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DOTS**

October 2019



A Current Affairs Series for UPSC Examination

Electoral Bond Scheme

Nano Pharmaceuticals in India

UNICEF Launches Cryptocurrency Fund,
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Compendium – October 2019

Dear Students,

With the present examination pattern of UPSC Civil Services Examination, General Studies papers require a lot of specialization with 'Current Affairs'. Moreover, following the recent trend of UPSC, almost all the questions are based on news as well as issues. CL IAS has now come up with '**JOIN THE DOTS! OCTOBER 2019**' series which will help you pick up relevant news items of the day from various national dailies such as The Hindu, Indian Express, Business Standard, LiveMint, PIB and other important sources.

'**JOIN THE DOTS! OCTOBER 2019**' series will be helpful for prelims as well as Mains Examination. We are covering every issue in a holistic manner and covered every dimension with detailed facts. This edition covers all important issues that were in news in the month of June 2019. Also, we have introduced Prelim base question for Test Your Knowledge which shall guide you for better revision. In addition, it would benefit all those who are preparing for other competitive examinations.

We have prepared this series of documents after some rigorous deliberations with Toppers and also with aspirants who have wide experience of preparations in the Civil Services Examination.

For more information and more knowledge, you can go to our website <https://www.careerlauncher.com/upsc/>

“Set your goals high, and don't stop till you get there”

All the best!!

Team CL

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GENERAL STUDIES I

**Indian Heritage and Culture,
History and Geography of
World and Society**

Join the dots!

A current affairs series for UPSC Examination

Human Resource Development: Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan is all set to celebrate “EK BHARAT-SHRESTHA BHARAT PARV”

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ek bharat shreshth bharat parv) + Mains (GS I Indian heritage and culture)

What's the NEWS

- The Union Human Resource Development Minister, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' will inaugurate EK Bharat Shreshth Bharat Parv being organized by Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan under Ministry of Human Resource Development

Objective

- To Celebrate the Unity in Diversity of our Nation and to maintain and strengthen the fabric of traditionally existing emotional bonds between the people of our Country, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan is going to organize a mega cultural and literary youth extravaganza KVS “Ek Bharat ShreshthBharatParv”.

Know! more about it

- This event is primarily to showcase the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat' and also to promote the communication & artistic skills of students through various competitions.
- All the 25 regions of KVS are paired with a State different from their own State and also a Country.
- This gives them an opportunity to understand the Art & Culture of the paired States and the Countries, thus imbibing a mutual respect towards different cultures.
- This cultural MahaParv is expected to gather more than 2300 participants from 25 regions of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan.
- The main objective of the event is to showcase the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshth Bharat' and also to promote the Cultural & literary skills of students through various competitions.
- Further, it also provides a platform for teachers to express their talent in performing and visual arts.
- This year four contemporary theme-based exhibits have been incorporated in the KVS “EK Bharat-Shrestha Bharat Parv”, Fit India, SamagraShiksha& Jal Suraksha, Ban on single-use Plastic, Swacch Bharat.



Culture/Heritage: E-Portal of CCRT ‘Digital Bharat Digital Sanskriti’ launched

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the E-Portal of CCRT ‘Digital Bharat Digital Sanskriti’ and CCRT YouTube Channel)

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Culture has launched the E-Portal of CCRT ‘Digital Bharat Digital Sanskriti’ and CCRT YouTube Channel.



Know! the objective of e-portal

- The efforts of CCRT will enable dissemination of cultural education through digital interactive medium into the classrooms all over the country. For this initiative, CCRT has tied up with Routes 2 Roots, an NGO, for connecting seamlessly all the CCRT Regional Centres i.e., Guwahati, Udaipur and Hyderabad
- CCRT should provide 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.
- There is a need to identify institutions specializing in providing training in various art forms and encourage the children to join these institutions.

