

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Month of
AUGUST-2019



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Daily Current Affairs for UPSC IAS Preparation

01.08.2019

1. Cabinet approves increasing strength of SC judges from 31 to 34

- The Union Cabinet approved increasing the number of judges in the top court from the present 31 to 34, including the Chief Justice of India.
- At present, the sanctioned strength of the apex court is 31.

Related Information

Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956

- The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956 originally provided for a maximum of 10 judges (excluding the Chief Justice of India).
- This number was increased to 13 by the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 1960, and to 17 in 1977.
- The working strength of the Supreme Court was, however, restricted to 15 judges by the Cabinet (excluding the Chief Justice of India) till the end of 1979.
- In 1986, the strength of the top court was increased to 25, excluding the CJI.
- Subsequently, the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Act, 2009 further augmented the strength of the court from 25 to 30.
- This was last amended in 2009 to increase the judges' strength from 25 to 30 (excluding the CJI).

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Pouty

Source- The Hindu

2. India's large cities staring at water crisis: Water Stress Index

- London-based risk analytics firm Verisk Maplecroft lists India as the 46th highest risk country in the world in Water Stress Index.
- The Water Stress index measures the water consumption rates of households, industries and farm

sectors and the available resources in rivers, lakes and streams.

Highlights of the Index

- According to the index, Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Nashik, Jaipur, Ahmedabad and Indore are among the cities facing 'extreme risk'.
- Out of the 20 largest cities, 11 cities face an 'extreme risk' of water stress and seven are in the 'high risk' category.
- Verisk Maplecroft plotted the index with projected population growth trends to rank the cities facing the biggest threat to their water resources.
- The United Nations estimates that Delhi's population will grow from 28 million people to above 43 million by 2035, a 52% rise, while Chennai will grow by 47% to top 15 million over the same period.
- Further, India is rated 'high risk' in the Climate Change Vulnerability Index, which suggests that effects of climate change like an 'extended dry season' would make matters worse for the country's cities.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Important Index

Source- The Hindu business line

3. Cabinet approves ISRO Technical Liaison Unit at Moscow

- The Union Cabinet has approved the setting up of ISRO Technical Liaison Unit (ITLU) at Moscow, Russia.
- It will enable effective technical coordination for timely interventions on diversified matters with Russia and neighbouring countries for realization of the programmatic targets of ISRO.
- The Liaison Officer, deputed at ITLU from ISRO provides technical information about the developments

in research and technology and inputs arising from their meetings with researchers, government agencies and industries in the respective countries.

- They also support the ongoing bilateral programmes of cooperation in space technology and act on behalf of ISRO on the matters referred.

Benefits:

- ISRO will be able to collaborate with Space agencies/industries in Russia and neighbouring countries for mutually synergetic outcomes.
- ISRO's Gaganyaan human space programme 2022 requires the development of some of the key technologies and establishment of specialized facilities, which are essential to support life in space.

Related Information

ISRO Technical Liaison Units

- Department of Space has instituted technical Liaison Units, namely ISRO Technical Liaison Units (ITLU) at Washington, USA and Paris, France.
- Its primary objective to liaise with various Government and space agencies in the USA and Europe, respectively.
- India has expanded its space cooperation with countries near Russia.
- This will help for extensive uninterrupted coordination & interface support for the increased level of international technical collaboration.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science &

Technology Source- PIB

4. Cabinet approves the signing of the UNISA

- The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA) resulting from mediation by the Republic of India.

- The meditation scheduled to be held at Singapore on 7th August 2019, or at United Nations Headquarters.

Benefit:

- The signing of the Convention will boost the confidence of the investors and shall provide a positive signal to foreign investors about India's commitment to adhere to international practice on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

Related Information

- The United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements Resulting from Mediation ("the Convention") on 20th December 2018.
- The Convention provides a uniform and efficient framework for the enforcement of international settlement agreements resulting from mediation and for allowing parties to invoke such agreements.
- The Convention defines two additional grounds upon which a court may, on its own motion, refuse to grant relief.
- Those grounds relate to the fact that a dispute would not be capable of settlement by mediation or would be contrary to public policy.

Topic- GS Paper – International

Agreement Source- PIB

5. India became the fifth largest investor in Africa

- India has become the fifth largest investor in Africa with cumulative investment at over 54 billion US dollars.
- African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement launched recently will make Africa the largest free trade area in the world.
- India is opening 18 new missions, of which seven will be in West Africa.

Topic-GS Paper 2–International Relations

Source- AIR

6. India's fertilizer sector among the most energy-efficient in the world

- Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), has found that the country's fertilizer sector is among the best in the world in energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in his report Grain by Grain.

Highlights of the Report

- Uttar Pradesh is the best, followed by Hazira unit of KRIBHCO in Gujarat and Panambur unit of Mangalore Chemicals and Fertilizers Ltd. in Karnataka.
- "The Indian fertilizer industry is one of the most important industrial sectors of the country.

Green Rating Project

- The report - 'Grain by Grain' - is the complete assessment of the environmental performance of fertilizer industry in India is the seventh rating project undertaken by the Green Rating Project.
- The Project has, earlier, rated the pulp and paper, automobile, chloro-alkali, cement, iron and steel and thermal power sectors.
- The ratings recognise the good performers and push the bad ones to improve.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Important Report

Source- The Hindu

7. The anti-dumping duty imposed on purified terephthalic acid (PTA)

- The Finance Ministry has imposed definitive anti-dumping duty on all imports of purified terephthalic acid (PTA) from South Korea and Thailand.
- Purified terephthalic acid is primary raw material in the manufacture of polyester chips, which in turn are used in a number of applications in textile, packaging, furnishings, consumer goods, resins and coatings.

Related Information

- An anti-dumping duty is a protectionist tariff that a domestic government imposes on foreign imports that it believes are priced below fair market value.

- Dumping is the practice whereby the exporting nation sells its goods and services at a price lower than the price at which the importing nation sells the same goods and services within its domestic market.
- The objective of dumping is to increase market share in a foreign market by driving out competition and thereby create a monopoly situation where the exporter will be able to unilaterally dictate the price and quality of the product.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- TOI

02.08.2019

1. Omega 76: New molecule promises to address drug resistance

- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore have designed an antimicrobial protein that promises to kill multidrug-resistant bacterium called *Acinetobacter baumannii*.
- They used a bioinformatics approach to design a protein called Omega 76. Experiments showed that it killed the bacterium by breaking down its cell membrane.
- Conventional drugs act by blocking specific pathways or processes in bacterial cells but bacteria evolve to gain resistance against such drugs.
- In recent times, a class of chemical molecules called antimicrobial peptides has emerged as an alternative.
- They promise to kill bacteria by breaking down their membranes. The new molecule belongs to this group.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Down to Earth

2. The rise of the unemployment rate within various religious groups

- The three sets of data correspond to the Employment and Unemployment

Surveys conducted over the 66th Round (between July 2009-June 2010) and 68th Round (between July 2011-June 2012) by the NSSO as well as the PLFS (between July 2017-June 2018).

- The unemployment rates have been disaggregated for males and females as well as urban and rural areas.

Related Information

- Workers in the “usual status” category include-
(a) persons who worked for a relatively large part of the 365 days preceding the date of the survey, and
(b) persons from among the remaining population who had worked for at least 30 days during the reference period of 365 days preceding the date of the survey.
- Category (a) refers to “principal status” and the category (b) to “subsidiary status” and the “usual status” definition includes both.
- As such, usual status is a more relaxed measure of unemployment.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Indian Economy

Source- Indian Express

3. OBC sub-categorisation panel gets an extension for 6 more months

- The Chief Justice G. Rohini commission appointed in 2017 with the task of examining the sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) within 12 weeks was given yet another extension of six months by the Union Cabinet.

Related Information

Chief Justice G. Rohini commission

- It is a five-member panel formed under article 340 of Constitution.
- It is headed by former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court Justice (Retd) G. Rohini.
- Its report is expected to recommend earmarking sub-quotas for the extremely backward classes within the OBCs.

Other reservation panels

- In 1980, the Mandal Commission was set up by the erstwhile government.
- It estimated the OBC population at 52% and classified 1,257 communities as backward.
- It recommended increasing the existing quotas which were only for SC/ST, from 22.5% to 49.5% to include the OBCs.
- Its recommendations were implemented by the then government in 1990.
- In Indra Sawhney case, the Supreme Court had upheld the caste-based reservation for the OBCs as valid.
- At present, 27% quota in government jobs and educational institutions is given to OBCs, provided the annual income of the family is up to Rs 8 lakh and those with higher earnings are referred to as the ‘creamy layer’ and are not eligible for reservation.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Pouty

Source- The Hindu

4. KABIL Set up to Ensure Supply of Critical Minerals

- Recently Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) is to be set up with the participation of three Central Public

Sector Enterprises namely, National Aluminium Company Ltd, Hindustan Copper Ltd.(HCL) and Mineral Exploration Company Ltd.

- The objective of constituting KABIL is to ensure a consistent supply of critical and strategic minerals to the Indian domestic market.
- It would also ensure mineral security of the Nation.
- It helps India to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and opting a greener mode of transportation which has the pledged of India in UN Climate Change Conference, Paris, 2015.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

5. Madhya Pradesh second state to have a plan for antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

- Madhya Pradesh State Action Plan for Containment of Antimicrobial Resistance (MP-SAPCAR) has been released in Bhopal.
- With this, MP has become the second state in India after Kerala to develop an action plan to manage antimicrobial resistance.
- The MP-SAPCAR focuses on a 'One Health' approach to containing AMR through six key strategic priority areas and multi-sectoral involvement.

Related Information

- AMR is a global public health threat, according to the World Health Organization. Misuse of antibiotics in humans, animals, and aquaculture contributes to AMR.
- With rising AMR, antibiotics are increasingly becoming ineffective for treating diseases in humans.
- If there is no timely containment, AMR is likely to cause nearly 10 million deaths by 2050 and result in significant global economic losses.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Down To Earth

6. WB launches "Save Green. Stay Clean" awareness campaign for preserving greenery and keeping the environment clean

- The State CM launched the campaign named as 'Save Green, Stay Clean' in Kolkata.
- Under the campaign, the State Government will distribute more than 1 lakhs saplings throughout the state for spreading of greenery.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- AIR

7. India Slips to 7th Spot in Global GDP Rankings of 2018: WB

- According to the World Bank report, India slipped to the seventh position in the worldwide GDP rankings in 2018.
- India was at 6th place in 2017.
- India's GDP in 2018 stood at \$2.7 trillion, while Britain and France stood at \$2.8 trillion.

Ranking	Country	GDP 2018 (USD trillion)
One	United States	20.5
Second	China	13.6
Third	Japan	5.0
Fourth	Germany	4.0
Five	United Kingdom	2.8
Six	France	2.8
Seven	India	2.7

8. One Nation-one Ration Card scheme implemented on pilot basis in four States

- The central government has launched the One Nation-One Ration Card scheme on a pilot basis in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- Families who have food security cards can buy subsidized rice and wheat from any ration shop in these states.
- 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.

Note:

- The Union Government plans to extend the One nation one ration card scheme to all the states by August 2020 to enable the portability of the food security card.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Government Schemes

Source- Indian Express

9. Indonesia: Fight against to relocate the Komodo Dragons

Related Information

Komodo Dragons

- Komodo dragons, or Komodo monitors, are the largest, heaviest lizards in the world.
- They found in the Indonesian islands of Komodo, Rinca, Flores, and Gili Motang.
- Komodo National Park is one of the world heritage sites in Indonesia is related to these dragons.
- They are listed as Vulnerable in IUCN Red List.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment and

Biodiversity

Source- TOI

05.08.2019

1. Govt introduces J&K Reorganisation Bill 2019 in Rajya Sabha

- The government introduced the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill, 2019 in the Rajya Sabha.
- It also moved a resolution revoking Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir.
- Home Minister also put forth a statement informing that Ladakh will now be given the status of Union Territory, while Jammu and Kashmir will be a separate Union Territory.
- The Minister asserted Article 370 never helped Jammu and Kashmir join

India and said, Jammu and Kashmir was already a part of India much before Article 370.

Related Information

Special Status of Jammu & Kashmir

- Article 370 of the Constitution grants special status to Jammu and Kashmir, while Article 35A empowers the state legislature to define the state's "permanent residents" and their special rights and privileges.

What is Article 35A?

- Article 35A, which was incorporated in the Constitution by a 1954 Presidential Order, gives special rights and privileges to the citizens of Jammu and Kashmir.
- It denies property rights to a woman who marries a person from outside the state. The provision, which leads to such women from the state forfeiting their right over property, also applies to their heirs.
- It disallows people from outside the state from buying or owning immovable property there, settles permanently, or avail themselves of state-sponsored scholarship schemes.
- It also forbids the J-K government from hiring people, who are non-permanent residents.

What is Article 370?

- Article 370 of the Indian Constitution is a "temporary provision" which grants special autonomous status to Jammu and Kashmir.
- Jammu and Kashmir have been accorded special status under Article 370 under Part XXI of the Constitution, which deals with "Temporary, Transitional and Special provisions".
- All the provisions of the Constitution which are applicable to other states are not applicable to Jammu and Kashmir.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Pouty

Source- AIR

2. NASA Satellite Discovers 'First Nearby Super-Earth' named GJ 357 d

- Scientists have characterised the first potentially habitable world outside our own solar system located about 31 light-years away.
- The super-Earth planet — named GJ 357 d — was discovered in early 2019 owing to NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS), a mission designed to comb the heavens for exoplanets.
- Astronomers from the Institute of Astrophysics of the Canary Islands and the University of La Laguna, both in Spain, announced the discovery of the GJ 357 system in the journal *Astronomy & Astrophysics*.
- With a thick atmosphere, the planet GJ 357 d is 22% larger than the Earth and could maintain liquid water on its surface like Earth.

Related Information

Super-Earth

- It is an extrasolar planet with a mass higher than Earth's, but substantially below the masses of the Solar System's ice giants, Uranus and Neptune.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science & Tech

Source- Livemint

3. India test-fires Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile

- India test-fired a sophisticated all-weather and all-terrain Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM) from a test range in Odisha.

Related Information

Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM)

- It has been developed by the DRDO for the India Army.
- It is an all-weather and all-terrain missile, which can be mounted on a truck and stored in a canister.
- The systems are equipped with indigenously-developed Phased array radar, Inertial Navigation System, Data Link & RF seeker

- QRSAM uses solid-fuel propellant and has a range of 25-30 km.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- AIR

4. Tigers in India face lurking threat from virus

- According to a recent study, 86 percent of the tested dogs around Ranthambhore National Park in Rajasthan carried CDV antibodies in their bloodstream.
- A potential virus — Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) — that can be transmitted from CDV-infected dogs living in and around wildlife sanctuaries has started to raise concern among wildlife biologists.
- There is a high risk of disease transfer from dogs to tigers, leopards in Ranthambhore National Park.

Related Information

Canine Distemper Virus

- Canine distemper is a contagious viral disease that attacks the respiratory, gastrointestinal and nervous systems of a wide variety of animal species, including dogs, coyotes, foxes, pandas and wolves.
- It is caused by a single-stranded RNA virus of the family Paramyxoviridae (the same family of the viruses that causes measles, mumps, and bronchiolitis in humans).
- This virus is similar to the measles virus in humans and the rinderpest virus which affects cattle.
- The disease is highly contagious via inhalation and also be transmitted by shared food and water bowls and equipment.
- There is no cure for canine distemper infection.

Note:

- In the year 2019, over 20 lions from the Gir forest succumbed to the canine distemper virus infection.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

5. Groundwater over-exploitation, state by state

- Groundwater resources are over-exploited in 1,186 out of 6,881 “assessment units” (blocks, talukas, watersheds etc) in the country.
- This was as assessed in 2017.
- All these over-exploited assessment units are in 17 states and Union Territories.
- Punjab has the highest extent of over-exploitation at 79 per cent of its blocks, followed Rajasthan, Delhi, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, each at 50 per cent or more.
- Tamil Nadu, which has the highest number of blocks, also has the highest number of over-exploited units.

Topic- GS Paper-1- Natural Resources

Source- Indian Express

6. ISRO to install telescopes & radar to track space debris

- ISRO is setting up a network of telescopes and radar to develop its own system to monitor space debris to safeguard its space assets.
- Currently, ISRO has 50 functional satellites, including communication, navigation and surveillance satellites, in space.
- ISRO was dependent on NORAD (North America Aerospace Defense Command) data, which is available in public domain, for keeping track of space debris and monitoring our active and passive (dead) satellites which are sometimes not accurate.
- NORAD also keeps accurate data, which is exclusively available to those that are members of its network.
- To get accurate data about the movement of space debris to avoid collision with its satellites, ISRO has decided to set up telescopes and radars in four corners of the country.
- First telescope setup in Ponmudi (Thiruvananthapuram) and the second one in Mount Abu (Rajasthan)

and the third one in deep north and fourth in the northeast.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology
Source- TOI

7. Armoured, specialised vehicles of armed forces exempted from BS-VI emission norm

- The government has exempted the armoured and other specialised vehicles of Indian armed and paramilitary forces from the vehicular emission norms BS-VI that will come into force from April 1, 2020.

Related Information

Bharat stage emission standards (BSES)

- These 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.
- In 2016, the Indian government announced that the country would skip the BS-V norms altogether and adopt BS-VI norms by 2020.

Difference between BS-IV and the new BS-VI

- The newly introduced fuel is estimated to reduce the amount of sulphur released by 80 percent, from 50 parts per million to 10 ppm.
- The emission of NOx (nitrogen oxides) from diesel cars is also expected to reduce by nearly 70 percent and 25 per cent from cars with petrol engines.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

8. Mekong Ganga Cooperation

- External Affairs Minister has emphasised on better connectivity between India and other member countries of the Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) bloc for developing a vibrant economic growth corridor during 10th Mekong Ganga Cooperation Ministerial Meeting.
- It was held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Related Information

Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC)

- It is an initiative by six countries – India and five ASEAN countries, namely, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam for cooperation in tourism, culture, education, as well as transport and communications.
- It was launched in 2000 at Vientiane, Lao PDR.
- It aims to facilitate closer contacts among the people inhabiting these two major river basins.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Organisation

Source- PIB

9. IMPacting Research, INnovation and Technology (IMPRINT) and UchhatarAvishkar Yojana (UAY)

- Union Human Resource Development Minister inaugurated the TechEx – technology exhibition at IIT Delhi.
- TechEx was organized to demonstrate products and prototypes developed under the two flagship schemes of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) namely IMPacting Research, INnovation and Technology (IMPRINT) and UchhatarAvishkar Yojana (UAY).

Related Information

IMPRINT

- It was launched in 2015 with the objective of providing solutions to the most relevant engineering challenges by translating knowledge into viable technology (products or processes) in 10 selected technology domains.

