

CURRENT AFFAIRS

MONTH OF JUNE-2019



Plot-1441, Opp. IOCL Petrol Pump, CRP Square, Bhubaneswar

Ph : 8093083555, 8984111101

Web : www.vanikias.com | E-mail : vaniksias@gmail.com



www.facebook.com/vanikias

Daily Current Affairs for UPSC IAS Preparation

03.06.2019

1. K. Kasturirangan Committee submits the Draft National Education Policy

- The Committee led by the Chairman Dr. Kasturirangan submitted the Draft National Educational Policy to the Human Resource Development Ministry to replace the extant National Policy on Education, 1986 modified in 1992.
- The Draft National Education Policy, 2019 is built on the foundational pillars of Access, Equity, Quality, Affordability and Accountability.

Recommendations on School Education:

- The Committee also recommends Extension of Right to Education Act 2009 to cover children of ages 3 to 18 which is right now six to fourteen.
- It proposes a 5+3+3+4 curricular and pedagogical structure based on cognitive and socio-emotional developmental stages of children:
 - (a) Foundational Stage (age 3-8 yrs): 3 years of pre-primary plus Grades 1-2;
 - (b) Preparatory Stage (8-11 years): Grades 3-5;
 - (c) Middle Stage (11-14 years): Grades 6-8; and
 - (d) Secondary Stage (14-18 years): Grades 9-12.
- Schools will be re-organized into school complexes.
- It also seeks to reduce the content load in the school education curriculum.

Recommendations on Higher Education:

- A restructuring of higher education institutions with three types of higher education institutions is proposed –
 - (a) Type 1: Focused on world-class research and high-quality teaching;

(b) Type 2: Focused on high-quality teaching across disciplines with significant contribution to research;

(c) Type 3: High-quality teaching focused on undergraduate education.

- A new apex body Rashtriya Shiksha Ayog is proposed to enable an integrated implementation of all educational initiatives and to coordinate efforts between the Centre and States.

The National Research Foundation

- The National Research Foundation, an apex body is proposed for creating a strong research culture and building research capacity across higher education.
- The four functions of Standard setting, Funding, Accreditation and Regulation to be separated and conducted by independent bodies:
 - (a) National Higher Education Regulatory Authority as the only regulator for all higher education including professional education;
 - (b) Creation of accreditation ecosystem led by revamped NAAC;
 - (c) Professional Standard Setting Bodies for each area of professional education and
 - (d) UGC to transform to Higher Education Grants Commission.

Other recommendations:

- The Committee has proposed to rename MHRD as Ministry of Education.
- The 4-year integrated stage-specific B.Ed. the programme will eventually be the minimum degree qualification for teachers.
- The private and public institutions will be treated on par and Education will remain a 'not for profit' activity.
- It also said about the continuation of three language formula in school.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Important Policy
Source- The Hindu

2. Clarification on Three - language formula

- Recently Government issues a clarification on three-language formula, says 'no Hindi imposition' after Draft National Education Policy unveiled.

Related Information

Three - language formula

- The three-language formula for language learning was formulated in 1968 by the Ministry of Education of the Government of India in consultation with the states.
- The formula as enunciated in the 1968 National Policy Resolution.
- It provided the study of "Hindi, English and modern Indian language (preferably one of the southern languages) in the Hindi speaking states and Hindi, English and the Regional language in the non-Hindi speaking States".
- Currently, the three language system is not followed in Tamil Nadu.

Related Committee to Language

- Gujral: constituted in 1972 for the promotion of Urdu language.
- Ali Sardar Jafri: in 1990 to examine the implementation of the Gujral committee recommendations.

Topic- GS Paper 1 – Art and Culture

Source- The Hindu

3. Cabinet clears special scheme for control of foot and mouth disease for livestock

- Cabinet cleared special scheme for Control of Foot and Mouth Disease and Brucellosis.
- The diseases of Foot and Mouth Disease and Brucellosis are very common amongst the livestock; cow-bulls, buffaloes, sheep, goats, pigs.
- The entire cost of the scheme is to be borne out by the Central Government.

Foot and Mouth Disease and Brucellosis

- It is a highly contagious viral disease of livestock.

- The disease affects cattle, swine, sheep, goats and other cloven-hoofed ruminants.
- It can spread when infected animals bring the virus into physical contact with susceptible animals.
- In rare cases, humans are also susceptible.

Brucellosis

- It is a bacterial disease caused by various Brucella species, which mainly infect cattle, swine, goats, sheep and dogs.
- The disease causes flu-like symptoms, including fever, weakness, and malaise and weight loss.

Mode of Infection

- Humans generally acquire the disease through direct contact with infected animals, by eating or drinking contaminated animal products, or by inhaling airborne agents.
- The majority of cases are caused by ingesting unpasteurized milk or cheese from infected goats or sheep.
- Person to person transmission is rare.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance

Source- The Hindu

4. Pension scheme for shopkeepers, traders

- Cabinet clears pension scheme for shopkeepers, traders which assure minimum monthly pension of Rs 3,000 to all shopkeepers, retail traders and self-employed persons after attaining the age of 60 years.
- This is being done as part of the government's efforts to offer universal social security.
- All small shopkeepers and self-employed persons as well as the retail traders with GST turnover below Rs. 1.5 crore and age between 18-40 years, can enrol for this scheme.
- The scheme is based on self-declaration as no documents are required except Aadhaar and bank account.

- Interested persons can enrol themselves through Common Service Centres spread across the country.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance

Source- AIR

5. Exotic Kappaphycus seaweed poses threat to coral reef

- The invasive Kappaphycus alvarezii seaweed, which smothers and kills coral reefs, has spread its wings to coral reef areas in Valai island in the Gulf of Mannar (GoM) and set to invade new coral colonies in the marine national park.

Related Information

Kappaphycus alvarezii

- It is a species of red algae.
- It is one of the most important commercial sources of carrageenans, a family of gel-forming, viscosifying polysaccharides.
- It is very fast-growing, known to double its biomass in 15 days.
- This alga is an introduced species and a noxious aquatic weed in Hawaii.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment

Source- Down to Earth

6. Govt approves the extension of PM-KISAN scheme to all farmers

- Government has approved the extension of Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) to all the farmers in the country.
- Earlier the benefit of the scheme was applicable to farmers having two hectares of land.

Related Information

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi

- It has been launched in 2018 which will provide assured income support to the small and marginal farmers.
- Vulnerable landholding farmer families, having cultivable land upto 2 hectares, will be provided direct income support at the rate of Rs 6,000 per year.
- Income support will be transferred directly into the bank accounts of beneficiary farmers, in three equal instalments of Rs 2,000 each.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance

Source- AIR

7. 'Forbidden' planet discovered in Neptunian Desert

- Astronomers had discovered a rogue exoplanet NGTS-4b also known as 'The Forbidden planet' in with its own atmosphere in the Neptunian Desert.
- The "Forbidden Planet" orbits a star called NGTS-4, which is located about 920 light-years away from Earth.
- This newly discovered exoplanet is smaller than Neptune but three times the size of Earth.
- It also retains an atmosphere of gas.

Related Information

- The Neptunian Desert is broadly defined as the region close to stars where no Neptune-sized exoplanets are found.
- These areas receive strong irradiation from the star.
- Therefore, the planets do not retain their gaseous atmosphere as they evaporate leaving just a rocky core

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Science and Technology

Source- Science Daily

8. Irula tribal community

- The rock paintings in Karikiyoor at Kil Kotagiri in the Nilgiri forests have withstood the forces of nature for some 5,000 years, but in just the last few years, close to 40% of the paintings have been destroyed by trekkers, tourists, and vandals.
- Govt. has done little to stop illegal tourism from defacing the 5,000-year-old drawings at Karikiyoor.
- Recently Irula tribal community Nilgiri tribals tense as trekkers trash priceless rock painting in Karikiyoor at Kil Kotagiri in the Nilgiri forests.

Related Information

Irula people

- Irula is a Dravidian ethnic group inhabiting the area of the Nilgiri Mountains, in the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, India.

- They are scheduled tribe which belongs to the Dravidian family.

Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve

- The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve is an International Biosphere Reserve in the Western Ghats and Nilgiri Hills ranges of South India.
- It was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2012.
- It includes the Aralam, Mudumalai, Mukurthi, Nagarhole, Bandipur and Silent Valley national parks, as well as the Wayanad and Sathyamangalam wildlife sanctuaries.
- Tribal groups like the Todas, Kotas, Irullas, Kurumbas, Paniyas, Adiyans, Edanadan Chettis, Allar, Malayan, etc., are native to the reserve.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- Indian Express

9. New Zealand 'wellbeing' budget

- New Zealand is the first western country to design its entire budget based on wellbeing priorities.
- The budget includes life expectancy, education levels, air quality and "a sense of belonging."
- There will be increased spending on mental health, indigenous welfare and child poverty in a budget.

Related Information

- It is a second innovation step after the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan first floated the idea of prioritising happiness overgrowth in the early 1970s and introduced a Gross National Happiness Index in 2008.

Topic- GS Paper 3– Economics

Source-Live Mint

04.06.2019

1. Mandatory Hindi goes out of draft education policy

- The clause recommending mandatory Hindi teaching in all schools was dropped from the draft National Education Policy by the Union Government.

- However, the revised draft retains the recommendation to introduce a three-language formula from Class 1 onwards; it simply removes the clause stipulating the specific languages that students must choose.
- The controversial sentence appeared in Section 4.5.9, titled 'Flexibility in the choice of languages'.

Original Draft

- In keeping with the principle of flexibility, students who wish to change one of the three languages they are studying may do so in Grade 6, so long as the study of three languages by students in the Hindi-speaking states would continue to include Hindi and English and one of the modern Indian languages from other parts of India.
- While the study of languages by students in the non-Hindi-speaking states would include the regional language, Hindi and English.

Revised Draft

- In keeping with the principle of flexibility, students who wish to change one or more of the three languages they are studying may do so in Grade 6 or Grade 7, so long as they are able to still demonstrate proficiency in three languages (one language at the literature level) in their modular Board Examinations sometime during secondary school."

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

2. UdChalo' Portal

- 'UdChalo' is a travel portal that caters for the personal travel of the military and paramilitary forces personnel by aggregating defence fares and gets exclusive discounts.
- The Army's Paraplegic Rehabilitation Centre has joined hands with UdChalo with an aim to empower the disabled military veterans.

Related Information

Paraplegic Rehabilitation Centre

- It is a nodal agency which provides specialized rehabilitation services for a range of spinal cord injuries to the Armed Forces of India (Army, Navy & Air Force).
- These are the armed personnel's who are medically boarded out i.e. retired from service due to Spinal Cord injury while serving the Nation.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- The Hindu

3. Tiananmen Square Protests 1989

- Recently, China's Minister has defended the crackdown on the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests in a rare public acknowledgement of events.

Related Information

1989 Tiananmen Square protests

- The Tiananmen Square protests, commonly known in mainland China as the June Fourth Incident or Six four, were student-led demonstrations in Beijing in mid-1989.
- These protests are commonly known in mainland China as the 'June Fourth Incident' or 'Six four' or '89 Democracy Movement'.
- The protests were forcibly suppressed after the communist government declared martial law and sent in the military to occupy central parts of Beijing.
- Troops with assault rifles and tanks fired at the demonstrators trying to block the military's advance towards Tiananmen Square which results in several thousand students died in the massacre.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International events

Source- The Hindu

4. Central Administrative Tribunal can exercise the same powers as HC

- The Delhi High Court has held that the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT), which adjudicates service matters, can exercise the same jurisdiction and powers, as a High Court, in respect of its contempt proceedings.

Related Information

Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT)

- It has been established for adjudication of disputes with respect to recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to public services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or other local authorities within the territory of India or under the control of Government of India.
- Part XIV-A of the constitution provides for the tribunals.
- The provision was added through the 42nd Amendment Act, 1976.
- Article 323A and 323B provide for Administrative Tribunals and Tribunals related to other matters respectively.
- The Administrative Tribunals Act in 1985 enacted by the Parliament authorises the central government to establish a central administrative tribunal and the state administrative tribunals.
- The CAT exercises jurisdiction over all service matters concerning the following:
 - (a) a member of any All-India Service
 - (b) a person appointed to any civil service of the Union or any civil post under the union
 - (c) a civilian appointed to any defence services or a post connected with defence
- However, the members of the defence forces, officers, the staff of the Supreme Court and the secretarial staff of the Parliament are not covered under the jurisdiction of CAT.
- The CAT comprises of a chairman, vice- chairman and other members who are appointed by the President.
- The term of the service is 5 years or until the age of 65 years for chairman and vice- chairmen and 62 years for members, whichever is earlier.

- The chairman, vice-chairman or any other member may address his resignation to the president in between his term of office.
- The appeal against the orders of a tribunal could be made in High Court and not directly in Supreme Court.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

5. Government launches new 'Jal Shakti' ministry

- The Jal Shakti' Ministry has been formed by merging the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- The new ministry will encompass issues ranging from providing clean drinking water, international and inter-states water disputes, to the Namami Gange project aimed at cleaning Gang and its tributaries, and sub-tributaries.

Related Information

Ministry of Water Resources

- The Ministry of Water Resources (formerly Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation) is the apex body for formulation and administration of rules and regulations relating to the development and regulation of the water resources in India.

Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation

- It was formed under Ministry of Rural Development, for focused attention on drinking water and sanitation.
- The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation is the nodal department for the overall policy, planning, funding and coordination of programmes of drinking water and sanitation in the country.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- AIR

6. New gender equality index. India is 95th in 129 countries

- A new index to measure global gender equality, launched recently, ranks India at 95th among 129 countries.
- The SDG Gender Index comes close on the heels of the gender gap index of the World Economic Forum where India was ranked 108th.

How the ranking works

- The SDG Gender Index has been developed by Equal Measures 2030, a joint effort of regional and global organisations including African Women's Development and Communication Network, Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and International Women's Health Coalition.
- It accounts for 14 out of 17 SDGs (sustainable development goals) that cover aspects such as poverty, health, education, literacy, political representation and equality at the workplace.
- A score of 100 reflects the achievement of gender equality in relation to the targets set for each indicator.
- The ranking found that the world is far from achieving gender equality with 1.4 billion girls and women living in countries that get a "very poor" grade.
- The global average score of the 129 countries — which represent 95% of the world's girls and women — is 65.7 out of 100 ("poor" in the index).

Key findings for India

- India's highest goal scores are on health (79.9), hunger & nutrition (76.2), and energy (71.8).
- Its lowest goal scores are on partnerships (18.3, in the bottom 10 countries worldwide), industry, infrastructure and innovation (38.1), and climate (43.4).

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Economic Development

Source- Indian Express

7. Indian Navy steps up anti-piracy patrol

- In an expansion of its Mission Based Deployments (MBD) in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), the Navy deployed its P-8I long-range maritime surveillance aircraft for anti-piracy sorties from Salalah in Oman to patrol the Gulf of Aden.
- Under the MBD concept, the Navy maintains a ship at every choke point in the IOR at any point of time.

Mission-Based Deployments

- In addition to the anti-piracy deployment, the IN ships were also Mission Deployed for Operation 'GULFDEP' in the Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf and Operation 'MALDEP' in the Andaman Sea and approaches to the Malacca Strait.

Related Information

About P-8I Aircraft

- The P-8I is a long-range anti-submarine warfare, anti-surface warfare, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance aircraft capable of broad-area, maritime and littoral operations.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source-PIB

8. Crime Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS) project

- The Maharashtra government has decided to upgrade the entire Crime Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS) project, following complaints of glitches in the system.

Related Information

About the Project

- The project was unveiled in September 2015 under Indian government for creating a comprehensive and integrated system for effective policing through e-Governance.
- The system includes nationwide online tracking system by integrating more than 14,000 police stations across the country.

- The project is implemented by the National Crime Records Bureau.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

9. Orden Mexicana del Aguila Azteca: Mexico highest civilian award for foreigners

- Former President Pratibha Patil was bestowed on the highest civilian award of Mexico for foreigners known as 'Orden Mexicana del Aguila Azteca' (Order of the Aztec Eagle).
- Pratibha Patil helped to strengthen humanitarian relations with Mexico is given this honour.

Related Information

Order of the Aztec Eagle

- It is given by the office of the foreign minister on the instructions of a Council established for this purpose headed by the President.
- Pratibha Patil is the first Indian woman and second Indian after Dr Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan to receive such an award.
- Earlier Dr. Nelson Mandela, Queen Elizabeth II (2nd), Bill Gates were honoured with this award".

Topic- Important for State PCS –Awards and Prizes

Source- Indian Express

05.06.2019

1. Centre's New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rule, 2019.

- Several critically ill patients have been forced to line up at the Delhi High Court after they suddenly stopped getting medication following the implementation of the Centre's New Drugs.

Related Information

New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rule, 2019

- It is under the supervision of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- The new rules reduce the time for the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) to decide on a clinical trial application from 180 days to 90 days

for drugs developed outside India and to 30 days for "discovery, research and manufacture" in India.

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare marked "stem cell-derived products" under the definition of "new drugs".
- It also mandated that such formulations be approved by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).
- The new rules require clinics engaged in such "new drug" therapy to acquire a marketing licence.
- Clinical trials are research studies that explore whether a medical strategy, treatment or device is safe and effective for humans.
- Before a drug is launched in the market, it has to be tested for its safety and efficacy.

Central drug Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO)

- Central drug Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) regulates clinical trials under Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.
- The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) is the national regulatory body for Indian pharmaceuticals and medical device.
- It functions under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.
- CDSCO comes under Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

CDSCO is responsible for

- Approval of New Drugs
- Conduct of Clinical Trials
- Laying down the standards for Drugs
- Control over the quality of imported Drugs in the country and
- Coordination of the activities of State Drug Control Organizations by providing expert advice with a view to bring about uniformity in the enforcement of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

2. Scientists edit chicken genes to make them resistant to bird flu

- Scientists have used gene-editing techniques to stop bird flu spreading in chicken cells grown in a lab that could halt a human flu pandemic.
- They use the gene editing technology, known as CRISPR.
- It helps to remove a section of the birds' DNA responsible for producing a protein called ANP32, on which all flu viruses depend to infect a host.
- Cas9 (or "CRISPR-associated protein 9") is an enzyme that uses CRISPR sequences as a guide to recognize and cleave specific strands of DNA that are complementary to the CRISPR sequence.
- Cas9 enzymes together with CRISPR sequences form the basis of a technology known as CRISPR-Cas9 that can be used to edit genes within organisms.

Related Information

Bird Flu

- Bird flu, also called avian influenza, is a viral infection that can infect not only birds but also humans and other animals. Most forms of the virus are restricted to birds.
- H5N1 is the most common form of bird flu.
- It's deadly to birds and can easily affect humans and other animals that come in contact with a carrier.
- Currently, the virus isn't known to spread via human-to-human contact.
- H5N1 occurs naturally in wild waterfowl, but it can spread easily to domestic poultry.
- The disease is transmitted to humans through contact with infected bird feces, nasal secretions, or secretions from the mouth or eyes.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

3. Nilekani Recommendations to boost digital transactions

- Nandan Nilekani committee, appointed by the RBI, had submitted its suggestions on promoting digital payments.