Know! about CCRT

- The Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) is autonomous organisation under Ministry of Culture of Government of India.
- Established in May 1979, to support cultural education, with its inception it took over the Scheme-Propagation of Culture among College and School students, which was being implemented by Delhi University since 1970, where a Research and Production Cell was functioning for this purpose.
- The CCRT also organises activities such as school tours to museums, monuments and craft centres, collects teaching resources including photographs, audio recordings, films and software



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 **INQUIZITIVE MINDS**

GENERAL STUDIES II

**Governance, Constitution,
Polity , Social Justice and
International Relations**

Educational Reforms: NITI Aayog releases School Education Quality Index (SEI)

NITI AAYOG EDUCATION QUALITY INDEX

Categories	Top 3	Bottom 3
Large states	Kerala, TN and Haryana	Telangana, Bihar, Jharkhand
Small states	Tripura, Goa, Manipur	Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh
Union Territories	Chandigarh, Delhi, Puducherry	Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Andaman Islands, Lakshwadeep

Relevance IN – Prelims (about SEI) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

What's the NEWS

- School Education Quality Index (SEI) was developed by NITI Aayog to evaluate the performance of States and Union Territories (UTs) in the school education sector.
- Kerala, Manipur and Chandigarh top in overall performance
- Haryana, Meghalaya, Daman & Diu show most improvement in the first edition of index.

Know! the objective of SEI

- The index aims to bring an 'outcomes' focus to education policy by providing States and UTs with a platform to identify their strengths and weaknesses and undertake requisite course corrections or policy interventions.
- In line with NITI Aayog's mandate to foster the spirit of competitive and cooperative federalism, SEI strives to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and best practices across States and UTs.

Know! the process of SEI

- Developed through a collaborative process, including key stakeholders such as Ministry of Human Resource and Development (MHRD), the World Bank and sector experts, 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

- Schooling should result in successful learning outcomes. A credible system of assessment in this regard is crucial to design necessary remedial actions.
- To ensure the system is geared towards learning, SEI assigns almost half its weight to learning outcomes. This sends a strong signal across the nation to ensure the focus remains centred on learning outcomes.

Large States, Small States and UTs

- To facilitate a like-for-like comparison, States and UTs have been grouped as Large States, Small States and UTs. Within each of these groups, the indicator values have been appropriately scaled, normalized and weighted to generate an overall performance score and ranking for each State and UT.
- States' and UTs' performance on Learning Outcomes is driven by their results on the National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2017.

- Their performance on Access Outcomes is primarily driven by enrolment ratios at the secondary level and transition rates from upper-primary to secondary level.
- In terms of Infrastructure & Facilities for Outcomes, States' and UTs' performance is strongly linked to the presence of Computer Aided-Learning (CAL) at the elementary level and vocational education at the secondary and senior-secondary level.



Know! more about SEQI

- SEQI also included an analysis of States and Union Territories for each indicator under study.
- For instance, indicators such as average score in Class 3, 5 and 8 for Language and Mathematics, Transition Rates from primary to upper-primary level, capturing equity in learning outcomes between general and marginalised sections of society, supply a wealth of data for future action and policy design for every State.
- States and UTs are ranked on their overall performance in the reference year 2016-17, as well as on their annual incremental performance (difference in the overall performance) between the reference year and base year (2015-16).
- The rankings present incredible insights on the status of school education across States/UTs and their relative progress over time.
- SEQI is envisioned as a dynamic instrument that will continue to evolve. Over time, the relevance of the existing indicators and the availability of data for new indicators will be factored into the index design. In particular, the linkages between policy actions and SEQI indicators will be analyzed to reflect the efforts made by States and UTs to improve school education.

Health Reforms: 'Arogya Manthan', on completion of one year of Ayushman Bharat- PMJAY launched

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Arogya manthan + ayushman bharat) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources).

What's the NEWS

- Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, inaugurated the 'Arogya Manthan', a 2-day national workshop organised by National Health Authority (NHA) to mark the first year anniversary of Ayushman Bharat PMJAY, which was launched on 23rd September last year at Ranchi by the Hon. Prime Minister.

Know! about PMJAY

- Ayushman Bharat Yojana or Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) or National Health Protection Scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme launched in 2018, under the Ayushman Bharat Mission of MoHFW in India.
- The scheme aims at making interventions in primary, secondary and tertiary care systems, covering both preventive and promotive health, to address healthcare holistically.
- It is an umbrella of two major health initiatives namely, Health and Wellness centres and National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS).

