

MONTHLY

# FACTLY

EXCLUSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR

# PRELIMS

MARCH 2020

ForumIAS

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## Polity

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### 1. Essential Commodities Act(ECA),1955

**News:** The Centre has brought masks and hand sanitisers under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to make sure that these products help in preventing the spread of Covid-19 infection.

**Facts:**

- **Objective:** The Act ensures the easy availability of essential commodities to consumers at fair prices. It empowers the government to regulate and control the production, distribution, supply and sale of the commodities declared as 'essential' by the Act.
- **The list of items:** drugs, fertilisers, pulses and edible oils and petroleum and petroleum products.
- **Implementation:** The State Governments are the implementing agencies

### 2. Centre can't brand an organisation as 'political': Supreme Court

**News:** The Supreme Court has held that the central government cannot brand an organisation as 'political' and deprive it of its right to receive foreign funds for using legitimate forms of dissent to aid a public cause.

**Facts :**

- **Section 5(1) of the FCRA:** It allows the Centre to decide freely whether a seemingly non-political organisation is political in nature.
- **Rule 3 of the 2011 Rules:** Provision identifies the various types of 'political' activities for which/organisations whose foreign funding could be stopped by the government.
- The Court observed that an organisation which supports the cause of a group of citizens agitating for their rights without a political goal or objective cannot be penalised by being declared as an organisation of a political nature.
- However, foreign funding could be stopped if an organisation took recourse to these forms of protest to score a political goal.

**Additional Facts - Background:**

- The judgement came on a petition filed by the Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF) challenging certain provisions of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA),2010 and the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Rules of 2011.
- The act and the rules regulate the receipt and usage of foreign contributions by non-governmental organisations(NGOs) in India.
- The act aims to prevent use of foreign contribution or foreign hospitality for any activity detrimental to the national interest.
- It is implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

### 3. Rights of an accused to be Defended

**News:** The Karnataka High Court has observed that it is unethical and illegal for lawyers to pass resolutions against representing accused in court.

**Facts:**

- **Article 22(1):** It gives the fundamental right to every person not to be denied the right to be defended by a legal practitioner of his or her choice.
- **Article 14:** It provides for equality before the law and equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
- **Article 39A:** It is part of the Directive Principles of state policy. It states that equal opportunity to secure justice must not be denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities, and provides for free legal aid.

**Additional Facts - Background:**

**S Mohammed Rafi vs State of Tamil Nadu, 2010:** Every person however wicked, depraved or repulsive he may be regarded by society has a right to be defended in a court of law and correspondingly, it is the duty of the lawyer to defend him.

### 4. Suspension of MPs from Lok Sabha

**News:** Seven Members of Parliament(MP) have been suspended from Lok Sabha for the remaining period of the Budget session.

**Facts:**

	<i>In Lok Sabha</i>	<i>In Rajya Sabha</i>
<b>Suspension Rules</b>	<p><b>Rule 373:</b> If the Speaker can order a member to be withdrawn during the remainder of the day's sitting, if the Speaker is of the opinion that the conduct of the member is grossly disorderly.</p> <p><b>Rule 374:</b> If a Member disregards the authority of the Chair or abuses the rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing its business. Then the house through a motion can suspend the member for a period not extending the remainder of the session.</p>	<p><b>Rule 255:</b> Provides for similar powers (as rule 373 ) to the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha</p> <p><b>Rule 256:</b> Provides for similar powers (as rule 373 ) to the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha</p>
<b>Automatic Suspension</b>	<b>Rule 374A:</b> Empowers the speaker to name and automatically suspend a member who has behaved in a disorderly fashion by coming into the well of the House or	<b>No such rule exists</b>

	abused the Rules of the House persistently and wilfully obstructed its business by shouting slogans or otherwise. The period of suspension would be for five consecutive sittings or the remainder of the session, whichever is less.	
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**Need for Rule 374A in Lok Sabha:** In order to skirt around the necessity of moving and adopting a motion for suspension, this rule was incorporated in the Rule Book in 2001.

**Note:** Therefore, unlike the Speaker, the Rajya Sabha Chairman does not have the power to suspend a member.

### 5. Supreme Court invokes special powers, removes Manipur minister

**News:** The Supreme Court has invoked special powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to remove the Manipur Minister against whom disqualification petitions were pending before the Speaker since 2017.

#### **Facts :**

- The Supreme Court removed the minister from the state cabinet and restrained him from entering the Legislative Assembly till further orders.
- A disqualification petition under Tenth Schedule (Anti-defection law) was pending before the Speaker since 2017 but the Speaker failed to take the decision within a reasonable time period.

#### **Additional Facts :**

- **Article 212:** According to Article 212, the courts in India including the Supreme Court cannot interfere in the proceedings of the Legislature of state. However, this has been overruled by the Supreme Court in this matter by invoking special powers under Article 142.
- **Article 142:** Article 142 provides for the enforcement of decrees and orders of Supreme Court. It consists of two clauses:
  - **Article 142(1):** It states that the Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it and the orders shall be enforceable throughout the territory of India.
  - **Article 142(2):** It states that the Supreme Court shall have the power to make any order for the purpose of (a) securing the attendance of any person, (b) the discovery or production of any documents or (c) the investigation or punishment of any contempt of itself.
- **About Tenth Schedule:** The Anti-Defection Law was passed in 1985 through the 52nd amendment to the Constitution. It added the Tenth Schedule to the Indian Constitution. The main intent of the law was to combat political defections.



## 6. President nominates former CJI to the Rajya Sabha

**News:** The President of India has nominated former Chief Justice of India to the Rajya Sabha (Upper House).

**Facts :**

- Under article 80 of the Constitution, the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) is composed of not more than 250 members of whom 12 are nominated by the President of India from amongst persons who have special knowledge or practical experience in respect of such matters as literature, science, art and social service.

**Additional Facts- Powers and Privileges of Nominated members:**

- Nominated members enjoy all powers, privileges and immunities available to an elected member of Parliament. They take part in the proceedings of the House as any other member.
- However, they are not entitled to vote in the election of the President of India. But in the election of the Vice-President of India, they have a right to vote.
- A nominated member is allowed six months, should he decide to join a political party after he has taken his seat in the House in terms of article 99 of the Constitution.
- A nominated member has also been exempted from filing his assets and liabilities under Section 75A of the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1951 which requires the elected member to do so within 90 days of his making or subscribing oath/affirmation.

## 7. Lok Sabha passes Appropriation Bill

**News:** The Lok Sabha has passed the Appropriation Bill 2020-21.

**Facts :**

- **Definition :** Appropriation Bill is a money bill that allows the government to withdraw funds from the Consolidated Fund of India to meet its expenses during the course of a financial year.
- **Constitution :** As per article 114 of the Constitution, the government can withdraw money from the Consolidated Fund only after receiving approval from Parliament.
- The government usually introduces the Appropriation Bill in the Lok Sabha after discussions on Budget proposals and Voting on Demand for Grants.
- The defeat of an Appropriation Bill would necessitate resignation of a government or a general election. However, this has never happened in India till date.

**Additional Facts:**

**About Money Bill:** A money bill is defined under Article 110 of the Indian Constitution. A Bill is said to be a Money Bill if it only contains provisions related to taxation, borrowing of money by the government, expenditure from or receipt to the Consolidated Fund of India.

**About Consolidated Fund of India:** Consolidated fund of India has been constituted under Article 266 (1) of the Constitution of India. The fund consists of revenues which are received by the government through taxes and expenses incurred in the form of borrowings and loans. No money out of this fund can be appropriated or drawn except in accordance with a parliamentary law.

## 8. Public Safety Act

**News:** Omar Abdullah, released after nearly eight months in detention under the Public Safety Act, 1978 of Jammu and Kashmir

### Facts:

- The Public Safety Act was first promulgated in J&K in 1978 for administrative detention. The Act was introduced to prevent the smuggling of timber and keep the smugglers out of circulation. It is a preventive detention law that allows the State government to detain a person (above the age of 18) up to two years without a trial or charge.
- **Authority:** Order is passed either by the Divisional Commissioner or the District Magistrate.
- **Advisory Board:** A non-judicial body to review detention orders

### Additional Facts:

- **Preventive detention:** It is the imprisonment of a person with the aim of preventing them from committing further offenses or for maintaining public order.
- **Constitutional Provisions and Preventive Detention**
  - Article 22: provides safeguards against arrests and detentions.
  - Article 22 (2) : Produce before the magistrate within 24 hours
  - Article 22 (4) no individual can be detained for more than 3 months unless a bench of High court judges or an Advisory board decides to extend the date.
- **National Security Act, 1980:** Empowers the government to detain a person if the authorities are satisfied that he/she is a threat to national security or to prevent him/her from disrupting public order. It extends to the whole of India except Jammu and Kashmir.

## 9. Legal provisions to enforce lockdown:

**Epidemic Disease Act, 1897:** Cabinet Secretary has advised all states and Union Territories should invoke provisions of Section 2 of Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 so that Health Ministry advisories are enforceable.

### Facts:

- The **Epidemic Disease Act** was introduced by the British in 1897 to tackle the epidemic of bubonic plague that broke out in the then state of Bombay.
- **Section 2:** It empowers the state governments/UTs and central government to take special measures and formulate regulations for containing the outbreak. Such measures include inspection of persons travelling by railway or other modes of transport, and segregation, in hospitals, temporary accommodation or other places, of persons suspected by the inspecting officer of being infected with any such disease.
- **Section 3:** Any person disobeying any regulation or order made under this Act shall be deemed to have committed an offence punishable under section 188 of the Indian Penal Code.
- **Section 4:** It gives legal protection to the implementing officers acting under the Act.

**Different IPC sections against violators of prohibitory orders:** Government has said that those violating the lockdown orders can face legal action under various sections of the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

**Facts:**

- **Section 188:** It states that any person who disobeys an order given by a public servant will be punished with imprisonment upto 1 month and if that disobedience causes danger to human life, the term may extend to six months.
- **Section 269:** It states that anybody who does an **unlawful or negligent act** which is likely to spread an infectious disease dangerous to life can be punished with imprisonment upto 6 months. Besides, a fine can also be imposed on such a person.
- **Section 270:** It states that anybody who does an act with a **deliberate intention** which he/she knows is likely to spread an infectious disease dangerous to life can be punished with imprisonment upto two years or with a fine.
- **Section 271:** It states that if anybody who knowingly disobeys any rule made with the object of isolating places where an infectious disease prevails, then the person can be punishable with six-month imprisonment.

#### 10. Department related Standing Committees (DRSCs)

**News:** Rajya Sabha Chairman has said that fewer sittings of Parliament are compensated by the working of department-related standing committees (DRSCs).

**Facts:**

About Department related Standing Committees(DRSCs):

- On the recommendation of the Rules Committee of the Lok Sabha, DRSCs were constituted with an objective to secure more accountability of the Executive (i.e the Council of Ministers) to the Parliament particularly financial accountability.
- Functions of DRSC:
  - To consider the demands for grants of the concerned ministries before they are discussed and voted in the Lok Sabha. Its report should not suggest anything of the nature of cut motions.
  - To examine bills pertaining to the concerned ministries/departments.
  - To consider annual reports of ministries/departments.
  - To consider national basic long-term policy documents presented to the Houses.
- Limitations:
  - They should not consider the matters of day-to-day administration of the concerned ministries/departments.
  - They should not generally consider the matters which are considered by other parliamentary committees.

- The recommendations of these committees are advisory in nature and hence not binding on the Parliament.

### 11. Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act

**News:** Kerala Government has sought relaxation under the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act so as to ensure that the State's finances are not adversely impacted in the wake of Coronavirus.

#### **Facts:**

- The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act (FRBM Act) was enacted in 2003 to introduce transparency in India's fiscal management systems by reducing fiscal deficit.
- The act mandated the reduction of the fiscal deficit to 3% of GDP but it has been subsequently amended and the present target is 3.1% by March 2023.
- The states have also enacted their own respective fiscal Responsibility Legislation which sets 3% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) cap on their annual budget deficits.
- **Escape Clause:** Under Section 4(2) of the Act, the Centre can exceed the annual fiscal deficit target citing grounds which includes a) National security b) war c) National calamity d) Collapse of agriculture e) Structural reforms and f) Decline in real output growth of a quarter by at least three percentage points below the average of the previous four quarters.
- However, the deviation from the stipulated fiscal deficit target must not exceed 0.5 percentage points in a year.

#### **Additional Facts-Instances of the past FRBM relaxation:**

##### **Global financial crisis in 2008-09:**

- The Centre resorted to fiscal stimulus to counter the fallout of the global slowdown. This led to the fiscal deficit climbing to 6.2%, from a budgeted goal of 2.7%.
- The deficit goals for the States too were relaxed to 3.5% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) for 2008-09 and 4% of GSDP for fiscal 2009-10.

##### **Budget 2020-21 presentation:**

- The reductions in corporate tax were cited as structural reforms that triggered the escape clause. This enabled the government to adjust the fiscal deficit target for 2019-20 to 3.8% from the budgeted 3.3%.

## *Policy*

### 1. Policy Measures taken in India amid COVID-19 pandemic

#### **Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana**

- **Aim:** To provide relief to the urban and rural poor amid Coronavirus pandemic
- **Components:**
  - **Insurance scheme for health workers:** Health professionals in Government Hospitals and Health Care Centres to be compensated with an amount of Rs 50 lakh.
  - **PM Garib Kalyan Ann (अन्न) Yojana:** 80 crore individuals to be provided double of their current entitlement of foodgrains over next three months
  - **Benefit to farmers:** First instalment of Rs 2,000 due in 2020-21 will be paid in April 2020 under the PM KISAN Yojana.
  - **Help to Poor:** 20.40 crores PMJDY women account-holders would be given extra Rs 500 per month for next three months.
  - **Gas cylinders:** gas cylinders, free of cost, would be provided to 8 crore poor families for the next three months.
  - **Help to low wage earners in organised sectors:** 24% of monthly wages to be paid into PF accounts of wage-earners below Rs 15,000 per month in businesses having less than 100 workers, for next three months.
  - **Support for senior citizens (above 60 years), widows and Divyang:** Rs 1,000 to be paid during next three months.
  - **MNREGA:** wages would be increased by Rs 20 with effect from 1 April, 2020

**RBI's monetary Policy statement-amidst COVID-19:** Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee(MPC) has come out with its own measures to help deal with economic fallout of COVID-19 pandemic.

- **Repo Rate:** It is the rate at which the RBI lends money to the banks for a short term. It has been cut by 75 basis points (bps) from 5.15% to 4.40%.
- **Reverse Repo Rate:** It is the short term borrowing rate at which RBI borrows money from banks. It has been cut by 90 bps to 4%.
- **Moratorium on Repayments of Loans:** RBI has allowed banks to defer payment of Equated Monthly Installments (EMIs) on home, car, personal loans as well as credit card dues for three months.
- **Cash Reserve Ratio(CRR):** It refers to a certain percentage of total deposits the commercial banks are required to maintain in the form of cash reserves with the central bank. It has been cut to 3% from 4%.



- **Marginal Standing Facility(MSF) :** Marginal standing facility (MSF) enables the banks to borrow overnight at their discretion by dipping up to 2 per cent into the Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR). It has been decided to increase the limit of 2 per cent to 3 per cent with immediate effect.

**Additional Facts-Monetary Policy Committee(MPC):**

- It is a committee of the Reserve Bank of India which consists of six members with three nominated by the Union government and three representing the RBI.
- The primary objective of the monetary policy is to follow flexible inflation targeting i.e the target mandated by law is to ensure that retail inflation stays at 4% with a maximum limit of 6% and minimum of 2%.

**PM-CARES Fund:** Prime Minister has announced the constitution of the PM's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations(PM-CARES) fund.

**Facts:**

- It is a dedicated national fund with the primary objective of dealing with any kind of emergency or distress situation like posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Chairman:** Prime Minister
- **Members:** Defence Minister, Home Minister and Finance Minister.
- **Exemption:** The donations to this fund will be exempted from income tax under section 80(G).
- The contributions by the corporates will qualify as part of Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR) spending.

**PM's National Relief Fund (PMNRF):** The Railway Board has appealed to its employees to voluntarily donate a day's salary towards the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) to support the fight against the novel coronavirus.

**Facts:**

- **Established in:** 1948
- **Used for:** immediate relief to families of those killed in natural calamities like floods, cyclones and earthquakes, etc. and to the victims of the major accidents and riots
- **Headed by:** Prime Minister
- **Administration:** Administered on an Honorary basis by Joint Secretary to the Prime Minister as Secretary of the fund.
- **Features:**
  - Consists entirely of public contributions and does not get any budgetary support.
  - Recognized as a Trust under the Income Tax Act
  - Exempt under the Income Tax Act, 1961 under Section 10 and 139 for return purposes.

**MPLADS funds may be utilized for COVID-19:** The government has issued a circular granting one-time dispensation for utilizing funds under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) to address the challenges in the fight against COVID-19.

**Facts:**

- **Aim:** To provide funds to MPs to execute certain developmental projects to meet the urgent needs of their constituents. Ex-drinking water facilities, education, etc
- **Features**
  - Every MP is entitled a non-lapsable fund of Rs. 5 crore per annum
  - The implementation of the project is done by local authorities.
  - Elected Members of Rajya Sabha can recommend works in the state from where they have been elected.
  - Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country.
- **Scheme type:** MPLADS is a central sector scheme.
- **Implementation:** Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation

**National Food Security Act, 2013:** Cabinet has approved the supply of 2 kg extra subsidised food grains through the ration shops under the National Food Security Act, 2013.

**Facts:**

- **Nodal agency:** Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
- **Objective:** To provide food and nutritional security by ensuring access to an adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices.
- **Coverage:** 67% of the population (75% in rural areas and 50% in urban areas)
- **Allocation:** Eligible persons will be entitled to receive 5 Kgs of foodgrains per person per month at subsidised prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains.
- The existing Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) households which constitute the poorest of the poor receive 35 Kgs of foodgrains per household per month.
- Pregnant women and lactating mothers are entitled to a nutritious take home ration of 600 Calories and a maternity benefit of at least Rs 6,000 for six months.
- Children upto 14 years of age are also entitled to nutritious meals as per the prescribed nutritional standards.
- **Grievance Cell:** The act also contains provisions for setting up of grievance redressal mechanism at the District and State levels.

## 2. Global Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

**News:** The United Kingdom will be co-chairing the India led CDRI (Global Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure).

