

MONTHLY

FACTLY

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PRELIMS

MARCH 2019

ForumIAS

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POLITICAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES**Questions/Notes****1. Padma awards:**

News: The government recently announced the Padma Awards 2019.

Facts:

- Padma Awards is one of the highest civilian awards of the country.
- There are three categories, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.
- The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.
- Padma Awards were instituted by the Government of India in 1954 to be awarded to citizens of India in recognition of their distinguished contribution.
- The recipients of these awards can also include foreigners who have contributed in various ways to India.
- The awards are announced on Republic Day every year.
- The 2019 Padma Awards consists of 4 Padma Vibhushan, 14 Padma Bhushan and 94 Padma Shri Awards.

Other facts:

- Ms. Teejan Bai an exponent of Pandavani from Chhattisgarh, is one of the four people who received the Padma Vibhushan. Others are Sri Ismail Omar Guelleh (Foreigner) from Djibouti, Shri Anilkumar Manibhai Naik from Maharashtra and Shri Balwant Moreshwar Purandare from Maharashtra.

2. National Institute of Unani Medicine:

News: Union Minister of State (IC) for AYUSH laid the foundation stone for National Institute of Unani Medicine (NIUM) at Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh.

Facts:

- It aims to provision and promote quality education, research and healthcare services through Unani Medicine and other AYUSH systems.
- The institute will have a facility of 200 beds, it would cater to the needs of the masses and would have facilities for quality research and education at postgraduate and PhD levels.

Other facts:

- The Unani System of Medicine has a long and impressive record in India. It was introduced in India by the Arabs and Persians sometime around the 11th century.
- Unani system originated in Greece. The foundation of Unani system was laid by Hippocrates.

Questions/Notes

- The system suffered a severe setback during the British rule in India, however it was revived during the freedom struggle by Hakim Ajmal Khan, a renowned physician and also one of the foremost freedom fighters in the country.
 - He established an Ayurvedic and Unani Tibbia College and Hindustani Dawakhana a pharmaceutical company for manufacturing of Ayurvedic and Unani medicine in Delhi in 1916.
 - Mahatma Gandhi inaugurated this college on February 13, 1921.
- February 11 is celebrated as the Unani Day as it marks the birth anniversary of Hakim Ajmal Khan.
- The day is adopted by the Ministry of AYUSH.

3. National Common Mobility Card:

News: The Prime Minister launched One Nation, One Card for transport mobility at a function in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

Facts:

- One Nation One Card Model formally known as the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) is the first of its kind in India.
- It is an Indigenous Automatic Fare Collection System.
- The National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) was envisaged as part of the National Urban Transport Policy (NUTP) in 2006.
- It is an initiative of the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.
- CDAC was entrusted with the task of finalization of NCMC specification for Automatic Fare Collection (AFC) system including the interface with Bank server.
- CDAC worked in collaboration with NPCI to develop this.
- Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) was roped in for making Gates & Reader.
- The customer may use this single card for payments across all segments including metro, bus, suburban railways, toll, parking, smart city and retail.
- The stored value in the card supports offline transaction across all travel needs with minimal financial risk to involved stakeholders.

4. Integrated Command and Control Centres:

News: PM launched the Integrated Command and Control Centres in Gangtok, Namchi, Pasighat, Itanagar and Agartala.

Facts:

- Project implementation under the Smart Cities Mission.
- Smart City Command and Control Centres use digital technology to integrate different service networks.
- It will enable real-time collaboration among departments such as Police, Transport, Power, Water, Sanitation, and Public Safety utilities.

Questions/Notes

- The Command the Control Centre will be managed through GIS (geographic information system) platform, where residents can register their complaints regarding service dysfunction through helpline numbers.

5. Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology:

News: The Prime Minister inaugurated Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology on 9th March, 2019 at Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

Facts:

- The Institute of Archaeology (IA) is an academic wing of ASI under the Ministry of Culture.
- The foremost aim of this Institute is to provide an opportunity for students to achieve excellence in the field of archaeology.
- The Institute comprises of an auditorium with a seating capacity of 1000 people, an open-air theatre and an Archaeological Museum.

Other facts:

- In 1959, the School of Archaeology was started by ASI under the directorship of the renowned archaeologist Shri B.B. Lal.
- The School of Archaeology transformed into Institute of Archaeology in 1983 after the R.N. Mirdha Committee Report.
- In 1985, the Institute was shifted to a colonial structure at 24, Tilak Marg, New Delhi and later to Red Fort premises, Delhi.
- Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the Ministry of Culture, is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage in India.
- ASI regulates all archaeological activities in the country as per the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 and Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972.

6. Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose the First Lokpal of India:

News: President Ram Nath Kovind administered the Oath of Office to Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose as Lokpal. Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose is the first anti-corruption Ombudsman.

Facts:

- The Lokpal Act provides for a chairperson and a maximum of eight members in the Lokpal panel and of these, 50% need to be judicial members.
- The chairperson and members will hold office for a term of five years or till they attain 70 years of age.
- The salary and allowances of the chairman are same as that of the Chief Justice of India. The salary and allowances of members are same as that of a judge of the Supreme Court.

7. National Commission on Backward Classes:

News: Bhagwan Lal Sahni who hails from Bihar has been appointed as the Chairman of the National Commission for Backward Classes.

Facts:

- The National Commission for Backward Classes is a Constitutional body set up through the 102nd Constitutional Amendment Act.
- A new Article 338B has been added to the Indian Constitution.
- The Commission consists of one chairman and five Members with a term of three years.
- The body has the power to advise on inclusion of OBCs in the Central List.

Other facts:

- National Commission for Backward classes is the successor of the National Commission for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (NCSEBC).
- It is now empowered to look into the grievances of persons of Other Backward Classes.
- The Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and other Members of the Commission shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal.
- The Commission shall have the power to regulate its own procedure.

Questions/Notes

INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

Questions/Notes

1. 7th RCEP Inter-Sessional Ministerial Meeting:

News: Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, went to Siem Reap in Cambodia for the 7th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Intersessional Ministerial Meeting (7th RCEP ISSL MM).

Facts:

- The meeting was chaired by Chutima Bunyapraphasara, Acting Minister of Commerce of Thailand.
- At the Ministerial, RCEP reached successful conclusion of three chapters, namely
 - (i) institutional provisions;
 - (ii) Sanitary and Phyto-Sanitary (SPS) measures
 - (iii) Standards, Technical Regulations and Conformity Assessment Procedure (STRACAP).

Other facts:

- The Regional Comprehensive Partnership (RCEP) is a proposed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between sixteen countries namely 10 countries of ASEAN (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and their six FTA partners (also known as AFP's or ASEAN FTA Partners) namely Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea and New Zealand.
- During the 2nd RCEP Summit in November 2018 in Singapore, Leaders acknowledged the 'substantial progress' in the negotiations and reiterated their determination to conclude a modern, comprehensive, high quality, and mutually beneficial RCEP in 2019.

2. Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue, 2019:

News: The second edition of Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) - 2019 was held in March 2019 at the Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi.

Facts:

- This dialogue examined five fresh themes:
 - Practical solutions for achieving cohesion in the region through maritime connectivity;
 - Measures to attain and maintain a free-and-open Indo-Pacific;
 - A regional approach to the region's transition from a 'Brown' to a 'Blue' economy;
 - Opportunities and challenges arising from the maritime impact of 'Industry 4.0';

Questions/Notes

- Twin conceptualisations of 'SAGAR' and 'SAGARMALA' and the ways to make them mutually-reinforcing on a regional level.

- Thirteen countries of the Indo-Pacific — Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Indonesia, Israel, Japan, Seychelles, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America attended the IPRD 2019.

