

**GEOGRAPHY****Marawah Island**

The oldest known natural pearl in the world has been discovered by Abu Dhabi archaeologists working at a Neolithic site on Marawah Island, just off the coast of Abu Dhabi.

**About:**

- Dubbed the 'Abu Dhabi Pearl', it was found in layers that have been radiocarbon dated to 5,800-5,600 BCE, during the Neolithic period.
- The discovery is a proof that pearls and oysters were being used in the UAE nearly 8,000 years ago, and represents the earliest known evidence for pearling yet discovered anywhere in the world.

**Marawah Island:**

- Marawah is a low-lying island off the coast of Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates.
- The island is a key center of archaeology. Archeologists have identified various sites dating from the Neolithic to the Islamic Period (12-13 AD).

**INDIAN HERITAGE, HISTORY****Muhammad Iqbal**

Furqan Ali, a headmaster of a government primary school in Uttar Pradesh was suspended after his students recited a poem written by Muhammad Iqbal in 1902 titled, "Lab pe aati hai dua". This happened after a complaint was filed by local Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) workers who alleged that asking students to recite it in a government school is "anti-national".

**About:**

- Muhammad Iqbal (1877 – 1938), widely known as Allama Iqbal was a poet-philosopher whose work promoted the philosophy of self-hood and dealt with the intellectual and cultural reconstruction of the Islamic world.
- His best known Urdu works are The Call of the Marching Bell, Gabriel's Wing, The Rod of Moses and a part of Gift from Hijaz.
- "Sare Jahan se Accha", formally known as "Tarānah-e-Hindi", is an Urdu language patriotic song for children written by poet Muhammad Iqbal in the ghazal style of Urdu poetry. The poem was published in 1904.

**Role in creation of Pakistan Movement:**

- He is widely regarded as having inspired the Pakistan Movement. He is called the "Spiritual Father of Pakistan."
- In 1930, during the 25th Session of the All-India Muslim League in Allahabad, he delivered his most famous presidential speech known as the Allahabad Address in which he pushed for the creation of a Muslim state in north-west India.
- Iqbal is considered to have given the vision for the creation of Pakistan, whereas Jinnah is considered to be the one who shaped this vision.
- The Pakistan government officially named him "National Poet of Pakistan".

**Digital Bharat Digital Sanskriti**

Union Minister for Culture & Tourism (IC) launched the E-Portal of CCRT 'Digital Bharat Digital Sanskriti' and CCRT YouTube Channel in New Delhi.

**About:**

- This will enable dissemination of cultural education through digital interactive medium into the classrooms all over the country.
- For this initiative, CCRT has tied up with Routes 2 Roots, an NGO, for connecting seamlessly all the CCRT Regional Centres i.e., Guwahati, Udaipur and Hyderabad.

**Related Info :**

- The Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) is autonomous organisation under Ministry of Culture of Government of India. it was established in 1979 to support cultural education.

## **INDIAN POLITY & GOVERNANCE**

### **Right To Information (RTI) Act**

The Delhi High Court has said that giving judgment on the policy framework of an organisation and directing change of policies are not envisaged under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

#### **About:**

- The observation came as the court set aside a Central Information Commission (CIC) direction to the Centre to revise the present policy for selection of meritorious students under the 'Bal Shree scheme'.
- The Court quashed the CIC's November, 2018 order to the Human Resource Development Ministry as the directions were clearly beyond the statutory framework and powers of the CIC.
- The CIC order had come on an RTI applicant's plea to the National Bal Bhawan, seeking details regarding the age limit for Bal Bhawan membership and whether it was necessary for being eligible for a 'Bal Shree award'.
- The Ministry filed an appeal, contending that the CIC order was bad in law as the direction given was beyond the scope, purview and ambit of the RTI Act.

## **INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**

### **Us India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF)**

The members of US India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi. The delegation was led by Chairman, USISPF, Mr. John Chambers.

#### **About:**

- The US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) is a non-profit organization.
- it's primary objective is strengthening the India-US bilateral and strategic partnership through policy advocacy in the fields of economic growth, entrepreneurship, employment-creation, and innovation.
- According to USISPF estimates, India-US bilateral trade is projected to grow to 238 billion dollars by 2025. Sectors like defence trade, commercial aircraft, oil and LNG, coal, machinery and electronics are areas of potential growth in US investments and commerce into India.

