

CURRENT AFFAIRS

Month of
OCTOBER-2019



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

Ph : 8093083555, 8984111101

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



www.facebook.com/vanikias

Daily Current Affairs for UPSC IAS Preparation

01.10.2019

1. NITI Aayog releases School Education Quality Index (SEOI)

- School Education Quality Index was developed by NITI Aayog through a collaborative process, including key stakeholders such as the Ministry of Human Resource and Development, the World Bank and sector experts.
- It aims to evaluate the performance of States and Union Territories (UTs) in the school education sector.
- The objective of the index is to bring an outcomes focus to the education policy by providing States and UTs with a platform to identify their strengths and weaknesses and undertake requisite course corrections and policy interventions."
- The index consists of 30 critical indicators that assess the delivery of quality education.
- These indicators are categorized as below:
- Category 1: Outcomes
 - Domain 1: Learning outcomes
 - Domain 2: Access outcomes
 - Domain 3: Infrastructure and facilities for outcomes
 - Domain 4: Equity outcomes
- Category 2: Governance processes aiding outcomes
- The governance process aiding outcomes category included indicators such as student and teacher attendance system, transparency in teacher recruitment to name a few.
- The data for the index was collected for three categories: large states, small states and Union Territories.

Findings of the index

- Kerala bagged the top spot with 76.6 per cent and while Uttar Pradesh with 36.4 per cent scored the lowest for 2016-17.

- Among the small States, Manipur (68.8 per cent) emerged as the top performer while Arunachal Pradesh (24.6 per cent) came last in the category.
- Rajasthan bagged the second position among the large States with 72 per cent, followed by Karnataka with 70 per cent and Andhra Pradesh-69 per cent respectively.
- Among Union Territories, Chandigarh (82.9 per cent) stood at the top position while Lakshadweep ranked lowest (31.9 per cent).

Note:

- West Bengal did not participate in the NITI Aayog exercise.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

2. A process on to commute Rajoana sentence: MHA

- The process to commute the death sentence of Balwant Singh Rajoana, convicted for killing former Punjab chief minister Beant Singh, was "underway,".

Related Information

Pardoning Power of the President

Article 72 of the Constitution empowers the President to grant pardons to persons who have been tried and convicted of any offence in all cases where the:

1. Punishment or sentence is for an offence against a Union Law;
 2. Punishment or sentence is by a court-martial (military court); and
 3. Sentence is a sentence of death.
- The pardoning power of the President is independent of the Judiciary; it is executive power.
 - The pardoning power of the President includes the following:
 1. Pardon: It removes both the sentence and the conviction and completely absolves the convict from all sentences, punishments and disqualifications.

2. Commutation: It denotes the substitution of one form of punishment for a lighter form. For example, a death sentence may be commuted to rigorous imprisonment, which in turn may be commuted to simple imprisonment.
3. Remission: It implies reducing the period of a sentence without changing its character. For example, a sentence of rigorous imprisonment for two years may be remitted to rigorous imprisonment for one year.
4. Respite: It denotes awarding a lesser sentence in place of one originally awarded due to some special fact, such as the physical disability of a convict or the pregnancy of a woman offender.
5. Reprieve: It implies a stay of the execution of a sentence (especially that of death) for a temporary period. Its purpose is to enable the convict to have time to seek pardon or commutation from the President.

Note:

- Under Article 161 of the Constitution, the governor of a state also possesses the pardoning power but the pardoning power of the governor differs from that of the President in following two respects:
 - The President can pardon sentences inflicted by court-martial (military courts) while the governor cannot.
 - The President can pardon a death sentence while the governor cannot.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

3. Land-attack version of BrahMos supersonic missile successfully test-fired

- DRDO successfully test-fired a land-attack version of BrahMos supersonic missile from Chandipur coast in Odisha's Balasore district.

- The missile, with a strike range of 290km, can be fired from land as well as sea-based platforms.

Related Information

BrahMos Missile

- It has been jointly developed by India and Russia and is operationalised in the Indian Armed Forces with all the three services.
- The recent test-fire was conducted on the land-attack version of 290-km range BrahMos supersonic cruise missile which featured Indian propulsion system, airframe, power supply and major indigenous components.
- The missile can be fired from land as well as sea-based platforms.
- The missile has been tested with increased indigenous equipment and is a version used by Indian Army.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- AIR

4. Salar de Uyuni: world's greatest lithium deposits

- Bolivia, among the poorest countries in South America, sits on one of the world's largest lithium reserves, beneath the vast Salar de Uyuni salt flat.
- Salar de Uyuni, the world's largest salt flat, lies one of the world's greatest lithium deposits – around 17 per cent of the global total.
- Bolivia's lithium deposits contain four times as much magnesium as neighbouring Chile.

Related Information

Lithium

- It is a soft, silvery-white alkali metal. Under standard conditions, it is the lightest metal and the lightest solid element.
- Like all alkali metals, lithium is highly reactive and flammable and must be stored in mineral oil.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- Down to Earth

5. 20 countries including India sign agreement to stop the spread of fake news online

- Recently twenty countries, including France, Britain and India, have signed an agreement at the United Nations to stop the spread of fake news on-line.
- The signatories, which also included South Africa and Canada, committed to promoting independently reported, diverse and reliable information on the internet under an accord initiated by Reporters Without Borders (RSF).
- The agreement underlined the responsibility of internet providers to promote trustworthy content and pluralism to escape the current information chaos.

Related Information

Reporters Without Borders

- It is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Paris that conducts political advocacy on issues relating to freedom of information and freedom of the press.
- Its headquarter in Paris, France.

Publications

- Reporters Without Borders issues press releases, fact-finding reports, and periodical publications.
- Its key Publications are:
World Press Freedom Index, Predators of Press Freedom and Press Freedom Barometer.

World Press Freedom Index 2019

- India has dropped two places on a global press freedom index to be ranked 140th out of 180 countries in the annual Reporters Without Borders analysis.
- The World Press Freedom Index 2019', topped by Norway,

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Economics Times

6. Scientists excavate 'ancient river' in Uttar Pradesh

- The Union Water Ministry has excavated an old, dried-up river in Prayagraj (formerly Allahabad) that linked the Ganga and Yamuna rivers.
- The "ancient buried river" as it was described at a conference organised by the Ministry, is around 4 km wide, 45 km long and consisted of a 15-metre-thick layer buried under the soil.
- The newly discovered river was a buried paleochannel that joins the Yamuna River at Durgapur village, about 26 km south of the current Ganga-Yamuna confluence at Prayagraj.
- The genesis of the paleochannels discovery followed a 2016 report of a seven-member committee, headed by Professor K.S. Valdiya of the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, commissioned by the Water Resources Ministry.
- This report concluded that evidence from paleochannels suggested that the mythological Saraswati River did indeed exist.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- The Hindu

7. Kerala CM launches a capacity development programme for women entrepreneurs

- Kerala Chief Minister has launched the Kerala edition of WING-Women Rise Together at the second edition of Huddle Kerala 2019.
- It is an initiative by Startup India, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) for capacity development of women entrepreneurs in the country.
- The programme aims to identify and support aspiring and established female entrepreneurs by providing them access to incubation, investors and various business support services.

- Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) along with LetsVenture has been awarded the responsibility by Invest India to run this programme in all the southern states.

Related Information

Invest India

- It is India's official agency dedicated to investment promotion and facilitation which work under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It was set up as a joint venture company between the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and State Governments of India.
- It provides sector-specific and state-specific information to a foreign investor, assists in expediting regulatory approvals, and offers hand-holding services.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Women Empowerment

Source- PIB

8. IMD: Wettest monsoon in India in 25 years

- According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the rainfall during the southwest monsoon season has been termed as "above normal" and it's the wettest monsoon in 25 years.
- The rainfall across India during June to September this year was recorded at 968 mm, taking the total rainfall to 110 per cent of the Long Period Average (LPA), which was last seen in 1994, according to the agency.

Related Information

Long Period Average of Monsoon

- The LPA for the season is calculated on the basis of the mean rainfall during the four-month monsoon season over the 50-year period from 1951-2010.
- It works out to an average of 89 cm for the country as a whole.

- This is the average rainfall recorded during the months from June to September, calculated during the 50-year period.
- It is kept as a benchmark while forecasting the quantitative rainfall for the monsoon season every year.
- When IMD forecasts the category of rainfall, be it for country, region or month, the forecast is based on these standardised figures calculated for a period of 50 years.

Five Rainfall Distribution categories

- Normal or Near Normal: When per cent departure of actual rainfall is +/- 10% of LPA, that is, between 96-104% of LPA.
- Below normal: When the departure of actual rainfall is less than 10% of LPA, that is 90-96% of LPA
- Above normal: When actual rainfall is 104-110% of LPA
- Deficient: When the departure of actual rainfall is less than 90% of LPA
- Excess: When departure of actual rainfall is more than 110% of LPA

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- Indian Express

03.10.2019

1. 'Stations' Cleanliness Survey Report'

- Minister of Railways released the 'Stations' Cleanliness Survey Report' which include the cleanliness assessment of Non-suburban and Suburban Stations 2019.

Highlights of the Report

- The top three cleanest railways stations are from the western state of Rajasthan in which Jaipur was on the first position, Jodhpur on second followed by Durgapura in the third position.
- North Western Railway followed by South East Central Railway and East Central Railway are the top three railway zones.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Rajya Sabha TV

2. Delhi CM to endorse clean air declaration at C40 summit

- Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will be among 20 leaders from megacities around the world to launch the 'Clean Air Cities Declaration' during the C40 Summit in Copenhagen.
- Clean Air Cities Declaration' is a set of short and long-term commitments towards cleaning the air.

Related Information

C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group

- The C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40) is a group of 94 cities around the world that represents one-twelfth of the world's population and one-quarter of the global economy.
- It is focused on tackling climate change and driving urban action that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and climate risks while increasing the health, wellbeing and economic opportunities of urban citizens
- It was founded in October 2005 London

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

3. National Monsoon Mission

- Recently the Coupled Forecast Model deployed by the India Meteorological Department under the National Monsoon Mission has failed to forecast the excess rainfall received during Aug-Sept 2019.
- This year, India ended up with 10% more monsoon rain (or 110% of the long period average LPA of 887 mm) than usual.

Related Information

National Monsoon Mission (NMM)

- Ministry of Earth Sciences had launched NMM in 2012 with a vision to develop a state-of-the-art dynamical prediction system for monsoon rainfall on different time scales.
- The responsibility of execution and coordination of this mission is vested to the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune.

- Climate Forecast System of USA has been identified as the basic modelling system for the above purpose, as it is one of the best among the currently available coupled models.
- The objective to build a state-of-the-art coupled ocean-atmospheric model for –
 1. improved prediction of monsoon rainfall on the extended range to seasonal time scale (16 days to one season) and
 2. improved prediction of temperature, rainfall and extreme weather events on short to medium range time scale (up to 15 days).

Coupled Forecast Model

- The American model called "Climate Forecast System" (CFS) is developed by National Centres for Environmental Prediction (NCEP), USA.
- Climate Forecast System (CFS) of NCEP, USA has been identified as the basic modelling system which helps to combines data from ocean, atmosphere and land for providing long-range forecasting (seasonal prediction of Indian Monsoon).
- It is one of the best among the currently available coupled models.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- TOI

4. Rural India has declared itself open defecation free

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently announced that rural India and its villages have declared themselves open defecation free on the occasion of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- It was done under the Swachh Bharat Mission- Gramin.
- He also announced a second campaign aimed at eliminating single-use plastic by 2022.

Related Information

Swachh Bharat Mission

- It was launched on October 2, 2014, which consists of two sub-missions –

- the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) (SBM-G): which will be implemented in rural areas
- the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban): which will be implemented in urban areas.

Swachh Bharat Mission- Gramin

- It seeks to eliminate open defecation in rural areas by 2019 through improving access to sanitation.
- It also seeks to generate awareness to motivate communities to adopt sustainable sanitation practices and encourage the use of appropriate technologies for sanitation.
- It was launched on October 2, 2014, with an aim to achieve universal sanitation coverage, improve cleanliness, and eliminate open defecation in the country by October 2, 2019.
- Under SBM-G, a village is ODF when:
 1. There are no visible faeces in the village
 2. Every household, as well as public/community institution, uses safe technology options for faecal disposal.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

5. Bathukamma Festival

- Recently a nine-day-long floral festival 'Bathukamma' begins in Telangana.

Related Information

About Festival

- It is the state festival of Telangana which marks the beginning of Sharath Ruthu.
- The festival is celebrated to pray to the Goddess for health and achievements of each family.
- During the festival, flowers arranged and decorated in a big plat in conical shape in seven layers and this arrangement is called as Bathukamma.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- PIB

6. Mo Sarkar initiative launched

- Odisha Chief Minister launched a new governance initiative 'Mo Sarkar' on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti.
- The objective of the 'Mo Sarkar' programme is to provide service with dignity to people who are coming to government offices for different purposes.
- This is the first such type of programme in the country.
- The phone numbers of people who are coming to government offices will be collected randomly with the purpose to improve the governance system by collecting feedback on behaviour and professionalism of government officers.
- The employees will be ranked as good or bad on the basis of the feedback and those with good rank will get out-of-turn promotion and action will be taken against employees with bad rank.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- HT

7. CBDT launches documentation identification number

- The Documentation Identification Number (DIN) system of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has come into existence with the generation of about 17,500 communications with DIN on the very first day.

Related Information

Documentation Identification Number

- The DIN system will apply to all kind of communications from the Income Tax (IT) Department, whether it is related to the investigation, assessment, rectification, appeals and penalty among other things.
- From now onwards every communication with CBDT – be it a notice, letter, order and summon or any other correspondence – will have to have a DIN except only if it is in the specified exceptional circumstances.

- Any communication issued manually under exceptional circumstances would have to be uploaded and regularised on the system portal within 15 days of its issuance.

Benefits

- This system would ensure greater accountability and transparency in tax administration.
- This development would also help taxpayers detect fake notices and letters as the notice would be verifiable on the e-ling portal of the department.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- Economics Times

8. Armed Forces Tribunal

- The Centre said it was willing to appoint former Delhi High Court Chief Justice Rajendra Menon as Chairman of the Armed Forces Tribunal.

Related Information

About Tribunal

- It is the military tribunal in India, established under Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007 to provide effective redressal mechanism for personnel of three armed forces.
- It was established as a statutory body in 2009 under the Armed Forces Tribunal Act, 2007.
- The Principal Bench of AFT is in New Delhi which has 11 regional benches as on (October 2019).
- The objective of this is to adjudicate complaints on the appointments and conditions of service in respect of persons subject to the
 - Army Act, 1950
 - The Navy Act, 1957
 - The Air Force Act, 1950.
- It can further provide for appeals arising out of the orders of courts-martial held under the above-mentioned Acts.

Composition

- The Composition of Armed Forces Tribunal consists of Judicial Members who are retired High Court Judges.