Other facts:

- The idea of an Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) was first conceptualised and conducted in 2018, as the apex level conference of the Indian Navy, organised by the National Maritime Foundation as the Navy's Knowledge Partner.
- The permanent theme of this annual dialogue is a review of India's opportunities and challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.

3. Nice, Vienna and Locarno Agreements:

News: The Union Cabinet approved the proposal for accession of India to The Nice Agreement, The Vienna Agreement, The Locarno Agreement.

Facts:

- The Nice Agreement establishes the International classification of Goods and Services for the purposes of registration of marks.
- The Vienna Agreement establishes an International Classification of the figurative elements of marks.
- The Locarno Agreement establishes an International classification for industrial designs.

Benefits:

- It will help the Intellectual Property Office in India harmonise the classification systems for examination of trademark and design applications, in line with the classification systems followed globally.
- The accession is also expected to instill confidence in foreign investors in relation to protection of IPs in India.
- The accession is part of the government's commitment to strengthen the Indian Intellectual property regime.

4. 3rd Indo-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction:

News: The 3rd Indo-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was held in New Delhi.

Facts:

- The 3rd Workshop was organized with the objective of enhancing collaboration between research institutes, cities and the private sector in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction.

Other facts:

- The 1st Indo-Japan Workshop on DRR was held on March, 2018 in New Delhi and the 2nd Indo-Japan workshop on DRR was held on October, 2018 in Tokyo, Japan.

5. World Happiness Report 2019:

News: The United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network released the World Happiness Report 2019.

Facts:

- The report ranks countries on six key variables that support well-being:
 - Income
 - Freedom
 - Trust
 - Healthy life expectancy
 - Social support
 - Generosity.
- It ranks 156 countries annually.
- Finland topped the index for the second year in a row. It is followed by Denmark, Norway, Iceland and The Netherlands.
- India has dropped to 140th place in 2019 compared to 133rd place in 2018.

6. Sharda Peeth Corridor:

News: Pakistan government has approved a proposal to establish a corridor which would allow Hindu pilgrims from India to visit Sharda Peeth in the region of Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

Facts:

- Sharda Peeth is an abandoned Hindu temple and ancient centre of learning in Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- The temple is dedicated to Goddess Sharada, the Hindu goddess of learning, it is situated on the banks of River Kishanganga.
- Goddess Sharada is the Kuldevi of Kashmiri pandits and one of the three famous tirthas, or for Kashmiri Pandits, the other two being the Martand Sun Temple and the Amarnath Temple.

Questions/Notes

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES**Questions/Notes****1. Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan Scheme (KUSUM):**

News: The government issued a General Advisory warning people against few fake websites claiming to be the registration portal for KUSUM Scheme.

Facts:

- The scheme is for farmers for installation of solar pumps and grid connected solar power plants.
- DISCOMs and State Nodal agencies shall be implementing this scheme.
- The scheme serves two purposes:
 - Solar water pumps to be installed in remote areas for irrigation needs
 - Farmers can get extra income by selling surplus solar power to DISCOMs

2. Quality Assurance Scheme for Basic Composite Medical Laboratories:

News: National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) has launched a voluntary scheme called Quality Assurance Scheme (QAS) for Basic Composite Medical Laboratories.

Facts:

- Laboratories performing only basic routine tests like blood glucose, blood counts, rapid tests for common infections, liver & kidney function tests and routine tests of urine will be eligible to apply under this scheme.
- The scheme requires minimal documentation and a nominal fee for availing the scheme.
- The quality standards will be matched against the criteria enlisted in Gazette notification by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) to amend Clinical Establishments Rules 2012.
- This will inculcate the habit of quality and facilitate laboratories to achieve benchmark accreditation of ISO 15189 over a period of time before which they will be allowed to use a distinct symbol on the test reports as a mark of endorsement to the basic standard for a defined time.
- Successful laboratories will be issued a certificate of compliance to QAS BC scheme by NABL.

Other facts:

- National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) is a constituent board of Quality Council of India (QCI) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

3. Mukhyamantri Anchal Amrit Yojana:

News: The Government of Uttarakhand launched the Mukhyamantri Anchal Amrit Yojana to provide milk at the Anganwadi Centres.

Facts:

- Children under six years of age in every Anganwadi centre will be provided milk under the Aanchal Amrit scheme.
- This scheme is aimed at improving health conditions and nutritional levels of children in the state.
- Under the scheme- flavoured, sweet and skimmed milk powder will be made available to the 20,000 Anganwadi Kendras.

Other facts:

- Milk as a source of protein, calcium, vitamins provides benefits like building and maintaining bone and teeth.

4. Yuvasree Arpan Scheme:

News: The Chief Minister of West Bengal launched Yuvasree Arpan to encourage entrepreneurship among the youth of West Bengal.

Facts:

- Under the Yuvasree Arpan Scheme around fifty thousand youth who have passed out of ITI or other polytechnic institutes will be eligible to get financial support of 1 lakh rupees to set up own business enterprises.

5. Jalamurtha Scheme:

News: The Government of Karnataka launched the water conservation scheme Jalamrutha.

Facts:

- The scheme focuses on drought-proofing measures, including protection and rejuvenation of water bodies.
- The scheme will be implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj of Karnataka.

Questions/Notes

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS**Questions/Notes****1. FinTech Conclave 2019:**

News: NITI Aayog organized a day-long FinTech Conclave in New Delhi.

Facts:

- Over 300 stakeholders from across the Government, Banking and Startup investors participated to chart the future of financial technologies.
- The Conclave had parallel tracks, which looked into various dimensions of the future of the FinTech, particularly in the areas of:
 - Digital Onboarding of Customers and Merchants for Financial Inclusion
 - Building Financial Products for Bharat
 - Emerging Areas of FinTech
 - Fast tracking investment in FinTech industry
 - Financial Inclusion of MSMEs

Other facts:

- Financial technology, or FinTech, is a new technology and innovation that aims to compete with traditional financial methods in the delivery of financial services.
- The Indian fintech ecosystem is the third largest in the world and attracts nearly \$6 billion in investments since 2014.

2. Handloom Haat:

News: Union Textiles Minister inaugurated the renovated Handloom Haat in New Delhi.

Facts:

- The Haat at Janpath in New Delhi was set up by Ministry of Textiles to provide marketing opportunities to authentic handloom products from various States, PSUs and cooperative societies.
- The main objective is to provide infrastructure support to handloom agencies to augment their sales of handloom products and to showcase the exquisite variety of handloom products produced all over the country.

Other facts:

- The Minister also launched three projects of NIFT - VisionNXT – Trend Forecasting Initiative, Indian Textiles and Craft Repository and Design Innovation and Incubation.
 - Project 'VisionNxt' is being set up by NIFT to create an indigenous fashion forecasting service that endeavours to design seasonal directions for our country.

Questions/Notes

- Indian Textiles and Craft Repository of NIFT will house virtual registers of textiles and crafts resources, which will be available in the Weaver Service Centres, the Crafts Museums, similar institutions and private collections through a National Knowledge Portal titled Indian Textile & Craft Repository.
- Design Innovation and Incubation (DII) is intended to support young entrepreneurs, artisans, start-ups, NIFT alumni and students.
- Regional Incubators would be set up in Mumbai, New Delhi and Bengaluru campuses of NIFT.

3. Vigilance Conclave:

News: Ministry of Steel organized a two-day Vigilance Conclave in New Delhi.

Facts:

- The Conclave was aimed at sensitizing officials of Steel PSUs on the basic principles and procedures to be followed while taking important administrative and commercial decisions relating to various functions including procurement, contracts, personnel and finance.

4. Kaushal Bhawan:

News: Vice-President of India Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu laid the foundation stone of Kaushal Bhawan.

Facts:

- It will house the office of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- Kaushal Bhawan is located in New Moti Bagh, New Delhi.