Recommendation of the committee

- To encourage digital payments, the committee has suggested a host of measures, including elimination of charges, round-the-clock RTGS and NEFT facility, and duty-free import of point-of-sales machines.
- Merchant Discount Rates pricing structure: 15 basis points (0.15 per cent) cut on the interchange rate on card payments which is borne by the merchants.
- Removal of existing 18 %import duty on POS (point of sale) machines for a period of three years.
- Reduce the goods and services tax on digital transactions so that the acceptance of digital payments can be improved among the customers.
- Payment systems must use machine-driven, online dispute resolution systems to handle complaints.
- There should be no convenience fee on payments made to government agencies by customers.
- The RBI and the government had to put in place an appropriate mechanism to monitor the digital payment systems and make aggregated information based on blocks, and PIN code.

Topic- GS Paper 3–Economics

Source- Indian Express

4. Serious Fraud Investigation Office
 - The government's financial fraud probe agency SFIO has recommended necessary action against guilty auditors of IL&FS.

Related Information

Serious Fraud Investigation Office

- The Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) is a statutory corporate fraud investigating agency in India.
- It was formed on the recommendation of the Naresh Chandra Committee on corporate governance and in the

backdrop of stock market scams as also the failure of non-banking companies resulting in a huge financial loss to the public in 2003.

- It is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.
- The SFIO is involved in major fraud probes and is the coordinating agency with the Income Tax Department and the Central Bureau of Investigation.
- It is a multi-disciplinary organization having experts from the financial sector, capital market, accountancy, forensic audit, taxation, law, information technology, company law, customs and investigation.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

5. Punjab and Haryana High Court declares all animals in Haryana to be 'legal persons'
 - The Punjab and Haryana High Court has accorded the status of "legal person or entity" to animals in Haryana.
 - It helps them to grant the "corresponding rights, duties and liabilities of a living person".
 - The verdict comes nearly a year after Uttarakhand High Court passed a similar order "to protect and promote greater welfare of animals".

Related Information

- Uttarakhand High Court had also declared in 2017 the rivers Ganga and Yamuna as living entities, a verdict that was later stayed by the Supreme Court.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source-Live mint

6. Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quads) meets in Bangkok
 - The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue which is also known as Quad, is an informal strategic grouping consisting of India, US, Australia and Japan recently met in Bangkok in Thailand.

Related Information Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

- The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD, also known as the Quad) is an informal strategic dialogue between the United States, Japan, Australia and India that is maintained by talks between member countries.
- The Quad (or QSD) is committed to preserving and promoting the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The dialogue was initiated in 2007 by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, with the support of Vice President Dick Cheney of the US, Prime Minister John Howard of Australia and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India.
- The dialogue was paralleled by joint military exercises of an unprecedented scale, titled Exercise Malabar.
- The diplomatic and military arrangement was widely viewed as a response to increased Chinese economic and military power, and the Chinese government responded to the Quadrilateral dialogue by issuing formal diplomatic protests to its members.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Organisation

Source- Indian Express

7. IBC amendments to usher in cross-border insolvency resolution
 - A panel led by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs had suggested adopting the United Nations Commission on International Trade Laws on cross-border insolvency.
 - The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, at present, does not effectively deal with cases involving cross-border insolvency.
 - The government is expected to amend Section 234 and Section 235 of the IBC.
 - At present, Section 234 of the IBC mentions that "the Central Government may enter into an agreement with the Government of

any country outside India for enforcing the provisions of this Code.

Related Information

United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

- It is the core legal body of the United Nations system in the field of international trade law.
- The UNCITRAL Model Law envisages a balance between liquidation and reorganization and provides a framework for resolution in four areas of cross border insolvency.
- It has provided a valuable platform for countries to compare, examine, debate and adopt principles of international commercial and trade law appropriate to their circumstances.
- India is one of the members of UNCITRAL.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- Economics Times

8. Oussudu Lake

- Vulnerability assessment study conducted in Oussudu Lake, Puducherry had shown concern over rising plastic pollution in water bodies.
- The report had highlighted that the canals have become dumping grounds for used plastic bags, thermocols, cups, plates, pipes and bottles.

About

- The Ousteri Lake also referred to as Oussudu Lake is a man-made lake situated about 10 km from Puducherry.
- Tamil Nadu government also announced it as a 'birds' sanctuary, in 2015.
- It is recognized as one of the important wetlands of Asia by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).
- Lake acts as the single largest catchment of fresh water in Puducherry.

06.06.2019

- The vegetation of the lake (ranges from small herbs to trees) supports migratory avifauna as well as native birds during summer and winter.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

9. #selfiewithsapling campaign
- Union Environment Minister launched a people's campaign #SelfiewithSapling urging all to join and plant a sapling and post the selfie with the sapling on social media.
- The theme of World Environment Day 2019 is "Air Pollution"

Related Information

- World Environment Day 2019 urges governments, industries, communities and individuals to come together to explore renewable energy, green technologies and improve air quality in cities and regions across the world.

Some Air Pollution Facts

- 92 Percent of people worldwide do not breathe clean air.
- Air pollution costs the global economy \$5 trillion every year in welfare costs.
- Ground-level ozone pollution is expected to reduce staple crop yields by 26 Percent by 2030.

India Steps toward to curb air Pollution

- India has formulated and launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).
- This is a long term time-bound national level strategy and tackles the increasing pollution problem across the country.
- The objective of NCAP is a comprehensive plan for prevention, control and abatement of air pollution besides augmenting the air quality monitoring network.
- The tentative national level target is the reduction of PM2.5 and PM10 concentration by 20% – 30% by 2024.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Times of India

1. PM to head the committee on economic growth and Unemployment

- To address the twin problems of sluggish economic growth and rising unemployment, the government has constituted two Cabinet committees to be chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Committee on Investment and Growth

- The five-member Committee on Investment and Growth consists of Home Minister, Finance Minister, Minister for Road Transport and Highways and MSME and Railways Minister.
- This committee will be a focussed group to take measures to bring investments and spur growth in the critical sectors including infrastructure, manufacturing and agriculture, as the economy is passing through a highly volatile period.

Committee on Employment and Skill Development

- The committee will prepare a road map to bring the economy (GDP) back on a growth trajectory which will be falling to 5.8% in the last quarter of 2018-19, the lowest in the last five years.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

2. 'Nal se Jal' Scheme

- The 'Nal se Jal' Scheme has been recently launched by Jal Shakti Ministry.
- The scheme aims to provide piped drinking water to every rural home by 2024.
- The scheme is based on the report of UNICEF which revealed that 84% of rural homes have no access to piped water, with more than 70% of the country's water contaminated.

- UNICEF study also showing that groundwater is 12.7 times less likely to be contaminated in ODF villages than non-ODF ones.

Related Information

Jal Shakti Ministry

- The Jal Shakti' Ministry has been formed by merging the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- The new ministry will encompass issues ranging from providing clean drinking water, international and inter-states water disputes, to the Namami Gange project aimed at cleaning Gang and its tributaries, and sub-tributaries.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

3. 2+2 meeting with Tokyo

- India's External Affairs Minister and his Japanese counterpart had held a telephone conversation to discuss maritime security in the Asia-Pacific region.
- The two countries have decided to hold their first 2+2 level dialogue this year ahead of Indian Prime Minister and Japan Prime Minister annual summit.
- The 2+2 meeting refers to a meeting of foreign and defence ministers of both countries.
- India has a 2+2 mechanism with the USA.

Related Information

India-USA: 2+2 Dialogue

- India and the US have already established a new 2+2 ministerial dialogue to enhance strategic coordination between them and maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The new dialogue format will replace the earlier India-US Strategic and Commercial Dialogue.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – IR

Source- The Hindu

4. Economic Census -2019

- The preparations for the 7th Economic Census are underway under the Union Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation (MoSPI).
- It is the seventh Economic Census (7th EC).
- The first Economic Census was undertaken in 1977.
- In the current Economic Census 2019, MoSPI has partnered with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, a Special Purpose Vehicle under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology as the implementing agency.

Economic Census

- Economic Census is the complete count of all establishment located within the geographical boundary of India.
- The Economic Census provides disaggregated information on various operational and structural variables of all establishments of the country.
- Economic Census also provides valuable insight into geographical spread/clusters of economic activities, ownership pattern, persons engaged, etc. of all economic establishments in the country.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Economy

Source-PIB

5. Hoolock Gibbon

- In an Arunachal Pradesh village, locals are planting a corridor of gibbon-friendly trees in a bid to conserve the arboreal species in their natural habitat

Related Information

About Hoolock gibbons

- The hoolock gibbons are native to eastern Bangladesh, Northeast India and Southwest China.
- Hoolock Gibbon is listed as vulnerable in IUCN Red list
- They are mainly concentrated in the Mishmi Hills and are now commonly known as Mishmi hills gibbons.

- The animal is protected in Mehao Wildlife Sanctuary located in Lower Dibang Valley district

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source-Live Mint

6. Tamil Nadu Health System reform programme

- The central government, Tamil Nadu and the World Bank have signed a \$287 million loan agreement for the state's Health System Reform Programme.
- The programme aims to improve the quality of health care, reduce the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and fill equity gaps in reproductive and child health services.
- Tamil Nadu ranks third among all Indian States in the NITI Aayog Health Index which shows improvement in the health outcomes.
- The State's maternal mortality rate has declined from 90 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2005 to 62 deaths in 2015-16 while infant mortality has declined from 30 deaths per 1000 live births to 20 in the same period.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- TOI

7. Equator Prize

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has announced six women from Deccan Development Society groups as the winner of 'Equator Prize' for 2019.
- The award sights DDS sangham women as 'an outstanding example of a local, nature-based solution to climate change and sustainable development'.
- The women of DDS have been selected for this award by her relentlessly work for the past three decades to protect the environment by following the traditional systems. "Consume fresh food grown locally to protect your health."

Related Information

About Equator Prize

- The Equator Prize, organized by the Equator Initiative within the United Nations Development Programme.
- It is awarded biennially to recognize community efforts to reduce poverty through the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Important Prize

Source- The Hindu

8. China launches its first sea-based space rocket

- China has conducted a pioneering launch of a space rocket from a cargo ship, becoming "the first nation" to fully own and operate a floating launch platform.
- A Long March 11 rocket was launched from a ship in the Yellow Sea.
- The launch vehicle successfully delivered five commercial satellites into Earth's orbit as well as two scientific modules.
- The satellites are expected to monitor winds on the ocean surface and to forecast typhoons and other extreme weather conditions.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

9. Dolphins may have died due to environmental conditions'

- A team of scientists and researchers has ascertained the causes behind the deaths of two dolphins which were recently stranded along the shore of the Mukka and Sasihitlu beach, Mangaluru, Karnataka.
- According to the team, the Dolphins could have died due to various environmental conditions such as extreme tidal fluxes, extreme weather condition, solar storms, human activities, illness or injury or pollution (toxic effects of an oil spill).

Related Information

Indian Dolphin

- Dolphins are protected species as per the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.

- The government has also declared Gangetic Dolphin as the national aquatic animal.
- They are listed as Endangered in the IUCN Red List.
- Recently for the conservation of Gangetic Dolphin, Asia's First Dolphin Research Centre has been set up on the banks of River Ganga in Patna University premises.
- India also has a sanctuary for the conservation of Gangetic Dolphin known as the Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary, located in Bhagalpur District of Bihar.

Topic- GS Paper 3–Environment

Source- Indian Express

07.06.2019

1. Reconstitution of Cabinet Committees- 2019

- The Union government released the composition of eight Cabinet Committees, including two new ones — one on Investment, the other on Employment and Skill Development.

Related Information

Cabinet Committees

- The executive works under the Government of India Transaction of Business Rules, 1961.
- These Rules emerge out of Article 77(3) of the Constitution.
- The Rules mandate the minister-in-charge of a department (ministry) to dispose of "all business allotted to a department under" him or her.

These include –

- Appointments Committee of the Cabinet
- Cabinet Committee on Accommodation
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs
- Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs
- Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs
- Cabinet Committee on Security

- Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth
- Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development

Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth:

- The Cabinet Committee on Investment will "identify key projects required to be implemented on a time-bound basis", involving investments of Rs 1,000 crore or more.
- It will prescribe time limits for giving requisite approvals and clearances by the ministries concerned in identified sectors.

Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development:

- The Cabinet Committee on Employment and Skill Development is supposed to provide "direction to all policies, programmes, schemes and initiatives for skill development.
- It aims to increase the employability of the workforce for effectively meeting the emerging requirements of the rapidly growing economy and mapping the benefits of demographic dividend".

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source-PIB

2. Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSSs)

- Union Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has announced that Fee for SC/ST candidates who have joined vocational training under Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) has been waived off.
- This decision was taken to further strengthen the skill ecosystem benefiting those in the underprivileged sections of society.

Related Information

JSSs

- It is established to provide vocational training to non-literate, neo-literate, as well as school dropouts by identifying skills that would have a market in the region of their establishment.

- Earlier, JSS was under the Ministry of Human Resources Development but it has now been transferred to the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source-PIB

3. Autonomous Development Councils (ADCs)

- The 15th Finance Commission has held a meeting with the representatives of the Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) of Meghalaya.
- There are 3 ADCs in Meghalaya namely the Khasi Hills ADC, Garo Hills ADC and Jaintia Hills ADC.

Related Information
Autonomous District Councils

- Autonomous District Councils in the tribal-dominated areas of North East are administrative bodies constituted in accordance with Sixth Schedule Article 244 (2) & Article 275(1) of the Indian Constitution.
- The 6th schedule of the Indian Constitution provides for special arrangements for the administration of tribal area in the four northeastern States- Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.
- The term of the Autonomous District Councils is for five years from the date of their constitution.
- The autonomous district council is governed by an Executive Committee.
- The functions of ADCs under schedule 6 of the constitution includes
 - (a) Making laws on land
 - (b) Management of forests, except reserved forests
 - (c) Appointment of traditional chiefs and headmen
 - (d) Making rules regulating the inheritance of property, marriage, divorce, the constitution of village courts and
 - (e) To undertake development works like construction of roads, waterways etc.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

4. Russia willing to drop New START pact

- Russia President Putin said Washington showed no genuine interest in conducting talks on extending the New START treaty, which caps the number of nuclear warheads well below Cold War limits.

Related Information

New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) Pact

- It is a nuclear arms reduction treaty between the United States and the Russian Federation with the formal name of Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms.
- It was signed on 8 April 2010 in Prague, and, after ratification, entered into force on 5 February 2011.
- It is expected to last at least until 2021.
- New START replaced the Treaty of Moscow (SORT), which was due to expire in December 2012.
- Under terms of the treaty, the number of strategic nuclear missile launchers will be reduced by half.
- A new inspection and verification regime will be established, replacing the SORT mechanism.
- It does not limit the number of operationally inactive stockpiled nuclear warheads that remain in the high thousands in both the Russian and American inventories.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – IR

Source- The Hindu

5. RBI removed charges for RTGS and NEFT transactions

- RBI has removed the charges levied on RTGS and NEFT transactions to boost digital payments.
- At present, transactions done through RTGS system levy a minimum charge for large-value (Rs 2 lakh and above) instantaneous fund transfers and

NEFT System for other fund transfers (below Rs 2 lakh).

Related Information

Real Time Gross Settlement (RTGS)

- RTGS systems are specialist funds transfer systems where the transfer of money or securities takes place from one bank to any other bank on a "real time" and on a "gross" basis.
- Settlement in "real time" means a payment transaction is not subjected to any waiting period, with transactions being settled as soon as they are processed. "
- The gross settlement" means the transaction is settled on a one-to-one basis without bundling or netting with any other transaction.
- The minimum amount to be remitted through RTGS is Rs 2 lakh.
- There is no upper ceiling for RTGS transactions.
- RTGS payments typically incur higher transaction costs and usually operated by a country's central bank.
- Recently RBI extends RTGS transfer timings window for customer transactions (initial cut-off) from 4.30 pm to 6 pm.

National Electronic Funds Transfer (NEFT)

- It is an electronic fund transfer system introduced by the RBI in 2005.
- It has maintained by Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT).
- NEFT enables bank customers in India to transfer funds between any two NEFT-enabled bank accounts on a one-to-one basis(not on a real-time basis as in RTGS)
- No settlements are made on the second and fourth Saturday of the month, or on Sundays, or on public holidays.

Topic - GS Paper 3 – Indian Economy

Source - The Hindu

6. Gujarat launches India's first trading programme to combat particulate air pollution

- Gujarat Chief Minister launched India's first trading programme to combat particulate air pollution on World Environment Day 2019, which has air pollution as its theme.
- The programme is a market-based system where the government sets a cap on emissions and allows industries to buy and sell permits to stay below the cap.
- Being initiated in Surat by the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB), the emission trading scheme (ETS) was designed with the help of a team of researchers from the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC), the Economic Growth Center at Yale University and others from The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL).
- Under the cap and trade system, the regulator first defines the total mass of pollution that can be put into the air over a defined period by all factories put together.
- Then, a set of permits is created, each of which allows a certain amount of pollution, and the total is equal to the cap.
- These permits are the quantity that is bought and sold.
- Each factory is allocated a share of these permits (this could be equal or based on size or some other rule).
- After this, plants can trade permits with each other, just like any other commodity on the National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX).
- Globally, cap-and-trade systems have been used to reduce other forms of pollution, such as programmes that have successfully reduced sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) in the United States. But the Gujarat programme is the first in the world to regulate particulate air pollution.

Related Information

- Emissions trading (also known as cap and trade) is a market-based approach to controlling pollution by providing economic incentives for achieving reductions in the emissions of pollutants.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down To Earth

7. Indian Navy steams ahead with its go 'green' plans in eco-friendly push

- Indian Navy has formulated a plan called as Indian Navy Environment Conservation Roadmap (INECR).
- Under the INECR, numerous policies aimed at reduction of energy consumption and environment sustenance have been formulated and disseminated to all ships, as well as shore establishments.
- The roadmap aims for a reduction in energy consumption and diversification of energy supply as the key result areas.
- Indian Navy has pledged 1.5% of its works Budget towards Renewable Energy generation.
- Solar photovoltaic (PV) projects have been one of the focus areas of the Navy since the inception of the INECR.
- Solar Photo Voltaic (PV) projects consisting of both rooftop and land-based solar panels are under execution at various shore establishments of the Navy under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

8. Election Commission may revisit penal provision on a test vote

- The Election Commission of India may revisit a rule that provides for prosecution of an elector if a complaint regarding malfunctioning of the EVM or VVPAT machine turns out to be false.
- Under Rule 49MA of the Conduct of Election Rules, a voter who claims that the EVM or the paper trail

machine did not record his or her vote correctly is allowed to cast a test vote.

- If the voter fails to prove the mismatch, poll officials can initiate action against the complainant under Section 177 of the Indian Penal Code, which deals with giving false submission.
- Under the Section, a person can be punished with a jail term up to six months, or fine to the tune of Rs 1,000 or both.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Indian Polity

Source- New Indian Express

9. CII launches new Index "Fiscal Performance Index" to measure fiscal performance

- Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has launched a Fiscal Performance Index (FPI) to assess state and central budgets.
- The Index incorporates qualitative assessments of revenue expenditure, capital expenditure, revenues, fiscal prudence and the level of public debt arrive at a more holistic picture of fiscal performance than the fiscal deficit to GDP ratio.
- A single criterion such as the 'fiscal deficit to GDP ratio' does not tell us anything about the quality of the Budget. Hence, the Government should use multiple indicators to measure the quality of Budgets at the Central and the State levels rather than a single indicator.
- The CII has used this index to analyse state and central budgets from 2004-05 to 2016-17.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economic Development

Source- Economic Times

10.06.2019

1. All States, Union Territories can now set up Foreigners Tribunals
- The Ministry of Home Affairs has recently amended the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964.

