

**GOVERNANCE****Smartcode Platform launched**

SmartCode Platform was recently launched.

Ministry: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

**Key Points**

- SmartCode is a platform that enables all ecosystem stakeholders to contribute to a repository of open-source code for various solutions and applications for urban governance.
- It is designed to address the challenges that urban local bodies (ULBs) face in the development and deployment of digital applications.
- It shall enable cities to take advantage of existing codes and customising them to suit local needs, rather than having to develop new solutions from scratch.
- The source code will be free to use without any licensing or subscription fees

**INDIAN ECONOMY****RBI releases the Annual Report of the Ombudsman Schemes**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released the Annual Report of the Ombudsman Schemes for 2019-20 recently.

RBI has 3 Ombudsmen- **Banking, Non-Banking Finance Company (i.e. NBFC) and digital transactions.**

- A common man can approach these Ombudsmen for their grievances.
- These Schemes are being merged and integrated into a single scheme which will be rolled out from June 2021.
- There was an increase of around 65% in the receipt of complaints.
- 92% of them have been resolved.

**JB Ekka Committee to be formed**

A one-man committee under Principal Secretary Dr. JB Ekka will be formed for equal wages of small tea workers of Assam.

**Key Points**

- Also, the Assam government has announced the increase in wage of tea garden workers from Rs 167 to Rs 217 per day.
- The tea garden managements pay the wages which is fixed by the government.
- The tea tribe community of Assam also faces exploitation, economic backwardness, poor health conditions and low literacy rates.
- In the Union Budget 2020-21, Rs 1,000 crore was announced for the welfare of tea workers in Assam and West Bengal

**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY****New Lead (Pb) free material discovered**

Scientists have found a new Lead (Pb) free material.

**Identified by:** Scientists at Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bengaluru. It is called **Cadmium (Cd) doped Silver Antimony Telluride (AgSbTe<sub>2</sub>)**.

**Key Points**

- It can efficiently convert waste heat to power our small home equipment and automobiles.
- Most efficient thermoelectric materials developed so far use Lead (Pb) as a major constituent element, restricting their use for mass-market applications.
- This work is supported by Swarna-Jayanti fellowship.

**Swarna Jayanti Fellowships scheme**

- The Swarna Jayanti Fellowships scheme was launched by the Indian Government to commemorate India's 50th Independence.
- It provides special assistance and support to a selected number of young scientists with a proven track record to enable them to pursue basic research in frontier areas of science and technology.
- The award consists of a Fellowship of Rs. 25000 per month along with the salary drawn from the parent Institute and a Research Grant of Rs. 5 lakh per annum by Department of Science and Technology (DST) for a period of 5 years.

**ART AND CULTURE****Animal Husbandry****Laxmi Vilas Palace**

- The Lakshmi Vilas Palace is located in Vadodara, Gujarat.
- It was constructed by the Gaekwad family, a prominent Maratha family, who ruled the Baroda State.
- It was built by Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad III in 1890.
- Major Charles Mant was credited to be the main architect of the palace.

- It is styled on the Indo-Saracenic Revival architecture.

**INDIAN HISTORY**

**Pagri Sambhal Movement**

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) is celebrating 23rd February as Pagri Sambhal Diwas, honouring the memory of Ajit Singh-founder of the Pagri Sambhaal Movement of 1907.

Farmer unions part of the ongoing protests in Delhi claim that farm laws passed by Parliament will ultimately force them to sell their land to corporates. It was a similar complaint that fueled the farm protests in 1907.

**Key Points**

**Pagri Sambhal Movement:**

- It was a successful farm agitation that forced the British government to repeal three laws related to agriculture back in 1907.
- The Punjab Land Alienation Act 1900, the Punjab Land Colonisation Act 1906 and the Doab Bari Act 1907.
- These acts would reduce farmers from owners to contractors of land, and gave the British government the right to take back the allotted land if the farmer even touched a tree in his field without permission.

**Slogan:**

- The slogan, Pagdi Sambhal Jatta, the name of the movement, was inspired by the song by Banke Lal, the editor of the Jang Sayal newspaper.

**Protest:**

- The protests were violent and the protestors ransacked government buildings, post offices, banks, overturning telephone poles and pulling down telephone wires.

**Leader of the Agitation:**

- Bhagat Singh's uncle Ajit Singh was the force behind this agitation.
- He wanted to channel people's anger over the farm laws to topple the colonial government.
- Bhagat Singh's father Kishan Singh and uncle Ajit Singh, with their revolutionary friend Ghasita Ram, formed Bharat Mata Society, aiming to mobilise this unrest into a revolt against the British government.
- Many young revolutionaries like Sufi Amba Prasad, Zia-ul-Haq, Lal Chand Falak, Din Dayal Banke, Kishan Singh and Lala Ram Saran Das were among the members of Bharat Mata Society.

