

GEOGRAPHY- PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC**National Waterway-2**

The first-ever container cargo movement on Brahmaputra (National Waterway -2) will sail via National Waterway-1 (River Ganga), Indo-Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) route and National Waterway-2 (River Brahmaputra).

National Waterway-2

- The Sadiya-Dhubri stretch of the Brahmaputra river (891 Km) declared as National Waterway-2 in 1988 is located in the state of Assam.
- As per the National Waterways Act, 2016, 111 waterways have been declared as NWs.
- National Waterway-1 (Prayagraj-Haldia) with length 1620 km is the longest National waterway in India.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**DUSTLIK-2019**

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Uzbekistan counterpart presided over the Curtain Raiser of the first-ever India-Uzbekistan Joint Exercise - Dustlik-2019.

About:

- The joint military exercise focused on counter-terrorism starts on November 4 and will continue till November 13, at Chirchiq Training Area near Tashkent.
- The exercise will enable sharing of best practices and experiences between the Armed Forces of the two countries and would lead to greater operational effectiveness.
- Defence Minister is in Uzbekistan on a three-day visit. This is the first visit by an Indian Defence Minister to Uzbekistan in about 15 years.
- During the meeting, India and Uzbekistan concluded an MoU on cooperation in the field of Military Medicine between the Armed Forces of the two countries.

150 Years of Suez Canal

The Suez Canal opened in 1869 as a vital shortcut for military and commercial shipping, but 150 years later vessels have other options available for traversing the seas other than the venerable Mediterranean-Red Sea shipping lane.

About:

- Location: The Suez Canal is a sea-level waterway in Egypt, connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea through the Isthmus of Suez. It extends from the northern terminus of Port Said to the southern terminus of Port Tewfik at the city of Suez.
- The canal is owned and maintained by the Suez Canal Authority (SCA) of Egypt.
- Under the Convention of Constantinople, it may be used "in time of war as in time of peace, by every vessel of commerce or of war, without distinction of flag".
- Importance: The canal offers watercraft a more direct route between the North Atlantic and northern Indian oceans via the Mediterranean and Red seas, thus avoiding the South Atlantic and southern Indian oceans.

Timeline:

- Constructed by the Suez Canal Company between 1859 and 1869, it officially opened on 17 November 1869.
- The United Kingdom and France owned the canal until July 1956, when the President of Egypt, Gamal Abdel Nasser, nationalized it - an event which led to the Suez Crisis of October-November 1956.
- Egypt opened a major expansion of the canal in August 2015, deepening the main waterway and providing ships with a parallel 22-mile channel. The expansion allows two-way traffic along part of the route for the first time and the passage of larger vessels.

INDIAN ECONOMY**Labour Productivity**

An analysis done by India Ratings and Research of Annual Survey of Industries data on India's labour productivity growth in the organised manufacturing sector shows a disappointing trend.

What is labour productivity?

- Productivity is a measure of the efficiency with which resources, both human and material, are converted into goods and services. Besides land and capital, labour productivity plays a crucial role in deciding the rate of economic growth.
- Labour productivity is crucially dependent on businesses investing in knowledge and innovation even as the governments bring about structural reforms that enable such investments to bear fruit.
- Analysis by India Ratings and Research on India's labour productivity growth in the organised manufacturing sector:
- Between 2004 and 2008, India's labour productivity grew by over 14 % every year. But between financial years of 2011 and 2015, this rate fell to just half of that (7.4 %) and continued its deceleration to just 3.7 % between financial years of 2016 and 2018.
- Between financial years 2001 and 2018, the capital intensity — that is, fixed capital used per worker — in India's organised manufacturing has been rising. But the output intensity — that is, the value of output per fixed capital — has actually declined over the same period.
- In other words, while more and more capital is being used per unit of labour, it is not yielding commensurate level of output growth.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC**Navigation In Indian Constellation (Navic)**

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and its older commercial arm Antrix Corporation Ltd. are poised to commercialise India's regional navigation satellite system, NavIC.

About:

- NavIC (Navigation in Indian Constellation) is the Indian system of eight satellites that is aimed at telling business and individual users where they are, or how their products and services are moving.
- The indigenous positioning or location based service (LBS) works just like the established and popular U.S. Global Positioning System or GPS, but within a 1,500-km radius over the sub-continent.