Modi government approves world's largest and most comprehensive healthcare scheme

AYUSHMAN BHARAT
National Health Protection Mission

- Around 11 crore poor and vulnerable families to benefit
- Benefits of the scheme are portable across the country*
- Rs. 5 lakh insurance cover per family per year, irrespective of family size
- Beneficiaries can avail benefits in all empanelled public and private hospitals

* Benefits can be availed anywhere in India

Read full: bit.ly/AB-NHPM

Insuring the masses

Key features of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Abhiyaan, to be officially launched on Sept. 25

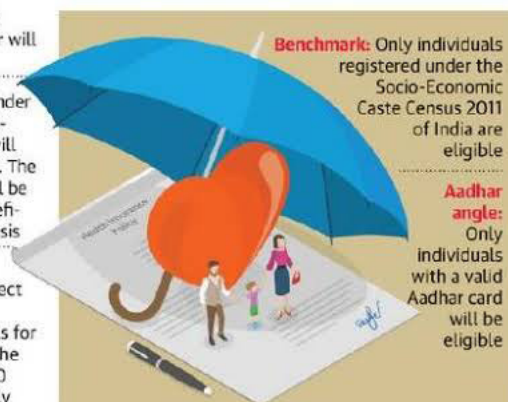
Launch pad: The project will start on a pilot basis in 80-100 districts. October will see the second phase of expansion

Participants: 28 States/ Union Territories have agreed to join the health insurance scheme. Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Odisha, Telangana and Delhi are yet to come on board

Yearly payments: Under the scheme, all registered beneficiaries will get a sum of ₹5 lakh. The insurance money will be provided to the beneficiaries on a yearly basis

Core centres: The government will select 1.5 lakh healthcare centres and hospitals for implementation of the scheme. with ₹1,200 crore allocated solely to develop and activate such centres

Identification: Beneficiaries will be required to use their registered mobile phone numbers as their ID number



Benchmark: Only individuals registered under the Socio-Economic Caste Census 2011 of India are eligible

Aadhar angle: Only individuals with a valid Aadhar card will be eligible

WHO IS ELIGIBLE

Only financially weak and underprivileged members of the society will be eligible for the Scheme. A maximum of five members of such a family will get the insurance cover

Governance: Electoral Bond Scheme

Relevance IN – Prelims (about electoral bond) + Mains (GS II Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures

Electoral Bonds Scheme Notified

To help cleanse the political funding system in the country

Nature

- Bearer Instrument in the nature of a Promissory Note
- Interest free banking instrument

Eligibility

- A citizen of India or a body incorporated in India
- On fulfillment of all the extant KYC norms
- By making payment from a bank account

Value

- Issued/ Purchased in multiples of Rs.1,000, Rs.10,000, Rs.1,00,000, Rs.10,00,000 and Rs.1,00,00,000
- Available from the Specified Branches of the State Bank of India (SBI)

Lifespan

- Shelf life of only 15 days
- Can be used for making donation only to the political parties registered u/s 29A of the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1951

Period of Purchase

- Available for purchase for a period of 10 days each in the months of January, April, July and October, as may be specified by the Government