- The Administrative Members are retired Members of the Armed Forces who have held the rank of Major General/ equivalent or above for a period of three years or more.

Note:

- The Paramilitary forces including the Assam Rifles and Coast Guard are outside the tribunal's purview.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

04.10.2019

- Rajasthan to create pneumoconiosis fund with DME money
- Rajasthan has announced the creation of a Pneumoconiosis Fund, which will be majorly financed by money from the District Mineral Foundation (DMF).
- This Fund will be used to finance a comprehensive policy on the disease.
- Pneumoconiosis, a lung disease, mostly affects workers who work in the mining and construction sectors and deal with soil, silica, coal dust and asbestos. The disease includes asbestosis, silicosis and coal workers' pneumoconiosis.
- Rajasthan is one of the leading mining states of India, with a distinction of having more than 33,000 mine leases, the highest in the country. Most of these are sandstone mines and quarries.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down To Earth

2. PRAKASH portal

- PRAKASH (Power Rail Koyla Availability through Supply Harmony) portal has been jointly launched by the Union Minister of State for Power and the Ministry of Coal, Mines.
- The Portal aims at bringing better coordination for coal supplies among all stakeholders viz - Ministry of Power, Ministry of Coal, Coal India, Railways and power utilities.

- It will help in ensuring adequate availability and optimum utilization of coal at thermal power plants.
- The Portal is designed to help in mapping and monitoring the entire coal supply chain for power plants, viz–
 - Coal Stock at supply end (mines),
 - coal quantities/ rakes planned,
 - coal quantity in transit and
 - coal availability at power generating station.
- PRAKASH Portal is developed by NTPC and sources data from different stakeholders such as Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) and coal companies.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

3. Indo Maldives joint Exercise "Ekuverin – 19"

- The tenth edition of the Joint Military Exercise Ekuverin between the Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Force will be organised at Aundh Military Station in Pune, Maharashtra.

Related Information

- The Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Forces have been conducting Exercise Ekuverin meaning 'Friends' in the Dhivehi language since 2009.
- It held alternatively in India and Maldives focuses on enhancing interoperability between the two forces for carrying out counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations in a semi-urban environment under the United Nations mandate.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- PIB

4. Consumer App

- Union Minister of Consumer Affairs launched the 'Consumer App' which is a one-stop solution for consumer

grievance redressal at the palm of every consumer across the nation.

- The application aims to provide a one-stop solution for consumer grievance redressal at the palm of every consumer across the nation via mobile phones.
- The registered consumer will be informed about their complaint via SMS/E-mail with a unique number which can be tracked by the consumer.
- There will be a time-bound resolution of all grievances and those that are simple in nature will be resolved within 20 days.
- The grievances in Complex nature will be solved within 60 days.
- If after 60 days the grievance is not resolved, the consumer will be advised to proceed to consumer fora.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

5. Nomadic Elephant 2019

- It is the 14th edition of India and Mongolian joint military training Exercise conducted at Bakloh in Himachal Pradesh.
- Nomadic Elephant-XIV is aimed at training troops in counter-insurgency & counter-terrorism operations under United Nations mandate.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- AIR

6. Village Secretariat system in Andhra Pradesh

- Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh has recently inaugurated the Village Secretariat system at Karapa village near Kakinada on the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- Under the new system, one Village Secretariat has been set up for every population of 2,000, with each one comprising close to a dozen village officials from various departments like police, revenue, etc.

- The idea behind it is to ensure that its services reach people on the ground, and also to strengthen the existing Panchayat Raj system.
- These institutions would act as a bridge between the government and the people by rendering over 500 types of services at their doorstep.

Related Information

Amma Vodi Scheme

- This scheme has been launched by Andhra Pradesh government in June 2019, which has been designed to check the school-dropout rate and also to boost admissions in the State-run schools.
- In the Amma Vodi Scheme, it is provisioned that the mothers will be given Rs. 15000 annually as financial assistance if she sends her wards to school or college.
- The amount will be given to the eligible mothers by the government.
- Earlier, the Amma Vodi Scheme was meant for supporting up the students till high school education and now this will be extended for intermediate education also.
- It covers all the students who are studying in government, social welfare residential and private colleges which aim is to reduce the state's illiteracy rate

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- TOI

7. Elephant endotheliotropic herpesvirus

- Recently four calves between the ages of six and ten have died in Nandan Kanan Zoo in Bhubaneswar, followed by the fifth elephant that died in Chandaka forest this week due to EEHV.
- Elephant endotheliotropic herpesvirus is lethal for young elephants between the ages of one and 12.
- If a young elephant dies before reproducing, it affects the population

of the species as a whole in the concerned geography.

Related Information

Elephant endotheliotropic herpes virus

- It is a type of herpes virus that can cause a highly fatal haemorrhagic disease in young Asian elephants.
- When EEHV is triggered, the elephant dies of massive internal bleeding and symptoms which are hardly visible.
- The disease is usually fatal, with a short course of 28-35 hours.
- There is no true cure for herpesviruses in animals or in humans because herpes viruses go latent.

Note:

- Herpesviridae is a large family of DNA viruses that cause infections and certain diseases in animals, including humans.
- The members of this family are also known as herpesviruses.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

8. Humans pollute more than volcanoes: study

- According to the decade-long study done by Deep Carbon Observatory, Human activity churns out up to 100 times more planet-warming carbon each year as all the volcanoes on Earth.

Related Information

- The Deep Carbon Observatory is a 500-strong international team of scientists, released a series of papers outlining how carbon is stored, emitted and reabsorbed by natural and manmade processes.
- They found that manmade carbon dioxide emissions drastically outstrip the contribution of volcanoes — which belch out gas and are often fingered as a major climate change contributor — to current warming rates.
- Manmade emissions in 2018 alone topped 37 gigatonnes.

- By comparison, the CO₂ released annually by volcanoes hovers around 0.3 and 0.4 gigatonnes roughly 100 times less than manmade emissions.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

9. Parichay' (identity): A Legal aid clinic

- Recently five law schools of the country have jointly launched a legal aid clinic called 'Parichay' (identity) to help people excluded from the National Register of Citizens (NRC) appeal before the foreigners' tribunals (FTs).
- These law schools are Assam's National Law University and Judicial Academy, West Bengal National University of Juridical Science, Hyderabad's National Academy of Legal Studies and Research, Delhi's National Law University and the National Law University of Odisha.
- The headquarters of Parichay is in Guwahati, Assam.
- Parichay will assist lawyers in drafting appeals, conduct research on pertinent questions of law, assist in training lawyers and paralegals and generate documentation on the functioning of FTs.
- "Parichay will also collaborate with civil society to provide legal aid to communities.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source-Indian Express

10. Automated Real-Time Performance Smart-board

- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (Meity) has inaugurated an Automated Real-Time Performance Smart-board which has been developed by MeitY.
- It helps in effective monitoring and measurement of the outcome and impact of different welfare programmes/ schemes at various levels for the citizen's benefit.
- This Performance Smart-board is single window access for Centre,

State or District specific projects implemented by MeitY.

- It will provide real-time, dynamic analytical project monitoring for critical and high priority Programme/Schemes of MeitY.
- It will also promote transparency and enhance ease of working.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

07.10.2019

1. Madhya Pradesh set to get its seventh tiger reserve

- Madhya Pradesh is set to get its 7th tiger reserve which has been proposed to be carved out of the Ratapani wildlife sanctuary; will be known as the Ratapani Tiger Reserve.
- The Ratapani wildlife sanctuary is spread over the area of Raisen and Sehore districts of Madhya Pradesh.
- Other six Tiger Reserves in Madhya Pradesh are
 - Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, Sanjay Dubri Tiger Reserve, Panna Tiger Reserve, Bori-Satpura Tiger Reserve, Kanha Tiger Reserve, Pench Tiger Reserve
- Madhya Pradesh is also known as the Tiger State of India.

Related Information

About Tiger Reserves

- Tiger Reserves are protected area that aims at conserving the habitat to ensure a viable population of the tigers along with their prey base in their habitat.
- These are established under the Project Tiger in 1973.
- Jim Corbett in Uttarakhand is the first Tiger Reserve to be established under Project Tiger.
- National Tiger Conservation Authority, established in 2005, oversees the management of Project Tiger and Tiger Reserves in India.

National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA)

- It is a statutory body under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change.
- It was provided statutory status by the Wild Life (Protection) Amendment Act, 2006 which had amended Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.
- It addresses the administrative as well as ecological concerns for conserving tigers, by providing a statutory basis for the protection of tiger reserves.

Note:

- According to the All India Tiger Estimation Report– 2018, Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of tigers followed by Karnataka and Uttarakhand.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment

Source- PIB

2. Ecuador to quit OPEC in 2020 in search of bigger export revenue
- Ecuador, one of the smallest members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, said that they leave the OPEC to fiscal problems.

Related Information

About Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC))

- It is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization.
- It was created at the Baghdad Conference in 1960 by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.
- It has its headquarters in Vienna, Austria.
- It aims to manage the supply of oil in an effort to set the price of oil on the world market and to avoid fluctuations that might affect the economies of both producing and purchasing countries.
- According to its statutes, OPEC membership is open to any country that is a substantial exporter of oil and shares the ideals of the organization.

- After the five founding members, OPEC added 11 additional member countries as of 2019.
- They are, in order of joining, Qatar (1961), Indonesia (1962), Libya (1962), the United Arab Emirates (1967), Algeria (1969), Nigeria (1971), Ecuador (1973), Gabon (1975), Angola (2007), Equatorial Guinea (2017), and Congo (2018).
- However, Qatar terminated its membership on Jan. 1, 2019, and Indonesia suspended its membership on Nov. 30, 2016, so as of 2019 the organization consists of 14 states.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Organisation

Source- Indian Express

3. Cabinet approves new strategic disinvestment process

- The Cabinet has approved a new process of strategic disinvestment with a view to expediting privatisation of select PSUs.
- The news changes are :
 - o Under the new policy, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) under the Ministry of Finance has been made the nodal department for the strategic disinvestment sale.
 - o Presently, PSUs for strategic sale are identified by NITI Aayog, but according to new policy DIPAM and NITI Aayog will now jointly identify PSUs for strategic disinvestment.
 - o The DIPAM secretary would now co-chair the inter-ministerial group on disinvestment along with the secretary of administrative ministries concerned.

Related Information

About disinvestment

- It is defined as the action of an organisation or government selling or liquidating an asset or subsidiary.

- In the case of Public Sector Undertakings (PSU), disinvestment means Government selling/ diluting its stake (share) in PSUs in which it has a majority holding.
- Disinvestment is carried out as a budgetary exercise under which the government announces yearly targets for disinvestment for selected PSUs.
- Government has set the disinvestment target of 1.05 lakh crore for the current financial year 2019-20.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- ET

4. Peddapalli best Swachh district in the country

- Peddapalli district has emerged as the "Overall Best District" in the country during the annual survey conducted in the country as part of Swachh Survekshan 2019 by the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- Peddapalli district is a district located in the northern region of the Indian state of Telangana.

Related Information

- Out of the survey conducted in 690 districts and 17,400 villages in the country, Peddapalli district emerged overall best district
- The district had earlier won two national awards in Swachh Sundar Shauchalay (neat and clean toilets) and Open Defecation Free (ODF) district with the construction of 1.35 lakh individual sanitary latrines and its utilisation.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

5. Telangana's idea of supplying medicines to remote areas by drones

- The Telangana government has adopted a framework to use drones for last-mile delivery of essential medical supplies such as blood and medical samples in an effort to increase the access to healthcare to communities across the state.

- The framework has been co-designed by the World Economic Forum (WEF) and Apollo Hospitals Group Healthnet Global Limited.
- The project is a part of the WEF's "Medicine from the Sky" initiative that aims to develop source materials for policymakers and health systems to analyse the challenges that come with drone delivery and to compare this model with other competing delivery models.

Related Information

About Drone

- A drone is an aircraft that operates without a pilot on board and is referred to as an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV).
- It has three subsets: Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA), Autonomous Aircraft, and Model Aircraft.
- An RPA can be further classified into five types on the basis of weight: nano, micro, small, medium and large.
- RPAs are aircraft that are piloted from remote pilot stations.
- The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation acts as the regulatory body in the field of civil aviation, responsible for regulating air transport and ensuring compliance to civil aviation requirements, air safety, and airworthiness standards.

Note:

- In Rwanda, drone-related pilot projects have been implemented on a national scale to deliver medical supplies without delay and at scheduled intervals.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- HT

6. Multidisciplinary drifting Observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate (MOSAIC) mission

- Recently, Vishnu Nandan, a 32-year-old polar researcher from Kerala, will be the only Indian among 300

scientists from across the world aboard the multidisciplinary drifting observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate expedition.

Related Information
 About the MOSAiC mission

- The objective of the mission to study the impact of climate change on the Arctic and how it could affect the rest of the world.
- It is the largest ever Arctic expedition in history, which is first of its kind to conduct a study of this scale at the North Pole for an entire year.
- The mission has received funding from U.S. institutions such as the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and NASA.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

7. World Congress of Poets

- Recently Vice President of India addressed the valedictory ceremony of 39th World Congress of Poets at Bhubaneswar.

Related Information

About 39th World Congress of Poets

- The World Congress of Poets was founded in 1969 by Amado M.Yuzon, Krishna Srinivas, Lou Lutour and Tin-Wen Chung.
- It was held for the first time in Manila in 1969.
- This year the theme was "Compassion through Poetry."

- It was held in English, Spanish and Chinese.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- PIB

8. E-Waste Clinic

- The Bhopal Municipal Corporation and the Central Pollution Control Board have joined hands to set up the country's first e-waste clinic in Bhopal.
- Central Pollution Control Board will offer technical support.
- The clinic is being conceived in compliance with the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016.
- This would enable segregation, processing and disposal of waste from both household and commercial units.

Related Information

About E-waste

- Electronic waste/ e-waste describes discarded electrical or electronic devices.
- Used electronics which are destined for refurbishment, reuse, resale, salvage recycling through material recovery, or disposal are also considered e-waste.
- Informal processing of e-waste in developing countries can lead to adverse human health effects and environmental pollution.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

09.10.2019

1. Rafale Fighter jets



Source- TOI

- Defence Minister formally received the first Rafale fighter jet known as RB-001 built for the Indian Air Force (IAF) in France; however, the first batch of the jets will arrive in India only in May 2020.
- India had ordered 36 Rafale fighter jets from France in a deal worth 59,000 crore rupees in September 2016 which are expected to arrive in India by September 2022.

Source- TOI

Related Information
Dassault Rafale fighter jets

- It is a French twin-engine, canard delta wing, multirole fighter aircraft designed and built by Dassault Aviation.
- It is intended to perform in-depth strike, anti-ship strike and nuclear deterrence missions.
- The Rafale has been used in combat over Afghanistan, Libya, Mali, Iraq and Syria.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- The Hindu

2. Ganga Amantran Abhiyan

- Jal Shakti Ministry has launched the 'Ganga Aamantran Abhiyan', a month-long exploratory open-water rafting and kayaking expedition, covering nearly 2,500 kilometres from Devprayag in Uttarakhand to Ganga Sagar in West Bengal.

