacific’.
- The dialogue is being organized with the assistance of Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), a New Delhi-based autonomous policy research institute.

Additional Facts:

ICWA: ICWA was established in 1943 by a group of Indian intellectuals as think tank. ICWA is devoted exclusively for the study of international relations and foreign affairs.

- It was established as a non-official, non-political and non-profit organisation under Registration of Societies Act 1860.
- It was declared as an institution of national importance by Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) Act, 2001 enacted by Parliament.
- The Vice President of India is the ex-officio President of ICWA. Minister of external Affairs is the Vice President of ICWA.

IORA: Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is an intergovernmental organization, with a secretariat at Ebene, Mauritius. It was established in 1997 with the aim to strengthen regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean Region.

- It comprises of 22 member states and 9 dialogue partners with Indian Ocean Tourism Organisation and the Indian Ocean Research Group having observer status.

3. EIGHT WEST AFRICAN NATIONS RENAME COMMON CURRENCY FROM ‘CFA FRANC’ TO ‘ECO’

News: Recently, eight West African nations have agreed to change the name of their common currency from ‘CFA franc’ to ‘Eco’.

Facts:

CFA Franc is the name of two currencies- ‘the West African CFA franc’, which is used in 8 West African countries and ‘Central African CFA franc’, which is used in 6 Central African countries. Both currencies are guaranteed by the French treasury and were created in 1945.

What was the decision?

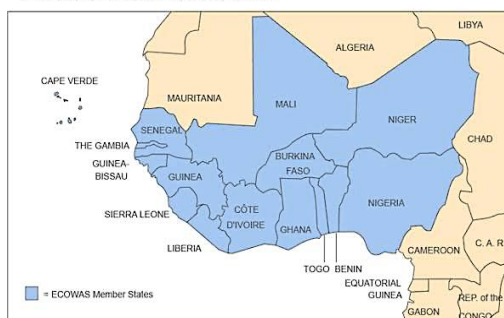
- The eight West African countries namely - Ivory Coast, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Guinea-Bissau, have agreed to change the name of their common currency from ‘CFA franc’ to ‘Eco’.
- All these countries except Guinea-Bissau are former French colonies.
- This decision was taken after the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) made efforts to establish a common currency to be launched in 2020.

Additional Facts:

ECOWAS:

- It is a 15-member regional group established in 1975 by the Treaty of Lagos for promoting economic integration. It is considered as one of the pillars of the African Economic Community,

The Fifteen ECOWAS Member States



- The member countries are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d' Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo

4. US CONGRESS CONSENTS TO DESIGNATE INDIA'S NAVIC AS ALLIED SYSTEM

News: Recently, the US Congress has agreed to designate India's Navigation in Indian Constellation (NavIC) as its allied navigational satellite system.

Facts:

The allied navigational satellite tag allows the US satellite navigation system to co-operate or to exchange data with other certified satellite navigation systems. The aim of such a system is to develop a prototype program for multi-global navigation satellite system.

- This tag is designated as part of the conference report of the National Defence Authorization Act (NDAA) 2020.
- Along with NavIC, Galileo of the European Union and QZSS of Japan were also designated allied navigational satellite system tag and Russia's GLONASS and Chinese Beidou as a non-allied system.

Additional Facts:

NDAA: The National Defence Authorization Act (NDAA) for fiscal year 2020 had designated India as a major defence partner which brings India at par with the closest US partners in terms of defence trade and technology transfer.

NavIC: It is also known as Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS). It is an independent regional navigation satellite system being developed by Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).

- Its main objective is to provide reliable position, navigation and timing services over India and its neighbourhood up to 1500 km from its boundary
- It will provide two types of services namely, Standard Positioning Service (SPS) which is provided to all the users and Restricted Service (RS), which is an encrypted service provided only to the authorized users.
- The constellation consists of 7 satellites. Three of the seven satellites are located in geostationary orbit and remaining four satellites are in geosynchronous orbit (GSO).

5. SAUDI ARABIA TAKES OVER G20 PRESIDENCY FROM JAPAN

News: Arabia has become the first Arab nation to take over the G20 Presidency on December 1, 2019.

Facts:

- Saudi Arabia will host the G20 Summit in its capital, Riyadh on November 21, 2020.
- The theme of Summit- "Realising Opportunities of the 21st Century for All".

Additional Facts:

G20: The G20 (or Group of Twenty) is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union. It was founded in 1999 with the aim to discuss policy pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability.

- Members of G20 include 19 countries and European Union. Spain is a permanent guest and always participates in the G20 summits

G20 members



Note: The European Union is also a member



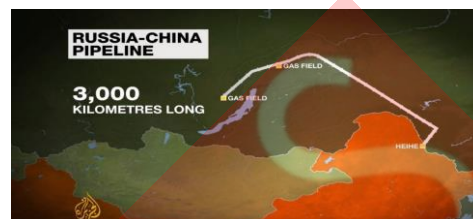
- The G20 operates without a permanent secretariat or staff. The G20 summits are attended by Head of States/ Head of Government.

6. POWER OF SIBERIA GAS PIPELINE CEMENTS CHINA-RUSSIA BOND

News: “Power of Siberia” gas pipeline has been inaugurated by President of China and Russia.

Facts:

- It is the first cross-border gas pipeline between Russia and China with the aim to pump natural gas to China and Russia’s far-east regions.
- Under this pipeline project, Russia will deliver 1 trillion cubic meters of natural gas to China over the next 30 years.



7. VISIT OF SWEDISH ROYALS TO INDIA

News: Sweden’s King and Queen were on a state visit to India with an aim to strengthen bilateral ties.

Facts:

- The two countries inaugurated the India-Sweden High-Level Dialogue on innovation policy with a focus on areas such as digital health, artificial intelligence (AI), future mobility and circular economy.
- An agreement on science cooperation in the polar regions was signed.
- India-Sweden Relations: The diplomatic ties between India and Sweden were established in the year 1949.
- The Indo-Swedish Joint Commission for Economic, Industrial and Scientific Cooperation was established at the level of the Ministers of Commerce and Industry in India and the Swedish Minister for Foreign Trade and EU Affairs.
- Bilateral trade was US \$1.9 billion in 2016-17 as compared to about US \$2.17 billion in 2015-16.

8. OPEC COUNTRIES, RUSSIA TO CUT OIL OUTPUT, PUSHING UP PRICES

News: The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and Russia has reached a deal extending their output cuts. This deal is aimed at reducing surplus oil and to bolster crude prices.

Facts:

OPEC:

- It is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization, created at the Baghdad Conference in 1960 by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. It is headquartered in Vienna, Austria.
- OPEC aims to manage the supply of oil to influence its price on the world market and to avoid fluctuations that might affect the economies of both producing and purchasing countries.

OPEC Membership, 2019



- Its membership is open to any country that is a substantial exporter of oil and which shares the ideals of the organization.
- The current OPEC members are: (a)Algeria (b)Angola (c)Ecuador (d)Equatorial Guinea (e)Gabon (f)Iran (g)Iraq (h)Kuwait, (I)Libya (j)Nigeria (k)the Republic of the Congo (l)Saudi Arabia (j)United Arab Emirates and (k)Venezuela.

*Environment***1. UNFCCC COP25 CONCLUDED IN MADRID, SPAIN**

News: UNFCCC CoP25 concluded in Madrid, Spain

Facts:

Key takeaways

- **No agreement on carbon markets:** No agreement was reached on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement which enables the Sustainable Development Mechanism (SDM) as a new carbon market instrument for the period after 2020.
- **Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), 2020:** The index developed by Germanwatch, New Climate Institute and Climate Action Network (CAN), ranked the USA and Saudi Arabia as topmost polluters. India was ranked 9th.
- **“Ocean deoxygenation: Everyone’s problem”:** The report by IUCN noted that levels of oxygen in the oceans fell by around 2% from 1960 to 2010.
- **Global Climate Risk 2020 report:** The report by Greenwatch, ranked Japan, the Philippines, and Germany at the top for overall climate vulnerability in 2018. India was ranked 5th.
- **Global Carbon Budget 2019:** In 2018, the global carbon dioxide emissions were dominated by emissions from China (28%), the USA (15%), the EU (9%) and India (7%).
- **Launch of Platform of Science-based Ocean Solutions:** It aims to enhance the sharing of knowledge created by various actors in the ocean and climate community to advance ocean-climate action.
- **State of Global Climate Report 2019:** Released by World Meteorological Organization’s (WMO), the report noted that the global average temperature in 2019 (January to October) was about 1.1 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial period.
- **Emission Gap Report:** UNEP released Emission Gap Report which noted that at the current pace, the world is heading for a 3.2°C temperature rise.
- **Climate Ambition Alliance:** 73 countries joined the Climate Ambition Alliance which was launched by Chile in September 2019. It aims to accelerate the transformation needed to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Additional Facts:

UNFCCC - The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is an international environmental treaty adopted on 9 May 1992 and opened for signature at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro from 3 to 14 June 1992. It then entered into force on 21 March 1994, after a sufficient number of countries had ratified it. The UNFCCC objective is to "stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system.

2. GLOBAL CARBON BUDGET 2019

News: The Global Carbon Budget 2019 has been released for the year 2019.

Facts:

The Global Carbon Project is a Global Research Project of Future Earth and a research partner of the World Climate Research Programme. It was established in 2001.

- The project seeks to work with the international science community to establish a common and mutually agreed knowledge base to support policy debate and action to slow down and ultimately stop the increase of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.
- The project publishes two reports namely the Global Carbon Budget and Global Carbon Atlas.

Key takeaways from the report:

- In 2018, the global carbon dioxide emissions were dominated by emissions from China (28%), the USA (15%), the EU (9%) and India (7%).
- About 40% of global carbon dioxide emissions were attributable to coal use, 34% from oil, 20% from natural gas, and the remaining 6% from cement production and other sources.
- The growth in global carbon dioxide emissions is likely to come down to just 0.6% in 2019 when compared to about 2% in 2018.
- The slowdown can be attributed to declines in coal use in the U.S. and much of Europe and lower-than-expected growth from other key coal consumers this year.

Report on India:

- The report has said that India's emissions in 2019 was likely to be only 1.8% higher than in 2018. This is significantly lower than the 8% growth that India showed in 2018.
- The lower growth in CO₂ emissions is due to slowdown in Economic growth which has been consistently weakening leading to reduction in activities that cause emissions.

3. INDIA SUFFERED MAXIMUM NUMBER OF CLIMATE-RELATED FATALITIES IN 2018

News: Non-profit organization Germanwatch released the Global Climate Risk 2020 report at UNFCCC CoP 25 in Madrid, Spain.

Facts:

- India suffered the maximum number of deaths (2,081) from climate-triggered extreme weather events in 2018. India was second in terms of economic losses in 2018.
- Japan, the Philippines and Germany are at the top for overall climate vulnerability in 2018. India has been ranked fifth.
- Between 1999 and 2018, Puerto Rico, Myanmar and Haiti were the countries most affected by extreme weather events.

Additional Facts:

Global Climate Risk Index: The Global Climate Risk Index (CRI) developed by Germanwatch analyses quantified impacts of extreme weather events. It analyses the impact both in terms of fatalities as well as economic losses that occurred.

4. CLIMATE CHANGE PERFORMANCE INDEX (CCPI) 2020 AT UNFCCC COP25 IN MADRID

News: Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI), 2020 has been released at UNFCCC CoP25 in Madrid, Spain.

Facts:

- The USA followed by Saudi Arabia was designated as topmost polluters.
- Sweden is the least polluter followed by Denmark.
- India has been ranked 9th.

Additional Facts:

CCPI - is an independent monitoring tool for countries' climate protection performance. It measures the emissions, renewable energy share and climate policies of 57 countries and the European Union. These countries are collectively responsible for 90% of GHG emissions.

- The index is developed by Germanwatch, New Climate Institute and Climate Action Network (CAN).

5. EU'S CLIMATE NEUTRALITY 2050 PLAN

News: European Union has put forward European Green Deal at UNFCCC CoP25 in Madrid, Spain

Facts:

- **European Green Deal:** It commits to climate neutrality by 2050. EU's NDC under the Paris Agreement is to reduce its emissions by 40 % by 2030 from 1990 levels.
- **Climate neutrality:** It is when CO₂ emissions do not have a negative impact on climate. It can be achieved through reducing emissions to a minimum and balancing remaining emissions with climate protection measures.

6. CLIMATE EMERGENCY COP25: NEW PLATFORM LINKING OCEANS AND CLIMATE LAUNCHED IN MADRID

News: At the 25th Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC (COP25), Platform of Science-based Ocean Solutions has been launched with aim to enhance the sharing of knowledge created by various actors in the ocean and climate community to advance ocean-climate action.

Facts:**Objectives:**

- To encourage the incorporation of the ocean in climate strategies (NDCs, NAPs, Adaptation Communications, and National Policy Frameworks).
- To facilitate access to key resources and solutions for the ocean
- To highlight the importance of the IPCC Special Report on Oceans and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC) and its main findings, as the best available science for the planning and implementation of national policies
- To involve and engage a large number of actors in ocean-climate action: academia, the public sector, the private sector and the civil society

IPCC Special Report on Oceans and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate (SROCC): It was released in September 2019.

- The global ocean has absorbed more than 90% of the excess heat in the climate system.
- It has also absorbed 20-30% of total human-caused carbon dioxide emissions since the 1980s, causing increasing surface acidification.
- Since 1993, the rate of ocean warming has more than doubled. It has resulted in marine heatwaves doubling in frequency since 1982 and increasing in intensity.
- It is very likely that between 84–90 % of marine heatwaves that occurred between 2006 and 2015 are attributable to the anthropogenic temperature increase.

Additional Facts:

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) - The IPCC is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations. It was founded in 1988. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

- It provides policymakers with regular scientific assessments on climate change, its implications and potential future risks. It also puts forward adaptation and mitigation options.
- The IPCC does not carry out original research, nor does it monitor climate or related phenomena itself. It assesses published literature including peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed sources.
- The IPCC publishes main Assessment Reports every five or six years. It also publishes a series of special reports to provide an assessment on a specific issue.

7. STATE OF GLOBAL CLIMATE 2019

News: World Meteorological Organization's (WMO) released provisional State of Global Climate 2019 at the Conference of Parties 25 (CoP 25) in Madrid. The final Statement on the State of the Climate with complete 2019 data will be published in March 2020.

Facts:

Key takeaways from provisional State of Global Climate 2019

- **High Temperatures in 2019:** The global average temperature in 2019 (January to October) was about 1.1 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial period. 2019 is expected to be the second or third warmest year on record. 2016 remains the warmest year.
- **Record greenhouse gas concentrations:** Concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere hit a record level of 407.8 parts per million in 2018 and continued to rise in 2019.
- **Acceleration of global mean sea level rise:** In October 2019, the global mean sea level reached its highest value since the beginning of the high-precision altimetry record (January 1993). This is because of the melting of ice sheets in Greenland and Antarctica.

Additional Facts:

World Meteorological Organization (WMO): It is an intergovernmental organization with a membership of 192 Member States and Territories. It is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) for meteorology, operational hydrology and related geophysical sciences. Other than the annual State of Climate report, WMO releases Greenhouse Gas Bulletin annually.

- It was established by the ratification of the WMO Convention on 23 March 1950. It is headquartered at Geneva, Switzerland.
- It originated from the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), which was established after the 1873 Vienna International Meteorological Congress.

8. RHINOS TO BE RE-INTRODUCED IN UTTARAKHAND

News: The Uttarakhand State Wildlife Board has cleared a proposal by the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) to re-introduce rhinoceroses in the Corbett Tiger Reserve (CTR).

Facts:

Great one-horned rhinoceros (Indian rhinoceros): There are about 2,600 rhinos in India, with more than 90% of the population concentrated in Assam's Kaziranga National Park. Outside Kaziranga, rhinos are found in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar.

- It is listed as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List.

Conservation Programmes in India

- **Indian Rhino Vision (IRV) 2020 programme:** The program was launched in 2005 by Assam Forest Department in partnership with WWF-India, the International Rhino Foundation, and US Fish & Wildlife Service.

- It aims to attain a wild population of at least 3,000 greater one-horned rhinos spread over seven protected areas in Assam by the year 2020.
- **New Delhi Declaration on Asian Rhinos 2019:** Under the declaration, India will collaborate with Bhutan, Nepal, Indonesia, and Malaysia for conservation and protection of three Asian rhino species-
 - Greater one-horned rhinoceros,
 - Javan rhinoceros (listed as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List)
 - Sumatran rhinoceros (listed as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List).
- **National Rhino Conservation Strategy for India:** it has been launched by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. It aims at strengthening rhino protection and expanding present distribution range by at least 5%

Additional Facts:

Other Rhino Species:

- Southern White Rhino: It is listed as Near Threatened in IUCN Red List.
- Northern White Rhino: Functionally extinct.
- Black Rhino: It is listed as Critically Endangered in the IUCN Red List.

Jim Corbett National Park - Jim Corbett National Park was established in 1936 as Hailey National Park - the first national park in India. It is located in the Nainital district of Uttarakhand.

- The park was declared a Tiger Reserve in 1973- the first to come under the Project Tiger initiative.

9. INDIA HAD MOST DEATHS CAUSED BY POLLUTION IN 2017: NEW REPORT

News: Global Alliance on Health and Pollution (GAHP) 2019 has released Pollution and Health Metrics: Global, Regional and Country Analysis.

Facts:

- In 2017, pollution was responsible for 15% of all deaths globally.
- India had the most pollution-related deaths (about 2.3 million) followed by China and Nigeria.

According to State of Global Air 2019 published by Health Effects Institute (HEI) air pollution led to 5 million deaths in 2017. South Asian region (Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Pakistan) accounted for over 1.5 million deaths.

Additional Facts:

Indian Govt Initiatives to combat Air Pollution:

- **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):** launched in 2019, it is a five-year action plan. it aims at 20%–30% reduction of PM2.5 and PM10 concentration by 2024, taking 2017 as the base year for the comparison of concentration. The program targets 102 non-attainment cities.
- **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojna:** It seeks to replace unclean cooking fuels used in the most underprivileged households with clean and more efficient LPG (Liquefied Petroleum Gas). A major objective of the scheme is to ensure smoke-free houses and thus curb indoor air pollution.
- The Indian government has also decided to skip BS-V and directly move to BS-VI from April 2020. It has further agreed to advance the proposed date for Euro-VI from 2026 to 2020.

10. ODISHA AWARDED 'WORLD HABITAT AWARD' FOR JAGA MISSION

News: Odisha has won the 'World Habitat Award', global recognition for its ambitious initiative called Jaga Mission.

Facts:

- Odisha Liveable Habitat Mission "JAGA" is a society under the Housing & Urban Development Department, Government of Odisha. It is headed by the Chief Secretary, Odisha.
- The mission aims at transforming the slums into liveable habitat with all necessary civic infrastructure and services at par with the better off areas within the same urban local body (ULB).
- The mission also aims at leveraging and converging various schemes/ programs by strengthening collaboration among various Departments and other Stakeholders.
- It will also provide advisory support to the Government of Odisha to examine options for policy reforms required for the sustainable transformation of lives of urban poor.

Additional Facts:

World Habitat Award: The World Habitat Award is given by World Habitat. It is given in partnership with United Nations Habitat every year.

- The award is given for recognition of innovative, outstanding and revolutionary ideas, projects and programmes from across the world in the field of housing.

UN Habitat: The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) is the United Nations agency for human settlements and sustainable urban development. It was established in 1978. UN-Habitat is headquartered at Nairobi, Kenya.

- The twin goals of the Habitat Agenda are (a) *adequate* shelter for all and (b) development of sustainable human settlements in an urbanizing world.
- UN Habitat reports directly to the UN General Assembly. It is also a member of the United Nations Development Group (UNDP).