- The projects are funded jointly by MHRD and the participating Ministry in the ratio of 50:50.
- These 10 technology domains are Health Care, Energy, Sustainable Habitat, Nano-Technology Hardware, Water Resources and River Systems, Advanced Materials, Information and Communication Technology, manufacturing, security and defence, and environmental science and climate change.

Uchhatar Avishkar Yojana (UAY)

- It was also launched in 2015 with the objective of promoting innovation of a higher order that directly impacts the needs of the Industry and thereby improves the competitive edge of Indian manufacturing.
- The projects are funded jointly by MHRD, participating Ministries and the Industry in the ratio of 50:25:25.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

06.08.2019

1. Meghdoot: New mobile app launched to assist farmers

- The Ministries of Earth Sciences and Agriculture have launched a mobile application "Meghdoot" that will provide the location, and crop and livestock-specific weather-based agro advisories to farmers in local languages.
- It has been developed by experts from the India Meteorological Department and Indian Institute of Tropical meteorology and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research.
- It will also provide forecast relating to temperature, rainfall, humidity, and wind speed and direction, which play critical roles in agricultural operations and advisories to the farmers on how to take care of their crops and livestock.

- The app would provide information in the form of images, maps and pictures to help the farmer to have a clearer picture of what is in store.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Science and Technology

Source- Down to Earth

2. National Resource Efficiency Policy 2019

- The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has proposed a draft National Resource Efficiency Policy 2019.
- It aims to streamline the efficient use of these resources with a minimum negative impact on the environment.
- The policy helps India to double its consumption of metallic and nonmetallic resources by 2030.
- The draft policy intends to minimize this inherent cost of economic growth on the natural environment by setting up a National Resource Efficiency Authority (NREA).

NREP, 2019 is guided by the principles of
(i) reduction in primary resource consumption to 'sustainable' levels, in keeping with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and staying within the planetary boundaries,
(ii) creation of higher value with less material through resource-efficient and circular approaches,
(iii) waste minimization,
(iv) material security,
(v) creation of employment opportunities and business models beneficial to the cause of environment protection and restoration.

National Resource Efficiency Authority

- It draws its power from the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, to provide for the regulatory provisions of this policy.
- It would develop and implement resource efficient strategies for material recycling, reuse and land-filling targets for various sectors and set standards for reuse of secondary raw materials to ensure quality.

- It would also maintain a database of material use and waste generated, recycled and landfilled, across various sectors and different regions and monitor the implementation.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- PIB

3. Resource Assistance for Colleges with Excellence: A new higher education model

- Rajasthan has launched a new higher education model titled "Resource Assistance for Colleges with Excellence".
- The objective is the distribution of faculties and movable assets among the government colleges at the district level to rationalise the availability of resources.
- The model will also create a pool for sharing of facilities which will benefit the colleges lacking infrastructure and faculties.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

4. Statue of Unity shortlisted for UK-based structural award

- The Statue of Unity, a memorial to Sardar Patel, in Gujarat's Kevadia town has been shortlisted for 'The Structural Awards 2019' of the UK-based Institution of Structural Engineers (IStructE).
- The aims of this awards programme are to increase awareness of the important work that structural engineers do.

Related Information

Statue of Unity

- It is situated in the Kevadia town, Narmada district Gujarat.
- It has been built on the Sadhu Bet Island, on the Narmada River.
- It is the tallest statue in the world with a height of 182 meters.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- AIR

5. Section 144 of CrPC: All you need to know

What is Section 144 of CrPC?

- Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) is issued in urgent cases of security threat or riot and bars the assembly of five or more people in an area where it has been imposed.
- The notification is issued by the District Magistrate of the area. The section also empowers the authorities to block internet access.

When is Section 144 CrPC imposed?

- When there are apprehensions of breach of public peace and order by some people, Section 144 CrPC is put into effect.
- Under this section, all civilians are barred from carrying of weapons including lathis, sharp-edged weapons or firearms in public places except for police or paramilitary or security forces.
- No order under this section can remain in force for more than two months.
- However, if the state government considers it necessary for preventing danger to human life or for preventing a riot, it can extend the impositions under the sections for not more than six months from the date of issuance of the initial order.

What is the punishment if someone violates Section 144 CrPC?

- Any person involved in such unlawful assembly can be booked for "engaging in rioting".
- The maximum punishment for such an act is three years.

What is the difference between prohibitory orders under Section 144 and curfew?

- It must be noted that Section 144 CrPC is not equivalent to a curfew.
- Curfew orders are issued in more severe situations where people are instructed to stay indoors for a specific time or period.

- Establishments such as markets, schools, colleges, etc. are ordered to remain shut, and only essential services are allowed to run on prior notice.
- There is a complete restriction on traffic as well.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Indian Polity

Source- Indian Express

6. Restricted use of 9 pesticides for Basmati

- The Punjab Agriculture Department restricted the use of nine pesticides which are generally used for the Basmati crop in Punjab.
- These pesticides are Acephate, Carbendazim, Thiamethoxam, Triazofos, Tricyclazole, Buprofezin, Carbofuron, Propiconazole and Thiophanate Methyl.
- Most of these restricted pesticides and fungicides are not recommended by the Punjab Agriculture Department.

Related Information

- Punjab has over 40% of the total Basmati export of India so to meet the demand; farmers use the pesticide on the recommendation of pesticide dealers.
- It is against the instructions of the agricultural experts and is not recommended by the Agriculture Department.
- The use of these restricted pesticides makes the input cost go up to Rs 2000 to Rs 4000 per season, with pesticide companies making a huge profit as 25 per cent of the total farmers in Punjab-grown Basmati.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –

Environment Source- The Hindu

7. United States designates China a "currency manipulator"

- The United States has designated China a "currency manipulator", a move that could escalate the tense trade relations between the two nations.

- After this decision, the US will engage with the International Monetary Fund to eliminate the unfair competitive advantage created by China's latest actions.

Related Information

- US treasury department alleged that "China is intent on continuing to receive hundreds of Billions of Dollars they have been taking from the US with unfair trade practices and currency manipulation".
- China has a long history of facilitating an undervalued currency through protracted, large-scale intervention in the foreign exchange market.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Relations

Source- AIR

8. Mohali gets a first 3-D traffic signal

- In a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country, Mohali traffic police have launched 3-D Smart Traffic Signal devised by the students of a Chandigarh university.
- The wireless system, called 'Intelights', has been installed at the traffic crossing near the Airport Road, on a pilot project basis, and will regulate traffic signals with a smart bird's eye view wireless sensor system.
- Intelights proposes a 360-degree solution to curb the rising problem of traffic congestion.
- Presently, the timers of traffic lights display a preset value which leads to waste of time.
- For instance, consider a scenario where green light of '20 seconds' is displayed but there is no vehicle present at that particular intersection - thus leading to unnecessary waste of time.
- To tackle this issue, 'Intelights' proposes an Intelligent Traffic Timer Control; which uses dynamic signal control technology to adjust the

timers of red, yellow and green lights according to the traffic density at an intersection.

- The team also worked to develop a one-of-its-kind, real-time solution for defending 'Green Corridors' for ambulances while controlling the movement of vehicles on roads.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Down to Earth

07.08.2019

1. Centre approves a project to link Kosi-Mechi Rivers

- The Centre has approved a project worth Rs 4,900-crore Kosi-Mechi river interlinking project, providing a major lease of life to Bihar's Seemanchal region.
- It is the country's second major river interlinking project after Ken-Betwa of Madhya Pradesh.
- Kosi is also known as "Sorrow of Bihar."
- It will not only relieve large swathes of north Bihar from the menace of recurring floods but also provide irrigation for a whopping over 2.14 lakh hectares of command areas spread across the districts of Araria, Kishanganj, Purnia and Katihar in north Bihar.
- It has the potential to usher in the next green revolution in Seemanchal region.

A green Project

- The Kosi-Mechi interlinking project is a green project.
- Its environmental approval note clearly states that 'the project involves no displacement of population and there is no acquisition of any forest land.

- No National Park, Wildlife Sanctuary, Eco-sensitive areas, etc. are present within 10 km radius of the project.

Mechi River

- Mechi is an important tributary of Mahananda River.
- Its basin, however, remains mostly deficient in providing adequate water for irrigation.
- Channelling Kosi water into the Mahananda will optimize redistribution of the surplus waters which will take irrigation potential in the region into a different league.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economy

Infrastructure Source- AIR

2. Parliament passes bill splitting J&K into two UTs, adopts resolution scrapping special status

- Parliament has approved a resolution abrogating special status to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution and a bill for splitting the state into two Union Territories

Related Information

Status of Union Territories in the Indian Union

- India is a federal polity with two types of constituent units - states and union territories.
- Article 1 of the Constitution of India says that the territory of India comprises three categories of territories:
 - (a) States
 - (b) Union Territories
 Territories that may be acquired by the Government of India at any time.
- Union territories are thus, constitutionally recognised segments of the Indian polity.
- They are directly under the control of the Centre and are thus also called centrally administered territories.

What is the reason behind the creation of present-day Union territories?

- The seven union territories in present-day India have been created due to a number of reasons:
 - Strategic Importance - Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshwadeep
 - Cultural Distinctiveness - Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and Puducherry
 - Political and Administrative Reasons - Chandigarh and National Capital Territory of Delhi
- The states of Manipur and Tripura had been made Union territories due to the special treatment required for the people residing in these regions which are now come under Schedule areas either in Schedule V or VI.

Centre relation with the Union Territories

- The Centre has powers to administer the Union territories. Hence, under Article 239 the President appoints an administrator to act as the head the union territory's executive.
- The administrator's position is quite distinct from the position of a Governor of a State.
- He/ She does not have the discretion accorded to the Governor, who is an independent position under the Constitution.
- The President can also appoint the Governor of a neighbouring state as the administrator of a Union Territory.
- The administrator is either called a Lieutenant Governor or Administrator in different union territories.
- Under Article 240, President has the power to make regulations for the peace, progress and good governance of Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshwadeep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu and Puducherry.
- In the case of Puducherry, the President can make a regulation to

legislate only when the assembly is suspended or dissolved.

- The Union territories, except Puducherry and Delhi, do not have any legislatures of their own.
- Thus, the power to make laws on any of the subjects under all lists mentioned in the Seventh Schedule resides with the Parliament which also covers Puducherry and Delhi.

Role of Ministry of Home affairs

- The Ministry of Home Affairs at the Centre is the nodal ministry for all matters related to Union Territories relating to legislation, finance and budget, services and appointment of Administrators.
- All the five union territories without a legislature have the forum of Home Minister's Advisory Committee (HMAC) to discuss general issues related to social and economic development.
- Under Article 239AB, in case of failure of Constitutional machinery in the case of NCT of Delhi, the President can suspend the operation of any provision of Article 239AA and make such provisions as are necessary for administering the NCT of Delhi under the Constitution.
- This is similar to Article 356 with respect to states.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Pouty

Source- The Hindu

3. Elephant population in the country estimated at 29,964 as per 2017 census

- Elephant population in the country is estimated at 29,964 as per the census conducted in 2017.
- The South Region accounted for 14,612 followed by North East with 10,139 elephants.
- The census of tigers is undertaken at the national level once every four years and that of elephants at every five years.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- AIR

4. India contributes \$5 million to UN agency working for Palestinian refugees

- India has contributed \$5 million to the UN Palestine refugee agency and called for ensuring sustained fiscal support for the organisation's work.

Related Information

United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA)

- It is the only UN agency dedicated to helping refugees from a specific region or conflict and is separate from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.
- It provides education, health care, and social services to the population it supports.
- Aid is provided in five areas of operation: Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem;
- Aid for Palestinian refugees outside these five areas is provided by UNHCR.
- It also provided relief to Jewish and Arab Palestine refugees inside the State of Israel following the 1948 conflict until the Israeli government took over responsibility for Jewish refugees in 1952.
- In the absence of a solution to the Palestine refugee problem, the UN General Assembly has repeatedly renewed UNRWA's mandate, most recently extending it until 30 June 2020.
- The United Nations Relief and Works Agency headquarters in Jerusalem.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –

International Organisation

Source- The Hindu Business Line

5. Scientists found evidence of a 'mega-tsunami' on Mars

- A new study on the impact craters found on the surface of Mars suggests that if the red planet harboured water, it could have experienced a "mega-tsunami" that shaped the planet.

- This study focuses on the identification of impact craters that impacted into the ocean and are likely to have produced the tsunami.
- The research analysed a meteor impact site called Lomonosov, which is 120 kilometres deep, the same height as the estimated depth of the ocean.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –

Geophysical Phenomenon

Source- Indian Express

6. Consumer Protection Bill 2019

- The Rajya Sabha passed the Consumer Protection Bill, 2019 which will replace the Consumer Protection Act of 1986.

Key features of the Bill include:

Definition of consumer:

- A consumer is defined as a person who buys any goods or avails a service for consideration. It does not include a person who obtains a good for resale or a good or service for commercial purpose.
- It covers transactions through all modes including offline, and online through electronic means, teleshopping, multi-level marketing or direct selling.

Rights of consumers:

- Six consumer rights have been defined in the Bill, including the right to:
 - (a) be protected against the marketing of goods and services which are hazardous to life and property;
 - (b) be informed of the quality, quantity, potency, purity, standard and price of goods or services;
 - (c) be assured of access to a variety of goods or services at competitive prices; and
 - (d) Seek redressal against unfair or restrictive trade practices.

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA)

- The central government will set up a CCPA to promote, protect and enforce the rights of consumers.
- It will regulate matters related to violation of consumer rights, unfair trade practices, and misleading advertisements.
- The CCPA will have an investigation wing, headed by a Director-General, which may conduct enquiry or investigation into such violations.

Penalties for a misleading advertisement:

- The CCPA may impose a penalty on a manufacturer or an endorser of up to Rs 10 lakh and imprisonment for up to two years for a false or misleading advertisement.
- In case of a subsequent offence, the fine may extend to Rs 50 lakh and imprisonment of up to five years.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Economy

Source- PIB

7. AERA (Amendment) Bill- 2019

- President Ram Nath Kovind has given his assent to The Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India, AERA (Amendment) Bill- 2019.
- The bill increases the threshold of annual passenger traffic for major airports from 15 lakh to over 35 lakh passengers.
- Earlier, the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India Act, 2008 defined a major airport as one with annual passenger traffic over 15 lakh, or any other airports as notified by the central government.
- As per the provisions of the bill, the Authority will not determine the tariff, tariff structures, or the development fees, in cases where these amounts were a part of the bid document on the basis of which the airport operations were awarded.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- AIR

8. National Party Status

- The poll panel had served show-cause notices to TMC, CPI and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) recently seeking explanation on why their national party status should not be withdrawn after their rout in the Lok Sabha elections.
- Under the Symbols Order 1968, a party, on losing the national status, does not have the right to fight elections using a common symbol across the country.
- 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)

Conditions for Recognition as a National Party

- According to the criteria set by the poll panel, 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.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Indian Polity

Source- Indian Express

08.08.2019

1. IIT-Guwahati builds a portable device "OFET" for rapid detection of bacteria

- Researchers at IIT Guwahati have developed a low-cost and portable

device named the Organic Field Effect Transistor (OFET).

- The Organic Field Effect Transistor is an electronic device that works on the principle that charges in the vicinity of the channels of certain semiconductors can induce a current in them
- It has the ability to detect bacteria rapidly without the need for cell culture and microbiological assays.
- It was developed in a bid to overcome the prevailing challenge of detecting bacterial infection through time-consuming techniques.
- The device will enable rapid detection of bacteria, which is important not only in healthcare but also help in monitoring environmental applications.
- At present, the detection of bacteria in body fluids is done in laboratories.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- TOI

2. India world's 13th most water-stressed country: WRI

- India placed 13th among the world's 17 'extremely water-stressed' countries, according to the Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas released by the World Resources Institute (WRI).
- The country, followed by neighbouring Pakistan, was under 'extremely high' levels of baseline water stress.
- Twelve of the 17 were from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region; climate change may complicate the crisis, the document warned.
- A region is said to be under 'water stress' when the demand for water there exceeds the available volume or when poor quality restricts use.

India Scenario

- India has more than three times the population of the other 16 extremely highly stressed countries combined, the WRI noted.

- This implies that more than three-quarters of these populations facing extremely high water stress live in India.
- The report noted that last year, NITI Aayog declared that the country is “suffering from the worst water crisis in its history.
- India’s groundwater resources are severely overdrawn, largely to provide water for irrigation.
- Groundwater tables in some northern aquifers declined at a rate of more than 8 cm per year between 1990 and 2014.
- The newly reconstituted Union Jal Shakti Ministry too raised concern in the Lok Sabha about the grim situation.
- Groundwater resources were over-exploited in 1,186 of 6,881 ‘assessment units’ (blocks, talukas, watersheds and others) in India.

Related Information

World Resources Institute (WRI)

- It is a global research non-profit organization which focuses on 7 areas:
 - Food
 - forests,
 - Water
 - Energy
 - Cities
 - Climate
 - Ocean
- Its mission is to move human society to live in ways that protect Earth’s environment.
- It partners with local and national governments, private companies, publicly held corporations, and other non-profits organisations.

Topic- GS Paper–Natural

Resources Source- Down to

Earth

3. Special Status to other states

- Article 371 of the constitution contains special provisions for the tribal communities of the northeast and some other states.

- The Part XXI of the Constitution consists of articles on Temporary, Transitional and Special Provision of some states, other than Jammu and Kashmir.

Maharashtra and Gujarat (Article 371)

- According to the Article, the Governor of Maharastra has a special responsibility to establish “separate development boards” for regions like Vidarbha, Marathwada, in Maharashtra; while Gujarat has the power to do so in Saurashtra and Kutch.

Nagaland (Article 371A)

- In Nagaland, the Indian Parliament cannot legislate in matters of Naga religion or social practices, Naga customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law, and ownership and transfer of land and its resources, without the state Legislative Assembly’s nod.

Assam (Article 371B)

- Quite like Nagaland, The President of India may provide for the constitution and functions of a committee of the state Legislative Assembly consisting of members elected from the tribal areas of the state.

Manipur (Article 371C)

- The President may provide for the constitution and functions of a committee of elected members from the Hill areas of the state in the Assembly for the modifications to be made in the rules of business of the Government.

Andhra Pradesh (Article 371D, 371E)

- The President of India must ensure “equitable opportunities and facilities for the people” or ensure reservation in the matter of government jobs, education and other schemes by the state government.

- Article 371E allows the establishment of a Central University in Andhra Pradesh by a law of Parliament.

Sikkim (Article 371F)

- The Article gives Sikkim to hold a Legislative Assembly of minimum 30 members, notwithstanding anything in the Constitution.
- These members shall elect the representative of Sikkim in the Indian Parliament.

