

**NATIONAL SOCIAL ISSUES- WOMEN, POPULATION, URBANISATION,
EMPOWERMENT ETC****School Health Ambassadors**

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), along with Union Ministry of Health and Union Ministry of Human Resource Development, has prepared a curriculum for the School Health Ambassadors.

About:

- The Curriculum has been released nearly two years after the launch of the School Health Programme which was launched by PM Modi in 2018 under the Ayushman Bharat Programme.
- Under the scheme, two teachers, preferably one male and one female, will be appointed as Health and Wellness Ambassadors, who will teach students about the promotion of health as well as prevention of diseases.
- The programme will also have class monitors playing the role of Health and Wellness Messengers who would assist the two ambassadors.
- These sessions will be activity-based in order to promote joyful learning and will be held for one hour every week over 24 weeks in a year.
- For the training purposes, the NCERT has constituted a 40-member National Resource Group (NRG). All the NRG members are well trained and experienced in Adolescent Health and they will further train State Resource Groups comprising of six persons from each selected district at the five Regional Institute of Education (RIE) at Mysore, Shillong, Bhubaneswar, Ajmer and Bhopal.
- Initially, the curriculum will be implemented in the public upper primary, secondary and senior secondary schools of those districts which volunteer. The remaining districts will be covered in the second year.

INDIAN HERITAGE AND CULTURE, HISTORY**Yakshagana**

Arshiya, a Yakshagana artist from Mangaluru is likely the first woman from the Muslim community in Yakshagana. There are far fewer women Yakshagana artistes compared to men, and a Muslim woman exponent is rare. At one time, this traditional art form was forbidden for women.

About:

- Yakshagana is a traditional theatre form that combines dance, music, dialogue, costume, make-up, and stage techniques with a unique style and form.
- Yakshagana literally means the song (gana) of the yaksha (nature spirits).
- It developed in Udupi, in the state of Karnataka. It is popular in the Karnataka districts of Dakshina Kannada, Kasaragod, Udupi, Uttara Kannada and Shimoga .
- This folk art is believed to have originated somewhere in between the 10th and 16th century.
- Yakshagana is strongly influenced by the Vaishnava Bhakti movement. Its stories are mainly drawn from Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavata and other Hindu epics.
- A typical Yakshagana performance consists of background music played by a group of musicians (known as the himmela); and a dance and dialog group (known as the mummela), who together enact poetic epics on stage.
- Yakshagana is traditionally presented from dusk to dawn.

Types:

- The tenkutittu style: It is prevalent in Dakshina Kannada. Tenkutittu is noted for its incredible dance steps; its high flying dance moves; and its extravagant rakshasas (demons).
- The Badagutittu style: It is prevalent in Uttara Kannada District and places more emphasis on facial expressions, matugarike (dialogues), and dances appropriate for the character depicted in the episode.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS- BILATERAL, GROUPINGS, ORGANISATIONS**Fatf Plenary**

Financial Action Task Force (FATF) President chaired the second Plenary under the Chinese Presidency of the FATF that met in Paris from 19-21 February 2020.

Key Outcomes:

- FATF placed Iran on its 'black list' after it failed to comply with international anti-terrorism financing norms, a move that will deepen the country's isolation from financial markets.
- Pakistan has been retained on the 'grey list' of the FATF for another four months, with a stern warning to complete the 27-point action plan it has been given by June 2020 or face being put on the 'black list'. Pakistan has been lobbying to get off the grey list, citing actions already taken.
- Pakistan was given a deadline to complete the tasks that included shutting down all access to funding of United Nations Security Council-designated terrorist groups, including the Taliban, al-Qaeda, the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammed and prosecuting their leadership for any access to finance.

Related Info:

- The FATF's plenary year begins in July and ends in June. During a plenary year, the FATF holds three plenary meetings, a meeting of experts and various ad hoc groups.
- The "black list" refers to countries for who there has been a "call to action" or strict banking and international finance sanctions, a list which at present includes Iran and North Korea.
- Pakistan is one of the 12 countries on the "grey list" or "other monitored jurisdictions" that are being reviewed for actions to stop terror financing and money laundering.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**Investment In Research And Development (R&D)**

In an effort to stimulate investment in research and development (R&D), the Department of Science and Technology is mooted a fund that will match the contributions made by private companies in R&D. Currently, a ₹ 40 crore target was on the anvil.

About:

- The idea is to pool funds from a group of companies willing to invest in fundamental research and whatever is invested government will match that.
- The scheme will be coordinated through the department's Science and Engineering Research Board, which funds a variety of basic science projects in several universities.

Background:

- According to a 2019 report by the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) to the Prime Minister, as a fraction of GDP, public expenditures on R&D in India has been stagnant — between 0.6-0.7% of GDP — over the past two decades.
- It is well below that in major nations such as the U.S. (2.8), China (2.1), Israel (4.3) and Korea (4.2).
- Public sector institutions form the lion's share of India's investment in R&D. In 2004-2005, private sector accounted for 28% of India's research spend and in 2016-17 this increased to 40%. In most advanced economies, private R&D accounts for the bulk of investment in R&D.