## **DEFENCE AND SECURITY**

### **'Make In India' In Defence**

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, accorded approval for three projects to be indigenously designed, developed and manufactured by the Indian industry.

#### **About:**

- The first two projects include third generation Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM) and the Auxiliary Power Units (APUs) for the T-72 and T-90 Tanks.
- The third generation ATGM would provide 'Fire and Forget' and "Top Attack" capabilities to the troops in an armoured battle.
- The APUs would enable incorporation of various upgrades to Fire Control System and Night Fighting capabilities of the Tanks.
- Both these projects will be progressed under the 'Make-II' Category and will provide a boost to indigenous research and development in the Private Sector.

- With this, for the first time the Ministry of Defence has offered complex Military equipment to be designed, developed and manufactured by the Indian private industry.
- The third indigenous project pertains to discrete Electronic Warfare (EW) systems for the mountain and High Altitude terrain, which would be designed and developed by DRDO and manufactured by design cum production partner from the Indian industry.

### **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

#### **Skin-On Interface**

Researchers from the University of Bristol in partnership with Telecom ParisTech and the Sorbonne University in France have developed a skin-on interface that mimics the appearance of human skin and its ability to sense.

#### **About:**

- The interface is made up of layers of silicone membrane. It is, therefore, more natural than the hard casing of phones, and can detect gestures made by end-users.
- The artificial skin allows the device it is on to “feel” the user’s grasp, including its pressure and location. Therefore, it can detect interactions such as tickling, caressing, twisting and pinching.

#### **Significance:**

- While artificial skin has been studied in the field of robotics, the aim of those studies was either cosmetic or focussed on safety. This is the first time that the uses of “realistic” artificial skins are being considered for augmenting devices.
- This development could take touch technology to the next level for interactive devices such as phones, wearables and computers.

### **QUOTES FOR ESSAY- Governance/Corruption**

**"Climate change is simply, the greatest collective challenge we face as a human family"**  
**Ban Ki Moon**

## **DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns: Discuss how ‘Right to Information’ has helped in furthering the goals of democracy and explain the impediments still remaining in its implementation.**

**Ans**

Right to Information mandates timely response to citizen requests for government information. It has made access to information both a citizens’ right and at the same time the government’s duty.

#### **‘Right to Information’ and goals of democracy**

- Accountability: RTI promotes accountability of government by promoting a transparent and open government.
- People participation: RTI is a powerful tool that strengthens democracy and promotes good governance by enhancing the citizen’s ability to participate in the process of governance.
- Reduces corruption: RTI reduces corruption and arbitrary administrative actions.
- Responsive: Responsive governance is hallmark of democracy and ‘RTI’ promotes responsive governance.
- Citizen empowerment: RTI empowers the citizen by giving him legal right to hold public authorities accountable for their work.

### Impediments in the implementation of RTI

- Low public awareness: In general there is low awareness about the 'RTI'; further the awareness level is low among the disadvantaged communities such as women/SC/ST/rural population etc.
- Constraints faced in filing applications like Non-availability of User Guides for RTI implementation for information seekers,
- Inconvenient submission channels for RTI application e.g. inadequate efforts have been made to receive RTI applications through electronic means i.e., on email/website etc.
- Inconvenient payment channels for submission of application fees: Majority of PIOs use cash and demand drafts, which causes inconvenience to citizens.
- Non-friendly attitude of the PIOs: The attitude of civil services towards 'RTI' is still not positive. This bureaucratic resistance discourages information seeker.
- Poor quality of information provided: It is observed that incomplete and inaccurate information provided by the PIOs to curtail the statutory rights under 'RTI'.
- Constraints faced in inspection of records: PIO discourage physical inspection of records even when it is allowed by RTI act.
- Inadequate trained PIOs and First Appellate Authorities
- Failure to provide information within the stipulated time of 30 days.
- Pendency of RTI applications: There is huge number of pending RTI application. The total number of pending RTI requests in 2016-17 was 11,29,457.
- Violence against information seeker: There have been instances of attack and assault on information seekers.

### Way forward

- Engagement of civil society organizations like NGOs in building awareness.
- Promoting a culture of transparency through training among civil servants.
- Promotion of greater voluntary disclosure of information held with public Authorities.
- The person demanding information under the RTI should be emboldened and secure. Police authorities in States have to be sensitive to this and take effective steps to prevent the occurrence of such incidents.