II. INDIA STATE OF FOREST REPORT 2019

News: The India State of Forest Report 2019 has been prepared by Forest Survey of India (FSI). The report is a biennial exercise. It assesses the forest and tree cover, bamboo resources, carbon stock and forest fires.

Facts:**Forest and Tree cover:**

- The country's forest cover includes all patches of land with a tree canopy density of more than 10% and more than 1 hectare in area, irrespective of land use, ownership and species of trees.
- The forest cover in the country has increased by 3,976 square kilometre in the last two years.
- The tree cover which is defined as patches of trees less than 1 hectare and occurring outside the recorded forest area has grown by 1,212 sq km.
- The tree and forest cover together made up 25.56% of India's area. In the last assessment it was 24.39%.
- The top three States showing an increase in forest cover are Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala.
- However, the sharpest decline in forest cover was seen in the north eastern States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram.
- The loss in the North East is attributed primarily due to the traditional farming practice of Shifting Cultivation.

Carbon stock:

- The total carbon stock of the country was estimated at 7124 million tons, which is an increase of 42.6 million tons from the last assessment.
- It implies that India is on the right track to achieve its Paris Agreement commitment of 2.5 -3 billion carbon sinks.

Mangroves and Bamboo Cover:

- The mangrove cover has increased by 54 square km or about 1% from the last assessment with Gujarat and Maharashtra registering the largest improvements.
- The total bamboo bearing area of the country is estimated as 1,60,037 sq km. There is an increase of 3,229 sq. km in bamboo bearing area as compared to the previous estimate.

Additional Facts:

Forest Survey of India: Forest Survey of India (FSI) is an organisation under the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India.

- It was established as an organization called Pre- Investment Survey of Forest Resources (PISFR) in 1965.
- Its principal mandate is to conduct a survey and assessment of forest resources in the country.

12. ODISHA LAUNCHES 'JALSATHI' PROGRAMME

News: Odisha Chief Minister has launched the 'Jalsathi' programme with the aim to ensure supply of safe drinking water to all households in the state.

Facts:

- The Jal Sathi programme aims to ensure the supply of clean drinking water to consumers through piped water connections.
- The Odisha government has roped in women volunteers to serve the people as 'Jalasathis'. This will help boost the economic empowerment of women in the state.
- Under the programme, over 5,000 women will be engaged in Odisha to supply safe drinking water.
- The Jalsathis will be responsible for testing of water quality, facilitating new water connections and regularising connections, reassessing of demands, reading of meter, bill generation and delivery, collection of water charges and facilitating complaints redressal.
- The programme will be initially implemented in eight wards of Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation under the 5T initiative of the Housing and Urban Development.

Additional Facts:

Mission Shakti: Mission Shakti was launched on the occasion of International Women's Day in 2001 by Chief Minister of Odisha.

- The Mission aims at empowering women through formation and promotion of women Self Help Groups.

13. INDIA TO HOST 36TH INTERNATIONAL GEOLOGICAL CONGRESS IN MARCH 2020

News: India will be hosting the 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) in Delhi in March, 2020.

Facts:

- International Geological Congress (IGC) is a prestigious global platform for advancement of Earth Science. The congress is conducted once every four years.
- It was founded as a non-profit scientific and educational organization in 1878. However, IGC came under the aegis of International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) in 1961.
- The first session of IGC assembled in 1878 in France with an aim to provide the global geological community with an opportunity to create an organizational framework for meeting at regular intervals.

- **36th International Geological Congress (IGC):** The theme for the 36th Geological conference is 'Geosciences: The Basic Science for Sustainable Development'.
- India is the only Asian country to host the event twice. In 1964, India had hosted it for the first time which was the 22nd IGC.
- The 36th IGC is funded by the Ministry of Mines and the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India, and supported by the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and the science academies of Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- Geological Survey of India (GSI) is the nodal agency for organizing the event.

Additional Facts:

GSI: Geological Survey of India (GSI) was set up in 1851 primarily to find coal deposits for the Railways. It is headquartered at Kolkata. It is an attached office to the Ministry of Mines.

- The main functions of GSI relate to creation and updation of national geoscientific information and mineral resource assessment.
- The objectives are achieved through ground, air-borne and marine surveys, mineral prospecting and investigations, multi-disciplinary geoscientific, geo-technical, geo-environmental and natural hazards studies, and carrying out fundamental research.

14. AVARTANSHEEL KHETI CHANGING LIVES WITH PERIODIC, PROPORTIONATE FARMING

News: Several farmers across the country have started adopting pioneering method of sustainable farming called Avartansheel Kheti.

Facts:

- Avartansheel Kheti is based on the philosophy of A Nagraj who was a proponent of harmonious coexistence.
- Under this technique, the land is divided into three parts. Fruits and trees that grow in a forest are grown in one part. This helps earn additional income while the cost of labor to maintain this land is low.
- It also helps the farmer to create natural compost with dried leaves and cow dung which increases the fertility of soil. This eliminates the need of chemical fertilizers.
- The second part of land is used rear livestock like cows, buffaloes. They can use the milk for their household and the excess can be sold outside.
- And the third of the land is used to grow crops for his home. The farmer can grow rice, pulses, vegetables, fruits, spices, oil among others.
- Thus, the farmer sustains his home first and after that, he will sell his surplus products in the market not in raw form but after being processed.

15. DEVELOPMENT OF LOKTAK INLAND WATERWAYS PROJECT IN MANIPUR

News: The Ministry of Shipping have given approval for the development of Loktak Inland Waterways improvement project in Manipur.

Facts:

- The project will develop the Inland water transport connectivity in North East States and give a boost to the tourism sector.
- The project is approved under the Central Sector Scheme (CSS).

- The project will be implemented under the Ministry of Shipping.

Additional Facts:

Loktak lake: Loktak lake is the largest freshwater lake in North east located at Moirang in Manipur.

- The lake is famous for its phumdis floating over it which are formed naturally. Phumdis are the floating mass of entangled vegetation formed by the accumulation of organic debris and biomass with soil.
- **Keibul Lamjao National Park** which is the only floating National Park in the world is located on the Loktak Lake.
- **The sangai deer** which is an endemic and endangered subspecies of brow-antlered deer is found only in the Keibul Lamjao National Park, Manipur. The species is listed as Endangered (EN) in IUCN Red list.

16. OPERATION 'CLEAN ART'

News: Operation Clean Art was first pan India operation conducted by Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) to ensure that the mongoose hairbrush trade be closed down across the country.

Facts:

- **Mongoose:** Mongooses belongs to the Herpestidae family. They are commonly found in the open forest, cultivated land and close to human habitation.
- There are six species of mongoose found in India which are (1) Indian grey mongoose (2) Small Indian mongoose (3) Ruddy mongoose, (4) Crab-eating mongoose (5) Stripe-necked mongoose and (6) Brown mongoose.
- The mongoose is listed in Schedule II of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 making its hunting, possession, transportation and trade a punishable offence.
- They are listed as Least Concern in the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List.
- The Mongoose hair is in high demand among artists worldwide because of the quality of brushes they help create which define lines clearly and hold paint properly.

Additional Facts:

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB): Wildlife Crime Control Bureau is a statutory body established by the Government of India under the Ministry of Environment and Forests to combat organized wildlife crime in the country.

- It assists the Customs authorities in inspection of the consignments of flora & fauna as per the provisions of the Wildlife Protection Act, CITES and EXIM Policy governing such an item.

Functions of WCCB: Under Section 38(Z) of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, it is mandated to

- To collect and collate intelligence related to organized wildlife crime activities and to disseminate the same to State and other enforcement agencies.
- To establish a centralized wildlife crime data bank.
- To coordinate actions by various agencies in connection with the enforcement of the provisions of the Act
- To assist foreign authorities and international organization concerned to facilitate coordination and universal action for wildlife crime control.

17. ENERGY CONSERVATION WEEK HELD FROM DECEMBER 14TH TO DECEMBER 20TH, 2019

News: The National Energy Conservation Day is celebrated every year on December 14 since 1991. The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under the Ministry of Power, spearheads the celebrations.

Facts:

Initiatives to Promote Energy Conservation and Energy Efficiency

- **Standards and Labelling:** The BEE initiated the Standards and Labeling programme for equipment and appliances in 2006. It provides consumer knowledge about the energy efficiency of appliances through a star rating.
- **Energy Conservation Building Codes (ECBC):** It was launched by the Ministry of Power in 2007. It sets minimum energy standards for new commercial buildings.
- **National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE):** It is one of the eight missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC). It aims to strengthen the market for energy efficiency by creating a conducive regulatory and policy regime.
- **Perform Achieve and Trade Scheme (PAT):** The scheme provides the option to trade any additional certified energy savings with other designated consumers to comply with the Specific Energy Consumption reduction targets.
- **Bachat Lamp Yojana (BLY):** It is a PPP program comprising of BEE, Distribution Companies (DISCOMs) and private investors. It seeks to accelerate market transformation in energy-efficient lighting.
- **Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) scheme:** It seeks to promote efficient lighting and enhance awareness on using efficient equipment.

18. OCEAN DEOXYGENATION: EVERYONE'S PROBLEM REPORT RELEASED BY IUCN

News: International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has released a report titled "Ocean deoxygenation: Everyone's problem". It reports the scale and nature of the changes being driven by ocean deoxygenation

Facts:

Ocean Deoxygenation: It is defined as the reduction in oxygen content of the ocean due to anthropogenic effects.

- The levels of oxygen in the oceans fell by around 2% from 1960 to 2010. The deoxygenation of the oceans occurred due to climate change and other human activities such as the nutrient runoff from farm fertilizers into waterways (nutrient pollution).

Impact of Ocean deoxygenation:

- Reduction in the habitat available for pelagic, mesopelagic, and benthic organisms.
- Reduction in the abundance of fish population
- Expansion of the volume of anoxic zones (Waters with totally depleted oxygen levels) since 1960
- Alteration in the balance of marine life by favouring low-oxygen tolerant species (e.g. microbes, jellyfish and some squid)

Measures to be taken:

- **Nutrient management:** Reducing nutrient and carbon loads to coastal waters
- **Reducing the threat of global warming:** Reduction in global greenhouse gas emissions through commitments in four areas- policy, technology, finance and patterns of consumption

- Adaptation in the face of oxygen decline: This should be done through ecosystem-based management of fisheries, spatial planning enhances ecosystem resilience, actions that reduce local stress on ecosystems etc.

Additional Facts:

IUCN: It is an international organization working in the field of nature conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. It was established in 1948 and is headquartered in Gland, Switzerland.

- IUCN has an observer and consultative status at the United Nations.
- It is best known for compiling and publishing the IUCN Red List, which assesses the conservation status of species worldwide.

19. CARBON MARKETS

News: The developed world will be focusing in Madrid on creating a global system of accounting for emissions reductions, introducing credible carbon markets, and making some of the gains from these markets available to developing nations to invest in green energy

Facts:

Carbon Market: It is a term used for a trading system through which countries may buy or sell units of CO₂ emissions in an effort to meet their national limits on emissions.

Carbon markets under the Kyoto Protocol: Under the Kyoto Protocol, three carbon markets were established. The aim was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions cost-effectively by setting limits on emissions and enabling the trading of emission units.

- **Clean Development Mechanism:**
 - CDM allows emission-reduction projects in developing countries to earn certified emission reduction (CER) credits, each equivalent to one tonne of CO₂.
 - These CERs can be traded and sold and used by industrialized countries to meet a part of their emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol.
- **Joint implementation:** It enables developed countries to carry out emission reduction or removal enhancement projects in other developed countries. This allows developed countries to earn emission reduction units (ERUs), each equivalent to one tonne of CO₂.
- **Emission trading:** It allows countries that have emission units (carbon dioxide) to spare (emissions permitted to them but not “used”) to sell this excess capacity to countries that are over their targets.
- **Carbon Market under Paris Agreement:** Article 6 of the Paris Agreement established the Sustainable Development Mechanism (SDM) as a new carbon market instrument for the period after 2020.
 - It aims to deliver an overall mitigation in global emissions. It seeks to achieve the twin objectives of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees, and the Sustainable Development Goals laid out in the UN 2030 Agenda.
 - Article 6 puts forward two different approaches for carbon trading:
 - Article 6.2 enables bilateral arrangements for the transfer of emissions reductions while ensuring that they do not double-count the reductions.
 - Article 6.4 talks about a wider carbon market in which reductions can be bought and sold by anyone.

Additional Facts:**Market-based Initiatives in India:**

- **Perform Achieve and Trade (PAT) initiative:** It is a flagship programme of the Bureau of Energy Efficiency under the National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE). It was launched in 2012 by the Ministry of Power.
 - The scheme provides the option to trade any additional certified energy savings with other designated consumers to comply with the Specific Energy Consumption reduction targets.
- **Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) trading system:** It was launched in 2010. Its primary purpose is to promote renewable energy. The Ministry of Power regulates the REC mechanism. The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) is the federal authority that administers the REC scheme.
 - Under Energy Act-2003, the country's State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERCs) set targets for power companies to purchase a certain percentage of their total power from renewable sources. These targets are called Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPOs).
- **Gujarat's Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) for trading in Particulate Matter (PM) emissions:** It was launched in 2019. The programme aims to reduce particulate air pollution and facilitate robust economic growth. It is the first in the world to regulate particulate air pollution.
 - Under the programme, the government sets a cap on emissions and allow industries to buy and sell permits to stay below the cap.

20. INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

News: Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change has informed Rajya Sabha about the initiatives to promote environmental awareness and to mobilize people's participation for conservation of environment.

Facts:

Green Good Deeds Campaign: The Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has launched Green Good Deeds campaign.

- The purpose of the people-oriented campaign is to sensitise people and students in particular about climate change and global warming.
- The objective of the campaign is to restore and return the clean and green environment to the next generation.

Environment Education, Awareness & Training (EEAT) Scheme: Environment Education, Awareness and Training (EEAT) is central sector scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC). It was launched during the financial year 1983-84.

- The scheme aims to (a) promote environmental awareness among all sections of society (b) spread environment education and (c) mobilize student's participation for environmental conservation.
- The scheme comprises of three programmes namely 1) National Green Corps "Eco-club" programme 2) National Nature Camping programme and 3) Capacity Building Activities.

National Green Corps (NGC) "Eco-club" programme: The programme aims at creating awareness among school and college students for environmental conservation and sustainable development across the country.

- It also aims to sensitise and nurture students on nature conservation leading towards positive environmental actions at different levels.
- Students of schools and colleges across the country are eligible to participate in the programme.
- Under the programme, Eco-club will be setup across schools and colleges which will be headed by the Principal or their nominee.

National Nature Camping Programme (NNCP): The Nature Camping Programme aims to provide students an opportunity to learn about natural resources, ecosystem services and the importance of the area by involving them in activities

- Under this programme, nature camps will be organised in different protected areas or Nature parks of the country to create awareness amongst school/college students on environment and nature.

Capacity Building Activities: The objective of this programme is to support capacity building activities and to impart skills to students and teachers of Eco-club on various thematic areas like Biodiversity conservation, Waste Management among others.

21. INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON CLIMATE SMART FARMING SYSTEMS FOR BIMSTEC COUNTRIES HELD IN DELHI

News: 'International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems' for BIMSTEC countries is being held in Delhi.

Facts:

International Seminar on Climate Smart Farming Systems has been organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. The objective of the seminar is to share experiences to enable the improvement of tropical smallholder farming systems for greater productivity and resilience to climate change.

Climate Smart Farming System: Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) is an approach to help farmers respond effectively to climate change and ensure food security.

- It has three main objectives:
 - Sustainably increasing agricultural productivity and incomes;
 - Adapting and building resilience to climate change;
 - Greenhouse gas emissions mitigation

Additional Facts:

Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture: It is hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). It is a multi-stakeholder platform that seeks to improve food security, nutrition, and resilience amidst climate change.

BIMSTEC: The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an international organization.

- It comprises seven Member states lying in the littoral and adjacent areas of Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity. The members include Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan, and Nepal.
- It was founded in 1997. It is headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- The objective of the BIMSTEC alliance is to enhance trade and accelerate growth with mutual cooperation in different areas of common interest.

22. HEAVY METALS CONTAMINATING INDIA'S RIVERS

News: A study conducted by Central Water Commission (CWC) from May 2014 to April 2018 revealed that India's major river systems are contaminated with heavy metals.

Key takeaways:

- Samples from only 35% of water quality stations were safe while rest were polluted with heavy metals, exceeding safe limits set by the Bureau of Indian Standards.
- Iron was the most common contaminant found in rivers. Other major contaminants found in the samples were lead, nickel, chromium, cadmium and copper.
- Main sources of heavy metal pollution: agriculture, mining, milling, plating and surface finishing industries that discharge a variety of toxic metals.
- **Impact:** Long term exposure may result in slowly progressing physical, muscular, and neurological degenerative processes.

River	Chromium	Lead	Iron
Ganga	Exceeds		Exceeds
Yamuna			Exceeds
Brahmaputra			Exceeds
Ramganga		Exceeds	
Rapti	Exceeds		Exceeds
Narmada			Exceeds
Godavari			Exceeds

SOURCE: CENTRAL WATER COMMISSION STUDY

Note: Heavy metal refers to any metal and metalloid element that has a relatively high density ranging from 3.5 to 7 g/cm³. Example: Arsenic, copper, mercury, lead, etc.

Heavy Metal

Arsenic

Mercury

Cadmium

Nitrate

Disease

Black foot

Minamata

Itai-Itai

Blue Baby syndrome (Methemoglobinemia)

1. STAR NAMED AFTER INDIAN SCIENTIST, EXOPLANET GETS A SANSKRIT NAME

News: Indian names were allotted to a star and its exoplanet by the International Astronomical Union (IAU)

Facts:

- A dwarf star in the constellation Sextans has been named Bibha. It means “a light beam” and refers to Bibha Chowdhuri, a pioneering Indian scientist.
- Bibha’s exoplanet has been named Santamasa, which in Sanskrit means “clouded”

Additional Facts:

International Astronomical Union: It is an international association of professional astronomers. It was founded in 1919. It is headquartered in Paris, France.

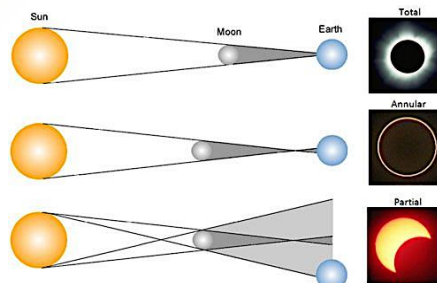
- In October 2091, IAU named a minor planet after Indian musician Pandit Jasraj. He is an exponent of Indian classical vocal music belonging to the Mewati Gharana. He has created a novel form of jugalbandi called Jasrangi.

2. ANNULAR ECLIPSE OF THE SUN ON 26 DECEMBER

News: The annular phase of the solar eclipse is visible from Saudi Arabia, Oman, southern India, and parts of Indonesia, weather permitting.

Facts:

- **Solar eclipse:** It occurs on a new moon day when the Moon comes between the Earth and the Sun and when all the three objects are aligned in syzygy position. The shadow cast by the Moon on the Earth blocks the sunlight fully or partially.
- **Annular Solar Eclipse:** It occurs when the angular diameter of the Moon falls short of that of the Sun. The moon covers the Sun’s centre, leaving the Sun’s visible outer edges to form a “ring of fire” or annulus around the moon.



Additional Facts:

Other Types of Solar Eclipse:

- **Partial:** It happens when the Moon only partially covers the disk of the Sun.
- **Total:** It happens when Sun’s disk is completely obscured by the Moon.
- **Hybrid:** It changes from an annular to a total solar eclipse, and vice versa, along its path.