About

- This is the first-ever effort by the National Mission for Clean Ganga to raft across the entire stretch of the river.
- It is a nine-member team of swimmers and rafters from the three services of the Indian Armed Forces will be led by acclaimed international open-water swimmer Wing Commander Paramvir Singh.
- It is also the longest ever social campaign undertaken through an adventure sporting activity to spread the message of river rejuvenation and water conservation on a massive scale.
- It will cover the five Ganga basin states, namely Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal with stops at Rishikesh, Haridwar, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, Sonapur and Kolkata.
- The expedition will draw attention to the ecological challenges being faced by the Ganga.
- The expedition will be supported by all the stakeholders of Namami Gange including the MPs of the constituency along Ganga, members of Ganga Praharis, Ganga Vihar Manch among others.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

3. eDantseva

- Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare launched the eDantseva website and mobile application.

- It is the first-ever national digital platform on oral health information and knowledge dissemination.
- e-DantSeva contains information about the National Oral Health Program, detailed list of all the dental facility and colleges, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material.
- It has a unique feature called the 'Symptom Checker', which provides information on symptoms of dental/oral health problems, ways to prevent these, the treatment modes, and also directs the user to find their nearest available dental facility (public and private sectors both).
- The website also provides GPRS route/images/satellite images of the facility for easier access to the general population.
- The developed IEC material aims to eliminate the prevailing myths and misconception regarding maternal and child health and also encourages a visit to the dentist during pregnancy and early childhood years.

National Oral Health Programme

- It was introduced in 2014.
- The Center for Dental Education and Research (CDER), AIIMS, New Delhi functions as the National Center of Excellence for Implementation of NOHP.
- The Centre has been instrumental in providing consultation and support for the research and other activities for the National Oral Health Program.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

4. Cotton Technical Assistance Programme

- Union ministry of Textiles announced that India will cover five more African countries in the second phase of its cotton technical assistance programme (TAP) for the region.

Related Information

About cotton technical assistance programme

- India implemented a technical assistance programme (TAP) for cotton in six African countries, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Malawi, Nigeria and Uganda, from 2012 to 2018.
- In the five-year-long second phase, the programme will be scaled up in size and coverage and will be introduced in five additional countries, namely Mali, Ghana, Togo, Zambia and Tanzania.
- The Cotton TAP programme will now cover 11 African countries including the C4 (Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali).
- Technical Assistance Programme (TAP) covers the following broad areas –
 1. Increasing cotton production (area expansion and productivity enhancement)
 2. Improving Extension & Support Service Efficiency
 3. Enhancing R&D/ Quality Control
 4. Marketing/Distribution Infrastructure
 5. Strengthening/development of cotton residue-based value addition industry
 6. Creating/Strengthening Downstream Industry in Textiles and Clothing

World Cotton Day

- For the first time, the World Cotton Day is being celebrated from 7th October to 11th October 2019, in Geneva.
- It is organized by the WTO in collaboration with UN, FAO, UNCTD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), International Trade Center and International Cotton Advisory Committee.
- It aims to celebrate the advantages of cotton, ranging from its qualities as a natural fibre to the benefits people obtain from its production, transformation, trade and consumption.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Economics Times

5. India to be trans-fat free by 2022: FSSAI

- Union minister Harsh Vardhan launched the 'Trans Fat-Free' logo.
- The logo has been launched to accelerate FSSAI's 'Eat Right India', a movement to phase out trans-fat in the country.
- Food outlets that use trans-fat free fats/oil and do not have industrial trans-fat more than 0.2g / 100g of food, can display the logo.
- FSSAI aims to reduce the industrially produced trans-fats on food supply to less than two per cent by 2022.
- Trans-fats are the worst form of fats that create high health risks.
- Industrial trans-fats are used in vegetable fats/oils, vanaspati, margarine and baked foods for longer shelf life.
- India targets to eliminate trans-fat by 2022, a year ahead of the global target by the World Health Organization.

Topic-GS Paper 3 –Science & Technology
 Source- Down To Earth

6. Asia Environmental Enforcement Award

- Senior Indian Forest Service officer Ramesh Pandey has been selected for the prestigious Asia Environmental Enforcement Award by the United Nations Environment Programme.
- He will receive the award on November 13 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok.

Related Information

Asia Environmental Enforcement Award

- The award recognises outstanding achievements by public organisations and individuals in Asia to combat transboundary environmental crime.
- The 2019 Awards are presented by the UN Environment programme in partnership with the UNDP, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, INTERPOL, USAID, Freeland Foundation, and the Government of Sweden.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- HT

7. Nobel Prize 2019 in Physics

- A Canadian-American cosmologist James Peebles and two Swiss scientists Michel Mayor & Didier Queloz won this year's Nobel Prize in Physics.
- They got this award for exploring the evolution of the universe and discovering a new kind of planet, with implications for that nagging question: Does life exist only on earth.
- Canadian-born James Peebles, 84, an emeritus professor at Princeton University, won for his theoretical discoveries in cosmology.
- Swiss star-gazers Michel Mayor, 77, and Didier Queloz, 53, both of the University of Geneva, were honoured for finding an exoplanet — a planet outside our solar system — that orbits a sun-like star.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –S & T

Source- The Hindu

8. Nobel Prize 2019 in Medicine

- The 2019 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine has been awarded to scientists William G Kaelin, Jr, Peter J Ratcliffe and Gregg L Semenza.
- They received the award jointly for their discoveries of "how cells sense and adapt to oxygen availability.
- It will help to establish the basis for our understanding of how oxygen levels affect cellular metabolism and physiological function.
- This research "paved the way for promising new strategies to fight anaemia, cancer and many other diseases."
- It is the 110th prize in the category that has been awarded since 1901.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –S & T

Source- The Hindu

9. Hindu-Kush-Himalayan (HKH) Region

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) will collaborate with meteorological agencies in China and Pakistan, among others, to provide

climate forecast services to countries in the Hindu-Kush-Himalayan (HKH) Region

Related Information

HKH region

- The HKH region spans Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- It is considered the Third Pole [after the North and South Poles] and has significant implications for climate.
- The Third Pole, which contains vast cryospheric zones, is also the world's largest store of snow and ice outside the polar region.

Cryosphere

- According to the 5th Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the cryosphere, comprising snow, river and lake ice, sea ice, glaciers, ice shelves and ice sheets, and frozen ground.
- It plays a major role in the Earth's climate system through its impact on the surface energy budget, the water cycle, primary productivity, surface gas exchange and sea level.
- The cryosphere is a natural integrator of climate variability and provides one of the most visible signatures of climate change.

National Action Plan on Climate Change

- The Government has launched the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) in June 2008 to achieve its goals and to deal with the issues related to climate change.
- NAPCC comprises eight missions in specific areas of solar energy, enhanced energy efficiency, sustainable habitat, water, sustaining Himalayan ecosystems, Green India, sustainable agriculture and strategic knowledge for climate change.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Indian Express

10. National Nutrition Survey

- The Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey released which is the first-ever national nutrition survey conducted by the government.

Findings of the survey

- Malnutrition among children in urban India is characterised by relatively poor levels of breastfeeding, higher prevalence of iron and Vitamin D deficiency as well as obesity.
- The rural parts of the country see a higher percentage of children suffering from stunting, underweight and wasting and lower consumption of milk products.
- The survey shows that 83% of children between 12 and 15 months continued to be breastfed, a higher proportion of children in this age group residing in rural areas are breastfed (85%) compared to children in urban areas (76%).
- Breastfeeding is inversely proportional to household wealth and other factors influencing this trend may include working mothers who have to travel long distances to reach their workplace.
- Children and adolescents residing in urban areas also have a higher (40.6%) prevalence of iron deficiency compared to their rural counterparts (29%),

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

10.10.2019

1. India slips down 10 places to rank 68th in 2019 global competitiveness index

- World Economic Forum (WEF) has released The Global Competitiveness Index 2019.

Highlights of the Index

- Singapore has become the world's most competitive economy in 2019, pushing the US to the second place

followed by Hong Kong at third place and Netherlands and Switzerland at 4th and 5th places respectively.

- China was ranked at 28th position and was the highest-ranked among BRICS nations.
- Vietnam showed higher improvements in the region and was ranked at 67.

India's ranking

- India has slipped down 10 places to rank 68th in 2019 from 58th in 2018 on the global competitiveness index which is among the worst-performing BRICS nations along with Brazil (ranked even lower than India at 71st this year).
- The index has flagged limited ICT (information, communications and technology) adoption, poor health conditions and low healthy life expectancy as the reasons.
- In the overall ranking, India is followed by some of its neighbours including Sri Lanka at 84th place, Bangladesh at 105th, Nepal at 108th and Pakistan at 110th place.

Related Information

Global Competitiveness Index

- The Global Competitiveness Index is released by the World Economic Forum.
- It was launched in 1979.
- It ranks the competitiveness landscape of 141 economies through 103 indicators organised into 12 pillars.

The report has twelve pillars of competitiveness. These are:

- Institutions
- Appropriate infrastructure
- Stable macroeconomic framework
- Good health and primary education
- Higher education and training
- Efficient goods markets
- Efficient labour markets
- Developed financial markets
- Ability to harness existing technology

- j. Market size—both domestic and international
- k. Production of new and different goods using the most sophisticated production processes
- l. Innovation capability

World Economic Forum

- It was established in 1971 as a not-for-profit foundation and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The objective of WEF is to improve the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.
- Some of the most significant reports published by the WEF are
 - Global Gender Gap Report
 - Global Competitiveness Report
 - Global Travel and Tourism Report
 - Global Risks Report among others.
 - Draft social security code a good step but lacks specifics, clarity

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Important Index

Source- The Hindu

2. Gagan Enabled Mariner's Instrument for Navigation and Information (GEMINI): disaster warning device

- Union Minister for Earth Sciences, Science & Technology has recently launched Gagan Enabled Mariner's Instrument for Navigation and Information (GEMINI).

About (GEMINI)

- It has been developed by Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), and Airports Authority of India (AAI).
- It is a GAGAN system-enabled device that will disseminate seamless and effective emergency information and communication on disaster warnings, Potential Fishing Zones and the Ocean States Forecasts to fishermen.
- The device will also help to provide information related to disaster warnings when fishermen move away

from the coast beyond 10 to 12 kilometres.

- The GEMINI device receives and transfers the data received from GAGAN satellite/s to a mobile through Bluetooth communication.
- A mobile application developed by INCOIS decodes and displays the information in nine regional languages.

Background

- The GAGAN satellite system had developed after the Ockhi cyclone in 2017 when fishermen went out, for deep-sea fishing before the onset of the cyclone and could not be informed about the developing cyclone.
- It has been developed by the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and Airports Authority of India (AAI).
- It utilizes the GAGAN (GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation) satellite system to transmit the PFZ, OSF and disaster warnings to fishermen with GAGAN system consisting of three geosynchronous satellites (GSAT-8, GSAT-10 and GSAT-15).
- GAGAN foot-print covers the entire Indian Ocean round the clock.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Disaster Management

Source- PIB

3. WHO India Country Cooperation Strategy 2019–2023

- Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare has launched 'The WHO India Country Cooperation Strategy 2019–2023: A Time of Transition'.

Country Cooperation Strategy

- The Country Cooperation Strategy provides a strategic roadmap for WHO to work with the Government of India towards achieving its health sector goals.

- The four areas identified for strategic cooperation of WHO with the country encompass are:
 - a. to accelerate progress on Universal Health Coverage;
 - b. to promote health and wellness by addressing determinants of health;
 - c. to protect the population better against health emergencies;
 - d. to enhance India's global leadership in health.
- The India CCS is one of the first that fully aligns itself with the newly adopted WHO 13th General Programme of Work and its 'triple billion' targets, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and WHO South-East Asia Region's eight Flagship Priorities.
- It captures the work of the United Nations Sustainable Development Framework for 2018–2022.

Related Information

- Recently the member countries of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Committee for South-East Asia have resolved to eliminate highly infectious diseases Measles and Rubella (both are Viral Diseases) by 2023.

WHO's Regional Committee for South-East Asia

- It is a World Health Organization's governing body in the South-East Asia Region, with representatives from all 11 Member States of the Region.
- It meets every year to review progress in health development in the Region.
- It formulates resolutions on health issues for the Member States, as well as considers the regional implications of World Health Assembly resolutions.
- The Member Countries are: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste,

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Organisation

Source- PIB

4. DHRUV - Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme

- Union Human Resource Development Minister has launched the Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme- 'DHRUV' from Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Headquarters at Bengaluru.

About Program

- The objective of the Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme helps to allow talented students to realize their full potential and contribute to society.
- The Programme is being started to identify and encourage talented children to enrich their skills and knowledge.
- The programme will be called DHRUV (after the Pole Star) and every student to be called 'DHRUV TARA'. It will cover two areas i.e. Science and Performing Arts.
- There will be 60 students in all, 30 from each area across the country
- The students will be broadly from classes 9 to 12, from all schools including government and private.
- This is only the first phase of the programme which will be expanded gradually to other fields like creative writing etc.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

5. Saturn: the most moons in our Solar System

- The International Astronomical Union's Minor Planet Center confirmed 20 new moons orbiting Saturn, making it the planet with the most moons in our Solar System, at 82.
- The 20 had been discovered by Scott S Sheppard of the Carnegie Institution for Science.
- Until their confirmation, the planet with the most moons was Jupiter, at 79.

- Each of the newly discovered objects in orbit around Saturn is about 5km (three miles) in diameter; 17 of them orbit the planet "backwards" which is known as a retrograde direction.
- The other three moons orbit in a prograde direction - the same direction as Saturn rotates.
- NASA website shows that our Solar System's planets together have 205 confirmed moons now.
- Saturn and Jupiter, with 161 between them, account for nearly 80% of these.
- Another 20% are orbiting Uranus (27) and Neptune (14) and the remaining three moons; one is Earth's own while the other two are with Mars.

Note:

- Mercury and Venus do not have a moon.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- Down to Earth

6. Govt sets up a high-level panel to check money laundering activities

- The government set up a high-level inter-ministerial committee chaired by revenue secretary for better coordination among various departments and law enforcement agencies to prevent money laundering activities.
- The 19-member Inter-Ministerial Coordination Committee (IMCC) has five secretaries, including from ministries of finance and external affairs, and chiefs of various regulatory authorities, as well as probe agencies, according to a notification.
- Besides ensuring operational co-operation between the government, law enforcement agencies, the Financial Intelligence Unit-India and the regulators or supervisors, the committee would also work on the development and implementing policies on anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism.