Mizoram (Article 371G)

- According to the Article, the Legislative Assembly of AP should not contain less than 40 members.
- Apart from that, similar to Nagaland in Mizoram as well the Parliament cannot make laws on "religious or social practices of the Mizos, Mizo customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary law, ownership and transfer of land" unless the state Assembly decides to do so.

Arunachal Pradesh (Article 371H)

- This article vests the Governor with special responsibility for law and order of the state, but he will have to consult the Council of Ministers in the state before exercise his individual judgment.

Karnataka (Article 371J)

- This allows the establishment of a separate development board for the backward districts in Hyderabad-Karnataka region — similar to the provisions made for Maharashtra and Gujarat.
- This board will have to report to the state Assembly every year.
- It also ensures reservation for people of this region, in government jobs and education.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Pouty

Source- Financial Express

4. Dixon Plan of 1950: Idea of dividing Kashmir has a chequered history

- The idea of dividing Jammu and Kashmir into two or more parts has a chequered history, tracing its origin to the Dixon Plan of 1950.
- Owen Dixon, an Australian jurist chosen by the United Nations to mediate between India and Pakistan on the J&K issue, in his report of September 1950.
- It had proposed a plebiscite in the Kashmir valley.
- Dixon submitted the report. However, it did not receive acceptance from India.

Related Information

- The Plan had assigned Ladakh to India and northern areas and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir to Pakistan, besides splitting Jammu between the two.
- A year later, B.R. Ambedkar, after quitting as Law Minister from the Jawaharlal Nehru Ministry, had suggested the formation of three zones:
 - the area held by Pakistan
 - the Valley
 - Jammu-Ladakh.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Pouty

Source- The Hindu

5. Japan urged to sign UN nuke ban on Hiroshima anniversary

- The mayor of Hiroshima urged Japan to sign a landmark UN treaty banning nuclear weapons as the city, on August 6, marked 74 years since being targeted in the world's first atomic attack.
- Japan remains the only country to have experienced atomic attack -- against Hiroshima and Nagasaki, days ahead of the country's surrender on August 15, 1945, to end World War II.
- The UN treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons (TPNW), approved by more than 120 nations, but rejected by the U.S. and other nuclear-armed countries.

Related Information

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

- It is the first legally binding international agreement to comprehensively prohibit nuclear weapons, with the goal of leading towards their total elimination.
- These include undertakings not to develop, test, produce, acquire, possess, stockpile, use or threaten to use nuclear weapons.
- The Treaty also prohibits the deployment of nuclear weapons on national territory and the provision of assistance to any State in the conduct of prohibited activities.
- In order to come into effect, signature and ratification by at least 50 countries are required as of 31 July 2019, 24 nations have ratified the treaty.
- However, eight nuclear weapon states namely the US, Russia, Britain, China, France, India, Pakistan and North Korea along with Israel had not participated in the negotiations of the treaty.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Organisation

Source- Indian Express

6. UNSC Resolution 47 on Kashmir

- Resolution 47 of the UNSC that focuses on the complaint of the Government of India concerning the dispute over the State of Jammu and Kashmir, that India took to the Security Council on January 1948.
- In October 1947, following an invasion by soldiers from the Pakistan Army in plainclothes and tribesmen, the Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh sought assistance from India and signed the Instrument of Accession.
- After the first war in Kashmir (1947-1948), India approached the UN Security Council to bring the conflict in Kashmir to the notice of Security Council members.

What did the UNSC order Pakistan to do?

- The UNSC ordered that Pakistan was to withdraw its tribesmen and Pakistan nationals who had entered "the State for the purpose of fighting" and to prevent future intrusions and to prevent "furnishing of material aid to those fighting in the State".

What did the UNSC order India to do?

- After the Pakistani army and tribesmen had withdrawn from the State and the fighting had ceased, India was to submit a plan to the Commission for withdrawing forces from Jammu and Kashmir and to reduce them over a period of time to the minimum strength required for civil maintenance of law and order.

How did India & Pakistan react to the UNSC Resolution 47?

- Both countries rejected Resolution 47.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –

International Organisation

Source- Indian Express

7. Fossil of the world's largest parrot "Heracles" discovered in New Zealand

- The remains of a super-sized parrot Heracles inexpectatus have been discovered in New Zealand.
- According to a report by an international team of palaeontologists the parrot stood more than half the height of an average human and roamed the earth 19 million years ago.
- This was the flightless bird and the unexpected nature of the discovery.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

09.08.2019

1. 'Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha'

- Union HRD Minister will launch 'Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha' to create awareness about Water Conservation among all school students in the country.
- It is a time-bound campaign with a mission mode approach.

- This concept of water conservation is essential for students so that they can understand the importance of water.
- The five Major Objectives Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha
 - (a) To educate students to learn about conservation of water
 - (b) To sensitize students about the impact of scarcity of water
 - (c) To empower students to learn to protect the natural sources of water
 - (d) To help every Student to save at least one litre of water per day
 - (e) To encourage Students towards judicious use and minimum wastage of water at home and school level

Target under the scheme

- One Student - One Day- Save One Litre Water
- One Student - One Year - Save 365 Litres Water
- One Student - 10 Years - Save 3650 Litres Water

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

2. Papua New Guinea country has the most number of languages

- The Pacific island nation of Papua New Guinea has the highest number of 'living' indigenous languages in the world (840), while India stands 4th with 453.
- United Nations recently declared 2019 year as International Year of Indigenous Languages.

Related Information

- Ethnologue, a directory of languages, lists 7,111 living languages worldwide (languages that are still being used and spoken by people).
- Chinese, Spanish, English, Hindi and Arabic are the most widely spoken languages worldwide when only first-languages are considered.
- These five languages account for what is spoken by over 40% of people worldwide.
- Ethnologue has also put forward a 'Greenberg's diversity index'.

- It is the probability that any two people of the country selected at random would have different mother tongues.
- The value ranges from 0 to 1; where 0 indicates no diversity (everyone has the same mother tongue) and 1 indicates total diversity (no two people will have the same mother tongue).
- India has a diversity value of 0.9
- According to UNESCO's 'Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger', 228 languages have become extinct since 1950.
- About 10% of the languages are classified as 'vulnerable'. 10% are 'critically endangered'.
- In India, 5 languages have become extinct since 1950 whereas 42 languages are critically endangered.
- The languages like Tiniguan (Colombian origin) are the example of an endangered language.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –International

Affairs Source- TOI

3. Goa Government to amend Portuguese-era Uniform Civil Code of 1870

- Chief Minister in Goa is likely to roll out amendments in the Portuguese-era Uniform Civil Code (UCC) that was brought in 1870.

What does the law provide?

- The Uniform Civil Code 1870 which is a Portuguese-era law prohibited the marriage of non-Goans to register their marriages in the coastal state.

What does change after an amendment?

- After amendment the Uniform Civil Code, the non-Goans can be allowed to register their marriages in the coastal state.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

4. UNIDO and National Institute of Solar Energy to partner for skill development program

- An agreement was signed between the NISE and the UNIDO to initiate a skill development programme for different levels of beneficiaries in the solar thermal energy sector.
- NISE and UNIDO will engage national and international experts to bring the best practices by developing specialized training material.
- The agreement is part of the ongoing MNRE-GEF-UNIDO project implemented jointly by UNIDO and to support capacity building and skill development of technical manpower in the Concentrated Solar Thermal Energy Technologies (CST) which are being used to replace conventional fossil fuels.

UNIDO (United Nations Industrial Development Organization)

- It is a specialized agency in the United Nations system, headquartered in Vienna, Austria.
- The mission of UNIDO, as described in the Lima Declaration adopted at the fifteenth session of the UNIDO General Conference in 2013, is to promote and accelerate inclusive and sustainable industrial development (ISID) in the Member States.
- It is also a member of the United Nations Development Group.

NISE (National Institute of Solar Energy)

- It is an autonomous institution of Ministry of New and Renewable (MNRE), is the apex National R&D institution in the field Solar Energy.
- The Government of India has converted 25-year-old Solar Energy Centre (SEC) under MNRE to an autonomous institution in September 2013 to assist the Ministry in implementing the National Solar

Mission and to coordinate research, technology and other related works.

Topic- GS Paper 3-Energy

Source- PIB

5. India, Bangladesh to set up a committee for optimum utilisation of water resources

- India and Bangladesh have agreed to set up a Joint Technical committee for optimum utilisation of Ganges water as being received by Bangladesh under the Ganga Water Sharing Treaty 1996.
- Both the countries also agreed to prepare a framework for interim water-sharing agreement for eight rivers including Feni, Gumti and Teesta.
- Both the countries also discussed issues related to pollution of trans boundary rivers.
- The Secretary-level meeting was held after a gap of more than 8 years.
- The Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna mega-basin is the second largest hydraulic region in the world.
- Within this basin, fifty-four rivers cross the border between upstream India and downstream Bangladesh.

Topic- GS Paper 3-Bilateral Relations

Source- PIB

6. Ancient drop of seawater shows Earth's tectonic activity began 3.3 bn years ago

- Recently the scientists established the findings using the remains of a microscopic drop of ancient seawater that tectonic activity began on Earth 3.3 billion years ago.
- It was previously assumed that tectonic activity began about 2.7 billion years ago on Earth.
- To establish the new timeline, they analysed a piece of rock melt called komatiite — ultramafic mantle-derived volcanic rock rich in magnesium oxide.

- It was derived from the hottest magma ever produced in the first quarter of Earth's existence (the Achaean).
- It is named after the type occurrence in the Komati River near Barberton in Mpumalanga in present South Africa.

Related Information

Plate tectonics

- Plate tectonics is the theory that Earth's outer shell is divided into several plates that glide over the mantle, the rocky inner layer above the core.
- The plates act like a hard and rigid shell compared to Earth's mantle which is called the lithosphere.
- The lithosphere includes the crust and outer part of the mantle.
- Below the lithosphere is the asthenosphere, which is malleable or partially malleable, allowing the lithosphere to move around.
- It controls everything from atmospheric conditions to volcanoes and earthquakes.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Physical Geography

Source- Down to Earth

7. World Biofuel Day: 10th August

- World Biofuel Day is observed every year on the 10th of August to create awareness about the importance of non-fossil fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels.
- This year the theme of the World Biofuel Day is "Production of Biodiesel from Used Cooking Oil (UCO)".

Related Information

Used Cooking Oil (UCO) as Biofuel

- The National Policy on Biofuels, released by the Government of India in 2018, envisages production of biofuel from Used Cooking Oil (UCO).
- FSSAI is implementing a strategy to divert UCO from the food value chain and curb current illegal usage.
- In India, approximately, 22.7 MMTPA of Cooking Oil is used out of which 1.2 MMTPA UCO can be collected from

Bulk Consumers such as hotels, restaurants, canteens, etc. for conversion, which will give approximately 110 crore litres of Biodiesel in one year.

- In India, the same cooking oil is used for repeated frying which adversely affects the health due to the formation of polar compounds during frying.
- These polar compounds are associated with diseases such as hypertension, atherosclerosis, Alzheimer's disease, liver diseases among others.

Note

- Recently McDonald's has become the first company in the food industry in India to recycle used cooking oil for biodiesel production.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –

Environment Source- PIB

8. India signs the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA)

- The United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements was signed by India's High Commissioner to Singapore representing the Government of India.
- 46 countries signed the treaty named Singapore Convention on Mediation.

Related Information

UNISA

- It has been adopted in December 2018, which is resulting from Mediation, also known as the "Singapore Convention on Mediation" (the "Convention").
- It has been applied to international settlement agreements resulting from mediation ("settlement agreement").
- It establishes a harmonized legal framework for the right to invoke settlement agreements as well as for their enforcement.
- The Convention is an instrument for the facilitation of international trade and the promotion of mediation as an

alternative and effective method of resolving trade disputes.

- It is a binding international instrument which is expected to bring certainty and stability to the international framework on mediation.
- It also contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), mainly the SDG 16.
- The Convention is open for signature by States and regional economic integration organizations (referred to as "Parties")

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Organisation
Source- Indian Express

12.08.2019

1. Newly-Discovered Lake in Nepal Likely to Become World's Highest

- Kajin Sara Lake a newly-discovered lake in Nepal is likely to set a new record of being the world's highest lake.
- It will replace Tilicho Lake which is situated at an altitude of 4,919 metres in the Himalayan nation which is currently the world's highest lake.

Related Information

Kajin Sara lake

- The Kajin Sara Lake in Manang district was discovered about a few months ago by a team of mountaineers.
- It is located at Singarkharka area of Chame rural municipality in Nepal.
- It is located at an altitude of 5,200 metres.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Physical Geography Source- TOI

2. At CITES, India to seek a boost to protection status of 5 species

- India has submitted proposals regarding changes to the listing of various wildlife species in the CITES secretariat meeting, scheduled later this month in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The proposals submitted are regarding changes in the listing of the

smooth-coated otter, small-clawed otter, Indian star tortoise, Tokay gecko, wedge fish and Indian rosewood.

Overview of the Proposal

- For the Indian rosewood, the proposal is to remove the species from CITES Appendix II.
- India is among the parties proposing the re-listing of the star tortoise from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I due to the loss of habitat to agriculture and illegal harvesting for the pet trade.
- With regard to the two otter species, India, Nepal and the Philippines have proposed that the listing be moved from CITES Appendix II to Appendix I for the more endangered species.
- A similar proposal has been made to include the Tokay gecko in Appendix I.

Related Information

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

- The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora is an international agreement between governments.
- It aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.
- It has the following appendix related to the conservation status.
 - (a) Appendix I include species threatened with extinction but the Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances.
 - (b) Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival.
 - (c) Appendix III contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other, CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

3. What the new IPCC report says on land and climate change

- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a new report which presents the most recent evidence on how the different uses of land — forests, agriculture, urbanisation — are affecting and getting affected by climate change.
- It is part of a series of special reports that IPCC called the Assessment Reports that are due around 2022.
- This is the first time that the IPCC has focused its attention solely on the land sector.

Highlights of the report

- The report says that if pre-production activities like cattle rearing and post-production activities like transport, energy and food processing contribute as much as 37 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions every year.
- It points out that nearly 25 per cent of all food produced is either lost or wasted and even the decomposition of the waste releases emissions.
- Land and ocean together absorb nearly 50 per cent of greenhouse gases emitted every year through natural processes in the carbon cycle.
- India has promised that it would create an additional carbon sink of about 2.5 billion to 3 billion tonnes by the year 2032 by increasing its forest cover and planting more trees.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Indian Express

4. Gogabeel is Bihar's first community reserve

- Gogabeel, an ox-bow lake in Bihar's Katihar district, has been declared as the state's first 'Community Reserve'.
- The water body was notified as a 57 hectare Community Reserve and a 30-hectare 'Conservation Reserve' on August 2, 2019.

- Gogabeel is formed from the flow of the rivers Mahananda and Kankhar in the north and the Ganga in the south and east. It is the fifteenth Protected Area (PA) in Bihar.
- It also recommended the site as having the potential to be declared as a Ramsar Site of India.
- On November 2, 2018, the State Board for Wildlife passed the proposal for notifying Gogabeel and Baghar Beel as 'Community Reserve' and 'Conservation Reserve'.

Gogabeel

- Gogabeel is a permanent waterbody, although it shrinks to some extent in the summer but never dries completely.
- More than 90 bird species have been recorded from this site, of which, about 30 are migratory.
- Among the threatened species, the Lesser Adjutant Stork is listed as 'Vulnerable' by the IUCN while the Black Necked Stork, White Ibis and White-eyed Pochard are 'Near Threatened'.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down To Earth

5. 3rd Edition of Renewable Energy Investors' Meet & Expo (RE-INVEST 2019)

- Ministry of New & Renewable Energy organised Curtain Raiser ceremony for the 3rd Edition of Renewable Energy Investors' Meet and Expo (RE-INVEST 2019).
- The event is to be scheduled in the month of Oct-Nov 2019.
- The objective of the event is to attract the right investments in renewable energy (RE) and present India's RE story to the world.

Indian Commitment regarding Renewable Energy

- India had set a target of 175 GW renewable energy capacities by 2022.

- As of June 30, 2019, India has an installed renewable energy capacity of 80.47 GW, of which solar and wind comprises 29.55 GW and 36.37 GW respectively.
- Biomass & small hydropower constitute 9.81GW & 4.6GW respectively.
- The Government of India allows a 100 per cent FDI under the automatic route for projects of renewable power generation and distribution.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Energy

Source- PIB

6. Rotavirus Vaccine

- Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare have been decided to provide Rotavirus vaccine to every child across all states & UTs by September 2019.
- The Government is committed to ending morbidity and mortality in children due to the diarrhoea by 2022.

Related Information

Rotavirus

- Diarrhoea is one of the biggest killers in children and Rotavirus is one of the most common causes of severe diarrhoea in children less than 2 years of age.
- Rotavirus is a very contagious virus that causes diarrhoea.
- It's the most common cause of diarrhoea in infants and children worldwide,
- The virus is transmitted by the faecal-oral route.
- There are nine species of rotavirus, referred to as A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and I.
- Humans are primarily infected by the species rotavirus A.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- TOI

7. Mukhya Mantri Krishi Ashirwad Yojana launched in Jharkhand

- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu has launched the Jharkhand government's

'Mukhya Mantri Krishi Ashirwad Yojana'.

- Under the scheme, the money will be directly transferred into the bank accounts of farmers in the state.
- The beneficiaries having farmland of less than one acre to five acres will get 5,000 to 25,000 rupees in their bank accounts.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Schemes

Source- AIR

8. India's longest ropeway over sea project — connecting Mumbai with the Elephanta Caves

- India's longest ropeway project connecting Mumbai with the Elephanta Caves will soon clear the final hurdle.
- The initiative is to be executed by the Mumbai Port Trust, under the Ministry of Shipping.
- The 8-km ropeway will begin from Sewri in Mumbai's east coast and end at Raigad district's Elephanta Island.
- The Elephanta caves, located on the Elephanta Islands, off Mumbai, was declared a world heritage site by UNESCO in 1987, due to which clearance will have to be taken from Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), besides the Indian Navy, Coast Guard and the Ministry of Environment.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Infrastructure

Source- Indian Express

13.08.2019

1. Invasive weed found in Haryana wheat crop

- The scientist has found an invasive weed called *Emex australis* Steinh in wheat fields at villages of Faridabad and adjoining districts in Haryana.
- It is commonly known as 'doublegee', 'three corner jack' or 'spiny emex'.