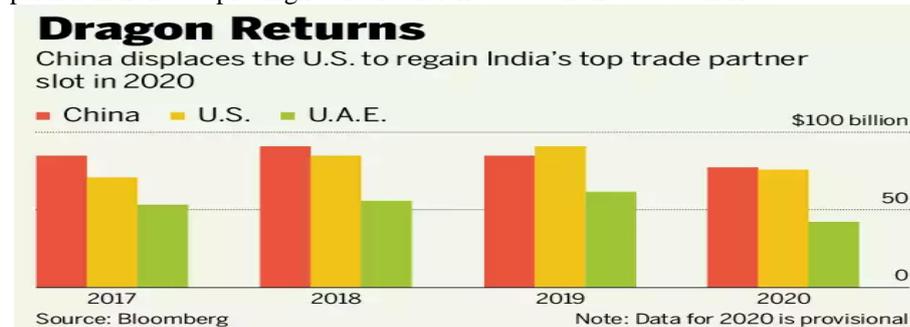
**Sardar Ajit Singh:**

- Born on 23rd February, 1881 he was an Indian revolutionary, an Indian dissident and a nationalist during the colonial era.
- He was an inspiration to Indian revolutionaries and his nephew Bhagat Singh.
- He openly criticised the colonial government and was amongst the early protests in Punjab.
- With his brother Kishan Singh, worked among the people in famine-stricken regions like Barar (Madhya Pradesh) and Ahmedabad and in flood-and-earthquake-affected areas of Srinagar and Kangla in 1905.
- He built a network of solidarity with people who were struggling for India's liberation in different parts of Europe. He also founded in this period the Indian Revolutionary Association (Bharatiya Krantikari Sangh).
- In May 1907, Sardar Ajit Singh along with Lala Lajpat Rai was exiled to Mandalay in Burma.
- However, due to great public pressure and apprehension of unrest in the Indian Army, both of them were released in October 1907.

**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**China: India's Top Trading Partner in 2020**

According to provisional data from India's commerce ministry, China regained its position as India's top trade partner in 2020 despite high border tensions between the two countries.



**Key Points**

- The two-way trade between India and China stood at USD 77.7 billion for the year 2020.
- Trade with China was USD 85.5 billion total in the previous year (2018-2019).
- Now, China is the largest commercial partner displacing the US bilateral trade at USD 75.9 billion amid reduced demand for goods in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Imports from China:** Total imports from China at USD 58.7 billion were more than India's combined purchases from the USA and the UAE, which are its second- and third-largest trade partners, respectively.

**Exports to China:** India has only managed to increase its exports to China by about 11% from a year ago to USD 19 billion last year.

**Trade Deficit:** Thus, a bilateral trade gap with China stood at almost USD 40 billion in 2020, making it India's largest.

Trade Gap/Deficit is the amount by which the cost of a country's imports exceeds the value of its exports.

**Analysis:**

- Emergence of China as the top trading partner is due to increased import of Chinese medical supplies.
- Online shoppers seem to prefer Chinese mobile phones and electronic gadgets despite the environment of anti-China sentiments in the nation.
- As per the Prime Day 2020 sale data of Amazon, an e-commerce giant, OnePlus, Oppo, Huawei's Honor and Xiaomi were among the top-selling smartphone brands in India.
- Also, India continues to rely heavily on Chinese-made heavy machinery, telecom equipment and home appliances.
- The increase in trade is despite the tense relations between the two countries and India's ambitions to bolster its manufacturing capabilities under Atmanirbhar Bharat.

**Measures Taken to Reduce Import Dependence on China:**

**Recent Ban:** The ban on more than 100 Chinese apps citing national security reasons.

**Increased Scrutiny:** It has increased scrutiny of Chinese investments in many sectors, and is weighing a decision to keep Chinese companies out of 5G trials.

**Curb Opportunistic Takeovers:** The government recently put import restrictions on tyres, while also making its prior approval mandatory for foreign investments from countries that share land border with India to curb "opportunistic takeovers" of domestic firms - a move which will restrict FDI from China.

To cut import dependency on China for APIs (Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients), the government in March 2020 approved a package comprising four schemes with a total outlay of Rs. 13,760 crore to boost domestic production of bulk drugs and medical devices in the country along with their exports.

**Way Forward**

India cannot afford to sever all its economic links with the world's second-largest economy. Chinese finance can help in sustaining India's start-up economy.

India needs to be very selective in its measures. For example, India can curb Chinese firms' involvement in the telecom sector in India, especially 5G trials. But at the same time a large part of the infrastructure India already has in place in the 4G network is all Chinese, so India will still need China for maintenance and servicing.