3. SNOWEX

News: NASA has launched a seasonal campaign which is a part of SnowEx

Facts:

- SnowEx is a five-year program initiated and funded by NASA’s Terrestrial Hydrology Program

- It aims to address the most important gaps in our snow remote sensing knowledge. It seeks to lay the groundwork for a snow satellite mission to study global snow water equivalent (SWE).
- SnowEx seeks to study six broad snow climate categories in North America. It includes tundra (alpine or Arctic), taiga (Boreal forest), warm (temperate) forest, maritime, prairie, and ephemeral.

Additional Facts:

Snow Water Equivalent: It is the amount of water contained within the snowpack i.e. the depth of water that will result if the entire snowpack is melted instantaneously.

4. ISRO TO LAUNCH SPY SATELLITE, 9 FOREIGN CUSTOMER SATELLITES

News: Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) launched RISAT-2BRI and nine foreign satellites from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh on December 11.

Facts:

- **RISAT-2BRI-** RISAT-2BRI is a Radar imaging earth observation satellite weighing about 628 kg. It was launched aboard PSLV-C48.
- It has a synthetic aperture radar to provide all-weather surveillance. It will enhance India's defence capabilities to monitor cross border activities.
- The RISAT-2BRI is the second satellite in the RISAT-2B series.

Additional Facts:

Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV): It is an indigenously developed expendable launch system of the ISRO.

- It comes in the category of medium-lift launchers with a reach up to various orbits, including the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit, Lower Earth Orbit, and Polar Sun Synchronous Orbit.
- It is a four-staged launch vehicle with first and third stage using solid rocket motors and second and fourth stages using liquid rocket engines.

5. PLANET ORBITING WHITE DWARF STAR IS A BREAKTHROUGH DISCOVERY

News: Astronomers from the University of Warwick's Department of Physics and the Millennium Nucleus for Planet Formation (NPF) at the University of Valparaiso found the first-ever evidence of a planet orbiting a dead white dwarf star.

Facts:

- The star is around 2000 light-years away from Earth.
- The planet orbits the white dwarf every ten days and cannot be seen directly.

Additional Facts:

White Dwarf Stars: Stars like the Sun fuse hydrogen in their cores into helium. White dwarfs are stars that have burned up all of the hydrogen they once used as nuclear fuel.

- Fusion in a star's core produces heat and outward pressure. This pressure is kept in balance by the inward push of gravity generated by a star's mass. When the hydrogen used as fuel vanishes, and fusion slows, gravity causes the star to collapse in on itself, thus forming a white dwarf star.
- White dwarfs typically have a radius just .01 times that of the Sun in our Solar System, but their mass is about the same as the Sun.

6. UNION CABINET APPROVED INTRODUCTION OF PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION BILL IN PARLIAMENT

News: The Union Cabinet approved the introduction of the Personal Data Protection Bill in Parliament, the government announced.

Facts:

- The bill was prepared by a high-level expert committee headed by former Supreme Court judge B.N. Srikrishna. The Committee was constituted in 2017.

Key Features of the Bill:

- Definition of Personal Data:** The bill defines 'personal data' as any information which renders an individual identifiable.
 - It classifies 'sensitive personal data' as those including passwords, financial data, health data, etc. Such sensitive personal data can be processed only with the explicit consent of the person
- Data Processing:** Personal Data can be processed by both government and private entities incorporated in India, and entities incorporated overseas if they systematically deal with data principles within the territory of India. Data processing is allowed if consent is provided by the individual. This condition also has some exceptions.
- Rights of Data Principal (whose data is being processed):** The right to obtain a summary of their personal data held with the data fiduciary (one who processes the data).
 - Right to be forgotten: the right to restrict or prevent continuing disclosure of personal data.
- Exemptions:** Data principal will have not the rights defined under the bill if their data is processed for - national security, legal proceedings, journalistic purposes etc.
- Data Protection Authority:** The Bill provides for the establishment of a Data Protection Authority (DPA) to supervise and regulate data fiduciaries.
- Cross Border Storage of Data:** every fiduciary shall keep a 'serving copy' of all personal data in a server or data centre located in India. The central government may notify certain categories of personal data as exempt from this requirement.

7. BRICS REMOTE SENSING SATELLITE CONSTELLATION

News: Space agencies of the BRICS group of nations have been negotiating a framework agreement to formalise the cooperation on building a 'virtual constellation of remote-sensing satellites.

Facts:

BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Constellation: 1st BRICS Remote Sensing Satellite Consultation Forum was held In Brazil in 2017.

- The constellation would be implemented in two phases:
 - Phase 1: Virtual Satellite Constellation:** The purpose of the virtual constellation is to get access to satellite remote sensing data. This could be used by the individual BRICS nations for various applications including natural resources management and disaster management.
 - Phase 2: Real Satellite Constellation**

8. CARBON DOTS HELP DETECT HERBICIDE POLLUTION

News: Researchers from Assam used the commonly found invasive plant water hyacinth to produce carbon dots. Carbon dots are carbon nanoparticles.

Facts:

- These extremely tiny (less than 10 nanometres) particles can be used for detecting herbicide pollution.
- Carbon dots exhibit a wide range of physicochemical properties making them an ideal platform for several important environmental, biological, and energy-related applications.
- They have been employed in emerging applications including antibacterial agents, self-healing materials, and mass spectrometry.

Additional Facts:

Water Hyacinth: Water hyacinth is a free-floating perennial aquatic plant (or hydrophyte) native to tropical and subtropical South America. They are considered as Invasive alien species.

- States like Assam and Kerala are highly affected by the Water Hyacinth. It is also referred to as the 'terror of Bengal' given its effect on the local ecology and lives of the people.

9. HYDROPONICS MAY PROVIDE BETTER AGRICULTURAL SOLUTIONS

News: Council of Scientific and Industrial Research- Institute of Himalayan Bioresource Technology (CSIR-IHBT) is developing low cost hydroponics system.

Facts:

- **Hydroponics:** Hydroponics is the technique of growing plants without soil by using nutrient rich water solvent. The method is suitable for growing greens and herbs as they don't have deep roots.
- **Benefits of Hydroponics:** Hydroponics provides higher yield and economic returns compared to traditional agricultural practices because of an increase in harvest cycles and balanced nutrient supply. Hydroponics system is not affected by weather, wild animals and any of the other external biotic or abiotic factors.
 - In addition to these benefits hydroponic system also makes efficient utilization of water. No nutrition pollution is released into the environment because of the controlled system.
- **Disadvantages:** It requires high technical knowledge and training before starting the process.
 - Without soil as a buffer, any failure to the hydroponic system leads to rapid plant death.

10. MoRT AMENDS MV RULES MANDATING ADHERENCE TO AIS-155

News: Union Ministry of Road Transport issued rules regarding Automotive Industry Standards (AIS)-155 in respect of Microdot identifiers to be affixed on the motor vehicles and their parts.

Facts:

Microdot Technology: Microdots are a globally proven technology to ensure originality in spare parts of machines and components including in the automobile sector.

- The microdot technology involves spraying thousands of microscopic dots onto vehicles or other assets to form a unique identification.
- Each microdot carries this identification, which is registered to the owner, but is not visible to the naked eye.

11. ISRO SETS UP SPACE TECHNOLOGY CELLS IN IITS, IISC AND OTHER COLLEGES

News: The Indian Space Research Organization has decided to set up five Space Technology Cells at the premier institutes in order to carry out research activities.

Facts:

Space Technology Cells: The Space Technology cells are being established under the RESPOND Programme. The Technology cells will consist of professors and scholars associated with the institute. Under the programme, the experts will conduct space technology research and applications.

- ISRO has already set up Space Technology Cells (STC) at premier institutions like IIT Bombay, Kanpur, Kharagpur and Madras, IISc, Bengaluru and Joint Research Programme with Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU).

Additional Facts:

RESPOND Programme: ISRO had started the RESPOND (Sponsored Research) programme in the 1970s. The objective of the programme is to encourage academia to participate and contribute in various Space related research activities.

12. ISRO BEGINS PREPARATIONS FOR SETTING UP THIRD ROCKET LAUNCHPAD

News: Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has begun preparatory works for setting up a third rocket Launchpad.

Facts:

- Third Launchpad will be set up in a coastal hamlet of Kulasekarapattinam in Thoothukudi district, Tamil Nadu.

Present Launchpads

- At present, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has two launchpads at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota Range (SDSC-SHAR).
- SHAR is situated on an island off Sullurupeta - a small town in Nellore district, Andhra Pradesh.

13. INDIA TESTS SWEDISH TECHNOLOGY TO REDUCE STUBBLE BURNING

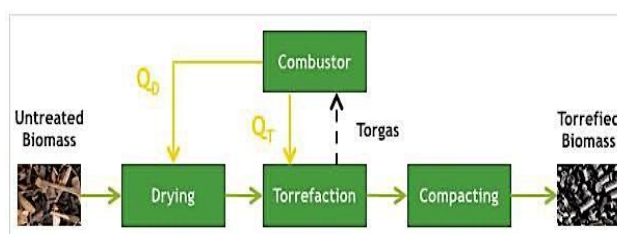
News: Recently, to find a solution to the stubble burning issue, India is testing a Swedish technology, 'torrefaction' that can convert rice stubble into 'bio-coal'.

Facts:

The government has funded a pilot project at the National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute in Mohali (Punjab) with a Swedish company to evaluate the feasibility of the torrefaction technology.

- **Torrefaction:** is a thermal process to convert biomass into a coal-like material which has better fuel characteristics than the original biomass.
 - It involves heating up straw, grass, sawmill residue and wood biomass to 250 degrees Celsius to around 350 degrees Celsius.
 - This changes the elements of the biomass into 'coal-like' pellets. These pellets can then be used for combustion along with coal for industrial applications like steel and cement production
 - If scaled up, about 65% of the biomass could be converted to energy.

BASIC TORREFACTION PRINCIPLE



14. BARCODE

News: Recently, engineer-scientist George Laurer, co-developer of Barcode, passed away. Barcode was co-developed by George Laurier and Norman Joseph Woodland in 1973.

Facts:

- A barcode, consisting of bars and spaces is a machine-readable representation of numerals and characters. It is also known as Universal Product Code (UPC). It is used to efficiently identify and track objects and people.
- **Types of Barcode:**
 - **One-dimensional barcode:** Numeric-only barcodes: barcodes consisting of only numbers and Alpha-numeric barcodes: contain a combination of numbers and alphabetic characters.
 - **Two-dimensional Barcode:** It is in the shape of a square or rectangle and contains many small dots arranged in a unique pattern. It is also known as Quick Response (QR) code.

15. ICMR SETS UP A TASK FORCE ON GENE THERAPY RESEARCH

News: Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is setting up a task force on gene therapy research to encourage research in the emerging field.

Facts:

Gene therapy: Gene Therapy refers to the process of introduction, removal or change in the content of an individual's genetic material with the goal of treating the disease and the possibility of achieving long term cure.

- Researchers are studying gene therapy for a number of diseases such as severe combined immuno-deficiencies, haemophilia, Parkinson's disease, cancer among others.
- The first gene therapy was successfully accomplished in the year 1989.

Types of Gene Therapy: Gene therapy classified into two types:

- **Somatic cell gene therapy (SCGT):** Somatic gene therapy involves the insertion of therapeutic DNA into body cells and not the germ cells or gametes.
 - This means any effects of the therapy are confined to the individual being treated and are not inherited by future offspring.
 - This technique is considered as the best and safest method of gene therapy.
- **Germ line gene therapy (GGT):** In GGT germ cells (sperm or egg cells) are modified by the introduction of functional genes into their genomes.
 - Modifying a germ cell causes all the organism's cells to contain the modified gene.
 - The change is therefore heritable and passed on to later generations.
 - Germ line gene therapy is not legal in many places as the risks outweigh the rewards.

16. WHO LAUNCHES FIRST BIOSIMILAR MEDICINE TO TREAT BREAST CANCER

News: The World Health Organization (WHO) launched its first biosimilar medicine to treat breast cancer named Trastuzumab.

Facts:

Trastuzumab: Trastuzumab drug was included in the WHO Essential Medicines List in 2015 as an essential treatment for about 20% of breast cancers.

- It has shown high efficacy in curing early stage breast cancer and in some cases more advanced forms of the disease.

Additional Facts:

About Biosimilar medicines: Biosimilars are replicas of biologic drugs (original drugs) that are used to treat different types of cancers and autoimmune diseases.

- Biosimilar medicines are made from living organisms through highly complex manufacturing processes and must be handled and administered under carefully monitored conditions.
- They are officially approved versions of original products and can be manufactured when the original product's patent expires. Reference to the innovator product is an integral component of the approval.

Difference between Biosimilar and Generic medicines:

- Biosimilars involve developing equivalent of biological entity while generics involve developing equivalent of a chemical entity-the Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient.
- Generic medicines are synthesized from chemicals in a consistent process so that manufacturers can be sure that each pill has the same effect every time.
- \On the other hand, Biosimilar medicines are produced from living organisms through highly complex manufacturing processes.

Policy

1. GOVERNMENT AIMS TO PROVIDE BROADBAND ACCESS TO ALL VILLAGES BY 2022

News: The Ministry of Communications launched the National Broadband Mission (NBM) to fast track growth of digital communications infrastructure and bridge the digital divide

Facts:

Objectives:

- Broadband access to all villages by 2022.
- Facilitate universal and equitable access to broadband services.
- Lay incremental 30 lakhs route km of Optical Fibre Cable by 2024.
- Increase in tower density from 0.42 to 1.0 tower per thousand of the population by 2024
- **Develop a Broadband Readiness Index (BRI):** It will measure the availability of digital communications infrastructure and a conducive policy ecosystem within a State/UT.
- Investment from stakeholders of Rs 7 Lakh Crore including Rs 70,000 crore from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)

Additional Facts:

Bharat Net: Bharat Net project (previously known as National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN)) seeks to provide affordable high-speed broadband connectivity to 2.5 lakh gram panchayats across India.

- It is funded by the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF). The nodal ministry for the project is the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology.

2. ECHO NETWORK LAUNCHED TO CATALYZE CROSS-DISCIPLINARY LEADERSHIP IN INDIA

News: Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India launched EChO Network

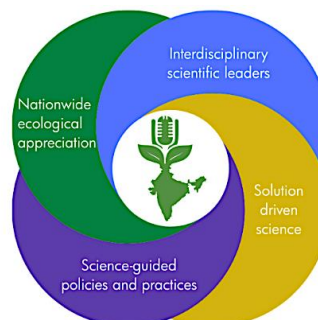
Facts:

EChO Network: is national program to provide a template for cross-disciplinary leadership in India with the specific focus of increasing research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment.

- The program is a partnership of Government, industry, and academia. Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Govt. of India leads the program.

Network goals

- Create interdisciplinary scientific leaders through cross- sector collaboration.
- Employ solution-driven and public-guided science to tackle real-world problems.
- Encourage science-driven policy and practice.
- Establish nationwide ecological and environmental appreciation and awareness.



Additional Facts:

National Knowledge Network (NKN) - It was established in 2010.

Its objective is to interconnect all institutions of higher learning and

research with a high-speed data communication network to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaborative research.

- National Informatics Centre (NIC), under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, is the implementing agency.

3. PRIME MINISTER RELEASES OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF JAL JEEVAN MISSION (JJM)

News: The Prime Minister released the Operational Guidelines of JJM in a function organised at Vigyan Bhawan on 25th December which is observed as Good Governance.

Facts:

Jal Jeevan Mission:

- **Aim:** Provide potable water in adequate quantity (55 liter per capita per day) of prescribed quality (BIS Standard of IS: 10500) on a regular basis to all rural households by 2024.
- **Implementing Ministry:** It will be implemented by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation under the Jal Shakti Ministry.
- **Institutional arrangement for Implementation:**
 - National Jal Jeevan Mission at the Central level;
 - State Water and Sanitation Mission (SWSM) at State level;
 - District Water and Sanitation Mission (DWSM) at the district level; and
 - Village Water Sanitation Committee (VWSC)/ Paani Samiti at the village level.
- **Features:**
 - Focus on integrated demand and supply-side management of water at the local level.
 - Implement source sustainability measures to recharge and reuse through greywater management, water conservation, and rainwater harvesting.
 - Convergence with other Central and State Government Schemes to achieve sustainable water supply management across India.
 - Generate maximum community participation in the form of 'Jan Andolan'

4. JIGYASA PROGRAM

News: Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has been collaborating with several scientists and research scholars in implementing the JIGYASA program.

Facts:

- Jigyasa is a student-scientist connect programme. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) has joined hand with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) to implement the program. The focus is on connecting school students and scientists so as to extend student's classroom learning with that of a very well-planned research laboratory-based learning. It will inculcate the culture of inquisitiveness and scientific temper on the minds of children and schoolteachers.
- The programme has been inspired by Prime Minister's vision of a new India and "Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR)" of the scientific community and institutions.

Additional Facts:

CSIR: Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is an autonomous research and development body established by the Government of India in 1942.

- It covers a wide spectrum of science and technology –from radio, oceanography, geophysics, chemicals, drugs, genomics, biotechnology and nanotechnology among others.

5. UGC ISSUES NORMS FOR ETHICS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

News: The Union Minister of Human Resource Development (MHRD) adopted the Quality Improvement Programme Mandate developed by UGC to improve the quality in higher educational institutions

Facts:

Quality Improvement Programme Mandate: The quality mandate aims to equip the country's youth with vital skills, knowledge and ethics for leading a rewarding life. It contains 5 documents covering the 5 verticals of Quality Mandate.

About the 5 verticals of Quality Mandate:

- **Evaluation reforms:** to make student assessment more meaningful, effective and linked to 'Learning Outcomes'.
- **Eco-friendly and Sustainable University Campuses:** The SATAT (sustainable) Framework encourages universities to enhance the environmental quality of the campus
- **Human Values and professional ethics:** a policy framework named MulyaPravah which are Guidelines for Inculcation of Human Values and Professional Ethics in Higher Educational Institutions.
- **Faculty Induction Programme: Guru-Dakshata** – aims to sensitize and motivate the faculty to adopt learner centred approaches, ICT integrated learning and new pedagogic approaches to teaching-learning, assessment tools in higher education.
- **Academic Research and integrity:** Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (UGC-CARE) to continuously monitor and identify quality journals across disciplines.

Additional Facts:

UGC: It is a statutory body set up by the Indian Union government in accordance with the UGC Act, 1956 under the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

- It is charged with coordination, determination, and maintenance of standards of higher education. It provides recognition to universities in India and disburses funds to such recognized universities and colleges.

6. CENTRE URGED TO TREAT KLIP AS A NATIONAL PROJECT

News: The Telangana State government has requested the Central Government to treat Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project (KLIP) as a National Project.

Facts:

Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project: Kaleshwaram Multipurpose Lift Irrigation Project of Telangana was initiated in 2016 on the Godavari River.

- It is touted as the world's largest multi-stage, multi-purpose lift irrigation project.
- The project will support crop cultivation on 45 lakh acres of land and meet the drinking water requirement of 70% of the state.
- The designation of the National Project will also lead to a Central grant of 90% of the estimated cost for their completion in a time bound manner.

Additional Facts:

The Telangana government is also running the Mission Bhagiratha and Mission Kakatiya to meet the water needs of population.

- **About Mission Kakatiya:** It is a flagship programme launched by the Government of Telangana which aims at rejuvenation of water tanks and other water storage structures to provide assistance and help to the small and marginal farmers of the state.
- **About Mission Bhagiratha:** It is a project for safe drinking water for every village and city household in Telangana State. The ambitious project will supply clean drinking water to all households in the state through water sourced from River Godavari and River Krishna.

7. EXPLAINED: THE SILVER LINE PROJECT

News: The Ministry of Railways has granted in-principle approval for the 'Silver Line' project, a proposal of the Kerala government.