- This amendment has empowered district magistrates in all States and Union Territories to set up tribunals to decide whether a person staying illegally in India is a foreigner or not.
- It will help to detain and deport foreign nationals staying illegally across the country.
- Earlier, the powers to constitute tribunals were vested only with the Centre.

Related Information

Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act, 1983

- The Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act was an Act of the Parliament of India enacted in 1983 by the Union government.
- It was struck down by the Supreme Court of India in 2005 in *Sarbananda Sonowal v. Union of India*.
- This act described the procedures to detect illegal immigrants (from Bangladesh) and expel them from Assam.
- The Act was pushed through mainly on the grounds that it provided special protections against undue harassment to the "minorities" affected by the Assam Agitation.
- It was applicable to the state of Assam only whereas, in other states, detection of foreigners is done under The Foreigners Act, 1946.

Foreigners Tribunals

- The tribunals are quasi-judicial bodies, unique to Assam.
- It helps to determine if a person staying illegally is a "foreigner" or not.
- When the 'foreigner' has been apprehended by the police for staying illegally, he or she is produced before a local court under the Passport Act, 1920, or the Foreigners Act, 1946, with the punishment ranging three months to eight years in jail.
- The Foreigners Act, 1946 defines a foreigner as a person who is not a citizen of India.

- Section 9 of the Act states that, where the nationality of a person is not evident as per preceding section 8, the onus of proving whether a person is a foreigner or not, shall lie upon such person.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

2. IndSpaceEx: A space warfare exercise

- India is planning to conduct its first-ever simulated space warfare exercise named IndSpaceEx in July 2019.
- The exercise will basically be a 'table-top wargame', with all stakeholders from the military and scientific community taking part in it.
- It helps to underline the seriousness with which India is taking the need to counter likely threats to its space assets from countries like China.
- IndSpaceEx will help us better grasp the strategic challenges in space that need to be handled.
- India took the first step towards developing a credible counter-space capability under 'Mission Shakti'.

Related Information

Mission Shakti

- Mission Shakti is India's test of an anti-satellite weapon called ASATs.
- Anti-satellite weapons (ASATs) are created to destroy or incapacitate satellites placed in low earth orbit.
- It helps towards step securing India's safety, economic growth and technological advancement.
- There are only four countries have ASAT capabilities, US, USSR, China and now India.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science & technology

Source- Economics Times

3. First Trains services opened in the Arctic

- Russia has launched the first tourist train named Zarengold (means 'The Tsar's gold' in German) to the Arctic region.
- The train will travel through Russia's Arctic region on to Norway and take 11 days to complete the whole trip

and allow passengers to discover areas in Arctic region which are difficult to access by other means.

- It set off from St. Petersburg station with passengers aboard.

Related Information

- According to the U.S Geological Survey, Arctic region holds oil and gas reserves equivalent to 412 billion barrels of oil and about 22% of the world's undiscovered oil and gas.
- Russia hopes to become the top economic and military power in the Arctic, foreseeing new trading routes as global warming breaks up glaciers.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- The Hindu

4. e-from ACTIVE: For Weeding out shell companies

- The Corporate Affairs Ministry (MCA) has ruled out any extension of the last date for filing the ACTIVE (INC 22A) form, which was primarily introduced to weed out shell companies.
- E-form ACTIVE stands for Active Company Tagging Identities and Verification.
- In case the ACTIVE form is not filed before the deadline, the compliance status for such companies would be marked as 'ACTIVE Non-Compliant' and directors of such ACTIVE non-compliant companies would be marked as 'Director of ACTIVE non-compliant company'.

Related Information

Shell Companies

- Shell companies include multiple layers of companies that have been created for the purpose of diverting money or for money laundering.
- Most shell companies do not manufacture any product or deal in any product or render any service. They are mostly used to make financial transactions.
- Generally, these companies hold assets only on paper & not in reality.
- These companies conduct almost no economic activity.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- The Hindu Business Line

5. E-Vidhan by Kerala government

- The Kerala Legislative Assembly recently announced an initiative to digitize all its records and proceedings under its ambitious project called E-Vidhan.
- It enables state legislature to go fully digital and completely paperless.

Related Information

E-Vidhan

- The e-Vidhan in State Legislatures and e-Sansad in Parliament are mission mode projects under Digital India.
- The aim is to digitize and make their functioning paperless which means make both Parliament and state legislature documents, including speeches, committee reports, questions and debates available on the internet.
- This will make their functioning transparent, responsive, productive, more accountable and participative to public.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

6. NPP first from North-East to get national party status

- The Election Commission of India declared the National People's Party led by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma as a national party.
- The NPP is recognised as a State party in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Nagaland.
- Currently, there are 7 parties have national party status in India which are:
 1. All India Trinamool Congress
 2. BSP
 3. BJP
 4. INC
 5. CPI-M
 6. Nationalist Congress Party
 7. National People's Party (India)

Related Information

Conditions for Recognition as a National Party

- At present (2016), a party is recognised as a national party if any of the following conditions are fulfilled
- 1. If it secures six per cent of valid votes polled in any four or more states at a general election to the Lok Sabha or to the legislative assembly; and, in addition, it wins four seats in the Lok Sabha from any state or states; or
- 2. If it wins two per cent of seats in the Lok Sabha at a general election; and these candidates are elected from three states; or
- 3. If it is recognised as a state party in four states.

Conditions for Recognition as a State Party

At present (2016), a party is recognised as a state party in a state if any of the following conditions are fulfilled

1. If it secures six per cent of the valid votes polled in the state at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned; and, in addition, it wins 2 seats in the assembly of the state concerned; or
2. If it secures six per cent of the valid votes polled in the state at a general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; and, in addition, it wins 1 seat in the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; or
3. If it wins three per cent of seats in the legislative assembly at a general election to the legislative assembly of the state concerned or 3 seats in the assembly, whichever is more; or
4. If it wins 1 seat in the Lok Sabha for every 25 seats or any fraction thereof allotted to the state at a general election to the Lok Sabha from the state concerned; or
5. If it secures eight per cent of the total valid votes polled in the state at a General Election to the Lok Sabha from the state or to the legislative

assembly of the state. This condition was added in 2011.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

7. NGT stays AP govt's Godavari-Penna interlinking projects

- The National Green Tribunal has stayed the Andhra Pradesh government's Godavari-Penna interlinking projects due to lack of environmental clearance.

Related Information

About The Project

- The project will interlink the two major rivers, Godavari and Penna to solve drinking water and irrigation problems in south coastal Andhra.
- Penna River flows through Anantapur, Kadapa, Kurnool, Chittoor and Nellore districts. But the meagre water resources in the river are not able to cater to the needs of these districts.
- On the other hand, a major share of Godavari water flows into the sea during the monsoon season.

Godavari River

- The Godavari is India's second longest river after the Ganga.
- Its source is in Triambakeshwar, Maharashtra.
- It flows from the states of Maharashtra, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha and ultimately emptying into the Bay of Bengal.
- In terms of length, catchment area and discharge, the Godavari is the largest in peninsular India and had been dubbed as the Vridha Ganga.
- The left bank tributaries which include the Purna, Pranhita, Indravati and Sabari River covering nearly 59.7% of the total catchment area of the basin.
- The right bank tributaries Pravara, Manjira, Manair together contributing 16.1% of the basin.
- Pranhita is the largest tributary covering about 34% of its drainage basin.

Penna River

- The Penna (also known as Pennar, Penner, Penneru or North Pin kin) is a river of southern India.
- The Penna rises in Nandi Hills in Chikballapur District of Karnataka state and runs north and east through the states of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh to empty into the Bay of Bengal.
- Tributaries
- Left Bank - Jayamangali, Kunderu, Sagileru
- Right Bank - Chitravati, Papagni, Cheyyeru

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Major Project (Geography)

Source- AIR

8. New injectable hydrogel may improve stem cell uptake

- Researchers from the Mohali-based Institute of Nanoscience and Technology have devised a method to encapsulate adult stem cells, called Mesenchymal Stem Cells, in an injectable hydrogel.
- The use of stem cells in regenerative medicine remains a challenging task because of problems associated with the survival of transplanted cells.
- Stem cells, when transplanted on a wound site, releases chemicals called Paracrine factors which stimulate other cells in the vicinity to initiate tissue regrowth.

About the Gel

- The injectable hydrogel has been derived from natural materials like cellulose and chitosan (found in seashells) and it biodegrades in about a month.
- The hydrogel was fabricated by connecting an aldehyde group with an amino group, by employing a method called the Schiff base reaction.
- "The hydrogel addresses the issue of the long-term survival of adult stem cells in simulated cultures that mimic the actual body tissue.

Stem cell

- Stem cells are cells that can differentiate into other types of cells, and can also divide in self-renewal to produce more of the same type of stem cells.
- In mammals, there are two broad types of stem cells:
- Embryonic stem cells, which are isolated from the inner cell mass of blastocysts in early embryonic development.
- Adult stem cells, which are found in various tissues of fully developed mammals.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Down to Earth

11.06.2019

1. Pakistan faces FATF blacklist

- The Joint Group of Asia Pacific Group (APG) has informed Pakistan that its action plans on terrorist groups were inadequate after it was grey-listed by the Financial Action Task Force for terror financing.
- APG has said that Pakistan has time until September 2019 to either comply with the demands made by FATF members or it could be blacklisted.
- The blacklisting will prevent institutions like IMF from financially supporting Pakistan which is anticipating a financial crisis.
- Pakistan was placed on FATF's grey list for terror financing in June 2018, on a proposal moved by the US, UK, Germany and France.

Related Information

Asia Pacific Group

- Asia Pacific Group is the FATF-style regional body for the Asia-Pacific region founded in 1997, Bangkok.
- It is autonomous regional anti-money laundering body by unanimous agreement among 13 original founding members.

- Currently, it consists of 41 members including India.
- It is focused on ensuring that its members effectively implement the international standards against money laundering, terrorist financing and proliferation financing related to weapons of mass destruction.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

- It is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 on the initiative of the G7.
- FATF is the global watchdog on anti-money laundering and combating financing terror.
- The FATF Secretariat is housed at the OECD headquarters in Paris.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – International Organisation

Source- The Hindu

2. G20 Finance Ministers call for the creation of digital tax

- The Finance Ministers of the G20 member nations recently called for the creation of a digital tax for multinational technology companies.
- It helps to close loopholes used by global tech giants to reduce their corporate taxes.
- Global technology firms such as Facebook, Google, Amazon and others face criticism for cutting their tax bills by booking profits in low-tax countries regardless of the location of the end customer.
- The G20's debate on changes to the tax code is focused on two pillars -:
 - The first pillar was to divide up the rights to tax a company where its goods or services are sold even if it does not have a physical presence in that country.
 - The second pillar was to decide on a global minimum tax rate to prevent companies from finding a way to book profits in low-tax or offshore havens.
- Britain and France have been among the most vocal proponents of proposals to tax big tech companies.

Related Information

G20 (Group of Twenty)

- It is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union.
- The group accounts for 85% of world GDP and two-thirds of the population.
- They have no permanent staff of its own and its chairmanship rotates annually between nations divided into regional groupings.
- It aims to bring together systemically important industrialized and developing economies to discuss key issues in the global economy.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – International Organisation

Source- Economics Times

3. El Salvador recognises forests as living entities

- El Salvador has recognised forests as living entities.
- Its citizens will now be required to preserve forests.
- El Salvador has lost about 85 per cent of its native forests since the 1960s, while Earth has lost about 80 per cent of its native forests.
- Recognising forests as living entities means humans live in harmony with forests and respect them as more than just property.

Related Information

How the tags of legal entities help forests?

- A tag of Legal entities helps the forests to have a right to be legally protected from any kind of harm or destruction.
- Cutting them without permission could entitle to human rights violation for which they can take legal recourse.
- Recently in 2017 India also became the second country to recognise rivers Ganga, the Yamuna as "living entities".

- New Zealand became the world's first to grant its third largest river, Whanganui, the same legal rights as a human being.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment

Source- Down to Earth

4. India gets its first Dinosaur Museum

- India's first Dinosaur Museum cum Park inaugurated at Raiyoli near Balasinor in Gujarat's Mahisagar district.
- The museum will exhibit remains of various dinosaurs and fossil records.
- It was the country's first such museum and the world's third park.
- Raiyoli is known to be the third largest dinosaur fossil site in the world, and also the second largest dinosaur hatchery in the world, where thousands of eggs had been found.
- This dinosaur museum was equipped with modern technology like 3D projection, virtual reality presentations, interactive kiosks and life-size dinosaur replicas.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment

Source- Business Standards

5. Govt amends 60-year-old rule to grant an extension to Cabinet Secy

- The Centre has amended a 60-year-old rule to grant a three-month extension to Cabinet Secretary Pradeep Kumar Sinha.
- According to All India Services (Death-Cum-Retirement-Benefits) Rules, 1958, the government can give extension in service to a cabinet secretary provided the total tenure does not exceed four years.
- As per the modified rules notified the central government may give an extension in service for a further period not exceeding three months, beyond the period of four years to a cabinet secretary.

Related Information

Cabinet Secretary of India

- The Cabinet Secretary is the top-most executive official and senior-most civil servant of the Government of India.

- The appointee for the office is approved by Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister, based on the appointee's ability and the confidence of the Prime Minister.
- The Cabinet Secretary is the ex-officio head of the Civil Services Board, the Cabinet Secretariat, the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), and all civil services under the rules of business of the government.
- The Cabinet Secretariat is responsible for the administration of the Transaction of Business Rules, 1961 and the Allocation of Business Rules, 1961 of the Government of India.
- It helps in facilitating a smooth transaction of business in ministries/departments of the Government.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance

Source- The Hindu

6. Antarashtriya Yoga Diwas Media Samman (AYDMS)

- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) has instituted its first Antarashtriya Yoga Diwas Media Samman.
- The aim of the award is to acknowledge the positive role & responsibility of media in disseminating the outreach of Yoga in India and abroad.
- The award will be conferred to Media Houses engaged in Print Media, Electronic and (Television & Radio).

Categories:

The award would be given under the following categories:

1. Best Media Coverage of Yoga in Newspapers - Eleven Sammans will be conferred in 22 Indian languages and English
2. Best Media Coverage of Yoga in Radio - Eleven Sammans will be conferred in 22 Indian languages and English
3. Best Media Coverage of Yoga in Television - Eleven Sammans will be

conferred in 22 Indian languages and English

Note:

- International Yoga day is celebrated on 21st June every year.
- Yoga is one of the six orthodox schools of Hindu philosophical traditions.

Topic- GS Paper 1 – Art and Culture

Source-Live Mint

7. National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031' adopted by the Cabinet of UAE

- The Cabinet of United Arab Emirates adopted a 12-year strategy 'National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031' during its meeting at the Presidential Palace in Abu Dhabi.

Highlights of the National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031

- The National Strategy for Wellbeing 2031 aims to make the UAE a world leader in quality of life through a number of strategic objectives and initiatives.
- It also aims to promote an integrated concept of wellbeing, thus supporting the vision of the UAE Vision 2021 and the UAE Centennial 2071.
- The Strategy is based on a national framework of three main levels - individuals, society and the country.
- It includes 14 components and nine strategic objectives, which include enhancing people's wellbeing by promoting healthy and active lifestyles, promoting good mental health and adopting positive thinking.
- The Strategy includes 90 supporting initiatives targeting more than 40 priority areas.
- One of the most important initiatives is the development of the first 'National Wellbeing Observatory' to support the policymaking process.
- Along with the formation of a National Wellbeing Council to manage and coordinate the national strategy, it will monitor a number of indicators of wellbeing in the UAE; submit regular reports to the UAE Cabinet.

- It also proposes training programmes for government employees and launch of the Academy of Wellbeing future generations.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance

Source- TOI

8. France invited India to attend the 45th G7 Summit in Biarritz

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accepted an invitation from French President Emmanuel Macron to attend the outreach session of the G7 Summit in Biarritz, France as a special invitee.

Related Information

G7 (Group of 7)

- It is a group of the seven most advanced economies as per the International Monetary Fund.
- The seven countries are Canada, USA, UK, France, Germany, Japan and Italy.
- The EU is also represented in the G7.
- These nations account for more than 64% of the net global wealth.
- The requirements to be a member of the G7 are a high net national wealth and a high HDI (Human Development Index).
- G7 Summit 2018 (44th Summit) was held in Quebec, Canada.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – International Organisation

Source- Indian Express

9. Study finds pathogens in wild snow leopards

- A new study has detected zoonotic pathogens in the blood of wild snow leopards.
- These zoonotic pathogens (bacteria) include *Coxiella burnetii*, which causes a disease known as Q fever in humans.
- It can also infect livestock.
- Researchers also detected pathogens from the *Leptospira* species, which

can be easily transmitted to humans and cause life-threatening infections.

- Another pathogen detected was the *Toxoplasma gondii*, a parasite that can infect all warm-blooded animals and cause toxoplasmosis.

Related Information

Snow Leopard

- It is a large cat native to the mountain ranges of Central and South Asia.
- It is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment and Biodiversity

Source- Down to Earth

12.06.2019

1. Gujarat on alert for cyclonic storm Vayu

- The India Meteorological Department issued an orange alert over Cyclone Vayu which is expected to reach the Gujarat coast.
- Cyclone Vayu, named by India.
- It is moving towards the North (expected to hit Gujarat coast) and is expected to draw moisture away from the monsoon that in turn will delay the arrival of monsoon.

Related Information

Conditions for cyclone formation:

1. Warm sea temperature of about 27 Celsius
2. Presence of Coriolis force
3. Calm atmospheric conditions

How does Cyclone affect monsoon?

- Cyclones are sustained by very strong low-pressure areas at their core.
- Winds in surrounding areas are forced to rush towards these low-pressure areas.
- Similar low-pressure areas, when they develop near or over land, are instrumental in pulling the monsoon winds over the country as well.
- But right now, the low-pressure area at the centre of the cyclone is far more

powerful than any local system that can pull the monsoon winds moving northeast.

- Thus by sucking all the moisture from the monsoon winds towards itself the northward progress, especially in interior areas, would not be possible till the cyclone dissipates

Different Cyclonic Alerts

- Yellow: Be Updated
- Orange: Be prepared
- Red: Take action
- Green: No warning

Arabian Sea Cyclones

- Arabian Sea cyclones are also relatively weak compared to those emerging in the Bay of Bengal.
- In the last 120 years, just about 14% of all cyclonic storms, and 23% of severe cyclones, around India have occurred in the Arabian Sea.
- Gujarat coastline, where most of the cyclones emerging in the Arabian Sea are headed, is not very densely populated, ensures that the damage potential of the cyclones on the western coast is comparatively low.

HOW ARE CYCLONES NAMED?

- India falls under the southern region of the world.
- A total of eight countries fall under this group and they give names to cyclones one by one.
- The countries involved are Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand.
- These countries name cyclones one by one, which are discussed in the meeting of all countries and then later finalised.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography of World and India

Source- The Hindu

2. Defence Space Agency: New agency to develop space warfare weapon systems

- The government has approved the setting up of a new agency called Defence Space Agency to enhance the

capabilities of the armed forces to fight wars in space.