What's the NEWS

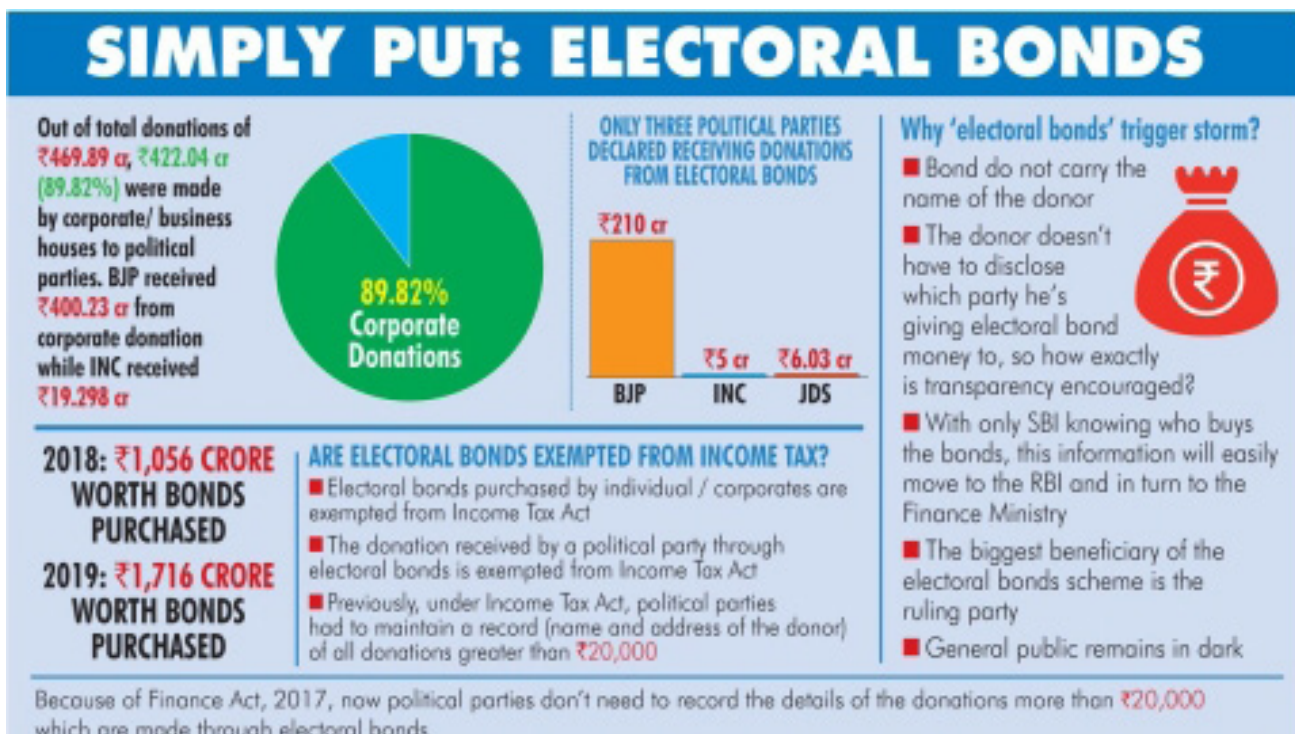
- Government of India has notified the Electoral Bond Scheme 2018 vide Gazette Notification No. 20 dated January 02, 2018.
- As per provisions of the Scheme, Electoral Bonds may be purchased by a person who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India.

Know! all about Electoral bonds

- A person being an individual can buy Electoral Bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals. Only the Political Parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (43 of 1951) and which secured not less than one per cent of the votes polled in the last General Election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State, shall be eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds.

- The Electoral Bonds shall be encashed by an eligible Political Party only through a Bank account with the Authorized Bank.
- State Bank of India (SBI), in the XII Phase of sale, has been authorised to issue and encash Electoral Bonds through its 29 Authorized Branches (as per list enclosed)w.e.f. 01.10.2019 to 10.10.2019.
- It may be noted that Electoral Bonds shall be valid for fifteen calendar days from the date of issue and no payment shall be made to any payee Political Party if the Electoral Bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period.
- The Electoral Bond deposited by an eligible Political Party in its account shall be credited on the same day.

Arguments against electoral bond



UNHOLY BONDS?

₹1,407 crore
is the worth of electoral bonds purchased so far

Bonds worth ₹222 crore were sold in the first tranche. Here is where the money went (in ₹ crore)



Total income of six national parties in 2017-18 (in ₹ crore)

Known donors	(36%)	467.13	(Donor details available in reports submitted by parties to the Election Commission)
Other known sources	(11%)	136.48	(Revenue from membership fees, sale of assets and publications, interest on bank accounts, etc.)
Unknown sources	(53%)	689.44	(As per income tax returns and submissions to the EC)

Electoral bonds account for ₹ 215 crore, or 31%, of the income from unknown sources

Social Justice: President to confer award Vayoshreshtha Samman on elders, senior citizens, institutions



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Vayoshreshtha Samman) + Mains (GS II Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

What's the NEWS

- A Madhya Pradesh municipality, which runs a day care centre for senior citizens, an NGO in Kerala that has sensitised thousands to the need for taking care of elders and the State of Tamil Nadu, which has established maintenance tribunals in each sub-division, are among those to be honoured on for their service to senior citizens.