Facts:**About Silver line project:**

- The Silver line project involves laying the 532 km long railway lines from Kasaragod in the north to Thiruvananthapuram in the south of Kerala.
- This will connect the major districts and towns with semi high-speed trains that will run on their own separate tracks.
- This will also cut the travel time between the two corners of the state from 12 hours to less than four hours with a maximum speed of 200 km/h.
- The Kerala Rail Development Corporation (K-Rail), a joint venture between the Ministry of Railways and the Kerala government to execute projects on a cost-sharing basis is the nodal agency of the project.

**8. GOVERNMENT APPROVES FUTURE SKILLING PROGRAMME**

News: The government has announced Rs 436 crore outlay for skilling 4 lakh professionals under Future Skills PRIME programme.

Facts:

FutureSkills Programme: FutureSkills Programme was launched in 2018 jointly by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and industry body NASSCOM.

- The program aims to reskill 2 million professionals and potential employees & students in the industry in eight emerging technologies like AI, VR, IoT etc over a period of 5 years.
- To do this, FutureSkills portal uses the technology of the future, to create a space where a learner can access content on all the skills of the future.
- This Future PRIME is the next phase of the Future Skills platform and is open to professionals from outside the IT industry as well, who want to improve themselves in ten emerging technologies.

Additional Facts:

NASSCOM: The National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) was established in 1988. It is a non-profit organization of the Indian Information Technology (IT) and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) industry.

9. GEM LAUNCHES NATIONAL OUTREACH PROGRAMME - GEM SAMVAAD

News: Ministry of Commerce & Industry has launched a national outreach Programme called GeM Samvaad. GeM Samvaad: The outreach programme aims to spread awareness about the Government e-Marketplace (GeM).

Facts:

- The programme will take place with stakeholders across the country and with local sellers in order to facilitate the on-boarding of local sellers on the marketplace while catering to specific requirements and procurement needs of buyers.

Additional Facts:

Government e-Marketplace (GeM): GeM is a state-of-the-art national public procurement platform launched in 2016 by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

- The portal aims to enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement.
- The platform facilitates online procurement of common use Goods & Services required by various Government Departments / Organisations / PSUs.
- It also provides the tools of e-bidding, reverse e-auction and demand aggregation to facilitate the government users, achieve the best value for their money.

SWAYATT: stands for Start-ups, Women and Youth Advantage Through eTransactions on Government e Marketplace (GeM).

- It is an initiative to promote MSMEs, women and young entrepreneurs through e-transactions on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM).

GeM Startup runway: GeM Start-up Runway-an initiative of GeM in association with Start -up India. It facilitates Start-ups registered with Startup India to access the public procurement market and sell innovative products and services to government buyers.

- GeM Start-up Runway will also address goals and objectives under United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 9: Build a resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.

10. AMRUT MISSION EXTENDED BY 2 MORE YEARS TILL 2022

News: The Central Government has decided to extend the mission period of its flagship initiative Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) by two more years till 2022.

Facts:

AMRUT Mission was launched in 2015 by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.

It aims to

- ensure that every household has access to a tap with assured supply of water and sewerage connection
- increase the amenity value of cities by developing greenery and well-maintained open spaces e.g. parks
- reduce pollution by switching to public transport or constructing facilities for non-motorized transport e.g. walking and cycling.

Features of the mission:

- The Mission covers 500 cities that includes all cities and towns with a population of over one lakh with notified Municipalities.

- AMRUT adopts a project approach to ensure basic infrastructure services relating to water supply, sewerage, stormwater drains, transport and development of green spaces and parks with special provisions for meeting the needs of children.
- Under this mission, 10% of the budget allocation will be given to states/union territories as incentive based on achievement of reforms during the previous year.

II. DEVELOPMENT A WORLD CLASS RESEARCH FACILITIES IN INDIA: HRD MINISTER

News: Union Minister for Human Resource Development informed the Lok Sabha about the initiatives taken by the Government to promote research in the field of science & engineering.

Facts:

- **Prime Minister Research Fellowship Scheme:** The students who have completed or are in the final year of B.Tech/Integrated M.Tech/M.Sc courses in Science and Technology streams from IISc/IITs/IISERs/ NITs/IIITs will be offered direct admission in PhD programme in IITs/IISc.
- **Establishment of Research Parks:** The five new Research Parks at IIT Delhi, IIT Guwahati, IIT Kanpur, IIT Hyderabad, and IISc Bangalore have been approved by the Government under Startup India Initiative in Higher Education (SIIHE) Scheme.
- **Impacting research Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT):** Launched in 2015, scheme is a pan-IIT and IISc joint collaboration. The scheme aims to provide solutions to the most relevant engineering challenges by translating knowledge into viable technology in 10 selected technology domains.
- **Uchhatar Avishkar Yojana (UAY):** Launched in 2015, the scheme aims to promote innovation of a higher order that directly impacts the needs of the industry and thereby improves the competitive edge of Indian manufacturing. The projects are funded jointly by MHRD, participating Ministries and the Industry in the ratio of 50:25:25.
- **Institutions of Eminence (IoE):** The Institution of Eminence scheme is a scheme of Ministry of Human Resource Development pertaining to higher education institutions (HES) in India to develop 20 world-class teaching and research institutions. The selected institutes will enjoy complete academic and administrative autonomy.
- **Smart India Hackathons:** Smart India Hackathons are organized on a yearly basis since 2017 to find out digital solutions to various problems faced by the people and gives hands-on working and research opportunity for engineering students.
- **Institutions innovation Council (IIC):** The purpose of formation of network of IICs is to encourage, inspire and nurture young students by exposing them to new ideas and processes resulting in innovative activities in their formative years.

12. PRADHAN MANTRI YUVA UDYAMITA VIKAS ABHIYAAN (PM YUVA) YOJANA

News: Minister of State for Skill Development has informed Lok Sabha about the Pradhan Mantri Yuva Udyamita Vikas Abhiyaan (PM YUVA) Yojana.

Facts:

PM YUVA is a centrally sponsored scheme launched in 2016. It aims to create an enabling ecosystem by 2021 for entrepreneurship development through entrepreneurship education & training, advocacy, and easy access to entrepreneurship network.

- It will provide entrepreneurship education and training to over 7 lakh students in 5 years (2016-17 to 2020-21) through 3050 Institutes.

- It will also include easy access to information and mentor network, credit, incubator and accelerator and advocacy to create a pathway for the youth.

Beneficiaries of the scheme: The target beneficiaries of the scheme are categorized as follows:

- Traditional students enrolled in degree programme across undergraduate/ postgraduate courses/ PhD programme/ Diploma
- School Students
- Students in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs)
- All citizens including the unorganized sector, women, and existing entrepreneurs in rural as well as urban areas, who would like to take up entrepreneurship education through coordination and support programmes.

13. GOVERNMENT PROCURED JUST 3% OF PULSES, SEEDS TARGETED UNDER PM-AASHA SCHEME

News: According to the Agricultural ministry data, less than 3% of this season's sanctioned amount of pulses and oilseeds have actually been procured under the PM-AASHA scheme.

Facts:

PM-AASHA scheme: The scheme aims to provide Minimum Support Price (MSP) to farmers and improve the farm income. The scheme comprises of three sub-schemes which are:

- **Price Support Scheme (PSS):** Under PSS, the physical procurement of pulses, oilseeds and Copra will be done by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) and the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation in collaboration with state governments. The Central Government will bear the procurement expenditure and losses due to procurement.
- **Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS):** Under PDPS, it is proposed to cover all the oilseeds for which MSP is notified. The state will provide direct payment of the difference between the MSP and the selling price to pre-registered farmers selling their produce in the notified market yard. All payments will be done directly into registered bank accounts of the farmers. There will be no physical procurement of crops.
- **Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme (PPPS):** Under this scheme, the participation of the private sector in procurement operations will be piloted. The States have the option to roll out the scheme on a pilot basis in selected districts/APMCs involving private stockists.

14. NORTH EAST RURAL LIVELIHOOD PROJECT

News: Union Minister of State for Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER) has informed Lok Sabha about North East Rural Livelihood Project.

Facts:

- North East Rural Livelihood Project (NERLP) is a World Bank aided project under the DoNER Ministry, launched in 2012.
- The project aims to improve rural livelihood, especially that of women, unemployed youth and the most disadvantaged in four North Eastern States of Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.
- The project focuses on five development strategies namely (a) social empowerment (b) economic empowerment (c) partnership development (d) project management and (e) livelihood & value chain developments.

15. GOAL - 'GOING ONLINE AS LEADERS' PROGRAMME

News: Ministry of Tribal Affairs has informed Rajya Sabha about 'Going Online as Leaders' Programme.

Facts:

GOAL (Going Online as Leaders) is a digitally enabled mentorship initiative of Facebook.

- The initiative connects underprivileged young women from tribal areas with senior expert mentors in the areas of business, fashion and arts to learn digital and life skills. One mentor is identified and attached to four tribal youth.
- It will include weekly one-to-one mentoring sessions, focused on a range of skills such as digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and online safety.

GOAL Second Phase: The second phase of the program was launched in October 2019. In the second phase, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, NITI Aayog and Facebook together will digitally mentor 5000 young women in India's tribal-dominated districts.

16. MINISTRY OF TOURISM HAS IDENTIFIED 17 SITES IN 12 CLUSTERS IN THE COUNTRY FOR DEVELOPMENT AS ICONIC TOURIST SITES

News: Ministry of Tourism has identified 17 sites in the country for development as Iconic Tourist Sites

Facts:

Iconic Tourist Sites Initiative

- Announced in Budget 2019-20 the initiative is implemented by the Ministry of Tourism.
- **Aim:** To develop the selected sites into world-class tourist destinations to serve as a model for other tourism sites.
- It involves inter-ministerial coordination among Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- Sites to be developed at par with international standards. Interventions in and around the monuments will have elements of universal accessibility, green technology, and enhanced security for tourists.

Selected Sites:

(a) Taj Mahal and Fatehpur Sikri (Uttar Pradesh) (b) Ajanta & Ellora (Maharashtra) (c) Humayun's Tomb, Red Fort and Qutub Minar (Delhi) (d) Colva (Goa) (e) Ajmer Fort (Rajasthan) (f) Somnath and Dholavira (Gujarat) (g) Khajuraho (Madhya Pradesh) (h) Hampi (Karnataka) (i) Mahabalipuram (Tamil Nadu) (j) Kaziranga (Assam) (k) Kumarakom (Kerala) and (l) Mahabodhi Temple (Bihar)

Additional Facts:

Other schemes for conservation of historical sites-

- **Adopt a Heritage Scheme (Apni Dharohar Apni Pehchan Project):** Launched in 2017, it is an initiative by the Ministry of Tourism in close collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). It aims to develop the heritage sites/monuments, make them tourist-friendly to enhance the tourism potential
 - Under this scheme, heritage sites/monuments and other tourist sites are entrusted to private players or public sector companies for the development of tourist amenities.
- **Swadesh Darshan scheme:** It was launched in 2014-15 by the Ministry of Tourism. It aims at the integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits. Example: Ramayana Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit.

- **National Heritage City Development and Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY) scheme:** It was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in 2015. It aims at the holistic development of heritage cities such as Ajmer, Puri, Mathura, Gaya, etc.
- **Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) Scheme:** It was launched by the Ministry of Tourism in 2015. It aims at identifying and developing pilgrim sites across India.

17. ACCESSIBLE INDIA CAMPAIGN'S DEADLINE EXTENDED TO MARCH 2020

News: The deadline for the Accessible India campaign has been extended to March 2020.

Facts:

Accessible India Campaign- Sugamaya Bharat Abhiyan- It is a nation-wide Campaign launched by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment in 2015.

- It aims to provide universal accessibility to persons with disabilities by developing an accessible physical environment, transportation system, and Information & communication ecosystem.
- The campaign targeted to complete accessibility audit of 25-50 of the most important government buildings in 50 cities by 2016 and making them completely accessible by 2018.

Additional Facts:

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana for Disabled Persons: It is a scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-living Devices for Senior citizens belonging to the BPL category. It was launched by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in 2017.

18. MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION LAUNCHES ROUND 4 OF RCS- UDAN

News: Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched the 4th round of Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) – Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN)

Facts:

The Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)-Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) scheme was launched in 2017 by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. The scheme is a component of the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP), 2016.

- Under the scheme, airlines have to cap airfares for 50% of the total seats at Rs. 2,500 per hour of flight. The losses for the price cap are compensated by a mechanism called Viability Gap Funding- A government grant provided to the airlines to bridge the gap between the cost of operations and expected revenue.

About UDAN 4.0

- The focus of UDAN 4.0 is on priority areas like North East Region, Hilly States, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and Islands.
- **Revision of (Viability Gap Funding) VGF cap** – The provision of VGF for Category 2 / 3 aircraft (more than 20 seaters) has been enhanced for the operation of RCS flights in the priority areas.
- **Promoting short-haul routes** – The provision of VGF would be restricted for routes with stage length up to 600 km. Beyond it, no monetary support would be provided.
- **Well defined Prioritization framework** – Airports that have already been developed by AAI would be given higher priority for the award of VGF under the Scheme.

- **Flexibility to change the frequency of flight operation** - The Selected Airline Operator (SAO) would be allowed to change the frequency of flight operation, during the tenure of flight operation of the given route.
- **Inclusion of helicopter and seaplane operation:** The operation of helicopter and seaplane would be allowed under this round.

19. NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION (NAPDDR), 2018-2025

News: Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has informed Lok Sabha about the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR)

Facts:

About National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR), 2018-2025

- It aims to reduce the adverse consequences of drug abuse in India through a) education, b) de-addiction and c) rehabilitation of affected individuals and their families. It was drafted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- The activities under the NAPDDR, include awareness generation programmes, community-based peer-led interactions intervention programmes for vulnerable adolescent and youth in the community, provisioning of treatment facilities and capacity building of service providers.
- A steering committee constituted under the chairmanship of the secretary; Social Justice Ministry monitors the implementation of the Action Plan.

Additional Facts:

Other Steps taken by Government of India:

- **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985:** It envisages stringent provisions for the control and regulation of operations relating to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
 - **Narcotics Control Bureau:** It is the nodal drug law enforcement and intelligence agency of India. It functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs. It was established in 1986 under the NDPS Act, 1985. It is headquartered in New Delhi.
- **National Policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS), 2012:** It seeks to combat drug abuse in a holistic manner. It was drafted by the Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue.
- **Central Sector Scheme of Assistance for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drug) Abuse:** Under the scheme, financial assistance is provided to eligible Non-Governmental Organizations for running Integrated Rehabilitation Centres for Addicts.

Social

1. WEF GENDER GAP INDEX: INDIA SLIPS TO 112TH RANK

News: World Economic Forum (WEF) has released the Global Gender Gap Index Report 2019.

Facts:

- The report ranks 153 countries on their progress towards gender parity in four dimensions namely (a) Economic Participation and Opportunity, (b) Educational Attainment (c) Health and Survival and (d) Political Empowerment.
- In addition, this year's report examines gender gap prospects in the professions of the future.

Global Scenario:

- The index was topped by Iceland.
- Among developing countries China ranked 106th, Bangladesh at 50th, Brazil at 92nd, Nepal at 101st, Indonesia at 85th and Sri Lanka at 102nd.
- The report highlights that as per the present scenario, workplace inequality will not be erased until the year 2276 also it will take 95 years to close the political gender gap as women hold 25.2% of parliamentary seats worldwide.

Index on India:

- India has been ranked 112th in the Global gender gap Index 2019 as compared to 108 the previous year.
- India's rank has worsened due to widening disparity in terms of women's health and survival and economic participation.
- India has slipped to 150th place on health and survival, 112th on educational attainment and 149th in economic participation.
- The report has said that there are very few economic opportunities for women in India. It is 34.5% in India, 32.7% in Pakistan, 27.3% in Yemen and 22.7% in Iraq.
- It also highlights that India has a very low (13.8 per cent) women representation on company boards.

Additional Facts:

WEF - The World Economic Forum (WEF), based in Cologny-Geneva, Switzerland, is an NGO, founded in 1971. The WEF's mission is cited as "committed to improving the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas".

The WEF hosts an annual meeting at the end of January in Davos, Switzerland. The meeting brings together some 3,000 business leaders, international political leaders, economists, celebrities and journalists for up to five days to discuss global issues, across 500 public and private sessions.

2. INDIA HAS ONE OF THE HIGHEST UNEMPLOYMENT RATES IN WOMEN

News: According to the OECD Economic Survey of India report, India is one of the worst countries for working women.

Facts:

- India has the one of the largest differences between the employment rates of women and men among developing nations at 52%. The employment gap between women and men is highest 15 to 29 years bracket.

Steps taken by the Indian Government to encourage women participation in the workforce:

- **Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP):** The scheme aims to provide skills that give employability to women and to provide competencies and skills that enable women to become self-employed/entrepreneurs.
- **Mahila E-Haat:** It is a direct online marketing platform leveraging technology for supporting women entrepreneurs/SHGs/ NGOs for showcasing their products/services.
- **Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for Children of Working Mothers:** It seeks to provide day care facilities for children (0-6 years) of working mothers.
- **Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017:** It provides for enhancement in paid maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks and provisions for mandatory crèche facility in the establishments having 50 or more employees. However, the provisions have largely been responsible for low hiring women in formal sectors especially in start-ups and SMEs
- **The Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013:** It seeks to protect women against sexual harassment at all workplaces both in public and private sector, whether organized or unorganized.

3. WCD MINISTRY INVITES APPLICATION FOR NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR

News: Ministry of Women and Child Development has invited applications for Nari Shakti Puraskar for the year 2019.

Facts:

Established in 1991, The Nari Shakti Puraskar is a national honour conferred on individual women for their exceptional achievement and exemplary service to the cause of upliftment of women.

- The awards are conferred by the President of India on the occasion of International Women's Day.
- The award recognizes the spirit of the courage of women in difficult circumstances and the pioneering contribution of an individual in empowering women and raising women's issues.

Additional Facts:

International Women's Day: The United Nations began celebrating International Women's Day (IWD) on 8 March during International Women's Year 1975.

- The theme for 2019 was 'Think equal, build smart, innovate for change'.
- **International Women's Day and SDGs:** The Goal 4 of SDG aims to ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning.
 - The Goal 5 of SDG aims to achieve gender equality, empower all women and girls and to end all forms of discrimination and violence against all women and girls everywhere.

4. MINISTER OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE INAUGURATES 2nd EDITION OF "EAT RIGHT MELA"

News: Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare has inaugurated the 2nd edition of Eat Right Mela in New Delhi.

Facts:

The Eat Right India Movement launched by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in 2018. It is a preventive healthcare measure to trigger social and behavioural change among people. The movement aims to improve public health in India and combat negative nutritional trends to fight lifestyle diseases.

- **Eat Right Mela:** It has been organised by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), to make citizens aware of the health and nutrition benefits of different types of food. It is an outreach activity for citizens to nudge them towards eating right.
- **The PURPLE Book:** It is a handbook on general recommendations on diets for common medical conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, cancer and so on. It has been developed as a resource for hospitals, clinics and medical centres.
- **NetSCoFAN:** It stands for Network for Scientific Cooperation for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. It is a network of research & academic institutions working in the area of food & nutrition along with the NetSCoFAN directory, covering detailed information of various heads/Directors and lead scientists of lead and associated partnering institutions.

5. DEVELOPMENT OF PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS (PVTGS) SCHEME

News: Ministry of Tribal Affairs is implementing the Development of PVTGs scheme for comprehensive socio-economic development of 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

Facts:

The Scheme for Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) is implemented by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

- It was first started in 1998-1999 for exclusive development of PVTGs and then later revised in 2015.
- The scheme aims at planning their socio-economic development in a comprehensive manner while retaining the culture and heritage of the community by adopting habitat development approach.
- State Governments submit Conservation cum Development (CCD) plans on the basis of their requirement.