Functions:

- It will help to develop sophisticated weapon systems and technologies.
- The agency would be provided with a team of scientists which would be working in close coordination with the tri-services integrated Defence staff officers.
- It would be providing the research and development support to the Defence Space Agency (DSA) which comprises members of the three services.
- The DSA has been created "to help the country fight wars in the space".
- The Defence Space Agency is being set up in Bengaluru.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Defence

Source- Indian Express

3. Sashakt panel hails RBI circular making ICA mandatory

- The Chairman of the Sashakt Committee Sunil Mehta has said the new RBI direction making the Inter-Creditor Agreement (ICA) framework mandatory is a move in the right direction for resolution of non-performing assets (NPAs or bad loans).
- RBI recently issued revised guidelines for resolution of -stressed assets - New Framework.
- The revised guidelines came after the Supreme Court had struck down the earlier RBI circular of February 2018 is unconstitutional.
- The circular mandated banks to complete resolution process for NPA accounts over Rs 2,000 crore within 180 days from the first date after default, failing which such accounts were to be referred for resolution under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016.

Related Information

Project Sashakt

- It was proposed by a panel led by PNB chairman Sunil Mehta to help consolidate stressed assets.
- Bad loans of up to 50 crore will be managed at the bank level, with a deadline of 90 days.
- For bad loans of 50-500 crore, banks will enter an inter-creditor agreement, authorizing the lead bank to implement a resolution plan in 180 days or refer the asset to NCLT.
- For loans above 500 crore, the panel recommended an independent AMC, supported by institutional funding through the AIF.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Indian Economy

Source- Economics times + Live mint

4. Pro-tem Speaker

- Madhya Pradesh Member of Parliament Virendra Kumar will be selected as the Pro-tem Speaker for the first session of the 17th Lok Sabha.

Related Information

Pro Tem Speaker

- It is provided by the Constitution, the Speaker of the last Lok Sabha vacates his office immediately before the first meeting of the newly-elected Lok Sabha.
- Therefore, the President appoints a member of the Lok Sabha as the Speaker Pro Tem.
- Usually, the seniormost member is selected for this.
- The President himself administers the oath to the Speaker Pro Tem.
- The Speaker Pro Tem has all the powers of the Speaker.
- He presides over the first sitting of the newly-elected Lok Sabha.
- His main duty is to administer the oath to the new members and also enables the House to elect the new Speaker.
- When the new Speaker is elected by the House, the office of the Speaker Pro Tem ceases to exist. Hence, this office is a temporary office, existing for a few days.

Topic- GS Paper 2– Indian Polity & Governance

Source- The Hindu

5. Action is needed to save West Africa's critically endangered chimpanzees

- In 2016, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) listed the western African subspecies of chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes verus*) as "Critically Endangered".
- It had previously been listed as "Endangered".

Related Information

Chimpanzee

- The chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes*), also known as the common chimpanzee, robust chimpanzee, is a species of great ape native to the forests and savannahs of tropical Africa.
- The chimpanzee and the closely related bonobo (sometimes called the "pygmy chimpanzee") are classified in the genus *Pan*.
- Evidence from fossils and DNA sequencing shows that *Pan* is a sister taxon to the human lineage and are humans' closest living relatives

Topic- GS Paper 3– Environment and Biodiversity

Source- Down to Earth

6. Malaysia has the right not to extradite Zakir Naik

- Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said the country reserved the right to disallow extradition of Zakir Naik to India if he was not going to be accorded justice.
- The Enforcement Directorate is preparing to secure a non-bailable warrant against Naik on money laundering charges.

Related Information

- Extradition is the formal process of one state surrendering an individual to another state for prosecution or punishment for crimes committed in the requesting country's jurisdiction.
- In India, the extradition of a fugitive (accused or convicted) is governed by the Extradition Act, 1962.

- The extradition of a fugitive depends upon the treaties/conventions/arrangements entered into by India with other countries.
- India and Malaysia had signed an extradition treaty in 2010

Topic- GS Paper 2 – IR

Source- TOI

7. Villagers turn to Valasa Devarlu: An age-old ritual for rains

- Valasa Devarlu', the age-old rural festival, has returned to a number of villages in the western mandals of Chittoor district in the face of drought conditions and only a few weeks left for the sowing season to close.

Related Information

Valasa Devarlu

- It is a traditional ritual, and some say a festival, dating back to the reign of Emperor Srikrishna Devarayalu.
- This ritual is popular in about 50 villages of Chittoor district (Andhra Pradesh) bordering Karnataka.

Topic- GS Paper 1– Art and Culture

Source-Live Mint

8. Campaign "CAPSULE" to fight quacks in Kerala

- CAPSULE (Campaign Against Pseudo Science Using Law and Ethics) is an initiative of the Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad (KSSP)
- The idea of CAPSULE was raised after a group of social activists launched a legal battle against a doctor in Thiruvananthapuram who gave advertisements in major newspapers claiming to cure diabetes, cancer and thyroid diseases.
- CAPSULE is working in association with organisations such as the Indian Medical Association and the Ayurveda Medical Association of India.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Social Issues

Source- The Hindu

13.06.2019

1. Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle

- DRDO conducted the test of an indigenously developed Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV).

Related Information

HSTDV

- The HSTDV is an unmanned scramjet demonstration aircraft for hypersonic speed flight which is run by the Indian Defence Research and Development Organisation.
- In scram-jet technology, fuel combustion takes place in a chamber in the missile at supersonic speeds.

Application of HSTDV

- The project will have multiple civilian applications.
- It can be used for launching satellites at low cost.
- It will also be available for long-range cruise missiles of the future.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- The Hindu

2. Education USA India: A New app to help students

- The U.S. Embassy has launched 'Education USA India', a mobile application to provide Indian students with "current, comprehensive and accurate information about studying in the U.S."
- The application will help the students seeking admission to universities based in the U.S. and facilitated their visa process.

Topic-GS Paper 2 – I.R

Source- The Hindu

3. ICAT Releases India's 1st BS – VI Certificate in Two Wheeler Segment

- International Centre for Automotive Technology released India's first Type Approval Certificate for Bharat Stage - VI (BS – VI) norms for the two-wheeler segment.
- This is India's first certification in the two-wheeler segment for the BS – VI norms.

Related Information

Bharat Stage

- Bharat stage emission standards (BSES) are emission standards instituted by the Government of India to regulate the output of air pollutants from internal combustion engines and Spark-ignition engines equipment, including motor vehicles.
- The standards and the timeline for implementation are set by the Central Pollution Control Board under the Ministry of Environment & Forests and climate change.
- The standards, based on European regulations were first introduced in 2000.
- Bharat Stage IV emission norms have been enforced for the entire country since April 2017.

Bharat Stage VI

- The Indian government has decided to skip BS-V and directly move to BS-VI from April 2020.
- BS-VI fuel will bring down sulphur by 5 times from the current BS-IV levels—a whopping 80 percent reduction and would make fuel extremely clean.

International Centre for Automotive Technology

- It is a leading world-class automotive testing, certification and R&D service provider under the aegis of NATRiP (National Automotive Testing and R&D Infrastructure Project), Government of India.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment & Ecology

Source-PI B

4. Reserve Bank sets up panel to examine ATM charges, fees

- RBI has constituted a committee, headed by VG Kannan, Chief Executive, Indian Banks' Association, to examine the entire gamut of ATM charges and fees.
- The committee will review the existing structures and patterns of costs, charges and interchange fees for ATM transactions.

- They also make recommendations on the optimal charges and interchange fee structure and pattern.

Related Information

Automated Teller Machine (ATM)

- It is a computerized machine that provides the customers of banks the facility of accessing their accounts for dispensing cash and to carry out other financial & non-financial transactions without the need to visit a bank branch.
- The fee structure determines the fee consumers pay for using their ATM cards at ATMs of other banks.
- Normally, the issuing bank allows a certain number of ATM transactions for free.

Type of ATM

- White Label ATM - ATM Provided by NBFC (Non-Banking Financial Company)
- Green Label ATM - ATM Provided for Agricultural Transaction
- Orange Label ATM - ATM Provided for Share Transactions
- Yellow Label ATM - ATM provided for E-commerce
- Pink Label ATM - ATM for women banking
- Brown Label ATM- The ATM machine is owned by a service provider but cash management and connectivity to banking networks are provided by a sponsor bank.

Topic-GS Paper 3 –Important Committee

Source- Indian Express

5. *Micryletta aishani*: A new species of Frog discovered in Assam

- A team of scientists from Delhi University and the Wildlife Institute of India, in collaboration with researchers from Indonesia and the US, have discovered a new species Aishani from Northeast India, primarily Assam.
- It is a group of narrow-mouthed frogs that is primarily and widely distributed in Southeast Asia.

- These frogs are more commonly known as "paddy frogs".
- *Micryletta aishani* is currently endemic to Northeast India but it could very well be present in neighbouring regions of Bangladesh and Myanmar.
- Apart from Assam, it is also present in Tripura and Manipur

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Indian Express

6. Phosphine is a safe and effective fumigant claims study

- According to a study by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) scientists, Phosphine may be as effective as the ozone-depleting methyl bromide (MB) in killing insect pests.
- It also used as quarantine fumigant at ports.

Phosphine

- Phosphine, a fumigant in a gaseous form, is normally produced using aluminium phosphate as substrate.
- It is 100 per cent effective against the pests.

Related Information

- India signed and ratified the Montreal Protocol which was committed to phasing out Methyl Bromide and other ozone-depleting substances (ODS) by 2015.
- But the Methyl Bromide fumigant is still used at Indian ports for treating cereals and pulses imported from other countries to quarantine insect pests.
- The repeated use of Methyl Bromide leaves residues in the grains whereas the Phosphine shows no residual build-up in the grains.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Down to Earth

7. Govt eyes reforms to club 44 labour laws into 4 codes

- The new legislation will club 44 labour laws into four codes on wages, social

security, industrial safety and welfare, and industrial relations.

Related Information

- Labour is a subject in the concurrent list of the Constitution of India and both the centre and states can enact laws on labour matters.
- There are 44 central laws and more than 150 state laws on labour.
- NSSO report showed that the unemployment rate across the country stood at 6.1%, the highest since 1972-73. It also showed that joblessness was higher in urban India (7.8%) than in rural India (5.3%).
- However, there is a stiff opposition from labour unions who alleges that Industries are already flouting labour regulations and any dilution of the existing laws will compromise employee's welfare.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- TOI

8. Bancha, the first solar kitchen only village in India

- Bancha in Betul district, Madhya Pradesh is the first village in India to have zero wooden stoves and almost no use for LPG cylinders with all its houses relying on solar-powered stoves to meet their cooking needs.

Topic- Important for PCS Exams

Source- Economic Times

14.06.2019

1. India will have its own space station

- India plans to have its own space station at a time frame for launch would be 5-7 years after Gaganyaan.
- Gaganyaan will be the first manned mission of India scheduled for August 2022 which is launched by GSLV Mk-III launch vehicle.

Indian Proposed Space Station

- The proposed space station would weigh around 20 tonnes.
- It serves as a facility where astronauts could stay for 15-20 days and would be placed in an orbit 400 km above the earth.
- It also provides a small module for microgravity experiments.

Related Information International Space Station (ISS)

- The ISS programme is a joint project between five participating space agencies: NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe), and CSA (Canada).
- It is a space station, or a habitable artificial satellite, in low Earth orbit about 400km.
- The ISS is the largest human-made body in low Earth orbit and can often be seen with the naked eye from Earth.
- The ISS serves as a microgravity and space environment research laboratory in which crew members conduct experiments in biology, human biology, physics, astronomy, meteorology, and other fields.
- It circles the Earth in roughly 92 minutes and completes 15.5 orbits per day.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology

Source- The Hindu

2. Global Peace Index 2019

- The Institute for Economics and Peace recently released Global Peace Index 2019 in which India's rank has slipped five places to 141 among 163 countries.

Highlights of the report

- Iceland remains the most peaceful country in the world, a position it has held since 2008.
- It is joined at the top of the Global Peace Index (GPI) by New Zealand, Austria, Portugal, and Denmark.
- Afghanistan is now the least peaceful country in the world, replacing Syria.

- In South Asia, Bhutan topped the index with 15th rank, followed by Sri Lanka 72
- India together with the Philippines, Japan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, China, Indonesia, Vietnam and Pakistan are the nine countries with the highest risk of multiple climate hazards.
- India has the seventh highest overall natural hazard score.

Institute of Economics and Peace

- It is an international and independent think tank dedicated to shifting the world's focus to peace as a positive, achievable and tangible measure of human well-being and progress.
- It considers 23 indicators.
- The report covers 99.7 Percent of the world's population.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Important Index

Source-Live Mint

3. China launches Internet 'clean-up' campaign

- China has launched a campaign to clean up its Internet.

About the Campaign

- The campaign will punish and expose websites for "illegal and criminal actions".
- It will also punish them for failing to "fulfil their obligation" to take safety measures or the theft of personal information.
- Recently, Internet censorship researchers had found that China has blocked Wikipedia.
- China had previously banned the Chinese language version of the site as well as the pages for sensitive search terms such as Dalai Lama and the Tiananmen massacre.
- China has long been enforcing mechanisms to deter criticism and spread of propaganda against the government.
- Reporters without Border's 2019 World Press Freedom Index ranks China at 177 on a list of 180 countries analysed.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Social Security

Source- The Hindu

4. Cabinet approves "The Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Bill, 2019

- The Bill will replace The Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers' Cadre) Ordinance, 2019.
- The bill provides for a 200-point roster that defines college or university as the unit for faculty reservation rather than a department or subject.
- This bill was introduced after the University Grants Commission (UGC) had announced that a 13-point roster would be followed.
- Accordingly, the individual department was considered as the base unit to calculate the number of teaching posts to be reserved for SC and STs Candidates which was framed after an order by the Allahabad High Court.
- The Allahabad High Court had ruled that the reservation for the SCs, STs and OBCs for faculty positions in state universities should be implemented in such a manner that each department of a university has to be considered as a unit.
- Prior to that Order, the reservation in universities was implemented by 200-point roster which considered the whole university as a single unit.
- The order was seen as a major setback as the department wise reservation would have led to declining in SC, ST representation.
- Further, the bill will also ensure providing 10% reservations to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS).

Related Information

- Recently, the central government had passed the 103rd Constitutional Amendment Act.
- It provides for 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the economically weaker section in the unreserved category.

- It also provides for reservation in private unaided educational institutions.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

5. PM Kisan Pension Scheme: Farmers' contribution to be Rs 100 per month

- Farmers will have to contribute 100 rupees per month under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Pension Yojana that seeks to provide a minimum fixed monthly pension of 3,000 rupees on the attainment of 60 years.
- The central government will also contribute an equal amount to the pension fund to be managed by the LIC, which will be responsible for the pension payout.
- The government approved a separate pension scheme for farmers with an aim to cover 5 crore beneficiaries in the first three years.
- The central government urged the states to start enrolling farmers in the age group of 18-40 years besides taking measures to create awareness about the scheme.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- AIR

6. 54th Jnanpith award

- Amitav Ghosh has been honoured with 54th Jnanpith Award.
- The award was given for his outstanding contribution in English.
- Amitav Ghosh is the first English writer to get this award.
- The notable work of Amitav Gosh is 'The Glass Palace, Sea of Poppies, River of Smoke, Hungry Tide

Jnanpith Award

- The Jnanpith Award is an Indian literary award presented annually by the Bharatiya Jnanpith to an author for their outstanding contribution towards literature.
- The award was instituted in 1961.
- It is bestowed only on Indian writers writing in Indian languages included in the Eighth Schedule to the

Constitution of India and English with no posthumous conferral.

Topic- AWARDS

Source- The Hindu

7. Central India gets its first Sikh museum in Raipur

- A museum exhibiting Sikh culture and tradition has opened in the heart of the state's capital city Raipur, Chhatisgarh.
- The museum, Shri Guru Teg Bahadur Sikh Museum, located at Gurudwara Gurusingh Sabha in Guru Nanak Nagar.

Topic- Miscellaneous

Source-ANI

8. India, US work towards signing 2 more defence pacts

- INDIA AND the US are working towards signing two more defence pacts, the Industrial Security Annexure (ISA) and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation (BECA) to further institutionalise defence cooperation between the two countries.
- An ISA, which is an Annexure to the General Security Of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) between the two countries, will enable the US government and US defence companies to share classified information with Indian private defence manufacturers.
- India and the US had the GSOMIA 17 years ago, which allowed sharing of classified information from the US government and American defence manufacturers with the Indian government and government-owned defence firms but not with Indian private companies.
- Signing the ISA is seen as a prerequisite for meaningful private sector participation in defence production in India if it has to get modern technological inputs from the US in a secure manner.
- The US has also shared a draft of BECA, which will allow the exchange

of geospatial information between India and the US for both military and civilian use.

- Getting accurate locations will allow Indian weapons systems and military platforms to accurately hit their targets. India had responded with its observations leading to a fresh draft from the US, and further discussions on it are expected before a draft is finalised.
- BECA is the last of the three foundational agreement and the only one remaining to be signed.
- The two countries had signed the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in August 2016, wherein both the militaries can provide logistics support to the other side from their bases. Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), amended to meet Indian requirements, was signed last September at the 2+2 dialogue.

Topic- GS-2- International Relation

Source-Indian Express

9. Cabinet nod for Aadhaar as ID proof at banks, telcos

- The Union Cabinet has approved a Bill to allow voluntary submission of Aadhaar as identity proof for use by private entities such as banks and telecom companies.
- The Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019', which will replace an ordinance, also gives a child an option to exit from Aadhaar on attaining 18 years of age.
- The Bill proposes deletion of section 57 of the Aadhaar Act that allows the use of Aadhaar by private entities, while also providing for civil penalties for violation of Aadhaar.
- The bill says that for the convenience of the general public in the opening of bank accounts, it will allow the use of Aadhaar number for authentication on a voluntary basis as an acceptable KYC document under the Telegraph

Act, 1885 and the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002.

- The Bill proposed amendments provide for the establishment of the Unique Identification Authority of India Fund.
- It also confers enhanced regulator-like power on the UIDAI to give directions as it may consider necessary to any entity in the Aadhaar ecosystem.
- The bill is in pursuance to the Supreme Court judgement in 2018 which upheld that the Aadhaar is constitutionally valid but struck down section 57 of the Aadhaar Act.
- The SC had ruled that Aadhaar is mandatory for filing of income tax returns and allotment of Permanent Account Number.

Aadhaar Number

- The Aadhaar number is a verifiable twelve-digit unique identity number issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India to the residents of India.
- It is linked with the resident's demographic and biometric information.
- The Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 provides legislative backing to the project.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Economics Time

17.06.2019

1. India set to join heavyweight torpedo club

- Indian Navy has decided to induct the indigenously developed heavyweight torpedo "Varunastra".
- This will put India in a group of only eight countries that have the capability to manufacture heavyweight torpedoes.

- The weapon has been developed by the Naval Science and Technology Laboratory (NTSL), Visakhapatnam.

Varunastra

- It is a ship-launched, electrically-propelled underwater weapon equipped with one of the most advanced automatic and remote-controlled guidance systems.
- The weapon system uses its own intelligence in tracing the target.
- Varunastra is considered to be 95% indigenous.
- It can be launched from ships and submarines and also from ashore.
- Varunastra can hit stealth submarines underwater.
- The operational range is 40 km and it can carry a warhead weighing 250 kg.