- The invasive weed belongs to the family Polygonaceae which is a native to Australia and South Africa.
- The weed prospers in conditions such as drought and unseasonal rain and climate change help increase its numbers.
- The weed has the potential to damage wheat crops and reduces its productivity in India.
- This was first reported in India in Santhal Pargana division of erstwhile united Bihar in 1984 and in Jammu & Kashmir in 1987.

Related Information

- Recently, an invasive weed called 'Onion Weed' or Asphodelus Fistulosus invaded onion farms in Ahmadnagar and Aurangabad districts in Maharashtra.
- The weed is a native of North Africa, Southern Europe and West Asia. It looks like an onion plant.
- The weed can potentially damage India's self-sufficiency in onion production. It could also make land infertile if it is not controlled in a timely manner.

Invasive Species

- An invasive alien species is a species that is not native to a specific location, and that has a tendency to spread to a degree believed to cause damage to the environment, human economy or human health.
- An alien species is a species introduced by humans – either intentionally or accidentally - outside of its natural past or present distribution, however not all alien species have negative impacts.
- Notable examples of alien invasive species :
 1. Water hyacinth
 2. Zebra mussels
 3. Ship rat
 4. Small Indian mongoose

5. Yellow crazy ant
6. American Bull FrogComb jellyfish and Zebra mussel

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down to Earth

2. Sex ratio at birth: Kerala on top. Northeast states show a decline

- According to the 4th National Family Health Surveys (NFHS), the sex ratio at birth (SRB) has improved from 914 in 2005-06 to 919 in 2015-16.
- The sex ratio at birth (SRB) in the country, defined as the number of female births per 1,000 male births.

Highlights of the Survey

- The survey has said that the highest improvement in sex ratio at birth was in Punjab at 126 points but its SRB remained at 860 which was one of the lowest SRB in the states.
- Further, after Punjab, the highest improvement in sex ratio at birth was in Kerala at 1,047 from 925 in 2005-06 which was the highest among all states.
- Despite the North-Eastern societies traditionally being matriarchal, the sharpest decline was in Sikkim where the sex ratio at birth dropped 175 points to reach 809, the lowest among all states in 2015-16.

Related Information

National Family Health Survey

- It is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.
- Four rounds of the survey have been conducted since the first survey in 1992-93.
- The survey provides state and national information for India on fertility, infant and child mortality, the practice of family planning, maternal and child health, reproductive health, nutrition, anaemia, utilization and quality of health and family planning services.

Note:

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW), Government of India, designated the International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) Mumbai, as the nodal agency, responsible for providing coordination and technical guidance for the survey.

Topic- GS Paper –Society

Source- TOI

3. Uber for tractors': Government to launch the app to aid farmers

- The agriculture ministry has developed a farm equipment rental app for Indian farmers called Uber for tractors.
- The app will allow the farmers to hire tractors, rotavator and other farm-related machinery on rent for with flexible tenure.
- The farmers who wish to hire equipment can register using their names, addresses and mobile numbers and then punch in their requirements.
- It will efficiently connect farmers with custom hiring centres, just like Uber cab service.
- The app will show farmers the custom hiring centres which have the equipment available near his location.
- The farmer can then call the CHC (custom hiring centres) or just use the app to book the equipment at a specific time and location and it will turn up just like an Uber.
- It will also help to create an invaluable database for policy-makers who can track the use and cost of equipment.
- The system would also help to track the usage of new technology that the government wants to promote such as the Happy Seeder.
- The Happy Seeder aims to prevent stubble burning that causes air pollution or solar dryers that can help farmers process and preserve their produce.

- The system put in place on a pilot basis in states of Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Punjab, has been successfully running.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

4. ISRO's founder, Vikram Sarabhai's 100th birth anniversary: 12 August

- Remembered as the Father of India's Space Programme, Vikram Sarabhai was born in Ahmedabad on 12th August in 1919.
- He established the Indian National Committee for Space Research in 1962, which was later renamed as the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- He was also the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission.
- He is also responsible for setting up many institutions in India including the Physical Research Laboratory, the Indian Institute of Management, and the Center for Environmental Planning and Technology.
- A crater on the moon was also named after him in his honour in 1973.
- Recently ISRO launched its lunar mission with the Chandrayaan-2, in which the Vikram lander is scheduled to touch down on the lunar surface.

Related Information

- For his exemplary contribution, he was honoured with the Padma Bhushan in 1966 and the Padma Vibhushan (posthumously) in 1972.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

5. 63% panchayats join state's star-rating scheme on 7 social indicators

- Two years after launching its '7-Star Rainbow Scheme', the Haryana government has given star-rankings to 63 per cent of the state's gram panchayats based on their performance against seven social parameters.

- Based on the ranking, the government gives financial aid to villages.

Related Information

7-Star Rainbow Scheme

- The scheme was launched in January 2018.
- Under the scheme, state government gives star-rankings to state's gram panchayats based on their performance against seven social parameters.
- Seven parameters under the scheme includes-
 - Sex ratio,
 - Education,
 - Hygiene,
 - Environment preservation,
 - Good Governance and
 - Social participation.
- The villages would be rewarded Rs one lakh for achieving each parameter.
- The villages having equal or more girl population will be given Rs 50,000 as the bonus with their reward money.
- Similarly, the villages which adopt Swachhta Mission will be given an additional Rs 50,000 as the reward.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Schemes

Source- Indian Express

- Zanzibar passes new regulation developed by CSE on solid waste management
 - Zanzibar, a semi-autonomous archipelago of Tanzania, has recently passed the Urban Municipal Council Solid Waste Management (SWM) Regulations, 2019, developed by Delhi-based non-profit, Centre for Science and Environment (CSE).
 - Zanzibar has become the first island in East Africa to have a decentralised waste management model.
 - Zanzibar bans import, production, use and sale of plastic bags.

Major provisions

- The regulation emphasises the generator's responsibility to segregate domestic waste into three streams namely compostable, recyclable and non-recyclable waste.
- The regulation is based on the 'Polluter Pays Principle', under which the generator has to pay a user fee or service charge on a monthly basis to the council.
- There are four Schedules included in the regulation.
- The first Schedule talks about the charges and fees for solid waste services.
- The second schedules talks about the format of the application form for demolition and construction waste storage permits.
- The third schedules and fourth Schedules are related to; registration application form for hazardous, industrial & e-wastes producers and transporters and the permit application form to transport bulk wastes respectively.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Environment

Source- Down to Earth

- Earth's last magnetic field flip lasted 22,000 years: Study
 - According to the journal Science Advances, the magnetic field, which protects the Earth from potentially dangerous solar radiation, last flipped some 770,000 years ago and is named Matuyama-Brunhes after the scientists who discovered it.
 - The Matuyama-Brunhes took more than twice as long to flip, while all reversals generally wrap up within 9,000 years.

Related Information

- The liquid layer of the Earth called the outer core is responsible for its magnetic field.

- As Earth spins on its axis, the iron inside the liquid outer core moves around and creates a field.
- Reversals of the magnetic field are recorded in the rocks in a phenomenon called rock magnetism.
- Many rocks contain iron-bearing minerals that act like tiny magnets.
- As magma or lava cools, these minerals align with the magnetic field preserving its position and form rocks.

Impact of Magnetic flip

- The magnetic North Pole is currently careening toward Siberia, which recently forced the Global Positioning System that underlies modern navigation to update its software sooner than expected to account for the shift.
- A reversing field might significantly affect navigation and satellite and terrestrial communication.

Topic- GS Paper –Geophysical Phenomenon

Source- Down to Earth

14.08.2019

1. Shillong Declaration

- The 22nd National Conference on e-Governance has adopted a 10 point Shillong Declaration to improve citizens' experience with government service.
- The conference was organized by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) and the State Government of Meghalaya.
- The theme of this Conference was "Digital India: Success to Excellence".

The 10-point declaration of Shillong includes:

- The GOI and State governments would collaborate to improve the citizen's experience with government services by promoting the timely

implementation of India Enterprise Architecture (IndEA).

- It will also implement a single sign-on for interoperability and integration among e-Government applications throughout the country.
- It will help to consolidate the successful State-level e-Governance projects and domain-based projects with the focus on replicating them as common application software with configurable features.
- It also ensures improvement in ease of living and ease of doing business by making a big shift in the role of the Government from service provider to service enabler
- It also agreed to take steps to enhance the activities of the Electronics Sector Skill Council in the North Eastern States and explore the possibility of opening an electronics skill centre in Shillong.
- It also helps promote the use of e-Office and move towards less paper State Secretariats in the North Eastern States and in the district-level offices.
- This will help improve the quality of delivery of e-Services in the North East to fulfil the vision of improved citizen experience.
- It was also resolved to develop India as a global cloud hub and facilitate the development of Government applications and databases on Cloud by default.
- To adopt emerging technologies for finding e-Governance solutions and to promote the Digital India Projects with focus on Smart Cities and Smart Villages through Startups and Smart Entrepreneurship were also resolved in the declaration.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

2. Happy Seeder: A solution for crop residue burning problem

- Recently a study found that Happy Seeder will eliminate air pollution and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from on-farm activities by more than 78 per cent.
- The study also found that the Happy Seeder-based systems are on average 20 per cent more profitable than the most common 'burnt' systems and almost 10 per cent more than the most profitable burning options.

Related Information

Happy Seeder

- It is a tractor-mounted device which wills cuts and lifts the residue of the previous crop (in this case the rice straw) and sows a new crop (wheat) in its place.
- It is a direct sowing machine that is capable of seeding for the new wheat crop even in the presence of the rice straw residues on the soil surface without any tillage.
- It will help to deposit the straw over the sown area as mulch.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Science and Technology

Source- Down to Earth

3. Two new Union Territory's J & K & Ladakh will come into effect on 31st October

- Two newly formed Union Territories Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh will formally come into being on October 31, 2019 (Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's birth anniversary).
- The President had already given assent to newly adopted Jammu and Kashmir Re-organization Act 2019.
- Under the new Act, Union Territory J&K will have an Assembly, while Ladakh will be Union Territory without a Legislature.
- The Ladakh UT will have three districts that are Leh, Kargil and Ladakh while the remaining 12 districts will stay with J&K UT.

- Each UT will be governed by a separate Lieutenant Governor.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Indian Polity

Source- India Today

4. Army launches 'Mission Reach Out' in Jammu

- The Army has launched "Mission Reach Out" in Jammu to ensure basic necessities and essential services are available in the region post the abrogation of the provisions of Article 370 and reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- Livemint

5. Karnataka government launches initiative "E-Step" to empower student start-ups

- Government of Karnataka has introduced the "E-Step" initiative to empower start-ups of students.
- The "E-Step" initiative was introduced by the Karnataka Department of IT, BT and S&T through the Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society (KITS).
- Karnataka Government has launched "E-Step" initiative to empower student start-ups.
- Under the boot camps of the E-Step initiative, mentoring and coaching programs will be organized that will cover multiple elements of entrepreneurship.
- The program is specially designed for students/start-ups/ entrepreneurs to know the basics of entrepreneurship from experienced trainers.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Government Policies

Source- Hindu business line

6. Iran unveils 'Falaq' an 'improved' radar air defence system

- Iran unveiled a locally upgraded radar system Falaq after a rising tension between Iran and the United States

Related Information

Falaq

- Falaq is a radar air defence system with a range of 400 km (250 miles)

that could help defend against cruise and ballistic missiles and drones.

- The Falaq is a phased-array radar system which can be incorporated into Iran's larger integrated air defence, which includes an S-300 surface-to-air missile system.

Background

- Recently U.S. President Donald Trump reimposed sanctions on Tehran after pulling out of the nuclear deal.
- It makes other signatories are struggling to maintain as Washington also lobbies to establish a maritime security coalition to safeguard shipping in the Gulf in a related standoff with Iran over oil supplies.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology

Source- Hindustan Times

7. World's 1st museum on Sri Chaitanya

- West Bengal Chief Minister has inaugurated the world's first museum on Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu at Baghbazare in Kolkata.
- Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was the mystic and saint of Bengali Hindu in the 16th century and the principal advocate of the tradition of Gaudiya Vaishnavism within Hinduism.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art & Culture

Source- UNI

8. Vice President advocates for Supreme Court Benches in distinct areas

- Vice President of India has advocated the need to set up Supreme Court benches in different regions in the country, including one at Chennai.
- It will help to bring the judicial system closer to people.

Related Information

Law Commission report 2009

- The Law Commission, in its report submitted to the government in 2009, recommended that –
1. Constitution Bench be set up in Delhi to deal with constitutional and allied issues, and
 2. four Cassation Benches in Delhi (north), Chennai/Hyderabad (south),

Kolkata (east) and Mumbai (west) to deal with all appellate work arising out of the orders/judgments of the High Courts.

Constitutional Provision

- Article 130 is an enabling provision which empowers the Chief Justice of India, with the approval of the President, to appoint place or places other than Delhi as the seat of the Supreme Court.
- Article 130 cannot be construed as casting a mandatory obligation on the Chief Justice of India to appoint place or places other than Delhi as the seat of the Supreme Court.
- No court can give a direction either to the Chief Justice of India or the President to exercise the power under article 130.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Pouty

Source- The Hindu

9. India contributes 1 million to the UN Fund

- India has contributed one million US Dollars to the United Nations Special Purpose Trust Fund for the Resident Coordinator System.
- According to the UN information, Special Purpose Trust Fund (SPTF) is a specific fund housed within the UN Secretariat, established to receive, consolidate, manage all contributions and financial transactions of the new Resident Coordinator system in a transparent and effective way.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –India and World

Source- The Hindu

10. Three new sports included in the Commonwealth Games 2022

- Three new sports Women's T20 cricket, Beach volleyball and Para-table Tennis included in the Commonwealth Games 2022 which is to be held in Birmingham, England.

Topic- State PCS

Source- TOI

16.08.2019

1. Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

- Prime Minister has announced in his Independence Day speech for the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff to provide “effective leadership at the top level” to the three wings of the armed forces.

Related Information

Office of the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

- The CDS is a high military office that oversees and coordinates the working of the three Services, and to help improve coordination among them.
- He also acts as a military adviser to the President, and his remit extends to the National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council, and the Defence Secretary.
- It provides single-point advice to the Executive (in India’s case, to the Prime Minister) on long-term defence planning and management, including manpower, equipment and strategy, and above all, “jointmanship” in operations.
- National Security Advisor Ajit Doval as its chairman, and the foreign, defence, and expenditure secretaries, and the three Service Chiefs as members are the present body who advise Prime Minister on military matters which were created by Defence Planning Committee in 2018.

Background

- The first proposal for a CDS came from the 2000 Kargil Review Committee (KRC).
- The committee called for a reorganisation of the “entire gamut of national security management and apex decision-making and structure and the interface between the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces Headquarters”.
- The Group of Ministers Task Force that studied the KRC Report and recommendations proposed to the

Cabinet Committee on Security that a CDS, who would be five-star officer, be created.

- In preparation for the post, the government created the Integrated Defence Staff (IDS) in late 2002, which was to eventually serve as the CDS’s Secretariat.

Note :

- The United States Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS), for example, is extremely powerful, with a legislated mandate and sharply delineated powers.
- The Chiefs of the United States Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and National Guard too, are members of the JCSC.
- All, including the CJCS, are four-star officers, but by statute, only the CJCS is designated as the “principal military adviser”.
- However, the CJCS is barred from exercising any operational authority over combat commanders in varied theatres because this authority rests exclusively with the US President.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- The Hindu

2. PM announces Jal Jeevan Mission Scheme for households

- Prime Minister has announced that the government will launch a Jal Jeevan Mission to bring piped water to households.

Related Information

Jal Jeevan Mission

- The objective of the mission to ensure HarGharJal (piped water supply) to all rural households by 2024 under the Jal Jeevan Mission.
- Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation under the Jal Shakti Mantralaya is the Executing Agency.
- This Mission will focus on integrated demand and supply-side management of water at the local level, including the creation of local infrastructure for source sustainability

like rainwater harvesting, groundwater recharge and management of household wastewater for reuse in agriculture.

- The Mission will converge with other Central and State Government Schemes to achieve its objectives of sustainable water supply management across the country.

Note:

- In July 2019 budget speech, Union Finance Minister announced that government has identified 1592 Blocks (spread across 256 districts) which are critical and overexploited, for Jal Shakti Abhiyan.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

3. First-ever global assessment of forest biodiversity by World Wide Fund for Nature

- According to the first-ever global assessment of forest biodiversity by World Wide Fund for Nature, there has been a 53 per cent decline in the number of forest wildlife populations since 1970.
- The new findings were based on the Forest Specialist Index, developed following the Living Planet Index methodology — an index that tracks wildlife that lives only in forests.

Highlights of the report

- The data were available for 268 species (455 populations) of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians.
- Of the 455 monitored populations of forest specialists, more than half declined at an annual rate of 1.7 per cent, on average between 1970 and 2014.
- While the decline was consistent in these years among mammals, reptiles and amphibians (particularly from the tropical forests), it was less among birds (especially from temperate forests).

- Further, the report found that just the changes in tree cover — deforestation or reforestation — was not responsible for the decline in wildlife populations.
- Other major threats were:
 - Habitat loss and habitat degradation/change
 - Exploitation
 - Climate change
- Loss of habitat due to logging, agricultural expansion, mining, hunting, conflicts and spread of diseases accounted for almost 60 per cent of threats.
- Nearly 20 per cent of threats were due to overexploitation. Of the 112 forest-dwelling primate populations, 40 were threatened by overexploitation (hunting), the report showed.
- Climate change, on the other hand, threatened to 43 per cent of amphibian populations, 37 per cent of reptile populations, 21 per cent of bird populations but only 3 per cent of mammal populations.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down to Earth

4. CORAS Of Indian Railways

- Union Railway Minister has launched Commandos for Railway Security, a special railway unit for the Indian railways and a new establishment manual for the Railway Protection Force (RPF).

Related Information

Commandos For Railway Security

- It is a separate Commando unit of the Railway Protection Force.
- The vision of this unit to respond in situations pertaining to damage, disturbance, disruption of train operations, providing safety to passengers, service during disaster situations in the railway area.
- The Commando will be deployed in Left Wing Extremism (LWE)/

insurgency/terrorism affected railway areas.

Note:

- A state of the art commando training centre is to be established in Jagadhri, Haryana.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Security

Source- Livemint

5. Panchamirtham' of Palani temple gets GI tag

- The famous Palani panchamirtham, given as 'prasadam' at the Murugan temple there, has been granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
- This is the first time a temple 'prasadam' from Tamil Nadu has been bestowed with the GI tag.

Panchamirtham

- It is a combination of five natural substances — banana, jaggery, cow ghee, honey and cardamom. Dates and diamond sugar candies are added for flavour.
- The panchamirtham is an 'abhishega prasadam' (food that is a religious offering), which is served in a semi-solid state.
- It is sweet in taste and one of the main offerings for Lord Dhandayuthapani Swamy, the presiding deity of Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swamy Temple, situated on Palani Hills.