Topic- GS Paper 3- Indian Economy

Source- Business Standard

7. 2019 Nobel Prize in Chemistry

- The 2019 Nobel Prize in Chemistry awarded to John B Goodenough of the University of Texas; M Stanley Whittingham of the State University of New York at Binghamton; and Akira Yoshino of Asahi Kasei Corporation and Meijo University in Japan.
- They got this prestigious award for the development of the lithium-ion battery, which "laid the foundation of a wireless, fossil-fuel-free society."

About the Lithium Battery

- The lithium-ion battery is a lightweight, rechargeable and powerful battery that is now used in everything from mobile phones to laptops and electric vehicles.
- It can also store significant amounts of energy from solar and wind power, making possible a fossil fuel-free society.
- The foundation of the lithium-ion battery was laid during the oil crisis of the 1970s.

Topic- Important for PCS Exams

Source- The Hindu

8. India International Cooperatives Trade Fair

- The first-ever 'India International Cooperatives Trade Fair' (IICTF) is going to be held at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi from 11th till 13th October, 2019.
- The Trade Fair is aimed at promoting cooperative to cooperative trade within India and abroad leading to enhanced rural and farm prosperity and also for doubling the farmer's income.
- The Fair is being conducted with the support of one international organization (NEDAC), three Ministries, four State Governments and several apex levels Indian cooperative organizations.

Related Information

Yuva Sahakar Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme 2019

- The scheme will be launched during the fair by Union Minister for Agriculture with an annual outlay of 100 crores.
- The Scheme is liberal to cooperatives in the North Eastern Region, cooperatives registered and operating in Aspirational Districts as identified by NITI Aayog, cooperatives with 100 % women/SC/ST/ PwD members.
- It is in line with the Government's focus on programmes like Start-up India and Stand-up India aimed at young entrepreneurs with new and innovative ideas.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

11.10.2019

1. SUMAN scheme: Assures free medicines for pregnant women

- The central government launched the Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan scheme, under which pregnant women, mothers up to 6 months after delivery, and all sick newborns will be able to avail free healthcare benefits.
- The scheme will largely help in bringing down maternal and infant mortality rates in the country.
- The scheme provides the zero expense access to identification and management of complications during and after the pregnancy.
- Under the scheme, the pregnant women will have a zero expense delivery and C-section facility in case of complications at public health facilities.
- It will ensure respectful care with privacy and dignity, with early initiation and support for breastfeeding, zero dose vaccination and free and zero expense services for sick newborns and neonates.

Note:

- According to the government, India's maternal mortality rate has declined from 254 per 1,00,000 live births in 2004-06 to 130 in 2014-16. Between 2001 and 2016, the infant mortality rate came down from 66 per 1,000 live births to 34.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

2. Advanced Air Quality Early Warning System

- The Union Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) has launched an advanced Air Quality Early Warning System.

Related Information

Advanced Air Quality Early Warning System

- It has been developed by Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, under MoES.
- It uses data of stubble burning incidents from the past 15 years to predict the date and place of the next burning, and help authorities to act in advance.
- Using the data, the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), under the aegis of the Central Pollution Control Board.
- It will create probability maps to alert government agencies about areas where the chances of stubble burning are going to be high.
- It can predict the air pollution level for the next 72 hours.
- It can also forecast the level of pollutants like particulate matter (PM) 2.5, PM10, and dust, coming from sources other than stubble burning.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down to Earth

3. Government plans 1,400 km long great 'green wall' of India

- The Centre is mulling an ambitious plan to create a 1,400 km long and 5 km wide green belt from Gujarat to the Delhi-Haryana border.

- It is based on the lines of the “Great Green Wall” running through the width of Africa, from Dakar (Senegal) to Djibouti, to combat climate change and desertification.
- It will help in restoring degraded land through afforestation along with the Aravali hill range that spans across Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi, and also act as a barrier for dust coming from the deserts in western India and Pakistan.
- The idea of creating a huge green belt was part of the agenda of the recently held conference (COP14) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) in India.
- The desertification and land degradation atlas of India brought out by the ISRO in 2016, revealed that Gujarat, Rajasthan and Delhi were among states/UT where more than 50% of the total area was degraded land and those under the threat of desertification.

Related Information Great Green Wall of Africa

- It aims to restore Africa’s degraded landscapes and transform millions of lives in one of the world’s poorest regions, the Sahel which is still only 15% complete.
- It is about 8,000 km natural wonder of the world stretching across the entire width of the continent when once fully completed, the Wall will be the largest living structure on the planet.
- African countries during the UNCCCD COP14 sought global support in terms of finance to make the Wall a reality in the continent’s Sahel region by 2030.
- The Sahel is a semiarid region of western and north-central Africa extending from Senegal eastward to Sudan.
- It forms a transitional zone between the arid Sahara (desert) to the north

and the belt of humid savannas to the south.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- Times of India

4. World Vision Report

- World Health Organization recently released its first World Vision Report.

Highlights of the report

- The report warned that population ageing would lead to a dramatic increase in the number of people with vision impairment and blindness.
- The report has said that the prevalence of vision impairment in low- and middle-income regions was estimated by the report to be four times higher than in high-income regions.
- It also said that the rural populations face greater barriers to accessing eye care due to them having to travel greater distances and poor road quality, among other factors.
- It also highlighted that there was a gender disparity in accessibility to eye care services, with women standing a lesser chance of availing them.

Causes of the rise in vision impairment

- The various reasons for the increase in numbers of people living with vision impairment are
 - Ageing populations
 - Changing lifestyles
 - Limited access to eye care (particularly in low- and middle-income countries.)

India Praised

- The report has praised India for its National Programme for Control of Blindness.

National Programme for Control of Blindness and Visual Impairment (NPCB&VI)

- It was launched in the year 1976 as a 100% centrally sponsored scheme (now 60:40 in all states and 90:10 in the NE States) with the goal of reducing the prevalence of blindness to 0.3% by 2020.

- The prevalence rate of blindness and targets
 - Prevalence of Blindness - 1.1%. (Survey 2001-02).
 - Prevalence of Blindness - 1. %. (Survey 2006-07).
 - Prevalence of Blindness target - 0.3% (by the year 2020).

Note:

- Presbyopia which is a condition in which it is difficult to see nearby objects has affected 1.8 billion people which occur with advancing age.
- The common refractive error called myopia, which is a condition in which it is difficult to see objects at a distance.
- Trachoma is caused due to bacterial infection in the eye which is eliminated in many countries including India.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance (Important Report)

Source- Down to Earth

5. National Health Systems Resource Centre (NHSRC)

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with the World Health Organization formally announced the re-designation of National Health Systems Resource Centre, as the WHO Collaborating Centre for Priority Medical Devices and Health Technology Policy.

Related Information

National Health Systems Resource Centre

- It has been set up under the National Health Mission (NHM) of Government of India to serve as an apex body for technical assistance in 2006.
- It has a 23 member Governing Body, chaired by the Secretary, Ministry of Health, Government of India.
- It helps to assist in policy and strategy development in the provision and mobilization of technical assistance to the states and in capacity building for

the Ministry of Health at the centre and in the states.

- The mandate of the Division of Healthcare Technology at NHSRC is to draw up technical specifications for technologies procured under National Health Mission.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

6. 9th RCEP Intersessional Ministerial

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Railways will attend the 9th RCEP Intersessional Ministerial meeting to be held in Bangkok in Thailand.

Related Information

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

- It is a proposed free trade agreement between 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.
- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with six partners namely People's Republic of China (ACFTA), Republic of Korea (AKFTA), Japan (AJCEP), India (AIFTA) and Australia and New Zealand (AANZFTA).
- RCEP negotiations were formally launched in November 2012 at 21st ASEAN Summit held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- The objective of launching RCEP negotiation is to achieve a modern, comprehensive, high quality and mutually beneficial economic partnership agreement among the ASEAN member states and ASEAN's FTA partners.
- Cambodia, Brunei, Indonesia, Vietnam, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Myanmar are the 10 ASEAN Members countries.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

7. 'AngiKaar' campaign

- Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb inaugurated the 'AngiKaar' campaign to bring the beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U) under one fold of other central government implemented the scheme.

Topic-GS Paper 2 –Government Schemes
 Source- PIB

8. 2019 Nobel Prize in Literature

- Austria's Peter Handke won the 2019 Nobel Prize for Literature, and Polish author Olga Tokarczuk awarded the 2018 Nobel prize of literature which was postponed in 2018.
- Austria's Peter Handke won the 2019 prize for "for an influential work that with linguistic ingenuity has explored the periphery and the specificity of human experience."
- Polish author Olga Tokarczuk won the 2018 prize for "a narrative imagination that with encyclopaedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life."

Note: Olga Tokarczuk, the 15th woman to win the Nobel Literature Prize, also won the International Booker Prize in 2018.

Topic- Important for PCS Exam

Source- The Hindu

9. C40 World Mayors' Summit

- The C40 World Mayors' Summit is a three-day conference where city leaders from around the world share ideas on green urban development, and on ways to get national governments to act on climate issues.
- The C40 connects more than 96 of the world's largest cities to deliver urgent and essential climate action needed to secure a sustainable future for urban citizens worldwide.
- The group is committed to delivering on climate targets set under the 2016 Paris Agreement and sets the bar for cities to develop and implement local level plans that comply with those targets.

- The C40 group was started in 2005 by the then Mayor of London, Ken Livingstone, and got its name in 2006 since it had 40 members that year.
- It has 96 members at present, representing over 70 crore people, and one-quarter of the global economy.
- These cities have the potential to deliver 40 per cent of the emissions reductions to meet the Paris targets.
- The host city of this year's conference (scheduled to last from October 9 to October 12) Copenhagen, plans to become carbon neutral by 2025.
- At the 2019 Summit, the Mayor of Los Angeles will take over as chair of the group.
- The cities from India that are part of the C40 are Delhi NCR, Bengaluru, Jaipur, and Kolkata.

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

14.10.2019

1. RBI introduces a new reporting system "CISBI" for co-operative banks

- The Reserve Bank of India has introduced a new reporting system – the Central Information System for Banking Infrastructure (CISBI) – for all co-operative banks.
- Under this system, these banks are required to submit information pertaining to opening/closing/conversion of branches, offices, non-administratively independent offices (extension counters, satellite offices), and customer service points (ATMs) in a single proforma online on the CISBI portal.
- All co-operative banks should submit immediately and in any case, not later than one week the information relating to opening, closure, merger, shifting and conversion of bank branches/offices/NAIOs/CSPs online

through the CISBI portal, the central bank said in a circular.

- To ensure correctness of data on the CISBI, in the last week of every month, banks have to generate a 'nil report' in the CISBI for position as on last day of the previous month, indicating the total number of functioning branches, offices, NAIOs, CSPs, and submit it through the CISBI after authenticating its correctness.
- The CISBI replaces the legacy master office file system. The new reporting system is applicable to urban co-operative banks, State co-operative banks and district central co-operative banks.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Indian Economy

Source- Business Line

2. Pangio bhujia: A new subterranean fish species

- Researchers from Kerala have discovered a new species of eel-loach named 'Pangio bhujia' in Kozhikode district of state.

Related Information

Pangio Bhujia

- The species has been named 'Pangio bhujia' due to its resemblance to the North Indian snack, bhujia.
- It is a unique species of miniature well-dwelling subterranean fish.
- It is the first species of eel-loach in the world that has been discovered to be living in subterranean environments.
- They are generally found in fast-flowing streams in the south and south-east Asia.
- It resides in purest waters of deep subterranean aquifers.
- It has several unique characters including the absence of dorsal fin which has never been encountered in genus Pangio to which this new species belongs.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment

Source- Down to Earth

3. National Coordination Centre

- The Central Government is planning to create a National Coordination Centre (NCC) which will function as a databank on Maoists' core strongholds and cadres.

Related Information

About the Centre

- The National Coordination Center (NCC) will act as a synergy point for anti – Maoist operations and intelligence gathering.
- The NCC will also utilise the experience and knowledge of retired police officers who have served in anti-Maoist operations in areas of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Chhattisgarh.
- The coordination centre will also identify the sources of finance to the Maoists and work to neutralize the network.

About Naxals

- The term 'Naxal' derives its name from a village called Naxalbari in the State of West Bengal where the movement had its origin under the leadership of Charu Majumdar and Kanu Sanyal.
- The Naxals are considered far-left radical communists who support Maoist political ideology.
- Naxalism originated as a rebellion against lack of development and poverty at the local level in the rural parts of eastern India.
- Their origin can be traced to the split that took place in the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in 1967 which led to the formation of the Communist Party of India (Marxist and Leninist).
- Initially, the movement had its centre in West Bengal thereafter, it spread into Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Internal Security

Source- PIB

4. Indo-Japan Joint Military Exercise DHARMA GUARDIAN – 2019

- Exercise DHARMA GUARDIAN-219 will be conducted at Vairengte, Mizoram between India and Japan from 19 Oct 2019 to 02 Nov 2019.

Related Information

About the Exercise

- It is an annual joint military exercise between Indian and Japan since 2018.
- The exercise aims to share experience gained during various Counter-Terrorism Operations in respective Countries.
- The exercise with Japan is crucial and significant in terms of security challenges faced by both the nations in the backdrop of global terrorism.

Other exercises between India and Japan

- Exercise Malabar– It is a trilateral naval exercise involving the United States, Japan and India as permanent partners.
- JIMEX- It is a bilateral maritime exercise between India and Japan.
- Sahayog-Kaijin – It is a joint bilateral exercise between the Indian Coast Guard and the Japan Coast Guard.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- HT

5. Typhoon Hagibis hits Japan

- Typhoon Hagibis caused flooding and landslides as it reached Japan at 225 km/h wind speeds.
- More than 100 people were injured across the country after Typhoon Hagibis landed on Japan's main island of Honshu.

Typhoon Hagibis

- The name Hagibis has been used to name four tropical cyclones in the western North Pacific Ocean. The name was contributed by the Philippines and means "rapidity" or "swiftness."
- Typhoon Hagibis (2002)- a super typhoon that never affected land
- Typhoon Hagibis (2007 – one of the last storms during the 2007 season.
- Tropical Storm Hagibis – formed from

the early southwest monsoon of 2014.
Typhoon Hagibis (2019)

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- BBC

6. Mobile App, "mHariyali" Launched for 'Environment Protection in Government Colonies' Website

- Housing & Urban Affairs Minister of State Shri Hardeep S Puri launched 'mHariyali' mobile application, which encourages public participation in planting trees and other Green drives for the benefit of the public.
- People can now upload information/photos of any plantation done by them, which is linked to the app and will be displayed on the website epgc.gov.in.
- The App provides for automatic geotagging of plants.
- This app will also enable nodal officers to periodically monitor the plantation.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

GS-2- Governance

Source- Orissadiary

7. Global Fund to fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (GFTAM)

- French President has said that the Global Fund to fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria has raised at least USD 13.92 billion for the next three years.