Note:

- Torpedo is a self-propelled underwater missile, launched from a submarine, surface vessel, or airplane and designed for exploding upon contact with the target.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- The Hindu

2. Multilateral instrument to curb tax treaty abuse

- The Union Cabinet approved the ratification of the multilateral instrument (MLI) which helps in preventing tax treaty abuse under the umbrella of the base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) action plan.
- The Multilateral Instrument/Convention are an outcome of the OECD and G20 Project to tackle the BEPS Project.

Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS)

- The BEPS Project objective is to tackle base erosion and profit shifting through tax planning strategies that exploit gaps and mismatches in tax rules to artificially shift profits to low or no-tax locations.
- It takes place where there is little or no economic activity resulting in little or no overall corporate tax being paid.

- The BEPS Project identified 15 actions to address base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) in a comprehensive manner.

Multilateral Instrument/Convention

- It will enable India to modify its tax treaties to curb revenue loss through treaty abuse or BEPS strategies where companies park their profits in low-tax jurisdictions.
- It will ensure profits are taxed where substantive economic activities are carried out and where value is created.
- The US is not a signatory of this Multilateral Convention as it believes that it has a robust tax treaty network that prevents treaty abuse.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source-Live mint

3. Scientists unravel the fungus responsible for Sheath Blight disease in rice

- A team of scientists has unravelled the two Indian strains of *Rhizoctonia solani* (Fungus) that causes the dreaded Sheath Blight disease in rice.
- *Rhizoctonia solani* is a fungal pathogen that causes the dreaded Sheath Blight disease in rice.

Related Information

Sheath Blight Diseases

- Sheath Blight disease is a major issue in rice cultivation.
- It can cause up to a 60% reduction in rice yield.
- It is difficult to breed disease-resistant rice varieties as there is a lack of natural source of disease resistance.
- The scientists have identified several genes and gene families in the strain that might account for their disease aggressiveness.
- This genomic insight is expected to help develop rice varieties resistant to sheath blight disease.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Environment & Biodiversity

Source- Down to Earth

4. Bihar govt launched Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna

- Bihar Government has launched 'Mukhya Mantri Vridha Pension Yojna' a universal old age pension scheme.

Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna (MVPY)

- The scheme covers a person above the age of 60 (if they are not getting any another pension from state or central government), irrespective of their financial, family or caste status will get a sum of Rs. 400/ month directly in their bank account.
- Each person above at the age of 80 or above will get a pension of Rs. 500/ month directly in their bank account.
- The scheme aims to cover an estimated 36 lakh senior citizens who were still not privy to any salary, pension or family pension.
- The state cabinet had sanctioned a sum of Rs 384 crore from Bihar Contingency Fund for the payment of the universal old age pension scheme for the financial year 2019-20.
- Bihar has become the first state in India to launch a universal old age pension scheme.
- In other states, old age pensions are provided only to members of either BPL family of 60 years and above, SC/ST or widows or disabled persons.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Social Scheme

Source- TOI

5. World Investment Report 2019

- UNCTAD has released the World investment report in which India gets \$42-billion FDI inflows in 2018.

Highlights of the report

- Foreign Direct Investment inflows have increased in South Asia by 3.5% to \$54 billion.
- India attracted over 77% of the total foreign direct investments that came to the South Asian region.
- However, the report says that the global FDI flows have fallen by 13% in 2018 to \$1.3 trillion from \$1.5 trillion

in 2017 which is the third consecutive annual decline.

- The contraction was largely due to US multinational enterprises (MNEs) withdrawing earnings from abroad making use of tax reforms introduced by the US government in 2017.
- India, the Republic of Korea, the Philippines, and Turkey are focusing on information and technology zones, while West Asia favours services and most of South-East Asia seeks to attract different types of manufacturing."

Findings in the Context of India

- The sectors which received strong inflows include financial services, cross-border merger, manufacturing, communication and acquisition activities.
- The report ranks India at 10th position amongst the top recipients of FDI in 2018.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

- It was established in 1964 as a permanent intergovernmental body.
- UNCTAD is the part of the United Nations Secretariat dealing with trade, investment and development issues.

Other Reports of UNCTAD

- Trade & Development Report
- The Least Developed Countries Report
- Information and Economy Report
- The Technology & Innovation Report
- Commodities & Development Report

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Important Report

Source- Economics Times

6. Outbreak of Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) in Bihar

- Recently the toll of children suffering from Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) in Muzaffarpur (Bihar) rose to 83.

Related Information

Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES)

- It is characterized by an acute onset of fever and clinical neurological manifestation that includes mental

confusion, disorientation, delirium, or coma.

- It has been caused by several different viruses, bacteria, fungus, parasites, spirochetes, chemical/toxins etc.
- It predominantly affects the population below 15 years.
- In India, AES outbreaks in the north and eastern India have been linked to children eating unripe litchi fruit on empty stomachs.
- Unripe fruit contains the toxins hypoglycin A and methylenecyclopropylglycine (MCPG), which cause vomiting if ingested in large quantities.
- Hypoglycin A is a naturally occurring amino acid found in the unripened litchi that causes severe vomiting (Jamaican vomiting sickness).
- Methylenecyclopropylglycine is a poisonous compound found in litchi seeds that causes a sudden drop in blood sugar, vomiting, altered mental states leading to lethargy, unconsciousness, coma and death.
- Japanese encephalitis virus (JEV) is the major cause of AES in India (ranging from 5%-35%).
- Nipah virus, Zika viruses are also found as causative agents for AES.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

7. Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana

- The Punjab government will launch its flagship universal health insurance scheme.
- The scheme will provide an annual health cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family and around 43.18 lakh families will be covered under it.
- Out of 43.18 lakh families, there are 14.86 lakh Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) families.
- The cost of the premium for families covered under PMJAY would be borne by the Union Government and the State Government in 60:40 ratio and

other beneficiaries cost would be borne by the State Government.

- Beneficiaries could avail the cashless secondary care and tertiary treatment in empanelled public and private hospitals of Punjab and Chandigarh.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana

- It is a centrally sponsored scheme which seeks to provide coverage of up to 5 lakh (per family per year) for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Health Scheme

Source- The Hindu Business line

8. Novel selenium-graphene catalyst for fuel cells

- A multi-institutional team from India has developed a selenium-graphene-based catalyst which is helpful in commercial hydrogen fuel-based cars which require good catalysts.
- The catalyst is more efficient, costs less and also remains stable for longer than the usual platinum-based catalysts.
- Normally, fuel cells use expensive platinum-like elements.
- These expensive metal-based technologies perform excellently for initial few cycles, but then get degraded in performance due to many reasons.
- The oxygen reduction reaction is a key step in the functioning of the fuel cell.
- Graphene modified with selenium atoms in very low amounts can perform like platinum in a demonstrated reaction.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

9. Assam temple bids adieu to rare turtle hatchlings

- The Ugratara Temple of Assam organised a special darshan of 34 hatchlings of the black softshell freshwater turtle.

Related Information

Black softshell turtle

- The black softshell turtle or Bostami turtle is a species of freshwater turtle found in India (Assam) and Bangladesh (Chittagong and Sylhet).
- They are listed as 'Extinct in the wild' IUCN Red List.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

10. Three horses test positive for Glanders disease

- Uttar Pradesh government has been euthanized three horses after a report by Hisar-based National Research Centre on Equines (NRCE) report confirmed that they tested positive for Glanders disease.

Related Information
About Glanders Diseases

- Glanders is an infectious disease that is caused by the bacterium *Burkholderia mallei*.
- Glanders is primarily a disease affecting horses.
- It also affects donkeys and mules and can be naturally contracted by other mammals such as goats, dogs, and cats.
- It spread to humans by direct contact with infected animals.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- TOI

18.06.2019

1. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation meet

- Indian Prime Minister has concluded his two-day visit to attend the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.
- Indian PM has held successful bilateral with China, Russia, Afghanistan and Kyrgyzstan apart from addressing the SCO summit.
- He coined the acronym HEALTH during his address at the Summit, which is a template for strengthening

cooperation amongst SCO member-states.

- The acronym of HEALTH stands for 'H' in HEALTH stands for Healthcare Cooperation, 'E' for Economic Cooperation, 'A' for Alternate Energy, 'L' for Literature and Culture, 'T' for Terrorism free society and 'H' for Humanitarian Cooperation.
- Indian PM also said that India's participation in projects such as the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), Ashgabat Agreement and in the development of Iran's Chabahar port was a hallmark of its commitment to linkages between India and the region.

Ashgabat Agreement

- The Ashgabat Agreement is a pact among Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Iran, Pakistan, India and Oman to build an international transport and transit corridor that facilitates transportation of goods between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf.

International North-South Transport Corridor

- The INSTC is a 7,200-km multimode network of ship, rail and road routes for moving freight between India, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe.

Topic-GS Paper 2–International Organisation
Source- The Hindu

2. India to host UN meets on land degradation in September

- India for the first time will host the 14th session of the Conference of Parties (COP-14) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).
- Environment Ministry also launched a flagship project, part of a larger international initiative called the Bonn Challenge, to enhance India's capacity for forest landscape restoration (FLR).

Related Information

Bonn Challenge

- The Bonn Challenge is a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of degraded and deforested land into restoration by 2020 and 350 million by 2030.

World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought

- The World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought (WDCD) is observed on 17th June every year.
- UNCCD was established in 1994 and the only legally binding international agreement linking environment and development issues to the land agenda.
- This is one of the three major conventions of the United Nations others two are the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).
- The theme for this year is "Let's grow the future together".

India's Position to Combat Desertification and Drought

- According to the report published by the ISRO found that about 29% of India's land (in 2011-13) was degraded, this being a 0.57% increase from 2003-05.
- At the COP 24, India had committed to restoring 13 million hectares of degraded and deforested land by the year 2020 and an additional 8 million hectares by 2030.

Note :

- Goal 15 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) calls for sustainable management of forests, combating desertification, halting and reversing land degradation, halting biodiversity loss.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

3. G20 agrees to tackle ocean plastic waste

- Group of 20 environment ministers agreed to adopt a new

implementation framework for actions to tackle the issue of marine plastic waste on a global scale at the recent G20 Ministerial Meeting.

- The new framework is aimed at facilitating further concrete action on marine waste, though on a voluntary basis, after the G20 Hamburg Summit in Germany adopted the "G20 action plan on marine litter" in 2017.
- Under the new framework, G20 members are tasked with promoting a comprehensive approach to prevent and reduce plastic waste discharge to the oceans through various measures and international cooperation.
- Researchers estimate that more than 8.3 billion tonnes of plastic have been produced since the early 1950s.
- About 60% of that plastic has ended up in either a landfill or the natural environment.

India Step to tackle Plastic pollution

- India Pledges to Beat Plastic Pollution by 2022 on the 2018 World Environment Day.
- India can do it adopting five steps.
 1. Reusables in government offices
 2. Fishing for plastic waste from water bodies
 3. Crackdown on plastic usage
 4. Utilising plastic for road surfacing
 5. Upcycling plastic for better purposes

Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2018

- It recommends a central registration system for the registration of the producer, importer or brand owner.
- It also recommends a national registry for producers with presence in more than two states, a state-level registration for producers operating within one or two states.
- Rule related to explicit pricing of carry bags has been removed.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- TOI

4. 'Operation Sunrise 2'

- India and Myanmar have launched second phases of joint operations called Operation Sunrise 2 along with the Myanmar border targeting camps of insurgent groups operating in North East (Manipur, Nagaland and Assam).
- The strategy is aimed at hitting militant groups that are impacting both India and Myanmar.
- The first phase of this operation was launched in February 2019 when several camps were destroyed in Myanmar close to the border, both in the north and south closer to Mizoram in India.
- Despite the joint operation by India and the Myanmar Army they also fight against the insurgent group, Arakan Army, the danger on the Kaladan transit project.

Related Information

Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project

- The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project is a project connecting the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata with Sittwe seaport in Rakhine State, Myanmar by sea.
- In Myanmar, it will then link Sittwe seaport to Paletwa in Chin State via the Kaladan riverboat route, and then from Paletwa by road to Mizoram state in Northeast India.
- The Kaladan multi-modal transit transport project is viewed as India's gateway to Southeast Asia.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- The Hindu

5. GST Council may give a 1-year extension to the anti-profiteering authority

- The GST Council is likely to extend till November 30, 2020, the tenure of the National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA).
- Besides, the Council will also discuss a proposal to levy GST on extra-neutral alcohol which is used for manufacturing alcoholic liquor for human consumption.

- Extra-neutral alcohol is a derivative of sugarcane molasses and is not alcoholic liquor for human consumption but can be used as a raw material or input after processing and substantial dilution in the production of whisky, gin, country liquor.

Related Information

National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA)

- It has been constituted under Section 171 of the Central Goods and Services Tax Act, 2017.
- Its main function is to ensure that the reduction in the rate of tax or the benefit of the input tax credit is passed on to the recipient by way of commensurate reduction in prices.
- It is also responsible to examine and check such profiteering activities and recommend punitive actions including the cancellation of licenses.
- In the context of the GST, profiteering means that traders are not reducing the prices of the commodities when the GST Council reduces the tax rates of commodities and services.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- The Hindu

6. Qualifying for Leader of the Opposition

- The Member of Parliament took oath after the result of 17th Lok Sabha but there is uncertainty over the selection of a formally recognised Opposition party and the Leader of Opposition in the 17th Lok Sabha.
- There is no provision in the Constitution or in the Lok Sabha Rules of Procedure in regard to the recognition of the Leader of Opposition.

Leader of the Opposition

- In each House of Parliament, there is the 'Leader of the Opposition'.
- The leader of the largest Opposition party having not less than one-tenth seats of the total strength of the House is recognised as the leader of

the Opposition in that House ((55 in the Lok Sabha, which is a 543-member house).

- The 10% condition for LoP has been incorporated in Direction 121(1) in Parliament (Facilities) Act 1998.
- In a parliamentary system of government, the leader of the opposition has a significant role to play.
- As a member of the selection panel, the Leader of the Opposition has a crucial role in deciding key appointments such as CBI Director, Chief Vigilance Commissioner (CVC), the anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal, Chief information commissioner and the chairperson of the NHRC.
- The leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha were accorded statutory recognition in 1977.
- In USA Leader of Opposition is known as the 'minority leader'.
- It was in 1969 that an official leader of the opposition was recognised for the first time.
- They are also entitled to the salary, allowances and other facilities equivalent to that of a cabinet minister.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Indian Polity

Source- Indian Express

7. DoT panel approves the levy of penalty on Airtel, Vodafone, Idea

- The Digital Communications Commission has given its approval for imposing a penalty on Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea for denial of interconnection to Reliance Jio when the latter had entered the market.

Related Information

- In September 2018 Cabinet has approved the National Digital Communications Policy-2018 (NDCP-2018) and re-designation of the Telecom Commission as the "Digital Communications Commission".

- The new National Digital Communications Policy - 2018 has been formulated, in place of the existing National Telecom Policy-2012, to cater to the modern needs of the digital communications sector of India.

Impact:

- The NDCCP-2018 envisions supporting India's transition to a digitally empowered economy and society by fulfilling the information and communications needs of citizens and enterprises by the establishment of a ubiquitous, resilient and affordable digital communications infrastructure and services.

Digital Communications Commission (Erstwhile Telecom Commission)

- The Telecom Commission was set up by the Government of India in 1989 with administrative and financial powers of the Government of India to deal with various aspects of Telecommunications.
- The Government in October 2018, has re-designated the 'Telecom Commission' as the 'Digital Communications Commission'.
- The Digital Communications Commission consists of a Chairman, four full-time members, who are ex-officio Secretaries to the Government of India in the Department of Telecommunications.

Functions

- Formulating the policy of Department of Telecommunications for approval of the Government;
- Preparing the budget for the Department of Telecommunications for each financial year and getting it approved by the Government
- Implementation of the Government's policy in all matters concerning telecommunication.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu Business Line

19.06.2019

1. Heritage site status for Coringa mangroves likely

- The A.P. government has begun the process to get UNESCO's World Heritage Site status for Godavari Mangroves at Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, near Kakinada.
- Godavari Mangroves is the second largest mangroves in India.

Related Information

Mangroves

- Mangroves are shrubs or small trees that grow in coastal saline or brackish water.
- They are salt tolerant trees, also called halophytes, and are adapted to harsh coastal conditions.
- They contain a complex salt filtration system and complex root system to cope with salt water immersion and wave action.
- They are adapted to the low oxygen (anoxic) conditions of waterlogged mud.
- They produce pneumatophores (blind roots) to overcome the respiration problem in the anaerobic soil conditions.
- Mangroves occur worldwide in the tropics and subtropics, mainly between latitudes 25° N and 25° S.
- Mangroves exhibit Viviparity mode of reproduction. i.e. seeds germinate in the tree itself (before falling to the ground).

Mangroves in India

- (a) Godavari-Krishna
- (b) Sundarbans (West Bengal)- is considered as the largest mangrove forest in the world
- (c) Islands in the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal
- (d) Andaman and Nicobar Islands
- (e) Gulf of Kutch in Gujarat
- (f) Bhitarkanika Mangroves
- (g) Godavari-Krishna mangroves.

(h) Pichavaram Mangrove Forest (Tamilnadu)- second largest mangrove forest in the world

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

2. World's Highest Operating Weather Stations Installed On Mount Everest

- The National Geographic Society has announced the successful installation of the world's highest operating weather stations on Mount Everest.
- It will help to get real-time information about mountain conditions to researchers, climbers, and the public.
- The weather station will also record data on temperature, relative humidity, barometric pressure, wind speed, and wind direction.
- The analysis from these stations will also help to reveal how monsoon patterns will change in India.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- Indian Express

3. Niti's new road map: Only electric vehicles to be sold after 2030

- The government's think tank NITI Aayog has proposed that only electric vehicles should be sold after 2030.
- Cabinet note, seeking to fix responsibility for different ministries, with the road transport and highways ministry, proposed to prepare a framework to phase out the sale of diesel and petrol vehicles by 2030.
- Earlier, a panel headed by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant had suggested that only electric-powered three-wheelers and two-wheelers with engine capacity of up to 150 cc should be sold from 2025.
- The proposals are part of the plan to manufacture 50 Gigawatt hour (GWh) batteries by 2030.

Related Information

- Recently, the Union Cabinet approved the proposal for the implementation of 'Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India Phase II (FAME India Phase II)'.

- The scheme will be implemented over a period of three years with effect from 1st April 2019.
- The FAME II is an expanded version of FAME I, launched in 2015 which aimed to support hybrid/electric vehicles market development and Manufacturing ecosystem.
- FAME scheme is under Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Economics Times

4. AWaRe: A tool for safer use of antibiotics, curb resistance

- WHO has launched a global campaign that urges countries to adopt its new online tool called "AWaRe".
- The tool aimed at guiding policy-makers and health workers to use antibiotics safely and more effectively.
- It's another objective is to limit drugs that are at risk of resistance.
- The tool, known as 'AWaRe', classifies antibiotics into three groups:
 - (a) Access — antibiotics used to treat the most common and serious infections
 - (b) Watch — antibiotics available at all times in the healthcare system
 - (c) Reserve — antibiotics to be used sparingly or preserved and used only as a last resort
- The campaign aims to achieve a 60 per cent increase in the use of antibiotics under the Access group cheap, 'narrow-spectrum' drugs (that target a specific microorganism rather than several) and also lower the risk of resistance.
- It also reduces the use of the antibiotics most at risk of resistance from the Watch and Reserve groups.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Health issues

Source- Down To Earth

5. India accounts for 6.3% of global fish production

- According to the Fisheries Department, India is the second

largest fish producing country in the world as it accounts for 6.3 per cent of the global fish production.