Additional Facts:

Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG): The Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) are the marginalized section of the Scheduled tribes of India.

- They are a section who are relatively isolated, educationally and socio-economically backward living in a habitat far away from amenities.
- In 1973, the Dhebar Commission had created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups.
- In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as PVTGs. However, they are not a Constitutional category nor are these constitutionally recognized communities.
- The criteria followed for determination of PVTGs are (a) pre-agriculture level of technology (b) stagnant or declining population (c) Extremely low literacy and (d) subsistence level of economy.
- Among the 75 listed PVTGs the highest number are found in Odisha (13), followed by Andhra Pradesh (12) and among others.

6. 20TH EDITION OF HORNBILL FESTIVAL BEGINS IN NAGALAND

News: The 20th Edition of Hornbill Festival has started in the state of Nagaland.

Facts:

Hornbill festival aka 'Festival of Festivals', it is celebrated every year in Nagaland.

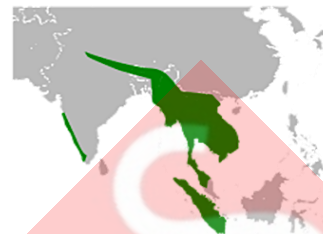
- The festival is organized by the Nagaland State Tourism and Art & Culture Departments.
- The festival aims to encourage inter-tribal interaction and to promote culture through colourful performances, crafts, sports, food fairs, games and ceremonies.

- The festival is named after the Great Indian hornbill, the large and colourful forest bird which is displayed in the folklore of most of the state's tribes.
- The figure shows the range of the Great Indian Hornbill.

Additional Facts:

Great Indian Hornbill:

- The Great Indian Hornbill also known as the great pied hornbill.
- The bird is the state bird of Kerala and Arunachal Pradesh. But it is not a state bird of Nagaland.
- The IUCN status of the bird is vulnerable.
- The bird is threatened by (a) Logging (b) Forest clearance for agriculture (c) susceptible to hunting pressure among others.



7. THE PAIKA MEMORIAL

News: President laid the foundation stone for a memorial to mark 200 years of the Paika Rebellion.

Facts:

- The Paikas were a class of military retainers who had been recruited since the 16th century by kings in Odisha from a variety of social groups to render martial services in return for hereditary rent-free land (nish-kar jagirs) and titles.

Paika Rebellion: The Paika Rebellion was an armed rebellion against the British East India Company's rule in 1817.

- Bakshi Jagabandhu, the hereditary chief of the militia army of the Gajapati King of Khurda led an army of Paikas to join the uprising of the Kondh.
- Bakshi Jagabandhu escaped to the jungles and stayed out of reach of the British until 1825, when he finally surrendered under negotiated terms.

*Internal security***1. INDIA CONDUCTS 1ST NIGHT TRIAL OF NUCLEAR CAPABLE AGNI-III MISSILE**

News: India has conducted the first night trial of nuclear capable long-range ballistic missile Agni-III.

Facts:

Agni-III is an intermediate range nuclear capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile developed by DRDO having a strike range of 3000-5000km.

- The missile is powered by a two-stage solid propellant engine and is equipped with nuclear warheads. It is equipped with a hybrid navigation, guidance and control systems along with advanced on-board computer.
- The trial was carried out by the Strategic Forces Command of the Indian Army with logistic support from the DRDO.

Additional Facts:

Strategic Forces Command: The Strategic Forces Command (SFC) was created in 2003. It is a part of India's Nuclear Command Authority (NCA).

- It is responsible for the management and administration of the country's tactical and strategic nuclear weapons stockpile.

Nuclear Command Authority (NCA): Nuclear Command Authority is India's nodal authority responsible for command, control and operational decisions regarding India's nuclear weapons programme.

- It has an Executive Council which is headed by National Security Advisor.
- It gives input to the Political Council headed by the Prime Minister. The Political Council authorizes a nuclear attack if need be.

2. HAND-IN-HAND MILITARY EXERCISE BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA -2019

News: The 8th India-China joint training exercise 'HAND-IN-HAND 2019' was conducted at Umroi, Meghalaya.

Facts:

- The Hand-in-Hand exercise is a joint military exercise between India and China. It was held for the first time in the year 2007.
- This year's exercise was held with the theme counterterrorism under United Nation's mandate. The aim of the exercise was to practice joint planning and conduct of counter terrorist operations in semi urban terrain.
- There were two tactical exercises which are scheduled during the training which are (a) one on counter terrorism scenario and the other on (b) Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations.

3. EXERCISE INDRA 2019

News: India and Russia conducted the Exercise INDRA 2019 in India from 10 December simultaneously at Babina (near Jhansi), Pune, and Goa.

Facts:

- The exercise began in the year 2003 and the first joint tri services exercise was conducted in 2017
- Exercise Indra is a joint tri-services exercise comprising Army, Air Force and Navy of India and Russia. The aim of the exercise is to practice joint planning and conduct to enhance interoperability in the peacekeeping and enforcement environment under the aegis of the United Nations

4. PHILIPPINES LIKELY TO FINALISE BRAHMOS DEAL BY NEXT YEAR

News: The Philippines is set to become the first country to buy the BrahMos cruise missile jointly developed by India and Russia.

Facts:

- BrahMos is a Supersonic Cruise missile. It is a joint venture between India and Russia. It is named after Brahmaputra and Moscow rivers.
- The missile is capable of being launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air against surface and sea-based targets.
- The missile has a strike range of 290 km. It can be fired from land as well as sea-based platforms.
- Brahmos is also one of the fastest cruise missiles deployed with the speed of Mach 2.8, which is 3 times more than the speed of sound.

Additional Facts:

- **Cruise missile** - A cruise missile is an unmanned self-propelled (till the time of impact) guided vehicle that sustains flight through aerodynamic lift for most of its flight path.
- **Ballistic missile** - A ballistic missile follows a ballistic trajectory to deliver one or more warheads on a predetermined target. These weapons are only guided during relatively brief periods of flight—most of their trajectory is unpowered, being governed by gravity and air resistance if in the atmosphere.

5. RUSSIAN AVANGARD MISSILE

News: Russia's military has deployed a new intercontinental weapon called the Avangard hypersonic missile system.

Facts:

- The Avangard hypersonic missile system is a re-entry body carried atop an existing ballistic missile which has the capability to manoeuvre.
- Its manoeuvring capability makes it difficult to predict its trajectory and gives it the ability to protect itself from the air and ballistic missile defences by delivering nuclear warheads to targets.
- The missiles have a range of over 6,000 km, weigh approximately 2,000 kg and can withstand temperatures of over 2000 degree Celsius.
- The missiles can travel more than 20 times the speed of sound.

Additional Facts:

Importance of Hypersonic missiles: Hypersonic weapons strikes at a tremendous speed and prohibits the defender to get his defences to react to such a threat in time. They can fly lower than the traditional ballistic missiles thus they tend to avoid radar detection.

*Miscellaneous***1. DPIIT INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR FIRST-EVER NATIONAL STARTUP AWARDS 2020**

News: The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has announced the institution of the first ever National Start-up Awards.

Facts:

- The awards seek to recognize outstanding start-ups and ecosystem enablers that are building innovative solutions and scalable enterprises, with high potential of employment generation or wealth creation, demonstrating measurable social impact.

2. INDIA CORRUPTION SURVEY 2019

News: India Corruption Survey 2019 was conducted by the Local Circles, a social media firm and the Transparency International India.

Facts:

- Rajasthan tops the corruption chart in India. As per Survey, 78% of people in Rajasthan, participating in the survey admitted to paying bribes to get work done.
- Bihar follows Rajasthan and was placed at the second spot. In Bihar, 75 % of citizens admitted to paying a bribe to get their work done.
- In South India, Telangana has topped with 67% of citizens admitted to paying a bribe to get their work done.
- On the other hand, Kerala was ranked as the least corrupt state where only 10% of people admitted to paying a bribe to get their work done.
- Besides Kerala, Goa, Gujarat, Odisha, West Bengal, Haryana and Delhi were among the least corrupt states.

Additional Facts:

Transparency International: Transparency International is an international non-governmental organization. It was founded in 1993 based in Berlin, Germany.

- It publishes various reports such as the Global Corruption Barometer and the Corruption Perceptions Index.

3. PRIME MINISTER LAUNCHED FIT INDIA SCHOOL GRADING SYSTEM

News: The Prime Minister launched the Fit India School grading system in schools across the country.

Facts:**About Fit India School grading system:**

- The Fit India School rankings have been divided into three categories namely The Fit India Schools which is the first level of ranking, Fit India School (3 star) and Fit India School (5 star).
- The level of ranking depends on how much importance the school gives to inculcating fitness among its students and teachers, besides facilities available for fitness activities.
- The schools that achieve this ranking will also be able to use the Fit India logo and flag. Further, the Schools can declare themselves as fit by visiting the Fit India portal.

Additional Facts:

Fit India movement: The Prime Minister launched the Fit India Movement on the occasion of National Sports day. The movement aims to encourage Indians to include fitness activities and sports in their daily lives to pave the way for a healthy and fit lifestyle.

4. DAVI KOPENAWA WINS RIGHT LIVELIHOOD AWARD

News: Yanomami shaman Davi Kopenawa also known as the Dalai Lama of the Rainforest received the Right Livelihood Award.

Facts:

- The Right Livelihood Award was created in 1980 by Swedish-German philatelist Jakob von Uexkull. The award is also known as the alternative Nobel Prize.
- The award honours courageous people and organisations offering solutions to the root causes of global problems that the prize founder felt were being ignored by the Nobel Prizes.
- The award is presented annually in Stockholm, Sweden. It is usually shared by four recipients but may vary from year-to-year.

Additional Facts:

Yanomami Tribe: The Yanomami are the largest relatively isolated tribe in South America. They live in large circular and communal houses called Yanos or Shabonos. They live in the rainforests and mountainous regions of Northern Brazil and Southern Venezuela.

5. INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY

News: December 9 was observed as the International Anti-Corruption day.

Facts:

- Anti-corruption Day is celebrated annually since 2005 when the United Nations Convention against Corruption came into force.
- The theme for 2019 Anti-Corruption Day was 'United against Corruption'. It focuses on corruption as one of the biggest obstacles to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Further, a campaign called #YouthForJustice has been launched which focuses on mobilizing and empowering youth as a key for ensuring sustainable solutions to combating corruption.

Additional Facts:

United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) - It is the only legally binding universal anti-corruption instrument. It was adopted in 2003 and came into force in 2005.

- The Convention covers five main areas: preventive measures, criminalization and law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery, and technical assistance and information exchange.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) serves as Secretariat for the UNCAC
- India is a party to the Convention.

6. FIT INDIA PLOGGING RUN

News: The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports announced Ripu Daman Bevli, popularly known as Plogman of India as the Plogging Ambassador of India. Ripu Daman Bevli started plogging in 2017.

Facts:

- Plog Run is a unique way of picking up garbage while jogging. Fit India Plogging Run is a part of the Fit India Movement. It was launched on October 2, 2019.
- Fit India Plogging Run combines the Fit India Movement and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

7. 2.95 CRORE RELEASED FOR 'GANDHI ENCYCLOPEDIA' FOR PROMOTION OF APPROPRIATE GANDHIAN PHILOSOPHY

News: The Ministry of Culture has approved a project for the development of Gandhi Paedia by National Council of Science Museums.

Facts:

- **About Gandhi Paedia:** It seeks to promote appropriate Gandhian philosophy and thoughts through social media platforms.
- **About the National Council of Science Museums (NCM):** It is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Culture. It was established in 1978 and is headquartered in Kolkata.

8. 44,000-YEAR-OLD CAVE ART IN INDONESIA IS 'WORLD'S OLDEST'

News: According to a study published in the journal "Nature", the oldest animal drawing has been found in Indonesia.

Facts:

- The painting has been discovered in a cave called Liang Bulu Sipong 4 in the south of Sulawesi, Indonesia. It has been found to be 44,000 years old.

9. PORTAL TO SHOWCASE INDIAN CULTURE UNVEILED MINISTRY OF CULTURE

News: The Ministry of Culture has unveiled the Indian culture web portal

Facts:

- It is a digital resource of documents, artefacts, paintings and other items available in the archive.
- The Indian Culture portal was envisioned by the Ministry of Culture and was created by the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, in collaboration with IGNOU
- It is the first government-authorized portal where knowledge and cultural resources of various organizations of the Ministry of Culture are available in the public domain on a single platform

10. UNESCO'S LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

News: UNESCO included 20 intangible cultural heritages in its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Facts:

Intangible culture is the immaterial part of the culture. It is made up of oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices and traditional craftsmanship techniques.

Intangible Cultural Heritages from India in the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

Name	Characteristics
Kutiyattam	Form of Sanskrit theatre, practised in Kerala

Tradition of Vedic chanting	Chanting of a multitude of texts and interpretations collected in four Vedas
Ramlila	Form of theatre performed across northern India during the festival of Dussehra
Ramman	It is a religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, Uttarakhand
Mudiyettu	It is a ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala
Kalbelia folk songs and dances	Performed by kalbelia community of Rajasthan
Chauu Dance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performed in Eastern India <u>Theme</u>: episodes from epics including the Mahabharata and Ramayana, local folklore and abstract themes Three distinct styles: Seraikella, Purulia and Mayurbhanj- the first two uses masks
Buddhist chanting of Ladakh	It is the recitation of sacred Buddhist texts by major sects viz. Nyingma, Kagyud, Shakya and Geluk
Sankirtana	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is ritual singing, dancing, drumming of Manipur <u>Theme</u>: lives and deeds of Krishna
Craft of the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru	Constitutes the traditional technique of manufacturing brass and copper utensils in Punjab.
Nowruz	Persian new year-celebrated on March 21 st
Yoga	Consists of a series of poses, meditation, controlled breathing, word chanting and other techniques
Kumbh Mela	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth It is held on the banks of the Ganges at Allahabad, Hardwar, Ujjain and Nasik every four years by rotation

II. THE DRAKE PASSAGE

News: Recently, six rowers from four countries crossed the Drake Passage, in just under two weeks after pushing off from the southern tip of South America. The project was dubbed as the Impossible Row.

Facts:

- The six men rowed for 12 days, 1 hour and 45 minutes making it the first completely human-powered crossing of the passage which was confirmed by the Guinness World Records (GWR).
- As per the GWR, the row represents among the first row on the Southern Ocean, the first row across the Drake Passage and the first row to the Antarctic continent.

Additional Facts:

Drake Passage: The Drake Passage is located between Cape Horn at the tip of South America and the Antarctic Peninsula.

- It is also the narrowest stretch in the Southern Ocean and spans approximately 800 km between the southern tip of South America and the northern tip of the West Antarctic Peninsula.
- It is considered one of the roughest waterways in the world because here, layers of cold seawater from the south and warm seawater from the north collide to form powerful eddies.



12. ODISHA GOVERNMENT SCHEME TO MERGE WITH 'PM-KISAN' YOJANA

News: The Odisha government decided to merge its KALIA Scheme with Centre's Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) yojana.

Facts:

- **KALIA Scheme:** "Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation" (Kalia) scheme of Odisha is a direct cash transfer scheme for small and marginal farmers and landless agricultural labourers.
- **PM KISAN Scheme:** Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a Central Sector Scheme with 100% funding from Government of India. The Scheme is effective from 1/12/2018.
 - Under the Scheme, income support of Rs.6000/- per year is provided to all farmer families across the country in three equal instalments of Rs.2000/- every four months.

13. KERALA STATE YOUTH WELFARE BOARD ORGANISED KALARIPAYATTU TRAINING FOR YOUNG WOMEN

News: Kerala State Youth Welfare Board has organised Kalaripayattu training for young women in the backdrop of women increasingly becoming vulnerable.

Facts:

- Kalaripayattu is a great and ancient physical, cultural and martial art of Kerala. The martial art originated during the 3rd century BC to the 2nd century AD. It is considered as one of the oldest fighting systems in existence.
 - The word kalari first appears in the Tamil Sangam literature (c. 300 BCE to 300 CE) to describe both a battlefield and combat arena.
 - Kalaripayattu techniques include a combination of steps (Chuvatu) and postures (Vadivu).
 - Chuvatu is the basic steps of the martial arts. Vadivu (postures) is the basic characteristics of Kalaripayattu training. Named after animals, they are usually eight in number.

14. UNDP RELEASED HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX 2019- INDIA UP ONE RANK

News: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) released Human Development Index 2019.

Facts:

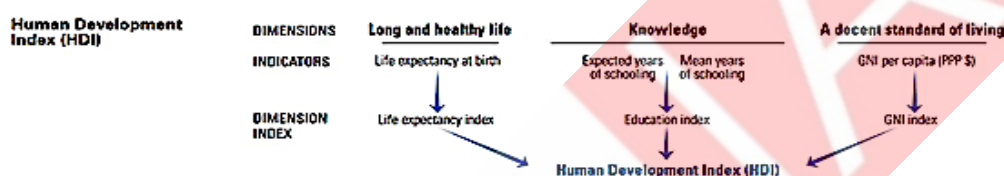
- Norway ranked first in HDI 2019, followed by Switzerland and Ireland. Burundi ranked last (189)
- India ranked 129 out of 189 countries in 2019. HDI value was 0.647. India ranked 130 in 2018.
- Among India's neighbours, Sri Lanka ranked 71, China ranked 85. Bhutan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan were ranked lower than India.

Additional Facts:

Other important indexes published by UNDP

- **Multidimensional Poverty Index:** It identifies multiple deprivations at the individual level in health, education and standard of living.
- **Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (IHDI):** It adjusts the Human Development Index (HDI) for inequality in the distribution of each dimension across the population.
- **Gender Inequality Index (GII):** It reflects women's disadvantage in three dimensions—reproductive health, empowerment and the labour market.

- **Gender Development Index:** It addresses gender-gaps in the dimensions of HDI: life expectancy, education, and incomes.
- **Gender Empowerment Measure:** It is based on estimates of women's relative economic income, participation in high-paying positions with economic power, and access to professional and parliamentary positions.
- **Multidimensional gender social norms index:** It shows how social beliefs can obstruct gender and women's empowerment. It takes into account four dimensions - political, educational, economic and physical integrity.
- **HDI** - It measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development:
 - A long and healthy life measured by Life expectancy at birth
 - Access to knowledge: measured by Mean years of schooling and Expected years of schooling
 - A decent standard of living- measured by Gross National Income (GNI) per capita (PPP US\$).



- Pakistani economist Mahbub ul Haq created HDI in 1990, deriving the dimensions from Amartya Sen's capability approach.

15. WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION RELEASED THE ANNUAL GLOBAL MALARIA REPORT.

News: The World Health Organization has released the annual Global Malaria Report.

Facts:

- India registered a fall of 2.6 million malaria cases in 2018 as compared to 2017.
- India accounted for 53% of total malaria deaths occurring in WHO South East Asia region.
- Seven states account for about 90% of the burden of malaria cases in India. These are Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Gujarat, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh.

16. INTERNATIONAL MIGRANTS DAY CELEBRATED ON 18TH DECEMBER

News: 18th December marks the day when UNGA, in 1990, adopted the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

Facts:

- **Chief Organization:** The day is celebrated through the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
- **2019 Theme:** "We Together."

Additional Facts:

The International Organization for Migration (IOM): Established in 1951, it is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration management. It is headquartered in Grand-Saconnex, Switzerland. In 2016, it became a related organization of the United Nations.

17. BRICS' NDB PLEDGES \$100 MILLION TO NIIF

News: Recently, New Development Bank (NDB) has committed \$100 million to India's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF).