Other facts:

- The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship was set up in 2014 to coordinate all skill development efforts across the country.

5. World Consumer Rights Day 2019:

News: The Department of Consumer Affairs, Ministry of Consumer Affairs Food and Public Distribution, Government of India celebrated the World Consumer Rights Day 2019 at Vigyan Bhawan, Delhi.

Facts:

- The theme of the World Consumer Rights Day 2018 was "Trusted Smart Products".

Other facts:

- March 15 every year is celebrated as World Consumer Rights Day.

Questions/Notes

- The first World Consumers Day was celebrated in 1983 and since then every year March 15 is celebrated as World Consumers Day.
- Consumer rights in India provides 6 consumer rights as follows:
 - Right to choose the product.
 - Right to be protected from all kind of hazardous goods.
 - Right to be informed about the performance and quality of all products.
 - Right to be heard in all decision-making processes related to consumer interests.
 - Right to seek redressal, whenever consumer rights have been infringed.
 - Right to consumer education.

6. GI Website & Tutorial Video on IPR:

News: Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Suresh Prabhu, launched a tutorial video on “Intellectual Property Rights” for school students and the GI website in New Delhi.

Facts:

- The tutorial video is available on CIPAM’s YouTube Channel and on the existing resource pool on CIPAM’s official website www.cipam.gov.in which is freely available for public.
- The 20-minute tutorial video was created by the Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM), Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) in collaboration with Qualcomm.
- It explains the fundamentals of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) such as Patents, Copyrights and Trademarks.
- The website will help in promoting creativity and motivate more of India’s skilled artisans to apply for GI registration.
- ‘IP Nani’, India’s first Intellectual Property (IP) Mascot, features in a series of short animated videos, to spread awareness about the importance of IPRs amongst children.
- The Geographical Indications (GI) of India website showcases Indian GIs products, classified state wise as well as product category wise.
- It will increase the awareness and the visibility of GI and improve profitability.

7. Construction Technology India-2019 Expo-cum-Conference:

News: Prime Minister inaugurated the Construction Technology India-2019 Expo-cum-Conference in New Delhi in March, 2019.

Facts:

- Prime Minister declared ‘April 2019-March 2020’ as Construction-Technology year.

Questions/Notes

- Construction-Technology year emphasises the role of advanced technology to meet the increasing demand for housing in the country.
- It was a 2-day event, organised by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi to identify proven, innovative and globally established technologies for use in the Indian context.
- CTI-2019, an expo-cum-Conference will provide avenues for interaction among stakeholders that can open up new areas for collaboration.
- Proven technologies identified during CTI - 2019 were further invited to design and build lighthouse projects of approximately 1,000 housing units each, at six places in the country.
- The six States are Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh that have competed with a total of 14 States/UTs in a competitive mode and won the opportunity to build the Light House Project.
- These projects will demonstrate the merits of the selected technologies and serve as live laboratories for research, testing, technology transfer, increasing mass awareness and for mainstreaming them in the country.
- At the Construction Technology India-2019 Expo-cum-conference, the Prime Minister also launched the Global Housing Technology Challenge - India (GHTC-India) mobile application, an interactive platform for all stakeholders for the exchange of knowledge on innovation and alternative housing technologies.

Other facts:

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India has conceptualized a Global Housing Technology Challenge - India (GHTC- India) which aims to identify and mainstream a basket of innovative technologies from across the globe that are sustainable and disaster-resilient.

8. Smart India Hackathon:

News: Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, announced the Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2019 – Software edition, Grand Finale.

Facts:

- IIT Kanpur was the nodal center for the grand finale.
- It was organised by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and in collaboration with MIC, i4c and Persistent Systems.

Other facts:

- Smart India Hackathon includes 2 sub-editions – Software edition, which is a 36-hr software product development competition and the Hardware edition, involving building of hardware solutions.

Questions/Notes

- It is aimed at harnessing creativity and expertise of students, builds funnel for 'Startup India' campaign, crowd source solutions for improving governance and quality of life, and provides opportunity to citizens including students to provide innovative solutions to India's problems.

9. Coffee Board Activates Blockchain Based Marketplace in India:

News: Commerce Secretary launched blockchain based coffee e-marketplace through video conferencing in New Delhi.

Facts:

- This pilot project will help integrate the farmers with markets in a transparent manner and lead to realisation of fair price for the coffee producer.
- Coffee Board is collaborating with Eka Plus, one of the global leaders in Digital Commodity Management platforms for Agriculture for development of Blockchain based marketplace application.
- The blockchain will reduce the number of layers between coffee growers and buyers and help farmers double their income.
- Blockchain based marketplace app for trading of Indian coffees is intended to bring in transparency in the trade of Indian coffee, maintain the traceability of Indian coffee from bean to cup.
- This initiative will help in creating a brand image for Indian Coffee through traceability in reducing grower's dependency on intermediaries by having a direct access to buyers for a fair price for their produce.
- The coffee farmer registers credentials like place where coffee is grown, details of the crop, elevation, certificates if any and any relevant information.
- A block is created for each of the lot the farmer sells on the Blockchain. The credentials of the block/ lot will be stored on the Blockchain throughout its journey and are immutable.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS**Questions/Notes****1. Centre for Disability Sports:**

News: The Government has approved the proposal for setting up a Centre for Disability Sports at Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh.

Facts:

- They would be multi-functional centres with provision for training, selection, sports academics and research, medical support, spectator galleries and suitable for holding national/international events.
- The Centre of Disability Sports would be registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- A governing body consisting of not exceeding 12 members would be set up for overall superintendence and supervision of the Centre with representation for experts from National Level Sports Federations apart from experts in para games.
- The sports identified for training in the Centre are:
 - Integrated sports (Indoor) like Badminton, Basketball, Table Tennis, Volleyball, Judo, Taekwondo, Fencing and Rugby;
 - Adapted sports (Indoor) like Boccia, Goalball, Football 5 a side, Para Dance Sport and Para Powerlifting;
 - Integrated sports (Outdoor) like Athletics, Archery, Football 7 a side and Tennis; and
 - Integrated sports (Indoor & Outdoor) – Swimming.
- The project is expected to be completed in two years' time, i.e, by 31st March, 2021, thereafter it will take another 6 months for the Centre to become operational.

2. National Institute for Mental Health Rehabilitation:

News: Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment laid the foundation stone of the 'National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation'.

Facts:

- The National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation will come up at Sherpur Village along the Bhopal-Sehore highway, District Sehore, Madhya Pradesh.
- NIMHR will be the first of its kind in the country in the area of mental health rehabilitation.
- The Central Government has approved an outlay of Rs. 180 crore for this project for an initial period of 3 years.
- The Institute will promote mental health rehabilitation using an integrated multidisciplinary approach, to undertake capacity building and to involve in developing trained professionals in the area of mental health rehabilitation.

Questions/Notes

- It will have nine departments and centres and will conduct 12 courses to offer diploma, certificate, graduate, post graduate, M.Phil degrees in field of mental health rehabilitation.
- It will assist the Government in formulating policy and programs/models for rehabilitation of persons with mental illness.
- The construction work of the building will be undertaken by Central Public Works Department (CPWD), Bhopal and is expected to be completed within a period of two years.

3. Poshan Pakhwada:

News: The Minister for Women and Child Development announced that the Government celebrated the first anniversary of POSHAN Abhiyaan on 8th March, 2019 by organising Poshan Pakhwada across the Country.