**Facts:**

- CRDI was launched by India at the UN Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in New York, US in 2019.
- **Aim:** To rapidly expand the development of resilient infrastructure and retrofit existing infrastructure for resilience, and to enable a measurable reduction in infrastructure losses.
- **Governance:** The Governing Council is the highest policy-making body of the CDRI. It is co-chaired by India and a representative of another national government nominated by rotation every two years.
- **Members:** As of March 2020, the CDRI comprises 15 member countries namely Afghanistan, Australia, Bhutan, Fiji, Germany, Italy, India, Japan, Mauritius, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom and United States.
- **Interim Secretariat:** So far there is no permanent secretariat, the interim secretariat is based in New Delhi, India.

## 3. Union Cabinet approves Scheme for Domestic Manufacturing of Medical Devices

**News:** Union Cabinet has approved the Domestic manufacturing of Medical Device Park Scheme.

**Facts:**

- **Aim:** To boost the domestic manufacturing of medical devices, reduce the imports and the cost of production.
- **Details:** The government has decided to set up four 'Medical Device Parks' and three 'Bulk Drug Parks' across the country for which it will provide incentives to states.
- **Funding:** It will give grants-in-aid to each state, up to Rs 100 crore for each 'Medical Device Park' and Rs 1,000 crore for each 'Bulk Drug Park' over the next five years.

**Additional Facts :**

Pharmaceutical raw materials include both active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) and excipients :

- APIs are bulk drugs that are pharmaceutically active and generate a desired pharmacological effect, whereas,
- Excipients are pharmacologically inactive substances that are generally used as a carrier of the API in the drug.

## 4. Cabinet okays three schemes for electronics manufacturing in India

**News:** Union Cabinet has approved three schemes to boost large-scale electronics manufacturing in India.

**Facts:**

- **Electronics Manufacturing Clusters(EMC2.0) Scheme:**
  - **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).



- **Aim:** To create world class infrastructure along with common facilities and amenities through setting up of Electronics Manufacturing Clusters(EMCs) and Common Facility Centers(CFCs).
- These centres would help in a) growth of the Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) sector b) development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem c) attract investments d) increase employment opportunities and e) tax revenues.
- **Scheme for Promotion of manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors(SPECS):**
  - **Aim:** To offer financial incentive of 25% of capital expenditure for the manufacturing of goods that constitute the supply chain of an electronic product.
- **Production Incentive Scheme (PLI) for Large Scale Electronics Manufacturing:**
  - **Aim:** To attract large investments in mobile phone manufacturing and specified electronic components, including assembly, testing, marking and packaging (ATMP) units.
  - **Details:** The government will offer an incentive of 4-6% on incremental sales of goods manufactured in India and is expected to create a total of 8 lakh jobs.

### 5. E-Learning Platforms

**News:** Union Human Resource Development(HRD) Minister has asked students to use the available digital e-Learning platforms during the period the educational institutions are closed as a precautionary measure against COVID-19.

**Facts:**

- **DIKSHA Portal:** It offers teachers, students and parents engaging learning material relevant to the prescribed school curriculum.
- **e-PATHSHALA:** It is a joint initiative of Ministry of HRD and NCERT to showcase and disseminate all educational e-resources including textbooks, audio, video, periodicals and a variety of other digital resources.
- **SWAYAM:** Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM) is an integrated platform for offering online courses, covering school (9th to 12th) to Postgraduate Level.
- **SWAYAM Prabha:** It is an initiative to provide 32 High Quality Educational Channels through DTH (Direct to Home) across the length and breadth of the country on a 24X7 basis.
- **National Digital Library of India(NDL):** It is a project to develop a framework of virtual repository of learning resources with a single-window search facility.

### 6. Initiatives for Gender Advancement and Equality in Academic and Research Institutions

**News:** The President has announced initiatives for gender advancement and equality in academic and research institutions on the National Science Day celebrations.

**Facts:**

- **Vigyan Jyoti Scheme:**
  - **Nodal ministry:** Ministry of Science & Technology (DST).

- **Coverage:** The programme covers girl students from grade 9 to 12.
- **Aim:** To create a level-playing field for the meritorious girls in high school to pursue Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics(STEM) in their higher education and become self-reliant.
- **GATI:**
  - GATI Stands for Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI).
  - **Aim:** To develop a comprehensive Charter and a framework for assessing Gender Equality in STEM.

## 7. National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill 2019

**News:** Rajya Sabha passed the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill 2019

**Facts:**

- **Objectives:** To ensure availability of adequate and high quality medical professionals, medical research, periodic assessment of medical institutions and an effective grievance redressal mechanism.
- **Key features:**
  - It provides for the establishment of the **National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM)**. The NCISM will have the following functions:
    - framing policies for regulating medical institutions and medical professionals
    - assessing the requirements of healthcare related human resources and infrastructure,
    - ensuring compliance by the State Medical Councils
    - ensuring coordination among the autonomous boards set up under the Bill.
  - **Autonomous Boards:** It sets up three autonomous boards under the supervision of the NCISM.
    - Board of Ayurveda and the Board of Unani, Siddha and Sowa-Rigpa
    - Medical Assessment and Rating Board for Indian System of Medicine
    - Ethics and Medical Registration Board.
  - **Advisory Council:** Setting up an Advisory Council for Indian System of Medicine.
  - **Entrance exam:** a uniform National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test for admission to undergraduate education in each of the disciplines.
- **Indian Systems of Medicine:** India has recognized six systems of medicine : Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Yoga, Naturopathy and Homoeopathy.

## *International Relations*

### 1. Virtual G20 Leaders Summit

**News:** A virtual G20 Summit was held under the presidency of Saudi Arabia in wake of the Coronavirus pandemic.

**Facts:**

- **Presidency:** Saudi Arabia is the first Arab nation to hold the G20 presidency.
- **Theme for the summit in Nov. 2020-** “Realising Opportunities of the 21st Century for All”.
- G20 is an informal group of 19 countries and the European Union
- It was founded in 1999 after the Asian financial crisis. After the 2008 Financial Crisis, the meeting has been held annually since 2010.

G20 members



**Additional Facts:**

- **G7:** It is an organisation made up of seven countries namely Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- **G4:** Consists of Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan which support each other's bids for permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council.
- **G77:** It is a coalition of 134 developing countries designed to promote its members' collective economic interests and create an enhanced joint negotiating capacity in the United Nations.

### 2. Kuril Islands

**News:** US authorities have put out tsunami warnings after an earthquake has struck Russia's Kuril Islands.

**Facts:**

- **Kuril Islands** is a volcanic archipelago which extends from the Japanese island of Hokkaido to the southern tip of Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula.
- It separates the Sea of Okhotsk from the north Pacific Ocean.
- It forms part of the 'Pacific Ring of Fire'.
- Its sovereignty is contested by Russia and Japan. The Islands are currently under Russian administration.



**Additional Facts:**

- The islands are resource rich. Its profitable fishing grounds and also has offshore reserves of oil and gas.

- The South Kuril Islands are known as Southern Kurils by Russia whereas Japan calls them Northern Territories.

### 3. SAARC Disaster Management Centre

**News:** The SAARC Disaster Management Centre launched a website for information related to the COVID-19 pandemic in the region.

**Facts:**

- **Aim:** To provide policy advice, technical support on system development, capacity building services and training for holistic management of disaster risk in the SAARC region.
- **Location:** SAARC Disaster Management Centre(SDMC-IU) has been set up at Gujarat Institute of Disaster Management (GIDM) Campus, Gujarat in 2017.

### 4. India joins Indian Ocean Commission as observer

**News:** India has joined the Indian Ocean Commission(IOC) as an observer state.

**Facts:**

- IOC is an intergovernmental organization institutionalized by the Victoria Agreement and HQ at Port Louis, Mauritius
- **Member States:** Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Réunion (an overseas region of France) and Seychelles.
- **Observer States:** China, Malta, European Union, International Organisation of La Francophonie(OIF) and now India.
- **Objectives of IOC:**
  - Political, economic, commercial and diplomatic cooperation
  - Sustainable development and cooperation in the field of agriculture, maritime fishing and the conservation of resources and ecosystems.



### 5. Greek Island of Lesbos

**News:** Greece has reinforced its sea and land borders to stop migrants crossing over from Turkey to reach Greek Island of Lesbos.

**Facts:**

**About Greek Island of Lesbos:**

- Lesbos is a Greek island located in the northeastern Aegean Sea.
- It is separated from Turkey by the narrow Mytilini Strait.



**Additional information - Aegean Sea:**

- The Aegean Sea is located between the nations of Turkey and Greece.
- It is connected to numerous waterways including the straits of Bosphorus and Dardanelles as well as the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara.

**6. U.S, Taliban sign peace deal**

**News:** The US and Taliban have signed a peace deal in Doha, the capital of Qatar.

**Facts:**

**Key provisions of the deal:**

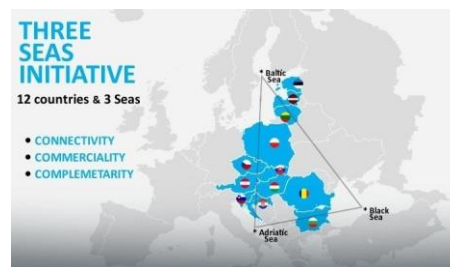
- **Troops Withdrawal:** Withdrawal of the United States troops from Afghanistan, based on the condition that Taliban fulfils its commitment.
- **Commitment:** by the Taliban to end support for U.S.-deemed terrorist organizations.
- **Communications:** channel between US and Taliban to support implementation of the agreement.
- **Confidence Building:** Exchange of prisoners between the Afghan government and the Taliban.
- **Political Roadmap:** Intra-party talks among Afghan government officials, opposition figures, civil society representatives and the Taliban to discuss a political road map for bringing an end to the war.

**7. Three Seas Initiative summit**

**News:** The Three Seas Initiative summit has been rescheduled due to the spread of coronavirus.

**Facts:**

- The Three Seas Initiative(3SI) is a forum that brings together Twelve European Union member states between the Adriatic Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea.
- **Members:** Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.
- **Aim:** To promote economic growth, security and a stronger and more cohesive Europe.

**Additional Facts-Adriatic Sea:**

- It is a part of the Mediterranean Sea positioned between the Italian Peninsula and the Balkan Peninsula.
- The countries that border the Adriatic Sea are Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Slovenia, and Montenegro.



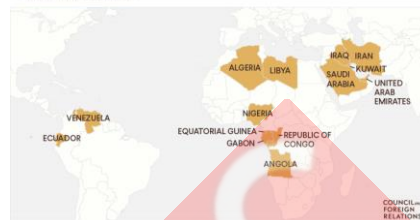
## 8. OPEC+

**News:** Saudi Arabia has decided to raise its crude oil production significantly above 10 million barrels per day (bpd) in April, after the collapse of the OPEC+ supply cut agreement with Russia.

**Facts:**

- The OPEC+ refers to the non-OPEC countries which export crude oil. These include Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan and Sudan.

OPEC Membership, 2019



**Additional Facts:**

**OPEC:**

- The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries(OPEC) is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization.
- It was created at the Baghdad Conference in 1960 by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. It has its headquarters in Vienna, Austria.
- **Aim:** to manage the supply of oil in an effort to set the price of oil on the world market and to avoid fluctuations

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## *Economy*

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### 1. MSME Sambandh and Udyam Sakhi Portal

**News:** Union minister for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) has urged all the female entrepreneurs to take maximum benefits from the MSME Sambandh and Udyam Sakhi Portal.

**Facts:**

- **MSME Sambandh:** The portal aims to help in monitoring the implementation of public procurement policy for micro and small enterprises.
- **Udyam Sakhi:** It aims to encourage women entrepreneurs by creating business models revolving around low-cost products and services to resolve social inequities.

**Additional Facts - Other Portals related to MSME:**

- **MSME Samadhan:** It empowers micro and small entrepreneurs across the country to directly register their cases relating to delayed payments.
- **MSME Sampark:** It is a digital platform wherein jobseekers (passed out trainees/students of MSME Technology Centres) and recruiters get connected.
- **Udyami Mitra Portal:** It was launched by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) to improve accessibility of credit and handholding services to MSMEs.

### 2. Shared economy at \$2 bn by end-2020

**News:** According to a recent report by Maple Capital Advisors, the Shared economy in India is estimated to be about a \$2 billion industry by the end of 2020.

**Facts - Shared Economy:**

- The sharing economy is an economic model defined as a peer-to-peer (P2P) based activity of acquiring, providing or sharing access to goods and services that is often facilitated by an Online platform.
- It includes segments such as co-working (Awfis, WeWork India), co-living (Stanza Living, OYO Life), shared mobility (Uber, Ola) and furniture rental (Furlenco, Rentomojo).

### 3. Long Term Repo Operation (LTRO)

**News:** The Reserve Bank of India has received ₹1.71 trillion in the third long-term repo operation (LTRO) conducted for an amount of Rs 25,000 crore.

**Facts:**

- LTRO is a mechanism to facilitate the transmission of monetary policy actions and to inject liquidity into the banking system to boost credit growth.
- **Details:** the central bank provides one-year to three-year money to banks at the prevailing repo rate accepting government securities with matching or higher tenure as the collateral.

- Usually, loans with higher maturity periods (here like 1 year and 3 year) will have higher interest rates compared to short term (repo) loans.
- The operations are being conducted on the Core Banking Solution (E-KUBER) platform.

#### **Additional Facts - LTRO vs LAF & MSF :**

RBI's current windows of liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) and marginal standing facility (MSF) offer banks money for their immediate needs ranging from 1-28 days whereas the LTRO supplies them with liquidity for their 1- to 3-year needs.

#### **Significance of LTRO:**

- Enhance liquidity in the banking system by Rs 1 lakh crore.
- It is expected to bring down short-term rates and also boost investment in corporate bonds.
- Bring down the cost of funds for banks without effectively cutting deposit rates.
- Encourage banks to push transmission of already announced interest rate cuts.

#### **4. Explained:AT-1 bonds**

**News:** The Reserve Bank of India(RBI) reconstruction plan for Yes Bank has put at risk nearly Rs 9,000 crore worth of AT-1 bonds.

#### **Facts:**

- Additional tier-1 bonds are a type of unsecured, perpetual bonds that banks issue to shore up their core capital base to meet the Basel-III norms.
- **Regulator:** The Reserve Bank of India(RBI) is the regulator of AT-1 bonds.
- Bonds are perpetual and carry no maturity date, i.e investors cannot return these bonds to the issuing bank and get the money. This means there is no put option available to its holders.
- Banks issuing AT-1 bonds can skip interest payouts for a particular year or even reduce the bonds face value provided their capital ratios fall below certain threshold levels.
- If the RBI feels that a bank is on the brink of collapse and needs a rescue, it can simply ask the bank to cancel its outstanding AT-1 bonds without consulting its investors.

#### **5. The Mineral Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020**

**News:** Parliament gave its approval to the Mineral Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2020

#### **Facts:**

- The bill amends the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act) and the Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 (CMSP Act).
- **Liberalised Usage:** The bill allows companies to carry on coal mining operations for their own consumption, sale or for any other purposes, as may be specified by the central government.



- **Participation:** It allows companies with no prior coal mining experience in India to participate in the auction of coal and lignite blocks.
- **License:** The bill provides for a composite type of license called prospecting license-cum-mining lease, instead for separate licenses.
- **Advance action for auction:** The state governments can take advance action for auction of a mining lease before its expiry.
- **Transfer of statutory clearances:** The bill provides for extension of various approvals, licences of previous lessee to the successful bidder for 2-year period.
- **Prior approval from the central government:** will not be required by the state government in granting licenses for coal and lignite, in certain cases.

### 6. Female Labour-force in India Down from 34% to 24%: UN Study

**News:** United Nations Global Compact(UNGC) has released a study on women's participation in India's labour force.

**Facts:**

- India is the only country among the 153 surveyed countries where the economic gender gap is larger than the political gap.
- Female labour-force participation in India has declined from 34% in 2006 to 24.8% in 2020.
- Raising women's participation in the labour force to the same level as men can boost India's GDP by 27%.

**Additional Facts- UNGC:**

- The United Nations Global Compact is a non-binding United Nations pact formed in 2000.
- **Aim:** to encourage companies worldwide to adopt sustainable and socially responsible policies based on 10 principles categorised into human rights, anti-corruption, environment and labour.

### 7. Virtual currency- Supreme Court verdict

**News:** The Supreme Court has set aside the 2018 circular of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on virtual currencies on grounds of proportionality.

**Facts:**

- **Legal Status of Virtual Currencies in India:**
  - It does not have the status of a legal tender.
  - In 2018, RBI prohibited financial institutions from providing services in relation to virtual currencies.
- **Supreme Court Judgement on Virtual Currency**
  - Virtual currencies are very much capable of performing some of the functions of actual and real currency.

- RBI 2018 directive failed on the five-prong test to check proportionality. Proportionality test include:
  - Direct and immediate impact upon fundamental rights
  - The larger public interest sought to be ensured;
  - Necessity to restrict citizens' freedom;
  - Inherent harmful nature of the act prohibited or its capacity to be harmful to the general public;
  - The possibility of achieving the same object by imposing a less drastic restraint.

#### Additional Facts - Virtual Currencies:

- They are digitally tradable form of value, which can be used as a medium of exchange or acts as a store of value or a unit of account.
- **Cryptocurrency:** is a specific type of virtual currency, which is decentralised and protected by cryptographic encryption techniques. Example: Bitcoins, Ethereum, Ripple, Petro (by Venezuela govt) and Alber (By UAE and Saudi Arabia).
- **Blockchain Technology:** A Blockchain is a digital, immutable, distributed ledger that chronologically records transactions in near real time. It is managed by a cluster of computers not owned by any single entity; therefore, it is decentralized.
- **Legal Tender:** is the legally recognized money within a given political jurisdiction. Legal tender laws effectively prevent the use of anything other than the existing legal tender for economic transactions.

#### 8. Central Government rolls out LLP settlement scheme

**News:** The Centre has introduced a new scheme named Limited Liability Partnership(LLP) Settlement Scheme 2020.

#### **Facts:**

- It aims to help non-compliant LLP firms turn compliant and enable ease of doing business for such entities.
- **Details:** The Government provides a one-time relaxation in additional fee to the defaulting LLPs by allowing filing of pending documents and helping them serve as a compliant LLP in future.

#### Additional Facts - Limited Liability Partnership(LLP):

- LLP is an alternative corporate business form that gives the benefits of limited liability of a company and the flexibility of a partnership.
- They are governed under the limited liability partnership act of 2008 with the Corporate Affairs Ministry implementing the Act.

<i>LLP -Limited Liability Partnership</i>	<i>Corporate Company</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Governed under the limited liability partnership act of 2008</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● regulated under the Companies Act, 1956</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More flexibility and lesser compliance regulatory laws (land/labour/contract/tax etc)</li> <li>• Liability of the partner is limited to his agreed contribution.</li> <li>• Internal governance limited by the contractual agreement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lesser flexibility and more compliance of regulatory laws (land/labour/contract/tax etc)</li> <li>• every partner is liable jointly with all the other partners for all acts of the firm done.</li> <li>• Internal governance based on regulations mentioned in companies act.</li> </ul>
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### 9. RBI releases new guidelines for payment aggregators

**News:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released guidelines for regulating activities of Payment Aggregators(PAs) and Payment Gateways(PGs) in the country.