Facts:

- The New Development Bank (NDB) formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank is a multilateral development bank established by the BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa).
- The bank was founded in 2014 by Fortaleza declaration but was launched in 2015 with an initial authorized capital of \$100 billion. The bank is headquartered in Shanghai, China.
- The bank aims to contribute to development plans established nationally through projects that are socially, environmentally and economically sustainable.
- Membership:
- The bank functions on a consultative mechanism among the BRICS members with all the BRICS member countries possessing equal rights.
- The bank's agreement specifies that all members of the United Nations could be members of the bank. However, the share of the BRICS nations can never be less than 55% of the voting power.

Additional Facts:

NIIF: NIIF is India's first sovereign wealth fund set up by the government of India in 2015. It is a fund manager that invests in infrastructure and related sectors in India.

- It was created with the objective to maximise economic impact especially by infrastructure investment in commercially viable projects.
- The Indian government has a 49% stake in NIIF with the rest held by foreign and domestic investors.
- NIIF currently manages three funds each with its distinctive investment mandate. The funds are registered as Alternative Investment Fund (AIF) with the SEBI.

18. CABINET AUTHORISES NHAI TO SET UP INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT TRUST (InvITs)

News: The Union Cabinet has given its approval to National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to set up infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs).

Facts:

InvITs: are investment scheme similar to mutual funds. They allow investment from individuals and institutional investors in infrastructure projects to earn a portion of the income as return.

- This investment is more attractive for investors as it provides greater flexibility and they don't have to build an infrastructure project from scratch and is averse to construction risk.
- Besides, mutual funds and institutes like Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) can also invest in infrastructure space through InvITs.

NHAI's InvITs:

- NHAI's InvIT will be a Trust established by NHAI under the Indian Trust Act, 1882 and Securities and Exchange Board of India (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) Regulations, 2014.
- The InvIT Trust will be formed with an objective of investment primarily in infrastructure projects.
- InvIT may hold assets either directly or through a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) or a holding.
- This will enable NHAI to monetize completed National Highways that have a toll collection track record of at least one year and NHAI will reserves the right to levy toll on the identified highway.

Additional Facts:

About NHAI: The National Highways Authority of India was constituted under National Highways Authority of India Act, 1988. It is a nodal agency of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

- It is responsible for the development, maintenance and management of National Highways entrusted to it and for matters connected or incidental there.

19. INDIA RANKS 73RD IN GLOBAL E-COMMERCE RANKING

News: United Nations Conference on Trade and Development's (UNCTAD) has released the Business-to-Consumer (B2C) E-commerce Index 2019.

Facts:

- The index compares 152 countries on four major indicators that are highly related to E-Commerce which includes population age, individuals using the internet, postal reliability index and secure internet servers.

Key takeaways -

- Netherlands has topped the index for the second consecutive time followed by Switzerland.
- The only non-European countries on the top 10 list are Singapore (third) and Australia (10th).
- Further, the index has ranked Comoros, Burundi, Chad, and Niger at the bottom four in the list.
- India was ranked at 73rd among 152 countries.
- About 11% of Internet users and 3% of the overall population in India have shopped online this year. As per the estimate, the Indian e-commerce market is expected to grow to US\$ 200 billion by 2026 from US\$ 38.5 billion as of now.

Additional Facts:

UNCTAD: UNCTAD is a permanent intergovernmental body established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1964.

- It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and part of the UN Secretariat. Currently, UNCTAD has 195 member states.
- It was formed specifically to handle the problems of developing countries dealing with trade, investment and development issues.
- **Reports published by UNCTAD:** UNCTAD produces a number of topical reports, including:
 - The Trade and Development Report
 - The Trade and Environment Review
 - The World Investment Report
 - The Economic Development in Africa Report
 - The Least Developed Countries Report
 - UNCTAD Statistics

20. INDIA'S FOREX RESERVES CROSS \$450 BILLION FOR THE FIRST TIME

- The foreign exchange reserves have increased due to strong inflows which enabled the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to buy dollars from the market.

21. INDIA SKILLS REPORT FINDS 46.21% OF STUDENTS EMPLOYABLE

- India Skills Report is a joint initiative of Wheebox (a global talent-assessment company), People Strong (a HR solutions and HR Technology company from India) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in collaboration with UNDP, AICTE, and AIU.

22. ECONOMIC CENSUS FLAGGED OFF IN DELHI

News: The Seventh Economic Census was launched in the National Capital Territory of Delhi.

Facts:

- Economic Census is a complete count of all economic establishments located within the geographical boundaries of India.
- It is conducted every five years by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). The first Economic census was held in 1978.
- The MoSPI has partnered with Common Service Centres e-Governance Services India Limited, Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) as the implementing agency for 7th Economic Census.

23. 'EBKRAY' ONLINE AUCTION PLATFORM

News: Union Finance Minister has launched an eBkay or eBक्रय which is a common e-auction platform for the attached properties held by the Public sector banks.

Facts:

- The eBkay platform enables the online auction of the attached assets transparently and cleanly for the improved realization of value by the Public Sector banks (PSBs).
- It also provides single-window access to information on properties up for e-auction as well as facility for comparison of similar properties.
- The e-auction platform has also now been linked to the Indian Banks Auctions Mortgaged Properties Information (IBAPI) portal and guidelines have been made available.

Additional Facts:

Indian Banks Auctions Mortgaged Properties Information (IBAPI): IBAPI is an initiative of Indian Banks Association (IBA) under policy of Department of Financial Services (DFS), Union Ministry of Finance.

- It provides details of mortgaged properties to be auctioned online by banks, starting with PSBs.
- The buyers can use the portal to search and get properties details and participate in auction process. Currently, 21 banks are onboard on this portal.

24. PREPAID PAYMENT INSTRUMENT LAUNCHED BY RBI

News: The Reserve Bank has introduced a new type of prepaid payment instrument (PPI) for daily digital payments.

Facts:

- The prepaid payment instrument (PPI) could be used only for purchase of goods and services up to a limit of ₹10,000 per month.
- PPIs shall be issued by bank and non-bank PPI issuers after obtaining minimum details of the holder.
- The amount loaded in such PPIs during any month shall not exceed ₹10,000 and the total amount loaded during the financial year shall not exceed ₹1,20,000.
- The PPI issuers shall provide an option to close the instrument at any time and also allow to transfer the funds 'back to source' at the time of closure.

Additional Facts:

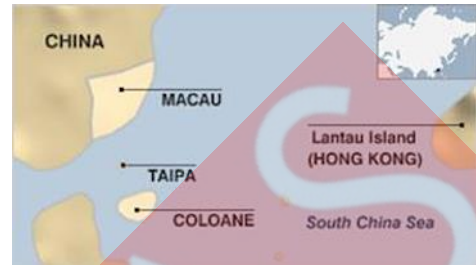
Prepaid Payment instrument (PPI): Prepaid Payment instrument (PPI) are financial instruments that facilitate the purchase of goods and services against the value stored on such instruments.

- These are generally issued in the form of smart cards, mobile wallets, paper vouchers, internet accounts/wallets.
- These payment instruments are licensed and regulated by the Reserve Bank of India.

Pointly

1. MACAU CELEBRATES 20 YEARS OF CHINESE RULE

- Macau celebrated the 20th Anniversary since the former Portuguese colony was returned to China.
- Macau is a special administrative region of China. It is an example of One Country, Two Systems. It means Macau can have a different political and economic system from mainland China while still being a part of the People's Republic of China (PRC).
- Hong Kong is also run under the one country two system framework.



2. SIX EUROPEAN NATIONS JOIN IRAN BARTER SYSTEM

- Six European countries joined the barter mechanism called INSTEX which is designed to circumvent US sanctions against trade with Iran by avoiding the use of dollars.
- **What is INSTEX?** The Instrument in Support of Trade Exchanges (INSTEX) is a payment mechanism set up by the governments of France, Germany and Britain to secure trade with Iran and circumvent US sanctions.

3. NEW ZEALAND VOLCANO ERUPTION: WHITE ISLAND

- A volcanic eruption took place at White Island in New Zealand.
- White Island has been classified as New Zealand's most active volcano since 1976. The Island is also called as Whakaari



4. SHEHRI SAMRIDHI UTSAV

- **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana** - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) organised a consultative meeting to set out the framework for Shehri Samridhi Utsav (SSU) 2020.
- **Shehri Samridhi Utsav** - Launched in 2019, it is an initiative of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA). It aims to extend the outreach of DAY-NULM, to the most vulnerable people. It also seeks to showcase its initiatives and facilitate access of Self-Help Group (SHG) members to the other government schemes.

5. LAND RECORDS IN 90% OF INDIAN VILLAGES HAVE BEEN COMPUTERISED

- According to the Ministry of Rural development, around 90% of the land of Indian villages have been computerised under Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP).
- Digital India Land Records Modernisation Programme (DILRMP):
 - The Digital India Land Record Modernization Programme (DILRMP), previously known as the National Land Record Modernization Programme (NLRMP) was launched in 2008.
 - The purpose of the programme is to digitize and modernize land records and develop a centralised land record management system.

6. WI-FI CALLING

- For the first time in India, Bharti Airtel launched Voice over Wi-Fi (VoWiFi) in Delhi NCR.
- Wi-Fi Calling is a technology that enables a smartphone user to make and receive calls over a Wi-Fi network rather than a cellular radio connection.
- It is aimed especially for areas where cellular networks are not strong.

7. INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES -3RD DECEMBER 2019

- The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons was proclaimed in 1992 by the United Nations General Assembly.
- The theme for 2019 is 'Promoting the participation of persons with disabilities and their leadership: taking action on the 2030 Development Agenda'.

8. THE WORLD OBSERVES HUMAN RIGHTS DAY CELEBRATED ON 10TH DECEMBER

- Human Rights Day marks the day on which the United Nations General Assembly, in 1948, adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
- The theme for 2019 Human Rights Day is - Youth Standing up for Human Rights.

9. INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE DAY- 12TH DECEMBER

- Day was proclaimed by the United Nations in 2017. It marks the day when the UNGA endorsed a resolution urging countries to accelerate progress toward UHC (2012).
- 2019 Theme: 'Keep the Promise'

10. BLUE WATER FORCE

- **Classification of Navy:** The Navies are classified in terms of the following colours:
 - **Brown water Navy [Coastal Security]** - A navy whose operations are restricted close to the shore where the water is muddy.
 - **Green Water Navy [Littoral Defence]** - These can go further in the sea than Brown water Navy.
 - **Blue Water Navy** - Maritime force capable of operating in deep water and open seas.

11. INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION ORGANISATION (ICAO)

- International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations charged with coordinating and regulating international air travel.
- ICAO was established in 1944 by the Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention). It is headquartered in Quebec, Canada.

12. MOSPI CONSTITUTES COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC STATISTICS

- The committee consists of 28 members. It is headed by former Chief Statistician Pronab Sen.
- The committee has been constituted after several economists had expressed concern over political interference in influencing statistical data in India. They had called for restoration of institutional independence and integrity to the statistical organisations.
- The committee will review and develop the country's surveys on employment, industry and services sector amid criticism of official statistics.

13. SEEDS BILL

- The government is planning to change the existing seed regime, by bringing in a new law with the objective of regulating quality of seeds for sale, import and export.
- The current 1966 Act only covers “notified kinds or varieties of seeds” The new Seeds Bill, 2019 provides for compulsory registration of any kind or variety of seeds that are sought to be sold.
- In other words, even hybrids/varieties of private companies will have to be registered, and their seeds would have to meet the minimum prescribed standards relating to germination, physical and genetic purity.
- Breeders would be required to disclose the “expected performance” of their registered varieties “under given conditions”. If the seed of such registered kind or variety fails to provide the expected performance under such given conditions, the farmer can claim compensation from the producer, dealer, distributor or vendor under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.

14. INDIAN PEACEKEEPERS IN SOUTH SUDAN RECEIVE PRESTIGIOUS UN MEDAL

- Indian peacekeepers serving in South Sudan have been awarded the United Nations (UN) medal for their service and contribution to building peace in the country.
- India and UN Peacekeeping: Currently, there are more than 6,700 troops and police from India who have been deployed to UN peacekeeping missions. India is the fourth highest amongst troop-contributing countries.
- In 2007, India became the first country to deploy an all-women contingent to a UN peacekeeping mission.
- **United Nations Peacekeeping:** It was created in 1948. It helps countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. UN peacekeepers are often referred as Blue Berets or Blue Helmets.
 - It integrates the troops from around the world with the civilian peacekeepers to address the mandate set by the UN Security Council (UNSC) and the General Assembly.
 - The UN Peacekeeping is guided by three basic principles (1) Consent of the parties (2) Impartiality and (3) Non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate.

15. WILDLIFE INSTITUTE OF INDIA (WII)

- WII is an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change. It was established in 1982 and is based in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
- It offers training programs, academic courses and advisory in wildlife research and management.

16. ATAL BHUJAL YOJANA

- Atal Bhujal Yojana is a central sector scheme under the ministry of Jal Shakti. The scheme was announced in the 2016-17 Union Budget.
 - It aims to recharge groundwater sources and ensure the efficient use of water by involving people at the local level. The scheme seeks to strengthen the institutional framework and bring about behavioural changes at community level for sustainable groundwater resource management. It envisages community-led Water Security Plans.
 - The funding pattern of the scheme is 50:50 between the Government of India and the World Bank.
 - The scheme will be implemented in water-stressed areas of Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.
- **Central water commission (CWC):** It is a premier Technical Organization of India in the field of Water Resources.

- It functions as an attached office of the Ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. It was founded in 1945 and is headquartered in New Delhi.
- It is mandated with the initiation and coordination of schemes introduced by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

17. TO CONTROL STRAYS, CENTRE PUSHES NEW TECHNOLOGY TO PRODUCE ONLY FEMALE CALVES

- Sexed semen technology is about preselecting the sex of offspring by sorting or separating the X-sperms from Y-sperms. The aim is to deliver freedom from male calves by ensuring that cows are inseminated by semen containing only X-chromosome-bearing sperms. This will ensure that only a female calf is born.

18. AERIAL SEEDING

- Aerial seeding is the technique of sowing seeds by spraying them through aerial mechanical means such as a drone, plane or helicopter.
- Aerial seeding is adopted because it is quicker and more effective than planting manually. It also allows access to areas where the terrain is rocky or at high elevation. However, Aerial Seeding is generally achieved not with darts but by spraying seeds through an aircraft or a drone.
- **Dart Seeding:** The process involves throwing darts containing seeds onto open ground.

19. LYSOSOMAL STORAGE DISORDERS

- Lysosomal storage disorders are a group of more than 50 rare diseases. They affect the lysosome which is a structure in our cells that breaks down substances such as proteins, carbohydrates and old cell parts so the body can recycle them.
- People with these disorders lack important enzymes (proteins that speed up reactions in the body) without which, the lysosome isn't able to break down these substances.

20. RARE DISEASES

- A rare disease is a health condition of low prevalence that affects a small number of people compared with other prevalent diseases in the general population.
- Most rare diseases are genetic and are present throughout a person's entire life, even if symptoms do not immediately appear.
- The most common rare diseases recorded in India are Haemophilia, Thalassemia, sickle-cell anaemia and primary immunodeficiency in children, auto-immune diseases among others.
- India has about 70 million patients of rare diseases.

21. HYDROGEN FUEL CELLS

- Fuel cells generate electricity through an electrochemical process. It converts chemical energy in fuels into electrical energy.
- It combines hydrogen and oxygen to generate an electric current with water being the only by product.
- The fuel cell promises power generation with high efficiency and low environmental impact.
- Recently, the Supreme Court has directed the government to look into the feasibility of introducing vehicles based on a hydrogen cell technology to deal with air pollution in Delhi.

22. SOCIAL ACTIVISM AGAINST MOB LYNCHING

- **NOT IN MY NAME campaign:** It was launched in 2017 to protest against the cow vigilantism.
- **National Campaign against Mob Lynching (NCAML):** It is also known as 'Masuka', short for Manav Suraksha Kanoon (law to protect humans). It seeks to make lynching a non-bailable offence.

MCQs –STATIC SYLLABUS

Q.1) With reference to the difference between Civil Disobedience Movement and Non-Cooperation Movement, consider the following statements:

1. Civil Disobedience Movement had the objective of Purna Swaraj, while Non-Cooperation Movement had the objective of Swaraj.
2. Muslim participation was relatively lesser during the Non-Cooperation Movement when compared to the Civil Disobedience Movement.

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

Ans) a

Exp) Option (a) is the correct answer.

Comparison between Civil Disobedience Movement and Non-Cooperation Movement:

There were certain aspects in which the Civil Disobedience Movement differed from the Non-Cooperation Movement. These comparisons are as follows:

- **Statement 1 is correct.** The stated objective this time was complete independence and not just remedying two specific wrongs and a vaguely-worded Swaraj. Civil Disobedience Movement had an objective of Poorna Swaraj.

- The methods involved violation of law from the very beginning and not just non-cooperation with foreign rule.
- There was a decline in forms of protests involving the intelligentsia, such as lawyers giving up practice, students giving up government schools to join national schools and colleges.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect.** Muslim participation was nowhere near that in the Non-Cooperation Movement level.
- No major labour upsurge coincided with the movement.
- The massive participation of peasants and business groups compensated for decline of other features.
- The number of those imprisoned was about three times more this time.
- The Congress was organizationally stronger.

KB)

Source) A Brief History of Modern History by Rajiv Ahir, Chapter 19 Civil Disobedience Movement and Round Table Conference page no 424

Q.2) Consider the following statements:

1. The Bengal gazette, started by James Augustus Hickey in 1780, was the first newspaper in vernacular language in India.
2. Bal Gangadhar Tilak became the first Indian journalist to be imprisoned for his fight for freedom of press.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans) d

Exp) Option (d) is the correct answer.

Statement 1 is incorrect. James Augustus Hickey in 1780 started The Bengal Gazette or Calcutta General Advertiser, the first newspaper in India, which was an English language weekly newspaper. It was seized in 1872 because of its outspoken criticism of the Government.

Statement 2 is incorrect. In 1883, Surendranath Banerjea became the first Indian journalist to be imprisoned. In an angry editorial in The Bengalee Banerjea had criticised a judge of the Calcutta High Court for being insensitive to the religious sentiments of Bengalis in one of his judgements.

Source) A Brief History of India Spectrum 2017. Pg: 629;

Q.3) Which of the following was nicknamed “The Gagging Act”:

- a) Newspaper (Incitement to Offences) Act, 1908
- b) Rowlatt Act, 1919
- c) The Defence of India Act, 1915
- d) Vernacular Press Act, 1878

Ans) d

Exp) Option (d) is the correct answer.

Vernacular Press Act, 1878 was passed by Lord Lytton and came to be nicknamed “the gagging Act”. The worst features of this Act were—(i) discrimination between English and vernacular press, (ii) no right of appeal. Under VPA,

proceedings were instituted against Som Prakash, Bharat Mihir, Dacca Prakash and Samachar. (Incidentally, the Amrita Bazar Patrika turned overnight into an English newspaper to escape the VPA.)

There was strong opposition to the Act and finally Ripon repealed it in 1882.

Source) A Brief History of India Spectrum 2017. Pg: 628, 629;

Q.4) Arrange the following events chronologically:

1. Establishment of Sanskrit College by Jonathan Duncan
2. Establishment of Calcutta Madrasah
3. Censorship of Press Act
4. Foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans) c

Exp) Option (c) is the correct answer

- **Calcutta Madrasah (1781)** was established by Warren Hastings in 1781 for the study of Muslim law and related subjects.
- **Foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1784):** was founded by civil servant Sir William Jones in 1784 to enhance and further the cause of Oriental research
- **The Sanskrit College (1791)** was established by Jonathan Duncan, the

resident, at Benaras in 1791 for study of Hindu law and philosophy.