Facts:

- Poshan Pakhwada was celebrated on lines of 'Poshan Maah' held during the month of September, 2018 and in a convergence mode where all the concerned Ministries/Departments and States/UTs play a key role for implementing various activities.
- The Pakhwada was launched on International Women's Day, 8th March, 2019.
- The Ministry of Women & Child Development was the nodal ministry for coordinating activities for the 'Poshan Maah'.
- It included key activities like Poshan Melas, rally on "Nutrition at all levels", Prabhat Pheris, session on nutrition at schools, Self Help Group meetings, anaemia camps, growth monitoring of children, home visits of newborn babies by ASHA/AWW, Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Day (VHSND, Community Based Events (CBE).
- Social Media Campaign Hashtag #PoshanPakhwada through media partners and team of Swasth Bharat Preraks would be carried out for maximum outreach.

4. West Nile Fever:

News: The media has reported that a seven-year-old boy from Malappuram District of Kerala is suffering from a West Nile Virus (WNV).

Facts:

- It is a mosquito-borne disease, mostly reported in the continental United States.
- It is a zoonotic disease caused by a flavivirus -West Nile Virus (WNV).
- This virus is a member of the flavivirus genus, to which other viruses that cause Japanese Encephalitis, yellow fever and St. Louis encephalitis are also related.

Questions/Notes

- The virus travels to salivary glands from where it is injected into humans as well as animals through mosquito bites.
- Uptill now, no human-to-human transmission of WNV through casual contact has been documented.
- Infection with WNV is either asymptomatic (no symptoms) in around 80% of infected people, or can lead to West Nile fever or severe West Nile disease.
- People infected with WNV suffer from fever, headache, fatigue, body aches, nausea, vomiting, occasionally with a skin rash etc.
- It results in neurological disease as well as death in people.
- There are no vaccines to prevent or medications to treat the infection.

5. World TB Day:

News: World Tuberculosis Day, is observed every year on March 24.

Facts:

- It commemorates the anniversary of Dr. Robert Koch's discovery of the Tuberculosis (TB) bacteria in 1882.
- The theme of World Tuberculosis Day this year is "It's Time".
- India has renewed its commitments and intentions to end TB by 2025, five years ahead of the global targets.

Other facts:

- TB is caused by bacteria "Mycobacterium tuberculosis" that most often affects the lungs, but can also affect other parts of the body.
- The disease spreads from person to person through the air.
- World Tuberculosis Day (WTD) is one of eight official global public health campaigns observed by the World Health Organization (WHO).

6. Pulse Polio Programme 2019:

News: The President of India, launched the Pulse Polio programme for 2019.

Facts:

- More than 17 crore children of less than five years across the country will be given polio drops as a part of the drive of Government of India to sustain polio eradication from the country.
- The Pulse Polio Programme 2019 is aimed at sustaining the polio eradication from the country.
- India was declared polio-free country in the year 2014.
- India's last reported cases of wild polio were in West Bengal and Gujarat on 13 January 2011.

Other facts:

- Polio also known as poliomyelitis is a highly contagious viral disease caused due to the attacks the nervous system and children younger than 5 years are more likely to contract the virus.
- Poliovirus usually spreads from person to person through infected faecal matter entering the mouth and contaminated food and water.

7. New Series of Visually Impaired Coins:

News: The Prime Minister released a new series of visually impaired friendly circulation coins in New Delhi.

Facts:

- Coins of denominations Rs.1, Rs.2, Rs.5, Rs.10 and Rs.20 were released as a part of the new series.
- The new coins with various differentiating features, will greatly aid the visually impaired.
- The National Institute of Design designed the new coins.
- Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited and the Ministry of Finance collaborated with one another to introduce the new coins.
- The coins are characterized by the increasing size and weight from lower to higher denominations.
- The newly included coin of Rs.20, will be a 12 sided coin with no serrations while rest of the denominations would be of round shape.

8. National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) 2018-19:

News: The National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) 2018-19, was recently conducted by an Independent Verification Agency (IVA).

Facts:

- It was conducted under the World Bank support project to the Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G).
- According to the survey 96.5% of the households in rural India who have access to a toilet use it.
- The NARSS also re-confirmed the Open Defecation Free (ODF) status of 90.7% of villages which were previously declared and verified as ODF by various districts/States.

9. Teachers' Cadre Ordinance, 2019

News: The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for promulgation of "The Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Ordinance, 2019".

Questions/Notes

Facts:

- In April 2017, the University Grants Commission had announced in March last year that an individual department should be considered as the base unit to calculate the number of teaching posts to be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes candidates.
- This order of UGC was met with protests and the protestors were demanding the restoration of the 200-point roster.
- 200-point roster system is a roster system for faculty positions that includes 99 posts reserved for the SC, ST and OBC communities and 101 posts for the unreserved.
- Under this roster system, in case there is a deficit of reserved seats in one department, it could be compensated by more people from the reserved communities in other departments in the university.
- It considers college or university as a unit for reservation in teaching posts.
- This decision is expected to improve the teaching standards in higher educational institutions to attract all eligible talented candidates.
- It will allow filling up of more than 5000 vacancies by direct recruitment to the Teachers' Cadre.
- It ensures that Articles 14, 16 and 21 shall be complied with and stipulated reservation criteria for the Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes are met.

10. Zero Discrimination Day:

News: March 1st is annually celebrated as the Zero Discrimination Day by the UN and other international organisations.

Facts:

- It aims to promote and celebrate everyone's right, regardless of age, gender, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity, skin colour, etc.
- A butterfly is the symbol of the Zero Discrimination Day.

Other facts:

- Zero Discrimination Day was first celebrated on March 1, 2014, and was launched by UNAIDS Executive Director at Beijing.
- From India, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) joins the campaign every year to generate awareness on discrimination.

Questions/Notes

SECURITY AND DEFENCE**Questions/Notes****1. 50th Raising Day Celebrations of CISF:**

News: The Prime Minister attended the 50th Raising Day ceremony of Central Industrial Security Forces(CISF).

Facts:

- It was organized at the 5th Battalion Camp at Indrapuram in Ghaziabad.
- PM presented the Police and Fire Service Medals for distinguished and meritorious services.

Other facts:

- The responsibility of safeguarding the modern and critical infrastructure built for New India is in the safe hands of CISF.
- The force has also contributed to the disaster relief operations during Kerala floods and also during Nepal and Haiti earthquake.

2. Military Exercise Sampriti - 2019

News: A joint military exercise Sampriti-2019 was conducted at Tangail, Bangladesh from 02 March to 15 March 2019.

Facts:

- It is the eighth edition of Exercise Sampriti, it began in 2009.
- The Bangladesh contingent was represented by 36 East Bengal Battalion, while Indian side was represented by 9th Battalion the Rajputana Rifles.
- The aim of the exercise is to increase mutual cooperation, bonhomie and camaraderie between the two armies through interoperability and joint tactical exercises.
- It will hone their tactical and technical skills in countering insurgency, counter terrorism and aid to civil authorities for disaster management in an UN peace keeping scenario involving a combined deployment at a battalion level.

3. BOLD-QIT (Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique):

News: The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the project BOLD-QIT (Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique) on India-Bangladesh border in Dhubri District of Assam.

Facts:

- The project is under CIBMS (Comprehensive Integrated Border Management system).
- The 61 Kms of Border area in District Dhubri, Assam where River Brahmaputra enters into Bangladesh consists of vast char lands and innumerable river channels making border security a difficult task.

Questions/Notes

- In January, 2018, Information and Technology Wing of BSF undertook the project BOLD-QIT (Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique).
- BOLD-QIT is the project to install technical systems and will enable BSF to equip Indo-Bangla borders with different kind of sensors in unfenced riverine area of Brahmaputra and its tributaries.
- The entire span of River Brahmaputra has been covered with data network generated by Microwave communication, OFC Cables, DMR Communication, day and night surveillance Cameras and intrusion detection system.
- The information will be directly feed into BSF Control Rooms on the Border and enable BSF Quick Reaction Teams to thwart any possibility of Illegal Cross Border Crossing/ Crimes.