#### **Facts:**

- Reserve Bank of India(RBI) has defined Payment Gateways and Payment Aggregators as those entities who:
  - provide technology infrastructure to route and / or facilitate processing of an online payment transaction and perform other functions without actually handling the funds.
  - facilitate e-commerce sites and merchants to accept various payment instruments from the customers for completion of their payment without the need for merchants to create a separate payment system of their own.

#### **Key Guidelines:**

- Payment Aggregators (PA) should have a minimum net worth of ₹15 crore at the time of application for authorisation and ₹25 crore has to be maintained at all times thereafter.
- Non-bank PAs will require authorisation from the RBI under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 (PSSA).
- They should be a company incorporated in India under the Companies Act,1956 / 2013.
- PAs need to check their merchant customers are not involved in selling of prohibited or fake items and should also set up designated nodal offices to deal with customer grievances.



#### **Additional Facts:**

- Payment Aggregators facilitate e-commerce sites and merchants in accepting payment from the customers without the need for merchants to create a separate payment integration system of their own. Example: Billdesk.
- Payment Gateways are entities that provide technology infrastructure to route and facilitate processing of an online payment.

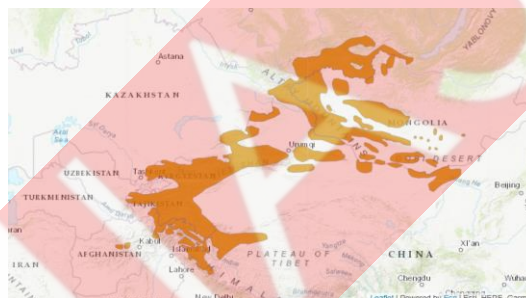
## *Environment*

### 1. Himalayan Ibex a distinct species

**News:** A recent study by scientists of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has proved that Himalayan Ibex, is a distinct species from the Siberian Ibex. The study was funded through the National Mission on Himalayan Studies

**Facts:**

- Siberian Ibex is a species of wild goat.
- **Distribution:** mountain ranges of central and northeastern Afghanistan, China, north India (Himalayas of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh), eastern Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, northeastern Uzbekistan, northern Pakistan, Russia, and Tajikistan.
- **IUCN Status:** Least Concern



**Additional Facts- National Mission on Himalayan Studies:**

- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
- **Aim:** Addressing the key issues relating to conservation and sustainable management of natural resources in Indian Himalayan Region

### 2. Gaur back in Valmiki Reserve after increase in grassland cover

**News:** According to a report, Gaur (*Bos Gaurus*) has returned to Bihar's Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR) due to an increase in grassland cover.

**Facts:**

**About Gaur (Indian Bison):**

- The gaur also called the Indian bison is the largest extant bovine. It is native to South Asia and Southeast Asia.
- The local names of the Gaur are a) Seladang — Malaysia b) Pyoung — Myanmar and c) Gayal or mithun — domesticated form of gaur.
- It is the State animal of Goa.
- Listed as Vulnerable under IUCN Red List.
- CITES- Appendix I
- Threats: a) Hunting for consumption b) Loss of suitable habitat and c) contract diseases transmitted by domestic cattle.

**About Valmiki Tiger Reserve:**

- Valmiki National Park, Tiger Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary is located at the India-Nepal border in the West Champaran district of Bihar on the bank of river Gandak.
- It is the only National park and Tiger Reserve of Bihar.

**3. Red Panda**

**News:** According to a TRAFFIC report, the Wildlife Trade of Red Panda has reduced significantly across India, Bhutan and Nepal.

**Facts:**

- The report has recommended cooperation through the use of multi-government platforms like SAWEN (South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network).

**About Red Panda:**

- The Red Panda (*Ailurus fulgens*) is a mammal native to the eastern Himalayas and southwestern China.
- In India, it is found in Sikkim, western Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling district of West Bengal and parts of Meghalaya. It is also the state animal of Sikkim.
- IUCN Red List: Endangered
- Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I
- CITES: Appendix I
- Threats: a) Habitat loss and fragmentation b) Hunting for meat and Trade c) Natural disasters among others.

**Additional Facts :****About South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network(SAWEN):**

- It is an intergovernmental wildlife law enforcement support body of South Asian countries namely - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- It was launched in 2011 with its Secretariat based in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- **Aim:** To work as a strong regional body for combating wildlife crimes by attempting common goals and approaches for combating illegal trade in the region.

**About TRAFFIC:**

- TRAFFIC is a Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network established in 1976 jointly by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- It is a leading non-governmental organisation working globally on trade in wild animals and plants in the context of both biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.



#### 4. Near-extinct hard ground swamp deer see revival in Kanha

**News:** The population of Hard ground swamp deer (Barasingha) has increased to 800 in the Kanha National park and Tiger Reserve.

**Facts:**

**Barasingha:**

- It is the state animal of Madhya Pradesh
- IUCN Status: Vulnerable

**Kanha National park and Tiger Reserve**

- It is located on the Maikal range of the Satpura hills, and is spread over Mandla and Balaghat districts of Madhya Pradesh.
- It is first tiger reserve in India to officially introduce a mascot, Bhoorsingh the Barasingha

**Additional Facts :** There are three subspecies of swamp deer found in the Indian Subcontinent:

- The western swamp deer found in Nepal,
- southern swamp deer found in central and north India
- eastern swamp deer found in the Kaziranga and Dudhwa National Parks.



#### 5. Black carbon levels spike at Himalayan glaciers

**News:** According to a study by scientists at the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG), black carbon concentrations near the Gangotri glacier rose 400 times in summer due to forest fires and stubble burning from agricultural waste, and triggered glacial melt

**Facts:**

**Black Carbon**

- Black carbon results from the incomplete combustion of fossil fuels and biomass.
- It is short-lived and remains in the atmosphere only for days to weeks before it descends as rain or snow.

**Concern:**

- Black carbon absorbs solar energy and warms the atmosphere.
- When it falls to earth with precipitation, it darkens the surface of snow and ice, reducing their albedo (the reflecting power of a surface), warming the snow, resulting in faster glacial melt.

**Additional Facts :**

**Other types of Carbon:**

1. **Blue Carbon:** It refers to coastal, aquatic and marine carbon sinks held by vegetation, marine organisms and sediments.
2. **Green Carbon:** It is the carbon that is stored in terrestrial ecosystems such as forests, pastures and soils.
3. **Brown Carbon:** It is a light-absorbing particle in the Earth's atmosphere that has the unique characteristics of both cooling the planet's surface and warming its atmosphere.

### Gangotri Glacier

- Gangotri Glacier is located in Uttarkashi District, Uttarakhand.
- Gaumukh, the snout of the Gangotri glacier is the source of river Bhagirathi, one of the important tributary of River Ganga

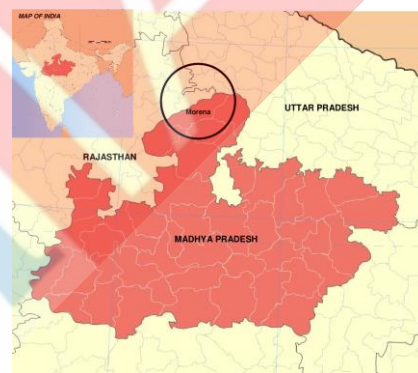
### 6. Centre declares National Chambal Sanctuary in MP as eco-sensitive zone

**News:** The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has declared the National Chambal Sanctuary as an eco-sensitive zone (ESZ). It has also directed the Madhya Pradesh government to prepare a Zonal Master Plan to provide for conservation and management of the ecology and environment.

#### Facts:

#### National Chambal Sanctuary

- It is located on the Chambal River near the tripoint of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. It spreads across Sheopur, Morena and Bhind districts of Madhya Pradesh.
- It is home to Gharial (critically endangered), Gangetic river dolphin (Endangered) and red crowned roofed turtle (critically endangered)



#### Eco-sensitive zone:

- It is an area notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC), around Protected Areas, National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- Notifications declaring areas as ESZ are issued under the Environment (Protection) Act 1986.
- The main aim behind ESZs is to regulate certain activities so as to minimise the negative impacts of such activities on the fragile ecosystem surrounding the protected areas.

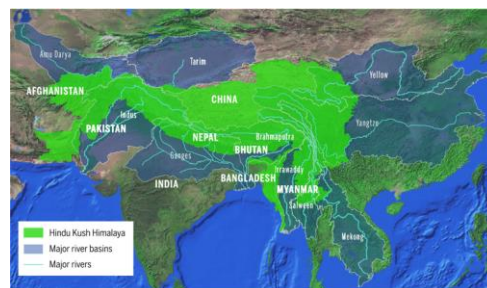
### 7. Water crisis looms large in Himalayan regions, finds study

**News:** According to a survey, published in the journal Water Policy, eight towns in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region of Bangladesh, Nepal, India and Pakistan were nearly 20%-70% deficient in their water supply.

#### Facts:

#### Key takeaways:

- **Major Challenges faced:** changing water budgets, increasing demand for water and water scarcity.
- **Reasons for water crisis:** poor water governance, lack of urban planning, poor tourism management during peak season, and climate-related risks and challenges



- **Solutions:** Holistic water management approach that includes springshed management and planned adaptation

#### **Additional Facts :**

**The Hindu Kush and Himalayan Range (HKH):** It is famously known as the earth's "third pole" as it forms the largest area of permanent ice cover outside of the North and South Poles. It spans Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan

#### **8. Sukhna lake of Chandigarh is legal entity**

**News:** The Punjab and Haryana High Court has declared Sukhna Lake a legal entity and has ordered demolition of legal/unauthorised constructions in its catchment area.

#### **Facts:**

#### **Key takeaways from the Judgement:**

- Sukhna Lake will now be a legal entity for its survival, preservation and conservation.
- The court also declared all citizens of Chandigarh as loco parentis (in the place of a parent) to save the lake from extinction.
- The court also invoked the Polluter pays principle by saying that the States should have taken precautionary measures to save the catchment of Sukhna lake.

**About Living Entity:** A legal entity means an entity which acts like a natural person but only through a designated person whose acts are processed within the ambit of law.

#### **Additional Facts :**

#### **About Sukhna Lake:**

- Sukhna Lake in Chandigarh is a reservoir at the foothills (Shivalik hills) of the Himalayas.
- This lake was created in 1958 by Le Corbusier and the Chief Engineer P L Verma by damming the Sukhna Choe, a seasonal stream coming down from the Shivalik Hills.
- The lake is a sanctuary for many exotic migratory birds like the Siberian duck, storks and cranes during the winter months.
- The lake has been declared as a protected national wetland by the Government of India.

#### **About Polluter Pays Principle:**

- The principle is enacted to make the party responsible for producing pollution responsible for paying for the damage done to the natural environment.
- In international environmental law it is mentioned under the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development of 1992.



### 9. New environment impact norm cuts time for public hearing

**News:** Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has released draft EIA notification.

**Facts:**

- It proposes an update to Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification of 2006
- The current EIA specifies a “minimum of 30 days” for people to respond. The draft EIA notification gives a “minimum of 20 days” of notice period.
- It also requires that the public-hearing process be wrapped up in 40 days, as opposed to the existing norm of 45 days.

**Additional Information - EIA:**

- EIA is a process which studies all aspects of the environment and seeks to anticipate the impact (positive and/or negative) of a proposed project or development on the environment.
- EIA is mandatory under the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986 for 29 categories of developmental activities involving investments of Rs. 50 crores and above.
- Objectives:
  - to identify, predict and evaluate the economic, environmental and social impact of development activities
  - to provide information on the environmental consequences for decision making and
  - to promote environmentally sound and sustainable development through the identification of appropriate alternatives and mitigation measures.

### 10. Protecting peatlands can help attain climate goals

**News:** According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations released a report titled “Peatland mapping and monitoring”.

**Facts :**

**Key takeaways from the report**

- Peatlands cover only 3% of Earth’s surface. However, their degradation due to drainage, fire, agricultural use and forestry can trigger release of the stored carbon in a few decades.
- Peatlands contain 30 per cent of the world’s soil carbon. When drained, these emit greenhouse gases, contributing up to one gigaton of emissions per year through oxidation.

**Additional Facts :**

- **Peatlands:**
  - It is a terrestrial wetland ecosystem in which the production of organic matter exceeds its decomposition and a net accumulation of peat results.
  - The total area globally is around 4 million km<sup>2</sup> making them 70% of natural freshwater wetland or 3% of the Earth’s land surface.

- **Brazzaville Declaration:**

- **Signed:** 2018
- **Aim:** To implement coordination and cooperation between different government sectors to protect the benefits provided by peatland ecosystems.

### 11. Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ)

**News:** INCOIS has said that the Oceansat Satellite data are used to prepare the Potential Fishing Zone (PFZ) advisories on the potential rich fishing areas and provide to the sea faring fishermen in all states.

**Facts :**

**About Potential Fishing Zone(PFZ):**

- Potential fishing zones (PFZ's) are those regions where the fishes aggregate due to an abundance of food and they are demarcated by tracing those regions in the ocean.
- These zones are identified using chlorophyll concentration (Chl) obtained from ISRO's Oceansat-2 satellite and the sea surface temperature from National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA / USA satellites).

**About Oceansat-2:**

- OceanSat-2 was launched in 2009 by the Indian Space Research Organization(ISRO) to provide service continuity for Oceansat-1.
- **Objectives:** a) To study surface winds and ocean surface strata, b) observation of chlorophyll concentrations, c) monitoring of phytoplankton blooms d) study of atmospheric aerosols and suspended sediments in the water.

**Additional Facts :**

**About INCOIS:**

- Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services(INCOIS) is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES).
- It is located in Hyderabad & was established in 1999 under the MoES and is a unit of the Earth System Science Organization (ESSO).
- It is mandated to provide the best possible ocean information and advisory services to society, industry, government agencies and the scientific community.

### 12. GreenCo Rating System

**News:** GreenCo Rating has been acknowledged in India's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) document submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in 2015.

**Facts :**

**About GreenCo Rating:**

- GreenCo Rating has been developed by the Confederation of Indian Industry(CII).

- **Aim:** To facilitate companies to make a substantial improvement in their environmental performance thereby saving both natural and financial resources.
- Under this, companies are evaluated on major environmental areas including- energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation, waste management, resource conservation, green supply chain and life cycle assessment.

#### **Additional Facts :**

##### **About CII:**

- Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led and industry-managed organization founded in 1895.
- It works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering industry, Government and civil society, through advisory and consultative processes.

### 13. Krishna Raja Sagar (KRS) Dam

**News:** The water level in the Krishna Raja Sagar (KRS) Dam in Karnataka is coming down due to increase in the evaporation rate and the decrease in the inflows as a result of summer.

#### **Facts :**

##### **About Krishna Raja Sagar Dam:**

- The Krishna Raja Sagar Dam was built across river Cauvery in 1932. It is named for the then ruler of the Mysore Kingdom, Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV.
- The dam is the main source of drinking water for the Mysore city and almost the whole of Bangalore.
- Further, the water is also used as an important source of water in the state of Tamil Nadu.



#### **Additional Facts :**

##### **About Cauvery River:**

- The Cauvery River originates in Karnataka's Kodagu district flows into Tamil Nadu and reaches the Bay of Bengal at Poompuhar.
- The parts of three Indian states namely Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka and the Union Territory of Puducherry lie in the Cauvery basin.

### 14. National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA)

**News:** The Government of India is implementing programmes such as National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) to tackle the impact of climate change on agriculture.

**Facts:****About NICRA:**

- It was launched by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in 2011.
- **Aim:** To enhance resilience of Indian agriculture to climate change and climate vulnerability through strategic research and technology demonstration.
- The research on adaptation and mitigation covers crops, livestock, fisheries and natural resource management.
- It consists of four components namely a) Strategic Research b) Technology Demonstration c) Capacity Building and d) Sponsored or Competitive Grants.

**Additional Facts :****About ICAR:**

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is an autonomous organisation under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- It is the apex body for coordinating, guiding and managing research and education in agriculture including horticulture, fisheries and animal sciences in the entire country.

**15. Malabar Civet**

**News:** Malabar Civet was found on the streets of Kerala in the backdrop of lockdown due to Coronavirus.

**Facts:**

- Malabar Civet is a nocturnal and elusive animal. It is endemic to Western Ghats of India.
- **IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered.
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I
- **CITES:** Appendix III
- **Threats:** Habitat destruction and Hunting.

**16. System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR)**

**News:** According to the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (Safar), the impact of the lockdown has resulted in a drop in PM2.5 by 30% in Delhi and by 15% in Ahmedabad and Pune.

**Facts:**

- SAFAR is a system to measure the air quality of a metropolitan city. It measures the overall pollution level and the location-specific air quality of the city.
- **Launched by:** Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)
- **Developed by:** Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune
- **Operationalized by:** India Meteorological Department (IMD).
- **Cities covered:** Delhi, Pune, Mumbai and Ahmedabad

- **Information provided:**

- Air quality forecast, 1-3 days in advance (Pollutants measured: PM2.5, PM10, Ozone, Carbon Monoxide (CO), Nitrogen Oxides (NOx), Sulfur Dioxide (SO2), Benzene, Toluene, Xylene, and Mercury)
- Weather forecast, 1-3 days in advance
- Location-specific UV index information
- Emission scenario

**Additional Facts:**

**Air Quality Index (AQI):**

- The AQI classifies air quality of a day considering criteria pollutants through colour codes and air quality descriptor. Further, it also links air quality with likely human health impacts.
- Measures eight major pollutants: particulate matter (PM 10 and PM 2.5), nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone, carbon monoxide, ammonia and lead.

**17. Star tortoise, otters get higher protection at CITES**

**News:** India's proposal to upgrade the protection of star tortoises, the smooth-coated otter and small-clawed otters to Appendix I in CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species on Wild Fauna and Flora) have been approved.

**Facts:**

- These species have been listed under Appendix I of CITES. There will be a complete international ban enforced on their trade.
- Indian Star Tortoise Smooth-coated Otter and small clawed otter are listed as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red list.

**Additional Facts - CITES:**

- CITES is an international agreement between governments. It aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.
  - Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances.
  - Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival.
  - Appendix III contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade.



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## Science and Technology

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### 1. New Hub Under National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber Physical Systems

**News:** Department of Science and Technology (DST) has decided to establish a Technology Innovation Hub(TIH) at IIT Mandi under the National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS).