- The fisheries sector in the country is growing at a rate of 7 per cent, sustaining 14.5 million fishermen.
- There is a huge potential in harnessing tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
- 30 per cent of the Indian EEZ is spread across the Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands, but only 1 per cent comprises the production of tuna fish.

Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

- It is an intergovernmental organization that coordinates the regulation and management of tuna in the Indian Ocean.
- A multilateral treaty, the Agreement for the Establishment of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission was approved by the Council of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in November 1993.
- The agreement entered into force on 27 March 1996 after it had been accepted by a tenth party.
- The Agreement is open to any state that has coasts within the Indian Ocean region (or adjacent seas) as well as any state that fishes for tuna in the Indian Ocean region.
- The agreement is also open to regional economic organizations.
- The IOTC is the successor to the Indo-Pacific Tuna Development and Management Programme, which was established in 1982.
- There are 31 members of IOTC.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Environment & Biodiversity

Source- Business Standards

6. Om Birla unanimously elected as Speaker of 17th Lok Sabha

Related Information

Speaker of Lok Sabha

- The Speaker is elected by the Lok Sabha from amongst its members (as soon as may be, after its first sitting).
- The date of election of the Speaker is fixed by the President.

Role, Powers and Functions

- The Speaker is the head of the Lok Sabha and its representative.
- He is the guardian of powers and privileges of the members, the House as a whole and its committees.
- The Speaker of the Lok Sabha derives his powers and duties from three sources, that is, the Constitution of India, the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of Lok Sabha, and Parliamentary Conventions (residuary powers that are unwritten or unspecified in the Rules).
- He presides over a joint sitting of the two Houses of Parliament when the sitting is summoned by the President to settle a deadlock between the two Houses on a bill.
- He decides whether a bill is a money bill or not and his decision on this question is final.
- He decides the questions of disqualification of a member of the Lok Sabha, arising on the ground of defection under the provisions of the Tenth Schedule.
- In 1992, the Supreme Court ruled that the decision of the Speaker in this regard is subject to judicial review.
- He acts as the ex-officio chairman of the Indian Parliamentary Group which acts as a link between the Parliament of India and the various parliaments of the world.
- He also acts as the ex-officio chairman of the conference of presiding officers of legislative bodies in the country.
- He appoints the chairman of all the parliamentary committees of the Lok Sabha and supervises their functioning.
- He is the chairman of the Business Advisory Committee, the Rules

Committee and the General Purpose Committee.

- His salaries and allowances are fixed by Parliament and charged on the Consolidated Fund of India and thus are not subject to the annual vote of Parliament.
- He is placed at seventh rank, along with the Chief Justice of India which means he has a higher rank than all cabinet ministers, except the Prime Minister or Deputy Prime Minister.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- AIR

7. Piped water at every rural home by 2024

- The government announced to roll out a new mission to ensure “Nal se Jal” (water from the tap) for each house in villages in the next five years i.e by 2024.
- Under the Jal Jeevan Mission, both ground and surface water will be used to meet the requirement.
- The quality of water sources both surface and ground sources is hardly suited to drinking.
- According to NITI Aayog, nearly 70 per cent of all of the country's fresh water sources is contaminated.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

8. Libra is Facebook's cryptocurrency

- Facebook has decided to launch a crypt currency called Libra.
- The currency is designed not to be a speculative asset, like Bitcoin, but a form of digital money backed by a reserve of assets.

Related Information

- The Marshall Islands has also decided to launch “Sovereign” (SOV), a cryptocurrency which can be used as a legal tender.
- In 2018, Venezuela launched Petro, becoming the first country to officially launch its own cryptocurrency.

Crypto Currency

- Cryptocurrency is an encrypted decentralized digital currency

transferred between peers and confirmed in a public ledger via a process known as mining.

- Some important cryptocurrencies are Bitcoins, Litecoin, Namecoin, Swiftcoin, Bytcoin, Gridcoin
- Cryptocurrency is not a legal tender in India.
- According to recent studies, it is found that the use of Bitcoin, a popular virtual currency emits over 22 megatons of carbon dioxide annually.
- The power consumption of hardware behind the bitcoin network is about 46 TWh (Terra Watts).

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- The Hindu

9. SEBI allows futures on commodity indices

- SEBI has allowed exchanges with commodity derivatives segment to launch futures contracts on commodity indices.

Related Information

Futures contracts

- It is a standardized forward contract, a legal agreement to buy or sell something at a predetermined price at a specified time in the future, between parties not known to each other.
- The asset transacted is usually a commodity or financial instrument.
- The predetermined price the parties agree to buy and sell the asset for is known as the forward price. The specified time in the future which is when delivery and payment occur is known as the delivery date.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- The Hindu

20.06.2019

1. India to host international workshop on piracy-related issues with ReCAAP

- The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) will be co-hosting an international workshop

in cooperation with the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) Information Sharing Centre (ISC).

- The aims of the workshop to deepen knowledge on issues related to piracy and armed robbery.

Related Information

ReCAAP

- It is the first regional Government-to-Government agreement to deal with piracy and armed robbery at sea in Asia.
- Presently, 20 countries are members of the ReCAAP.
- Information sharing, capacity building and mutual legal assistance are the three pillars of co-operation under the ReCAAP agreement.
- An ISC has been established at Singapore to collate and disseminate the information among the contracting parties and the maritime community.
- India played an active role in the setting up and functioning of ReCAAPISC along with Japan and Singapore.

Topic- GS Paper 3- Defence

Source- TOI

2. U.P. site expected to get 'national importance' tag

- Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has started the process of declaring the site at Sadikpur Sinauli of national importance.
- It is the largest necropolis site of late Harappan age.
- Earlier it was thought that there was no warrior class group during Harappan age but after the excavation of this site, ASI found chariots, swords and other objects pointing to the presence of a warrior class around 4,000 years ago in Uttar Pradesh's Baghpat district.

Other Important Harapan Site in Uttar Pradesh

- Sanauli in Baghpat District famous for burial site with 125 burials found.
- Sothi near Baraut Bagpat district
- Mandi Muzaffarnagar district
- Bargaon Saharanpur District

Topic- GS Paper 1- Art and Culture

Source- The Hindu

3. First Water clinic for elephants opens in Mathura
- India has opened its first specialised hydrotherapy treatment for elephants suffering from arthritis, joint pain and foot ailments, near the Wildlife SOS' Elephant Conservation and Care Centre (ECCC) in Mathura.

Related Information

Elephant Conservation and Care Centre (ECCC)

- It is established by Wildlife SOS in collaboration with Uttar Pradesh Forest Department.
- It currently houses several rescued elephants who were rescued from circuses and from cruel owners who were in illegal possession of these elephants.

Topic- GS Paper 2- Governance

Source- The Hindu

4. Kaleshwaram, Bahubali of irrigation plans, set to flow

- Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project is a multipurpose irrigation project on Godavari River in Kaleshwaram, Telangana.
- The project was earlier known as the Pranahita-Chevella Lift Irrigation Project.

Related Information

Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project

- The project is at the confluence Point of Pranahita River and Godavari River i.e., at Kaleshwaram village in Telangana.
- It is Billed as 'Bahubali' of lift irrigation projects in the world.

- Pranahita River in itself is a confluence of various other smaller tributaries like Wardha, Penganga and Wainganga Rivers.

Lift Irrigation

- It is a method of irrigation in which water instead of being transported by natural flow (as in gravity-fed canal systems) requires external energy through fuel based or electric power using pumps or other mechanical means.

Topic- GS Paper 1-Geography

Source- The Hindu Business Line

5. Bangladesh has emerged as the fastest growing economy among 45 countries of the Asia-Pacific region

- Bangladesh has emerged as the fastest growing economy among the 45 countries of the Asia-Pacific region according to the Asian Development Bank (ADB).
- In the financial year, 2018-19 Bangladesh attained a growth rate of 7.9 % which is its fastest rate since 1974.
- The bank predicted that the growth will be 8% in the next financial year.

Topic- GS Paper 3-Economy

Source- AI R

6. 20th Meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council

- The 20th Meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) was held under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs.

Related Information

FSDC

- It is a super regulatory body for regulating the financial sector which is vital for bringing the healthy and efficient financial system in economy of the country set up in 2010.
- Its mandate is to strengthen and institutionalise mechanism of maintaining financial stability, financial sector development, and

interregulatory coordination along with monitoring macro-prudential regulation of the economy.

- Union Finance Minister is chairman of FSDC.
- Its members are heads of financial sector regulatory authorities (i.e, RBI, SEBI, IRDA, PFRDA), Finance Secretary and Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs; Secretary, Department of Financial Services, and Chief Economic Adviser.

Topic- GS Paper 2- Governance

Source- The Hindu

7. EAC-PM releases a detailed analysis on the robustness of India's GDP estimation methodology

- The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister released a detailed note titled 'GDP estimation in India- Perspectives and Facts'.
- The note provides a clear rationale for India's switch to an improved GDP estimation methodology in January 2015.
- The new methodology that uses 2011-12 as the base year includes two major improvements,
 - a) Incorporation of MCA21 database, and
 - b) Incorporation of the Recommendations of System of National Accounts (SNA), 2008.

Related Information

Prime Minister's Economic Advisory Council

- It is a non-constitutional and non-statutory, non-permanent and independent body.
- The prime and sole aim to analyse all critical issues, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the prime minister and advising him thereon.
- It advises the Prime Minister on economic issues like inflation, microfinance, export-import changes, GDP changes and industrial output.

- Bibek Debroy is the current chairman of the current EAC.

Functions

- It submits periodic reports to PM related to macroeconomic developments and issues which will have implications of the economic policy.
- Analyse any topics, issues assigned by the PM and provide advice to them.
- Analyse macroeconomic issues having high importance and present the views to PM and any other task which is assigned by Prime Minister.

Topic- GS Paper 2- Governance

Source- The Hindu

8. Cancer cell detection 'dots' developed from coal

- A team of scientists in Assam has developed a chemical process that turns 'dirty' coal into a biomedical 'dot' to help detect cancer cells.
- It has applied for a patent for their chemical method of producing carbon quantum dots (CQDs) from cheap, abundant, low-quality and high-sulphur coals.

Related Information

Carbon quantum dots

- CQDs are carbon-based nanomaterials whose size is less than 10 nm, or nanometre.
- "Carbon-based non-materials are used as diagnostic tools for bio-imaging, especially in detecting cancer cells, for chemical sensing and in optoelectronics.

Topic-GS Paper 3-Science & Technology

Source- The Hindu

21.06.2019

1. World Refugee Day: 20th June

- It has been observed on 20th June every year help to seeks to draw the public's attention to the millions of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide.

Related Information

UN's Refugee Convention

- The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, also known as the 1951 Refugee Convention, is a United Nations multilateral treaty that defines who a refugee is, and sets out the rights of individuals who are granted asylum & the responsibilities of nations that grant asylum.
- India is not a party to the Refugee Convention.
- The cornerstone of the 1951 Convention is the principle of non-refoulement.
- The Refugee Convention builds on Article 14 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which recognizes the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution in other countries. A refugee may enjoy rights and benefits in a state in addition to those provided for in the Convention.
- Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are people who have not crossed an international border but have moved to a different region than the one they call home within their own country.
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, established in 1950 is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide

Topic-GS Paper 3- Important Convention
Source- TOI

2. Indian scientists develop a more potent Anthrax vaccine

- A group of Indian scientists have developed a new vaccine against anthrax.
- It is claimed to be superior over existing vaccines as it can generate an immune response to anthrax toxin as well as its spores rather than the toxin alone.

Related Information

Anthrax

- It is a deadly human disease caused by bacterium *Bacillus anthracis* that

also infects animals like horses, sheep, cattle and goats.

- Humans, pigs and dogs are comparatively less susceptible and only get infected if exposed to a copious amount of spores.
- In 2001, these spores were used as agents of bioterrorism when letters containing anthrax spores were sent to some people in America, leading to widespread panic.
- Spores of the bacterium that causes anthrax are present in soil and can stay in latent form for years.
- However, under favourable environmental conditions, they become active and start to infect. Often, animals pick up spores while grazing, following which spores germinate in their body and produce toxins.

Topic-GS Paper 3-Science & Technology
Source- Indian Express

3. RBI panel on MSMEs suggests Rs 20 lakh collateral-free loan under Mudra

- RBI expert committee on MSMEs has recommended doubling the cap on collateral-free loans to Rs 20 lakh from the current Rs 10 lakh.
- This will be extended to borrowers falling under the Mudra scheme, self-help groups, and MSMEs said a person privy to the development.
- If the central bank approves the recommendation, the banking regulator will have to amend its July 1, 2010, circular that prescribes a maximum Rs 10 lakh for collateral-free loans.
- The proposal is part of a report prepared by the eight-member RBI committee tasked with reviewing the current framework for the MSME sector.
- The panel, headed by former Securities and Exchange Board of India chairman U K Sinha.
- The committee is learnt to have suggested various long-term solutions

for the economic and financial sustainability of MSMEs.

- The report has also mentioned mainstreaming the restructuring of stressed loans.

Related Information

Definition of MSME (According to 2006)

(i) Manufacturing Units

- investment below Rs. 25 lakh were termed micro, those between Rs 25 lakh and Rs 5 crore termed small, and from Rs 5 crore to Rs 10 crore medium.

(ii) Service Units

- investment up to Rs 10 lakh for micro, Rs 10 lakh-2 crore for small, and Rs 2 crore-5 crore for medium enterprises.

New Definition of MSME

- However, the proposed change under a new draft, as approved by the Cabinet but not yet accepted.
- It is that annual turnover, rather than investment size, should be the criterion for such units.
- Under the draft, there would be no difference between a manufacturing and service unit.
- Micro can be up to Rs 5 crore of turnover, small up to Rs 75 crore, and medium up to Rs 250 crore of turnover should be considered.

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)

- It was launched in April 2015.
- The loans are given to non-corporate, non-farm small and micro-enterprises.
- The lending priority will be given to SC/ST enterprises
- The loans are given by banks and non-banking financial companies as working capital and term loans for business enterprises in manufacturing, trading and services and for agriculture activities.

MUDRA

- MUDRA stands for Micro-Units Development and Refinance Agency

MUDRA Bank

- MUDRA Bank will be set up as a statutory body
- It will regulate and refinance all MFI who lend to MSME engaged in small manufacturing, trade or services.
- It will partner all state/regional level coordinators to provide easy finance to even the remote investors.
- To address the three segments, MUDRA Bank has launched three loan instruments:
 - (a) Shishu: covers loans up to Rs 50,000/-
 - (b) Kishor: covers loans above Rs 50,000/- and up to Rs. 5 lakh
 - (c) Tarun: covers loans above Rs 5 lakh and up to Rs 10 lakh
- It provides a loan at low rates to small entrepreneurs

Topic- GS Paper 3- Economy

Source- Business Standard

4. Polavaram project will be completed in 2021'

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister said that the Polavaram Multipurpose Project will be completed by June 2021 and not in 2020 as expected.

Related Information

Polavaram Project

- Polavaram Project is an under construction multi-purpose National project on the Godavari River in the West Godavari District and East Godavari District in Andhra Pradesh.
- The project has been accorded national project status by the Union Government of India.

National Project of India

- Government of India has approved a scheme of National Projects to be implemented during XI Plan (2007-2012).

- It's objective to expedite completion of identified National Projects for the benefit of the people.
- These projects will be provided financial assistance by the Government of India in the form of Central grant which will be 90% of the estimated cost of such projects for their completion in a time-bound manner.

Criteria for selection of National Projects

- (a) International projects where usage of water in India is required by a treaty or where planning and early completion of the project are necessary for the interest of the country.
- (b) Inter-State projects which are dragging on due to non-resolution of Inter-State issues relating to sharing of costs, rehabilitation, aspects of power production etc., including river interlinking projects.
- (c) Intra-State projects with additional potential of more than 2, 00,000 hectare (ha) and with no dispute regarding sharing of water and where hydrology is established.

Topic- GS Paper 3- Infrastructure

Source- The Hindu

5. Climate change can trip small island states enroute SDGs: UN

- According to the United Nation's report on World Population Prospects 2019 many small island developing states (SIDS) may fail to achieve several Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 because of increasing population and climate change risks.

Related Information

Small Island developing states (SIDS)

- SIDS are a group of small island countries that tend to share similar sustainable development challenges, including small but growing populations, limited resources, remoteness, susceptibility to natural disasters, vulnerability to external shocks, excessive dependence on international trade, and fragile environments.

- These are including Comoros, Guinea-Bissau, Sao Tome and Principe, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Topic- GS Paper 3- Environment and Biodiversity

Source- Down to Earth

6. Dispute resolution panel to be set up for solar, wind projects implemented by SECI, NTPC

- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has decided to set up a three-member dispute resolution committee (DRC) to look into disputes beyond contractual agreements between solar or wind power developers and Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) or state-run power giant NTPC.
- This mechanism will cover all those projects that would be implemented through or by SECI and NTPC.
- Solar and wind power industries have been demanding such a dispute resolution mechanism.
- The upper age for the DRC members shall be 70 years, and its members shall be chosen from the eminent persons located in Delhi-NCR to avoid expenditure on air travel and accommodation.
- The DRC will consider cases including an appeal against decisions given by SECI on the extension of time requests based on terms of the contract and all requests of extension of time not covered under the terms of the contract.
- It will examine all such cases referred to it, including the cases where the developer is not satisfied with the decision of SECI or NTPC and it decides to appeal after paying the required fee.
- The order said the recommendations of the DRC, along with the MNRE's observations, will be placed before the new and renewable energy minister for final decision.
- To arrive at any decision, the Committee will be free to interact with

the relevant parties of the case and shall record their views.

- No lawyer shall be permitted to present the case before the DRC.

Topic- GS Paper 3 - Indian Economy

Source- Business Line

7. Sri Lanka successfully launches its first satellite 'Ravana-1' into orbit

- Sri Lanka's first satellite, 'Ravana-1', was successfully launched into orbit from the International Space Station (ISS).

Related Information

Ravana-1

- This is a low orbit cube research satellite.
- The lifespan of the satellite is minimum one and a half years but is expected to be active for 5 years.
- Ravana 1 is expected to fulfil five missions which include:
 - a) capturing of pictures of Sri Lanka and surrounding regions,
 - b) Glue Mission: to find COTS alternative to expensive space glue
 - c) active attitude stabilization Earth Magnetic Field measurement,
 - d) Provide ciphered short messages in its beacon in the 437 MHz band and
 - e) Remote Data Collection.

Topic- GS Paper 3- Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu Business Line

8. New Panel will study the '1 nation, 1 poll' issue

- Prime Minister has said that a panel will be formed to examine the issue of 'One Country, One Election'.
- The panel will come up with the suggestions in a time-bound manner.
- One Country, One Election is the method of holding single elections for both Lok Sabha and States instead of separate and continuous elections.

Background of simultaneous elections in India

- Simultaneous elections are not new to India; they were the norm until 1967.