**Qns: The MSME sector, apart from being the backbone of the Indian economy, plays a great role in ensuring socialist goals like income equality, employment generation, poverty eradication and balanced regional development. Substantiate.**

MSMEs are labour intensive, have the advantage of low cost of production and can make good use of locally available resources pushing demand and growth.

- The sector offers wide range of employment opportunities and absorbs most of the working age population. Majorly consists of handlooms, handicrafts, coir, sericulture, khadi and village industries, small scale industries and powerlooms are complementary to large industries as ancillary units.
- Contributes in the inclusive industrial development.
- Functions as the backbone by providing the linkage between different units within the economy, connecting the labour skills, intermediate parts and market to the respective specific manufacturing systems.

### Role of MSME in ensuring socialist goals

- Income equality: MSMEs support industrialisation of backward areas and assure more equitable distribution of national income and wealth.
- Employment generation: Produces a wide range of products, from simple consumer goods to high-precision, sophisticated finished products
- Has emerged a major supplier of mass consumption goods as well as a producer of electronic and electrical equipment and drugs and pharmaceuticals
- Can generate more number of employment opportunities per unit of capital invested compared to large industries
- Provides opportunities for entrepreneurship.
- Poverty eradication: Addresses unemployment, provides diversified income opportunities to rural masses.
- Customised production expands the range of market and ensures sustainability to production.
- Balanced regional development: Depends on locally available resources both material and labour and can be set up anywhere in the country.
- Absence of locational constraints ensures that the benefits of industrialisation reach every region. Thus, contributing to the balanced development of the country.

#### Conclusion

- Problems like remote location with less developed infrastructural facilities, lack of managerial talent, poor quality, traditional technology and inadequate availability of finance have to be addressed for the maximum benefits from the industry.
- Other problems of exporting small scale units include lack of adequate data on foreign markets, lack of market intelligence, exchange rate fluctuations, quality standards, and pre-shipment finance should be tackled to boost the industry.
- Regular monitoring and research for the upgradation of the sector can contribute to the holistic development.

### **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQS**

1. Recently launched by Ministry of Culture, Digital Bharat Digtan Sanskriti is a
  - (a) Web Portal
  - (b) Youtube Channel
  - (c) Facebook Page
  - (d) Both (a) and (b)**
2. With reference to the 'Make in India' in Defence, consider the following statements:
  1. The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), recently accorded approval for projects like third generation Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM) and the Auxiliary Power Units (APUs) for the T-72 and T-90 Tanks to be indigenously designed, developed and manufactured by the Indian industry.
  2. For the first time the Ministry of Defence has offered complex Military equipment to be designed, developed and manufactured by the Indian private industry.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only
  - (c) Both 1 and 2**
  - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
3. Marawah Island, recently in news, is located in which of the following countries?
  - (a) U.A.E**
  - (b) Qatar
  - (c) Saudi Arabia
  - (d) Israel

4. With reference to the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), consider the following statements:
  1. It is a non-profit organization.
  2. It's primary objective is strengthening the India-US bilateral and strategic partnership through policy advocacy in the fields of economic growth, entrepreneurship, employment-creation, and innovation.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only
  - (c) Both 1 and 2**
  - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. With reference to the skin-on interface, consider the following statements:
  1. The interface is made up of layers of silicone membrane.
  2. The artificial skin allows the device it is on to "feel" the user's grasp, including its pressure and location.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
  - (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only
  - (c) Both 1 and 2**
  - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
6. "Sare Jahan se Accha", formally known as "Tarānah-e-Hindi", is an Urdu language patriotic song for children written by:
  - (a) Muhammad Iqbal**
  - (b) Rabindranath Tagore
  - (c) Bashir Badr
  - (d) Khwaja Muhammad Afzal
7. As per USISPF estimate Indo-USA bilateral trade volume by 2025 will grow to
 

(a) \$138b	(b) \$168b
<b>(c) \$238b</b>	(d) \$268b
8. Who heads the Defence Acquisition Council of India ?
 

(a) President	(b) PM
<b>(c) Defence Minister</b>	(d) Finance Minister
9. Which of the following can be taken as impediments to RTI
  - (a) Low Public Awareness
  - (b) Non-friendly attitude of PIO
  - (c) Pendency of RTI Application
  - (d) All of these**
10. Oldest known Natural Pearl has been discovered in which country
 

(a) Iran	(b) Iraq
(c) Saudi Arab	<b>(d) UAE</b>