**Facts:**

**Aim of the Hub :** To focus on human-computer interaction(HCI) research where projects will focus on design and development of computer technology (interfaces) and the study of interaction between humans(users) and computers.

**About NM-ICPS:**

- Launched in 2018 by the Department of Science & Technology for a period of five years.
- **Aim:** To create a seamless ecosystem for CPS by coordinating and integrating nationwide efforts encompassing knowledge generation, human resource development, research, technology, innovation and commercialization.
- Under this, Technology Innovation Hubs (TIH), Application Innovation Hubs(AIH) and Technology Translation Research Parks(TTRP) will be established.
- These hubs will connect to Academics, Industry, Central Ministries and State Government in developing solutions at reputed academic, R&D and other organizations across the country in a hub and spoke model.

**Additional Facts :**

**About Cyber Physical Systems(CPS):**

- Cyber Physical Systems(CPS) are a new class of engineered systems that integrate computation and physical processes in a dynamic environment.
- It encompasses technology areas of Cybernetics, Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, Artificial Intelligence (AI) among others.
- The potential applications are a) Driverless cars that communicate securely with each other on smart roads  
b) Sensors in the home to detect changing health conditions among others.

### 2. Commercial Cord Blood Banking

**News:** Recently, there has been growing concern regarding the aggressively promoted concept of cord blood banking.

**Facts:**

**About Cord Blood Banking:**

- **Cord Blood :** Cord blood is the blood from the baby that is left in the umbilical cord and placenta after birth. It contains special cells called hematopoietic stem cells that can be used to treat some types of diseases.

- **Cord Blood Banking :** Cord blood banking is the process of collecting the cord blood and extracting and cryogenically freezing its stem cells and other cells of the immune system for potential future medical use.

#### Additional Facts :

**About Stem Cells:** Stem cells are special human cells that have the ability to develop into many different cell types from muscle cells to brain cells. In some cases, they also have the ability to repair damaged tissue.

#### Types of Stem Cells:

- **Embryonic stem cells:** Embryonic stem cells supply new cells for an embryo as it grows and develops into a baby. These stem cells are said to be pluripotent which means they can change into any cell in the body.
- **Adult Stem Cells:** Adult stem cells supply new cells as an organism grows and to replace cells that get damaged. They are said to be multipotent which means they can only change into some cells in the body not any cell.
- **Induced pluripotent stem cells:**
  - Induced pluripotent stem cells or 'iPS cells', are stem cells that scientists make in the laboratory.
  - 'Induced' means that they are made in the lab by taking normal adult cells, like skin or blood cells, and reprogramming them to become stem cells. Just like embryonic stem cells, they are pluripotent so they can develop into any cell type.

### 3. Bone Ossification Test

**News:** In State of Madhya Pradesh v. Anoop Singh, the Delhi High court held that the ossification test is not the sole criteria for determination of age.

#### Facts:

- **Bone ossification or osteogenesis:** It is the process of bone formation. It begins about the third month of fetal life in humans and is completed by the age of 25 years.
- **Bone Ossification Test:** It is the primary test for age determination. This test only tells the estimated age of a person and not the exact age.

### 4. CRISPR (CaS9)-The Gene Editing Tool used to treat blindness for the first time

**News:** A person with a genetic condition that causes blindness has become the first to receive a CRISPR–Cas9 gene therapy administered directly into their body.

#### Facts:

#### CRISPR (CaS9)

- It stands for Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats (CRISPR)
- It is a gene editing technology, which replicates natural defence mechanisms in bacteria to fight virus attacks, using a special protein called Cas9.
- The technology behaves like a cut-and-paste mechanism on DNA strands that contain genetic information.

- The specific location of the genetic codes that need to be changed, or “edited”, is identified on the DNA strand and then using the Cas9 protein, which acts like a pair of scissors, that location is cut off from the strand. A DNA strand, when broken, has a natural tendency to repair itself.
- Scientists intervene during this an auto-repair process, supplying the desired sequence of genetic codes that binds itself with the broken DNA strand.

**Additional Fact :**

**Gene Editing:** It is the deliberate alteration of a selected DNA sequence in a living cell. It involves editing an organism’s DNA by altering, removing or adding nucleotides to the genome.

**5. Explained: WHO raises global risk of coronavirus to ‘very high’, what does this mean**

**News:** The World Health Organization has increased the assessment of the risk of spread and risk of the impact of the coronavirus from high to very high at the global level.

**Facts:**

**About WHO Assessment:**

- The World Health Organization(WHO) has prepared a manual to guide the rapid risk assessment of acute public health risks.
- The manual characterises risk of spread and impact of a disease on a scale that ranges from “low risk” to “very high” level of risk.

**Types of Characteristics:**

- **Low Risk:** Managed according to standard response protocols, routine control programmes and regulation (e.g. monitoring through routine surveillance systems)”.
- **Moderate Risk:** Roles and responsibility for the response must be specified. Specific monitoring or control measures required (e.g. enhanced surveillance, additional vaccination campaigns)”.
- **High Risk:** Senior management attention needed: there may be a need to establish command and control structures; a range of additional control measures will be required some of which may have significant consequences.
- **Very High Risk:** Immediate response required even if the event is reported out of normal working hours. Immediate senior management attention needed; the implementation of control measures with serious consequences is highly likely.

**6. Huntington Disease**

**News:** Recently, the National Centre for Cell Science has found that the pathogenic protein called Huntingtin Protein causes a decrease in overall protein production.

**About Huntington disease:**

- Huntington's disease is an inherited genetic disease that causes the progressive breakdown (degeneration) of nerve cells in the brain.



- It is caused by a mutation in a gene called 'HTT' which is involved in the production of a protein called huntington.

#### Symptoms:

- The symptoms of Huntington's disease usually develop between ages 30 and 50 but they can appear at an early as well as late age.
- The disease has a broad impact on a person's functional abilities and usually results in movement, thinking (cognitive) and psychiatric disorders.

#### Treatment:

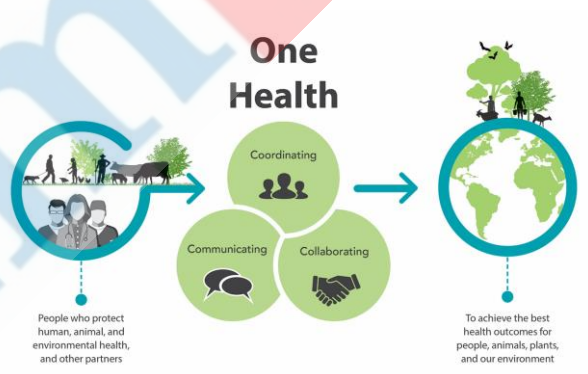
- There is currently no cure for Huntington's disease and no way to slow or stop the brain changes it causes. Treatments focus on managing symptoms.

### 7. One Health concept

**News:** Recently, the concept of 'One Health' is gaining importance as most of the contagious diseases affecting humans are zoonotic (animal to man origin) in nature.

#### Facts :

**About One Health Concept:** One Health is a collaborative, multisectoral approach working at the local, national, and global levels with the goal of achieving optimal health outcomes recognizing the interconnection between people, animals, plants and their shared environment.



**Significance of the model:** It can facilitate an interdisciplinary approach in disease control so as to control emerging and existing zoonotic diseases.

#### Additional Facts :

**About Zoonotic diseases:** The diseases which spillover from animals to humans are referred to as zoonotic diseases. They represent more than 60% of emerging infectious diseases worldwide.

### 8. What is community transmission?

**News:** Recently, the government has said that there has been no community transmission of COVID-19 in India as the coronavirus pandemic spreads around the world.

#### Facts :

#### About Community Transmission:

- Community transmission happens when a patient who is not exposed to anyone known to be infected and has not travelled to countries in which the virus is circulating tests positive for infection.

- Under this, contact tracing is inadequate in containing the disease. This is because a person irrespective of whether she or he has been exposed to an already infected person or have travelled to affected countries remains vulnerable.

#### About Contract Tracing:

- Contact tracing means when a case of infection is detected each individual with whom the patient has come in contact is closely monitored. If necessary, these individuals can be kept in isolation to prevent the infection from spreading further.

### 9. Explained: What is sepsis

**News:** Recently, many coronavirus patients have died of sepsis after the body's immune system goes into overdrive.

#### About Sepsis:

- Sepsis is a life-threatening organ dysfunction caused by the body's immune system overreacting in response to an infection. This overactive, toxic response can lead to tissue damage, multiple organ failure and death.

#### Causes:

- It can be triggered by a variety of pathogens such as Viruses, bacteria, fungi or parasites. The causes of sepsis are usually pneumonia, wound infections, urinary tract infections or infections in the abdominal cavity.
- Other viruses that are highly infectious such as coronaviruses, Ebola and yellow fever viruses, dengue, swine flu or bird flu viruses can also cause sepsis.

#### Symptoms:

- Drop in blood pressure with a simultaneous rise in heart rate, fever, rapid, heavy breathing, an unusually strong feeling of illness and sudden confusion.

#### Treatment:

- When diagnosed, sepsis is immediately treated as an emergency. The blood is examined, a broad-spectrum antibiotic is administered, and sufficient blood circulation and ventilation are ensured.
- As a precautionary measure, many sepsis patients are protectionally incubated which means put into an artificial coma.

### 10. Explained: Herd immunity

**News:** Recently, the UK government has announced that it is aiming to achieve herd immunity as a way of tackling COVID-19.

#### Facts :

#### About Herd Immunity:

- Herd immunity is when a large number of people are vaccinated against a disease, lowering the chances of others being infected by it.
- However, this type of immunity is usually viewed as a preventive strategy in vaccination programmes.

- Since, we don't have a vaccine for COVID-19 – achieving herd immunity would require a significant proportion of the population to be infected and recover from COVID-19.
- This will allow us to retain an immunological memory of the disease that enables us to fight off that same disease in the future.

### 11. Coronavirus: Stage by stage in a pandemic

**News:** Coronavirus pandemic

**Facts:**

**Pandemic:** It is an epidemic occurring worldwide or over a very wide area crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people. Epidemic is an event in which a disease is actively spreading. Usually, this is an outbreak that has grown out of control but is often within one country or location

**Stages:**

- **Stage 1:** Disease epidemic takes the form of a pandemic; cases are imported into a country in which the infection did not originate.
- **Stage 2- Local transmission:** the source of the infection is from within a particular area and the trajectory the virus has taken from one person to the next is clearly established.
- **Stage 3- Community Transmission:** the virus is now circulating in the community, and can infect people with no history either of travel to affected areas or of contact with an infected person

### 12. COVID-19 News related to Science and Technology:

**Drugs in News:** The World Health Organization (WHO) announced a large global trial, called **SOLIDARITY** which will study, test four most promising drugs, and develop an antidote against coronavirus. The drugs include:

1. **Remdesivir:** An antiviral compound that was widely used to combat Ebola
2. **Chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine:** used to treat patients suffering from malaria.
3. **Ritonavir and lopinavir:** combination of the drug used to halt progress of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
4. **Ritonavir/lopinavir and interferon-beta:** Combines the two antivirals with interferon-beta, a molecule involved in regulating inflammation in the body

**Hydroxychloroquine:** The government has notified hydroxychloroquine, an anti-malarial drug, under Schedule-H1 to regulate and restrict the sale and distribution of the drug.

**Facts:**

**Classification of Drugs in India:** The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, provides for classification of drugs into different schedules.

Schedule	Features
Schedule H1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aims to check to check the indiscriminate use of antibiotics, anti-TB and some other drugs.</li> <li>● Cannot be sold without a valid prescription.</li> <li>● Package of the drugs has mandatory warning printed in a box with a red colour border.</li> </ul>
Schedule H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cannot be sold without a valid prescription.</li> <li>● Labels of any Schedule H drug must display the text "Rx" on the top left corner of the label</li> </ul>
Schedule X	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Labels of any Schedule X drug must display the text "XRx" on the top left corner of the label.</li> <li>● Includes narcotic and psychotropic substances-based drugs.</li> <li>● Cannot be sold without a valid prescription.</li> <li>● Drug retailer has to preserve the copy of prescription for two years</li> </ul>

#### Tests in News:

1. **Genetic test:** It is conducted on a swab collected from the back of the throat, a liquid sample from the lower respiratory tract, or a simple saliva sample.
2. **Serological Test/Antibody Testing:** It is a blood test to detect the presence of antibodies against a microorganism. These tests help detect and trace past infections while genetic tests can only identify infections that are active. They are relatively cheaper than genetic tests.

**Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction(RT-PCR):** The Indian Council of Medical Research(ICMR) has said the designated labs will use the conventional real-time Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction(PCR) test to detect the novel coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

#### Facts PCR Test:

- PCR test is conducted on a swab collected from the back of the throat, a liquid sample from the lower respiratory tract or a simple saliva sample.
- Such tests are commonly used in Influenza A, Influenza B and H1N1 virus detection.
- PCR uses a technique that creates copies of a segment of DNA. 'Polymerase' refers to the enzymes that make the copies of DNA. The 'chain reaction' is how the DNA fragments are copied, exponentially.
- Since, COVID - 19 is a virus made of RNA which needs to be converted into DNA. For this, the technique includes a process called reverse transcription.
- A 'reverse transcriptase' enzyme converts the RNA into DNA. Copies of the DNA are then made and amplified. A fluorescent DNA binding dye called the probe shows the presence of the virus.

**Additional Facts - Polymerase chain reaction(PCR):**

- The polymerase chain reaction(PCR) is a technique which makes numerous copies of a specific segment of DNA quickly and accurately.
- It was developed by the American biochemist Kary Mullis in 1983. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1993 for his pioneering work.
- This technique enables investigators to obtain the large quantities of DNA that are required for various experiments and procedures in molecular biology, forensic analysis and medical diagnostics.

**Convalescent plasma therapy:** US Food and Drug Administration has approved the use of convalescent plasma therapy for patients with serious life-threatening COVID-19 infections.

**Facts:**

- Convalescent plasma therapy aims to make use of the antibodies developed in the recovered patient against the infections.
- Under this, whole blood or plasma from recovered patients are taken and then injected into critically ill patients so that the antibodies are transferred and boost their fight against the virus.

**Additional Facts - Plasma:**

- Plasma also called Blood Plasma is the single largest component of human blood.
- **Functions:** a) maintain blood pressure and volume b) Supply critical proteins for blood clotting and immunity c) Carries electrolytes such as sodium and potassium to our muscles and d) Helps to maintain a proper pH balance in the body which supports cell function.

**Organizations in News:****Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR):**

- It is the apex and premier medical research organization in India.
- **Function:** planning, formulation, coordination, implementation and promotion of biomedical research.
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

**National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority**

- It is an independent body set up in 1997 under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.
- **Function:** to fix/revise controlled bulk drugs prices and formulations, enforce prices and availability of medicines under the Drug (Price Control) order, 2013.



**National Centre for Disease Control(NCDC)**

- It is an institute under the Indian Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- **Functions:** As a nodal agency for disease surveillance facilitating prevention and control of communicable diseases.

**World Health Organization (WHO)**

- It is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health.
- It was established on 7th April 1948, and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. Every year, 7th April is celebrated as World Health Day.
- The WHO is a member of the United Nations Development Group. It has 194 member states.

**13. Zoonotic Diseases**

**News:** Since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been emergence and outbreaks of multiple zoonotic diseases.

**Facts:**

**Definition:** Type of disease that passes from an animal or insect to a human.

Diseases	Features
Nipah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Host: Fruit bats of the Pteropodidae family</li> <li>• transmitted to humans from animals (such as bats or pigs), or contaminated foods and transmitted directly from human-to-human.</li> </ul>
Zika	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• transmitted primarily by Aedes mosquitoes.</li> <li>• infected people can transmit Zika through transfer of body fluids including sexual intercourse</li> </ul>
Ebola	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 species of Ebola Virus identified till date: Zaire, Bundibugyo, Sudan, Tai Forest, Reston and Bombali.</li> <li>• Host: fruit bats of the Pteropodidae family</li> <li>• Transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population through human-to-human transmission</li> </ul>
Avian/Bird Flu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• caused by H5N1 virus, a subtype of the influenza A virus.</li> <li>• Human infections occur through infected bird-to-human contact or contact with surfaces and objects contaminated by their droppings.</li> <li>• Human-human transmission is limited</li> </ul>

Swine Flu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caused by H1N1 virus</li> <li>occur in people with direct exposure to pigs</li> <li>spread from person to person, similar to seasonal influenza viruses.</li> </ul>
Kyasanur forest disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>caused by Kyasanur Forest disease Virus (KFDV), a member of the virus family Flaviviridae</li> <li>Host: Rodents, shrews and monkeys after being bitten by an infected tick.</li> <li>Transmission to humans occur after a tick bite or contact with an infected animal</li> </ul>
Rabies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>caused by Ribonucleic Acid(RNA) virus that is present in the saliva of a rabid animal.</li> <li>Transmitted to humans following a bite of a rabid animal</li> </ul>
West Nile Virus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>caused by the West Nile Virus</li> <li>Natural Host: Birds</li> <li>Transmits to humans through bites from infected Culex mosquitoes</li> </ul>
Monkeypox	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>caused by monkeypox virus</li> <li>transmitted to people from wild animals such as rodents and primates</li> <li>Human-to human transmission caused by contact with lesions, body fluids, respiratory droplets and contaminated materials</li> </ul>
Dengue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Caused by Dengue virus belonging to the genus Flavivirus of the family Flaviviridae</li> <li>Transmitted to humans by bite of an infected female Aedes Aegypti mosquito</li> </ul>
Malaria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>caused by Plasmodium parasites</li> <li>transmitted to humans through the bite of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.</li> </ul>
Hantavirus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>family of viruses which are spread mainly by rodents</li> <li>does not spread from one person to another</li> <li>can be contracted if someone comes in contact with a rodent that carries the virus.</li> </ul>

#### 14. GISAT-1

**News:** GISAT-1 is scheduled for launch on March 5th aboard Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F10)

**Facts:**

- GISAT-1 is a Geo Imaging Satellite in Geostationary orbit with a high temporal resolution.
- It is India's first earth imaging satellite in a geostationary orbit.

- **Applications:**

- facilitate near real time observation of the Indian subcontinent, under cloud free condition, at frequent intervals.
- help quick monitoring of natural disasters.
- keep a constant watch on borders.
- Monitor any changes in the geographical condition of the country.
- Help to obtain spectral signatures of agriculture, forestry, mineralogy, disaster warning, cloud properties, snow, glaciers and oceanography.

**Additional Facts:**

- **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicles (GSLV):** They are space launch vehicles used to put satellites into geostationary orbits that are over 30,000 km from Earth.
- **Geosynchronous Orbit:** It is a high Earth orbit that allows satellites to match Earth's rotation. They are located at 35,786 kilometers above Earth's equator.