Know! about Vayoshreshtha Samman

- Vayoshreshtha Samman, the annual national award of the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, will be given away to 15 individuals and organisations by President Ram Nath Kovind.
- The award distribution is one of the Ministry's events to mark the International Day of Older Persons.
- Tamil Nadu is expected to be given the award for the best State in implementing the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, and providing services to senior citizens.
- According to the citation, the State has set up maintenance tribunals under the Act in each sub-division, but half of the cases are resolved through conciliation.
- The municipal council of Unhel, in Ujjain district of Madhya Pradesh, will receive the award for the best urban local body. It provides medical services, income generation schemes and pension to seniors. It has also opened a day care centre, Anand Ghar, fitted with recreation facilities.
- Gandhi bhavan International Trust, a non-profit in Kollam, Kerala, is set to be honoured for providing care to 1,400 needy people, including 350 senior citizens, and for conducting awareness programmes for the youth. So far, 60,000 people have attended the programme.

Government Schemes: Ministry of Tourism launches Audio Guide facility App “Audio Odigos”

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Paryatan Parv 2019) + Mains (GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.)

What’s the NEWS

- On the occasion of the nationwide “Paryatan Parv 2019” the Ministry of Tourism launched the Audio Guide facility Audio Odigos for 12 sites of India (including Iconic Sites).

Adopt a Heritage, Apni Dharohar Apni Pehchan’ scheme

- 26th MoU under the ‘Adopt a Heritage, Apni Dharohar Apni Pehchan’ scheme of Ministry of Tourism has been exchanged for development of Tourism Amenities.
- The project aims to develop synergy amongst all stakeholders and involves active participation of local communities/players to promote ‘responsible tourism’.
- Ministry of Tourism’s scheme “Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan”, is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and State Governments / UT Administrations.
- It aims at involving public sector companies, private sector companies and corporate citizens/individuals to take up the responsibility for making our heritage and tourism more sustainable through development, operation and maintenance of world-class tourist infrastructure and amenities at ASI/ State heritage sites and other important tourist sites in India.



Know! about Audio Guide: Audio Odigos

- Audio Guide: Audio Odigos, launched for the benefit of the tourists. Audio guide odigo offers Government of India verified content, with visuals & voice over support.
- With Audio Odigos, tourists will now enjoy a more enriching experience and take back historical insights of the Indian culture and heritage.
- The Audio Odigos app contains an inbuilt map of the site for a smooth navigation during the tour.
- Listeners will be offered various versions of history like Synopsis, Detailed History and Podcasts.
- The audio can be chosen in their preferred language & version of the history. Audio Odigos is now available for download on all Android and iOS supported mobile phones.
- Audio Guide facility Audio Odigos can be used in 12 sites that includes Amer Fort, Rajasthan, Chandni Chowk, Red Fort, Purana Quila, Humayun’s tomb, Delhi, Fatehpur Sikri, Taj Mahal, Uttar Pradesh, Somnath and Dholavira, Gujarat, Khajuraho, Madhya pradesh, Mahabalipuram, Tamilnadu and Mahabodhi Temple, Bihar.

Know! about Paryatan Parv 2019

- The Ministry of Tourism is organising a nationwide event Paryatan Parv 2019 from 2nd to 13th October 2019.
- The Delhi leg of the Parv is to be organized from 2nd to 6th October 2019
- The idea of Paryatan Parv is to propagate the message of ‘Dekho Apna Desh’, to encourage Indians to visit various tourist destinations of the country and also to spread the message of ‘Tourism for All’.
- Paryatan Parv 2019 is dedicated to 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. M/s Ashok Events, ITDC is the event manager of the Ministry of Tourism for the event.