Other facts:

- Bangladesh has the longest international border with India followed by China and Pakistan.
- Border Security Force is responsible for safeguarding 4,096 Km long International Border with Bangladesh.

4. NCBR celebrates Inception Day:

News: National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) will celebrate its 34th Inception Day tomorrow on March 11, 2019.

Facts:

- Formed in 1986, NCRB is mandated to empower the Indian Police with Information Technology and is responsible for collecting, maintaining and analysing the crime data of the country.
- It facilitates Investigating Officers with updated IT tools and information in Investigation of Crimes.
- Bureau is implementing & monitoring agency for implementation of Crime & Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS), a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan of Government of India.
- Its parent agency is the Ministry of Home Affairs.

5. PINAKA:

News: Defence Research and Defence Organisation (DRDO) successfully test fired the Guided missile PINAKA from Pokhran ranges.

Facts:

- PINAKA is an indigenously developed Guided missile by DRDO.
- It will significantly boost the capability of the artillery to make precision hits, as the weapon system is equipped with state-of-the-art guidance kit comprising of an advanced navigation and control system.

Questions/Notes

- Pinaka was initially a 30 to 40 km range rocket. Its range was increased 70 to 80 km with Pinaka Mark II.

Other facts:

- The rocket system was named after Pinaka, the bow of Lord Shiva.

6. Exercise Al Nagah III 2019:

News: Indo Oman Joint Exercise Al Nagah III 2019, a joint military exercise between Indian and Royal Army of Oman.

Facts:

- It was a two-week-long event, held at HQ Jebel Regiment, Nizwa, Oman.
- The exercise aims at honing their tactical and technical skills in joint counter insurgency and counter terrorist operations in semi-urban scenario in mountainous terrain under UN mandate.

7. Gallantry Awards:

News: The President of India conferred the gallantry awards to Indian Armed Personnel.

Facts:

- The President of India is the Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces.
- The wartime gallantry awards of the country are: Param Vir Chakra, Maha Vir Chakra and Vir Chakra.
- The Peacetime Gallantry Awards of the country are: Ashok Chakra, Kirti Chakra and Shaurya Chakra.
- Wartime distinguished service medal include: Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medal, Uttam Seva Medal and Yudh Medal.
- Peacetime Distinguished Service Medals in India include: Param Vishist Seva Medal, Ati Vishist Seva Medal and Vishist Seva Medal.

8. Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM):

News: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully test fired Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM) for the second time today in the ranges of Rajasthan desert.

Facts:

- It is an indigenously developed, low weight, fire and forget Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM).
- It is equipped with advanced features including state-of-the-art Imaging Infrared Radar (IIR) Seeker with integrated avionics.
- MPATGM capable of being fired from the shoulder and can be used during the day and night.
- MPATGM is fitted with high-explosive anti-tank (HEAT) warhead.

9. Theatre Level Readiness and Operational Exercise (TROPEX):

News: Annual Theatre Level Readiness and Operational Exercise (TROPEX) was recently conducted.

Facts:

- It was held at the Naval Base, Kochi.
- TROPEX - the largest maritime exercise of the Indian Navy was conducted in the month of February in the Arabian Sea and North Indian Ocean. It was followed by a day long review of TROPEX 2019 was undertaken to examine the conduct of exercise and to assess the operational readiness of the Indian Navy.
- The exercise also included a Tri-services Amphibious Exercise that saw the participation of Army and Air Force personnel and assets.
- The exercise was preceded by the largest coastal defence exercise over codenamed 'Sea Vigil', was conducted on 22 and 23 Jan 19 with participation of all coastal states and union territories along with all maritime stakeholders.

10. International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDRI):

News: An International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDRI) was recently conducted in New Delhi.

Facts:

- The two-day workshop is being organised by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) in partnership with the Global Commission on Adaptation, United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank.
- The workshop aims to:
 - Identify good practices of disaster risk management in key infrastructure sectors
 - Identify specific areas and pathways for collaborative research on DRI (Transport, Energy, Telecom and Water)
 - Discuss and co-create the broad contours of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) as well as a notional roll-out plan for the next three years
 - Build a forum for members to work on areas of common interest and make specific commitments

Other facts:

- The first International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDRI 2018) was held in January 2018.
- The CDRI is envisaged as a knowledge exchange and capacity development partnership.

Questions/Notes

11. Exercise MITRA SHAKTI VI:

News: the 6th edition of the Exercise MITRA SHAKTI was conducted recently, as part of military diplomacy and interaction between armies of India & Sri Lanka.

Facts:

- It is an annual exercise.
- It was held on 27 March at Diyatalawa Parade Ground in Diyatalawa, Badulla District, Sri Lanka.
- The aim of the exercise is to build and promote close relations between the armies of both the countries and to enhance the ability of joint exercise commander to take military contingents of both nations under command.
- The exercise will involve tactical level operations in an international Counter Insurgency and Counter Terrorist environment under United Nations mandate.

12. India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol:

News: The 33rd edition of the India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) to be held from 19 March- 04 April 2019.

Facts:

- The opening ceremony was held at Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India.
- The ship and aircraft from both the countries would undertake patrolling on the respective sides of 236 nautical miles along the International Maritime Boundary line.
- It was followed by a Closing Ceremony at Belawan, Indonesia.
- The IND-INDO CORPAT Series aims to underscore India's peaceful presence and solidarity with friendly Maritime neighbours countries to ensure good order in the maritime domain, consolidate interoperability and strengthen existing bonds of friendship between India and Indonesia.

13. Langkawi International Maritime Aero Expo (LIMA-2019):

News: Indian Air Force is participating in the Langkawi International Maritime Aero Expo (LIMA-2019) for the first time.

Facts:

- LIMA 2019 was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mahathir bin Mohammed.
- The Indian Air Force will showcase its indigenously developed LCA fighter aircraft.
- This will serve as a foundation for any future interaction with the Malaysian Air Force.
- INS Kadmatt is scheduled to participate in the 15th edition of Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition, LIMA-19.

Questions/Notes

Questions/Notes

- It will participate in events including the International Fleet Review (IFR) by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, maritime and air demonstration, Sea Exercises with 29 other participating navies, cultural exchange programmes, cross visits to ships, sporting events.

Other facts:

- INS Kadmatt (P 29) is an indigenous stealth anti-submarine warfare corvette and was commissioned into the Indian Navy in January 2016.

14. Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Training Facility - ABHEDYA:

News: Chief of the Naval Staff commissioned a state of the art "Nuclear, Biological, Chemical Training Facility - ABHEDYA", at INS Shivaji, Lonavla, Maharashtra.

Facts:

- This project is a reflection of the superior technical design and execution abilities of the Indian Navy and Goa Shipyard Limited.
- The facility will assist the Indian Navy in providing realistic simulation of Nuclear, Chemical & Biological warfare to its personnel during their NBC damage control training, which till now was limited to theoretical training largely.

15. Mountaineering Expedition to Mt Makalu:

News: Indian Army undertook its first Mountaineering Expedition to Mt Makalu (8485m).

Facts:

- The objective is of summiting all challenging peaks above 8000M, including Mount Makalu.
- The challenging mission is planned to start from New Delhi and group will set up six camps enroute to summit point on Mt Makalu.

16. Combat Management System (CMS) for the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier:

News: Recently, the Combat Management System (CMS) for the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) was developed.

Facts:

- It was developed by M/s Tata Power Strategic Engineering Division (TPSED), in collaboration with Weapon and Electronics System Engineering Establishment (WESEE) and M/s MARS, Russia.
- This is a major landmark on IN's thrust towards GoI's policy of 'Make in India' to encourage indigenous development and promoting private industry participation.