ENVIRONMENT- CONSERVATION, BIO-DIVERSITY AND ISSUES**Kawal Tiger Reserve**

The worrisome man-animal conflict in the Kawal Tiger Reserve (KTR) on account of water shortage is no longer an issue. There was no incident of wild animals straying into human habitations for water.

About:

- The Reserve covers areas in Adilabad, Kumram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial and Nirmal districts in Telangana.

- The reserve is catchment for the rivers Godavari and Kadam, which flow towards the south of it.
- There is water still flowing in the Kadem canal, which cuts through the KTR core area and the recent release in the Saraswati canal from the Sri Ram Sagar Project also resulted in water being available from Khanapur in Nirmal district to Luxettipet in Mancherial.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY- EVERYDAY SCIENCE, SPACE, NUCLEAR, DEFENCE ETC

Askdisha

Indian Railways has introduced the services of Artificial Intelligence based ASKDISHA chatbot.

About:

- It has been launched on the ticketing website www.irctc.co.in and tourism website www.irctctourism.com of its PSU, Indian Railways Catering & Tourism Corporation Limited (IRCTC).
- Artificial Intelligence based ASKDISHA chatbot is developed to resolve queries of railway passengers over the internet pertaining to various services offered by IRCTC
- The ASKDISHA Chatbot has been launched in English and Hindi languages.

Related Info: The chatbot is a special computer programme designed to simulate conversation with users, especially over the internet.

Habitable-Zone Planet Finder (HPF)

The newly discovered exoplanet (G 9-40b), by NASA's Kepler mission is the first one to be validated by Habitable-zone Planet Finder (HPF).

About:

- Habitable-Zone Planet Finder (HPF) is an astronomical spectrograph, built by Penn State University scientists, and recently installed on the 10m Hobby-Eberly Telescope at McDonald Observatory in Texas.
- The instrument is designed to detect and characterise planets in the habitable-zone — the region around the star where a planet could sustain liquid water on its surface — around nearby low-mass stars.

Spectrograph?

- A spectrograph is an instrument that splits light into its component wavelengths.
- Scientists then measure the properties of light over a specific portion of the spectrum, and draw conclusions on what is responsible for the trends they observe.

DEFENCE AND SECURITY

Bay Of Bengal Offshore Sailing Expedition (BBSE)

Indian Naval Sailing Vessels Mhadei and Tarini set sail for the Bay of Bengal Offshore Sailing Expedition on 22 February 2020 from the Indian Naval Ocean Sailing Node at Goa.

About:

- This would be the maiden major mixed crew sailing expedition of the Indian Navy with crew composition of five naval officers including two women officers in each boat, covering a total distance of 6,100 Nautical miles each and will be at sea for 55 days.
- This expedition would showcase harnessing of renewal energy namely wind energy to propel the boats. The expedition is also in pursuance of the mission of 'Nari Shakti' providing opportunity to women officers at par with men.

Related Info:

- Mhadei and Tarini inducted in the Indian Navy in 2009 and 2017 respectively have been the vessels of choice for the naval expeditioners in various sailing expeditions, including three circumnavigations.
- Mhadei has successfully completed two circumnavigations.

- Tarini created history in 2017-18 when six Indian Naval women officers sailed the vessel on maiden circumnavigation voyage titled Navika Sagar Parikrama.

Thal Sena Bhawan

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh laid the foundation stone of new Army Headquarters 'Thal Sena Bhawan' at Delhi Cantt.

About:

- The building, expected to be constructed in five years, will house offices, residential complex for security personnel with basic amenities. More than 1,700 officers both military & civilian and 1,300 sub staff will be accommodated in the new building.
- Presently, Army Headquarters is spread over several pockets i.e. South Block, Sena Bhawan, Hutments Area, RK Puram, Shankar Vihar and other places in Delhi.
- The new building, proposed in an area of 39 acres, has been conceptualised as a multi-storey green building, adopting Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA) norms.

DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE

Qns. "Artificial intelligence is going to change every industry, but we have to understand its limits". In light of this, discuss the benefits and challenges associated with AI in Indian context.

Answer

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the ability of machines to learn and reason through analogy, analyze, interpret information, recognize speech, visual perception and take decisions. In other words, AI is application of human intelligence by the machines.