Recent developments:

- Antrix Corporation Ltd. recently floated two separate tenders to identify industries that can develop dedicated NavIC-based hardware and systems. Besides the Antrix tenders, two other recent developments have paved the way for taking NavIC closer to end users.
- In mid-October, ISRO announced that Qualcomm Technologies Inc., a leading producer of semiconductor chips, had developed and tested NavIC-friendly chipsets across its user bases and that it would add NavIC to them.
- NavIC was also certified by the 3GPP (The 3rd Generation Partnership Project), a global body for coordinating mobile telephony standards. The specifications will be available in March 2020 and would be adopted as a national standard.

Glyphosate

German pharma company Bayer is facing thousands of lawsuits over its herbicides for their alleged cancer risks.

About:

- The herbicides are based on a compound called glyphosate. First developed in 1970, glyphosate is scientifically N-(phosphonomethyl) glycine under the IUPAC system of nomenclature.
- It is applied to the leaves of plants to kill weeds.
- It is widely used in India, too. This weedkiller in India goes by various brand names, including Roundup, Glycel, and Brake.
- In 2015, the World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) published a study that found glyphosate is "probably carcinogenic to humans". Activists have been campaigning against glyphosate-based products.
- In August 2018, a jury in California said that Monsanto (the company which Bayer acquired in 2018), should have warned of the alleged cancer risks. Bayer, however, has said it has strong support from US farmers who want the company to keep the product.

16th India-ASEAN Summit

The Prime Minister of India attended the 16th India-ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, Thailand on November 03, 2019.

Key Highlights:

- Along with this Summit, the other summits that took place in Thailand are-
 - 35th ASEAN Summit,
 - 14th East Asia Summit, and
 - 3rd meeting of RCEP.
- During the summit, the discussions were held to promote India-ASEAN strategic partnership along with cooperation in the field of maritime security and blue economy, trade and investment, connectivity, science and technology, and innovation.
- On the socio-cultural front, the focus was made on enhancing people-to-people connectivity, cultural exchanges, humanitarian aid, and tourism.
- The Prime Minister also talked about the mutual coordination between India's vision of the Indo-Pacific region and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Outlook for maintaining strategic balance in the region, which has been witnessing growing Chinese assertiveness.
- At the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Summit, a trade negotiation deal is yet to be finalized after considering all issues that concern Indian interests in trade in goods, services, and investments.
- The PM addressed the Indian community at the 'Sawasdee PM Modi' event in Bangkok.
- In the Thai language, the word 'Sawasdee' is used for greetings and goodbye.
- During the visit, the Indian PM held bilateral meetings with a number of other world leaders present at Bangkok.

India-Myanmar

- The Indian Prime Minister highlighted the importance of Myanmar to India's Look East Policy and the Neighbourhood First policies.
- The emphasis was laid on building a stable and peaceful border by improving physical connectivity to and through Myanmar to Southeast Asia via. building roads, ports, and expansion of air connectivity.
- India would continue to support the capacity expansion programme for Myanmar's police, military and civil servants, as well as its students and citizens.
- India plans to host a business event for the CLMV countries (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam) in Yangon at the end of November 2019.

India-Indonesia

- India and Indonesia agreed to work together for peace, security, and prosperity in order to achieve their shared vision on maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.

- The two leaders discussed the threat of extremism and terrorism and agreed to work closely bilaterally and globally to tackle this menace.
- India is working with Indonesia to strengthen the ties in the areas of defence, security, connectivity, trade and investment, and people-to-people exchanges.
- The Indian PM highlighted the need for greater market access for Indian commodities in Indonesia including, pharmaceutical, automotive and agricultural products.
- India shares a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Indonesia. And this year (2019), India and Indonesia commemorate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

India-Thailand

- India and Thailand agreed to explore opportunities for cooperation in areas such as trade, culture, and defence industries sector.
- Emphasis was laid to enhance connectivity between the two countries, including in the areas of physical and digital connectivity.
- Thailand 4.0 initiative of transforming Thailand into a value-based economy is complementary to India's priorities Digital India, Skill India, Swachh Bharat Mission, Smart Cities, Jal Jeevan Mission, etc.
- In the contemporary context, India's Act East policy is complemented by Thailand's Look West policy which has made the relationship deep, robust and multifaceted.

PRELIMS SPECIFIC FACTS- INDICES, DAYS, AWARDS, EVENTS ETC

Vigyanika

Vigyanika an International Science Literature Festival will be held during the 5th India International Science Festival (IISF) beginning in Kolkata on November 5, 2019.