Good Governance: PRAKASH portal launched by the Coal Ministry for transparency and better coordination in coal supplies to power plants

Relevance IN – Prelims (about PRAKASH Portal) + Mains (GS III Infrastructure development -energy + GS II Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications)

What's the NEWS

- The Power Ministry has recently launched PRAKASH (Power Rail Koyla Availability through Supply Harmony) portal.
- 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. This is an important step in ensuring adequate availability and optimum utilization of coal at thermal power plants.

The Portal is designed to help in mapping and monitoring 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.

The portal makes available following information on a single platform -

- Coal company will be able to track stocks and the coal requirement at power stations for effective production planning
- Indian Railways will plan to place the rakes as per actual coal available at siding and stock available at power stations.
- Power stations can plan future schedule by knowing rakes in pipe line and expected time to Reach.
- Stock at power generating station
- Ministry of Power /Ministry of Coal/ CEA/ POSOCO can review overall availability of coal at thermal power plants in different regions

Social Justice & Empowerment: 'Walkthan' for Senior Citizens to mark International Day of Older Persons

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Walkthan + steps taken by the government for the welfare of senior citizens) + Mains (GS II Social Justice + Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes)

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry for Social Justice & Empowerment flagged off a "Walkthan" for older persons and senior citizens to mark the International Day of Older Persons.
- The Walkthan was organised by the National Institute of Social Defence (NISD) under Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment in collaboration with Confederation of Senior Citizens Association of Delhi.

Know! the steps taken by the Ministry for the welfare of senior citizens

- Ministry has initiated many new programmes and schemes for the welfare of senior citizens.
- The Ministry felicitates senior citizens and older persons by conferring 'Vayoshreshtha Samman' every year on the eminent senior citizens and institutions in many categories in recognition of their services towards the cause of the elderly persons.
- In the year 2017 the Ministry has started "Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana" under which physical aids and assistive living devices viz. wheel chairs, hearing aids, spectacles, support stickset care distributed to the older persons of below poverty line category.
- On the International Day of Older Persons, every year since 2005 the mass awareness event "Walkthan" is being organised by NISD.

- The event has a great value for awareness about welfare of Senior Citizens and giving a life of dignity to elderly persons.

Health and Family Welfare: FSSAI's 'Trans-Fat Free' logo launched gives a boost to "Eat Right India" Movement

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Eat right India movement + about REPLACE and about trans fat) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/ Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources)

What's the NEWS

- Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare launched the "Trans Fat Free" logo of Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), at the 8th International Chefs' Conference (ICC VII)
- This marked an important milestone in the movement against Trans-Fats and also provided a momentum to accelerate the 'Eat Right India' movement of FSSAI.

The 'Eat Right India' movement of FSSAI

- To improve public health in India and combat negative nutritional trends to fight lifestyle diseases, FSSAI launched 'The Eat Right Movement' on 10th July, 2018.
- The food industry, public health professionals, civil society and consumer organizations, influencers and celebrities came together on a common platform and pledged to take concrete steps to amplify 'The Eat Right Movement' in the country. [Read More external link](#)
- The strength of the 'The Eat Right Movement' lies in its holistic and collaborative approach, with stakeholders on both the demand and supply-side joining to make a difference through some clearly identified steps.
- On the demand side, the Eat Right Movement focuses on empowering citizens to make the right food choices.
- On the supply side, it nudges food businesses to reformulate their products, provide better nutritional information to consumers and make investments in healthy food as responsible food businesses.
- Trans fats are the worst type of fats with known health risks.
- India is committed to eliminating it from the food supply and is progressing towards its objective of trans fat elimination by 2022; a year ahead of the global target by WHO.
- FSSAI is committed to reducing the industrially produced trans fatty acids to less than 2% by the year 2022 in a phased manner and is geared up to get freedom from trans fats with the motto 'India@75; Freedom from Trans Fats'

Green Purple initiative logo

- Dr Harsh Vardhan also launched the Green Purple initiative logo. The initiative aims to qualify the chefs on food safety legal requirements and sustainable cooking methods, in order to promote trans-fat free cooking.