Benefits of AI

- **Contribution to Economy:** The NITI Aayog estimates that AI could potentially give 15% boost to the gross value added (GVA) for the economy by 2035, adding \$957 billion to India's \$6397 billion-dollar GVA projected for that year.
- **Access To Affordable Healthcare:** The application of AI could increase access to and affordability of quality healthcare. India, with its acute shortage of specialist doctors in rural areas, could benefit greatly from such a tool.
- **Benefits In Agriculture:** It can enhance farmer's income, increase productivity and reduce wastage when used in agriculture. For instance, in agriculture, Microsoft, in collaboration with ICRISAT, has developed an AI-enabled sowing app that sends advisories to farmers on the best date to sow, soil-test based fertilizer application, manure application, seed treatment, optimal sowing depth, etc. In 2017, 3,000 farmers in Andhra and Karnataka used the app, resulting in a 10-30% increase in kharif yields across crops.
- **Benefit in Education:** In areas of education, AI can improve access and quality of education. For ex- to tackle school dropout, the AP government has partnered with Microsoft to keep track of data relating to student's demographic details, past and current academic performance, teacher skills to identify those likely to drop out.
- **Benefit In Infrastructure And Transportation Sector:** The AI can also help in improving connectivity and safer modes of transportation when put to infrastructure and transportation sectors.
- **Manufacturing Sector:** Robots are being used for manufacturing since a long time now, however, more advanced exponential technologies have emerged such as additive manufacturing (3D Printing), which with the help of AI can revolutionize the entire manufacturing supply chain ecosystem.
- **Legal Sector:** Automation can lead to faster resolution of already pending cases by reducing the time taken while analyzing cases thus better use of time and more efficient processes.

Challenges In AI

- The Aayog identified barriers that need to be surmounted to achieve success in the use of AI. These include lack of expertise, absence of enabling data ecosystem, high resource cost and low awareness, privacy and security issues, and absence of collaborative approach to adoption and application of AI.

- Lack of AI Expertise: India hardly has any AI expertise today. As only around 4% of Indian AI professionals are trained in emerging technologies such as deep learning.
- Lack Of Adequate Data: AI takes reams of historical data as input, identifies the relationships among data elements, and makes predictions. Unfortunately, India has sparse data in many sectors.
- Lack Of Funding And Deadline: It is one of the major challenges faced by the AI sector in India.
- Unemployment: Other major concerns is the possibility of human beings losing out on employment opportunities due to machines' ability to perform the same tasks more efficiently. Automation has already rendered a huge number of people jobless all around the world.
- Challenge In Form Of Regulations: Another major concern is about difficulties in regulation of machines in the human society. For ex- how can the self-driven cars that crash be held accountable for their actions?

Conclusion

- To truly harness AI's transformative potential, India must address its lack of expertise in AI research. With a billion-plus people populating the unique-ID system Aadhaar and the India Stack of digitally enabled offerings built on top of Aadhaar, the country has a platform for growth unlike any other in the world. It can in principle catalyze innovative applications, nurture an entrepreneurial ecosystem and generate a massive amount of data that can train algorithms and help develop more intelligence. The technology can address long-standing societal and human development problems of the kind that abound in India.

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS MCQs

1. With reference to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), consider the following statements:
 1. The FATF's plenary year begins in July and ends in June.
 2. The "black list" refers to countries for who there has been a "call to action" or strict banking and international finance sanctions, a list which at present includes Iran, Pakistan and North Korea.

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
2. Kawal Tiger Reserve, recently seen in news, is located in:
 - (a) **Telangana**
 - (b) Andhra Pradesh
 - (c) Odisha
 - (d) Tamil Nadu
 3. With reference to the investment in research and development (R&D), consider the following statements:
 1. According to a 2019 report by the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) to the Prime Minister, as a fraction of GDP, public expenditures on R&D in India has been stagnant — between 0.6-0.7% of GDP — over the past two decades.
 2. It is well below that in major nations such as the U.S. (2.8), China (2.1), Israel (4.3) and Korea (4.2).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. With reference to the Habitable-zone Planet Finder (HPF), consider the following statements:
 1. It is an astronomical spectrograph, built by China National Space Administration.

2. The newly discovered exoplanet (G 9-40b), by NASA's Kepler mission is the first one to be validated by Habitable-zone Planet Finder (HPF).

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) **2 only**
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. The new Army Headquarters 'Thal Sena Bhawan', recently seen in news, is in:
(a) **Delhi**
(b) Shimla
(c) Chennai
(d) Ambala
6. Which of the following has introduced the services of Artificial Intelligence based ASKDISHA chatbot?
(a) **Indian Railways**
(b) Air India
(c) SAIL
(d) SBI
7. With reference to the Bay of Bengal Offshore Sailing Expedition 2020, consider the following statements:
1. This would be the maiden major mixed crew sailing expedition of the Indian Navy.
2. Mhadei and Tarini inducted in the Indian Navy in 2009 and 2017 respectively have been the vessels of choice for the naval expeditioners in various sailing expeditions, including three circumnavigations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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(c) **Both 1 and 2**
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8. With reference to the School Health Ambassadors, consider the following statements:
1. The Curriculum has been released nearly two years after the launch of the School Health Programme which was launched by PM Modi in 2018 under the Ayushman Bharat Programme.
2. Under the scheme, two teachers, preferably one male and one female, will be appointed as Health and Wellness Ambassadors, who will teach students about the promotion of health as well as prevention of diseases.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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