**ODISHA DEVELOPMENTS****Olive Ridley Turtles**

The Orissa High Court has taken suo motu cognisance of the death of around 800 Olive Ridley sea turtles due to negligence by Odisha's forest and fisheries departments.

**Key Points**

- The Olive ridley turtles are the smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles found in the world.
- These turtles are carnivores and get their name from their olive colored carapace.

**Protection Status:**

- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Scheduled 1
- IUCN Red List: Vulnerable
- CITES: Appendix I

**Habitat:**

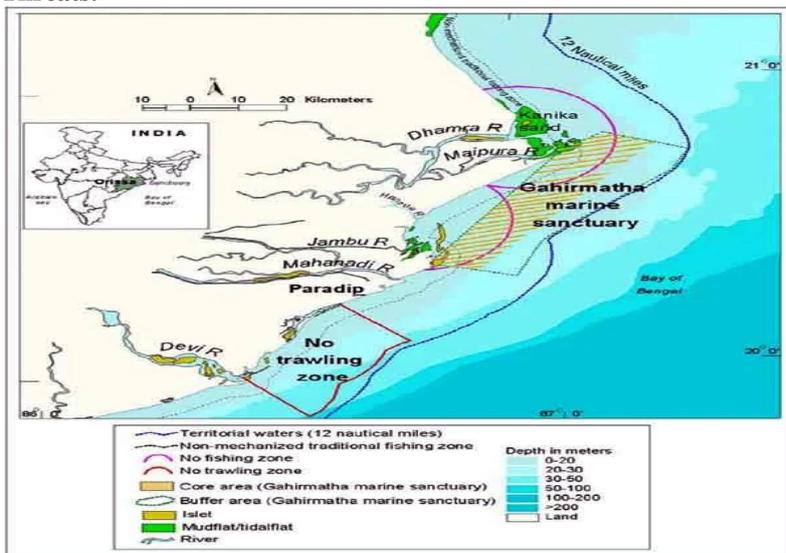
- They are found in warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.
- The Odisha's Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary is known as the world's largest rookery (colony of breeding animals) of sea turtles.

**Arribada (Mass Nesting):**

- They are best known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.

- They lay their eggs over a period of five to seven days in conical nests about one and a half feet deep which they dig with their hind flippers.

**Threats:**



**Marine pollution and waste**

- Human Consumption: They are extensively poached for their meat, shell and leather, and eggs.
- Plastic Garbage: An ever-increasing debris of plastics, fishing nets, discarded nets, polythene and other garbage dumped by tourists and fishing workers.
- Fishing Trawlers: Overexploitation of marine resources by use of trawlers often violates the rule to not fish 20 kilometres within a marine sanctuary.
- There were injury marks on many dead turtles indicating they could have been trapped under trawls or gill nets.

**Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary**

- Gahirmatha is the mass nesting spot in Indian Ocean region and the only turtle sanctuary in Odisha.
- It is the world’s largest nesting beach of Olive Ridley Sea Turtles.
- Gahirmatha was declared a turtle sanctuary in 1997 by the Odisha government after considering its ecological importance and as part of efforts to save the sea turtles.
- Gahirmatha Marine Sanctuary is one of the three parts of the Bhitarkanika National Park. The other two includes the area of Bhitarkanika National Park and the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary.

**IMPORTANT FACTS FOR PRELIM**

**Black-Necked Crane**

Recently, a group of Buddhist monks in Tawang district has opposed the Arunachal Pradesh government’s renewed push for hydropower projects.



The proposed projects would not only affect the nesting grounds of the endangered Black-Necked Crane but also threaten several holy Buddhist pilgrimage sites in the region.

**Key Points**

- Both the sexes are almost of the same size but male is slightly bigger than female.

- The upper long neck, head, primary and secondary flight feathers and tail are completely black and body plumage is pale gray/whitish.
- A conspicuous red crown adorns the head.
- The juveniles have a brownish head and neck and plumage is slightly paler than that of an adult.

**Special Significance:**

- The bird is revered by the community of Monpas (major Buddhist ethnic group of Arunachal Pradesh) as an embodiment of the sixth Dalai Lama (Tsangyang Gyatso).
- Monpas inhabit the West Kameng and Tawang districts, are essentially Buddhists who follow the Mahayana sect.

**Habitat and Breeding Grounds :**

- The high altitude wetlands of the Tibetan plateau , Sichuan (China), and eastern Ladakh (India) are the main breeding ground of the species, the birds spend winter at lower altitudes.
- In Bhutan and Arunachal Pradesh, it only comes during the winters.