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## Security

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### 1. ICGS Varad

**News:** The Indian Coast Guard's Offshore Patrol Vessel(OPV), ICGS Varad has been commissioned into service.

**Facts:**

**About ICGS Varad:**

- ICGS Varad is the fifth in the series of seven Vikram-class offshore patrol vessel vessels being constructed by Larsen and Toubro(L&T).
- The vessel is the first major defence ship to clear all the sea trials in one single sea sortie creating a record of sorts in the Indian shipbuilding industry.
- It will be deployed at Eastern Coast under the operational control of the North-Eastern Region's Coast Guard.

**Additional Facts:**

- **About Vikram class Offshore Patrol Vessel:** The Vikram-class offshore patrol vessel is a series of seven offshore patrol vessels(OPV) being built by L&T Shipbuilding for the Indian Coast Guard.
- **Offshore Patrol vessels(OPV) :** ICGS Vikram, ICGS Vijaya, ICGS Veera, ICGS Varaha, ICGS Varad and ICGS Vajra.

### 2. SC rules in favour of permanent commission for women officers in Navy

**News:** The Supreme Court (SC) has ruled in favour of permanent commission to female officers in the Indian Navy.:

**SC Judgement:**

- Ruled that women naval officers cannot be denied the right to equal opportunity and dignity entitled to under the Constitution on specious grounds such as physiology, motherhood and physical attributes.
- Directed the Centre to grant permanent commission to SSC women officers within three months.

**Implications:**

- All serving women short service commission (SSC) officers in at least seven wings, including the executive, engineering, electrical, education, law and logistics, will be eligible to apply.
- The grant of PCs will be subject to: (i) availability of vacancies in the stabilised cadre; (ii) Suitability of the candidate; and (iii) recommendation by the chief of Naval Staff.
- Grants pension benefits to retired women officers who were not granted permanent commission

**Additional Information:**

- **Permanent Commission:** It means an officer can serve the Navy till he/she retires.
- **Short service commission:** One can serve for 10 years and can be extended by four more years, or a total of 14 years.

### 3. Defence ministry out with new draft procurement policy

**News:** Ministry of Defence released draft Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2020

#### **Draft Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2020**

**Aim:** To increase indigenous manufacturing and expedite procurement of defence equipment.

#### **Key Features:**

- **Indigenous Content ratio hiked:** It proposes increasing the Indigenous Content (IC) stipulated in various categories of procurement by about 10% to support the 'Make in India' initiative.
- **New Category Buy (Global – Manufacture in India)** has been introduced with a minimum 50% indigenous content on cost basis of total contract value.
- **Leasing introduced as a new category:** Leasing has been introduced as a new category for acquisition in addition to existing 'Buy' & 'Make' categories to substitute huge initial capital outlays with periodical rental payments. Leasing is permitted under two categories i.e, Lease (Indian) where Lessor is an Indian entity and is the owner of the assets and Lease (Global) where Lessor is a Global entity.

#### **About Defence Procurement Procedure, 2016:**

- The Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP-2016) had replaced the DPP-2013 based on the recommendations of the Dhirendra Singh Committee.
- The procedure aims to develop a world-class domestic defence and aerospace industry by promoting indigenous design, development and manufacturing of defence equipment, platforms, systems and subsystems.

### 4. India-Israel sign agreement for Negev Light Machine Guns (LMG)

**News:** India has signed an agreement with Israel for procurement of Negev light machine guns(LMG).

#### **About Negev Light Machine Guns(LMG):**

- Negev is a light machine gun(LMG) with powerful target acquisition. It was adopted by the Israeli Defence Forces in 1997.
- It has semi-automatic mode to provide accurate, controlled fire in close quarter battle.

#### **Other Defence Deals by India from Israel:**

- **Spike missile:** It is a fire-and-forget anti-tank guided missile and anti-personnel missile. It can hit targets at a range of 4 kilometers. It can be deployed in both mountains and plains.
- **Heron:** It is a Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) unmanned aerial system used for intelligence, surveillance, target acquisition and reconnaissance purposes.
- **SPYDER:** It is a low-level quick reaction missile(LLQRM) which is used to protect critical infrastructure in ground-to-air missions from a wide spectrum of incoming air-borne threats.
- **Python-5:** It is a fifth generation air-to-air missile(AAM) that can engage enemy aircraft from very short ranges and near beyond visual range.



### 5. Biological Weapons Convention

**News:** The 45th anniversary of the entry into force of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention(BTWC) was observed on March 26,2020.

**Facts:**

- The BTWC entered into force in 1975.
- It is the first multilateral disarmament treaty banning the production of an entire category of weapons.
- **Obligations:** The treaty bans the development or acquire or transfer of a) biological agents or toxins that have no justification for peaceful uses and b) weapons or equipment designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes.
- **Members:** It currently has 183 states. India signed the convention in 1973.

**Additional Facts - Biological weapons:**

- These are microorganisms like virus, bacteria, fungi or other toxins that are produced and released deliberately to cause disease and death in humans, animals or plants.

**Australia Group:**

- It is a multilateral export control regime(MECR) and informal group formed in 1985.
- **Aim:** To ensure that exports do not contribute to the development of chemical or biological weapons.
- **Members:**43. India has joined as a 43rd member in 2018.

## Social

### 1. Tribal Lockdown Rituals

**News:** Tribes in Arunachal Pradesh have revived indigenous lockdown rituals to contain the spread of COVID-19.

**Facts:**

- **Galos Tribe:**
  - One of the 26 scheduled tribes who reside in the West Siang district.
  - They practice the **Arr-Rinam** ritual which imposes lockdown for 48 hrs during an epidemic.
- **Adi Tribe:**
  - They are of Tibeto-Burman lineage.
  - They performed a ritual called the **motor or pator system** where the locals lock down villages by erecting barricades to prevent the entry of outsiders.
- **Nyishi Tribe:**
  - Nyishi is a single largest Scheduled Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh of Tibeto-Burman origin.
  - They observe rituals such as **Arrue**(Self Quarantine) among others for preventing the entry of an epidemic to a village.

### 2. Traditional New Year Festivals

**News:** Various festivals marking the beginning of new year in different parts of India were celebrated.

Festivals	State/Community
Ugadi	Andhra Pradesh and Telangana
Yugadi /Ugadi	Karnataka
Gudi Padwa	Maharashtra
Cheti Chand	Sindh
Sajibu Cheiraoba	Meiteis(Manipur)
Navreh	Kashmir.

### 3. Chaitra Jatra Festival

**News:** The annual Chaitra Jatra festival scheduled to be held in Odisha's Tara Tarini hill shrine was cancelled as a precautionary measure against COVID-19 infection.

**Facts:**

- Chaitra Jatra is celebrated at Tara Tarini hill shrine in the Hindu month of Chaitra.
- Tara Tarini hill shrine is located at Kumari hill on banks of the Rushikulya river. It is a major centre of Shakti worship in Odisha.
- Indian Navy's sailboat INSV Tarini was named after Tara Tarini hill shrine. The first Indian all-woman crew had circumnavigated the globe in INSV Tarini.

**Additional Facts-Important Festivals of Odisha:**

- **Chhau Festival**
  - Chhau Festival is celebrated every year by the Bhuiyan tribes in Odisha.
  - Chhau dance is a semi-classical form of dancing that includes martial arts and folk elements. The dance is performed while wearing a mask or chhau
- **Nuakhai Festival:**
  - Nuakhai is an agricultural festival mainly observed by people of Western Odisha in India.
  - The farmers offer the first produce of their respective lands to Goddess Samaleswari.

### 4. Namda Traditional Art

**News:** Arifa Jan who revived a Kashmiri traditional art called 'Namda' was awarded Nari Shakti Puraskar and was also among the seven women who took control of the Prime minister's Twitter account.

**Facts:**

- **Name:** Namda comes from the root word Namata (Sanskrit for woollen stuff). It is a local term used for felted wool floor coverings made out of coarse variety of wool.
- **Features:** The art consists of floral patterns which provide the themes for these masterpieces and flowers, leaves, buds and fruits are the essence of the designs.
- **Practice:** It is practiced as a craft in several cultures especially the countries throughout Asia such as Iran, Afghanistan and several places in Ladakh, Kutch and Kashmir and Rajasthan in India.
- In India, it was actively promoted in the state under the patronage of the Mughal monarchs and the Rajput royals.



## *Miscellaneous*

### 1. Crime Multi Agency Centre and National Cybercrime Training Centre

**News:** Union Minister for Home affairs has launched the Crime Multi Agency Centre(Cri-MAC) and National Cybercrime Training Centre(NCTC).

**Facts :**

- **About NCTC:** The National Cybercrime Training Centre (NCTC) is meant for professional quality eLearning services on cyber-crime investigation on a large scale to police officers, judges, prosecutors and other stakeholders.
- **About Cri-MAC:** Crime Multi Agency Centre(Cri-MAC) aims to share information between various police forces on heinous crimes and other issues related to inter-state coordination.

### 2. Animal Protection Index: India ranks second

**News:** World Animal Protection, an international animal welfare charity has released Global animal protection index 2020

**Facts:**

- Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Austria are rated with the highest scores
- India has attained a C ranking in the index, along with countries like New Zealand, Mexico, France, and Spain.

**Additional Facts - Global Animal Protection Index :** It aims to showcase where countries are doing well, and where they fall short on animal welfare policy and legislation. The index ranks countries from A (being the highest score) to G (being the weakest score) according to their policy and legislation.

### 3. Monuments of the Deccan Sultanate

**News:** The Government of India has submitted a nomination dossier for the inclusion of Monuments and forts of the Deccan Sultanate in the World Heritage List for the year 2020.

**Monuments and Forts of the Deccan Sultanate**

Monument/Forts	Location	Date	Description
Bahmani Monuments	Gulbarga, Karnataka	14th Century	Comprise of the Gulbarga Fort and Great Mosque in the Fort and the Haft Gumbad complex with seven tombs
Bahmani and Barid	Bidar, Karnataka	15th-early 16th	Comprise of the Bidar Fort, the Madrasa

Shahi Monuments		century	Mahmud Gawan, the Bahamani tombs at Ashtur and the Barid Shahi tombs.
Adil Shahi Monuments	Bijapur, Karnataka	15th to the late 17th centuries	Ensemble of 80 small and big monuments including the fortifications, gates, water systems and tanks, several mosques and tombs and palatial structures Most remarkable: Gol Gumbaz
Qutb Shahi Monuments	Hyderabad, Telangana	1543 to 1672	Golconda Fort, Qutb Shahi Tombs and Charminar

**Additional Facts :**

**Deccan sultanate:** The Deccan sultanates were five late-medieval Indian kingdoms. They ruled on the Deccan Plateau between the Krishna River and the Vindhya Range. The kingdoms were Ahmadnagar, Berar, Bidar, Bijapur, and Golconda. Their architecture was a regional variant of Indo-Islamic architecture,

**4. Nomination dossier of 'Dholavira: A Harappan City'**

**News:** The Government of India has submitted the nomination dossier of 'Dholavira: A Harappan City' for inclusion in the World Heritage List for the year 2020.

**Facts :****Dholavira**

- Dholavira, also known as Kotada (which means large fort), is located in Khadir island of the Rann of Kutchch, Gujarat. It has two seasonal streams: Mansar in the north, and Manhar in the south.
- It is one of the two largest Harappan sites in India, and 5th largest in the subcontinent.
- It passed through all the stages of the Harappan culture from circa 2900 BC to 1500 BC.
- Town Planning: It consisted of a bipartite 'citadel', a 'middle town' and a 'lower town', two 'stadia', an 'annexe', a series of reservoirs all set within a fortification running on all four sides.







## 7. Period Poverty

**News:** Scotland may become the first country in the world to end 'period poverty' by passing the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill to make sanitary products free for all.

**Facts:**

- The Scottish Parliament has passed the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill.
- It aims to develop a universal system in Scotland which will provide free sanitary products for anyone who needs them.
- **Period Poverty:** Period poverty is often described as a lack of access to sanitary products due to financial constraints.

## 8. What is Google subsidiary Verily?

**News:** Recently, the Google Subsidiary Verily has launched a pilot of a COVID-19 screening and testing website as a part of Project Baseline.

**Facts :**

**About Verily:**

- The company was launched in 2015 and is a subsidiary of Google parent company Alphabet.
- It aims to make the world's health data useful so that people enjoy longer and healthier lives.
- It develops tools and devices to collect, organize and activate health data, and creates interventions to prevent and manage disease.

**Project Baseline:**

- Project Baseline was launched by Verily in 2017. It aims to bridge the gap between research and care.

## 9. World Consumer Rights Day

**News:** World Consumer Rights Day has been celebrated on the 15th March, 2020.

**Facts :**

**About World Consumer Rights Day:**

- **Aim:** To spread awareness on a global level to protect the rights of consumers and to ensure that the consumers are not subjected to market abuse or social injustice that may undermine their rights.
- **Theme:** The Sustainable Consumer
- **Organized by:** Consumers International.

**Additional Facts - Consumer International:**

- Consumers International was founded in 1960. It is a membership based organisation for consumer groups around the world.
- Its aim is to defend, promote, develop and pursue consumer rights as the international basis of consumer protection.
- It is headquartered in London, United Kingdom.

### 10. ROPAX Service

**News:** The Ministry of Shipping has launched a roll on-roll off cum passenger ferry service called 'ROPAX', between Mumbai and Mandwa (Maharashtra).

**Facts :**

**About ROPAX:**

- It is a water transport service project under the Eastern Waterfront Development.
- The benefits of this service include reduction in the travel time, vehicular emission and traffic on the road.

### 11. World Tuberculosis Day

**News:** Every year World Tuberculosis (TB) Day is celebrated on March 24

**Facts:**

- **Background:** The date marks the day in 1882 when Dr Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB.
- **2020 Theme:** 'It's Time'.

**Additional Information:**

**Tuberculosis(TB):** It is an infectious airborne bacterial disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.

**Initiatives taken in India:**

- **TB Harega Desh Jeetega Campaign:** The campaign aims to improve and expand the reach of Tuberculosis care services across the country by 2022.
- **Nikshay Poshan Yojana:** It is a direct benefit transfer (DBT) scheme to provide nutritional support to TB patients.
- **National Strategic Plan (NSP) for TB Elimination (2017-2025):** It is a framework to provide guidance for the activities of various stakeholders to reduce the burden of TB mortality and morbidity. It aims to work towards the elimination of TB in India by 2025.
- **TB-free India Campaign:** It was launched in 2018 to take the activities under the National Strategic Plan for TB Elimination.

### 12. Fight Corona IDEathon

**News:** All India Council for Technical Education(AICTE) and Ministry of HRD Innovation Cell has launched the Fight Corona IDEathon initiative.

**Facts:**

- **Aim:** To generate and transform innovative ideas into viable solutions that can support the community in managing the uncertainties arising out of the Coronavirus pandemic.

**Additional Facts:**

- **Innovation Cell:** It has been established at All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) premises to foster the culture of Innovation in all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the country.

- **AICTE:** It is a statutory body under the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development.

### 13. The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020

**News:** The Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was passed in the Lok Sabha

**Facts:**

- The Bill amends the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 which provides for the termination of certain pregnancies by registered medical practitioners
- The bill extends the time period to terminate pregnancy from 20 to 24 weeks under certain conditions.
- In case of unwanted pregnancy termination the Bill replaces the provision of who can terminate from 'married woman or her husband' with 'woman or her partner'.
- The Bill states that no registered medical practitioner will be allowed to reveal the name and other particulars of a woman whose pregnancy has been terminated.
- The bill calls for the constitution of a Medical Board for diagnosis of substantial foetal abnormalities.

### 14. Nile River dispute and the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam(GERD)

**News:** Ethiopia is building one of the largest dams in the world named Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam(GERD). This has aggravated the dispute of water sharing for the Nile River between the downstream and upstream countries.

**Facts:**

- The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam(GERD) which was formerly known as the Millennium Dam is located in Ethiopia, on the Blue Nile River about 40km east of Sudan.
- The Nile River flows from south to north through eastern Africa. It begins in the rivers that flow into Lake Victoria and empties into the Mediterranean Sea.
- The river runs through countries namely Egypt, Burundi, Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.
- Its three main tributaries are the White Nile, the Blue Nile, and the Atbara.



### 15. World Rare Disease Day

**News:** The World Economic Forum has released a study ahead of Rare Disease Day which is observed on the last day of February every year.

**Facts:**

- 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.

- The most common rare diseases recorded in India are Haemophilia, Thalassemia, sickle-cell anaemia and primary immunodeficiency in children, auto-immune diseases among others.

**Key takeaways from the study:**

- 475 million people are affected by rare disease worldwide and only 5% of people with a rare disease have access to treatment.
- 80% of rare diseases result from genetic or genomic variants meaning an individual is born with a rare disease. This results in 30% of children born with a rare disease dying before they reach their fifth birthday often without a diagnosis.
- In India, there are around 56-72 million people affected due to rare diseases.



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### Pointly

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1. [National Forensic Sciences University Bill,2020](#) : It aims to establish a National Forensic Sciences University as an institution of national importance by upgrading the Gujarat Forensic Sciences University in Gandhinagar.
2. [White-throated laughingthrush](#) (IUCN Red list: Least Concern) : The white-throated laughingthrush (*Proterorhinus albobularis*) is a species of passerine bird in the family Leiothrichidae. Its natural habitat is subtropical or tropical moist montane forests. It is found mainly in the northern regions of the Indian subcontinent, primarily the Himalayas and some adjoining and disjunct areas.
3. [World Water Development Report 2020](#): The report is produced annually by the UNESCO World Water Assessment Programme (WWAP) and released by UN-Water. The title of the report was 'Water and climate Change'.
4. [Torreites sanchezi](#): According to a study of fossil shells of an extinct mollusk species "Torreites sanchez", Earth spun 372 times a year 70 million years ago compared to the current 365. This means the day was 23½ hours long compared to 24 hours.
5. [World Water Day 2020](#): It is an event initiated by UN Water, which is being observed on 22 March,2020. The theme of this year's event was 'Water and Climate Change'. UN Water is an interagency mechanism of the United Nations Organisation headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
6. [International Conference on NanoScience and NanoTechnology \(ICONSAT\)](#): Department of Science and Technology (DST) organised the ICONSAT in Kolkata under the Nano Mission
7. [Devonian period](#): Researchers have revealed how the human hand evolved from fish fins based on their analysis of an ancient fossil found in Canada. The fossil may be from the Late Devonian period. The Devonian Period occurred from 416 million to 358 million years ago. This period is often known as the Age of Fishes.
8. [India arms import](#) : Stockholm International Peace Research Institute(SIPRI) has released a report on the latest data on international arms transfers. India continues to be the 2nd biggest arms importer after the Saudi Arabia. SIPRI is an independent international institute established in 1966 in Stockholm, Sweden.
9. [Raider-X](#): a new explosive detection device was unveiled at the National Workshop on Explosive Detection (NWED-2020) in Pune. It has been developed by the High Energy Material Research Laboratory (HEMRL), an arm of the DRDO
10. [Swavalamban Express](#): Small Industries Development Bank of India(SIDBI) has announced the start of Swavalamban Express. Swavalamban Express is a train journey to promote budding business aspirants and entrepreneurs.