- **Censorship of the Press Act, 1799:** Lord Wellesley enacted this, anticipating French invasion of India. It imposed almost wartime press restrictions including pre-censorship. These restrictions were relaxed under Lord Hastings, who had progressive views, and in 1818, pre censorship was dispensed with

Source) A Brief History of India Spectrum 2017

Q.5) Which of the following statements is/are not correct regarding the early nationalists:

1. They supported foreign capital investment in the country to support industrialization.
2. The drain theory for the first time, was put forward by Romesh Chandra Dutt in The Economic History of India.
3. The economic drain took the form of an excess of exports over imports.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans) a

Exp) Option (a) is the correct answer.

Statement 1 is incorrect. According to the early nationalists, industrialisation was to be based on Indian and not foreign capital because, foreign capital replaced and suppressed instead of augmenting and encouraging Indian capital. This suppression caused economic drain, further

strengthening British hold over India. The political consequences of foreign capital investments were equally harmful as they caused political subjugation and created vested interests which sought security for investors, thus perpetuating the foreign rule.

Statement 2 is incorrect. The drain theory was put forward by **Dadabhai Naoroji in his book Poverty and Unbritish Rule in India.**

Statement 3 is correct. The drain took the form of an excess of exports over imports for which India got no economic or material return. They pointed out that the pattern of foreign trade was unfavourable to India. It relegated India to a position of importer of finished goods and exporter of raw materials and foodstuffs. According to the nationalist calculations, this drain amount to one-half of government revenues, more than the entire land revenue collection and over one-third of India's total savings.

Source) A Brief History of India Spectrum 2017, Pg: 614-617

Q.6) Which of the following statements are correct regarding the Fundamental Right of Protection in respect of Conviction for Offences?

1. It prohibits conviction or sentence under an ex-post-facto criminal or civil law.
2. The protection against double jeopardy is available only in proceedings before a Court of Law or a Judicial Tribunal.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only

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

Ans) b

Exp) Option (b) is the correct answer.

Statement 1 is incorrect. Article 20 states that No person shall be

(i) convicted of any offense except for violation of a law in force at the time of the commission of the act, nor

(ii) subjected to a penalty greater than that prescribed by the law in force at the time of the commission of the act.

An ex-post-facto law is one that imposes penalties retrospectively upon acts already done or which increases the penalties for such acts. The enactment of such a law is prohibited by Article 20. However, this limitation is imposed only on criminal laws and not on civil laws or tax laws. In other words, civil liability or a tax can be imposed retrospectively.

Statement 2 is correct. Article 20 provides for No double jeopardy that is no person shall be prosecuted and punished for the same offense more than once. The protection against double jeopardy is available only in proceedings before a court of law or a judicial tribunal. In other words, it is not available in proceedings before departmental or administrative authorities as they are not of judicial nature.

Source) Fundamental Rights, Chapter 7, Lakshmikanth

Q.7) Consider the following statements:

1. A Bill decreasing the area of any State can be introduced in the Parliament only with the

prior recommendation of the President of India.

2. The power of the Parliament to diminish the area of a state does not include cession of Indian territory to a foreign country.
3. A law made for the establishment of new states is not considered an amendment of the Constitution under Article 368.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans) d

Exp) Option (d) is the correct answer.

Statement 1 is correct. Article 3 mentions that Bill making changes like decreasing or increasing the area of a state/ altering the boundaries of the state etc. can be introduced in the Parliament only with the prior recommendation of the President.

Statement 2 is correct. The Supreme Court held that the power of Parliament to diminish the area of a state (under Article 3) does not cover the cession of Indian territory to a foreign country. Hence, Indian territory can be ceded to a foreign state only by amending the Constitution under Article 368

Statement 3 is correct. The President (or Parliament) is not bound by the views of the state legislature and may either accept or reject them, even if the views are received in time. Further, it is not necessary to make a fresh reference to the state legislature every time an amendment to the bill is moved and accepted in Parliament.

Q.8) With reference to Article 15 of the Indian Constitution, consider the following statements:

1. The State shall not discriminate against any resident of India on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth.
2. All the provisions of Article 15 prohibit discrimination only by the State and not private individuals.
3. The State is permitted to make any special provision for the advancement of any economically weaker sections of citizens.

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

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

Ans) c

Exp) Option (c) is the correct answer.

Statement 1 is incorrect. Article 15 states that the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them. (Not Resident)

Statement 2 is incorrect. The provision that 'the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth', prohibits discrimination only by the State.

But the provision 'that no citizen shall be subjected to any disability, liability, restriction or condition on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth with regard to

- (a) access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and places of public entertainment; or
- (b) the use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or

partly by State funds or dedicated to the use of general public', prohibits discrimination both by the State and private individuals

Statement 3 is correct. The Constitution (One Hundred and Third Amendment) Act, 2019) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making any special provision for the advancement of any economically weaker sections of citizens other than the classes mentioned in clauses (4) and (5) of Article 15.

Q.9) With reference to the President's rule in states, consider the following statements:

1. It can be declared by the President with or without the report of the Governor.
2. It must be approved by both the Houses of Parliament within three months from the date of its issue.
3. Parliament does not have the power to pass a resolution to revoke it.

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

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

Ans) c

Exp) Option (c) is the correct answer.

Statement 1 is correct: Article 356 empowers the President to issue a proclamation, if he is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of a state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution. The president can act either on a report of the governor of the state or even without the governor's report.

Statement 2 is incorrect: A proclamation imposing President's Rule must be approved by both the Houses of Parliament within two months from the date of its issue. If the proclamation of President's Rule is issued at a time when the Lok Sabha has been dissolved or the dissolution of the Lok Sabha takes place during the period of two months without approving the proclamation, then the proclamation survives until 30 days from the first sitting of the Lok Sabha after its reconstitution, provided the Rajya Sabha approves it in the meantime.

Statement 3 is correct: Parliament can discontinue giving its approval, but it can be revoked by the President only on his own.

Q.10) Consider the following statements:

1. Free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years by the State is a Fundamental Right.
2. It is a Fundamental Duty of every citizen to provide early childhood care and education to his child/ward until they complete the age of six years.

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

Ans) a

Exp) Option (a) is the correct answer.

Statement 1 is correct. Right to Education is a Fundamental Right under Article 21A. Article 21A was added by the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2002. This amendment is a

major milestone in the country's aim to achieve 'Education for All'. It declares that the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such a manner as the State may determine.

Statement 2 is incorrect. Under Article 51A It shall be the duty of every citizen of India to provide opportunities for education by the parent the guardian, to his child, or a ward between the age of 6-14 years as the case may be.

Q.11) With reference to Five Year Planning in India, consider the following statements.

1. The First Five Year Plan's major focus was rapid industrialization of the country.
2. India never exceeded its growth rate targets set in the Plans.

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

Ans) d

Exp) The goals of the five-year plans were: growth, modernisation, self-reliance and equity. This does not mean that all the plans gave equal importance to all these goals. Due to limited resources, a choice had to be made in each plan about which of the goals is to be given primary importance. Statement 1 is incorrect. The First Five Year Plan (1951-56) was based on the Harrod-Domar model. In this plan, major focus was given on Development of Agriculture and allied sectors. The government established Dams and Irrigation projects e.g DVC, Bhakra dam. Establishment of

IITs and UGC to foster higher education. The growth target was set at 2.1% (although India achieved 3.6%). In the Second Five Year Plan (based on Mahalanobis model) the focus was on rapid industrialization of the Indian economy as the focus shifted on investing in the capacity building of the Capital goods sector. Statement 2 is incorrect. India exceeded the growth rate set in the plans on a number of occasions. Example - The First Five Year Plan - The growth target was set at 2.1% (although India achieved 3.6%). The Sixth Five Year Plan - The commission set a target 5.2% although the growth target of 5.6% was achieved. The Eighth Five Year Plan - The growth rate was 6.8% as against a target of 5.6%.

Source) EVOLUTION OF THE INDIAN ECONOMY, ForumIAS Economy handout page no.6,7,8

Q.12) With reference to the Liberalization of the Indian economy, which of the following can be considered as reasons for the need to adopt the liberalization reforms?

1. High rate of inflation
2. Sharp decline in remittances from overseas Indian workers
3. Alarmingly low levels of foreign exchange reserves

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans) d

Exp) The fourth phase of India's industrial policy (1991-2018) is known as the era of New Economic Policy. This is the phase where several steps were taken by government on major fronts of Liberalization-Privatization Globalization (LPG) of the economy. The need for adopting these LPG reforms can be attributed to the following reasons:

- reduction in public expenditure
- fall in effective demand due to inflationary pressure
- inflation peaking at nearly 17 percent
- Sharp decline in the private remittances from overseas Indian workers
- rise in cost of imports due to changes in cash reserve requirements
- Some immediate factors, such as o India met with an economic crisis relating to its external debt in 1991.
- Government was not able to repay its borrowings from abroad.
- Foreign exchange reserves (mainly used to import crude oil) fell to a level that was not sufficient even for a fortnight.
- The crisis was further compounded by rising prices of essential goods.

All these led to an unprecedented Balance of Payment crisis and forced the government to go to International organisations for a bailout package in the form of the 'Washington Consensus'.

KB) The Washington Consensus is a set of 10 economic policy prescriptions considered to constitute the "standard" reform package promoted for crisis-wracked developing countries by Washington, D.C.-based institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World

Bank and the United States Department of the Treasury.

Source) EVOLUTION OF THE INDIAN ECONOMY, ForumIAS Economy handout page no. 15 and 16

Q.13) With reference to the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), consider the following statements:

1. It looks after all of the equity investment of the Central Government.
2. It advises the Government in matters of financial restructuring of the Central Public Sector Enterprises.

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

Ans) c

Exp) The Department of Disinvestment was set up as a separate Department on 10th December, 1999 and was later renamed as Ministry of Disinvestment from 6th September, 2001. The Department of Disinvestment has been renamed as Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) from 14th April, 2016. 1. Following are the mandate of the department:

- All matters relating to the management of Central Government investments in equity including disinvestment of equity in Central Public Sector Undertakings.
- All matters relating to the sale of Central Government equity through offer for sale or

private placement or any other mode in the erstwhile Central Public Sector Undertakings.

- Department will take decisions on the recommendations of Administrative Ministries, NITI Aayog, etc. for disinvestment including strategic disinvestment.
- It will advise the Government in matters of financial restructuring of the Central Public Sector Enterprises and for attracting investment in the said Enterprises through capital market.

Source) EVOLUTION OF THE INDIAN ECONOMY, ForumIAS Economy handout page no. 22 and 23

Q.14) Consider the following statements regarding Wholesale Price Index and the Consumer Price Index:

1. WPI measures inflation at the level of producer while CPI captures changes in prices at the level of the consumer.
2. WPI does not capture changes in the prices of services, which CPI does.
3. RBI has adopted the CPI as its key measure of inflation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans) d

Exp) Statement 1 is correct. WPI, tracks inflation at the producer level and CPI captures changes in prices levels at the consumer level.

Statement 2 is correct. Both baskets measure inflationary trends (the movement of price signals) within the broader economy, the two indices differ in which weightages are assigned to food, fuel and manufactured items. WPI does not capture changes in the prices of services, which CPI does.

Statement 3 is correct. In April 2014, the RBI had adopted the CPI as its key measure of inflation.

Q.15) With reference to the inflow of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India, consider the following statements:

1. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is the nodal agency for formulation of policy of the Government on Foreign Direct Investment.
2. FDI in India is regulated under the Foreign Contribution Act (FCRA), 2010.
3. Startups in India are not allowed to secure funding through FDI.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans) c

Exp) Since 1991, the regulatory environment in terms of foreign investment has been consistently eased to make it investor-friendly.

Statement 2 is incorrect. FDI in India is regulated under Schedule 1 of Foreign Exchange Management (Transfer or Issue of Security by a Person Resident Outside India) Regulations (FEMA), 2000. Besides FEMA, 1999, FDI is also

subject to other regulations as per Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and DPIIT. Statement 1 is correct. DPIIT is the nodal agency entrusted to formulate FDI Policy. It issues press notes to make amendments in the existing policy and also issues consolidated FDI Policy on an annual basis.

Statement 3 is incorrect. RBI via the Foreign Exchange Management (Transfer or Issue of Security by a Person Resident outside India) Regulations, 2000 (FEMA 20) has allowed startups to issue convertible notes to foreign investors apart from FDI in startups by foreign venture capital investors through subscribing to equity or equity linked instruments or debt instruments.

Q.16) With reference to International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), which of the following statements is/are correct:

1. It is headquartered in Vancouver, Canada.
2. It is a specialized agency of the United Nations.
3. Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) was developed by ICAO.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

Ans) b

Exp) Statement 1 is incorrect: It is headquartered in Quebec, Canada

Statement 2 is correct: ICAO is a specialised agency of the United Nations concerned with civil

aviation, and serves as the medium for establishment of standards and recommended practices in the fields of safety, security, aviation environment protection and facilitation.

Statement 3 is correct: Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA) is an emission mitigation approach for the global airline industry, developed by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and adopted in October 2016. Measures include primarily offsets and "alternative" fuels. CORSIA addresses only emissions from international air travel that exceed the baseline of 2020 levels.

Q.17) With reference to the INTERPOL, consider the following statements:

1. It is headquartered in Lyon, France.
2. It reports to the UN General Assembly.
3. It deals with counter-terrorism operations also.
4. Black notice can be issued by it to arrest most-wanted persons.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans) a.

Exp) Statement 1 is correct: It is Headquartered in Lyon, France.

Statement 2 is incorrect: It is not linked to the UN in any manner and maintains a special representative office to coordinate with it.

Statement 3 is correct: INTERPOL provides investigative support, expertise, and training to law enforcement worldwide in battling three major areas of transnational crime: **terrorism**, cybercrime, and organized crime. Its broad mandate covers crimes against humanity, child pornography, drug trafficking and production, political corruption, copyright infringement, and white-collar crime. The agency also helps coordinate cooperation among the world's law enforcement institutions through criminal databases and communications networks.

Statement 4 is incorrect: A Black Notice is a request to seek information on unidentified bodies in member nations.

Red Notice is issued to seek the location and arrest of wanted persons wanted for prosecution or to serve a sentence.

Q.18) Which of the following statements is/are correct regarding BASIC countries?

1. It comprises Brazil, Argentina, South Africa, India and China.
2. It is a group of emerging nations for greater trade and economic cooperation.
3. The countries have a common position on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and raising funds needed to fight climate change.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

Ans) b

Exp) Statement 1 is incorrect: The BASIC countries are a bloc of four large newly industrialized countries – Brazil, South Africa, India and China – formed by an agreement on 28 November 2009.

Statement 2 is correct: The signatory nations committed to acting together at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, commonly known as the Copenhagen Summit which had happened in Copenhagen, Denmark on December 7, 2009. Subsequently, the Copenhagen Summit resulted in Copenhagen Accord between the US and BASIC countries.

Statement 3 is correct: The BASIC countries have met regularly to address the common concerns and interests of the developing countries vis-a-vis developed countries regarding climate change.

Q.19) With reference to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. It is the second largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations.
2. It is headquartered in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
3. Its membership is open to Non-Muslim Majority Nations also.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

Ans) b

Exp) Statement 1 is correct: It is the second largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations, established in 1969 with a

membership of 57 states spread over four continents, with a collective population of over 1.8 billion.

Statement 2 is incorrect: Its administrative headquarter is in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Statement 3 is correct: Only 53 countries are Muslim-majority countries. Some members, especially in West Africa and South America, are not Muslim majority countries.

Q.20) Consider the following statements regarding South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation:

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

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans) a

Exp) Statement 1 is correct: SAARC comprises eight member states: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an international organisation of seven nations of South Asia and South-East Asia, including Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan.

Statement 2 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 3 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.

Q. 21) Which of these seas is NOT included in the China Seas?

- The Yellow Sea
- The East China Sea
- The South China Sea
- The Cametos Sea

Ans) d

Exp) The China Seas consist of a series of marginal seas in the Western Pacific Ocean, around China. They are the major components signifying the transition from the continent of Asia to the Pacific Ocean. They have been

described in terms of their collective vastness and complexity:

The four seas of China, the Bohai Sea, the Huanghai Sea, the East China Sea, and the South China Sea, occupy a total area of about 4.7 million km², half of the area of China mainland. These seas are located in the southeastern margin of the Eurasian continent and subject to the interactions between the Eurasian, Pacific, and Indian-Australian plates. The seas have complicated geology and rich natural resources.

Q.22) Consider the following statements.

1. In the process of orogeny, the crust is severely deformed into folds and thus it is called as a mountain building process.
2. Due to epeirogeny, there may be a simple deformation in the crust and thus it is called as a continental building process.

Select the correct answer using the codes below.

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- None of the above

Ans) c

Exp) All processes that move, elevate or build up portions of the earth's crust come under diastrophism.

They include: (i) orogenic processes involving mountain building through severe folding and affecting long and narrow belts of the earth's crust; (ii) epeirogenic processes involving uplift or warping of large parts of the earth's crust; (iii) earthquakes involving local relatively minor movements; (iv) plate tectonics involving horizontal movements of crustal plates. In the

process of orogeny, the crust is severely deformed into folds. Due to epeirogeny, there may be simple deformation. Orogeny is a mountain building process whereas epeirogeny is continental Framework for Climate Services (GFCS); and specific applications through the provision of specialized products.

Q.23) In which of the following climate types dead vegetation is rapidly oxidised leaving very low humus content in the soil?

- a) Tundra climate
- b) Temperate type climate
- c) Humid tropical and equatorial climates
- d) Arid or semi-arid climate zones

Ans) c

Exp) Intensity of bacterial activity shows up differences between soils of cold and warm climates. Humus accumulates in cold climates as bacterial growth is slow. With undecomposed organic matter because of low bacterial activity, layers of peat develop in sub-arctic and tundra climates.

In humid tropical and equatorial climates, bacterial growth and action is intense and dead vegetation is rapidly oxidised leaving very low humus content in the soil. Further, bacteria and other soil organisms take gaseous nitrogen from the air and convert it into a chemical form that can be used by plants. This process is known as nitrogen fixation.

Q.24) Consider the following about the comparison between Gulf and Strait.

1. A gulf is a deep inlet of the sea, surrounded by land, with a narrow mouth whereas a strait is a narrow waterway that connects two large water bodies.
2. Gulfs can sometimes be connected to the ocean by straits which are formed by tectonic shifts or land that has been subsided or been eroded.

Which of the above is/are correct?

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

Ans) c

Exp) Statement 1: A gulf is a deep inlet of the sea with a narrow mouth, which is almost surrounded by land. Gulf can be defined as a portion of the sea that penetrates the land. Gulfs over the world can vary extensively in depth, size, and shape. Gulf is sometimes also known as a large bay. However, a bay is always larger and deeply indented than a gulf. Bays, as well as gulfs, make excellent trading centers and harbors due to their shape. A strait is a naturally formed narrow waterway that connects two large bodies of water. A strait can be formed by tectonic shifts or land that has been subsided or been eroded. The Strait of Gibraltar, the link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean was formed by tectonic shift. The Bosphorus, which connects the Aegean Sea and the Black Sea, is believed to be formed by land that has subsided or eroded. If a strait is formed by human activities, it is called a canal. The Suez Canal, which links the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea, enables easy passage between Europe and Asia, is such a manmade strait.

Statement 2: Like many other geographical features on Earth, gulfs are also formed due to the movements of the tectonic plates. Gulfs can sometimes be connected to the ocean by straits. The Gulf of Mexico (largest gulf in the world), Gulf of California, Persian Gulf, and the Gulf of Aden are some famous of gulfs.

Q.25) Which of the following forest types covers the largest area in India?