Related Information

Geographical Indications

- It is an intellectual property right which is a status accorded to a good which is unique to a particular region or area, and is originated from there.
- In India, the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, along with the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Rules, 2002 govern GI registrations and goods.

- These laws were introduced after the ratification of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- India Today

6. Jammu and Kashmir delimitation process kicks off

- Election Commission held internal discussions on the delimitation of constituencies ahead of elections to the new Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
- According to the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the UT of J&K would be increased from 107 to 114.
- The Act also specifies that delimitation will be based on the 2011 census till 2026.
- The act also carries a provision for the introduction of reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Related Information

Delimitation Act, 2002

- Articles 82 and 170 of the Constitution of India provide for readjustment and the division of each State into territorial constituencies (Parliamentary constituencies and Assembly constituencies) on the basis of the 2001 census by such authority and in such manner as Parliament may, by law, determine.
- Further, Articles 330 and 332 of the Constitution of India provide for fixing the number of seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in the House of the People and Legislative Assemblies of the States on the basis of the 2001 census.
- The present delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly

constituencies is based on the 1971 census.

- It is a high power body whose orders have the force of law and cannot be called in question before any court.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Pouty

Source- The Hindu

7. The "Golden Butterfly : A variety of Tea

Golden Butterfly

- The "Golden Butterfly" is a speciality tea which is produced by the Dikom Tea Estate near Dibrugarh.
- These teas are made of tea buds and not tea leaves.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- The Hindu

8. Document Identification Number (DIN)

- Every communication to be issued by the Income-Tax Department will now have a Document Identification Number (DIN).
- DIN is a unique Director identification number allotted by the Central Government to any person intending to be a Director or an existing director of a company.
- This intends to ensure a proper audit trail of such communication.
- It is an 8-digit unique identification number which has lifetime validity. Through DIN, details of the directors are maintained in a database.
- It is specific to a person, which means even if he is a director in 2 or more companies, he has to obtain only one DIN which would be worked in the other company as well after he/she leaves the job.
- It is used in whenever a return, an application or any information related to a company will be submitted under any law, the director signing such return, application or information will mention his DIN underneath his signature.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Indian

Economy Source- Economics

Times

9. New burrowing frog species confirmed in Jharkhand

- A new species of burrowing frog has been confirmed in Jharkhand's Chhota Nagpur Plateau.
- The frog was first discovered in 2015.
- It has been named as Spahaerotherca Magadha and will be known by the common name of 'Magadha Burrowing Frog'.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down to Earth

10. High CO2 emissions reducing nutrients in rice, wheat

- According to a report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), increased atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide (CO2) can reduce the nutritional quality of staple foods like wheat and rice.

Highlights of the reports

- According to the report wheat grown at CO2 levels of 546-586 parts per million (ppm) has 5.9-12.7 per cent less protein, 3.7-6.5 per cent less zinc, and 5.2-7.5 per cent less iron.
- Under similar levels of CO2, rice grains had lower protein (7.8 per cent), iron (8 per cent) and zinc (5 per cent).
- It indicated large declines in vitamins B and E, showed a meta-analysis on rice varieties.
- Further, the report states that current farmings practices, of both crop and livestock, are unsustainable and are responsible for a significant amount of green house gas emissions (GHG) and is also worsening climate change.
- Food system contributes to 25-30 per cent of GHG emissions.
- This includes agriculture (10-12 per cent), land use (8-10 per cent), and storage, transport and processing (5-10 per cent).
- Food wastage (from harvesting, processing, and storage) also

contribute 8-10 per cent of GHG emissions.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down to Earth

11. Kondapalli toys

- Kondapalli toys — cultural icons of Andhra Pradesh — are one of the most sold handicrafts in India and abroad, across online, wholesale, and retail platforms.

Related Information

- These are the toys made of wood in Kondapalli of Krishna district in Andhra Pradesh.
- The artisans who make the toys are referred to as Aryakhastriyas (also known as Nakarshalu), who have their mention in the Brahmanda Purana.
- It was registered as one of the geographical indication handicraft from Andhra Pradesh as per Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.
- The Kondapalli toys are made from softwood known as Tella Poniki which is found in nearby Kondapalli Hills.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- Indian Express

19.08.2019

1. Odisha to conserve two of its largest lakes

- The Odisha Wetland Authority has approved the implementation of an integrated management plan for Chilika, country's largest brackish water lagoon and Ansupa, State's largest freshwater lake.

Related Information

Chilika

- It lies in Odisha state on the eastern coast of India, at the mouth of the Daya River flowing into the Bay of Bengal.
- It is Asia's largest brackish water lagoon and has the largest coastal

lagoon in India and the second largest coastal lagoon in the world.

- It was the first water body in India to be designated as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention in 1981.
- It is also a home of endangered Irrawaddy dolphins and migratory birds during winter.

Ansupa

- It is famous for its sweet water fish, especially labeo bata locally known as pohala.
- The lake was sustaining from the freshwater supply during the rainy season from the Mahanadi River.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- AIR

2. SUPRA: New scheme will fund cutting-edge research

- Science and Engineering Research Board have recently announced a scheme called Scientific and Useful Profound Research Advancement, or Supra.
- It is a part of the Modi government's 100-day transformative ideas which has a sole objective of funding exploration of new scientific and engineering breakthroughs with global impact.
- The scheme is designed to attract high-quality research proposals consisting of new hypotheses or challenge existing ones and provide 'out-of-box' solutions.
- High Risk-High Reward (HRHR) Research is a scheme similar to SUPRA launched two years ago which was meant for conceptually new and risky projects that are expected to have paradigm-shifting influence

Related Information

Science and Engineering Research Board

- It is a statutory body under the Department of Science and Technology, GOI, established by an Act of the Parliament of India in 2009.

- The Board is chaired by the Secretary to the Government of India in the Department of Science and Technology.
- The Board was set up for promoting basic research in science and engineering and to provide financial assistance to scientists, academic institutions, R&D laboratories, industrial concerns and other agencies for such research.
- The Board offers JC Bose National Fellowship to scientists and engineers for their outstanding performance and contributions and RAMANUJAN Fellowship for brilliant scientists and engineers from all over the world to take up scientific research positions in India.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Live Mint

3. Four New Products get GI Tag

- The Geographical Indication (GI) under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has recently registered 4 new GIs.
- These are
 1. Palani Panchamirtham from Palani Town in Dindigul District of Tamil Nadu State
 2. Tawlhlohpuan from Mizoram
 3. Mizo Puanchei from the state of Mizoram
 4. Tirur Betel leaf from Kerala

Palani Panchamirtham

- They are the Prasadam; from Palani Town is one of the main offerings in the Abisegam of Lord Dhandayuthapani Swamy, the presiding deity of ArulmiguDhandayuthapaniswamy Temple, situated in Palani Hills.
- It is a combination of five natural substances, namely, banana, jaggery sugar, cow ghee, honey and cardamom in a definite proportion.
- This is the first time a temple 'prasadam' from Tamil Nadu has been bestowed with the GI tag.

Tawlhlohpuan

- It is a medium to heavy, compactly woven, good quality fabric from Mizoram is known for warp yarns, warping, weaving & intricate designs that are made by hand.

Mizo Puanchei

- It is a colourful Mizo shawl/textile, from Mizoram, is considered as the most colourful among the Mizo textiles.
- It is an essential possession for every Mizo lady and an important marriage outfit in the state.
- It is also the most commonly used costume in Mizo festive dances and official ceremonies.

Tirur betel vine from Kerala

- It is mainly cultivated in Tirur, Tanur, Tirurangadi, Kuttippuram, Malappuram and Vengara block panchayaths of Malappuram District.
- It is valued both for its mild stimulant action and medicinal properties.
- It has many medicinal, industrial and cultural is considered as a remedy for bad breath and digestive disorders.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- PIB

4. Glyptothorax gopii and Garra simbalbaraensis: New species of freshwater fish found

- Scientists of the Zoological Survey of India have discovered two new species of freshwater fish from the north-eastern and northern parts of the country.
- Both fish are hill stream fauna and are equipped with special morphological features to suit rapid water flow.

Glyptothorax gopii

- It is a new species discovered from Champai district in Mizoram near the India-Myanmar border.
- It has been named to celebrate the contribution of taxonomist K.C. Gopi.

Garra simbalbaraensis

- These species were found in Himachal Pradesh's Simbalbara River.

- It takes its name from the Simbalbara River.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment and Biodiversity

Source- The Hindu

5. India gets its first national essential diagnostics list

- India has got its first National Essential Diagnostics List (NEDL) finalised by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).
- It aims to bridge the current regulatory system's gap that does not cover all the medical devices and in-vitro diagnostic device (IVD).
- India's diagnostics list has been customised and prepared as per the landscape of India's health care priorities.
- WHO released the first edition of the essential diagnostics list (EDL) in May 2018.

Related Information

National essential diagnostics list

- It builds upon the Free Diagnostics Service Initiative and other diagnostics initiatives of the Health Ministry to provide an expanded basket of tests at different levels of the public health system like village level, primary, secondary and tertiary care.
- It includes a group of general laboratory tests for routine patient care and for diagnosis of communicable and non-communicable diseases.
- The inclusion of the diagnostic test on specific diseases selected on the basis of disease burden.
- It will help India in achieving Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3.8 i.e. Universal Health Coverage.
- In India, diagnostics (medical devices and in vitro diagnostics) follow a regulatory framework based on the drug regulations under the Drugs and

Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Drugs and Cosmetics Rules 1945.

- Diagnostics are regulated under the regulatory provisions of the Medical Device Rules, 2017.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

6. Manipur govt launches a scheme "School Fagadaba" to improve govt schools infrastructure and overall education quality

- Launching the "School Fagadaba" (Make education better) scheme, the state govt said the objective was to ensure better infrastructure, quality education and overall improvement of government schools to make them model schools.
- The biometric devices would be installed in schools in ensuring regular attendance of teachers.
- In the first phase of the scheme, one school from each of the 60 Assembly constituencies in the state have been selected.
- The overall objective is to improve the government schools conditions and to increase the enrollment of students.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Government Policies

Source- India Today

7. Lemru Elephant Reserve

- Chhattisgarh government is setting up of Lemru Elephant Reserve (LER), spanning over an area of 450 square kilometres, is aimed at minimizing human-elephant conflict and destruction of property in addition to providing a permanent habitat for the wild tuskers.
- The reserve will be set-up as per the report and recommendations of Special High-Power Technical Committee (SHPTC) which was constituted by the Government of India.
- The report of SHPTC stated that LER would provide a huge protected area for the conservation of wild elephants where the elephants will get an

abundant amount of water, food and other facilities.

- Chhattisgarh government had also formed Sarguja-Jashpur Elephant Reserve in 2011.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Business Standard

8. 28th Ministerial meeting on Climate Change of BASIC Countries

- The BASIC countries — a grouping of Brazil, South Africa, India and China — held their 28th Ministerial meeting on Climate Change between August 14 and August 16 in Sao Paulo, Brazil.
- The BASIC group was formed as the result of an agreement signed by the four countries on November 28, 2009.
- These nations have a broadly common position on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and raising the massive funds that are needed to fight climate change.
- The BASIC countries constituted one of the parties in the Copenhagen Accord reached with the US-led grouping; the Accord, was, however, not legally binding.

Related Information

- BASIC is one of several groups of nations working together to fight climate change and carry out negotiations within the UNFCCC.
- Other than BASIC, there are the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the group of countries of Central Asia, Caucasus, Albania and Moldova (CACAM), the Cartagena Dialogue, the Independent Alliance of Latin America and the Caribbean (AILAC), and the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our America (ALBA in Spanish), etc.
- CoP25 is scheduled from December 2-13, 2019 in the Chilean capital of Santiago.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Indian Express

20.08.2019

1. India emits the most sulphur dioxide in the world

- India is the largest emitter of sulphur dioxide (SO₂) in the world, contributing more than 15 per cent of global anthropogenic emissions.
- The data is based on a new report by Greenpeace which is based on hotspots detected by NASA Ozone Monitoring Instrument (OMI) satellite data.

Reason for this emission

- The primary reason for India's high emission output is the expansion of coal-based electricity generation over the past decade.
- Five of the top 10 SO₂ emission hotspots from coal/power generation industry across the world are in India.

Highlights of Report

- Russia continues to be the largest anthropogenic SO₂ emission hotspot in the world, followed by the Kriel area in Mpumalanga province of South Africa, Zagros in Iran, and Rabigh in Saudi Arabia.
- Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh is at number five.
- China reduced its SO₂ emissions through stringent emission norms and the implementation of technologies like FGD.

Related Information

Flue-gas desulfurization (FGD)

- It is a set of technologies used to remove sulfur dioxide (SO₂) from exhaust flue gases of fossil-fuel power plants, and from the emissions of other sulphur oxide emitting processes

Sulphur Dioxide

- Its emissions are a significant contributor to air pollution.
- Its direct exposure and exposure to particulate matter PM_{2.5} (fine particulate matter) produced when SO₂ reacts with other air pollutants to

form sulphate particles both affect human health.

- The greatest source of SO₂ in the atmosphere is the burning of fossil fuels in power plants and other industrial facilities.
- Other sources include industrial processes such as extracting metal from ore, natural sources such as volcanoes, and locomotives, ships and other vehicles and heavy equipment that burn fuel with high sulphur content.

Note:

- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change had, for the first time, introduced SO₂ emission limits for coal-fired power plants in December 2015.
- But a Supreme Court order changed the deadline for installation of FGD technology in power plants from 2017 to December 2019 in Delhi-NCR and till 2022 for other parts of the country.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Environment

Source- Down to Earth

2. Carbon dots: A new technique to make cancer treatment more effective, affordable

- Researchers in the United Kingdom have developed a new technology that could make light-based cancer treatment more effective and safer for patients.
- Light-based or photodynamic therapy is already a clinically-approved treatment, which uses drugs that only work when exposed to light to destroy cancer cells.
- However, many of these drugs are frequently toxic even without light, causing many side effects in patients and leading to treatment failure.
- The researcher has developed a tiny carbon nanoparticles called Carbon Dots that can deliver cancer drugs to tumours easily.

Carbon Dots

- Carbon dots are fluorescent nanoparticles with very little toxicity, making them extremely useful for this application.
- These nanoparticles were made using common ingredients such as sucrose and citric acid, which occur naturally in various fruits.
- Two different versions of the carbon dots were developed as part of the research, one with the drug bound on the surface and the other where the drug was inside the dot.
- The drug was bound to the surface of a carbon dot it was four times less toxic without light while maintaining its cancer-killing effect in a lab model of melanoma skin cancer.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- DD News

3. Madhya Pradesh demands Legislative Council

- Madhya Pradesh government has indicated that it plans to initiate steps towards the creation of a Legislative Council.

Constitutional Provisions

- Article 71 of the Constitution provides for the option of a state to have a Legislative Council in addition to its Legislative Assembly.
- Under Article 169, a Legislative Council can be formed "if the Legislative Assembly of the State passes a resolution to that effect by a majority of the total membership of the Assembly and by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of the Assembly present and voting". Parliament can then pass a law to this effect.
- Under Article 171 of the Constitution, the Legislative Council of a state shall not have more than one-third of the number of MLAs of the state, and not less than 40 members.
- The tenure of a Member of the Legislative Council (MLC) is six years,

with one-third of members retiring every two years.

- One-third of the MLCs are elected by the state's MLAs, another one-third by a special electorate comprising sitting members of local governments such as municipalities and district boards, 1/12th by an electorate of teachers and another 1/12th by registered graduates.
- The remaining members are appointed by the Governor for distinguished services in various fields.

Positive Arguments

- The second House can help check hasty actions by the directly elected House, and also enable non-elected individuals to contribute to the legislative process.

Negative Arguments

- Legislative Council can be used to delay legislation, and to park leaders who have not been able to win an election.

States with Legislative Council

- Currently, six states have Legislative Councils which are Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra.
- Jammu and Kashmir too had one, until the state was bifurcated into the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh.

Legislative Council V/S Rajya Sabha

- The legislative power of the Councils is limited.
- Unlike Rajya Sabha which has substantial powers to shape non-financial legislation, Legislative Councils lack a constitutional mandate to do so; Assemblies can override suggestions/amendments made to legislation by the Council.
- Again, unlike Rajya Sabha MPs, MLCs cannot vote in elections for the President and Vice President.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Indian Polity

Source- Indian Express

5. Project "Saraswati 2.0"

- IIT Kharagpur will steer Saraswati 2.0 — an Rs 15-crore project funded by the European Union and the Government of India's departments of Science and Technology and Biotechnology.
- The project aims to develop affordable technologies for the treatment of wastewater and provide solutions for its use in both rural and urban India.
- Saraswati 2.0, which has been selected under the EU-India Joint Call on Research and Innovation for Water, follows the Saraswati project of 2012-17.
- The EU will invest up to Rs 323 crore on various projects for four years.
- IIT KGP will steer three pilot projects to treat wastewater.
- For this, three plants will be soon set up at IIT KGP: Two anaerobic digesters, one with bio-electro chemical filter and another with photoheterotrophic bioreactor — and a plant for ultrasonic treatment of sludge.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down To Earth

6. Mangdechhu hydroelectric power plant

- PM Modi inaugurated the Mangdechhu hydroelectric power plant in Bhutan.
- The Rs 4,500-crore hydroelectric plant in central Bhutan presented as a Bhutan-India friendship project is a run-of-river power plant built on the Mangdechhu River in Trongsa Dzongkhag district of the Himalayan nation.
- Construction of the hydropower project began on June 2012 and the first of the four units of the power plant was commissioned in June 2019.

Related Information

- India also announced that an additional \$100 million will be available to Bhutan under the SAARC

currency swap framework to meet the foreign exchange requirement.

Topic- GS Paper 1 – Indian Geography

Source- Indian Express

7. PM Modi to receive UAE's highest civilian award, the Order of Zayed

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been recently honoured with the "Order of Zayed" which is the highest UAE civilian award.
- It is conferred due to the distinguished leadership of Prime Minister for giving a big boost to bilateral relations between the two countries.
- Along with Narendra Modi, Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, Elizabeth II, Queen of the United Kingdom and Chinese President Xi Jinping are the other recipient of this award.

Order of Zayed

- The award is given in the name of Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the founding father of the UAE.

Related Information

Other international awards received by Narendra Modi

Order of St. Andrew award

- It was awarded by Russia on 12 April 2019.
- Narendra Modi is the first Indian who received this award.

Order of the Distinguished Rule of Nishan Izzuddin

- It was awarded by the Maldives on 8 June 2019.
- This is the highest honour of the Maldives awarded to foreign dignitaries.