- But the following dissolution of some Legislative Assemblies in 1968 and 1969 and that of the Lok Sabha in December 1970, elections to State Assemblies and Parliament have been held separately.
- The idea of reverting to simultaneous polls was mooted in the annual report of the Election Commission in 1983.
- The Law Commission's Report also referred to it in 1999.

Positive Argument of Simultaneous Election

- It will reduce the enormous costs involved in separate elections
- It will help ruling parties focus on governance instead of being constantly in election mode.
- Help to boost voter turnout
- Also, help to free up security forces for deployment in their core areas.

Arguments against the simultaneous polls

- National and state issues are different and holding simultaneous elections is likely to affect the judgment of voters
- Since elections will be held once in five years, it will reduce the government's accountability to the people
- When an election in a State is postponed until the synchronised phase, President's rule will have to be imposed in the interim period in that state will be a blow to democracy and federalism.

Topic- GS Paper 2- Governance

Source- The Hindu

9. United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)

- Mexico became the first country to ratify the trade deal to replace NAFTA, known as the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement, or USMCA.
- The USMCA is essentially NAFTA 2.0, with a few updates.
- The pact has been tweaked to include changes for automakers, stricter labour and environmental standards, intellectual property protections, and digital trade provisions.

Topic- GS-2- International Organisation
 Source- NewYork Times

24.06.2019

1. Operation Bandar, the code name of Balakot strike

- According to the defence source the air strike by the Indian Air Force on a terrorist training camp in Balakot, Pakistan, was code-named 'Operation Bandar'.
- Operation Zafran is the code-named used by Army when increasing defences along the border to address a possible Pakistan retaliation to an air strike.

Related Information

- On February 26th 2019, India conducted cross-border airstrike to destroy a terrorist camp run by the Jaish-e-Mohammed in Balakot.
- Balakot is a town located in Pakistan's Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province.
- India had termed the airstrike an "intelligence-led, non-military, pre-emptive" operation.

Topic- GS Paper 3- IR

Source- The Hindu Business Line

2. Bihar bans tree-felling

- The Government of Bihar banned felling of trees, citing increasing pollution as well as a fatal heatwave.
- The order was passed under the Forest Conservation Act.
- Trees on private land, however, can be felled in the absence of a tree-protection Act in Bihar.
- Bihar has been able to increase its green cover from seven to 15 per cent under the Green Mission.

Topic- GS Paper 2- Governance

Source- Down to Earth

3. Railways plan a 'Give It Up' for train ticket subsidy

- To increase the earning of railways, the Indian Railways is mulling implementing a "give it up" scheme

asking passengers to sacrifice the subsidy on train tickets.

- The campaign is intended to reduce passenger subsidy on Indian Railways.
- According to Indian Railways, it recovers only 53% of the cost incurred from the passenger; the remaining 47 per cent is given as subsidy to the passengers.

Note:

- The government had launched "Give It Up" campaign in 2015 to motivate LPG users who can afford to pay the market price for LPG to voluntarily surrender their LPG subsidy.

Topic- GS Paper 2- Governance

Source- TOI

4. J&K 'back to the village' outreach programme

- Jammu and Kashmir government launched 'back to the Village' Programme' help to reach out to the people at the grassroots level through a programme named 'Back to the Village'.
- The programme is primarily aimed at energizing the panchayats and directing development efforts in rural areas through community participation and to create in the rural masses an earnest desire for a decent standard of living.
- The programme will involve the people of the state and government officials in a joint effort to deliver the mission of equitable development across all our rural areas.

Topic- GS Paper 2- Governance

Source- The Hindu

5. India scraps Israel anti-tank missile deal

- India has scrapped a \$500-million deal with Israel for the purchase of Spike anti-tank missiles from defence contractor Rafael Advanced Defense Systems after indigenous developer DRDO claimed that it could deliver an alternative within two years.

- DRDO is going to develop a similar missile at a lower price in partnership with VEM Technologies Ltd.

Related Information

- India's deal with Israel for 321 Spike launchers and 8,356 missiles was initially struck in October 2014 after the Defence Ministry selected Spike over the US-made FGM-148 Javelin.
- But it was scrapped in December 2017 in favour of DRDO.
- It was "reauthorized" in January 2018 following Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's visit to India and Rafael opened a production facility in India with local partner Kalyani Group.
- DRDO also offered to deliver thousands of indigenous MPATGM (Man-portable anti-tank guided missile) by 2021.

Topic- GS Paper-3- Defence

Source- Indian Express

6. UAE launches UN-developed anti-money laundering platform

- The UAE has become the first country in the Gulf to launch a new reporting platform developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to curb organised crimes.
- The UAE's Financial Intelligence Unit launched the new anti-money laundering platform 'goAML', which has been open for registration since May 2019.
- All financial entities and Designated Non-Financial Businesses or Professions have to register on this system.
- The platform will help the FIU prevent money laundering, financing of terrorism and other illicit financial activities.

Topic- GS Paper-3- Indian Economy

Source- Indian Express

7. Japan's 'washi' paper torn by modern life: struggles to attract customers

- The UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage status, washi paper is struggling to attract consumers and

the market value has dropped by more than 50% in the past two decades.

- Washi paper is a Japanese hand-made paper made from the fibres of the Kozo or mulberry plant.
- The fibres of the plant are much longer than materials used for paper in the west such as wood and cotton.
- Washi has been included in the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Related Information

UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- The UNESCO's coveted list is made up of those intangible heritage elements that help demonstrate the diversity of cultural heritage and raise awareness about its importance.
- The list was established in 2008 when Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage came into effect.
- It includes important intangible cultural heritage worldwide.
- It has two parts:
 1. Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
 2. List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

Topic- GS Paper 1- Art and Culture

Source- The Hindu

8. Normalized difference vegetation index (NDVI)

- A field study by researchers from Bengaluru shows that Normalized difference vegetation index remotely which estimates the density of vegetation does not yield a reliable estimate of food abundance for elephants in tropical forests.
- The researchers show that this index has a negative correlation with graminoids (grassy food – grasses, sedges and rushes – preferentially consumed by elephants) in tropical forests.

Related Information

- NDVI quantifies vegetation by measuring the difference between near-infrared (which vegetation strongly reflects) and red light (which vegetation absorbs).
- NDVI always ranges from -1 to +1.
- It does not show a distinct boundary for each type of land cover.

Topic- GS Paper 3- Environment

Source- TOI

9. Scientists decode the genome of 'miracle plant'

- Scientists from the University of Kerala have decoded the genetic make-up of Arogyapacha (*Trichopus zeylanicus*).
- It is a highly potent medicinal plant endemic to the Agastya hills in the southern Western Ghats.

Related Information

Arogyapacha

- This plant is traditionally used by the Kani tribal community to combat fatigue.
- The plants show anti-oxidant, aphrodisiac, anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory anti-tumour, anti-ulcer, hepatoprotective and anti-diabetic properties.

Topic-GS Paper 3-Environment & Biodiversity

Source- The Hindu

9. FATF warns Pakistan but keeps it off the blacklist

- Pakistan has avoided being placed on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) blacklist following support from China, Turkey and Malaysia.
- However, Pakistan continued to remain on a greylist given by the FATF.
- The charter of FATF mandates that support of at least three member states to avoid the blacklisting.
- However, FATF has said that Pakistan will be blacklisted if it fails to complete its action plan by October 2019.
- Once a country is blacklisted, FATF calls on other countries to apply enhanced due diligence and countermeasures, increasing the cost of doing business with the country and in some cases severing it all together.

- As of now, there are only two countries in the blacklist — Iran and North Korea — and seven on the grey list, including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Syria and Yemen
- Pakistan has been under the FATF's scanner since June 2018 when it was put on the greylist for terror financing and money laundering risks after an assessment of its financial system and law enforcement mechanism.

FATF

- It is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 on the initiative of the G7.
- It is a "policy-making body" which works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in various areas.
- The FATF Secretariat is housed at the OECD headquarters in Paris.

Objectives:

- The objectives of the FATF are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

Topic-GS Paper 3-International Organisation

Source- Indian Express

25.06.2019

1. NASA's Curiosity finds methane spike on Mars

- NASA Curiosity's Sample Analysis at Mars (SAM) has detected the highest ever levels of methane in the course of its mission on Mars.
- Scientists draw two information from the methane
 1. The presence of Methane Gas could point to the existence of microbial life.
 2. The methane could also be produced as a result of interactions between rocks and water.

Related Information

NASA Curiosity Mission

- The Curiosity is the largest and most capable rover ever sent to Mars which is landed on Mars in August 2012.
- The purpose of the mission is to find chemical and mineral evidence of past habitable environments on Mars.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology
 Source- The Hindu

2. India- Regional Economic Comprehensive Partnership

- Government officials said it would be “premature” to suggest that India could be cut out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) if it doesn’t agree to join it by the year-end.
- Although India is involved in the negotiations, it has expressed reservations for several reasons.
- In general, India is concerned that with RCEP in place, imports from RCEP countries may grow even faster than its exports to the bloc.
- New Delhi is reluctant to cut tariffs and open its markets in the face of strong opposition from its farming as well as steel and textiles industries.
- The dilemma facing India is exacerbated by the fact that strategic rival China is part of the agreement.
- In particular, it is worried that decreasing tariffs for China would lead to Chinese goods flooding the Indian market widening their trade deficit which in 2018 stood at USD53 billion.
- India and China do not have an existing free trade agreement.
- On the other hand, India would like to see better access for its professionals to the services sector in RCEP countries included in the agreement.
- The RCEP was first conceived as a traditional trade pact which cuts tariffs on tradable goods whereas India’s strength is in the services sector.
- India is the sixth largest trading partner of ASEAN having signed the

India-ASEAN FTA (free trade agreement) in 2010 and bilateral trade is valued at USD80 billion, but this is seen by economists as far short of its true potential.

Related Information

RCEP

- It is a proposed free trade agreement between the ten member states of the ASEAN and the 6 states with which ASEAN have existing free trade agreements - Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand.
- It is viewed as an alternative to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a proposed trade agreement which includes several Asian and American nations but excludes China and India.
- With the withdrawal of the US from the TPP, the chances of success for RCEP have improved.
- RCEP will cover trade in goods, trade in services, investment, economic and technical co-operation, intellectual property, competition, dispute settlement and other issues.

Recent Developments

- Trade ministers of 16 countries met in Singapore recently to create the largest economic integration agreement under RCEP.
- India has made a case that it needs 20 years as a “grace period” to implement certain parts of the RCEP agreement, which is yet to be decided.
- India also emphasised on the inclusion of services under goods in the economic agreement, which has been accepted.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –International Organisation

Source- The Hindu

3. RBI unveils online portal for filing grievances

- RBI has launched a Complaint Management System (CMS).

- It is an online portal to facilitate bank customer grievance redressal processes.
- The portal can be accessed on RBI's website and complaints can be lodged against any of the entities regulated by the central bank.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economy

Source- Business Standard

4. Device to trap ocean plastic waste relaunches

- A floating device designed to catch plastic waste has been redeployed in a second attempt to clean up an island of trash swirling in the Pacific Ocean between California and Hawaii.
- The device, developed by the Netherlands-based engineering NGO Ocean Cleanup was first deployed in 2018 for the cleaning of Great Pacific Garbage Patch.
- However, during the first run, the device broke under constant waves and wind.

Great Pacific Garbage Patch

- The Great Pacific Garbage Patch, also known as Pacific trash vortex is a gyre of marine litter.
- It is the largest accumulation of ocean plastic in the world.
- It is located in the North Pacific Subtropical Gyre, between Hawaii and California.
- It covers an estimated surface area of 1.6 million square kilometres
- The Great Pacific garbage patch formed gradually as a result of marine litter gathered by rotating ocean currents called gyres.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- TOI

5. 'National Freight Index' for live freight rates

- In its bid to bring transparency in the road-freight marketplace, Gurgaon-based tech-enabled logistics start-up Rivigo has launched National Freight Index (NFI) that will provide live

freight rates for different lanes and vehicles across the country.

Why was it required?

- The Indian road freight market size is estimated at \$150 billion-\$160 billion, of which \$130 billion-\$140 billion is full-truckload (FTL) market, but it has been facing a growing challenge of shortage of truck drivers.
- Logistics account for nearly 14% of India's GDP and 70% of it comes from road transportation.
- But, there is no pricing transparency and the working conditions of drivers is deplorable. Nobody wants to be a truck driver anymore and the country could face a 50% shortage of truck drivers by 2023.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economic Development

Source- Livemint

6. CJI writes to PM for removal of Allahabad High Court judge

- Chief Justice of India has written to Prime Minister to initiate a motion for the removal of Allahabad High Court judge, Justice S.N. Shukla, for his guilty of misconduct.
- A three-judge committee, comprising Chief Justices Indira Banerjee, S.K. Agnihotri and P.K. Jaiswal of the Madras, Sikkim and Madhya Pradesh High Courts formed in 2018 to inquire the complaint against Justice Shukla.

Related Information

Procedure for the removal of High Court Judges

- A judge of a high court can be removed from his office by an order of the President.
- The President can issue the removal order only after an address by the Parliament has been presented to him in the same session for such removal.
- The address must be supported by a special majority of each House of Parliament (i.e., a majority of the total membership of that House and majority of not less than two-thirds of

the members of that House present and voting).

- The grounds of removal are two—proved misbehaviour or incapacity. Thus, a judge of a high court can be removed in the same manner and on the same grounds as a judge of the Supreme Court.
- The Judges Enquiry Act (1968) regulates the procedure relating to the removal of a judge of a high court by the process of impeachment:
 - (a) A removal motion signed by 100 members (in the case of Lok Sabha) or 50 members (in the case of Rajya Sabha) is to be given to the Speaker/Chairman.
 - (b) The Speaker/Chairman may admit the motion or refuse to admit it.
 - (c) If it is admitted, then the Speaker/Chairman is to constitute a three-member committee to investigate into the charges.
 - (d) The committee should consist of
 - (a) the chief justice or a judge of the Supreme Court, (b) chief justice of a high court, and (c) a distinguished jurist.
 - (e) If the committee finds the judge to be guilty of misbehaviour or suffering from an incapacity, the House can take up the consideration of the motion.
 - (f) After the motion is passed by each House of Parliament by special majority, an address is presented to the president for removal of the judge.
 - (g) Finally, the president passes an order removing the judge.

Note: Till now no judge of a high court has been impeached so far.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

7. Government to launch Universal Smart Card Driving License

- Road Transport and Highways Ministry have prescribed a common standard format and design of the

Driving Licence for the whole of the country.

- It is under the flagship application called SARATHI developed by NIC which has a common countrywide database of all driving license holders.

SARATHI

- The SARATHI application has the feature to identify duplicate records online in real time and access information about the challans if any.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- AIR

8. Five countries had zero malaria cases in 2018: WHO

- According to the WHO E-2020 initiative: 2019 progress report, four countries from Asia — China, Iran, Malaysia, Timor-Leste and El Salvador (Central America) reported no indigenous cases of malaria in 2018.

Related Information

WHO Initiatives to Eliminate Malaria

- World Health Assembly approved a Global Technical Strategy for Malaria to eliminate malaria by 2030 in 2015.
- The strategy targeted 2020 to eliminate malaria in at least 10 countries.
- In 2016, WHO launched E-2020 initiative to scale up efforts to eliminate malaria by 2020.
- The 21 countries were identified by WHO in 2016 as having the potential to become malaria-free by 2020. India is not among the 21 countries under E-2020 initiative.
- Recently, the WHO declared Algeria as malaria-free which became the second E-2020 country to achieve certification, after Paraguay.
- Uzbekistan and Argentina though not E-2020 countries, were also awarded the malaria-free certification in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

Eligibility for Malaria Free Certification

- Countries that have achieved at least 3 consecutive years of 0 local cases of malaria are eligible to apply for the

WHO certification of malaria elimination.

World Malaria report 2018

- According to the World Malaria Report 2018, more than 200 million people were affected by malaria in 2017.
- India (4%) along with the Nigeria Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique, and Uganda accounted for nearly 50% of all malaria cases worldwide.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Important Report

Source- Down to Earth

9. Continental axis hypothesis

- It was first proposed by American geographer Jared Diamond in his popular 1997 book Guns, Germs, and Steel.
- This hypothesis is referred to as why certain regions of the world throughout history experienced more economic development than others.
- It states that regions of the earth that are spread across a large latitudinal area, that is east-west, are more likely to witness greater development than regions that extend longitudinally, that is north-south.
- This is because temperatures are largely similar across latitudes, which helps technology and ideas to spread among a larger population.
- It also results in more cultural homogeneity.
- It is also known as “Continental orientation hypothesis.”

Topic- GS Paper 1 – Geography

Source- The Hindu

26.06.2019

1. NITI Aayog's Health Index

- NITI Aayog recently released its second edition of State Health Index.
- The report 'Healthy States, Progressive India: Report on Rank of States and UTs' has ranked in three categories — larger States, smaller States and Union Territories.

- The Index ranks the States and Union Territories based on 23 health-related indicators.

The indicator includes

1. Neonatal mortality rate,
2. Under-five mortality rate,
3. Proportion of low birth weight among new-borns,
4. Proportion of districts with functional Cardiac Care Units,
5. Full immunisation coverage and proportion of specialist positions vacant at district hospitals.

Highlights of the Index

- Kerala continued to top the list for the best performing State in the health sector whereas Uttar Pradesh retained the worst performer tag among the 21 larger states.
- Among the UTs, Chandigarh is on the top.
- The report stated that only about half the States and UTs shows an improvement in the overall score of between 2015-16 (base year) and 2017-18 (reference year).
- The report added that among the eight Empowered Action Group States, only three States — Rajasthan, Jharkhand & Chhattisgarh — showed improvement in the overall performance.
- The eight socioeconomically backward states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttaranchal and Uttar Pradesh, referred to as the Empowered Action Group (EAG)

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Important Report

Source-The Hindu

2. DRDO scientist develops a herbal drug to treat leucoderma

- DRDO has developed 'lukoskin' for the treatment of Leucoderma on International Vitiligo Day 25 June.

Vitiligo or Leucoderma

- Leucoderma is a skin condition in which white patches develop on the skin due to lack of melanin (a pigment in the skin).

- It is neither contagious (i.e does not spread from getting in direct contact with the affected person) nor life-threatening.
- Genetic conditions or stress-induced situations are more prone to the occurrence of disease.
- Leucoderma patients are also vulnerable to inflammation in the iris, loss of hearing and sunburn.
- Vitiligo is not contagious and is not life-threatening.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source-Indian Express

3. *Senna spectabilis*: An Invasive Species

- Recently a meeting has been held by National Tiger Conservation Authority and State government officials to discuss measures to mitigate man-animal conflict and invasive species in Bandipur Wildlife Sanctuary.

Senna spectabilis

- It is an invasive species of plant which posed a major threat to the wildlife habitat in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.

Characteristics of Invasive Alien Species

- It shows rapid reproduction and growth,
- It also shows Phenotypic plasticity (ability to adapt physiologically to new conditions)
- It has high dispersal ability,
- Ability to survive on various food types and in a wide range of environmental conditions.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Environment & Biodiversity

Source-The Hindu

4. 'Impressive' tortoise discovered in Arunachal

- A team of herpetologists found the Impressed Tortoise in Yazali area of the Lower Subansiri district in Arunachal Pradesh.

Related Information

Impressed Tortoise

- It occurs in mountainous forest areas in Southeast Asia in Burma, southern

China, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Malaysia.