- a) Tropical Moist Deciduous Forest
- b) Tropical Evergreen Forests
- c) Littoral and Swamp Forest

d) Sub-Tropical Broad-Leaved Hill Forest

Ans) a

Exp) FAO has provided the relevant statistics, where largest Tropical moist deciduous is followed by tropical dry deciduous. So, deciduous forests cover the largest forest area in India, more than 60%. Tropical wet evergreen forests follow and then semi-evergreen forests. Tropical Moist Deciduous Forest (37%) > Tropical Dry Deciduous Forest (28.6%) > Tropical Evergreen Forest (8%) Lowest is Himalayan Dry Temperate Forest (313 sq. km)

MCQs – CA

Q.1) Consider the following statements:

1. The Indian Ocean Dialogue (IOD) is an initiative of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
2. The Delhi Dialogue is a premier annual track 1.5 event to discuss politico-security, the economic and socio-cultural engagement between India and ASEAN.
3. Indian Ocean Rim Association is an intergovernmental organization, with a secretariat at Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Which of the following are correct?

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

Ans) a

Exp) Statement 3 is incorrect: the Indian Ocean Rim Association is an intergovernmental organization, with a secretariat at Ebene, Mauritius. It was established in 1997 with the aim to strengthen regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean Region.

Q.2) Which of the following statement is incorrect.

1. Power of Siberia is first cross-border gas pipeline between Russia and India.
2. India is the highest troop contributor to the UN peacekeeping force.
3. ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) is a 15-member regional group

established in 1975 by the Treaty of Lagos for promoting economic integration.

Choose from the following:

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

Ans) a

Exp) Statement 1: Power of Siberia is first cross-border gas pipeline between Russia and China.

Statement 2: India is the fourth highest troop contributor to the UN peacekeeping force.

Q.3) Consider the following statements regarding OPEC

1. It is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization, created at the Baghdad Conference in 1960.
2. Its membership is open to any country.
3. Its current membership comprises of countries from West Asia and Africa.

Which of the following are correct?

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

Ans) a

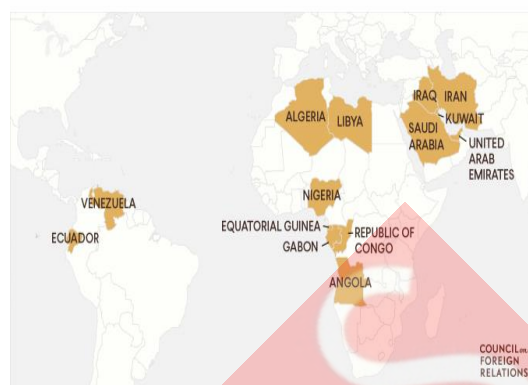
Exp) It is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization, created at the Baghdad Conference in 1960 by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. It is headquartered in Vienna, Austria.

- Its membership is open to any country that is a substantial exporter of oil and

which shares the ideals of the organization.

- The current OPEC members are:
 (a)Algeria (b)Angola (c)Ecuador
 (d)Equatorial Guinea (e)Gabon (f)Iran
 (g)Iraq (h)Kuwait, (I)Libya (j)Nigeria
 (k)the Republic of the Congo (l)Saudi Arabia (j)United Arab Emirates and
 (k)Venezuela.

OPEC Membership, 2019



Q.4) Consider the following regarding the National Broadband Mission (NBM).

1. It aims to provide broadband access to all cities and towns only.
2. Broadband Readiness Index (BRI) which is a part of NBM will measure the quality of broadband connection.

Which of the following are correct?

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

Ans) d

Exp) About National Broadband Mission

- Broadband access to all villages by 2022
- Facilitate universal and equitable access to broadband services
- Develop a Broadband Readiness Index (BRI): It will measure the availability of digital communications infrastructure and a conducive policy ecosystem within a State/UT.
- Investment from stakeholders of Rs 7 Lakh Crore including Rs 70,000 crore from Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF)

Q.5) Consider the following information regarding the EChO Network in news:

1. It is a national program to foster cross-disciplinary leadership to increase research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment in India.
2. This program is led by the Ministry of Human resource and development.

Which of the following are incorrect?

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

Ans) b

Exp) About EChO Network:

- It is a national program to foster cross-disciplinary leadership to increase research, knowledge, and awareness of Indian ecology and the environment in India.
- The program is a partnership of Government, industry, and academia. Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Govt. of India leads the program.

Q.6) Which statement describes the silver line project, recently in news?

- It is a high-speed railways project connecting Bangalore and Chennai.
- It is a project to mine silver metal in Andhra Pradesh.
- It is a railway project being implemented in Kerala where semi high speed trains would run on their own separate tracks.
- It is a cloud seeding project for causing rain in semi-arid regions of Karnataka.

Ans) c

Exp) About Silver line project:

- The Silver line project involves laying the 532 km long railway lines from Kasaragod in the north to Thiruvananthapuram in the south of Kerala.
- This will connect the major districts and towns with semi high-speed trains that will run on their own separate tracks.
- This will also cut the travel time between the two corners of the state from 12 hours to less than four hours with a maximum speed of 200 km/h.

Q.7) Gender Gap Index is published by which of the following organization?

- WEF
- UNDP
- WB
- IMF

Ans) a

Exp) World Economic Forum (WEF) has released the Global Gender Gap Index Report 2019.

Q.8) Consider the following statement regarding particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTG)

- The Dhebar Commission had created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category.
- More than 100 communities have been recognized as PVTG across India.
- The PVTG category is not constitutionally recognized.
- The criteria followed for determination of PVTGs includes use of pre-agriculture level of technology and stagnant or declining population

Which of the following are true?

- 1 and 2 only
- 1, 2 and 3 only
- 1, 3 and 4 only
- 2 and 3 only

Ans) c

Exp) About Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG):

- They are a section that are relatively isolated, educationally and socio-economically backward living in a habitat far away from amenities.
- In 1973, the Dhebar Commission had created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups.
- In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as PVTGs. However, they are not a Constitutional category nor are these constitutionally recognized communities.
- The criteria followed for determination of PVTGs are (a) pre-agriculture level of

technology (b) stagnant or declining population (c) Extremely low literacy and (d) subsistence level of economy.

- Among the 75 listed PVTG's the highest number are found in Odisha (13), followed by Andhra Pradesh (12) and among others.

Q.9) Which of the following statements are correct regarding the Great one-horned rhinoceros

1. It is listed as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List.
2. These Rhinos are found in Assam, Uttar Pradesh, and Orissa.

Select from the below options:

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

Ans) a

Exp) The Great one-horned Rhinoceros (Indian rhinoceros):

It is listed as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List.

There are about 2,600 rhinos in India, with more than 90% of the population concentrated in Assam's Kaziranga National Park. Outside Kaziranga, rhinos are found in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar.

Q.10) Which of the following are correct regarding Loktak Lake

1. Loktak lake is the largest freshwater lake in North east located at Moirang in Manipur.
2. The lake is famous for its phumdis floating over it which are formed naturally.

3. Keibul Lamjao National Park which is the only floating National Park in the world is located on the Loktak Lake.

Select from the below options:

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

Ans) b

Exp) About the Loktak lake:

- Loktak lake is the largest freshwater lake in North east located at Moirang in Manipur.
- The lake is famous for its phumdis floating over it which are formed naturally.
- Phumdis are the floating mass of entangled vegetation formed by the accumulation of organic debris and biomass with soil.
- Keibul Lamjao National Park which is the only floating National Park in the world is located on the Loktak Lake.

Q.11) Global Climate Risk Index (CRI) is released by which of the following organization

- a) UNFCCC
- b) Germanwatch
- c) Green Peace
- d) IPCC

Ans) b

Exp) About Global Climate Risk Index:

- The Global Climate Risk Index (CRI) developed by Germanwatch analyses quantified impacts of extreme weather events.

- It analyses the impact both in terms of fatalities as well as economic losses that occurred.

Q.12) Consider the following describes Operation Twist.

- It is a cross border action taken by the Indian Army in Myanmar recently
- It is a simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities by RBI to manage interest rates.
- It is an operation by the FATF to tackle money laundering
- It is the name of the rescue operation conducted in response to Cyclone Bulbul in Odisha and West Bengal

Ans) b

Exp) Details of RBI's Operation Twist

- Under Operation Twist, RBI will conduct simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities under Open Market Operations (OMO) for ₹10,000 crore each.
- It will purchase the longer-term maturities which are government bonds maturing in 2029 and simultaneously sell the shorter duration ones which are short-term bonds maturing in 2020.

Q.13) Consider the following statements:

- Bharat Bond ETF would be the first corporate Bond exchange-traded fund (ETF) in the country.
- The index will be managed by an independent index provider, Bombay stock exchange.

Which of the following is correct?

- 1 only
- 2 only
- Both 1 and 2
- Neither 1 nor 2

Ans) a

Exp) About Bharat Bond ETF:

- Bharat Bond ETF would be the first corporate Bond exchange-traded fund (ETF) in the country.
- The objective of the fund is to create an additional source of funding for Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs), Central Public Financial Institutions (CPFIs) and other Government organizations.
- The index will be managed by an independent index provider, National Stock Exchange.

Q.14) Consider the following about the GST council:

- Goods & Services Tax (GST) Council was constituted by the President as a statutory body under the CGST Act.
- The council is chaired by The Union Finance Minister.
- The voting patterns gives equal/similar weightage to the centre and the states.

Which of the following are correct?

- 1 and 2 only
- 1 only
- 2 only
- 1,2 and 3 only

Ans) c

Exp) About GST Council:

- Goods & Services Tax (GST) Council was constituted by the President as a constitutional body under Article 279(1) for making recommendations to the Union and State Government on issues related to Goods and Service Tax.
- The council consists of the following members: (a) The Union Finance Minister is the Chairperson (b) The Union Minister of State in-charge of Revenue of finance and (c) The Minister In-charge of finance or taxation or any other Minister nominated by each State Government.
- The centre has 1/3rd voting power and the states collectively have 2/3rd.
- The Good Governance Index is a uniform tool to assess the status of governance and the impact of various interventions taken up by the State governments and the Union Territories.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** The index was launched by the **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and the Centre for Good Governance.**
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The index has divided States and UTs into **three groups namely Big States, North-East and Hill States and Union Territories**
- Tamil Nadu has topped the Good Governance Index among the Big states
- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** Puducherry is the best governed Union Territory followed by Chandigarh and Delhi. Lakshadweep is the worst performing UT.

Q.15) Consider the following statements about the Good Governance Index.

1. The Index is launched by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and the Center for Good Governance.
2. The Index has a separate classification for North Eastern states and the Union Territories
3. Among the Union Territories, Chandigarh has topped the Index for Good Governance

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Ans) a

Exp) Option A is the correct answer.

Good Governance Index:

Source) <http://factly.forumias.com/good-governance-index-launched/>

Q.16) Consider the following statements regarding the Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019.

1. The Act exempts the state of Manipur from its ambit.
2. The Act provides for cancellation of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) registration, where the OCI card-holder has violated any provision of any law in force.

Which of the above statements is/are *incorrect*?

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

d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans) d

Exp) Option D is the correct answer

Citizenship Amendment Act, 2019:

- The Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 amended the definition of illegal immigrant for Hindu, Sikh, Parsi, Buddhist and Christian immigrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who have lived in India without documentation.
- They will be granted fast-track Indian citizenship in six years. Till now, 12 years of residence has been the standard eligibility requirements for attainment of citizenship by naturalisation.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** The Act excludes the areas under the Sixth Schedule and the North Eastern parts covered by the Inner Line Permit regime- which includes the whole of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, most of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Tripura, and certain pockets of Assam. **The state of Manipur has also been excluded in view of the people's objections to the Act**
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The Act also provides for cancellation of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) registration where the **OCI card-holder has violated any provision of the Citizenship Act or any other law in force.**

Source)

<http://prsindia.org/billtrack/citizenship-amendment-bill-2019>

Q.17) Consider the following statements about Inner Line Permit (ILP).

1. ILP has its origin in the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations, 1873.
2. ILP is applicable only to 3 North-Eastern states namely - Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Nagaland.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Ans) a

Exp) Option A is the correct answer

Inner Line Permit:

- Inner Line Permit (ILP) is an official travel document issued by the government of India. It is required by Indian citizens residing outside certain protected states while entering them.
- **Statement 1 is correct:** The origin of ILP dates back to the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulations, 1873.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Currently, the ILP is in force in (a)Arunachal Pradesh (b)Mizoram and (c)Nagaland (d) Manipur. **Manipur has been included in the ILP list in 2019 itself.**

Source)

<http://factly.forumias.com/explainedwhat-is-inner-line-permit-and-will-it-address-n-e-states-concerns-over-cab/>
<https://indianexpress.com/article/north-east-india/manipur/inner-line-permit-comes-into-force-in-manipur-temporary-permit-to-be-issued-for-15-days/>

Q.18) Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 has been in the news off late. Consider the following statements regarding the same:

1. It authorizes the Executive Magistrate of any state or territory to issue an order to prohibit the assembly of four or more persons in an area.
2. Section 144 also empowers the authorities to block the internet access in an area.
3. This section can also be imposed against a single individual.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Ans) d

Exp) Option D is the correct answer

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 1973 **authorizes the Executive Magistrate of any state or territory to issue an order to prohibit the assembly of four or more persons in an area.** It is imposed in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger of some event that has the potential to cause trouble or damage to human life or property.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** Section 144 also empowers the authorities to **block the internet access.**
- **Statement 3 is correct:** This section can also be used to **restrict even a single individual.** Such an order is passed when the magistrate considers that it is likely to

prevent obstruction, annoyance or injury to any person among others.

- No order under Section 144 shall remain in force for more than two months but the state government can extend the validity for two months and a maximum of up to six months.
- However, it can be withdrawn at any point of time if the situation becomes normal.

Source)

<http://factly.forumias.com/explainedhow-section-144-crpc-works/>

Q.19) Which of the following cities became the first in India to have a Wi-Fi calling facility?

- a) Hyderabad
- b) Bengaluru
- c) Chennai
- d) Delhi

Ans) d

Exp) Option D is the correct answer

Wi-Fi Calling:

- **D is the correct option:** For the first time in India, Bharti Airtel launched Voice over Wi-Fi (VoWiFi) in **Delhi NCR.**

About Wi-Fi calling

- Wi-Fi Calling is a technology that enables a smartphone user to make and receive calls over a Wi-Fi network rather than a cellular radio connection.
- It is aimed especially for areas where cellular networks are not strong.

Source) <http://factly.forumias.com/what-is-wi-fi-calling/>

Q.20) Consider the following statements about Nuclear Command Authority (NCA).

1. Nuclear Command Authority is India's nodal authority responsible for command, control and operational decisions regarding India's nuclear weapons programme.
2. The Executive Council of the NCA is headed by the Prime Minister.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Ans) a

Exp) Option A is the correct answer

About Nuclear Command Authority:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** Nuclear Command Authority is India's nodal authority responsible for command, control and operational decisions regarding India's nuclear weapons programme.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** It has an Executive Council which is headed by National Security Advisor.
- It gives input to the Political Council headed by the Prime Minister. The Political Council authorizes a nuclear attack if need be.

Source) <http://factly.forumias.com/india-conducts-1st-night-trial-of-nuclear-capable-agni-iii-missile/>

Q.21) Consider the following statements about Brahmos Missile.

1. The Missile is named after Brahmaputra and Moscow rivers in India and Russia respectively.

2. It is an Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Ans) a

Exp) Option A is the correct answer

About Brahmos Missile:

- **Statement 1 correct:** BrahMos is a Supersonic Cruise missile. It is a joint venture between India and Russia. **It is named after Brahmaputra and Moscow rivers.**
- The missile is capable of being launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air against surface and sea-based targets.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** The missile has a strike range of 290 km. It can be fired from land as well as sea-based platforms.
- The missile operates on the Fire and Forget principle which means that it does not require further guidance after launch.

Source) <http://factly.forumias.com/philippines-likely-to-finalise-brahmos-deal-by-next-year/>

Q.22) Consider the following statements about the India Corruption Survey, 2019.

1. It has been released by the NITI Aayog in collaboration with Transparency International, India.

2. Bihar has been adjudged the most corrupt state according to the survey

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Ans) d

Exp) Option D is the correct answer

About India Corruption Survey, 2019:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** India Corruption Survey 2019 was released by the Local Circles, a social media firm and the Transparency International India.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Rajasthan tops the corruption chart in India. As per Survey, 78% of people in Rajasthan, participating in the survey admitted to paying bribes to get work done. Bihar follows Rajasthan and was placed at the second spot.
- Kerala was ranked as the least corrupt state where only 10% of people admitted to paying a bribe to get their work done

Source) <http://factly.forumias.com/india-corruption-survey-2019/>

Q.23) Consider the following statements about Going Online as Leaders Programme (GOAL).

1. It is a digitally-enabled mentorship program of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs
2. The initiative connects underprivileged young women from tribal areas with senior expert mentors in the areas of business, fashion and arts to learn digital and life skills

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

Ans) b

Exp) Option B is the correct answer

About GOAL:

- **Statement 1 is incorrect:** It is a digitally-enabled mentorship initiative of Facebook.
- **Statement 2 is correct:** The initiative connects underprivileged young women from tribal areas with senior expert mentors in the areas of business, fashion and arts to learn digital and life skills. One mentor is identified and attached to four tribal youth, who are then trained and mentored.
- It will include weekly one-to-one mentoring sessions, focused on a range of skills such as digital literacy, entrepreneurship, and online safety.

GOAL Second Phase:

- The second phase of the program was launched in October 2019. In the second phase, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, NITI Aayog and Facebook together will digitally mentor 5000 young women in India's tribal-dominated districts.

Source)

<https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=193829>

<http://factly.forumias.com/goal-program/>

Q.24) Consider the following statements about Torrefaction technology.

1. It is a Swedish technology being tested by India to alleviate the problem of stubble burning
2. It is thermal process to convert biomass into a coal like material but has a lesser fuel quality than the original biomass
3. The efficiency of this technology is low and this is an impediment in implementing it.

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

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

Ans) a

Exp) Option A is the correct answer

About Torrefaction technology:

- **Statement 1 is correct:** The government has funded a pilot project at the National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute in Mohali (Punjab) with a **Swedish company** to evaluate the feasibility of the torrefaction technology.
- **Statement 2 is incorrect:** Torrefaction is a thermal process to convert biomass into a coal-like material which has **better fuel characteristics than the original biomass**.
- It involves heating up straw, grass, saw mill residue and wood biomass to 250 degrees Celsius to around 350 degrees Celsius.
- This changes the elements of the biomass into 'coal-like' pellets. These pellets can then be used for combustion along with

coal for industrial applications like steel and cement production

- **Statement 3 is incorrect:** If scaled up, **about 65% of the biomass could be converted to energy.**

Source) <http://factly.forumias.com/india-tests-swedish-technology-to-reduce-stubble-burning/>

Q.25) The term Trastuzumab has been in the news recently. Which of the following correctly explains it?

- a) It is a new missile system developed by Russia against US sanctions
- b) It is a new technology to address the photochemical smog in urban areas
- c) It is a new drug developed by the WHO for Breast cancer patients
- d) None of the above

Ans) c

Exp) Option C is the correct answer

About Trastuzumab:

- **C is the correct answer:** The World Health Organization (WHO) launched its first biosimilar medicine to treat breast cancer named Trastuzumab.
- Trastuzumab drug was included in the WHO Essential Medicines List in 2015 as an essential treatment for about 20% of breast cancers.
- It has shown high efficacy in curing early stage breast cancer and in some cases more advanced forms of the disease.

Source) <http://factly.forumias.com/who-launches-first-biosimilar-medicine-to-treat-breast-cancer/>