Champions of the Earth Award

- United Nations Environment Programme awarded this to award on October 2018.
- The Champions of the Earth Award is the annual award established to recognize outstanding environmental leaders from the private/public sectors and from civil society.

Philip Kotler Presidential Award

- Prime Minister Modi was awarded first-ever Philip Kotler Presidential Award.
- Philip Kotler Presidential Award aims to spread examples of individuals and companies who create an innovative culture for the economic, social and technological advancements of an industry or a country.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – International

Affairs Source- The Hindu

21.08.2019

1. 2nd giant planet found around nearby star Beta Pictoris

- Astronomers from France have recently discovered a 2nd planet called 'Beta Pictoris c'.
- It has been discovered with the help of High Accuracy Radial Velocity Planet Searcher (HARPS) spectro-scope on the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope in Chile.
- For the last decade, astronomers on Earth have thought of 'Beta Pictoris b' a planet as a lonely exoplanet orbiting within a huge, dusty disk around the star Beta Pictoris.

Related Information

Planet 'Beta Pictoris c'

- It is roughly around 3,000 times more massive than Earth.
- It orbits Beta Pictoris star, which is about nearly twice the mass of Sun and lies about 63 light-years away from Earth.
- It is situated 2.7 times further from its star than the Earth is from the Sun.
- It takes about 1,200 days to complete its orbit.

Beta Pictoris

- It is the second brightest star in the constellation Pictor.
- It is located 63.4 light-years from the Solar System and is 1.75 times as massive and 8.7 times as luminous as the Sun.

- The Beta Pictoris system is very young, only 20 to 26 million years old.
- Beta Pictoris is the title member of the Beta Pictoris moving group, an association of young stars which share the same motion through space and have the same age.
- Beta Pictoris shows an excess of infrared emission compared to normal stars of its type, which is caused by large quantities of dust and gas (including carbon monoxide) near the star.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Livemint

2. Manufactured sand (M-sand)

- The State government of Tamil Nadu will put in place an M-sand policy that aims to promote the use of M-sand as an alternative building material.
- It will help to eliminate the pervasion of sub-standard products in the market through the regulation of trade.

Related Information

Manufactured sand (M-Sand)

- It is a substitute of river sand for concrete construction.
- It is manufactured using technology like High Carbon steel hit a rock and then ROCK ON ROCK process from hard granite.
- The sand is in cubical shape with grounded edges, washed and graded to as a construction material and having a size of less than 4.75mm.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Science & Technology Source- The Hindu

3. Mobile metallic ramp

- DRDO recently handed over the design of Mobile Metallic Ramp (MMR) to the Indian Army.

Mobile Metallic Ramp (MMR)

- It has been designed and developed by Centre for Fire, Explosive and Environment Safety (CFEES), DRDO's premier research laboratory.

- It has a load-bearing capacity of 70 metric ton (MT).
- It has been designed and developed on requirements projected by Army for reducing Strategic Mobility time of mobilising Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFVs).
- It is a portable, modular in design, which can be easily assembled or disassembled which will provide strategic mobility for Armoured and Mechanised units and formations of Army.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- Indian Express

4. Election Commission to revisit 'D' voter criterion ahead of final NRC

Related Information

'D' voters

- They are the category of voters in Assam whose citizenship is doubtful or under dispute.
- This category was introduced in 1997 at the time EC was revising the state's voter list.
- 'D' voters continue to remain on Assam's electoral roll, they cannot vote in an election unless their case is decided by a Foreigners' Tribunal.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Pouty

Source- The Hindu

5. Punjab government brings 4500 journalists under SSBY scheme

- The Punjab Government has brought journalists into the ambit of its recently launched flagship universal health insurance scheme 'Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana' (SSBY).
- All journalists accredited to the state government or holding yellow cards will be eligible to be covered under the scheme.

Related Information

Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana (AB-SSBY)

- It is also known as Ayushman Bharat - Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana (AB-SSBY) which is a flagship state health

insurance scheme for the beneficiaries of State of Punjab.

- It will provide financial protection to 75% population of the state of Punjab.

Core Features of the Scheme

- It is a cashless health insurance cover of Rs 5 Lakh per family per year.
- It is an entitlement based Scheme.
- Pre-existing diseases are covered and treatment package includes 3 days' pre-hospitalization and 15 days' post-hospitalization expenditure
- Beneficiaries can avail health services at empanelled private and government hospitals of Punjab and Chandigarh.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

6. Chandrayaan-2 successfully completes second lunar orbit manoeuvre

- India's second Moon exploration mission, the Chandrayaan-2, went through its second lunar bound orbit manoeuvre.
- The spacecraft is now placed in the next orbit of the Moon or Lunar Bound Phase 2 (LBN#2) that is 118 km away from the moon's surface at its nearest point and 4,412 km at its farthest.

Related Information

- Chandrayaan-2 is India's second mission to the moon which is a totally indigenous mission.
- It comprises of an Orbiter, Lander named 'Vikram' and Rover named 'Pragyan'.
- The orbiter will circle the moon and provide information about its surface, while the Lander will make a soft landing on the surface and send out the rover.
- The payloads will collect scientific information on lunar topography, mineralogy, elemental abundance, lunar exosphere and signatures of hydroxyl and water-ice.

- Chandrayaan-2 has been launched from a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III, (GSLV -MK III) rocket.

Chandrayaan-1 Mission

- It was launched in October 2008 and operated till August 2009.
- The mission included a lunar orbiter and an impactor.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science & Technology

Source- Indian Express

7. What is Tardigrade, the water bear?

- Recently the Israeli spacecraft Beresheet attempted to land on the Moon but crashed on the surface.
- It was carrying a number of items — including thousands of specimens of a living organism called tardigrade.
- The tardigrade, also known as the water bear, is among the toughest and most resilient creatures on Earth.
- The tardigrade can only be seen under a microscope.
- Half a millimetre long, it is essentially a water-dweller but also inhabits the land and, a 2008 study found, can survive in the cold vacuum of outer space.
- In 2017, another study found that if all other life were to be wiped out by a cataclysmic event — a large asteroid impact, a supernova or gamma-ray bursts — the tardigrade would be the likeliest to survive.
- The tardigrade can endure extreme hot and cold temperature levels.
- The tardigrade derives its name from the fact that it looks like an eight-legged bear, with a mouth that can project out like a tongue.
- Its body has four segments supported by four pairs of clawed legs.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Biodiversity

Source- Indian Express

8. Draft National Resource Efficiency Policy Released

- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)

22.08.2019

released a draft on National Resource Efficiency Policy (NREP) 2019.

- It aims to streamline the efficient use of the resources with a minimum negative impact on the environment.
- The Draft National Resource Efficiency Policy (NREP) envisions a future with environmentally sustainable and equitable economic growth, resource security, healthy environment (air, water and land), and restored ecosystems with rich ecology and biodiversity.
- The Draft National Resource Efficiency Policy is guided by the principles of
 - (a) Reduction in primary resource consumption to 'sustainable' levels, in keeping with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and staying within the planetary boundaries,
 - (b) Creation of higher value with less material through resource-efficient and circular approaches,
 - (c) Waste minimization
 - (d) material security, and creation of employment opportunities and business models beneficial to the cause of environment protection and restoration

Related Information

National Resource Efficiency Authority

- It will be constituted under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- It would be supported by an Inter-Ministerial National Resource Efficiency Board to guide on the aspects critical to its implementation.
- It is also planned to offer tax benefits on recycled materials, green loans to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and soft loans to construct waste disposal facilities, apart from setting up Material Recovery Facilities (MRF).

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

1. Government launches SARAL Index

- Union Minister of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy (IC) and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship R K Singh, launched the State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index.
- The State of Karnataka has been placed at the first rank in the Index that evaluates Indian states based on their attractiveness for rooftop development.
- Telangana, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh have got 2nd, 3rd and 4th rank respectively.

SARAL (State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness) Index

- It has been designed collaboratively by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (SSEF), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and Ernst & Young (EY).
- It is the first of its kind index to provide a comprehensive overview of state-level measures adopted to facilitate rooftop solar deployment.
- The index evaluates Indian states based on their attractiveness for rooftop development.
- It currently captures five key aspects–
 - robustness of policy framework
 - implementation environment
 - investment climate
 - consumer experience
 - business ecosystem

Related Information

- MNRE has set a target of 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022, of which 100 GW solar power is to be operational by March 2022, of which 40 GW is expected to come from grid-connected solar rooftops.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

2. Kerala's Tirur Vettilla leaf obtains GI tag

- Tirur Vettilla (betel leaf) of Kerala has obtained GI (Geographical Indication) tag.

Tirur Vettilla

- It is grown in Tirur and nearby areas of Malappuram district of Kerala.
- It is unique for its significantly high content of total chlorophyll and protein in fresh leaves.
- Eugenol is the major essential oil in Tirur betel leaf contributing to its pungency.

Related Information

GI Tag

- It is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place.

GI tags – a requirement of the TRIPS agreement

- India, as a member of the WTO, enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15th September 2003.
- Darjeeling Tea was the first Indian product to get the geographical indication tag in the Year 2004.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- The Hindu

3. Union HRD Minister launches NISHTHA

- Union HRD Minister has launched the National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) as a part of National Mission to improve Learning Outcomes at the Elementary level.
- This is the largest teachers' training programme of its kind in the world.
- The basic objective of this massive training programme 'NISHTHA' is to motivate and equip teachers to encourage and foster critical thinking in students.

- The training programme has been included as one of the two transformative ideas from this Department for the 100 days programme of the Government.

- This integrated programme aims to build the capacities of around 42 lakh participants covering

(a) All teachers and Heads of Schools at the elementary level in all Government schools

(b) Faculty members of State Councils of Educational Research and Training (SCERTs),

(c) District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs)

(f) Block Resource Coordinators and Cluster Resource Coordinators in all States and UTs.

Related Information

Learning Management System

- It is based on MOODLE (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment) have been developed by NCERT.
- It will be used for registration of Resource Persons and Teachers, dissemination of resources, training gap and impact analysis, monitoring, mentoring and measuring the progress online.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

4. Sericin: This silk protein

- Indian scientists have discovered that a protein produced by silkworms can be used to develop a range of beauty and skincare products.
- The protein, sericin, is known to possess anti-oxidant and other medicinal properties.
- These properties depend on the amino acid composition and secondary metabolites (polyphenols and flavonoids) of sericin.
- They vary with the source of silkworms and their availability

depends on the length of sericin peptides obtained during extraction.

- It could be used for protection from oxidative damage, edema, erythema, sunburn, premature aging, wrinkling, and skin cancer.
- Sericin was isolated from cocoons of three types of silkworms
(a) *Bombyx mori* (Mori)
(b) *Antheraea assamensis* (Muga)
(c) *Philosamia ricini* (Eri)

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down to Earth

5. XDR TB – A deadly disease

- US-FDA approved a three-drug regimen against the most lethal form of multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis.

XDR TB

- XDR TB is known as the extensively drug-resistant strain.
- It has approved 'Pretomanid' Tablets in combination with 'Bedaquiline' and 'Linezolid' for the treatment.

WHO Report

- As per WHO, two-thirds of cases of the XDR-strain are in China, India and Russia.
- As per WHO the XDR can be contracted in two ways.
(a) It may develop in a patient who is already receiving treatment for TB and misuses the anti-TB drugs, or
(b) It can be contracted from a person who already has the disease.
- Ending the TB epidemic by 2030 is among the health targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Types of drug resistance TB

- Mono-resistance: resistance to one first-line anti-TB drug only
- Poly-resistance: resistance to more than one first-line anti-TB drug, other than both isoniazid and rifampicin.
- Multidrug resistance (MDR): resistance to at least both isoniazid and rifampicin
- Extensive drug resistance (XDR): resistance to any fluoroquinolone, and

at least one of three second-line injectable drugs (capreomycin, kanamycin, and amikacin), in addition to multidrug resistance.

- Rifampicin resistance (RR): resistance to rifampicin detected using phenotypic or genotypic methods, with or without resistance to other anti-TB drugs.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu Business line

6. Fossils show Kutch desert was once a forest

- Indian and French researchers have recently said that the hot arid desert of Kutch was once a humid sub-tropical forest with a variety of birds, freshwater fish and possibly giraffes and rhinos.
- Their conclusions are based on the discovery of a tranche of vertebrate fossils from nearly 14 million years ago in a geological period known as the Miocene.
- The fossils, consisting mostly of ribs, and parts of teeth and bones, were unearthed from Palasava village of Rapar taluk in Kutch, Gujarat.

Related Information

Miocene

- It is the first geological epoch of the Neogene period and extends from about 23.03 to 5.332 million years ago (Ma).
- The Miocene was named by Sir Charles Lyell.
- The Miocene follows the Oligocene epoch and is followed by the Pliocene epoch.
- The apes arose and diversified during the Miocene epoch, becoming widespread in the Old World.

Subdivisions

- The Miocene faunal stages from youngest to oldest are typically named according to the International Commission on Stratigraphy:
 - Messinian (7.246–5.332 Ma)

- Tortonian (11.608–7.246 Ma)
- Serravallian (13.65–11.608 Ma)
- Langhian (15.97–13.65 Ma)
- Burdigalian (20.43–15.97 Ma)
- Aquitanian (23.03–20.43 Ma)

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- The Hindu

7. E-VBAB Network Project

- E-VBAB Network Project is one of the 10 MoU signed between India and Zambia.
- Ministry of External Affairs and the Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd (TCIL) signed an agreement for the implementation of e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati (e-VBAB) Network Project in 2018.
- It is primarily a technological upgrade and extension of the Pan-African e-network Project (Phase 1) which was implemented in 48 partner countries across Africa from 2009 till 2017.
- It is a five-year duration project which will provide free tele-education courses in various academic disciplines to 4000 students every year from African countries.
- The E-VBAB Network Project will be completely funded by the Government of India for its entire duration and will be open for participation to all our partner countries in Africa.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

8. Report on illegal global tiger trade: Highest in India

- Overall, a conservative estimate of 2,359 tigers were seized from 2000 to 2018 across 32 countries and territories globally.
- India has the highest extent of tiger trade in the world.
- The top three countries with the highest number of seizure incidents were India (463 or 40.5% of total seizures) and China (126 or 11.0%), closely followed by Indonesia (119 or 10.5%).

- The new report has been compiled by Traffic, an NGO working in conservation and currently in partnership with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Related Information

- India has the world's largest tiger population — 2,967 in the Tiger Census released in July 2019.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Indian Express

9. IIT Hyderabad scientists convert fly ash into waterproofing material

- Researchers from the IIT Hyderabad have found that fly ash a waste byproduct of power plants that poses a threat to the environment — can be modified into a waterproofing material.
- They have converted fly ash into a waterproofing material by treating it with stearic acid, which is commonly used in soaps and shampoos.

Related Information

Stearic acid

- Stearic acid is a saturated fatty acid with an 18-carbon chain and has the IUPAC name octadecanoic acid.
- It is a waxy solid and its chemical formula is $C_{18}H_{36}O_2$.
- The salts and esters of stearic acid are called stearates.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Down to Earth

23.08.2019

1. CITES CoP 2019: Giraffes accorded protection from trade for the first time

- CITES CoP (18) was held recently in Geneva, Switzerland.
- On August 22, 2019, the Conference of Parties (CoP) to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species or CITES in Geneva passed a

resolution to place the giraffe in Appendix II of CITES.

- Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilisation incompatible with their survival.
- They have been listed as 'vulnerable' on the International Union for Conservation of Species Red List since 2016, with some sub-species classified as 'endangered' or 'critically endangered'.
- Today, they are found only south of the Sahara, and occupy only a fraction of their historic range as a result of human population expansion and changes in land use.

Related Information

CITES

- CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, also known as the Washington Convention) is a multilateral treaty to protect endangered plants and animals.
- It was drafted as a result of a resolution adopted in 1963 at a meeting of members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- The convention was opened for signature in 1973 and CITES entered into force on 1 July 1975.
- Each protected species or population is included in one of three lists, called Appendices.
- Currently, 183 countries are a signatory to the CITES.

CoP

- Species are proposed for inclusion in or deletion from the Appendices at meetings of the Conference of the Parties (CoP), which are held approximately once every three years.

- The most recent of which was CoP (CoP 18) in Geneva, Switzerland from 17 August to 28 August.

Topic- GS-3- Environment

Source- Down To Earth

2. Sabka Vishwas legacy dispute resolution scheme

- The government has announced a new scheme called Sabka Vishwas Scheme, 2019 during his budget speech will be operationalised from September 1.
- Businesses can now settle their pending disputes relating to central excise duty and service tax within four months starting 1 September under the terms notified by the government.
- The scheme offers attractive terms to settle disputes that are at different stages and also offers amnesty to those who wish to disclose any previously undisclosed tax liability and pay the tax amount involved without any penalty or prosecution.
- The amnesty offers an opportunity for the taxpayers to pay the outstanding tax and be free of any other consequence under the law.
- It provides substantial relief in the tax dues for all categories of cases as well as full waiver of interest, fine and penalty.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Important Scheme

Source- PIB

3. Oxytocin Ban

- The Supreme Court referred to a larger Bench a batch of petitions challenging a government notification banning private companies from manufacturing Oxytocin.
- The central government also notified on April 2018 under Section 26A of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 restricting the manufacture of Oxytocin for domestic use.

Related Information

Oxytocin

- It's sometimes known as the "cuddle hormone" or the "love hormone,"

because it is released when people snuggle up or bond socially.

- It is a hormone that is made in the brain, in the hypothalamus and it is transported to, and secreted by, the pituitary gland, which is located at the base of the brain.
- It acts both as a hormone and as a brain neurotransmitter.
- The release of oxytocin by the pituitary gland acts to regulate two female reproductive functions: Childbirth and Breast-feeding.

Reasons behind the ban are:

- It is misused by dairy owners on milch animals to artificially extract milk.
- Oxytocin is also used to increase the size of vegetables such as pumpkins, watermelons, eggplants, gourds, and cucumbers.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Hindu Business line

4. WHO released its first-ever report on the presence of microplastics in drinking water

- The WHO released its first-ever report on the presence of microplastics in drinking water on August 22, 2019.
- WHO said microplastics were present in drinking water, but the levels were not alarming.
- The UN health agency, however, said there was lack of "enough research" and "reliable and conclusive data" on the subject.
- This WHO assessment reassures the consumers of drinking water that risk of microplastics (in it) is low.
- There exist significant gaps in existing research studies on the presence of microplastics in drinking water.
- Microplastics can easily lodge themselves in the human body, but this doesn't necessarily translate into a health risk, according to the WHO.

Related Information

- There is no consensus on the exact definition of microplastics.

- A widely used definition describes microplastics as plastic particles smaller than 5 mm in length.
- However, this is a rather arbitrary definition and is of limited value in the context of drinking water.