11. **Safe Hands Challenge**: World Health Organization(WHO) has launched the Safe Hands Challenge in the backdrop of the coronavirus pandemic. The campaign urges everyone to wash their hands regularly for 40 seconds to keep themselves safe and prevent the transmission of Coronavirus disease.
12. **'Career Back 2 Women' initiative**: Indian Institute of Technology Madras(IIT Madras) has launched a "Career Back 2 Women(CB2 Women)" initiative. The initiative aims to skill women who aspire to return to a technical profession after a break in their career. It will also provide job placement assistance to all candidates who complete the modules.
13. **Invest India Business Immunity Platform** : Invest India has launched an Invest India Business Immunity Platform. It aims to provide a comprehensive resource to help businesses and investors get real-time updates on India's active response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus).
14. **Project Isaac** : Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IITGN) has launched Project Isaac. It aims to engage its students in creative projects to enhance their critical skills while they are confined to their homes because of Coronavirus.
15. **#StayHomeIndiaWithBooks Initiative** : National Book Trust(NBT) has launched #StayHomeIndiaWithBooks initiative in the wake of preventive measures taken by the Government of India to contain the spread of Covid-19.
16. **Anosmia and Ageusia**: Ear, Nose and Throat(ENT) specialists have noted a growing number of anosmia and ageusia cases among COVID-19 patients. **Anosmia**: It is the partial or complete loss of the sense of smell. This loss may be temporary or permanent. **Ageusia**: It is a condition that is characterized by a complete loss of taste function of the tongue.
17. **Centre for Internet of Ethical Things** : Karnataka Government has decided to set up a Centre for Internet of Ethical Things In Bengaluru. It is a collaboration with the World Economic Forum(WEF). It aims to bring together aspects of Artificial Intelligence(AI), Internet of Things (IoT) and Ethics on a single platform.
18. **Global Humanitarian Response Plan**: The United Nations has launched a \$2 billion Global Humanitarian Response Plan to fight against COVID-19. It will be implemented in the world's most vulnerable countries by UN agencies.
19. **Trusted News Initiative** :The Trusted News Initiative has decided to extend its efforts in identifying false and potentially harmful information on the coronavirus pandemic. The Trusted News Initiative was announced by BBC in 2019 to protect the people against the disinformation and fake news especially during the time of elections.
20. **50 years of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty(NPT)**: The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) which came into force on March 5, 1970. It is an international treaty signed in 1968 and came into force in 1970. It aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology. The treaty defines nuclear-weapon states as those that have built and tested a nuclear explosive device before 1 January 1967; these are the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, and China. The other nuclear armed states—

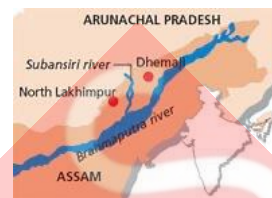
India, Israel and Pakistan have not joined the treaty. Further, North Korea and South Sudan have also not signed the treaty.

21. **BHOG(Blissful Hygienic offering to God):** BHOG launched by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India(FSSAI), aims to encourage all places of worship to adopt and maintain food safety and hygiene in preparation, serving and sale of food along with training of food handlers for basic food safety and hygiene.
22. **Keqiang Index:** The Li Keqiang index or Keqiang index is an economic measurement index created by The Economist to measure China's economy.
23. **Digitised Scripts of Yakshagana:** Yakshagana is a temple theatre art form of Karnataka that depicts mythological stories from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata and other Hindu epics. It combines dance, music, dialogue, costumes, make-up and stage techniques with a unique style and form.
24. **World Happiness Report 2020:** The United Nations has released the World Happiness Report 2020. It is released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations. The report ranks 156 countries on the state of global happiness using the Gallup World Poll and six factors namely levels of GDP, life expectancy, generosity, social support, freedom and corruption income.
25. **Chapchar Kut Festival:** Chapchar Kut is an annual harvest festival of the Mizo Community which marks the beginning of Spring. It is celebrated during March every year where they cut bamboo trees and are left to dry so that they can be burnt for jhum Cultivation.
26. **"Tech For Tribals" program:** TRIFED launched the "Tech For Tribals" program in partnership with Institutes of National Importance (INIs). It aims at capacity building and imparting entrepreneurship skills to tribal forest produce gatherers enrolled under the Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana (PMVDY)
27. **"Innovate for Accessible India" campaign:** Microsoft India and NASSCOM Foundation have launched the 'Innovate for Accessible India' campaign. It aims to empower people with disabilities with the technology and tools required for better integration into society and access to equal opportunities.
28. **Navroz Festival:** Navroz is a Persian New Year festival which falls on March 21 and is celebrated by Parsis, followers of Zoroastrianism and various other communities . In India, the Navroz festival is celebrated twice a year, first according to the Iranian calendar and the second according to the Shahan Shahi calendar. It is listed in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of India.
29. **QS world university rankings:** The Quacquarelli Symonds(QS) has released the QS World University rankings by Subject,2020. IIT- Delhi and Kanpur were ranked under 50. The universities were ranked based on the parameters such as Academic reputation, Employer reputation, Citation per faculty Faculty-Student ratio and International students.
30. **Urja Dakshata Information Tool(UDIT):** Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) along with World Resources Institute (a US based NGO) has launched Urja Dakshata Information Tool (UDIT) to facilitate a database on energy efficiency.

31. **Oculudentavis khaungraae**: Scientists identified a fossilised skull of a flying dinosaur named Oculudentavis khaungrae which may be the smallest Dinosaur yet discovered.
32. **CMS list**: Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) for the first time compiled the list of migratory species of India under the Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS).
33. **Swathi Radar**: Swathi is a weapon locating radar developed by DRDO. It is designed to detect and track incoming artillery and rocket fire to determine the point of origin for counter-battery fire.
34. **Bhoomi Rashi Portal**: It acts as a single point platform for online processing of land acquisition projects to accelerate highway infrastructure development. Launched in 2018 by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways with the help of National informatics Centre(NIC).
35. **Kisan Rail scheme**: It was proposed in Budget 2020-21, the scheme working under the PPP format, envisages to set up a national cold supply chain to transport highly perishable goods including milk, fish and meat.
36. **India Data Portal (IDP)**: developed by Indian School of Business and funded by Bill and Milenda Gates foundation, the portal is a one stop open-access portal for researchers, students, policy makers to access information related to agriculture and financial services.
37. **NAMASTE Portal**: National AYUSH Morbidity and Standardized Terminologies Electronic (NAMASTE) Portal provides standardized terminologies & morbidity codes for Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani systems of medicines.
38. **SCORES mobile app**: Sebi Complaints Redress System (SCORES) is a platform that allows investors to lodge their complaints online with SEBI pertaining to securities market
39. **Katchatheevu Island**: The annual festival of St Antony's Shrine is being celebrated in Katchatheevu Island, Sri Lanka.
40. **25 years of progress**: UNICEF along with Plan International and United Nations Women has released a report titled "A New era for girls: Taking stock on 25 years of progress" to mark the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and to acknowledge the Generation Equality campaign.
41. **Generation Equality Forum** is a civil society-centred, global gathering for gender equality convened by UN Women and co-hosted by the governments of Mexico and France. The Forum will start in Mexico City in May 2020 and culminate in France in July 2020.
42. **Gender Social Norms Index(GSNI)**: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has released the Gender Social Norms Index(GSNI), it measures how social beliefs obstruct gender equality in areas like politics, work and education.
43. **International Women's Day(IWD)**: celebrated every year on 8th March since 1911. The theme for 2020 is #EachforEqual- An equal world is an enabled world.
44. **Araku Utsav**: The festival is being organized by the Andhra Pradesh Government at Araku Valley in Visakhapatnam district with the aim to spread the tribal tradition and culture to other regions.



45. **EKAM Fest:** is a week-long exhibition launched by Ministry of social justice and empowerment. It stands for Entrepreneurship, Knowledge, Awareness, Marketing. The fest aims to promote entrepreneurship and knowledge among the Divyangjan/Persons with disabilities (PwDs) community.
46. **Earth Hour 2020:** Earth Hour is observed on the last Saturday of March every year. It was started in 2007 by the World Wildlife fund for Nature (WWF). It aims to call attention towards global warming, loss of biodiversity and climate change. Under this initiative, people switch off their lights for one hour. The theme for this year is 'Climate Change and sustainable development'.
47. **Project Arunank:** The project aims to reconstruct the Daporijo Bridge across Subansiri river in Arunachal Pradesh. It is being implemented by Border Roads Organization (BRO) in Arunachal Pradesh. It aims to link remote regions of the borders with well-developed strategic roads.
48. **Healing Solutions for Tourism Challenge:** This challenge was launched by United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO). It is a global call to reach the most disruptive startups, entrepreneurs and drive solutions to mitigate Covid-19 impacts on tourism.
49. **Peace Forest Initiative:** Peace Forest is an initiative of South Korea and UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) launched in 2019 during the 14th Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD in New Delhi, India. It aims to promote cooperation between countries to rehabilitate degraded land and forest in fragile and post-conflict locations.
50. **Exercise Red Flag:** It is an annual aerial combat training exercise between the Air Force of the United States and its allies. It was held for the first time in 1975. India is also a participant in the exercise.
51. **Sodium Hypochlorite:** was sprayed on migrant workers to sanitise them. Sodium hypochlorite ( $\text{NaOCl}$ ) is a compound that is used for surface purification, bleaching, odor removal and water disinfection. It is not recommended to be used on human beings as it is a corrosive compound and large quantities of chlorine can be harmful for the skin.
52. **Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship programme:** It has been launched to address the challenge of non availability of training personnel for implementation of various programmes at national, state and district levels. IIM-Bangalore will be assisting in training of personnels, formulating district skill plans etc. Any citizen 21-30 years of age with a graduate degree from a recognised university is eligible for the program.
53. **Extradition Treaty between India and Belgium:** Cabinet approved the signing and ratifying of the Extradition Treaty between India and Belgium. Under the treaty, each Party agrees to extradite a person accused/convicted of an extraditable offence (as mentioned in the agreement i.e. with imprisonment for 1 year or more) in the territory of the other Party. In India, the extradition is governed by the Extradition Act, 1962.
54. **Floor test :** Madhya Pradesh Governor has ordered a floor test in the state Assembly. A floor test is a constitutional mechanism taken to know whether the executive enjoys the confidence of the legislature. A





Composite Floor Test is conducted only when more than one person stakes claim to form the government and the majority is not clear.

55. [Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2019](#) : The Minister of Human Resource Development has introduced the Central Sanskrit Universities Bill, 2019. It aims to convert India's three deemed-to-be Sanskrit universities — (i) Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi, (ii) Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, New Delhi and (iii) Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth, Tirupati into Central Sanskrit Universities.
56. [Attukal Pongala](#) The annual Attukal Pongala festival has begun in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The temple is popularly known as the Women Sabarimala as only women perform the ritual. Pongala, which means 'to boil over', is the ritual in which women prepare sweet payasam and offer it to the main deity 'Bhagavathy' also referred to as 'Attukalamma'.
57. [Sanskriti Kunj Fair](#): The Eight day annual cultural fair called Vasantotsav was inaugurated at Sanskriti Kunj in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. It is organised by the Government of Gujarat to celebrate the rich diverse heritage of the country. The festival is often referred to as the state's spring festival or Basant Mahotsava. The theme of this year's festival is "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat".
58. [Suposhit Maa Abhiyan](#): Lok Sabha Speaker has launched the Suposhit Maa Abhiyan. The program aims to preserve and maintain the health of our future generation by providing nutritional support to pregnant women and newborn. Under this 1,000 women would be given food items for one month. The identified women would be required to register on a website for adoption. Only one pregnant woman would be adopted from a family.
59. [Senna spectabilis](#) : The Kerala Government is planning to stop the rampant growth of Senna spectabilis in the forest areas of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve(NBR). Senna spectabilis is a plant species of the legume family (Fabaceae) native to South and Central America. The plant has become an invasive alien species in parts of Africa, India and other countries. It is categorised as 'Least Concern' under IUCN Red List.
60. [Integrated Project for Source Sustainability and Climate Resilient Rain-Fed Agriculture](#) : The Government of India, Himachal Pradesh and World Bank has signed a US\$80 million loan agreement to implement Integrated Project for Source Sustainability and Climate Resilient Rain-Fed Agriculture in Himachal Pradesh. It aims to improve water management practices and increase agricultural productivity in selected Gram Panchayats in Himachal Pradesh.
61. [Sahyadri Megha](#) : University of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences(UAHS) has developed 'Sahyadri Megha', to prevent decline in the area under paddy cultivation. Sahyadri Megha is a new red variety of paddy that is resistant to blast disease and rich in nutrients. It was developed under the hybridization breeding method by cross-breeding 'Jyothi' variety with that of 'Akkalu', a native disease-resistant and protein-rich paddy variety. The new variety will also cater to the strong demand for red rice, rich in fibre and protein by health-savvy consumers in urban areas.
62. [Global Coalition for Biodiversity](#) : European Commission launched the Global Coalition for Biodiversity on the occasion of World Wildlife Day. The Coalition is a campaign for raising awareness about biodiversity

loss. It calls on world zoos, aquariums, botanical gardens and natural history museums to join the coalition to raise awareness about the nature crisis ahead of the CoP 15 in Kunming, China in 2020. It also adopted a pledge to raise voice for nature citing the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services(IPBES) Global Assessment finding that one million species were already at risk of extinction.

63. [Legacy Waste](#) : Legacy wastes are the wastes that have been collected and kept for years at some barren land or a place dedicated for Landfill (an area to dump solid waste). It is grouped into four categories: a) Contained and stored waste b) Buried waste c) Contaminated soil and groundwater and d) building materials and structures waste. Bio-mining method has been proposed by the Central Pollution Control Board(CPCB) for the effective disposal of legacy wastes.
64. [Hubli-Ankola Railway Line Project](#) : Karnataka chief Minister has approved the Hubballi-Ankola railway line project despite opposition by several members of the State Board of Wildlife. The railway line passes through the dense forests between two major protected areas — Kali Tiger Reserve and Bedthi Conservation Reserve which are part of Western Ghats.
65. [ExoMars mission](#) : The launch of ExoMars mission has been postponed until 2022 as the Rosalind Franklin rover will not be ready in time for the scheduled launch in 2020. ExoMars program (Exobiology on Mars) is a series of missions designed to understand if life ever existed on Mars. It is being undertaken by the European Space agency. It comprises two missions: one consisting of the Trace Gas Orbiter plus an Entry, Descent and landing demonstrator Module (EDM), known as Schiaparelli, launched in 2016, and the other, featuring Rosalind Franklin rover, with a launch date of 2022. Both missions are carried out in cooperation with Roscosmos.
66. [Perseverance](#) : National Aeronautics and Space Administration(NASA) has announced that the official name of its Mars 2020 rover will be 'Perseverance.' The mission is part of NASA's Mars Exploration Program, a long-term effort of robotic exploration of the Red Planet. The rover weighs less than 2,300 pounds and is managed by NASA's Jet Propulsion Lab. **Objective:** Studying Mars Habitability, Seeking Signs of Past Microbial Life, Collecting and Caching Samples and Preparing for Future Human Missions.
67. [About Mac-binding:](#) Mac-binding necessarily means binding together the MAC and IP addresses so that all requests from IP addresses are served only by the computer having that particular MAC address. In effect, it means that if the IP address or the MAC address changes, the device can no longer access the Internet. Further, monitoring authorities can also trace the specific system from which a particular online activity was carried out. Recently, the use of social media was allowed in Jammu and Kashmir with a condition that Internet connectivity will be made available with mac-binding.
68. [Wasp 76b - Iron rain on exoplanet](#) : Recently, Astronomers have observed an exoplanet (planet which orbits a star outside the solar system) named Wasp-76b where they suspect it rains iron instead of water. Wasp-76b is an exoplanet that is twice the width of our Jupiter. Its name comes from the UK-led Wasp telescope system that detected it four years ago. It is 640 light-years from the Earth and is so close to its star that it takes just 43 hours to complete one revolution.

69. **Eastern Waterfront Development**: The Eastern Waterfront is the Mumbai Port Trust's plan to develop the port lands across Mumbai's eastern coast stretching from Sassoon Dock to Wadala.
70. **COVID-19 National Teleconsultation Centre (CoNTeC)**: The Union Minister of Health has launched the COVID-19 National Teleconsultation Centre (CoNTeC). It is a Telemedicine Hub to connect the doctors across the country to AIIMS in real time for treatment of the COVID-19 patients. Telemedicine is the distribution of health-related services and information via electronic information and telecommunication technologies.
71. **Innovations for Defence Excellence(iDEX) framework** :The Government of India has set up a Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) framework to boost India's indigenous defence sector. Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) was launched by the Government of India in 2018. It is funded and managed by the Defence Innovation Organization (DIO). It primarily aims at creation of an ecosystem to foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace by engaging Industries including MSMEs, start-ups among others.
72. **Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX-2020)** : Recently, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has conducted the National level Search and Rescue Exercise(SAREX-2020) in Goa. The exercise has been conducted biennially since 2003 by Indian Coast Guard under the aegis of National Maritime Search and Rescue Board(NMSARB). Further, the exercise witnessed the participation of around 24 overseas observers from 19 countries.
73. **Bull and Bear market**: NSE Nifty index entered into 'bear market' territory in the backdrop of the declaration of the coronavirus outbreak. The term bull market refers to a stock market that has been rising. A bear market is a market where most stocks are declining in value due to widespread pessimism and negative investor sentiment. Circuit breakers are triggered to prevent markets from crashing which happens when market participants start to panic induced by fears that their stocks are overvalued and decide to sell their stocks.
74. **University for Peace(UPEACE)** : is an intergovernmental organization established by a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly in 1980. Its main campus is situated at Costa Rica. Its mandate is to offer Higher Education programmes focusing on peace and human rights studies.
75. **MACS-4028**: It is a biofortified durum wheat variety. It contains high protein content, better zinc and iron content, superior and stable yielding ability and good milling quality. It's been developed by the scientists from Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology.

## Static Syllabus Questions

**Q.1)** Which of the following have been incorporated as part of the 'Basic Structure' of the Constitution by the Supreme Court?