Questions/Notes

- It also assumes great significance as it is the first CMS developed by a Private Industry for IN and is for India's Indigenous Aircraft Carrier.

17. AUSINDEX 2019:

News: The 3rd installment of the Joint Naval Exercise of India and Australia AUSINDEX will be held off the coast of Visakhapatnam from April 2 to 16 2019.

Facts:

- The joint exercise will focus on anti-submarine warfare, as a part of its efforts to ramp up bilateral naval cooperation in the strategic Indian Ocean region.

18. Operation Sunrise:

News: India carried out Operation Sunrise to target insurgent camps that were planning to attack Indian workers at the Kaladan Transit project.

Facts:

- It was a joint operation carried out by both Indian and Myanmar armies.
- The target of the Operation Sunrise was the Arakan Army, an insurgent group trained by the Kachin Independence Army (KIA).

Other facts:

- Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project aims to connect seaport of Kolkata (India) with Sittwe seaport in Myanmar by sea.
- The project links Sittwe seaport to Lashio in Myanmar via Kaladan river through boat route and then from Lashio to Mizoram in India by road transport.

19. Mainamati Maitree Exercise 2019:

News: Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) concluded a three-day Mainamati Maitree Exercise 2019 as a part of Confidence-building exercises.

Facts:

- The exercise was held in areas near Srimantapur in Sipahijala district, bordering Comilla district of Bangladesh.
- The exercise was named after Mainamati hill range situated 8 km west of Comilla Township in Bangladesh, which is home to an ancient Buddhist archaeological site.
- The objective of Mainamati Maitree Exercise 2019 was to plan and conduct anti-smuggling and anti-criminal activity.

20. Exercise Red Flag 2019:

News: Red Flag 19 military drill is being held in the US.

Facts:

- Exercise Red Flag is an advanced aerial combat training exercise held several times a year by the United States Air Force.
- Each year the exercise will be held at Nellis Air Force Base, Nevada....
- The exercise began in the year 1975.

Questions/Notes

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY**Questions/Notes****1. Amendment to the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016:**

News: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change amended the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016.

Facts:

- It aimed to strengthen the implementation of environmentally sound management of hazardous waste in the country.
- The amendment was done to balance the objectives of “Ease of Doing Business” and boosting “Make in India” initiative and at the same time ensuring sustainable development with minimal impact on the environment.

Salient features of the amended rules:

- Solid plastic waste has been prohibited from being imported into the country, including through the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and by Export Oriented Units (EOU).
- Exporters of silk waste have been given exemption from requiring permission from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Electrical and electronic assemblies and components manufactured in and exported from India, if found defective can now be imported back into the country within a year of export without obtaining permission from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Industries which do not require consent under Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974 and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1981, are now exempted from requiring authorization under the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016, provided that hazardous and other wastes generated by such industries are handed over to the authorized actual users, waste collectors or disposal facilities.

2. First Workshop on India Energy Modelling Forum:

News: The NITI Aayog and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) organized the first workshop on the development of India Energy Modelling Forum (IEMF).

Facts:

- The IEMF seeks to provide a platform for leading experts and policy makers to study important energy and environmental issues and ensure induction of modelling and analysis in informed decision making process.

Questions/Notes

- The workshop featured eight expert sessions which saw discussions around the various aspects of setting up an India-centric energy modelling platform and its institutional, coordination and funding mechanisms.

3. Resolutions on Single-use Plastics and Sustainable Nitrogen management:

News: India piloted resolutions on two important global environment issues relating to Single-use Plastics and Sustainable Nitrogen management at the fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA).

Facts:

- UNEA adopted both the resolutions with consensus.
- The global nitrogen use efficiency is low, resulting in pollution by reactive nitrogen which threatens human health, ecosystem services, contributes to climate change and stratospheric ozone depletion.
- Only a small proportion of the plastics produced globally are recycled with most of it damaging the environment and aquatic biodiversity.

Other facts:

- The fourth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) which was held in Nairobi from 11th to 15th March 2019.
- The theme of the UNEA this year was 'Innovative Solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable production and consumption'.

4. Cyclone 'IDAI':

News: Cyclone 'IDAI' made a landfall at Beira, Mozambique.

Facts:

- Indian Navy (Sujata, Sarathi and Shardul) operating in the Southern Indian Ocean were diverted to Port Beira, Mozambique based on request received from the Government of Mozambique to provide Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR).
- The IN ships set up medical camps and provide food, water, blankets and other necessary relief items.

5. World Water Day:

News: Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation organised a two-day National Workshop on Management of Grey Water in Rural Areas and Arsenic and Fluoride Remediation on the occasion of World Water Day.

Facts:

- World Water Day is celebrated on 22nd March annually.
- The workshop was conducted in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras with support from UNICEF India.

Questions/Notes

- Various technologies, ranging from a simple soak pits, phyto-remediation to membrane based grey water treatment were discussed.
- Five States affected with arsenic/fluoride are West Bengal, Tamilnadu, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan.

Other facts:

- The WWD was first formally proposed in Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992.
- The first World Water Day was celebrated on 22 March 1993.

6. Bumphead Parrot Fish in Andaman and Nicobar:

News: A study has shown that fishing and coral reef degradation threaten parrotfish in Andaman.

Facts:

- The IUCN status of Bumphead Parrot Fish is Vulnerable.
- The Scientific name of the fish is *Bolbometopon Muricatum*.
- Protection of coral cover along the existing protected marine areas in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands is necessary for the conservation of the Bumphead Parrot Fish.

7. Smart Garbage Bins:

News: Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) has launched smart garbage bins made of stainless steel which integrates technology for smart waste management.

Facts:

- The Smart Garbage Bins will send signals to the garbage collection vehicle about the 'fill-up' position of the bin using IOT (Internet of Things).
- These Smart Garbage Bins made up of SAIL SALEM stainless steel will be installed in underground Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) pits at the Smart Garbage station.
- There will be separate bins for recyclable and non-recyclable wastes.
- The Compactor will lift the stainless steel bins from the underground pits and empty the garbage into the compactor vehicle.

8. International Day of Forests 2019:

News: International Day of Forests 2019 was observed on March 21st.

Facts:

- The theme is 'Forests and Education' to raise awareness on how to sustainably manage forests.

- The theme underscores the importance of education at all levels in achieving sustainable forest management and biodiversity conservation.

Other facts:

- International Day of Forests was observed for the first time on March 21, 2013.
- The International Day of Forests by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on November 2012.

9. World Wildlife Day 2019:

News: World Wildlife Day 2019 was observed on March 3rd 2019.

Facts:

- The theme of the year is 'Life below water: for people and planet'.

Other facts:

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on its 68th session on 20 December 2013 decided to proclaim 3rd March as World Wildlife Day.
- March 3rd is the day of the adoption of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

Questions/Notes

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**Questions/Notes****1. Flood Management and Border Areas Programme:**

News: The Union Cabinet approved the "Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP)".

Facts:

- The FMBAP Scheme will be implemented throughout the country for effective flood management, erosion control and anti-sea erosion.
- The Scheme "FMBAP" has been framed by merging the components of two continuing XII Plan schemes titled "Flood Management Programme (FMP)" and "River Management Activities and Works related to Border Areas (RMBA)".
- The aim of the Scheme is to assist the State Governments to provide reasonable degree of protection against floods in critical areas and enhancing their capabilities.
- The funding pattern for FM Component for works in general category States will continue to be 50% (Centre) : 50% (State) and for projects of North Eastern States, Sikkim, J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the funding pattern will continue to be 70% (Centre) : 30% (State). RMBA component the projects will continue to be funded as 100% grant-in-aid / central assistance.

2. Mission Shakti:

News: Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) successfully conducted an Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) missile test 'Mission Shakti'.