Industrial trans-fats

- Industrial trans-fats are made by adding hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid, and to increase the shelf life of foods.
- Trans-fats are largely present in partially hydrogenated vegetable fats/oils, vanaspati, margarine and bakery shortenings, and can be found in baked and fried foods.
- The food establishments which use trans-fat free oil and do not have industrial trans-fat more than 0.2 g/100g of food, in compliance with the Food Safety and Standards (Advertising and Claims) Regulations, 2018 can display "Trans-fat free" logo at their outlets and on their food products. The use of the said logo is voluntary.

Know! about REPLACE

- WHO released REPLACE, a step-by-step guide for the elimination of industrially-produced trans-fatty acids from the global food supply.
- Industrially-produced trans fats are contained in hardened vegetable fats, such as margarine and ghee, and are often present in snack food, baked foods, and fried foods.
- Manufacturers often use them as they have a longer shelf life than other fats. But healthier alternatives can be used that would not affect taste or cost of food.

- WHO calls on governments to use the REPLACE action package to eliminate industrially-produced trans-fatty acids from the food supply.

REPLACE provides six strategic actions to ensure the prompt, complete, and sustained elimination of industrially-produced trans fats from the food supply:

- REview dietary sources of industrially-produced trans fats and the landscape for required policy change.
- Promote the replacement of industrially-produced trans fats with healthier fats and oils.
- Legislate or enact regulatory actions to eliminate industrially-produced trans fats.
- Assess and monitor trans fats content in the food supply and changes in trans fat consumption in the population.
- Create awareness of the negative health impact of trans fats among policy makers, producers, suppliers, and the public.
- Enforce compliance of policies and regulations.

Know! more about TRANS FATS

- There are two main sources for trans fats: natural sources (in the dairy products and meat of ruminants such as cows and sheep) and industrially-produced sources (partially hydrogenated oils).
- Partially hydrogenated oils were first introduced into the food supply in the early 20th century as a replacement for butter.
- WHO recommends that the total trans fat intake be limited to less than 1% of total energy intake, which translates to less than 2.2 g/day with a 2,000-calorie diet.

Textiles: Textiles Minister Smriti Irani to represent India at World Cotton Day celebrations in Geneva

Relevance IN – Prelims (about cotton and World cotton day) + Mains (GS II international organisations + GS III economic development)

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, is participating in the World Cotton Day being observed from 7th October to 11th October 2019 in Geneva.

Know! about the World cotton day

- The World Trade Organisation (WTO) is organizing World Cotton Day event in collaboration with the Secretariats of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the International Cotton Advisory Committee (ICAC).
- WTO is hosting the event at the request of the Cotton – 4 countries, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali to celebrate their official application for the recognition of 7th October as World Cotton Day by the United Nations.

World Cotton Day (objective)

- World Cotton Day will celebrate the many advantages of cotton, from its qualities as a natural fibre, to the benefits people obtain from its production, transformation, trade and consumption.
- World Cotton Day will also serve to shed light on the challenges faced by cotton economies around the world because cotton is important to least developed, developing and developed economies worldwide.
- The World Cotton Day launch will give more than 30 countries exposure to producers, processors and businesses and more than 400 participants will be celebrating cotton in Geneva with thousand more around the world.
- World Cotton Day will be celebrated in countries across the globe, with events giving exposure to farmers, processors, researchers and businesses and their contributions to the cotton value chain. These activities will be organised at the country level and livestreamed at the WTO headquarters.

Know! about cotton

- Cotton is a global commodity that is produced all over the world and a single tonne of cotton provides year-round employment for five people on average.
- Cotton is a drought – resistant crop ideal for arid climates, it occupies just 2.1 % of the world's arable land, yet it meets 27% of the world's textiles need. In addition to its fibre used in textiles and apparel, food products are

also derived from cotton like edible oil and animal feed from the seed.

- The objective of observing October, 7 as World Cotton Day is to give exposure and recognition to cotton.