**In Arunachal Pradesh, it can be seen in three areas:**

- Sangti valley in West Kameng district.
- Zemithang in Tawang district.
- Chug valley in Tawang district.

**Threats:**

- Damage to the eggs and chicks, caused by feral dogs.
- Loss of habitat due to human pressure (Development Projects) on the wetlands.
- Increased grazing pressure on the limited pastures near the wetlands.

**Steps for their Conservation:**

- World Wide Fund for Nature-India (WWF-India) in collaboration with the Department of Wildlife Protection, Jammu & Kashmir, has been working towards conservation of high altitude wetlands, with black-necked cranes as a priority species in Ladakh region.
- In Arunachal Pradesh, WWF is working for the conservation of the small wintering population.

**Protection Status:**

- IUCN Red List: Near Threatened
- CITES: Appendix I
- Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I

**DAILY ANSWER WRITING PRACTICE**

**Qns. What are the main factors responsible for gender inequality in India? Discuss the contribution of Savitribai Phule in this regard. (UPSC GS-4 Mains 2020)**

Ans:

Even though successive governments have taken several steps to instill gender equality in the post-independence era, gender inequality prevails in all sectors of life like health, education, economics, and politics. This can be reflected in India's 112th rank in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2019-2020.

**Factors Responsible for Gender Inequality in India**

**Preference for Sons:** From time immemorial, a girl child has been considered as an unwanted entity and a burden whom the parents would not mind doing away with.

Discrimination against women begins even before their birth.

The gruesome evils of female feticide and infanticide prove how brutal the world could be to women.

**Role of Cultural Institutions:** Cultural institutions in India, particularly those of patrilineality (inheritance through male descendants) and patrilocality (married couples living with or near the husband's parents), play a central role in perpetuating gender inequality.

**Assumed Role of Women:** It is believed in the Indian Society the primary responsibility of taking care of the family and bringing up the child is still on the women.

Many women due to family pressures have to retreat from the workforce.

**Pink-Collarisation of Jobs:** The women are mostly deemed fit for "pink-collar jobs" only, such as teachers, nurses, receptionists, babysitter, lecturers, etc. which have been stereotyped for women. This denies them opportunities in other fields.

**Discrimination at Work:** Companies are interested in hiring more young women because it has been generally seen that the work and the family environment, marriage, and maternity generally forces a married woman to resign.

Women receive a lower amount of wages compared to men for the same work.

**Contribution of Savitribai Phule**

- Savitribai Phule, the social reformer is considered to be one of India's first modern feminists.

- She along with her husband, Jyotirao Phule, recognized that education was one of the central planks through which women can get liberation from centuries of injustice.
- They went on to found India's first school for girls called Bhide Wada in Pune in 1948.
- Their efforts led to women developing a voice and agency of her own, at a time when women were suppressed and lived a sub-human existence.
- Due to the role Phule played in the field of women's education, she is also considered to be one of the "crusaders of gender justice."
- Through her poems, she advocated values such as humanism, liberty, equality, brotherhood, rationalism, and the importance of education among others.

**Conclusion**

- For India to maintain its position as a global growth leader, more concerted efforts at local, national levels, and by the private sector are needed to bring women to parity with men.
- While increasing the representation of women in the public spheres is important and can potentially be attained through some form of affirmative action, an attitudinal shift is essential for women to be considered as equal within their homes and in broader society.

**DAILY QUIZ**

1. Consider the following statements about Women's participation in Parliament –

1. 17th Lok Sabha has the highest number of elected women since independence.
2. Of the 543 constituencies, more than 250 have never voted a woman MP since 1962.

Choose the correct answer form the given option below –

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

2. Consider the following statements about recent launched schemes –

1. National Urban Digital Mission (NUDM) will create a shared digital infrastructure for urban India.
2. India Urban Data Exchange has been developed by NITI Aayog.

Choose the correct answer form the given option below –

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

3. Consider the following statements regarding Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) –

1. It is a non-statutory body established by cabinet resolution.
2. It can acquire both movable and immovable property and all incomes from the property shall vest with the corporation.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

4. Consider the following statements regarding 'Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure' (CDRI)

1. CDRI is an international coalition of countries, UN agencies, multilateral development banks, the private sector, and academic institutions.
2. It was launched by Indian Prime Minister at BRICS summit in 2019.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

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

5. Which of the following statements is not true with reference to "Quantum-Matter Heterostructures"?

- a) It will lead to larger energy density in batteries.
- b) Traditionally, heterostructure materials have been built from layers of standard insulators, semiconductors.
- c) Challenges for Quantum Heterostructures are superconducting at very high temperature.**
- d) Transistors incorporating quantum heterostructures could pack more power into ever smaller devices.