Related Information

GFTAM

- It is an international financial organization which was formed in 2002.
- It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It aims to attract, leverage and invest additional resources to end epidemics of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.
- It is a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by the diseases.
- The organisation mobilizes and invests more than US\$4 billion a year

to support programmes run by local experts in more than 100 countries.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Economics

Source- Economics Times

8. India rejects RCEP e-commerce chapter
 - India has rejected the e-commerce chapter of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement.
 - The e-commerce chapter contains clauses that, if India had agreed to them, would have prevented it from implementing data localisation rules on companies doing business in India.
 - If India did not agree to the e-commerce chapter clauses, negotiations were now entering a frantic phase because there were still several uncertainties related to the cross-border transfer of electronic information that remained.
 - India has proposed locating computing facilities inside the country if it is meant to protect its essential security interests and national interests at the ongoing negotiations of the proposed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade agreement.

Background

- Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) in its April 2018 notification mandated "all system providers shall ensure that the entire data relating to payment systems operated by them are stored in a system only in India".
- It later clarified that a copy of domestic data can be stored abroad in the case of cross-border transactions which the financial services agreement (FSA) will partly nullify that position.

Data localisation

- It is the act of storing data on any device physically present within the borders of a country
- Localisation mandates that companies collecting critical data about

consumers must store and process them within the borders of the country.

- The main intent behind data localisation is to protect the personal and financial information of the country's citizens and residents from foreign surveillance and give local governments and regulators the jurisdiction to call for the data when required.
- The data localisation is also essential to national security.
- Storing of data locally is expected to help law-enforcement agencies to access information that is needed for the detection of a crime or to gather evidence.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- Indian Express

9. Kanyashree University

- West Bengal government has decided to set up Kanyashree University in Nadia district and Kanyashree colleges across the state so as to empower girls.

Related Information

Kanyashree scheme

- It was started by the West Bengal government to empower girls in 2013.
- The 'Kanyashree Prakalpa' seeks to improve the status and well being of girls, particularly those from socio-economically disadvantaged families through conditional cash transfers.

Objectives

- To ensure that girls study in schools and delay their marriages until they attain 18 years of age.
- To empower girls from school to university level so that they can become independent women.
- To improve the status and well-being of girls, particularly those from socio-economically disadvantaged families through conditional cash transfers.
- The scheme has two cash transfer components
 - (a) An annual incentive of Rs 750 is

given to girls in the age group 13 to 18 years old and studying in Class 8 for every year till they continue their education—provided they are unmarried at the time.

(b) A one-time grant of Rs 25,000 is also given to girls once they attain the age of 18 years, provided they are engaged in the academic or occupational pursuit and unmarried.

Note:

- In 2017, the Kanyashree scheme won the United Nations for Public Service award for its Kanyashree scheme.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

15.10.2019

1. DPIIT launches website and mobile app for IPR

- Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) launched the website and mobile application L2Pro India on Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).
- Full form of L2 Pro is "Learn to Protect, Secure and Maximize Your Innovation".
- The website and app have been developed by Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM)-DPIIT in collaboration with Qualcomm and National Law University (NLU), Delhi.
- It will enable youth, innovators, entrepreneurs and small and medium industries (SMEs) in understanding IPRs.

Related information

About IPR:

- Intellectual property rights are the rights given to persons over the creations of their minds.
- They usually give the creator an exclusive right over the use of his/her creation for a certain period of time.
- They are legally protected in India and abroad.

Topic- GS Paper 3- Economy

Source- The Economic Times

2. Pani Bachao Paisa Kamao Scheme

- It is a cash incentive scheme to save power and water which recently got recognition by 'The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences'.
- 'Pani Bachao Paisa Kamao' was launched last year as a pilot project by the Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL).
- This scheme was designed by Nobel Prize winners of economics- Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer.
- The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences described their work as a "new experiment-based approach" that has "transformed development economics" in Punjab.

Topic- Government Schemes; GS Paper 1- Geography; GS Paper 3-Conservation of Natural resources

Source- The Indian Express

3. India and Netherlands launched the second phase of the LOTUS-HR:

- LOTUS-HR stands for Local Treatment of Urban Sewage Streams for Healthy Reuse plant.
- The project was initiated in July 2017.
- It aims to demonstrate a novel holistic (waste) water management approach that will produce clean water which can be reused for various purposes.
- The LOTUS-HR project is jointly supported by Department of Biotechnology (Ministry of Science and Technology) Government of India and Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research /STW, Government of Netherlands.

Topic-GS Paper 2- International Relations

Source- PIB

4. Project Beehive

- The program codenamed 'Project Beehive' will be a centralised and automated system under the army's Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) corps.

- This automated program will provide real-time information to Indian Army about the life and present conditions of its tanks, vehicles, guns and air assets and their upcoming problems.
- This would help in better planning and carrying out its operations ranging from countering terrorists in J&K to moving deployments along the frontiers with Pakistan and China.

Topic- GS Paper 3- Internal Security

Source- The Economic Times

5. Training of 1st Batch of National Trainers for Census of India 2021 Commenced
 - The first batch of the trainings of National Trainers for Census of India 2021 has started at National Statistical System Training Academy (NSSTA), Greater Noida.
 - This training would take place from 14th October 2019 to 25th October 2019.

Related Information

About Census of India

- Census of India is the primary source of data collection from every section of society.
- Continuing this decennial activity, the 16th Indian Census is to be taken in 2021.
- Training is a very important aspect of conducting Census successfully by ensuring seamless execution of Census 2021 in the field.
- The National trainers are being trained on both Census and Trainer Development Skills (TDS) to further impart training to the next level, that is, Master Trainers.

Topic- GS Paper 3

Source- PIB

6. 3 Mumbai heritage structures win UNESCO awards for conservation
 - The three structures from Mumbai are among four from India to bag the UNESCO awards.

- The fourth structure to have made it to the list of awardees is the Vikram Sarabhai Library at the Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad.
- Three Mumbai's heritage structures are— Flora Fountain and Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue at Fort, and Our Lady of Glory Church at Byculla.

Related Information

About Flora Fountain

- The structure is inspired by the Victorian style of architecture.
- It is owned and maintained by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC).
- It was restored between July 2017 and October 2018.
- Its restoration work was headed by conservation architect Vikas Dilawari and the BMC heritage department.

About Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue

- It is owned and maintained by the Jacob Sassoon (Jewish) Trust.
- It was restored between February 2018 and February 2019 by conservation architect Abha Lambah

About Our Lady of Glory Church

- It is owned and maintained by the Church.
- It was restored between 2013 and 2019 by conservation architect David Cardoz.

Topic- GS Paper 1- Art and Culture; GS Paper 3- Conservation

Source- The Hindustan Times

7. JNU to establish a new centre for research in natural products
 - A National Centre for Screening of Natural Products for Parasitic Diseases will soon start working at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).
 - The main objective of the centre is to screen natural products to identify potential candidates for further optimisation and preclinical and clinical development as new drugs against parasitic diseases.
 - The other objective is to conduct target-based screening.

- The centre is being funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) under its Technology Development and Transfer Division.

Topic- GS Paper 3- Health

Source- Down to Earth

16.10.2019

1. India slips to 102nd rank in Global Hunger Report, behind Bangladesh, Pak, Nepal

- India slipped to 102 positions in the 2019 Global Hunger Index featuring 117 countries, behind Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- The report prepared jointly by Irish aid agency Concern Worldwide and German organisation Welt Hunger Hilfe.
- The report said India suffers from a level of hunger that is "serious", at the very end of the category with a 30.1 GHI score.
- Over one in every five children in India is "wasted" (low weight for height), the highest for any country in the report.
- The share of wasting (or low weight for height) among children in India rose from 16.5 per cent in the 2008-2012 period to 20.8 per cent in 2014-2018.
- Just 9.6 per cent of all children between 6 and 23 months of age are fed a "minimum acceptable diet".
- Seventeen countries, including Belarus, Ukraine, Turkey, Cuba and Kuwait, shared the top rank with GHI scores of less than five
- The government, last year, assured it is working to achieve the goal of 'zero hunger' by 2030. In 2018, India ranked 103rd among 119 countries on the global hunger index.
- The GHI score is calculated on four indicators —
(i) Undernourishment;

(ii) Child wasting, the share of children under the age of five who are wasted (that is, who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition);

(iii) Child stunting, children under the age of five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition; and

(iv) Child mortality, the mortality rate of children under the age of five.

Topic- GS-2- Economic Development

Source- Indian Express

2. Operation Peace Spring

- India has recently expressed deep concern over Turkey's unilateral military operation called Operation Peace Spring against the Syrian Kurdish militia in Northeast Syria.

Related Information

About Operation

- It is Turkey led military operation against Kurdish-led forces in north-eastern Syria.
- This move came after US troops, who relied on the Kurds to defeat the Islamic State (IS) group on the ground in Syria withdrew from the border area.

About Kurds

- They are one of the indigenous peoples of the Mesopotamian plains and the highlands whose population is spread across four countries – Iran, Iraq, Turkey, and Syria.
- Kurds make up between 7% and 10% of Syria's population.
- For decades, they were suppressed and denied basic rights by President Bashar al-Assad and, before him, his father Hafez.
- Today, they form a distinctive community, united through race, culture and language even though they have no standard dialect.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Relation

Source- The Hindu

3. India and Netherlands launched the second phase of the LOTUS-HR

- India and Netherlands have launched the second phase of the Local Treatment of Urban Sewage Streams for Healthy Reuse (LOTUS-HR) as a part of joint collaboration.

Related Information
About LOTUS-HR Project

- The project was initiated in July 2017 and aims to demonstrate a novel holistic (waste) water management approaches that will produce clean water which can be reused for various purposes.
- The project also aims to simultaneously recover nutrients and energy from the urban wastewater thus converting drain into profitable mines.
- It is jointly supported by Department of Biotechnology, Government of India and the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, Government of the Netherlands.
- The location of the project is Barapullah drain systems, New Delhi and the partners in the project are IIT-Delhi and The Energy and Resources Institute.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- TH

4. Vigyan Jyoti

- The Central government has planned a programme called Vigyan Jyoti to help girl students inculcate interest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).
- The programme is to be launched in the backdrop of the low percentage of women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM).

About the Programme

- The programme aims to tap 100 girl students in 550 districts from 2020-2025.
- It comes under the aegis of the Department of Science & Technology.

- The programme will cover girl students from grade 9 to 12 which were chosen based on their percentile.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

5. One Nation One Fastag

- Union Road Transport Minister will inaugurate a conference on 'One Nation One Fastag' in New Delhi.
- The conference will see the signing of MoUs with state departments and other agencies for bringing in a unified electronic tolling solution across the country.
- This would mean enabling the use of the same Fastag affixed on the windscreen of a vehicle at every toll plaza in the country under the jurisdiction of different states and agencies and other entities.
- This will help provide seamless services to consumers across the country.

Related Information

About FASTag

- It is a reloadable tag that allows automatic deduction of toll without having to stop for carrying out the cash transaction.
- The tag is linked to a prepaid account from which the applicable toll amount is deducted.
- It uses radio frequency identification) technology and is fixed on the windscreen of the vehicle once active.
- Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) is the use of radio waves to read and capture information stored on a tag attached to an object.
- The tag is valid for five years and comes in seven different colours — violet, orange, yellow, green, pink, blue, black and each colour is assigned to a particular category of vehicles.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Indian Express

6. Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme

- Nearly around 4,500 students from Jammu and Kashmir have reported at colleges across the country to pursue undergraduate studies under the Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme which is the highest in six years.

Related Information

About Scheme

- The scheme is under the Ministry of Human Resource Development which was launched in 2011.
- It aims to encourage the youth from Jammu & Kashmir to pursue higher education in educational institutions outside the state.
- It is a merit-based programme that offers admission to J&K students in colleges, institutes and universities across the country and pays for their tuition, board, books and other incidentals.
- Under the scheme, 5,000 scholarships are offered each year to pursue undergraduate studies in areas such as engineering, medical, nursing, pharmacy, hotel management, agriculture, architecture and commerce.
- The largest numbers of J&K students this year are studying in Maharashtra, followed by Delhi, Punjab, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

7. Baul Festival

- Recently a three day long Baul festival has concluded in Dhaka with performances by Bauls from India and Bangladesh.

Related Information

About Baul

- They are the mystic minstrels living in rural Bangladesh and West Bengal.
- Baul music represents a particular type of folk song, carrying influences

of Hindu bhakti movements as well as the shuphi, a form of Sufi song.

- Bauls belong to an unorthodox devotional tradition influenced by Hinduism, Buddhism, Bengali, Vaisnavism and Sufi Islam yet distinctly different from them.
- In 2005, the Baul tradition of Bangladesh was included in the list of Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity by UNESCO.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- DD News

8. Vajra Prahar Exercise

- The 10th edition of the joint military exercise 'Vajra Prahar' between India and the US will be held at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) in Seattle.

About the Exercise

- It is a Special Forces joint training exercise conducted alternately in India and the US.
- These exercises will enable the sharing of best practices and experience in areas such as joint mission planning capabilities and operational tactics.

Note:

- 'Yudh Abhyas' is a joint military training exercise between Indian and US had also taken place at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source-AIR

9. Man Booker Prize 2019

- Margaret Atwood and Bernardine Evaristo have been jointly awarded the Man Booker Prize 2019.
- Canadian author Margaret Atwood was awarded for the book 'The Testament' in the fiction category.
- Bernardine Evaristo became the first black woman to win the prestigious award since its creation in 1969 for her book 'Girl, Woman, Other'.

Topic- Important for PCS Exams

Source- Live mint

10. 2019 Nobel Prize in Economics

- The 2019 Nobel Prize in Economics has been awarded to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, and Michael Kremer by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences.
- They got this prestigious award for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty.

About their Work

- The work of the three economists had shown how the problem of poverty could be tackled by breaking it down into smaller and more precise questions in areas such as education and healthcare, making problems easier to tackle.
- These research show a vital impact of the Work on Policy Making
- Research surrounding remedial tutoring provided arguments for large scale support programmes that have now reached by 5 million children in India
- Their studies showed that deworming provides clear health benefits to school children but also parents are very price sensitive.
- This led to the WHO recommend that medicine should be distributed free to over 800 million school children living in areas where over 20% of them have a specific type of parasitic worm infection.
- Their studies paved the way for heavy subsidies for preventive healthcare that have been introduced in many countries.

Note:

- Amartya Sen received the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 1998 for his contributions to welfare economics.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- The Hindu

11. Bluetongue (BT) Virus

- The Department of Animal Husbandry released two diagnostic kits developed by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) under the Indian Veterinary Research Institute.
- They are the Bluetongue sandwich ELISA (sELISA) and the Japanese Encephalitis IgM ELISA kit for the control of Swine and Detection of AntigenELISA.

About Bluetongue virus

- It is an insect-transmitted viral disease of domestic and wild ruminants that includes the camelid species.
- The disease is widespread among the sheep, goats, cattle, buffaloes and camels in the country.
- With the help of the Kit "Bluetongue: Sandwich ELISA for detection of Antigen", the Bluetongue Virus can be controlled with the vaccination of susceptible animals, vector control and quarantine of infected animals with the good management practices.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Health

Source- PIB

17.10.2019

1. Second phase of GOAL (Going Online as Leaders)

- Union Minister of Tribal Affairs announced the second phase of GOAL (Going Online as Leaders).
- The first phase of the program was launched in March 2019.