1. Article 142
2. Power of Parliament to amend the Constitution
3. Fundamental Duties

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

**Q.2)** Which of the following is/are associated with the inclusion of fundamental duties in the Indian Constitution?

1. Swaran Singh committee
2. 42nd constitutional amendment
3. 44th constitutional amendment
4. 86th constitutional amendment

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**Q.3)** Consider the following statements regarding 123rd Constitutional Amendment bill:

1. It grants the National Commission on Backward Classes (NCBC) constitutional status by inserting a new article 338 B in the Constitution.
2. It states that the Governor may specify the socially and educationally backward classes in their respective states.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Q.4)** Consider the following statements regarding Goods and service tax council:

1. It is a statutory body for making recommendations to the Union and State Government on issues related to goods and service tax.
2. It is chaired by the union finance minister.
3. The Central Government has the majority share in decision making by the Council.

Which of the following statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Q.5)** Consider the following statements regarding Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB):

1. It is a statutory body.
2. It was entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
3. It comes under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

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 3 only

**Q.6)** With reference to the '73rd Constitutional Amendment Act' of 1992, consider the following statements:

1. A panchayat reconstituted after premature dissolution shall start a new full term of five years.
2. A panchayat if prematurely dissolved should hold fresh elections within 1 year from the date of dissolution.

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

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

**Q.7)** Arrange the following according to their increasing order of 'liquidity':

1. Saving deposits with the banks.
2. Currency and coins with the public.
3. Demand deposits with the banks.
4. Term deposits with the banks.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**Q.8)** Consider the following statements regarding The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID):

1. It is an investment dispute settlement body whose decisions are binding on the parties.

2. Once the parties have agreed to arbitration, they cannot withdraw their consent unilaterally.
3. India is a member of ICSID.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Q.9)** Which of the given pairs of Agreements is/are correctly matched with respect to Intellectual Property?

Agreement	Objective
1. Nice Agreement	International classification of goods and services for the purpose of registration of trademarks.
2. Vienna Agreement	Sets up an International classification of the figurative marks.
3. Locarno Agreement	Establishing an International classification for handicraft designs.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**Q.10)** Consider the following statements regarding the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) of RBI:

1. It is used by all financial institutions.
2. It is a part of the liquidity adjustment facility.
3. It is a cheaper route to fulfil the overnight requirement of funds.



4. Banks use this route only if they exhaust all other channels to raise short-term funds.

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

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

**Q.11)** Which of the following sources form part of the Revenue Receipts of government?

- 1. Interests received by the government on loans
- 2. Interests paid by the government on loans
- 3. Penalties & fines received by the government
- 4. Borrowings by the government

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

**Q.12)** Consider the following statements regarding INTERPOL:

- 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

**Q.13)** With reference to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, consider the following statements:

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

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Q.14)** Which of the following best define a Flagship Species?

- a) A species that plays an essential role in the structure, functioning or productivity of a habitat or ecosystem at a defined level.
- b) A species or group of species chosen as an indicator of, or proxy for, the state of an ecosystem or of a certain process within that ecosystem.
- c) A species to colonize bare earth after a disturbance or when the environment is too harsh to allow for colonization by other species.
- d) A species selected to act as an ambassador, icon or symbol for a defined habitat, issue, campaign or environmental cause.

**Q.15)** Which of the following have the property of absorbing the heat and contribute to the warming of the atmosphere?

- 1. Carbon Dioxide
- 2. Soot
- 3. Water Vapour

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

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

**Q.16)** Which of the following fauna of India belongs to the family of ape?

- a) Golden Langur
- b) Lion-tailed Macaque
- c) Hoolak Gibbon
- d) Slow loris

**Q.17)** Which of the following protected areas is a Marine National Park?

- a) Malvan marine sanctuaries
- b) Gulf of Kachchh
- c) Wandoor Mahatma Gandhi marine protected areas
- d) Both B and C

**Q.18)** Consider the following statements about zones of a freshwater lake:

1. The limnetic zone adjoins the shore.
2. The littoral zone includes all the waters beyond the limnetic zone and down to the light compensation level.
3. Profundal zone is the bottom and deep-water area of a lake, which is beyond the depth of effective light penetration.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

**Q.19)** 'Guru Shikhar' peak is located in which among the following hill ranges?

- a) Aravali Hills
- b) Garo Hills
- c) Mahadeo hills
- d) Satmala Hill

**Q.20)** 'Bewar' or 'Dahiya', primitive forms of cultivation is prevalent in which of the following state?

- a) Assam
- b) Kerala
- c) Haryana
- d) Madhya Pradesh

**Q.21)** "The rainfall is mostly experienced in winters. It is also known as the Subtropical Winter Rain Zone. The vegetation is mostly deciduous. In summer, short stature, moisture retentive trees especially citrus fruits grow here." Which region has the above mentioned characteristic?

- a) Mediterranean region
- b) Tropical monsoon type
- c) Tropical grasslands
- d) Temperate grasslands

**Q.22)** The festival of Sekrenyi is celebrated in which of the following state?

- a) Nagaland
- b) Manipur
- c) Tripura
- d) Mizoram

**Q.23)** In which of the following states "Pithora paintings" is famous?

- a) Andhra Pradesh & Telangana

- b) Tamil Nadu & Kerala
- c) Gujarat & Madhya Pradesh
- d) Gujarat & Rajasthan

**Q.24)** Lothian committee in British-India, related to which of the following?

- a) Rural Development
- b) Separate Electorates
- c) Financial decentralization
- d) Civil Service reforms

**Q.25)** “Kalibangan” is an ancient site located in which of the following state?

- a) Haryana
- b) Rajasthan
- c) Punjab
- d) Gujarat

#### STATIC SYLLABUS – ANSWER KEY

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

#### STATIC SYLLABUS – EXPLANATION

**Q.1)**

**Ans) a**

**Exp)** Statement 1 and 2 are correct: Article 32, 136, 141 and 142 come under the basic structure of the Constitution. Limited power of Parliament to amend the Constitution is also a part of the basic structure.

Statement 3 is incorrect: Fundamental Duties are not a part of the basic structure

Source) Indian Polity - M Laxmikanth

**Q.2)**

**Ans) b**

**Exp)** The original constitution did not provide for the fundamental duties of the citizens. These were added during the operation of internal emergency (1975–77) by the 42nd Constitutional Amendment Act (Mini constitution) of 1976 on the recommendation of the Swaran Singh Committee. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act of 2002 added one more fundamental duty that was - “Article 51A (k) : It shall be the duty of every citizen of India who is a parent or guardian to provide opportunities for education to his child or ward between the age of 6 to 14 years”.

Source) Indian Polity - M Laxmikanth - Fifth Edition, Page - 3.4

**Q.3)**

**Ans) a**

**Exp)** Central government has proposed to constitute a new backward classes commission after the term of National Commission for Other Backward Classes (NCBC) ended.

Statement 1 is correct. Parliament has passed the Constitution (123rd Amendment) Bill which grants the National Commission on Backward Classes (NCBC) constitutional status by inserting a new article 338 B in the Constitution.

Statement 2 is incorrect. The Bill states that the President may specify the socially and educationally backward classes in the various states and union territories. He may do this in consultation with the

Governor of the concerned state, however a law of Parliament will be required if the list of backward classes is to be amended.

Source) <http://factly.forumias.com/two-years-after-its-term-ended-centre-proposes-to-form-new-backward-classes-commission/>

**Q.4)**

**Ans) b**

**Exp)** Statement 1 is incorrect. By the constitution (101st) Amendment Act, 2016, Goods and Service Tax Council was made a Constitutional body for making recommendations to the Union and State Government issue related to the goods and service tax. As per article 279A of the amended constitution, the GST which will be a joint forum of the centre and the states shall consist of the following members:

- 1) Statement 2 is correct. The Union Finance Minister (Chairman),
- 2) The Union Minister of state in charge of revenue or Finance (Member),
- 3) Minister in charge of Finance taxation or any other Minister commuted by each state government (Members).

As per Article 279A (4), One-half of the total number of Members of the Goods and Services Tax Council shall constitute a quorum at its meetings.

The Goods and Services Tax Council shall determine the procedure in the performance of its functions. Every decision of the Goods and Services Tax Council shall be taken at a meeting by a majority of not less than three-fourths of the weighted votes of the members present and voting, in accordance with the following principles, namely: —

1) Statement 3 is incorrect. the vote of the Central Government shall have a weightage of one third of the total votes cast, and

2) the votes of all the State Governments taken together shall have a weightage of two-thirds of the total votes cast, in that meeting.

**Q.5)**

**Ans) d**

**Exp)** Statement 1 is correct. The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), statutory organization (not constitutional) was constituted in September, 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

Statement 2 is correct. CPCB was entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

Statement 3 is correct. It comes under the Ministry of Environment and Forests under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986. CPCB serves as a field formation and also provides technical services to the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Source) <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/environment/daily-court-digest-major-environment-orders-september-13-2019--66727>

<https://cpcb.nic.in/Introduction/>

**Q.6)**

**Ans) c**

**Exp)** The '73rd Constitutional Amendment Act' of 1992 provides for a five-year term of office to the panchayat at every level. However, it can be dissolved before the completion of its term.

Further, fresh elections to constitute a panchayat shall be completed-

- (a) Before the expiry of its duration of five years; or

(b) Statement 2 is incorrect. In case of dissolution, before the expiry of a period of six months from the date of its dissolution. But, where the remainder of the period (for which the dissolved panchayat would have continued) is less than six months, it shall not be necessary to hold any election for constituting the new panchayat for such period.

Statement 1 is incorrect. A panchayat reconstituted after premature dissolution does not enjoy the full period of five years but remains in office only for the remainder of the period.

**Q.7)**

**Ans) a**

**Exp)** Out of the four statements, term deposits are the least liquid as the depositor can withdraw money after a specific period. Currency and coins with the public are the most liquid as they can be spent very easily.

Demand deposits will have more liquidity than the saving deposits as the former includes the 'current accounts' of the firms (the most liquid deposit with the banks).

Source) Indian Economy; Ramesh Singh- Ch-12 Banking in India

**Q.8)**

**Ans) a**

**Exp)** Statement 1 is correct. The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), set up in 1966 is an investment dispute settlement body whose decisions are binding on the parties.

Statement 2 is correct. Though recourse to the centre is voluntary, but once the parties have agreed to arbitration, they cannot withdraw their consent unilaterally.

Statement 3 is incorrect. India is not a member of ICSID. It is believed that being signatory to it encourages the foreign investment flows into an economy, but risks independent sovereign decisions, too.

**Q.9)**

**Ans) c**

**Exp)** Pair 1 is correctly matched. The Nice Agreement was concluded at Nice in 1957. It was revised at Stockholm in 1967 and at Geneva in 1977, and amended in 1979. It establishes a classification of goods and services for the purposes of registering trademarks and service marks (the Nice Classification).

Pair 2 is correctly matched. The Vienna Agreement was concluded in Vienna in 1973. It was amended in 1985. It establishes a classification (the Vienna Classification) for marks that consist of, or contain, figurative elements.

Pair 3 is incorrectly matched. The Locarno Agreement was concluded at Locarno (Switzerland) in 1968. It was amended in 1979. It establishes a classification for industrial designs (the Locarno Classification).

**Q.10)**

**Ans) a**

**Exp)** Statement 1 is incorrect. Marginal Standing Facility is only for banks (not for financial institutions).

Statement 2 is incorrect. Though it is on the lines of the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) but it is not a part of it. RBI's LAF helps banks to adjust their daily liquidity mismatches.



LAF has two components -- repo (repurchase agreement) and reverse repo. When banks need liquidity to meet its daily requirement, they borrow from RBI through repo. The rate at which they borrow funds is called the repo rate. When banks are flush with funds, they park some of their funds with RBI through reverse repo mechanism at reverse repo rate.

Statement 3 is incorrect. MSF is a penal rate and thus not a cheap way and remains higher than the repo rate. Under this RBI has permitted banks to borrow a maximum 1 percent of their Net Demand and Time Liabilities. It is generally at a rate of 1 percent higher than the current repo rate, but it is not fixed and can be changed.

Statement 4 is correct. Banks use this facility only if they exhaust all other means to raise short term funds.

**Q.11)**

**Ans) b**

**Exp)** Option (1) is correct. Interests received by the government out of all loans (internal lending or external lending) form part of Non-tax revenue receipts.

Option (2) is incorrect. Interest paid by the government on loans (internal or external) form part of Revenue expenditure.

Option (3) is correct. Fees, Penalties & fines received by the government form part of Non-tax revenue receipts.

Option (4) is not correct. Borrowings by the government form part of Capital Receipts. Borrowings include all long-term loans raised by the government inside the country (internal borrowings) and outside the country (external borrowings).

**Q.12)**

**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.13)**

**Ans) d**

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

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

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

**Q.14)**

**Ans) d**

**Exp)** Flagship species: A flagship species is a species selected to act as an ambassador, icon or symbol for a defined habitat, issue, campaign or environmental cause. By focusing on, and achieving conservation of that species, the status of many other species which share its habitat – or are vulnerable to the same threats - may also be improved. Flagship species are usually relatively large, and considered to be 'charismatic' in western cultures. Flagship species may or may not be keystone species and may or may not be good indicators of biological process.

**Q.15)**

**Ans) c**

**Exp)** Greenhouse gas, any gas that has the property of absorbing infrared radiation (net heat energy) emitted from Earth's surface and reradiating it back to Earth's surface, thus contributing to the greenhouse effect. Carbon dioxide, methane, and water vapour are the most important greenhouse gases. (To a lesser extent, surface level ozone, nitrous oxides, and fluorinated gases also trap infrared radiation.) Greenhouse gases have a profound effect on the energy budget of the Earth system despite making up only a fraction of all atmospheric gases. Concentrations of greenhouse gases have varied substantially during Earth's history, and these

variations have driven substantial climate changes at a wide range of timescales. In general, greenhouse gas concentrations have been particularly high during warm periods and low during cold periods. These gases have a high capacity for absorbing infrared radiation or occur in significant quantities, whereas others have considerably lower capacities for absorption or occur only in trace amounts.

**Q.16)**

**Ans) c**

**Exp)** Apes Family of India: Unlike Africa in India we have only one species of Apes which even though is an ape yet is not one to be classified as one of the Great Apes (Chimpanzees & Gorillas). It does has distinctive build of an ape-arms that are longer than the legs and the body is tailless. Hoolock Gibbon (*Hylobates hoolock*): It is the only ape to be found in India and is generally seen in the forests of the NorthEast India and neighboring Bangladesh and Burma. The males have a black coat and the females can be distinguished by their lighter coat having grayish color. Hoolocks prefer to live in small groups in the hilly forests and feed on tender leaves, fruits, and insects including spiders. Their main source of water is from the dew which forms on the leaves. The young ones are normally born in the winter months between December and March. The average height of a Gibbon is 3 feet and the arms are normally double the length of its legs.

**Q.17)**

**Ans) d**

**Exp)** In India, 605 protected areas covering 5.2% of the total geographical area. Under this 96 national parks, 509 wildlife sanctuaries, 3 conservation reserve.

These are established under the wildlife (protection) Act. In India, there are 4 important marine national parks :

- Gulf of Kachchh National marine park (established in 1980; Okha to Jodia, Gujarat coast covering 42 islands; area 400 km<sup>2</sup>).
- Gulf of Mannar National marine park (established in 1986; Rameswar to Tuticorin, Tamilnadu; area 623ha)
- Wan door mahatma Gandhi marine park (established in 1983; area 281.50 km<sup>2</sup>, South Andaman)
- Rani Jhansi marine national park (established in 1996, area 256.41 km<sup>2</sup>, Andaman)

**Q.18)**

**Ans) c**

**Exp)** Freshwater community consists of an array of organisms depending on the physico-chemical and biological characteristics of the freshwater environment.

**Littoral zone:** The littoral zone adjoins the shore (and is thus the home of rooted plants) and extends down to a point called the light compensation level, or the depth at which the rate of photosynthesis equals the rate of respiration. Within the littoral zone producers are of two main types: rooted or benthic plants, and phytoplankton (plant plankton) or floating green plants, which are mostly algae.

**Limnetic Zone:** The limnetic zone includes all the waters beyond the littoral zone and down to the light compensation level. The limnetic zone derives its oxygen content from the photosynthetic activity of phytoplankton and from the atmosphere immediately over the lake's surface. The atmospheric source of oxygen becomes significant primarily when there is

some surface disturbance of water caused by wind action or human activity. The community of the limnetic zone is composed only of plankton, nekton, and sometimes neuston (organisms resting or swimming on the surface).

**Profundal Zone:** The bottom and deep-water area of a lake, which is beyond the depth of effective light penetration is called the pro-fundal zone. In north-temperate latitudes, where winters are long and severe, this zone has the warmest water (4°C) in the lake in winter and coldest water in summer.

**Q.19)**

**Ans) a**

**Exp)** Guru Shikar is located at a height of 1772 meters above sea level. This mountain peak is located at a distance of 15 km from Mount Abu in the Aravalli range. It is the highest peak in the Aravali Range.

**Q.20)**

**Ans) d**

**Exp)** The 'slash and burn' agriculture is known as 'Milpa' in Mexico and Central America, 'Conuco' in Venezuela, 'Roca' in Brazil, 'Masole' in Central Africa, 'Ladang' in Indonesia, 'Ray' in Vietnam. In India, this primitive form of cultivation is called 'Bewar' or 'Dahiya' in Madhya Pradesh, 'Podu' or 'Penda' in Andhra Pradesh, 'Pama Dabi' or 'Koman' or Bringa' in Odisha, 'Kumari' in Western Ghats, 'Valre' or 'Waltre' in South-eastern Rajasthan, 'Khil' in the Himalayan belt, 'Kuruwa' in Jharkhand, and 'Jhumming' in the North-eastern region.

**Q.21)**

**Ans) a**

**Exp)** The climate is known for warm to hot, dry summers and mild to cool, wet winters. Winter temperatures are usually between 30 and 65 degrees. Summer months all average above 50 degrees. The warmest month averages about 72 degrees. The cause of this climate is directly related to large bodies of water such as the Mediterranean Sea and ocean currents. During the summer, cold currents keep the climate mild and dry. Ocean currents shift as the seasons change. During the winter the water that was warmed up all summer moves in and keeps the land warm and often brings rain. Plants in Mediterranean climate must be able to survive long dry summers. Evergreens such as Pine and Cypress trees are mixed with deciduous trees such as some Oaks. Fruit trees and vines such as grapes, figs, olives, and citrus fruits grow well here. Other plants include what are called "scrub", which include small shrubs, grasses, and herbs.