Topic- GS-3- Environment

Source- Down To Earth

5. Kiren Rijju will head the committee for 'Fit India Movement'

- The 28-member committee headed by Sports Minister Kiren Rijju has been set up to advise the government on the "Fit India Movement."
- The Committee is composed of public authorities, members of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), national sports federations, private bodies and fitness promoters.
- The aim of the Fit India Movement is to encourage people to inculcate physical activity and sport in their daily lives.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the "Fit India Movement" on 29 August 2019.

Topic- GS-1-Awareness

Source- AIR

6. Culture Minister launched the book 'The Diary of Manu Gandhi'

- Culture Minister Prahlaad Singh Patel has launched the book - 'The Diary of Manu Gandhi' at a function in New Delhi.
- The book has been brought out by National Archives of India, on the occasion of 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in collaboration with Oxford University Press.
- The Diary of Manu Gandhi (Grandniece of Mahatma Gandhi) originally in Gujarati has been edited and translated by Dr Tridip Suhrud, a well-known scholar engaged in understanding the Gandhian Intellectual tradition.

Source- AIR

7. Nitrate exposure in infancy impacts Indian women's height

- In a new World Bank report that looks at the impact of water pollution worldwide, one aspect covered is the long-term impact of nitrate exposure experienced during infancy.

Highlights of the report

- Across 19 districts of the state, Nitrate levels in groundwater aquifers in India exceeded permissible levels in more than 50 %.
- While short-term exposure to nitrates has an almost negligible effect on adult height, cumulative exposure over the first 3 years of life has considerable impact.
- An infant girl who has been exposed to nitrate levels above the safety threshold in the first three years experiences a 1-2 cm decrease in her adult height.
- Given that female adult height in India has increased by approximately 4 cm over the last century, a 1-2 cm loss means that nitrate exposure in infancy can wipe out almost half of this gain in height.

Related Information

Nitrate Pollution

- Nitrate pollution is caused by the overuse of nitrogenous fertilisers which, while boosting yields, can be harmful if they leach into water or air.
- In India, the Green Revolution of the 1960s kick-started the use of synthetic fertilisers, the report notes.

Methemoglobinemia

- It is caused by overtaking of nitrates.
- In Methemoglobinemia, the blood shows elevated levels of methemoglobin.
- Methemoglobin is a form of haemoglobin that contains the ferric [Fe³⁺] form of iron.
- The affinity for oxygen of ferric iron is impaired.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Down to Earth

8. Government approves proposal to declare ocean energy as Renewable Energy

- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has approved a proposal to declare ocean energy as Renewable Energy.
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has clarified to all the stakeholders that energy produced using various forms of ocean energy such as tidal, wave, ocean thermal energy conversion among others shall be considered as renewable energy.
- They shall also be eligible for meeting the non-solar Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPO).

Related Information

- According to Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, the total identified potential of tidal energy is about 12,455 MW, with potential locations identified at Khambhat & Kutch regions, and large backwaters, where barrage technology could be used.
- The total theoretical potential of wave energy in India along the country's coast is estimated to be about 40,000 MW – these are preliminary estimates.
- Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) has a theoretical potential of 180,000 MW in India subject to suitable technological evolution.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- AIR

9. Rajasthan's free medicine scheme gets the first rank

- The National Health Mission has given the first rank to Rajasthan among 16 States in the implementation of its flagship free medicine scheme.
- The performance of States was assessed on the basis of parameters such as stock of drugs, the value of drugs about to expire and compliance

with the drugs and vaccine distribution management system.

Related Information

- In the year 2011-12, the Rajasthan government had announced a scheme to provide commonly-used essential medicines free of cost to patients visiting government healthcare institutions.
- The scheme consists of two components free medicine and free tests.
- To implement the scheme, Rajasthan Medical Services Corporation Limited (RMSCL) was incorporated in 2011, as a Public Limited Company.

Other similar initiatives in India

National Health Mission

- In 2018 Union cabinet has announced the National Health Mission (NHM) which would have a "special focus" with "intensification of initiatives such as National Health Mission Free Drugs and Diagnostics Services.

Jan Aushadi Kendras

- Union government has set up medical dispensaries under Jan Aushadi Yojana to provide medicines at 50-90 per cent cheaper than branded drugs available in the market.
- This scheme aims to make healthcare affordable and encouraging Ease of Living.

Ayushman Bharat Yojana or National Health Protection Scheme

- It is a centrally sponsored scheme launched in 2018, under the Ayushman Bharat Mission of MoHFW in India.
- The scheme aims at making interventions in primary, secondary and tertiary care systems, covering both preventive and promotive health, to address healthcare holistically.
- It is an umbrella of two major health initiatives namely, Health and

Wellness centres and National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS).

Tamil Nadu Model

- Tamil Nadu introduced a free medicines model in 1995 consisting of a highly effective system of drug procurement, quality checks and supply and distribution centred on government hospitals.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Hindu

26.08.2019

1. Amazon forest fires

- AS FIRES rage in the Amazon rainforest, alarming the world.
- The implications are immense as the rainforest contributes 20% of the oxygen in the atmosphere, stores over 450 tonnes carbon per hectare, and plays a vital role in the global water cycle.
- There has been an 84 per cent increase in the number of fires compared with the same period in 2018. Most of these fires have been in the Amazon region.
- In the region, the number of fires this year is 35% higher than the corresponding eight-month average since 2010.
- Most of the fires are on agricultural land where the rainforest had already been cleared.
- The most affected country is Brazil.

Related Information

Amazon Rainforest

- It is a moist broadleaf tropical rainforest in the Amazon biome that covers most of the Amazon basin of South America.
- This region includes territory belonging to nine nations.
- The majority of the forest is contained within Brazil, with 60% of the rainforest, followed by Peru with 13%, Colombia with 10%, and with minor amounts in Venezuela, Ecuador,

Bolivia, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana.

- The Amazon represents over half of the planet's remaining rainforests and comprises the largest and most biodiverse tract of tropical rainforest in the world.

Topic- GS-3- Environment

Source- BBC

2. 'San-Sadhan' Hackathon

- It is being organized jointly by the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, in collaboration with Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog.
- It is an initiative to ease the lives of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) by making toilets smarter, more accessible, and easier to use.
- In this hackathon, the government is looking for smart, scalable and innovative solutions for economical toilets for individual and community use in rural and urban contexts.

Related Information

Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti

- The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation manages the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G) and is the coordinating department for the overall SBM.
- Since the launch of the SBM, India's rural sanitation coverage has increased from 39% in 2014 to over 99% as of August 2019, and the Mission is on track to achieve its goal of an ODF India by 2019.
- It also manages rural drinking water supply, and is responsible for the Jal Jeevan Mission, aiming at providing piped water supply to all rural households.

Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)

- It is a flagship initiative of the Government to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

3. Fedor: Russia first humanoid robot into space

- Russia has launched an unmanned rocket carrying a life-size humanoid robot learning to assist astronauts on the International Space Station.

About the robot

- The robot, named Fedor – short for Final Experimental Demonstration Object Research also known as Skybot F850 is the first-ever sent into space by Russia.
- In order to test a new emergency rescue system, the robot was the Soyuz rocket's only passenger.
- Fedor copies human movements, a key skill that allows it to remotely help astronauts or even people on Earth to carry out tasks while the humans are strapped into an exoskeleton.
- Such robots will eventually carry out dangerous operations such as spacewalks.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & technology

Source- Livemint

4. Russia launches a floating nuclear reactor in the Arctic

- Russia launched the world's first floating nuclear reactor called Akademik Lomonosov in the Arctic region despite environmentalists warning of a "Chernobyl on ice."

Akademik Lomonosov

- It is a non-self-propelled power barge to be operated as the first Russian floating nuclear power station.
- The reactor will be the northernmost nuclear plant in the world.
- Floating nuclear power plant is basically a mobile, low-capacity reactor unit operable in remote areas isolated from the main power distribution system or in places hard to access by land.
- They are designed to maintain both uninterrupted power and plentiful

desalinated water supply in remote areas.

- It will also power the extraction of natural resources in the Arctic region.

Chernobyl incident

- The accident is referred to the 1986 nuclear power plant meltdown which released large levels of radiation into the atmosphere forcing thousands to flee their homes and sparked long-term fears of health and environmental repercussions.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology

Source- Indian Express

5. Gravitational Lensing

- Using NASA's James Webb Space Telescope as a sort of time machine, researchers plan to investigate how new stars are born when it launches in 2021.
- For this, they will take the help of a natural phenomenon called "gravitational lensing".
- Gravitational lensing is a natural phenomenon that magnifies light around galaxies which NASA plans to use it to study how Sun formed.
- The phenomenon occurs when a huge amount of matter, such as a massive galaxy or cluster of galaxies, creates a gravitational field that distorts and magnifies the light from objects behind it.
- These large celestial objects will magnify the light from distant galaxies that are at or near the peak of star formation.
- The effect allows researchers to study the details of early galaxies too far away to be seen otherwise with even the most powerful space telescopes.
- Under the programme called Targeting Extremely Magnified Panchromatic Lensed Arcs and Their Extended Star Formation, or TEMPLATES NASA is planning to look billions of years into the past in order to understand how our Sun formed.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Indian Express

6. CVC constitutes a panel to examine bank fraud

- CVC has constituted the Advisory Board for Banking Frauds (ABBF) to examine bank fraud of over 50 crore rupees and recommend action.
- The panel in its previous avatar called the Advisory Board on Bank, Commercial and Financial Frauds.
- The ABBF headed by former Vigilance Commissioner T M Bhasin has been formed in consultation with the RBI.
- It will function as the first level of examination of all large fraud cases before recommendations or references are made to the investigative agencies by the respective Public Sector Banks.
- The four-member board's jurisdiction will be confined to those cases involving officers of General Manager level and above in the PSBs in respect of an allegation of fraud in a borrowal account.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Indian Economy

Source- AIR

7. Development Financial Institution to fund infrastructure

- The government has proposed to set up a development financial institution to fund infrastructure projects.
- It is expected to solve the infrastructure financing needs of the country as banks do not have the long-term funds to finance such projects and also help in reviving the economic growth of the country.

Related Information

Development financial institution (DFI)

- The first Development financial institution was the Industrial Financial Corporation of India (IFC) which was set up in 1948.
- They are specialized institutions set up primarily to provide development

Project finance, especially in developing countries.

- They help to provide sector-specific loans to various sectors namely to industry, agriculture, housing, infrastructure, export finance among others.
- The IDBI, NABARD, EXIM Bank, SIDBI, NHB are the other major DFIs.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- PIB

8. 7 new species of insects that can walk on water discovered

- Scientists of the Zoological Survey of India have discovered seven species of water treaders, semi-aquatic insects that can walk or run on the surface of the water.
- The newly described species belong to the genus Mesovelgia whose size ranges from 1.5 mm to 4.5 mm and are equipped with hydrophobic setae (bristles) on their legs.
- The combination of hydrophobic setae and water surface tension prevents them from sinking.
- Among the new discoveries, Mesovelgia andamana is from the Andaman Islands, M. bispinosa and M. isiasi are from Meghalaya, M. occulta and M. tenuia from Tamil Nadu and M. brevia and M. dilatata live both in Meghalaya and Tamil Nadu.
- These bugs are hemimetabolous insects without having larval stage i.e., they go from egg to nymph to adult.
- They are found in freshwater bodies such as ponds, lakes, pools, streams, rocks with moss and sometimes on estuaries.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment and Biodiversity

Source- The Hindu

9. Mosquito fights mosquito technique: for Dengue Control

- Bangladesh considering 'mosquito fights mosquito technique' also called

Sterile Insect Technique for Dengue Control.

- A team of experts from WHO-FAO and IAEA arrived in Dhaka to discuss the feasibility of this technique.

Related Information

Sterile Insect Technique

- In the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) radiation sterilised male mosquitoes are released in areas with dengue causing female Aedes aegypti mosquitoes turning them infertile.
- This is an environmentally friendly method to control mosquitoes as no pesticide is used.
- This technique has been tested successfully at two sites in Guangzhou in China.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- AIR

10. Gujarat ranked first in composite water management index 2.0

- To supplement the efforts of Jal Shakti Ministry, NITI Aayog has prepared the Second Round of CWMI 2.0.
- NITI Aayog first launched and conceptualized the Composite Water Management Index in 2018.
- It is an important tool to assess and improve the performance of States and Union Territories in the efficient management of water resources.
- This has been done through a first of its kind water data collection exercise in partnership with,
 - Ministry of Jal Shakti,
 - Ministry of Rural Development
 - All the States/ Union Territories.
- CWMI 2.0 ranks various states for the reference year 2017-18 as against the base year 2016-17.
- The Index comprises nine themes with 28 different indicators.

Highlights of the index

- Gujarat is the highest performer in the reference year (2017-18), followed by

Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

- In North-Eastern and the Himalayan States, Himachal Pradesh has been adjudged number 1 in 2017-18 followed by Uttarakhand, Tripura and Assam.
- The Union Territories have first time submitted their data and Puducherry has been declared as the top ranker.
- In terms of incremental change in index (over 2016-17 level), Haryana holds the number one position in general States.
- Uttarakhand ranks at first position amongst North Eastern and the Himalayan States.

Topic- GS Paper –Natural Resources

Source- PIB

27.08.2019

1. G7 pledges millions to fight Amazon fires

- The G7 countries have agreed to spend €20 million on the Amazon, mainly to send firefighting aircraft to tackle the huge blazes engulfing many parts of the world's biggest rainforest.
- However, Brazil has rejected aid from G-7 countries to fight wildfires in the Amazon.

Related Information

G7 Summit

- Recently G7 summit was held in Biarritz, France.
- Although India is not a member of the G-7 grouping, Indian Prime Minister has been personally invited by the French President Emmanuel Macron.
- The G-7 was created in 1975 as an annual gathering of political leaders to discuss and exchange ideas on a broad range of issues including the global economy, security and energy.
- The Group of 7(G7) consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States.

- The European Union is also represented within the G7.
- Russia was also a part of the group and it was known as G-8.
- However, Russia was removed after it annexed Crimea from Ukraine, which was seen as a violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Organisation

Source- PIB

2. UN conference on Combat desertification

- Indian Prime Minister will address 14th session of the Conference of Parties (COP-14) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in September 2019.
- India, for the first time, will be hosting United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification COP at Greater Noida.

Related Information

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

- It is a legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management, was adopted in Paris in June 1994.
- India became a signatory to this convention in 1994 and ratified it in 1996.
- UNCCD seeks to work towards maintaining and restoring land and soil productivity and mitigating the effects of drought.
- The COP is the supreme decision-making body of a Convention.
- All States that are Parties to the Convention are represented at the COP, at which they review the implementation of the Convention.

India's Scenario on land Degradation

- According to 2016 report by the ISRO found that about 29% of India's land (in 2011-13) was degraded.
- Recently, the Environment Ministry has launched a flagship project on

enhancing capacity on forest landscape restoration and Bonn Challenge in India with the help of the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

- There will be a pilot phase of 3.5 years implemented in the States of Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Nagaland and Karnataka.
- It aims to develop and adopt best practices and monitoring protocols for the Indian states and build capacity within the five pilot states on forest landscape restoration and Bonn Challenge.

Bonn Challenge

- It has been established in 2011 with a global effort to bring 150 million hectares of the world's deforested and degraded land into restoration by 2020, and 350 million hectares by 2030.
- Later it has endorsed and extended by the New York Declaration on Forests at the 2014 UN Climate Summit.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Indian Express

3. Nigeria first to approve Bt cowpea

- Nigeria has become the first country to approve open cultivation of genetically modified (GM) Bt cowpea.

Related Information

Cowpea

- The cowpea (*Vigna unguiculata*) is an annual herbaceous legume from the genus *Vigna*.
- Due to its tolerance for sandy soil and low rainfall, it is an important crop in the semiarid regions across Africa and Asia.
- It requires very few inputs, as the plant's root nodules are able to fix atmospheric nitrogen, making it a valuable crop for resource-poor farmers and well-suited to intercropping with other crops.

Bt cowpea in Nigeria

- It is a pest-resistant and can help combat malnutrition rates, especially in children.
- Bt cowpea faced opposition for years in Nigeria due to fears of an adverse impact on health.
- It contains the transgene Cry1Ab.
- The activists claimed that the transgene Cry1Ab which is there in Bt cowpea can be toxic for human liver cells and can also alter the immune systems of lab animals.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –

Environment Source-Down to Earth

4. Sri Krishna temple in Bahrain

- Prime Minister launched \$4.2 million redevelopment project of the 200-year-old Sri Krishna temple in Manama, the Bahraini capital.

Related Information

Sri Krishna temple

- It is estimated to have been established around 1817 and was built by Thathai Bhatia Hindu community.
- It is considered to be one of the oldest temples in the Gulf countries.
- It will also have a special facility to host Hindu weddings.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- AIR

5. RBI to transfer Rs 1.76 lakh cr as a dividend, the surplus reserve to govt

- RBI has decided to transfer 1.76 lakh crore rupees as dividend and surplus reserve to the government.
- RBI informed that this amount includes over 1,23,000 crore rupees of surplus for the year 2018-19 and 52,637 crore rupees of excess provisions identified as per the revised Economic Capital Framework.
- RBI's Central Board has accepted the recommendations of a high-level panel headed by former RBI Governor Bimal Jalan on the transfer of excess reserves to the government.
- It adds that the Central Board has finalized RBI's accounts for 2018-19

using the revised framework as suggested by the Jalan committee to determine risk provisioning and surplus transfer.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Indian Economy

Source- AIR

6. McrBC: IISER team's find may help fight drug-resistant infections

- A team of scientists at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) able to determine the atomic structure of McrBC.
- McrBC is a complex bacterial protein which helps prevent viral infections in a bacterial cell and functions like molecular scissors.
- This is the first report of the high-resolution structure from India determined using electron cryomicroscopy, commonly known as cryo-EM.
- McrBC-like molecular scissors prevent viral infections of the bacterial cell, the design of such 'inhibitors' will be facilitated by their 3D structures.
- It helps in 'phage therapy' and could help combat drug-resistant infections in the future.

Note:

- Phages are groups of viruses that infect and kill bacterial cells and phage therapy is the therapeutic use of bacteriophages to treat bacterial infections.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology

Source- The Hindu

7. iNethra: an app to make eye screening affordable

- A team of four engineering students from a college affiliated to JNTU, Hyderabad, has developed a device and mobile app "iNethra" to make vision screening easy, accessible and affordable too.
- iNethra, the product, comprises a handy, stick-like device with a lens on one end and connected to a smartphone camera on the other side.