Facts:

- A DRDO-developed Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) Interceptor Missile successfully engaged an Indian orbiting target satellite in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) in a 'Hit to Kill' mode.
- The test has demonstrated the Nation's capability to defend its assets even in outer space.
- India is only the fourth country after the U.S., Russia and China to have the A-SAT technology.

3. World Down Syndrome Day:

News: March 21 was celebrated as World Down Syndrome Day.

Facts:

- The theme of the 2019 World Down Syndrome Day is "Leave no one behind".
- It is celebrated by the United Nations since 2012. to increase global awareness about the syndrome

Other facts:

- March 21st was chosen to signify the uniqueness of the triplication of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome.
- In normal conditions, people have only two copies of Chromosome 21 whereas those with Down's syndrome there is a presence of a part or full of the third chromosome.
- It is a genetic disorder which results in delayed physical and mental growth in individuals.
- It is an incurable disease.

Questions/Notes

MISCELLANEOUS

Questions/Notes

1. Vishva Umiyadham Complex:

News: The Prime Minister, laid the Foundation Stone of Vishva Umiyadham Complex at Jaspur, Ahmedabad.

Facts:

- It is dedicated to the Saints and Seers who played an important role in strengthening our society.
- They have given us valuable teachings, and the strength to fight evil and oppression.

Other facts:

- Maa Umiya is the kuldevi of the Kadva Patidar community of Gujarat.

2. Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019:

News: The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India won the First Prize in the category of TV Cinema Spot at the international Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019.

Facts:

- Following promotional films / television commercials produced by the Ministry as part of its Incredible India 2.0 Campaign received the awards:
 - Yogi of the Racetrack
 - The Reincarnation of Mr. and Mrs. Jones
 - Sanctuary in Paris
 - Maharani of Manhattan and
 - The Masala Master Chef
- The commercials have been produced in English with voice overs in 9 international languages, viz. German, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Arabic.
- The Golden City Gate Tourism Multimedia Awards are given annually in various categories related to the Tourism and Hospitality sectors.
- The entries received for the awards are judged by an international jury comprising film and tourism experts.
- It was held at ITB Berlin.

Other facts:

- The Ministry of Tourism has launched the Incredible India 2.0 Campaign in September 2017.
- The 2.0 Campaign marks a shift from generic promotions across the world to market specific promotional plans and content creation.

Questions/Notes

3. Nari Shakti Puraskar 2018:

News: President of India, presented the Nari Shakti Puraskar 2018, at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi, on International Women's Day.

Facts:

- It is the highest civilian honour for women in India.
- This year, 44 awardees have been selected for these Puraskar, out of around a thousand nominations received by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- This year, the Nari Shakti Puraskar has also been awarded to a One Stop Centre (OSC) of Lucknow and to Tamil Nadu state social welfare nutritious meal department, which has shown exceptional progress in improving child sex ratio at birth under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme.

Other facts:

- One Stop Centres (OSC) are being developed to provide 24x7 integrated services to women affected by violence under one roof, including hand holding them in filing of FIRs, providing them legal aid, medical aid, psycho-social counseling and temporary shelter upto 5 days.
- Beti Bachao Beti Padhao is a flagship initiative of the Prime Minister to spread awareness about the protection and development of the girl child.
- Nominations for the Nari Shakti Puraskar were invited from State Governments/UTs/Central Ministries/Departments and from the previous years' awardees (2015-2017).
- Self-nominations were also welcomed.

4. Kudo International Federation India:

News: Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has granted provisional recognition to Kudo International Federation India (KIFI) as National Sport Federation.

Facts:

- The grant of recognition is subject to compliance of the provisions of National Sports Development Code of India, 2011.
- The recognition means granting a major role to KIFI Association for promotion and Development of Kudo sport in India.
- The Kudo sport is placed in the 'Others' category.

Other facts:

- Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has granted provisional recognition to All India Carrom Federation (AICF) as National Sport Federation.
- The recognition means granting a major role to AICF for development of the Carrom sport in India.
- The Carrom sport is also placed in the 'Others' category.

5. Janaushadhi Diwas:

News: 7th March 2019 was declared as the 'JanaushadhiDiwas' across India.

Facts:

- It aims at providing further impetus & creating awareness about the use of generic medicines in India.
- India already has 5050 Jan Aushadhi Stores across 652 districts.
- It was announced that with this pace of progress, all blocks in the country would have at least 1 PMBJP Kendra by 2020.

Other facts:

- The Government has taken important steps to make affordable and quality generic medicines popular among the people through Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).
- A wide range of affordable quality health products have already been launched under the PMBJP Scheme and available at PMBJP Kendras.

6. Nowruz:

News: Navroz was celebrated on March 21st.

Facts:

- Nowruz/Navroz is the name of the Iranian/Persian New Year in Iranian calendars.
- Originally being a Zoroastrian festival, and the holiest of them all, Nowruz is believed to have been invented by Zoroaster himself.
- It is celebrated on 21 March every year, a date originally determined by astronomical calculations.
- Navroz is also the day of the Spring equinox and the rituals are performed based on the movements of the sun during the course of the day.
- Nowruz is associated with various local traditions, such as the evocation of Jamshid, a mythological king of Iran, and numerous tales and legends.
- It is included in the UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Other facts:

- Other New Year celebrations across India:

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Gudi Parwa | Maharashtra |
| Bestu Varas | Gujarat |
| Ugadi | Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana |
| Vishu | Kerala |
| Puthandu | Tamil Nadu |

Questions/Notes

- Other 12 intangible cultural heritage recognised by UNESCO:

| | |
|---|---|
| Kalbelia: serpent dance of Rajasthan | Sankirtana: ritual dancing and singing of Manipur |
| Tradition of Vedic Chanting | Buddhist Chantings of Ladakh: Jammu and Kashmir |
| Chhau Dance: semi-classical dance of Odisha, Jharkhand and West Bengal. | Ramlila: Traditional performance of Ramayana |
| Ramman: Religious function of the Garhwal Himalayas | Kumbh Mela |
| Yoga | Thatheras: Traditional brass and copper craft of utensils: Punjab |
| Koodiyattam: Sanskrit theatre of Kerala | Mudiyettu: Kerala |

7. State channels on DD Free Dish:

News: Prasar Bharati has brought 11 more State DD Channels, including five channels of North-Eastern States, increasing the Satellite footprint of India through DD Free Dish.

Facts:

- It is for the first time that the States of Chhattisgarh, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Uttarakhand have got their own DD Channel on a Satellite Network through DD Free Dish.
- The increased accessibility to regional broadcast will help promote regional culture and give opportunities to local talent as well.

8. Swachh Survekshan Awards 2019:

News: The President of India, presented the Swachh Survekshan Awards 2019, at a function held in New Delhi.

Facts:

- It is an initiative of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India.
- Indore, Madhya Pradesh has set an example for other urban centres by winning the first prize in all the four surveys so far.
- Bhopal has been declared as the cleanest capital.
- Ujjain has bagged the award for being the cleanest city in the population category of 3 lakh to 10 lakh.

Questions/Notes

Other facts:

- Every year, cities and towns across India are awarded with the title of 'Swachh Cities' on the basis of their cleanliness and sanitation drive as a part of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan that was launched in 2014.
- The Swachh Survekshan exercise was started with the objective of inculcating a spirit of healthy competition among cities in their race towards becoming India's cleanest cities.
- MoHUA conducted its first survey 'Swachh Survekshan-2016' survey for ranking 73 cities (Urban Local Bodies), under the ambit of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban).
- In order to expand the coverage of cities, the Ministry conducted its second survey 'Swachh Survekshan-2017' to rank 434 cities followed by 'Swachh Survekshan 2018' with 4,203 cities.
- Swachh Survekshan 2019 covered an even greater number- 4,237 cities.