**Q.22)**

**Ans) a**

**Exp)** The festival of Sekrenyi is celebrated in the month of February by the Angami tribe of Nagaland. According to the Angami tribe, it falls on the 25th of the 'Kezei' month or February. It is celebrated for over 10 days and is also called 'Phousanyi' by the Angamis.

**Q.23)**

**Ans) c**

**Exp)** The Pithora paintings are done by some tribal communities of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh and are said to serve religious and spiritual purposes. They are

painted in the walls of the houses to bring peace and prosperity. They are drawn on special family occasions as a ritual. Depictions of animals are common, especially horses.

**Q.24)**

**Ans) b**

**Exp)** The Communal Award, based on the findings of the Indian Franchise Committee (also called the Lothian Committee), established separate electorates and reserved seats for minorities, including the depressed classes which were granted seventy-eight reserved seats.

**Q.25)**

**Ans) b**

**Exp)** The settlement of Kalibangan is located in Rajasthan along the dried up bed of the river Ghaggar. As pointed out earlier this area had the largest concentration of the Harappan settlements. Kalibangan was excavated in the 1960s under the guidance of B.K. Thapar. This place has yielded evidence for the existence of Pre-Harappan and Harappan habitations. It shows significant variation from Harappan in the sphere of religious beliefs. Some scholars have suggested that Kalibangan might have been part of the 'Eastern Domain' of the Harappan Civilization. In the areas of present-day Haryana, East Punjab and Western U.P. Harappan sites like Bara, Siswal and Alamgirpur have been discovered. They give evidence of the presence of distinct local traditions in pottery along with the Harappan pottery. Kalibangan might have been a mediator between the Harappan cultural zone and the eastern provinces.

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## Current Affairs Questions

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**Q.1)** Consider the following statements with respect to Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana:

1. Scheme meant for old age protection and social security of Small and Marginal Farmers (SMF)
2. Their age group of eligible farmers must be between 18 to 40 years
3. Cultivable land up to 5 hectares as per land records of the concerned State/UT

Which of the following statements given above is/are NOT correct?

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

**Q.2)** Consider the following statement regarding the food security act 2013?

1. It aims to provide food and nutrition security for 75% of the population.
2. The scheme is run under the ministry of agriculture.
3. Eligible persons will be entitled to receive 5 Kgs of foodgrains per person per month at subsidised prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains.

Which of the following statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Q.3)** Which of the following statements is incorrect regarding Global Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CRDI)?

- a) It was launched by the USA at the UN Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in 2019.
- b) It is headquartered in New Delhi.
- c) It aims to rapidly expand the development of resilient infrastructure and retrofit existing infrastructure.
- d) Its governing council is co-chaired by India and a representative of another national government nominated by rotation every two years.

**Q.4)** Consider the following regarding Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF) programme:

1. It has been launched as part of the STRIVE (Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement) program.
2. It aims to address the challenge of non-availability of teachers/trainers for implementation of various programmes regarding skill development.
3. It's been assisted and implemented by IIM-Ahmedabad.

Which of the following statements given above is/are NOT correct?

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

**Q.5)** Consider the following sentences:

1. National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Act 2019, recognises six systems of



medicine, they are Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Yoga, Naturopathy and Allopathy.

2. National Commission for Indian System of Medicine aims to create six autonomous boards to regulate each of the Indian system of medicines.

Which of the following statements given above is/are correct?

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

**Q.6)** Which of the statements regarding Indian ocean commission is incorrect?

- a) Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) is an intergovernmental organization to foster political, economic and defence cooperation amongst the Indian ocean island nations.
- b) The headquarters of IOC is in Maldives.
- c) The permanent members of the commission are Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Réunion and Seychelles.
- d) India and China are observer nations to the commission.

**Q.7)** Match the following new year festivals and their states/communities

<i>Festivals</i>	<i>States/Community</i>
1. Cheti Chand	Sindhi
2. Gudi Padwa	Karnataka
3. Sajibu Cheiraoba	Kuki (Manipur)
4. Ugadi	Andhra Pradesh/Telangana

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

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

**Q.8)** Which of the following organisations releases the world happiness report?

- a) United Nation Development Programme
- b) World Bank
- c) Sustainable Development Solutions Network
- d) IMF

**Q.9)** Consider the following regarding the AT-1 (Additional tier-1) bonds, which of the following statements is/are correct?

- 1. Additional tier-1 bonds are a type of secured and redeemable bonds that banks issue to shore up their core capital base.
- 2. The AT-1 bonds are used by the RBI for open market operations.

Select the correct answer using the following code:

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

**Q.10)** The Three Seas Initiative (3SI) is a forum of European member states. These states border which of the following three seas?

- 1. Adriatic Sea
- 2. North Sea
- 3. Black Sea
- 4. Baltic Sea
- 5. Mediterranean Sea

Select the correct answer using the following code:

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

**Q.11)** Daporijo Bridge, being reconstructed by Border Roads Organization (BRO) on which of the following rivers?

- a) Brahmaputra
- b) Subansiri
- c) Lohit
- d) Manas

**Q.12)** “Galo tribe” has recently been in the news. They belong to which of the following states?

- a) Assam
- b) Telangana
- c) Manipur
- d) Arunachal Pradesh

**Q.13)** Wasp-76b, has been in news recently, is related to :

- a) The mission is part of NASA's Mars Exploration Program, a long-term effort of robotic exploration of the Red Planet.
- b) It is the name of an exoplanet where it is suspected that iron rain occurs.
- c) It is an inherited genetic disease that causes the progressive breakdown (degeneration) of nerve cells in the brain.
- d) None of these.

**Q.14)** “MACS 4028”, recently in news is referred in the context of:

- a) Exo-planet.

- b) Fortified rice.
- c) Fortified Wheat.
- d) Fortified Maize.

**Q.15)** Consider the following statements regarding Cord blood banking :

1. Cord blood is the blood from the baby that is left in the umbilical cord and placenta after birth.
2. Cord blood banking is the process of collecting the cord blood and extracting and cryogenically freezing its stem cells and other cells of the immune system for potential future medical use.
3. Stem cells in cord blood can be used to strengthen the immune system during cancer treatments.

Which of the above statements are correct ?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) All the above.

**Q.16)** Recently, India has signed defence agreement to procure Negev guns from which of the following countries :

- a) Germany
- b) France
- c) USA
- d) Israel

**Q.17)** Consider the following statements regarding SAREX 2020 :

1. The exercise has been conducted biennially since 2003 by Indian Navy under the aegis of National Maritime Search and Rescue Board(NMSARB).
2. It aims to test the efficiency of operations and coordination of the stakeholders involved in Search and Rescue in the Indian Ocean Region.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

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

**Q.18)** iDEX Framework, recently seen in news is related to :

- a) Framework to boost India's indigenous defence sector.
- b) India-Indonesia defence exercise.
- c) Disaster Management
- d) Controlling piracy on high seas

**Q.19)** Global Animal Protection Index is released by:

- a) WWF
- b) CITES
- c) World Animal Protection
- d) European Union

**Q.20)** Consider the following statements about an Indus valley settlements in Dholavira :

1. It has been included in the World Heritage List for the year 2019.
2. It is located in Khadir island of the Rann of Kutchch, Gujarat.
3. It passed through all the stages of Harappan culture.

Which of the above statements is/are **incorrect** ?

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- c) 3 Only
- d) Both 2 and 3

**Q.21)** Which of the following statements define the term 'Period poverty' ?

- a) Intergenerational inequity.
- b) Lack of sustainable development in societies.
- c) lack of access to sanitary products due to financial constraints.
- d) lack of access to adequate diagnostic facilities in hospitals.

**Q.22)** Crime Multi Agency Centre(Cri-MAC) is under which of the following ministry :

- a) Ministry of Law and Justice
- b) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
- c) Ministry of Defence
- d) Ministry of Home Affairs

**Q.23)** Consider the following statements about Integrated Irrigation Project for Climate Resilient Agriculture :

1. It has been launched by the World Bank and Government of India only.
2. It aims to support small landholding farmers in order to strengthen the resilience of their production systems against adverse climatic conditions.

Which of the above statements are correct ?

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

**Q.24)** Which among the following species is/are listed in the Appendix I of UN Convention on Migratory Species :

1. Great Indian Bustard
2. Asian Elephant
3. Bengal Florican.

Select the correct answer code:

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

**Q.25)** Consider the following statements regarding Wetlands.

1. In India, Wetlands are regulated under the Environment (Protection) Rules, 1986.
2. Wetlands International is an independent, not-for-profit, global organisation that works to sustain and restore wetlands and their resources for people and biodiversity.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

#### CURRENT AFFAIRS – ANSWER KEY

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

#### CURRENT AFFAIRS – EXPLANATION

**Q.1)**

**Ans) c**

**Exp)** Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maandhan Yojana is a government scheme meant for old age protection and social security of Small and Marginal Farmers (SMF).

All Small and Marginal Farmers having cultivable land

holding up to 2 hectares falling in the age group of 18 to 40 years, whose names appear in the land records of States/UTs as on 01.08.2019 are eligible to get benefit under the Scheme. Under this scheme, the farmers would receive a minimum assured pension of Rs 3000/- per month after attaining the age of 60 years and if the farmer dies, the spouse of the farmer shall be entitled to receive 50% of the pension as family pension. Family pension is applicable only to spouses.

- On the maturity of the scheme, an individual will be entitled to obtain a monthly pension of Rs. 3000/-. The pension amount helps pension holders to aid their financial requirements.
- The applicants between the age group of 18 to 40 years will have to make monthly contributions ranging between Rs 55 to Rs 200 per month till they attain the age of 60.
- Once the applicant attains the age of 60, he/she can claim the pension amount. Every month a fixed pension amount gets deposited in the pension account of the respective individual.

**Q.2)**

**Ans) c**

**Exp)**

- Nodal agency: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
- Objective: To provide food and nutritional security by ensuring access to an adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices.
- Coverage: 67% of the population (75% in rural areas and 50% in urban areas)

- Allocation: Eligible persons will be entitled to receive 5 Kgs of foodgrains per person per month at subsidised prices of Rs. 3/2/1 per Kg for rice/wheat/coarse grains.

**Q.3)**

**Ans) a**

**Exp)** CRDI was launched by India and not the USA at the UN Secretary-General's Climate Action Summit in New York, US in 2019.

Source: <http://factly.forumias.com/uk-confirmed-as-first-co-chair-to-india-led-coalition-for-disaster-resilient-infrastructure/>

**Q.4)**

**Ans) c**

**Exp)** Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship programme was launched by the ministry of skill development and entrepreneurship in IIM-Bangalore. The program aims to assist in creating a pool of trainers for enhancing skills in line with the SANKALP initiative.

Source: <http://factly.forumias.com/msde-launches-mahatma-gandhi-national-fellowship-programme-in-bengaluru/>

**Q.5)**

**Ans) d**

**Exp)**

- Indian Systems of Medicine: India has recognized six systems of medicine they are Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Yoga, Naturopathy and Homoeopathy.
- It aims to set up three autonomous boards under the supervision of the NCISM.

- Board of Ayurveda and the Board of Unani, Siddha and Sowa-Rigpa
- Medical Assessment and Rating Board for Indian System of Medicine
- Ethics and Medical Registration Board.

Source: <http://factly.forumias.com/national-commission-for-indian-system-of-medicine-bill-2019/>

**Q.6)**

**Ans) b**

**Exp)** IOC is an intergovernmental organization institutionalized by the Victoria Agreement and HQ at Port Louis, Mauritius

**Q.7)**

**Ans) b**

**Exp)** Gudi Padwa: Maharashtra  
Sajibu Cheiraoba: Meiteis (Manipur)

**Q.8)**

**Ans) c**

**Exp)** The United Nations has released the World Happiness Report 2020. It is released by the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations.

**Q.9)**

**Ans) d**

**Exp)** Additional tier-1 bonds are a type of unsecured, perpetual bonds i.e investors cannot return these bonds to the issuing bank and get the money. They are not used by the RBI as a tool for monetary policy.



**Q.10)****Ans) b**

**Exp)** The Three Seas Initiative (3SI) is a forum that brings together Twelve European Union member states between the Adriatic Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Black Sea.

Members: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

Aim: To promote economic growth, security and a stronger and more cohesive Europe.

**Q.11)****Ans) b**

**Exp)** Project Arunank has reconstructed the Daporijo Bridge across Subansiri river in Arunachal Pradesh. It is being implemented by Border Roads Organization (BRO), an important arm of the Ministry of Defence in Arunachal Pradesh. It aims to link remote regions of the borders with well developed strategic roads. Project Arunank is named after the state of Arunachal Pradesh.

**Q.12)****Ans) d**

**Exp)** The diversity of India gives it a unique identity. It is so well absorbed in every aspect that we can feel it developing on the surface of our souls. One such exotic aspect of Indian diversity is the Galo Tribe from Arunachal Pradesh that exudes a variety of colors in different shades and textures. A large chunk of tribes in the majestic Arunachal Pradesh is occupied by Galo Tribe. In some areas of the state, they are also known as Duba, Doba, Dobah Abors, Galloing Abors, and Galong. Galo tribe has been listed in the Indian constitution as a separate tribe or

scheduled tribe by the name of Galong. The efforts are being made to change the name to Galo by the community.

**Q.13)****Ans) b**

**Exp)** Wasp-76b is an exoplanet that is twice the width of our Jupiter. Its name comes from the UK-led Wasp telescope system that detected it four years ago. It is 640 light-years from the Earth and is so close to its star that it takes just 43 hours to complete one revolution.

**Q.14)****Ans) c**

**Exp)** Scientists from Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune, an autonomous institute under the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India, have developed a biofortified durum wheat variety MACS 4028, which shows high protein content. The wheat variety developed by the ARI scientists group on Wheat improvement, shown high protein content of about 14.7%, better nutritional quality having zinc 40.3 ppm, and iron content of 40.3ppm and 46.1ppm respectively, good milling quality and overall acceptability. MACS 4028, the development of which was published in the Indian Journal of Genetics and Plant Breeding, is a semi-dwarf variety, which matures in 102 days and has shown the superior and stable yielding ability of 19.3 quintals per hectare. It is resistant to stem rust, leaf rust, foliar aphids, root aphids, and brown wheat mite. The MACS 4028 variety is also included by the Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) programme for United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to alleviate malnutrition in a sustainable way and can boost the

Vision 2022 “Kuposhan Mukht Bharat”, the National Nutrition Strategy. An endeavor to tackle the hidden hunger in the rural areas of India is being continued using traditional plant breeding approach to achieve “Kuposhan Mukht Bharat.”

**Q.15)**

**Ans) d**

**Exp)** About Cord Blood Banking:

- Cord Blood : Cord blood is the blood from the baby that is left in the umbilical cord and placenta after birth. It contains special cells called hematopoietic stem cells that can be used to treat some types of diseases.
- Cord Blood Banking : Cord blood banking is the process of collecting the cord blood and extracting and cryogenically freezing its stem cells and other cells of the immune system for potential future medical use.

**Q.16)**

**Ans) d**

**Exp)** India has signed an agreement with Israel for procurement of Negev light machine guns (LMG). Negev is a light machine gun(LMG) with powerful target acquisition. It was adopted by the Israeli Defence Forces in 1997. It has semi-automatic mode to provide accurate, controlled fire in close quarter battle.

**Q.17)**

**Ans) b**

**Exp)** Recently, the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has conducted the National level Search and Rescue Exercise(SAREX-2020) in Goa. The exercise has been conducted biennially since 2003 by Indian Coast

Guard under the aegis of National Maritime Search and Rescue Board (NMSARB).

**Aim:** To test the efficiency of operations and coordination of the stakeholders involved in Search and Rescue in the Indian Ocean Region.

**Q.18)**

**Ans) a**

**Exp)** The Government of India has set up a Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) framework to boost India's indigenous defence sector.

About IDEX Framework: Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) was launched by the Government of India in 2018. It is funded and managed by the Defence Innovation Organization(DIO). It primarily aims at creation of an ecosystem to foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace by engaging Industries including MSMEs, start-ups among others. It also provides grants/funding to carry out R&D which has good potential for future adoption for Indian defence and aerospace needs.

**Q.19)**

**Ans) c**

**Exp)** Global Animal Protection Index : It is released by World Animal Protection, an international animal welfare charity. It aims to showcase where countries are doing well, and where they fall short on animal welfare policy and legislation. The index ranks countries from A (being the highest score) to G (being the weakest score) according to their policy and legislation.

**Q.20)**

**Ans) a**

**Exp)** The Government of India has submitted the nomination dossier of 'Dholavira: A Harappan City' for inclusion in the World Heritage List for the year 2020. Dholavira, also known as Kotada (which means large fort), is located in Khadir island of the Rann of Kutch, Gujarat. It has two seasonal streams: Mansar in the north, and Manhar in the south. It is one of the two largest Harappan sites in India, and 5th largest in the subcontinent. It passed through all the stages of the Harappan culture from circa 2900 BC to 1500 BC. Town Planning: It consisted of a bipartite 'citadel', a 'middle town' and a 'lower town', two 'stadia', an 'annexe', a series of reservoirs all set within a fortification running on all four sides.

**Q.21)**

**Ans) c**

**Exp)** Period poverty is often described as a lack of access to sanitary products due to financial constraints.

Scotland may become the first country in the world to end 'period poverty' by passing the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Bill to make sanitary products free for all.

**Q.22)**

**Ans) d**

**Exp)** Union Minister for Home affairs has launched the Crime Multi Agency Centre (Cri-MAC) and National Cybercrime Training Centre (NCTC). The National Cybercrime Training Centre (NCTC) is meant for professional quality eLearning services on cyber-crime investigation on a large scale to police officers, judges, prosecutors and other stakeholders.

Crime Multi Agency Centre (Cri-MAC) aims to share information between various police forces on heinous crimes and other issues related to inter-state coordination.

**Q.23)**

**Ans) b**

**Exp)** About Integrated Irrigation Project for Climate Resilient Agriculture:

- Launched by the Government of Odisha with the assistance of the World Bank and Government of India.
- Aim: To support small landholding farmers in order to strengthen the resilience of their production systems against adverse climatic conditions by improving access to climate resilient seed varieties and production technologies.

**Q.24)**

**Ans) d**

**Exp)** The Great Indian Bustard, Asian Elephant and Bengal Florican have been included in Appendix I of the UN Convention on Migratory Species. This was done at the 13th Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) in Gandhinagar (Gujarat).

**Q.25)**

**Ans) b**

**Exp)** Wetlands are regulated under the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017.

Wetlands International is a global organisation that works to sustain and restore wetlands and their resources for people and biodiversity. It is an independent, not-for-profit, global organisation,

supported by government and NGO membership  
from around the world.

ForumIAS