Related Information

About the Programme GOAL

- It is a Facebook program aimed at inspiring, guiding and encouraging tribal girls from across India to become village-level digital young leaders for their communities.
- The program helps to empower women by providing digital literacy, leadership, life skills and entrepreneurship skills.
- In order to become a beneficiary of the program.
 - (a) the girls should be above 18 years of age and should have dropped out of school.
 - (b) the girl should be of tribal origin.
 - (c) It also helps in closing the digital gender gap by enabling more women to get online and access digital services.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Women Empowerment

Source- PIB

2. Maritime States Development Council

- Recently at the 17th Meeting of Maritime States Development Council, the Ministry of Shipping is working on a plan to develop a National Grid for Ports based on the synergy between the Major and Minor ports in the country.
- There are 204 Minor ports in the country, of which only 44 are currently functional.

Related Information

About Council

- It is an apex advisory body for the development of the Maritime sector and aims to ensure integrated development of Major and non-Major Ports.
- It was constituted in May 1997 to assess in consultation with State Governments, the future development of existing and new Minor Ports by the respective Maritime States either directly or through captive users and private participation.
- Further, MSDC also monitors the development of minor ports, captive ports and private ports in the Maritime States.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

3. Food Safety Mitra scheme

- Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare launched Food Safety Mitra Scheme, Eat Right Jacket and Eat Right Jhola on the eve of World Food Day (16th October).
- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has introduced the scheme of Food Safety Mitra through which it plans to engage motivated individuals with the food safety ecosystem at ground level.

Food Safety Mitra

- These are the individual professional certified by FSSAI who assists in compliances related to FSS Act, Rules & Regulations with three avatars-Digital Mitra, Trainer Mitra and Hygiene Mitra depending upon their respective roles and responsibilities.

Eat Right Jhola

- The Minister also launched Eat Right Jhola which is a reusable, washable and bio-degradable bag.

Eat Right Jacket

- Eat Right Smart Jacket has been introduced to giving an identity to the FSSAI of India staff to ensure transparent inspection.
- It's embedded with an RFID tag and QR code which is linked to software to capture entry of inspection staff into the premise for monitoring.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

4. State of the World's Children report for 2019

- State of the World's Children report for 2019 has been released by United Nations Children's Emergency Fund.
- It is the first United Nations Children's Emergency Fund report in 20 years on child nutrition.

Highlights of the reports

- The report found that one in three children under the age of five years — around 200 million children worldwide — are either undernourished or overweight.
- India, every second child is affected by some form of malnutrition.
- The report said 35% of Indian children suffer from stunting due to lack of nutrition, 17% suffer from wasting, 33% are underweight and 2% are overweight.
- According to government figures, stunting and wasting among children in the country have reduced by 3.7 per cent and the number of underweight children has reduced by 2.3 per cent from 2016 to 2018.
- The report warns that poor eating and feeding practices start from the earliest days of a child's life.
- It stated that breastfeeding can save lives, but only 42% of children under six months of age are exclusively breastfed.
- India also has the highest burden of deaths among children under five per year in 2018 followed by Nigeria,

Pakistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Related Information

United Nations Children's Emergency Fund

- The United Nations Children's Fund, originally known as the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.
- It was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946.
- It's headquartered in New York, USA.
- It is a special program of the United Nations (UN) devoted to aiding national efforts to improve the health, nutrition, education, and general welfare of children.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Health (Important report)

Source- PIB

5. KHON Ramlila

- The Culture Department of Uttar Pradesh government is going to organise the country's first training and performance programme of world-famous KHON Ramlila which is a masked form of Ramlila art of Thailand in collaboration with the Thai government.

Related Information

KHON Ramlila

- It is a masked form of Ramlila art of Thailand which is included in the list of UNESCO's Intangible cultural heritage.
- It has no dialogues and background voices narrate the whole story of Ramayana.

UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

- The UNESCO's coveted list is made up of those intangible heritage elements that help demonstrate diversity of cultural heritage and raise awareness about its importance.
- The list was established in 2008 when Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage came into effect.

- It includes important intangible cultural heritages worldwide.
- It has two parts
 1. Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity
 2. List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- AIR

6. India, Japan begins joint Air Force exercise 'Shinyuu Maitri'

- The Indian Air Force will be carrying out a joint military exercise 'Shinyuu Maitri' with Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) from October 17 to 23.
- The exercise will be held at Air Force Station, Arjan Singh in Panagarh town in West Bengal.
- C-130 J aircraft of the Special Operations Squadron of IAF and C-130 H of Tactical Airlift Squadron of JASDF will participate in the exercise
- The focus of the exercise will be to undertake Joint Mobility and Tactical interoperability among the two forces.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- Business Standard

7. Andhra CM launches 'YSR Rytu Bharosa - PM KISAN' scheme

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy launched 'YSR Rytu Bharosa - PM KISAN' scheme at Vikrama Simhapuri University premises in Nellore's Kakuturu village.
- Under the scheme, the state government will give input subsidy of Rs 13,500 to farmers in the state.
- Out of the amount, The Centre will be contributing Rs 6000 under PM KISAN Yojana.
- If any farmer dies accidentally, Rs seven lakh compensation will be paid.
- If a cow or buffalo dies, compensation in the range of Rs 15000 to Rs 30000 will be paid.
- If goat or sheep dies, Rs 6000 compensation will be paid.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –government schemes

Source- Business Standard

8. UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation

- India has recently won four UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.
- The UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation awards were announced at a ceremony held in Penang, Malaysia.
- These are
 - (a) Award of Distinction : Vikram Sarabhai Library, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad
 - (b) Award of Merit: Both (i) Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue, Mumbai and (ii) Our Lady of Glory Church, Mumbai.
 - (c) Honourable Mention: The Flora Fountain, Mumbai.

Related Information

UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards

- It was established in 2000.
- It recognizes the efforts of private individuals and organizations that have successfully conserved structures and buildings of heritage value in the region.
- It aims to encourage other property owners to undertake conservation projects within their communities either independently or by seeking PPP (public-private partnerships).

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- PIB

9. Microbial fuel cells

- The Zoological Society of London has announced that at the London Zoo, a fern has started taking its own selfies after installing microbial fuel cells in Pete, a maidenhair fern.

Relate Information

Microbial fuel cells

- These are the devices that use bacteria as the catalysts to oxidise organic and inorganic matter and generate current.

Applications

- It can be used as an alternate method for bioremediation.

- It also acts as a biosensor-can measure the solute concentration of wastewater.
- The production of low-cost electricity from waste materials.
- It can be used in waste-water treatment.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

10. UAE announces the establishment of 1st graduate-level, research-based AI university in the world

- UAE announced the establishment of the Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI), the first graduate-level, research-based AI university in the world.
- MBZUAI will enable graduate students, businesses and governments to advance the artificial intelligence field.
- The University is named after Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, who has long advocated for the UAE's development of human capital through knowledge and scientific thinking to take the nation into the future.
- MBZUAI will introduce a new model of academia and research to the field of AI, providing students and faculty access to some of the world's most advanced AI systems to unleash its potential for economic and societal development.

Topic- Important for PCS Exams

Source- AIR

18.10.2019

1. India Innovation Index 2019

- NITI Aayog with Institute for Competitiveness released the India Innovation Index (III) 2019.

About the Index

- NITI Aayog with Institute for Competitiveness as the knowledge partner has released the India Innovation Index 2019.
- The index's objective is to rank Indian states on innovations through the portal that will capture data on innovation from all states on innovation and regularly update it in real-time.
- The aim of the index is to create a holistic tool which can be used by policymakers across the country to identify the challenges to be addressed and strengths to build on when designing the economic growth policies for their regions.
- The states have been bifurcated into three categories: major states, north-east and hill states, and union territories/city-states/small states.
- The India Innovation Index 2019 is calculated as the average of the scores of its two dimensions
 1. Enablers
 2. Performance
- The Enablers are the factors that underpin innovative capacities, grouped into five pillars:
 - (i) Human Capital,
 - (ii) Investment
 - (iii) Knowledge Workers
 - (iv) Business Environment,
 - (v) Safety and Legal Environment.

The Performance dimension captures benefits that a nation derives from the inputs, divided into two pillars:

1. Knowledge Output
2. Knowledge Diffusion

Highlights of the index

- Karnataka is the leader in the overall rankings in the category of major states.
- Karnataka's number one position in the overall ranking is partly attributed to its top rank in the Performance dimension and also among the top performers in Infrastructure,

Knowledge Workers, Knowledge Output and Business Environment.

- Among the category of major states, Maharashtra performs the best in the dimension of Enablers.
- Sikkim and Delhi take the top spots among the northeastern & hill states, and union territories/city-states/small states respectively.

Related Information

Global innovation index 2019

- Recently India jumps five places to 52nd in 2019 from 57th position last year.
- The GII rankings are published annually by Cornell University, INSEAD and the UN World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and GII Knowledge Partners.
- Switzerland retained its number-one spot on the index.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

2. EX EASTERN BRIDGE-V: India – Oman Joint air force Exercise

- Indian Air Force is participating in a Bilateral Joint exercise with Royal Air Force Oman, named EX EASTERN BRIDGE-V at Air Force Base Masirah.

Related Information

About the Exercise

- The last exercise, EX EASTERN BRIDGE-IV was held in 2017 at Jamnagar.
- The exercise will enhance inter-operability during mutual operations between the two Air Forces and will provide an opportunity to learn from each other's best practices.
- Besides strengthening bilateral relations, it will also provide a good opportunity for the air-warriors to operate in an international environment.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- PIB

3. Qatar moves to announce abolishment of the kafala system

- Qatar has announced to extend the elimination of Kafala System to all the remaining workers.
- Qatar has introduced a series of labour reforms since its selection as the 2022 World Cup host.

Related Information

About the Kafala system

- The Kafala (Arabic word for sponsorship) System emerged in the 1950s to regulate the relationship between employers and migrant workers in many countries in West Asia.
- It remains the routine practice in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries of Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and also in the Arab states of Jordan and Lebanon.
- The sponsorship system's economic objective was to provide temporary, rotating labour that could be rapidly brought into the country in an economic boom and expelled during less affluent periods.
- Under the Kafala system, a migrant worker's immigration status is legally bound to an individual employer or sponsor (kafeel) for their contract period.
- The migrant worker cannot enter the country, transfer employment nor leave the country for any reason without first obtaining explicit written permission from the kafeel.
- This practise has been criticised by human rights organizations for creating easy opportunities for the exploitation of workers as many employers take away passports and abuse their workers with little chance of legal repercussions.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Al Jazeera

4. 20th Livestock Census

- Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying have

released the 20th Livestock Census report.

- The Census will prove beneficial not just for policymakers but also for agriculturists, traders, entrepreneurs, dairying industry and masses in general.

Key results of the 20th Livestock Census:

- The total Livestock population is 535.78 million in the country showing an increase of 4.6% over Livestock Census-2012
- Total Bovine population (Cattle, Buffalo, Mithun and Yak) is 302.79 Million in 2019 which shows an increase of about 1% over the previous census.
- The total number of cattle in the country in 2019 is 192.49 million showing an increase of 0.8 % over the previous Census.
- The Female Cattle (Cows population) is 145.12 million, increased by 18.0% over the previous census (2012).
- The Exotic/Crossbred and Indigenous/Non-descript Cattle population in the country is 50.42 million and 142.11 million respectively.
- The Indigenous/Non-descript female cattle population has increased by 10% in 2019 as compared to the previous census.
- The population of the total Exotic/Crossbred Cattle has increased by 26.9 % in 2019 as compared to the previous census.
- The total buffaloes in the country are 109.85 million showing an increase of about 1.0% over the previous Census.
- The total milch animals (in-milk and dry) in cows and buffaloes are 125.34 million, an increase of 6.0 % over the previous census.
- The total sheep in the country is 74.26 million in 2019, increased by 14.1% over the previous Census.

Related Information

Livestock Census

- The Livestock Census has been conducted in the country periodically since 1919-20.
- The Livestock Census covers all domesticated animals and its headcounts.
- The 20th livestock census is indeed a unique attempt as for the first time such a major initiative has been taken to digitise household-level data through online transmission from the field.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

5. Van Dhan Internship Programme

- Union Minister of Tribal Affairs launched the “Van Dhan Internship Programme” organised by TRIFED under Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- The objective of the internship programme to help the tribal population in becoming self-reliant and entrepreneurs.
- 18 interns (to be called Minister's interns) from some of the reputed Institutes of Rural Management/ Management Institutions/ Institutes of Social Work/ Social Services of the country are participating in the programme.
- The period of internship is 6 months (extendable depending upon the need of the organisation and mutual sustainability).

Related Information

Van Dhan Yojana

- It is a scheme of Ministry of Tribal Affairs which was launched in 2018.
- The scheme is implemented through the Ministry of Tribal Affairs as Nodal Department at the Central Level.
- TRIFED acts as the Nodal Agency at the National Level.
- It aims to help tribals in optimum utilization of natural resources and provide sustainable Minor Forest Produce (MFP)-based livelihood.

- It also seeks to help increase tribal income through value addition of MFP centric products.

Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India.

- It functions under the administrative control of Ministry of Tribal affairs.
- It was established in 1987.
- The basic objective of the TRIFED is to provide good price to the products made or collected from the forest by the tribal people

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

6. World Giving Index: India ranks 82. USA tops the list

- India ranks 82 among the 128 countries surveyed by the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF), an international organisation that promotes giving to transform lives and communities across the world.
- The finding is an aggregate of trends for each country that emerged in surveys conducted by CAF over the past decade (2009 to 2018) and formulated as the World Giving Index (WGI).
- According to the WGI, the USA stood at the top followed Myanmar, New Zealand and Australia.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economic Development

Source- HinduBusiness Line

7. Kerala extends maternity leave benefits to teachers, other staff of private educational institutions

- In a path-breaking development, Kerala is extending maternity leave benefits to teachers and other staff of private educational institutions, including those in the unaided sector.
- The Central Government has approved the Kerala Government's decision to bring these teachers and employees under the Maternity Benefit Act.

- When the amendment to the Act comes into force, Kerala would become the first state in the country to provide maternity benefits in the private educational sector.
- Employees covered under the law can avail 26 weeks' maternity leave with salary.
- Moreover, an employer has to provide an amount of 1,000 rupees as a medical allowance.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Schemes and Policies
Source- AIR

8. China signs deal to 'lease' Pacific island in Solomons

- Recently a Chinese company signed an agreement to lease an entire island in the Solomon Islands known as Tulagi Island for 75 years.