- The species has a golden brown shell and skin.
- India was known to be the home of only the Asian Forest Tortoise (*Manouria emys*) until the discovery of the Impressed Tortoise.
- It is listed as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Environment & Biodiversity
Source-The Hindu

5. Scientists identify a new biomarker for malaria

- Researchers from the National Institute of Research in Tribal Health has identified glutamate dehydrogenase a new biomarker for malaria parasite.
- It helps to develop a more sensitive diagnostic test for the disease.

Related Information

Biomarker

- A biomarker is a measurable indicator of the severity or presence of some disease state or some other physiological state of an organism.
- Biomarker indicates a change in expression or state of a protein that correlates with the risk or progression of a disease, or with the susceptibility of the disease to a given treatment.
- It is characteristic by biological properties or molecules that can be detected and -measured in parts of the body like the blood or tissue.
- Biomarkers can be specific cells, molecules, or genes, gene products, enzymes, or hormones. Complex organ functions or general characteristic changes in biological structures can also serve as biomarkers.

Note:

- Currently, tests used for diagnosing malaria are based on a gene, Histidine-rich Protein 2 (HRP2), replete with amino acid Histidine.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source-Down to Earth

6. NASA's first Astrobe robot "Bumble" starts flying in space

- A robot named "Bumble" became the first Astrobe robot to fly under its own power in space.
- Astrobe is a free-flying robot system that will help researchers test new technologies in zero gravity and perform routine work alongside astronauts aboard the International Space Station.
- Robots that can operate on their own in space, such as Astrobe, can be caretakers for NASA's lunar gateway and will play a significant part in NASA's future missions to explore the Moon and Mars.
- Bumble and a second Astrobe, "Honey," launched to the space station in April 2019. A third robot named "Queen" is scheduled to launch in July 2019.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source-Space Daily

7. 31.4% of Indian children will be stunted by 2022: report

- According to an analysis of the report prepared by the UN World Food Programme in collaboration with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme, almost one in three Indian children under five years will still be stunted by 2022.
- Child stunting is a measure of chronic malnutrition — has reduced at a rate of about 1% per year, the slowest decline among emerging economies.

Highlights of the report

- Poorest wealth quintile has the highest stunting, wasting and underweight prevalence (51.4%, 24.2%, 48.6%) as against highest wealth quintile (22.2%, 17.9%, 20.1%)
- Mothers having low BMI have a higher prevalence of stunted, wasted and underweight children

- Children Of illiterate mothers have higher chances of stunting, wasting and being under-weight

Global Targets 2025

- To improve maternally, infant and young child nutrition, WHO member states have endorsed global targets for improving maternal, infant and young child nutrition and are committed to monitoring progress.

Stunting

TARGET: 40% reduction in the number of children under-5 who are stunted

Anaemia

TARGET: 50% reduction of anaemia in women of reproductive age

Low birth weight

TARGET: 30% reduction in low birth weight

Childhood overweight

TARGET: No increase in childhood overweight

Breastfeeding

TARGET: Increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months up to at least 50%

Wasting

TARGET: Reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Important Report
Source-The Hindu

8. Zero Chance: Australia cautions illegal immigrants

- Australian government is launching a campaign 'Zero Chance' to raise awareness among people trying to enter the country illegally by boats.
- This campaign helps to put an exclusive restriction on the illegal migrants who came by boat.
- For Refugees the Australian Government came with the resettlement plan in which those who wish to enter the country must apply through refugee's resettlement programmes.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –International Affairs
Source-The Hindu

9. 1 crore houses by 2020: Under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana

- The governments could be completed the target of constructing of one crore house (Urban) by the end of 2020 which has been targeted by 2022 under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

Related Information
Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana

- It was launched in 2015 with an objective to provide affordable housing to urban and rural poor.
- This scheme has two components viz. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) (PMAY-U) for the urban poor and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin) (PMAY-G or PMAY-R) for the rural poor.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin (Ministry of Rural Development)

- It's objective to help rural people below the poverty line (BPL) in construction of dwelling units and upgradation of existing unserviceable kutcha houses by providing assistance in the form of a full grant.
- Beneficiaries are chosen according to data taken from the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) of 2011.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (Ministry of Urban Affairs)

- The Mission is being implemented during 2015- 2022 and will provide central assistance to Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and other implementing agencies through States/UTs.
- All statutory towns as per Census 2011 and towns notified subsequently would be eligible for coverage under the Mission.
- It has the following provisions:
 - In-situ Rehabilitation of existing slum dwellers using the land as a resource through private participation
 - Credit Linked Subsidy
 - Affordable Housing in Partnership

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source-TOI

27.06.2019

1. UNSC NON-PERMANENT SEAT

- India has won the unanimous support of all countries in the 55-member Asia-Pacific Group at the United Nations in support of its bid for a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council (UNSC) for a two-year term in 2021-22.

Related Information

United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- It is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations and is charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.
- Its powers include the establishment of peacekeeping operations, the establishment of international sanctions, and the authorization of military action through Security Council resolutions.
- It is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states.
- The Security Council consists of fifteen members.
- Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, and the United States—serve as the body's five permanent members.
- These permanent members can veto any substantive Security Council resolution, including those on the admission of new member states or candidates for Secretary-General.
- The Security Council also has 10 non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve two-year terms.
- The body's presidency rotates monthly among its members.

Note:

- India has already held a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for seven terms.

Principal Organs of the UN:

- United Nations Secretariat

- United Nations General Assembly
- International Court of Justice
- United Nations Security Council
- United Nations Economic and Social Council
- United Nations Trusteeship Council

Topic- GS Paper 2 – International Organization

Source- The Hindu

2. Jal Shakti' scheme: For water-starved areas

- The Centre is set to initiate the Jal Shakti Abhiyan to ramp up rainwater harvesting and conservation efforts in 255 water-stressed districts from July 1.
- The campaign seems to follow the model of last year's Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, where central officials monitored the implementation of seven flagship development schemes in 117 aspirational districts across the country.
- The campaign will run from July 1 to September 15 in States receiving rainfall during the south-west monsoon, while States receiving rainfall in the retreating or north-east monsoon will be covered from October 1 to November 30.
- The Jal Shakti Abhiyan would aim to accelerate water harvesting, conservation and borewell recharge activities.

JAL SHAKTI ABHIYAN (JSA)

- It is a time-bound, mission-mode water conservation and irrigation efficiency campaign for water security in rural India.
- The JSA will run from July 1 to September 15, 2019
- During this time, officers, groundwater experts and scientists will work together with State and district officials in the country's water-stressed districts for water conservation, resource management and irrigation efficiency

Intervention areas:

- Water conservation and rainwater harvesting
- Renovation of water bodies
- Renovation Of borewell recharge structures
- Watershed development
- Intensive afforestation
- Progress would be monitored in real time through mobile applications and an online dashboard at indiawater.gov.in

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Important Scheme

Source- The Hindu

3. Council of Europe restores Russia's voting rights

- The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has voted in favour of restoring Russia's voting rights, five years after they were revoked over its illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula.
- The move paves the way for Russia to participate in the election of a new secretary general for the pan-European rights body.
- Russia was denied its voting rights after Russia's annexation of the Crimea in 2014.

Related Information

Council of Europe

- It is Europe's oldest political body which aims to uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law across the continent.
- The council was founded in 1949 and it has 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union.
- The Council of Europe is distinct from the European Union.
- The council oversees and enforces rulings made by the European Court of Human Rights which considers cases brought by individuals and groups against the signatories to the convention.
- The Council of Europe is also an official United Nations Observer.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Relation
Source- AIR

4. CYBER COORDINATION CENTRE (CyCord)

- Minister of State for Home Affairs informed the Rajya Sabha about the Cyber Coordination Centre (CyCord) portal.

Related Information
Cyber Coordination Centre

- The portal was launched by Prime Minister of India in December 2018 at DGPs/IGPs Conference.
- The primary objective of the Cyber Coordination Centre is to provide a platform to the Law Enforcement Agencies and other stakeholders.
- It helps to collaborate and coordinate their efforts to resolve cybercrime, and for other cyber-related issues like sharing case studies/research findings, experience sharing, formulation of research problems, finding solutions to complex cyber issues, etc.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source-PI B

5. NGOs for promotion of road safety

- Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has launched a scheme for grant of financial assistance to NGOs for administering "Road Safety Advocacy" in the last financial year 2017-18.
- Under this Scheme, proposals for road safety advocacy programmes through 203 different Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) / Trusts / Cooperative Societies have been sanctioned in the financial year 2017-18.
- Financial assistance for a road safety programme is Rs. five lakh.
- The scheme does not provide for any advance payment and financial assistance is reimbursement only after the successful completion of the programme.

- There is an adequate safeguard in the scheme to ensure proper utilization of funds, such as:-

- No advance payment is released to any agency.
- Registration of the NGO on Darpan Portal.
- The scheme is administered through a Project Management Unit (PMU) for scrutiny of proposals

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source-PI B

6. Lunar Evacuation System

- It is a device used in the preparations for NASA's 2024 Moon mission.
- Lunar Evacuation System Assembly (LESA) developed by the European Space Agency (ESA).
- It is a pyramid-like structure whose purpose is to rescue an astronaut should he or she suffer an injury on the lunar surface.
- Astronauts could not carry their fallen crewmate over their shoulder while wearing a heavy extravehicular activity suit.
- LESA can be operated by a single astronaut to rescue a fallen colleague.
- It enables an astronaut to lift their crewmate onto a mobile stretcher in less than 10 minutes, before carrying them to the safety of a nearby pressurised lander.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology
Source- Indian Express

7. Motion of Thanks

- Under Article 87 of the constitution, President of India specially addresses both Houses of Parliament together at the beginning of the first session after each general election and the first session of every fiscal year.
- In this address, the president outlines the policies and programmes of the government in the preceding year and the ensuing year.

28.06.2019

- At the end of the discussion, the motion is put to vote.
- This motion must be passed in the House; otherwise, it amounts to the defeat of the government.
- This inaugural speech of the president is an occasion available to the members of Parliament to raise discussions and debates to examine and criticise the government and administration for its lapses and failures.
- Notices of amendments to the Motion of Thanks can be given only after the President has delivered the Address.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance

Source-PIB

8. State divide in unemployment: Nagaland tops the list

- Nagaland has the highest unemployment rate among the states at 21.4%, and Meghalaya the lowest at 1.5%.
- The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) for 2017-18, other aspects of which have been reported earlier, shows huge variations among the states.
- Besides Nagaland, states with high unemployment are Goa and Manipur.
- Chhattisgarh and Sikkim are among those with the lowest rates.
- If Union Territories are included in the comparison, Nagaland still tops the list while Dadra and Nagar Haveli replaces Meghalaya with a low of 0.6%.
- Country-wide, PLFS pegs the unemployment rate at 6.1%, with the rate lower among females than males.
- Among the states, Nagaland and Meghalaya again take the top and bottom positions in both the female and the male lists.
- Goa and Kerala are high in female unemployment (respectively 26.0% and 23.3%).

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance

Source-PIB

1. Govt sets up a working group to revise the current series of WPI

- The government set up an 18-member working group for the revision of the current series of Wholesale Price Index under Ramesh Chand as its Chairman (a member of NITI Aayog).
- The Office of Economic Adviser, Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade will be the nodal office for the Working Group.

Needs for revision of WPI

- The current series of Wholesale Price Index (WPI) with 2011-12 as the base year was introduced in May 2017.
- Since 2011-12, significant structural changes have taken place in the economy.
- The revision of the base year would help in presenting a more realistic picture of the price situation and its impact on people.

Functions of the Working Group are

- To select the most appropriate Base Year for the preparation of a new official series of Index Numbers of WPI and Producer Price Index (PPI) in India.
- To review the commodity basket of the current series of WPI.
- To review the existing system of price collection in particular for the manufacturing sector.

Related Information

Wholesale Price Index

- It measures the change in the price of commodities traded in the wholesale market.
- It is also known as headline inflation.
- Current base year- 2011-12.
- The index basket of the current series has a total of 697 items (117 items for Primary Articles, 16 items for Fuel & Power and 564 items for Manufactured Products.)

- Published by- Economic Advisor, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Important Committee

Source- The Hindu

2. Surjit Bhalla Committee on Trade and Policy

- High-Level Advisory Group (HLAG) headed by Dr. Surjit S. Bhalla has been constituted by the Department of Commerce.
- It has made several recommendations for boosting India's share and importance in global merchandise and services trade.
- Among other things, the Report identifies tax reforms also to boost export and investment channels for exports.
- The Committee has recommended "Elephant Bonds".
- Elephant Bonds will be a 25-year sovereign bond in which people declaring undisclosed income will be bound to invest 50% which will be utilised only for infrastructure projects.
- HLAG has also made recommendations for reforms in Financial Services Framework for making India a Preferred Destination for financial services.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Important Committee

Source-PIB

3. Plastic Crust– a new kind of sea pollution

- Scientists from the Marine and Environmental Sciences Centre have discovered a new type of plastic pollution which has been dubbed as "plasticrusts".

Related Information

Plasticrust

- It is a layer of polyethene, the world's most widely used plastic encrusted onto ocean rocks.
- In 2016, researchers first observed blue and grey plastic patches on

Madeira, a volcanic Portuguese island off northwest Africa.

- After sampling rocks along the coastline, researchers found that by 2019 the plasticrusts covered 9.46% of the rocky surface.
- According to researchers, the potential impact of plasticrusts is still relatively unknown but had the potential to affect the island's animals.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment

Source- The Hindu

4. Beekeeping development committee

- Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister had set up a Beekeeping Development Committee under the Chairmanship of Professor Bibek Debroy.
- The committee was constituted with the objective of identifying ways of advancing beekeeping in India that can help in improving agricultural productivity, enhancing employment generation, augmenting nutritional security and sustaining biodiversity.

Recommendation of the Committee

- The committee has recommended that there is a need to recognise honeybees as inputs to agriculture and consider landless beekeepers as farmers.
- The report also recommended that government should institutionalise the National Bee Board and rechristen it as the Honey and Pollinators Board of India under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- The aim of such a board would be to engage in advancing beekeeping through multiple mechanisms such as setting up of new integrated bee development centres and strengthening the existing ones.
- Further, the report said that national and regional infrastructure should be developed for storage, processing and marketing of honey and other bee products.

- The report also suggested simplified procedures and clear standards for ease of exporting honey and other bee products.
- As per the Food and Agricultural Organization database, India ranked eighth in 2017-18 in the world in terms of honey production while China stood first.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance

Source-Live Mint

5. Research on Proton Therapy

- The Minister of State of Health and Family Welfare has informed Rajya Sabha about the present status of Research on Proton Therapy in India.

Related Information

Proton therapy

- It is a type of Radiation therapy, which is also called proton beam therapy.
- It uses protons rather than x-rays to treat cancer.
- A proton is a positively charged particle.
- At high energy, protons can destroy cancer cells.
- Like x-ray radiation, proton therapy is a type of external-beam radiation therapy.
- It painlessly delivers radiation through the skin from a machine outside the body.
- With proton therapy, there is less radiation dose outside of the tumour.
- In regular radiation therapy, x-rays continue to give radiation doses as they leave the person's body.
- This means that radiation damages nearby healthy tissues, possibly causing side effects.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Science and Technology

Source-PIB

6. Go Tribal campaign launched

- The government will launch the Go Tribal Campaign in New Delhi to promote the use of tribal handicrafts and natural products.
- Tribal Affairs Ministry said TRIFED has organized this event to institutionalize

collaborations and partnerships with different organizations to promote tribal products.

- During the event, Tribes India and Amazon Global Marketing will launch TRIBES India products globally through the Amazon platform.
- With this collaboration, tribal products will be available in the US and will help establish an export market with tribal products.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance

Source-PIB

7. Govt to launch 'One Nation One Ration Card'

- The central government is working on a plan to launch a "One Nation One Ration Card" scheme for beneficiaries, especially migrant workers, to access the Public Distribution System from any PDS shop across the country.
- The scheme is aimed at providing freedom to beneficiaries, as they will not be tied to one PDS shop, reduce their dependence on shop owners and curtail corruption.
- The biggest beneficiaries will be migrant workers who move to other states to seek better job opportunities.

Related Information

- Integrated Management of PDS (IMPDS), under which beneficiaries can avail their share of food grain from any district, is operational in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana and Tripura.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Government Schemes

Source- Indian Express

8. National mission on natural language translation

- Ministry of Electronics and IT will launch Natural Language Translation which is based on the one of the key missions identified by the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and

Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).

- The IT ministry is the lead agency for implementation of the mission along with Ministry of Human Resource Development and Department of Science and Technology.
- It aims to make science and technology accessible to all by facilitating access to teaching and researching material bilingually in English and in one's native Indian language.

Related Information

PM- STIAC

- It is an overarching body with function of assessing, creating and implementing major scientific, technology and innovation interventions in India.
- It has identified nine national missions to address major scientific challenges in India.
- These nine national missions are- Natural Language Translation, Quantum Frontier, Artificial Intelligence, National Biodiversity Mission, Electric Vehicles, BioScience for Human Health, Waste To Wealth, Deep Ocean Exploration, Agnii.
- It aims to facilitate collaboration to solve complex problems and to ensure sustainable development.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance

Source- The Hindu

9. Govt to provide broadband connectivity under BharatNet project to all gram panchayats

- Under BharatNet project, the last mile connectivity is to be provided at all the 2.5 lakh gram panchayats in the country.

About the Project

- The BharatNet project is being funded by the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).
- It was set up for improving telecom services in rural and remote areas of India.

The objective is to facilitate the delivery of e-governance, e-health, e-education, e-banking, Internet and other services to rural India.

- Phase I of the BharatNet project was completed in December 2017.
- Phase II is under implementation and a total of 2 lakh gram panchayats are targeted to be completed by March 2020.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

10. Digital Education under PMGDISHA

- Electronics and Information Technology Minister Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad has said that around 2.22 crore villagers are given Digital Education under Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan.

Related Information

Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)

- It is the scheme to make six crore persons in rural areas, across States/UTs, digitally literate, reaching to around 40% of rural households by covering one member from every eligible household by 31st March, 2019.
- The Scheme aims to bridge the digital divide, specifically targeting the rural population including the marginalised sections of society like Scheduled Castes (SC) / Scheduled Tribes (ST), Minorities, Below Poverty Line (BPL), women and differently-abled persons and minorities.
- Under it, people in a rural area will be trained to operate a computer, tablet, smartphones, etc and how to access the Internet, government services, undertake digital payment, compose e-mails, etc.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source-PIB



VANIK-IAS

Exclusive Coaching for UPSC/OPSC/PSC

**Admission
Open**

IAS/OAS

TEST & DISCUSSION

VANIK-IAS ACHIEVEMENTS

OCS-2017 SELECTED CANDIDATES



OCS-2016 SELECTED CANDIDATES TILL NOW



SANKALP S. SAHOO
RANK-2



OCS-2015 SELECTED CANDIDATES



OFS-2015 SELECTED CANDIDATES



Features & Facilities

- Subjectwise Weekly Test
- Topicwise Daily Test
- Free Magazine for Students
- Study room for self study
- Experienced Faculties
- Wi-Fi Campus Lab
- Daily Current Affair Handouts
- Daily Doubt Clearing Class

*Expert Faculties
From New Delhi*