9. Geographical Indication (GI) to five varieties of Indian coffee:

News: The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India has recently awarded Geographical Indication (GI) to five varieties of Indian coffee.

Facts:

- Coorg Arabica coffee is grown specifically in the region of Kodagu district in Karnataka.
- Wayanad Robusta coffee is grown specifically in the region of Wayanad district which is situated on the eastern portion of Kerala.
- Chikmagalur Arabica coffee is grown specifically in the region of Chikmagalur district which is situated in the Deccan plateau, belongs to the Malnad region of Karnataka.
- Araku Valley Arabica coffee can be described as coffee from the hilly tracks of Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha region grown at an elevation of 900-1100 Mt MSL. The coffee produce of Araku, by the tribals, follows an organic approach in which they emphasise management practices involving substantial use of organic manures, green manuring and organic pest management practices.
- Bababudangiris Arabica coffee is grown mainly in the birthplace of coffee in India. The region is situated in the central portion of Chikmagalur district. Selectively hand-picked and processed by natural fermentation, the cup exhibits full body, acidity, mild flavour and striking aroma with a tinge of chocolate. This coffee is also called high grown coffee which slowly ripens in the mild climate and thereby the bean acquires a special taste and aroma.

Questions/Notes

Other facts:

- The Monsooned Malabar Robusta Coffee, a unique specialty coffee from India, was given GI certification earlier.
- Coffee cultivation is mainly done in the Southern States of India:
 - Karnataka – 54%
 - Kerala – 19%
 - Tamil Nadu – 8%
- The recognition and protection that comes with GI certification will allow the coffee producers of India to invest in maintaining the specific qualities of the coffee grown in that particular region.
- It will also enhance the visibility of Indian coffee in the world and allow growers to get maximum price for their premium coffee.

10. Skytrax World Airport Awards 2019:

News: The UK-based Skytrax, a consultancy firm released the list of the Best 100 Airports of the World.

Facts:

- Singapore's Changi Airport has been crowned the world's best aviation hub for the seventh time in a row.
- Tokyo International Airport (Haneda), stood at the second place also won the award of the World's Best Domestic Air.

11. The International Day of Happiness 2019:

News: The International Day of Happiness 2019 was celebrated on March 20.

Facts:

- Theme of the day was Happier Together.
- The first ever International Day of Happiness was observed on March 20, 2013.
- March 20 was chosen for International Day of Happiness for its significance as the March equinox.
- March equinox is a universal formula, where the sun is exactly overhead the earth's equator.

12. World Theatre Day:

News: World Theatre Day was observed on March 27.

Facts:

- It is aimed to generate awareness about the importance of theatre arts.
- It was initiated by the International Theatre Institute in 1962.
- It is an annual event.

Questions/Notes

Other facts:

- International Theatre Institute is the world's largest performing arts organization founded in 1948 by theatre and dance experts and UNESCO.

13. Reports and Indices in News:

| | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Global Environment Outlook 2019 | United Nations Environment Programme |
| Global Economic Prospects | The World Bank |
| Corruption Perception Index | Transparency International |
| World Economic Situation and Prospects | United Nations's Flagship publication |
| Future of the World Initiative | The International Labour Organization |

14. GI Indicators:

News: Sirsi Supari of Karnataka, Erode Turmeric of Tamil Nadu and Marayoor Jaggery of Kerala has got the GI tag by the Registrar of Geographical Indications.

Facts:

- Sirsi Supari is the first product from Arecanut sector to get a GI tag.
 - It is cultivated in Yellapur, Siddapura and Sirsi taluks.
 - It has unique features like a round and flattened coin shape, ash coloured, and a hard seed.
 - It has a unique taste due to differences in chemical composition and the total average flavonoids content in it is around 90 whereas in others it is around 80.
- Erode Turmeric is golden yellow in colour with resistance to pests after boiling.
 - It is grown in hot moist conditions prevalent in the area with temperature ranging from 20 degrees to 37.9 degrees Celsius with an average rainfall of 600-800 mm in a year.
- The Marayoor Jaggery largely produced in the regions of Marayur and Kanthalloor grama panchayats of Kerala.
 - The distinct features of the Marayoor Jaggery are high sweetness with less saltiness, high content of iron and less sodium.
 - It is produced without adding any chemicals has always been known for its high quality.

15. Azadi ke Deewane Museum:

News: The 'Azadi ke Diwane' museum dedicated to the unsung heroes of the country's freedom struggle was inaugurated at the Red Fort.

Questions/Notes

Facts:

- The Museum is built by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- Azaadi ke Diwane is a digitised and interactive museum with a state-of-the-art, informative and educational exhibition.
- The Museum is a part of Kranti Mandir Series to inspire the younger generation.

16. Kashi Vishwanath Corridor:

News: Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the Kashi Vishwanath Corridor.

Facts:

- The project envisions a massive makeover of the holy shrine and its surrounding areas.
- The proposed 50-feet corridor will directly connect Ganga's Manikarnika and Lalita Ghat to the Kashi Vishwanath Jyotirlinga Temple.

Other facts:

- The Kashi Vishwanath temple located on the left bank of the holy river Ganga.
- It is one of the 12 Joytirlingas in India.

Questions/Notes

| MARCH POINTLY | Questions/Notes |
|--|-----------------|
| <p>1. NAMASTE-Portal: National AYUSH Morbidity and Standardized Terminologies Portal is a Ministry of AYUSH effort for centralised collection of morbidity statistics pertaining to various systems of medicine under the Ministry viz. Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy.</p> <p>2. A-HIMS: AYUSH HOSPITAL MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (A-HMIS) is a comprehensive IT platform to effectively manage all functions of health care delivery systems and patient care in AYUSH facilities.</p> <p>3. Kiru Hydro Electric(HE) Project: It is hydro electric project located on River Chenab in Kishtwar district of Jammu & Kashmir.</p> <p>4. World Kidney Day: World Kidney Day is a global health awareness campaign focusing on the importance of the kidneys and reducing the frequency and impact of kidney disease. It is celebrated annually on the 2nd Thursday of March.</p> <p>5. Tashigang, a small Himachal Pradesh village has got the distinction of the highest polling station in the world.</p> <p>6. “Candidate Connect” and “Share You Voted”: Social Media giant, Facebook has launched two new India-specific tools to boost civic engagement on its platform during the Lok Sabha elections 2019.</p> <p>7. Bomb Cyclone: A storm is considered a ‘bomb’ when the pressure drops rapidly — at least 24 millibars in 4 hours.</p> <p>8. Lose to Win Programme: The government of UAE has launched the Lose to Win Programme to assist the overweight employees in shedding extra kilos and adopt a healthy lifestyle.</p> <p>9. GeeBee Boxing Tournament: India participated in the 38th GeeBee Boxing Tournament was held at Helsinki, Finland.</p> <p>10. Combat Casualty Drug: The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed a range of combat drugs that can save lives in the event of warfare in jungle and high altitude areas as well as in terror attacks.</p> <p>11. Vstradan Campaign: Vastradan Campaign initiated by the erstwhile royal family of Udaipur has set the Guinness World Record for the largest collection of clothes for donation.</p> | |

12. Long March Rocket Series: China's Long March Rocket Series which is the mainstay of China's space programme since 1970 has successfully completed its 300th launch.

13. White Label Machines: Automated Teller Machines (ATMs) set up, owned and operated by non-bank entities are called White Label ATMs.

14. Bolo App: Tech giant Google has unveiled a new app 'Bolo' that aims to help children in primary school learn to read in Hindi and English.

15. e-Dharti and e- Dharti Geo app: The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister launched the e-Dharti app and e-Dharti GeoPortal to help the public in getting the necessary information on fingertips and the government to effectively manage its properties.

Questions/Notes