Related Information

Tulagi island

- It is a small island Solomon Islands, just off the south coast of Ngella Sule (Florida islands).
- It is the site of a former Japanese naval base and was the scene of fighting in World War II.
- The agreement with Chinese company mentions developing a refinery on the island.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- Economic Times

9. Sirumugai

- Prime Minister of India gifts handmade shawl by Sirumugai weavers to Chinese President Xi during the informal summit held at Mamallapuram.

Related Information

About Sirumugai

- It is a town in Coimbatore district in Tamil Nadu.
- It is well known for Silk Sarees Bazaars.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- AIR

21.10.2019

1. Interpol to hold the general assembly in India in 2022

- India recently won the vote for hosting the 91st Interpol General Assembly in India in the year 2022 as part of celebrations of the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence.

Related Information

International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol)

- It is a 194-member intergovernmental organisation headquartered in Lyon, France.
- It was formed in 1923 as the International Criminal Police Commission and started calling itself Interpol in 1956.
- India has been a member since 1956.
- Like any member nation, India maintains a National Central Bureau which serves as the national platform for cooperation between domestic law enforcement units and the international police community.
- The NCB is the designated contact point for the Interpol.
- India has collaborated with the Interpol in tackling a myriad of organised crimes such as poaching, wildlife trafficking, spurious drugs and fake medicine rackets, among others.
- It aims to enable police around the world to work together to make the world a safer place.

Different Interpol notices

Red Notice

- A Red Notice is a request to locate and provisionally arrest individual pending extradition.
- It is issued by the General Secretariat at the request of a member country or an international tribunal based on a valid national arrest warrant.

Yellow Notice

- A Yellow Notice is issued to help locate missing persons, often minors, or to

help identify persons who are unable to identify themselves.

- This is highly useful in cases of human trafficking or in case of missing persons due to calamities

Blue Notice

- A Blue Notice is issued to collect additional information about a person's identity, location or activities in relation to a crime.
- This does not guarantee extradition or arrest of the person.

Black Notice

- A Black Notice is a request to seek information on unidentified bodies in member nations.

Green Notice

- A Green Notice is issued to provide warnings and intelligence about persons who have committed criminal offences and are likely to repeat these crimes in other countries.

Orange Notice

- An Orange Notice is issued to provide warnings about warn of an event, a person, an object or a process representing a serious and imminent threat to public safety.

Purple Notice

- A Purple Notice is a request to seek or provide information on the modus operandi, objects, devices and concealment methods used by criminals.
- Last year the Interpol issued such notices to highlight human trafficking and modern-day slavery prevalent in the fisheries sector.

General Assembly

- The General Assembly is Interpol's supreme governing body and comprises representatives from all its member countries.
- The General Assembly meets annually for a session lasting approximately four days, to vote on activities and policy.

- Each country is represented by one or more delegates at the Assembly, who are typically chiefs of law enforcement agencies.
- The General Assembly also elects the members of the Interpol Executive Committee, the governing body which "provides guidance and direction in between sessions of the Assembly".
- Major trends in crime and security threats facing the world are also discussed.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Institution

Source- PIB

2. Andaman and Nicobar Islands exercise 2019 (Danx-19)

- Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) have conducted the second edition of Defence of Andaman & Nicobar Islands 2019 (DANX-19).

Related Information

Danx-19

- It is a joint services exercise conducted by the ANC (Andaman and Nicobar Command) which was conducted for the first time in 2017.
- The main objective of the exercise is to practice and validate procedures and drills of all Command forces aimed at defending strategic Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
- Indian Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Special Forces from newly formed Armed Forces Special Operations Division (AFSOD) participated in this exercise.

Related Information

Andaman and Nicobar Command

- It is the first and only Tri-service theatre command of the Indian Armed Forces.
- It is based at Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, a Union Territory of India.
- It was created in 2001 to safeguard India's strategic interests in Southeast Asia and the Strait of Malacca by increasing the rapid

deployment of military assets in the region.

- It provides logistical and administrative support to naval ships which are sent on deployment to East Asia and the Pacific Ocean.

Armed forces Special Operations Division

- It is a tri-services division which is tasked to carry out Special operations.
- The division will have commandos from all three services of the Indian Armed Forces and it will function under the Integrated Defence Staff.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- PIB

3. Govt to rename Chenani-Nashri tunnel after Syama Prasad Mukherjee

- The government has decided to rename the Chenani-Nashri tunnel road, the longest in India, after Bharatiya Jana Sangh founder Syama Prasad Mookerjee.

Related Information

Chenani-Nashri tunnel

- Chenani-Nashri tunnel was inaugurated in 2017 and also known as the Patnitop tunnel.
- It is located between Udhampur and Ramban in Jammu & Kashmir.
- It is not only India's longest highway tunnel but also Asia's longest bi-directional highways tunnel.
- The tunnel incorporates India's first fully integrated mechanism to externally control everything from the movement of vehicles to the inflow and outflow of air and even the evacuation of passengers or vehicles in distress.

Other tunnels in J&K

Nandini Tunnel

- They are the series of four tunnels in Udhampur district in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir completed in 2015.
- It is located beneath the Nandni wildlife sanctuary.

Jawahar Tunnel

- It is situated between Banih I and Qazigund on NH 1A that has been renumbered NH 44 which is 2.85 km long.
- The tunnel facilitates round-the-year road connectivity between Srinagar and Jammu.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- TH

4. Rangdum monastery

- Archaeological Survey of India has decided to declare the Rangdum monastery in Ladakh (Kargil district), a monument of national importance.

Related Information

Rangdum Monastery

- It is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery belonging to the Gelugpa sect.
- It is situated on top of a small but steep sugarloaf hill at the head of the Suru Valley, in Ladakh.

Archaeological Survey of India

- It is an Indian government agency attached to the Ministry of Culture.
- It is responsible for archaeological research and the conservation and preservation of cultural monuments in the country.
- It was founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham who also became its first Director-General.

National importance

- The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958 defines the archaeological site and remains as any area which contains or is reasonably believed to contain ruins or relics of historical or archaeological importance which have been in existence for not less than 100 years.
- When an archaeological site and remains are declared to be of national importance it is called protected area under the AMASR Act.

Recently six monuments declared as Monuments as Monuments of national importance in 2018 are:

- Old High Court Building in Nagpur Maharashtra
- Haveli of Agha Khan in Agra
- Haveli of Hathi Khana in Agra
- Neemrana Baori in Rajasthan's Alwar district
- Group of Temples at Ranipur Jharail in Odisha's, Bolangir district
- Vishnu Temple in Kotali, Pithoragarh district, Uttarkhand.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- Indian Express

5. Anthrax scare in reserve after the death of buffaloes

- Recently veterinarians have confirmed anthrax as the cause of death of two Asiatic water buffaloes in central Assam's Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary.

Related Information

About Anthrax

- It is a serious infectious disease caused by gram-positive, rod-shaped bacteria known as Bacillus anthracis which can be found naturally in soil.
- It is not contagious, which means you can't catch it like the cold or flu.
- It can occur in four forms: skin, lungs, intestinal, and injection.
- It commonly affects domestic and wild animals around the world.
- Cattle, sheep, goats, antelope, and deer can become infected when they breathe in or ingest spores in contaminated soil, plants, or water.
- People can get sick with anthrax if they come in contact with infected animals or contaminated animal products.

Note:

- Assam's Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, which has the highest concentration of one-horned rhinos in the world and is often called 'Mini Kaziranga' due to similar landscape and vegetation.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Down to Earth

6. What is Orionids meteor shower and when will it appear?

- The Orionids meteor showers will make their yearly appearance this and the next weekend, reaching their peak on October 22.
- These meteor showers are known for their brightness and speed, travelling at about 66 km/s into the Earth's atmosphere.
- According to NASA, over 30 meteor showers occur annually and are observable from the Earth.
- They are named after the constellation they appear to be coming from.
- Orionids meteor shower is believed to originate from the constellation Orion The Hunter.
- This point of origination is referred to as the radiant. Even so, this does not mean that the meteor showers originate from a particular constellation, but the name is given only for the purposes of identification.
- Meteors are bits of rock and ice that are ejected from comets as they manoeuvre around their orbits around the sun. The Orionids meteors emerge from the comet 1P/Halley.
- Meteor showers, on the other hand, are witnessed when Earth passes through the trail of debris left by a comet or an asteroid.
- When a meteor reaches the Earth, it is called a meteorite and a series of meteorites when encountered at once, is termed as a meteor shower.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Science & Technology

Source- Indian Express

7. Chewang Rinchen Setu in Ladakh

- Chewang Rinchen Setu which has been constructed at an altitude of 14,650 feet in the forward area of Ladakh region.
- This bridge has been built by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).
- This Bridge is built on the strategically important road Durbuk Shyok Daulat

Beg Oldie in sub-sector north in eastern Ladakh.

- According to BRO, micropile technology was used during the foundation of the bridge to overcome the technological challenges in this remote area of Ladakh.
- It is named in honour of Colonel Chewang Rinchan who was one of the highly decorated officers in the Indian Army from Ladakh and he was awarded the Maha Vir Chakara twice.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Indian Geography

Source- Indian Express

22.10.2019

1. Govt launches BHIM 2.0

- The Information Technology Ministry has unveiled a slew of new initiatives and programmes, including BHIM 2.0 that packs-in new functionalities.

BHIM application

- It is a UPI based payment interface application that allows real-time fund transfer. It is developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and was launched in December 2016.
- It is in line with government's vision of Digital India.
- It has three-point authentication via mobile number, device ID and UPI PIN.

BHIM 2.0 Features

- The new version of BHIM supports three additional languages- Konkani, Haryanvi and Bhojpuri, over and above existing 13.
- 'Donation' gateway Increased transaction limits for high-value transactions- increasing the existing cap of Rs. 20,000 and now up to Rs. 1,00,000 from verified merchants.
- Linking multiple bank accounts
- Offers from merchants
- Option of applying in IPO
- Gifting money

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- Live mint

2. Bhashan Char Island

- Recently approximately 6000-7000 Rohingya refugees have agreed to be relocated to the newly built camp on the Bhashan Char Island.

Related Information

About Island

- It is an uninhabited island around 30 kilometres east of Hatiya Island in South East Bangladesh.
- It was formed about two decades ago on the mouth of river Meghna.
- Bhashan Char falls in an ecologically fragile area prone to floods, erosion and cyclone.
- To avoid the effect of flood, erosion and cyclone the government has built a three-metre-high embankment along its perimeter to keep out tidal surges during cyclones.

About Rohingya

- They are an ethnic group, largely comprising Muslims, who predominantly live in the Western Myanmar province of Rakhine.
- They speak a dialect of Bengali, as opposed to the commonly spoken Burmese language.
- According to the 1982 Burmese citizenship law, a Rohingya (or any ethnic minority) is eligible for citizenship only if he/she provides proof that his/her ancestors have lived in the country prior to 1823.
- Else, they are classified as "resident foreigners" or as "associate citizens" (even if one of the parents is a Myanmar citizen).
- Recently lakhs of Rohingyas have fled to neighbouring countries like Bangladesh and India after facing religious and ethnical persecution in Myanmar which has lead to a historic migration crisis and a large humanitarian crisis.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – International issue

Source- PIB

3. World's oldest known natural pearl discovered on Abu Dhabi Island

- The oldest known natural pearl in the world has been discovered by Abu Dhabi archaeologists working at a Neolithic site on Marawah Island, just off the coast of Abu Dhabi.
- It is also known as 'Abu Dhabi Pearl'.
- It was found in layers that have been radiocarbon dated to 5,800-5,600 BCE, during the Neolithic period.

Marawah Island

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

About Pearl

- It is a hard, glistening object produced within the soft tissue (specifically the mantle) of a living shelled mollusk or another animal, such as a conulariid.
- It is composed of calcium carbonate (mainly aragonite or a mixture of aragonite and calcite) in minute crystalline form, which has been deposited in concentric layers.

Note:

- Aragonite is a carbonate mineral, one of the three most common naturally occurring crystal forms of calcium carbonate, CaCO_3 (the other forms being the minerals calcite and vaterite).
- It is formed by biological and physical processes, including precipitation from marine and freshwater environments.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Live mint

4. Definition of land as forest

- The Forest Advisory Committee of the environment ministry has clarified that states do not need permission from the Centre to define what constitutes unclassified land as forest.

Background

- In Supreme Court judgement in 1996 re-defined the meaning of forests to include all areas with natural forests irrespective of their ownership as well as those that came under the 'dictionary' meaning of forest.
- Under the Godavarman judgment, states were also directed to form expert committees to identify forests as defined and file reports.
- The latter clause allows the States to evolve their own criteria and define tracts of land as forest, and these would then be bound by forest conservation laws.
- An all-encompassing definition of the forest wasn't possible for India because the country has 16 different kinds of forest.
- A tract of grassland in one State might qualify in one region as forest, but not in another.

Forest Advisory Committee

- It is a statutory body under the Environment Ministry.
- It plays as the role of advisory body considers questions on the diversion of forest land for non-forest uses such as mining, industrial projects, townships and advises the government on the issue of granting forest clearances.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

5. US-India Defence Technology and Trade Initiative

- The ninth India-US Defence Technologies and Trade Initiative (DTTI) group meeting is scheduled to happen in New Delhi.

Related Information

DTTI

- It is an initiative which is led by Undersecretary of Defence for Acquisition and Sustainment from the United States and Secretary for Defence Protection from India.

- It is a flexible mechanism to make sure that senior leaders from both countries are engaged consistently to strengthen the opportunities in the field of defence.
- It provides India with greater supply-chain efficiency by allowing US companies to export a greater range of dual-use and high-technology items to India under streamlined processes.
- The aims of DTTI include strengthening India's defence industrial base, exploring new areas of technological development and expanding U.S.-India business ties.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Organisation

Source- PIB

6. Crime in India Report 2017

- Recently after a delay of two years, the annual Crime in India Report 2017 was published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

Highlights of the report

- Uttar Pradesh topped the list followed by Maharashtra and West Bengal in the number of cases.
- Majority of cases under crimes against women were registered under 'Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives'.
- The incidents registered under the Scheduled Caste Prevention of Atrocities Act saw an increase.
- Incidents of crime related to Scheduled Tribes dipped from 844 in 2016 to 720 in 2017.
- The NCRB for the first time collected data on the circulation of "false/fake news and rumours."
- Under the category, maximum incidents were reported from Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala.

Related Information

National Crime Records Bureau

- It is a nodal agency under Union Home Ministry for the authentic source of data on crime on various

parameters including accidents, suicides from across all the states of the country and prisons for policy matters and research.

- It was established in 1986 as the central police organization with headquartered in New Delhi.
- It is implementing and monitoring agency of Crime & Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS), a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan of Government.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance (Important Report)

Source- PIB

7. PettaThullal

- Recently in a study by the Kerala State Pollution Control Board has pointed to the presence of hazardous metals on the Blanket bespattering of which constitutes an indispensable part of the PettaThullal ritual.
- These chemicals pollute the soil and often get washed into the water bodies where the chances of these potent chemicals entering the human body are very high.