About:

- Vigyanika will showcase science communication efforts and concepts through an interesting mix of media including drama, poetry, panel discussions and paper presentations.
- The Vigyanika, to be held from November 5-7, 2019, will also include a science book fair displaying scientific publications from more than 30 reputed publishers.
- It is being coordinated by the CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (CSIR-NISCAIR), Vigyan Prasar, and Vigyan Bharati.
- It will see nearly 75 eminent science communicators, authors, researchers and science journalists from India, USA, UK, South Korea, Indonesia, Vietnam and Nepal addressing more than 200 delegates from across the country.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

If you can't do great thing, do small things in a great way.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns: What is RCEP? Do you support Govt's denial to join RCEP

Ans:

In the recent ASEAN Summit, the Indian Govt has decided not to join the proposed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) and the six states with which ASEAN has existing free trade agreements (Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand).

Problems for India:

1. E- commerce: Placing great limitation on digital policy making by any country in the name of promoting E-commerce.
 - India is still stuck in the IT realities of yesterday.
 - India is on a threshold of a digital society.
2. Intellectual property: Monopolies are adopted at this meeting , the repercussion may be permanently damaging for people's access to affordable medicines like in generic drugs by India.
3. Data exclusivity: Japan and Korea demanding the period of no less than 5 years .Data exclusivity creates a barrier to entry for generic producers .India has purposely not adopted it .
4. Procurement policy: pressure to free procurement policy to unlock over 300 billion dollar market by other countries to India. India is not a signatory to the govt procurement agreement within the WTO framework because it wants to retain its policy space to meet its development need through public procurement process.
5. On tariff liberalization: China wants high level of elimination of duties under it that will lead to surge of Chinese products in the market.

Conclusion: As the govt has shown very less interest in joining RCEP by which it has denied be part of the pact as once implemented the RCEP could be the largest free trade zone in the world as member countries account for 25 per cent of global GDP, 30 per cent of global trade, 26 per cent of global foreign direct investment (FDI) flows and 45 per cent of the total population.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQS

1. Which of the below-mentioned countries have signed the Free Trade Agreement with the ASEAN?

1. USA
2. India
3. Russia
4. Japan
5. New Zealand

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

2. Match the following pairs:

Countries

1. India and Uzbekistan
2. India and Maldives
3. India and Nepal
4. India and Sri Lanka

Military Exercise

- I Surya Kiran
- II Mitra Shakti
- III Ekuverin
- IV Dustlik

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1-IV, 2-I, 3-III, and 4-II
- (b) 1-II, 2-III, 3-I, and 4-IV
- (c) 1-I, 2-II, 3-III, and 4-IV
- (d) 1-IV, 2-III, 3-I, and 4-II**

3. With reference to the 'Vigyanika', consider the following statements:

1. It is an International Science Literature Festival.
2. It is being coordinated by the Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Science and Technology

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

4. National Waterway 2 is a section of which of the following rivers?

- (a) Ganga
- (b) Brahmaputra**
- (c) Krishna
- (d) Indus

5. With reference to an analysis done by India Ratings and Research of Annual Survey of

Industries data on India's labour productivity growth, consider the following statements:

1. Productivity is a measure of the efficiency with which resources, both human and material, are converted into goods and services.
2. While more and more capital is being used per unit of labour, it is not yielding commensurate level of output growth.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

6. What is 'Glyphosate', recently seen in news?

- (a) Compound present in herbicides.**
- (b) Newly found Comet
- (c) Mini Black Hole
- (d) Gusting winds in northern California

7. With reference to the Suez Canal, consider the following statements:

1. It is a sea-level waterway in Ethiopia connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea through the Isthmus of Suez.
2. The canal is owned and maintained by the United Kingdom.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

8. With reference to the NavIC (Navigation in Indian Constellation), consider the following statements:

1. It is the Indian system of eight satellites that is aimed at telling business and individual users where they are, or how their products and services are moving.
2. It works just like the established and popular U.S. Global Positioning System or GPS, but within a 3,500-km radius over the sub-continent.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

9. The joint military exercise 'Dustlik-2019' is between India and which of the following country?

- (a) Mongolia
- (b) Uzbekistan**
- (c) Tajikistan
- (d) Turkmenistan