- While this helps in clicking the retinal image of the patients, the mobile app helps in sharing and receiving information related to the eye condition.
- The clicked images are uploaded to the app for the doctor to access and analyse them.
- There is a provision in the app for the doctor to note details about the eye condition, provide tips and if required refer them to hospitals.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

28.08.2019

1. Union Textile Minister launches "Project SURE"

- The Union Ministry of Textiles launched Project SU.RE which is a move towards sustainable fashion.
- SU.RE stands for 'Sustainable Resolution' - a firm commitment from the industry to move towards fashion that contributes to a clean environment.
- The SU.RE project is a commitment by India's apparel industry to set a sustainable pathway for the Indian fashion industry.

Related Information

- According to the UN report, the fashion industry, including the production of all clothes which people wear, contributes to around 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions due to its long supply chains and energy-intensive production.
- The industry consumes more energy than the aviation and shipping industry combined.
- In March 2019, the UN Alliance for Sustainable Fashion was launched at the UN Environment Assembly to improve collaboration among UN agencies by analyzing their efforts in making fashion sustainable.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

2. "Janaushadhi Sugam": A Mobile application

- Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has launched a mobile application "Janaushadhi Sugam" which will enable people to search for Janaushadhi generic medicines.

Related Information

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana

- It was launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals in November 2008 under the name Jan Aushadi Campaign.
- Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI) is the implementation agency for PMBJP.
- The stores have been set up to provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs.
- The Vision of PMBJP is to bring down the healthcare budget of every citizen of India through providing Quality generic Medicines at Affordable Prices.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

3. Child well-being index

- Recently the Child well-being index has been released by the NGO World Vision India and research institute IFMR LEAD.
- The India child well-being index is a crucial report that can be mined both by the government and civil organisations to achieve the goal of child well-being and we will use this report effectively.
- It is also a tool designed to measure and track children's well-being comprehensively.
- The dimensions of the index include healthy individual development, positive relationships and protective contexts.

- It has twenty-four indicators.

Highlights of the Index

- Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Puducherry topped in the index.
- Meghalaya, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh featured at the bottom of the list.
- This report provides insights on health, nutrition, education, sanitation and child protection.
- The report highlights the multi-dimensional approach towards measuring child well-being — going beyond mere income poverty.
- Children have the potential to transform the country, but if neglected, they will exacerbate the burden of poverty and inequality.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Social Issues

Source- The Hindu

4. Govt rolls out the scheme to screen all children below 18 for leprosy, TB

- The Union government has rolled out a programme for universal screening of children below 18 years for leprosy and tuberculosis (TB).
- It will cover the children of 0-6 years at Anganwadis and children of 6-18 years enrolled in government and government-aided schools.

Related Information

Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram

- It is an initiative aiming at early identification and early intervention for children from birth to 18 years to cover 4 'D's viz. Defects at birth, Deficiencies, Diseases, Development delays including disability.
- It is important to note that the 0-6 years age group will be specifically managed at District Early Intervention Center (DEIC) level while for 6 -18 years age group, management of conditions will be done through existing public health facilities.

- District Early Intervention Center will act as referral linkages for both the age groups.
- Once the child is screened and referred from any of these points of identification, it would be ensured that the necessary treatment/intervention is delivered at zero cost to the family.

Leprosy

- Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is a chronic infectious disease caused by Mycobacterium leprae.
- The disease mainly affects the skin, the peripheral nerves, mucosal surfaces of the upper respiratory tract and the eyes.
- WHO's have targeted to eliminate Leprosy by 2020.

Tuberculosis

- It is a disease caused by bacteria that are spread through the air from person to person.
- The National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2017 - 2025 is the plan produced by the government of India (GoI) which sets out what the government believes is needed to eliminate TB in India.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

5. International protection for 'cute' otters

- In recently held CITES COP18 conference in Geneva, Over a hundred nations approved a proposal by India, Nepal, and Bangladesh to prohibit commercial international trade in a species of otter native to the subcontinent and some other parts of Asia.
- The Conference also accepted a separate proposal by India, moved together with the EU, the US and the Philippines, for the inclusion of a species of gecko lizard found widely in South and Southeast Asia, the US, and Madagascar.
- The other proposal that was passed was to include the Tokay gecko (Gekko gecko) in CITES Appendix II.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –

Environment Source- Indian Express

6. Feroz Shah Kotla Stadium of Delhi will be renamed after Arun Jaitley

- Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA) has announced that the Feroz Shah Kotla cricket stadium will be renamed Arun Jaitley.
- The decision was taken to honour Mr. Jaitley, who served as President of the DDCA (from 1999 to 2013).
- The renaming of the stadium will take place on 12 September 2019.

Source- AIR

7. Shaheen VIII: Pakistan-China aerial exercise

- Pakistan and China conducted joint bilateral aerial exercise Shaheen VIII (Eagle VIII) in the Chinese city of Holton.
- It was eight editions of this aerial exercise, which is conducted since 2011.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- AIR

8. Government constitutes GoM on Jammu and Kashmir

The government constituted a Group of Ministers (GoM) to look into the issues concerning Jammu and Kashmir which has been bifurcated into Union Territories after the abrogation of provisions under Article 370.

- Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Minister of State in the PMO, Dr Jitendra Singh are part of the group.
- The GoM will suggest various development, economic and social steps to be taken for the two UTs which will come into existence on October 31st.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Government Policies

Source- AIR

9. Peacock Parachute Spider

- Recently researchers have sighted a species of tarantula for the first time beyond its known habitat in the Eastern Ghats.

Related Information

Gooty Tarantula

- These spiders are commonly known as the Peacock Parachute Spider or Gooty Tarantula (*Poecilotheria metallica*).
- These are the Old World species of tarantula and known to be endemic to India.
- They found at the degraded forest between Nandyal and Giddalur in the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) categorised it as Critically Endangered.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment and Biodiversity

Source- The Hindu

29.08.2019

1. International Coalition For Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Establishment of an International Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) along with its supporting Secretariat Office in New Delhi.

Related Information

International Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

- It is proposed to be launched at the UN Climate Action Summit in New York, USA on 23rd September 2019.
- The establishment of the Secretariat of the CDRI as a Society under The Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- It will serve as a platform where knowledge is generated and exchanged on different aspects of disaster and climate resilience of infrastructure.
- It will bring together technical expertise from a multitude of stakeholders.

Topic-GS Paper 3 –Disaster Management

Source- PIB

2. Shagun: An Integrated Online junction for School Education

- Union HRD Minister Shri Ramesh launched an Integrated Online junction for School Education 'Shagun'.
- It is an over-arching initiative to improve the school education system.
- This will be achieved by creating a junction for all portals/websites relating to various activities of the Department of School Education and Literacy in the Government of India and States/UTs.
- This website cover Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, 18000 other CBSE affiliated schools, organisations affiliated with NTCE among others are integrated with Shagun.
- Report cards of 15 lakh schools all over the country will be available on the newly created junction.
- The website also provides vital information relating to the availability of nearby schools.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

1. Eastern Economic Forum

- Prime Minister of India has been invited as the chief guest of the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok by Russian President Vladimir Putin on September 5, 2019.

Related Information

Eastern Economic Forum

- The Eastern Economic Forum was established by Russia in 2015.
- It takes place each year in Vladivostok, a city in Russia for the purpose of encouraging foreign investment in the Russian Far East.
- Over the years, it has emerged as an international platform for discussing the strategy for developing political, economic and cultural ties between Russia and the Asia Pacific.

- It is considered as the biggest international communication platform for cooperation between business leaders and senior government representatives from Russia, the Pacific Region and the ASEAN.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Organisation

Source-The Hindu

2. Review capital framework every five years: Jalan Committee

- RBI had constituted a panel on the economic capital framework to address the issue of RBI reserves which was headed by Bimal Jalan ex-governor of RBI.
- Recently RBI decided to transfer a record high surplus reserve of Rs 1,76,051 crore to the government after approving all the recommendations of the Bimal Jalan-led expert committee.
- The RBI also gave its nod to transfer a sum of Rs 1,23,414 crore of surplus for the year 2018-19 and Rs 52,637 crore of excess provisions identified as per the revised Economic Capital Framework (ECF).
- Economic capital framework refers to the risk capital required by the central bank as a counter against unforeseen risks or events or losses in the future.

Key recommendation

- The committee has recommended a review of the Economic Capital Framework every five years.
- However, in case of a significant change in the RBI's risks and operating environment, an intermediate review may be considered.
- The committee has also suggested that an interim dividend to the government must only be made in exceptional circumstances.
- The Committee has recommended the alignment of the financial year of RBI with the fiscal year of the government for greater cohesiveness in various projections and publications brought out by RBI.

- The panel has also suggested a clearer distinction between the two components of economic capital namely

- (a) Realised equity
- (b) Revaluation reserves

- Realised equity is a form of a contingency fund for meeting all risks or losses primarily built up from retained earnings which are also called the Contingent Risk Buffer.
- Revaluation reserves comprise of periodic marked-to-market notional gains or losses in values of foreign currencies and gold, foreign securities and rupee securities and a contingency fund.
- The panel has given a range of 5.5-6.5% of RBI's balance sheet for Contingent Risk Buffer.
- Hence, the RBI has decided to set the CBR level at 5.5% of the balance sheet.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Indian Economy
 Source- Economics Times

1. ICFRE-ICIMOD's REDD+ Himalayan programme extended till 2020

- The Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+) programme being carried out in the Himalayan states jointly by Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) has been extended till July 2020.
- ICFRE-ICIMOD's REDD+ Himalaya: Developing and using experience in implementing REDD+ in the Himalaya programme was launched in January 2016 in Mizoram to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in India's Himalayan states.
- The project is supported by the environment, nature conservation and nuclear safety ministry of Germany, was implemented in four countries of the Hindu Kush Himalayan region—Bhutan, India, Myanmar and Nepal.

- The REDD+ programme was initiated by the United Nations in 2005 to mitigate climate change through enhanced forest management in developing countries. It aimed to create incentives for communities so that they stop forest degrading practices.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down To Earth

2. Direct Taxes Code panel for status quo on LTCG tax and STT

- Recently the committee headed by Akhilesh Ranjan submitted its report to the government which works on to draft a new direct tax law to replace the existing Income Tax Act, 1996.
- The committee was also constituted to look into the direct tax system prevalent in various countries, international best practices, the economic needs of the country, and other related matters.

Highlights of the Recommendation

- The task force has recommended retaining the long-term capital gains (LTCG) tax and the securities transaction tax while abolishing the dividend distribution tax.
- The proposed move to withdraw the dividend distribution tax would help encourage investments by addressing multiple taxation of income and by bringing down the effective tax rate on companies.
- Dividend distribution tax is the tax imposed by the Indian Government on Indian companies according to the dividend paid to a company's investors which is 15 % at present.
- The securities transaction tax is a direct tax payable on the value of taxable securities transactions done through a stock exchange.
- Long term capital gains(LTCG) tax refer to the gains made on any class of asset held for a particular period of time which in case of equity shares, it refers to the gains made on stocks held for more than one year.
- The high-level panel also recommended slashing the

corporate tax rate to an even rate of 25 per cent for both domestic and foreign companies.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Indian Economy

Source- Business standard

3. India Launches World's First-Ever Facial Bio-Metric Data-Based Seafarer Identity Document

- India has become the first country in the world to issue Biometric Seafarer Identity Document (BSID), capturing the facial biometric data of seafarers.
- The project was launched by Shipping and Chemical & Fertilizers.

The new document will give foolproof identification to our seafarers which will facilitate their movement, provide ease of getting jobs and help in identifying them from any location in the world.

- The new card is in confirmation of the Convention No. 185 of the International Labour Organisation on BSID.
- India ratified the Convention in October 2015.
- It will make the identification of the SID holder more reliable & efficient while protecting their dignity & privacy.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- TOI

30.08.2019

1. Union government releases Rs. 47,436 crores for compulsory afforestation in states

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change release over Rs.47,436 crores of CAMPA funds to various states achieve the objectives of the Nationally-Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- The CAMPA was created as National Advisory Council under the chairmanship of the environment minister for monitoring, technical assistance and evaluation of compensatory afforestation activities.

Related Information

- Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016

- The approval of this fund is under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.
- The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (FCA) governs diversion or use of forest land for non-forest purposes such as industrial or infrastructure projects.
- A company diverting forest land must provide alternative land for taking up compensatory afforestation.

Salient features

- Establishment of the National Compensatory Afforestation Fund under the Public Account of India, and a State Compensatory Afforestation Fund under the Public Account of each state.
- The payments into the funds include:
 - (a) Compensatory afforestation,
 - (b) Net Present Value (NPV)
 - (c) Any project-specific payments.
- The National Fund will get 10% of funds collected and the remaining 90% will go to respective State Fund.
- The collected funds will be utilized for:
 - (a) Afforestation,
 - (b) Regeneration of forest ecosystem,
 - (c) Wild life protection and
 - (d) Infrastructure development
- Levies are imposed on development projects that seek land inside a Reserved Forest or a Protected Area (PA) in a sanctuary or a national park.
- Establishment of National and State Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authorities (CAMPA) to manage the funds.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –

Environment Source- The

Hindu

2. By 2027, India population to cross China's: UN

- According to "World Population Prospects 2019" released by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country.

- According to estimates in a new United Nations report released, India is also expected to add 273 million people by 2050 and will remain the most populated until the end of the century.
- India is expected to remain the world's most populous country with nearly 1.5 billion inhabitants, followed by China at 1.1 billion, Nigeria with 733 million, the United States with 434 million, and Pakistan with an estimated population of 403 million.
- The report stated that in 2019, India has an estimated population of 1.37 billion and China 1.43 billion and by 2027, India's population is projected to surpass China's.
- The global population is projected to increase by another 2 billion people by 2050, from 7.7 billion in 2019 to 9.7 billion thirty years down the line.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Demography

Source- Indian Express

3. Safe Cities Index (SCI) 2019

- According to the Safe Cities Index Report, 2019 released by Economist Intelligence Unit, Mumbai has been ranked as the 45th safest city on the Safe Cities Index (SCI), while Delhi stood at the 52nd position.
- Cities in the Asia-Pacific (Apac) region made up six of the top-10 safest cities with Tokyo taking the top spot.
- Along with Tokyo, Apac cities dominated the SCI 2019.
- Singapore and Osaka came second and third, while Sydney and Melbourne also made it to the top-10 cities list.
- The Safe Cities Index (SCI) 2019 ranks 60 countries worldwide across five continents and measures the multi-faceted nature of urban safety, with indicators categorised as digital, infrastructure, health and personal security.

Topic- GS Paper3 –
Economic Development

Source- Livemint

4. Government allows 100% FDI in coal mining

- Union govt. announced the approval of 100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in coal mining and associated infrastructure.
- In the coal sector, for sale of coal, 100 per cent FDI under automatic route for coal mining, activities including associated processing infrastructure will attract international players to create an efficient and competitive coal market.
- The govt. also increased FDI to 100 per cent in contract manufacturing and to 26 per cent in digital media companies.
- On FDI in single-brand retail, the Cabinet expanded the definition of mandatory 30 per cent domestic sourcing norm.

Related Information

FDI (Foreign Direct Investment)

- A foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment in the form of controlling ownership in business in one country by an entity based in another country.
- There are two routes by which India gets FDI.
 (1) Automatic route- By this route, FDI is allowed without prior approval by Government or Reserve Bank of India.
 (2) Government route- Prior approval by the government is needed via this route. Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) which was the responsible agency to oversee this route was abolished on May 24, 2017.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Indian

Economy Source- Down To Earth

5. Odisha government has decided to extend the benefit of MAMATA scheme

- Odisha government has decided to extend the benefit of MAMATA scheme to all pregnant women of particularly

vulnerable Tribal group (PVTG) communities for any number of live births for another five years.

Related Information

Mamata Scheme

- It is a flagship conditional cash transfer maternity benefit scheme of the government was launched in September 2011.
- The objective of the scheme to reduce the infant and maternity mortality rate by improving the health and nutritious status of pregnant and lactating women and their infants.
- It intends to partially compensate wage loss for working women to help them take adequate rest and nutritious diet during pregnancy and post-pregnancy period.
- Under the scheme, Rs. 5,000 is directly transferred to the accounts of the beneficiaries in two tranches covering various stages of their pregnancy for their health and nutrition and their babies.
- It will cover all pregnant and lactating women of 19 years of age or above except the state and central government employees will get benefit under the scheme Tirumala.
- The Pregnant women of PVTG communities in Odisha to receive the benefit under Mamata scheme for their first two live births.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important Scheme

Source- UNI

6. Indonesia to move the capital from Jakarta to East Kalimantan

- Indonesia's president announced that the country's capital will move to East Kalimantan province on Borneo Island, known for rainforests and orangutans.
- The reason for shifting the capital is
 (a) To ensure a more equitable development amid environmental concerns Jakarta is prone to annual flooding

and is one of the world's fastest sinking cities.

(b) Traffic congestion and air pollution in Jakarta.

- Currently, 54% of the country's nearly 270 million people live on Java, the country's most densely populated area.

Source- Indian Express

7. Talks on global plan to protect biodiversity begin in Nairobi

- Government officials, experts and activists from at least 100 countries began talks in Nairobi, Kenya to move towards a new global framework on biodiversity, post-2020.
- The 196 Parties of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity are expected to adopt the new framework during their 15th Conference of the Parties (COP 15), scheduled for October 2020 in Kunming, China.
- The 'global framework' represents the global plan to halt the alarming trends in the state of nature.
- United Nations (UN) Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): framework aims to set the world on the path towards living in harmony with nature by 2050.

Related Information

- Recently, scientists have proposed a time-bound, science-based policy, titled "A Global Deal for Nature (GDN)", to save the diversity and abundance of life on Earth.

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

- It was signed at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit which is dedicated to promoting sustainable development.
- It has 3 main objectives:
 - a) conservation of biological diversity
 - b) sustainable use of the components of biological diversity
 - c) fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources

Topic- GS Paper 3 –

Environment Source- Down to Earth

1. Fund for study check antibiotic resistance in Ganga

- The government has commissioned a

Rs. 9.3 crore study to assess the microbial diversity along the entire length of the Ganga and test the microbes that may promote "antibiotic resistance.

- The fund is released under the National Gang Mission (Namami Gange).
- The project will be undertaken by scientists at the Motilal Nehru Institute of Technology, the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), and Sardar Patel Institute of Science & Technology.
- The main aim of the project is to indicate the type of "contamination"

(sewage and industrial) in the river and threat to human health (antibiotic resistance surge) they possess.

- It would seek to identify sources of Eschericia coli- a type of bacteria that lives in the gut of animals & humans.
- According to the 2014 study, cultural activities such as mass bathing in Ganga during religious mass gathering occasions, levels of resistance genes that lead to "superbugs" were about 60 times greater than other times.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu



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