Related Information

PettaThullal

- It is a ritualistic sacred dance to celebrate the victory of good over evil in the legend of Lord Ayyappa who killed the demon princess Mahishi.
- It denotes the beginning of the last leg of the annual Sabarimala pilgrimage season.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- AIR

8. United Nations WFP launches 'Feed Our Future' cinema ad campaign

- The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has launched a cinema advertisement campaign 'Feed Our Future' to raise awareness and take steps against hunger and malnutrition in India.
- Through a partnership with Facebook, the event took place recently via a live

broadcast from the social network's Mumbai office.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Social Issues

Source- Business Standards

9. Siachen, the world's highest battlefield, now open for tourists

- The world's highest battlefield, Siachen Glacier, is now open for tourists.
- Tourism will be allowed from Siachen base camp to Kumar Post that lies above 15,000 feet.
- Siachen base camp at Partapur is at an altitude of 12,000 feet and temperatures can dip as low as -60 degrees during the winter.
- The highest post in Siachen is Bana Post, which is 23,000 feet.
- The 430-metre long bridge located at an altitude of 14,650 feet between the strategic Karakoram and Chang Chengmo ranges will connect Durbuk and Daulat Beg Oldie in Eastern Ladakh.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Indian Geography

Source- Economic Times

23.10.2019

1. Digital Bharat Digital Sanskriti

- Union Minister of State for Culture & Tourism has launched the E-Portal of CCRT 'Digital Bharat Digital Sanskriti' in New Delhi.

About Portal

- The portal will enable dissemination of cultural education through digital interactive medium into the classrooms all over the country.
- It also provides a platform for specifically dropout children so that they can join the mainstream so that they can pursue their dreams and make a career out of it be it music, painting, theatre, martial arts or any other art forms.

Related Information

Centre for Cultural Resources and Training

- It is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Culture of Government of India.
- It established in May 1979, to support cultural education.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- PIB

2. TechSagar

- The National Cyber Security Coordinator's office in partnership with the Data Security Council of India launched TechSagar.

About TechSagar

- It is an online portal of India's technological capability.
- It will lists every technology-based business and research entities starting from the IT Industry, startups, Academia to even Individual Researchers.
- It will allow targeted search, granular navigation and drill-down methods using more than 3,000 niche capabilities.
- TechSagar will be frequently updated with new entities and information to maintain its relevancy and usefulness.

Related Information

Data Security Council of India

- It is a not-for-profit, industry body on data protection in India, set up by NASSCOM.
- It is committed to making the cyberspace safe, secure and trusted by establishing best practices, standards and initiatives in cybersecurity and privacy.
- It also engages with governments and their agencies, regulators, industry sectors, industry associations and think tanks for policy advocacy, thought leadership, capacity building and outreach activities.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- PIB

3. Electronic Interlocking System on Grand Chord route

- Indian Railways has installed the most advanced Electronic Interlocking System on the Grand Chord route.
- The measure is expected to help Indian Railways speed up trains and achieve the objective of reducing the travel time between Delhi and Howrah to about 12 hours from the existing 17 to 19 hours.

About Grand Chord

- It is part of the Howrah-Gaya-Delhi line and Howrah-Allahabad-Mumbai line.
- It acts as a link between Sitarampur in West Bengal and Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Junction, Uttar Pradesh, which falls in North Central Railway Zone.
- The new Electronic system has replaced outdated 65-year old mechanical signalling system at Tundla Junction in Uttar Pradesh on the route.
- This interlocking system at Tundla is the second largest in the country after Kharagpur Station in South Eastern Railway.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology

Source- PIB

4. International Workshop on Environmental Flows Assessment

- International workshop on Environmental Flows Assessment and Implementation for India was inaugurated by Jal Shakti ministry at Delhi.

Related Information

- According to the IUCN, Environmental flow is the water provided within the river, wetland or coastal zone to maintain ecosystems and their benefits.
- It is a tool for allocating water among multiple, competing uses in a river basin or watershed.
- The Environmental Flows provide the means for integrated management of river flows to meet the needs of the people, industry, agriculture, energy and ecosystems.

- It provides a unique ecosystem to India's National Aquatic animal Gangetic Dolphins, turtles and gharials.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- PIB

5. Prison Statistics India-2017

- Recently the National Crime Records Bureau has publically released data on crime and prison statistics of 2017.

Highlights of the report

- There are 1,361 prisons in the country consist of 666 Sub jails, 405 District jails, 142 Central jails, 64 Open jails, 41 Special jails, 22 Woman jails, 19 Borstal School and 2 other jails.
- In 2017, out of the 4 50,696 prisoners, 4,31,823 were male prisoners and 18,873 were female prisoners.
- The number of unnatural deaths in prisons has increased by 15.7 per cent from 115 in 2015 to 133 in 2017
- Gujarat has the highest number of under-trial prisoners who are Pakistani nationals and Jammu and Kashmir is the second-highest as compared to other states.
- The state's statistics show there were 80 under trial prisoners under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, the data shows zero convicts under this law in the period covered.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Outlook

6. Assam: No government jobs for those with more than two kids

- The Assam Cabinet decided that no government jobs will be given to persons having more than two children after January 1, 2021.
- It also adopted a New Land Policy, which will give three bighas of agricultural land to landless indigenous people and half a bigha for constructing a house.

Related Information

- In September 2017, the Assam Assembly had passed the 'Population

and Women Empowerment Policy of Assam'.

- It specified that job candidates with max two children only would be eligible for government employment and the existing government staff were to strictly follow the two children family norm.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

7. The QS Indian University Rankings

- The QS Indian University Rankings were released the second edition of the standalone rankings for India's higher education institutions.
- The rankings include public, private, higher education or deemed universities.
- The methodology used eight indicators
 - a. Academic reputation (weight of 30%),
 - b. Employer reputation (20%)
 - c. Faculty-student ratio (20%)
 - d. Proportion of staff with a PhD (10%)
 - e. Papers per faculty from Scopus database (10%)
 - f. Citations per paper from Scopus database (5%)
 - g. Proportion of international students (2.5%)
 - h. proportion of international faculty (2.5%).

Highlights of the ranking

- The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) dominate the list, with seven IITs figuring in the top ten rankings.
- IIT-Bombay leads followed by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) which is same as last year.
- IIT-Delhi stands third in the ranking whereas Delhi University, University of Hyderabad and the Indian Institute of Science are the only other non-IIT institutions in the top ten.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

8. National milk sample safety quality survey

- FSSAI has released a national milk sample safety quality survey.

Highlights of the survey

- Milk samples from Telangana, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Kerala, showed the highest number of cases of adulteration.
- The study noted that processed milk, including that of major brands, failed to meet the prescribed quality norm in 37.7% of the total samples tested.
- Most of the sample failed to comply with the FSSAI norm as contaminants like aflatoxin-M1, antibiotics and pesticides were found.
- Aflatoxin-M1 is more dominant in processed milk than raw milk which is in large dose can be life-threatening, usually through damage to the liver.
- Aflatoxin-M1 comes in the milk through feed and fodder that are currently not regulated in the country.
- Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Kerala were the top three States where Aflatoxin residue was found the most.

Related Information

- India is the world's largest producer of milk.
- The total estimated milk production in the country was 176.35 million tonnes during 2017-18.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

9. Environment Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority

- The Supreme Court-appointed Environment Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority has recently slammed Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan governments for not controlling air pollution.
- It also includes the burning of municipal solid waste, industrial pollution, and dusty roads among others.

Related Information

Environment Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority

- It is a Supreme Court mandated body tasked with taking various measures to tackle air pollution in the National Capital Region.
- It was notified in 1998 by Environment Ministry under Environment Protection Act, 1986.
- Its mandate is to protect and improve the quality of the environment and prevent and control environmental pollution in the National Capital Region.
- It is also mandated to enforce the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in NCR as per the pollution levels.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Indian Express

24.10.2019

1. 19th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit

- The Vice-President of India will represent India at the 19th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- In his statement at Baku, Mr. Jaishankar spoke and said that the NAM summit must resolve to fight terrorism "collectively" and "across all fronts", and advocated the finalisation of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) that India had proposed in 1996.
- This is the second NAM summit that will not be attended by an Indian PM, except for 1979 when caretaker PM Charan Singh skipped the summit in Havana.

Related Information

Non-Alignment Movement

- It was founded in 1961.
- It was based on Bandung principles that were adopted at the Belgrade Summit (an Afro-Asian Conference) in 1955.

It was founded during the collapse of the colonial system and independence struggles of Asia, Africa and Latin American countries.

- It worked towards the attainment of independence for many countries.

India and NAM

- India is one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which was established in 1961 with 29 members.
- It has since grown to 120 members to become one of the largest groupings of nation-states.

Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism

- It was proposed first by India in 1996, the ratification of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.
- It provides a legal framework which makes it binding on all signatories to deny funds and safe havens to terrorist groups.
- The original draft that was tabled in 1996 and discussed until April 2013 included the following major objectives:
- To have a universal definition of terrorism that all 193-members of the UNGA will adopt into their own criminal law.
 - a. To ban all terror groups and shut down terror camps
 - b. To prosecute all terrorists under special laws
 - c. To make cross-border terrorism an extraditable offence worldwide.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –International Organization

Source- PIB

2. Rabi crop MSP to be hiked for next season

- The Union Cabinet was decided to hike the minimum support price (MSP) for rabi crops for the marketing season 2020-21.

- The increase is based on the principle that MSP should be at least 1.5 times the all-India weighted average cost of production.

Related Information

Minimum Support Price (MSP)

- It is a form of market intervention by the Government of India to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices.
- The minimum support prices are announced by the Government of India at the beginning of the sowing season for certain crops on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices.
- MSP is price fixed by the Government of India to protect the producer - farmers - against excessive fall in price during bumper production years.
- The minimum support prices are a guaranteed price for their produce from the Government.
- The major objectives are to support the farmers from distress sales and to procure food grains for public distribution.

Highlights of the MSP Policy

- This policy, whereby the farmers are assured of a minimum of 50% as the margin of profit, is one of the important and progressive steps towards doubling farmers' income by 2022.
- The highest increase has been recommended for lentils followed by safflower and gram.
- In the case of cereals, the Food Corporation of India and other designated State agencies would continue to provide price support to the farmers.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Agriculture and its related issues

Source- The Hindu

3. India gets protocol to assess Snow Leopard population

- Union environment minister released the Snow Leopard Population Assessment at the fourth steering committee meeting of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Program.
- Snow Leopard Population Assessment has been prepared by the Wildlife Institute of India, Nature Conservation Foundation, GSLEP technical committee, Global Tiger Initiative Council, World Wide Fund for Nature, World Bank, Global Tiger Forum, and Wildlife Conservation Trust.
- National-level estimation processes are done for tigers, rhinos and elephants.
- With this protocol, the same can be done for snow leopards

Related Information

Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Program

- It is a high-level intergovernmental alliance of 12 snow leopard range countries.
- These are Russia, China, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.
- In India, snow leopards are found in the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan landscape at an elevation between 3,000 meters and 5,400 m.
- They found in India of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down to Earth

4. Jiyo Parsi' scheme

- The government is considering allocating more funds for the Jiyo Parsi scheme for the next financial year.

- A government scheme that offers cash assistance to encourage Parsi couples to have children has resulted in 214 births over the last five years through assisted reproductive techniques.
- Infertility and late marriages are among the main reasons for the rapid decline in the Parsi population.

Related Information

About scheme

- It is a Central Sector Scheme launched by the Ministry of Minority Affairs in 2013.
- The main objective of the scheme is to reverse the declining trend of the Parsi population by adopting a scientific protocol and structured interventions, stabilize their population and increase the population of Parsis in India.
- The Scheme comprises of three components
 - a. Advocacy Component
 - b. Health of the Community Component
 - c. Medical Component.

Parsis

- They are a group of followers in India who follow the Zoroastrianism.
- The religion was founded by Prophet Zoroaster (or Zarathustra).
- Maharashtra has the highest Parsi population in the country followed by Gujarat.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance (Scheme)

Source- Indian Express

5. Indian Army's exercise 'Sindhu Sudarshan' in deserts of Rajasthan

- More than 40,000 troops will take part in the Indian Army's exercise codenamed 'Sindhu Sudarshan' in the deserts of Rajasthan, from November 29 to December 4.
- The Army will be carrying out this exercise using its integrated battle groups which are the new formations being raised by the force for warfighting in future.

- The exercise will witness the Army assessing the operational efficiency of the Strike Corps to fight in the desert terrain and the Indian Air Force (IAF) to provide intimate support in terms of destruction of targets and airlifting troops.

Topic- GS Paper 3– Defence

Source- Economic Times

6. White bellbird: The world's loudest bird

- According to the study, published in the journal Current Biology, the male white bellbird's mating call is about three times louder than screaming phias — the previously loudest bird singer.

Related Information

White bellbird

- Its scientific name is Procnias albus.
- It is found in forests in the Guianas, with small numbers in Venezuela and the Brazilian state of Pará.
- It is listed as Least Concern in IUCN red list.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

7. India, Pakistan ink agreement to operationalise Kartarpur Corridor

- India and Pakistan signed an agreement to operationalise Kartarpur Corridor.
- With the signing of this agreement, a formal framework has been laid down for operationalisation of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor,"
- While India has been urging Pakistan to reconsider its stand to impose a \$20 service fee on pilgrims, Islamabad is yet to take a decision on the issue.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

8. Kittur Utsav

- Chief Minister of Karnataka inaugurated Kittur Utsav which is a three-day festivities will include sports, cultural programmes and lectures by resource persons on the kingdom of Rani Channamma.

Related Information

Kittur Chennamma

- She was an Indian freedom fighter and Rani of the Kittur, a former princely state in Karnataka.
- She led an armed force against the British East India Company in 1824 in defiance of the doctrine of lapse (the policy of Dalhousie, the then

Governor-General) in an attempt to maintain Indian control over the region, but was defeated in the third war and died imprisoned.

- The first female rulers to rebel against British rule, she has become a folk hero in Karnataka and symbol of the independence movement in India.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- PIB

9. Global Wealth Report 2019

- The Credit Suisse Group, a Switzerland-based multinational investment bank, has released the 10th edition of its annual Global Wealth Report.
- The report typically tracks both the growth and distribution of wealth in terms of
 - a. the numbers of millionaires and billionaires
 - b. the proportion of wealth that they hold.
 - c. the status of inequality around the world.

Highlights of the report

- China has overtaken the United States this year to become the country with most people in the top 10% of global wealth distribution.
- The women's wealth has also grown relative to that of men in most countries due to rising female labour force participation, more equal division of wealth between spouses and other factors.

Report on India:

- India ranks fifth globally in terms of the number of ultra-high-net-worth individuals.
- The total wealth in India has increased fourfold between 2000 and 2019, reaching \$12.6 trillion in 2019.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics Source- The Hindu



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