The India pavilion at the World Cotton Day exhibition

- The CCI will be displaying various grades of raw cotton including SUVIN, the finest quality of Extra Long Staple Cotton produced in Tamil Nadu having the highest fibre length.
- Further, natural coloured cotton that is grown in Dharwad in the state of Karnataka in different colours like dark brown, medium brown, green and cream colours will also be on display. Being naturally coloured there is no need to use synthetic dyes which leads to less toxicity in the fabric when used.
- The Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (TEXPROCIL) will be displaying India's high quality cotton textiles at the exhibition.
- Fabrics which have been given Geographical Indication like Venkatagiri, Chanderi, Maheshwari and Ikkat sarees will be displayed along with many other traditional Indian textiles and organic cotton fabrics.

Cotton Technical Assistance Programme (Cotton TAP-I)

- Between 2011 and 2018, India implemented a Cotton Technical Assistance Programme (Cotton TAP-I) of about USD 2.85 million for seven African countries namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad and also Uganda, Malawi and Nigeria.
- The technical assistance focused on improving the competitiveness of the cotton and cotton-based textiles and apparel industry in these countries through a series of interventions which had significant outcomes leading to a demand for a follow on project.

Bilateral Relations: India, Bangladesh sign MoU for setting up a coastal surveillance system radar in Bangladesh

Relevance IN – Prelims (about India – Bangladesh relations) + Mains (GS II Bilateral relations)

What's the NEWS

- India and Bangladesh inked an important MoU that will enable Delhi to set up a coastal surveillance system radar in Bangladesh besides deciding to further expand connectivity network corridors boosting Delhi's Indo Pacific strategy with Dhaka emerging as a key pillar in that vision.
- Under India's Act East Policy, Bangladesh is provided opportunities to expand connectivity corridors.
- Both India and Bangladesh are set to increase air, water and rail connectivity to enhance trade between Bangladesh and North Eastern India. As part of this decision, the countries decided to operationalize

After the summit between PMs Narendra Modi and Sheikh Hasina the two sides signed seven pacts –

- MoU for providing a Coastal Surveillance System
- Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on the use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports for Movement of goods to and from India
- MoU on withdrawal of 1.82 cusec of water from Feni River by India for drinking water supply scheme for Sabroom town, Tripura
- Agreement concerning Implementation of the Lines of Credit (LoCs) committed by India to Bangladesh
- MoU between University of Hyderabad and University of Dhaka
- Renewal of Cultural Exchange Programme MoU on Co-operation in Youth Affairs.

The two leaders also inaugurated through video-link three bilateral development partnership projects.

- Import of Bulk LPG from Bangladesh.
- Inauguration of Vivekananda Bhaban (students hostel) at Ramakrishna Mission, Dhaka.
- Inauguration of Bangladesh-India Professional Skill Development Institute (BIPSDI) at the Institution of Diploma Engineers Bangladesh (IDEB), Khulna.

Establishment of Coastal Surveillance Radar System

- Both Prime Ministers welcomed the initiatives for development of closer Maritime Security Partnership, and

noted the progress made in finalization of an MoU on Establishment of Coastal Surveillance Radar System in Bangladesh and encouraged both sides for early signing of the MoU.

- India has provided such systems to Mauritius, Seychelles, Maldives and planning one in Myanmar.
- The coastal surveillance system will pave way for Indo Bangladesh White Shipping Agreement in future.
- This will be useful amid growing terror threats via seas and growing presence of China in the Bay of Bengal region.
- The Leaders welcomed the conclusion of Standard Operating Procedures for the use of Chattogram and Mongla ports for movement of goods to and from India, particularly to and from the North East of India, which could create a win-win situation for both economies.

Convergences/challenges

UP | Ratification by India of the historic Land Boundary Agreement in 2015 saw the two countries formally exchange 162 enclaves scattered along their shared borders

DOWN | Hindu minorities in Bangladesh continue to be persecuted, problem for India

UP | Bangladesh allowed Indian vessels to dock at Chittagong port, the first time after 40 years. Indian companies developing Payra port

DOWN | Fencing erected by India along the two countries' shared 4,096-km land border is a point of contention as Bangladesh alleges India has fallen afoul of a 1975 agreement on this

UP | The two-way trade in FY 2012-2013 was \$5.34 billion with India's exports to Bangladesh at \$4.7 billion and imports from the neighbouring country at \$564 million. Also, India exports 600MW power annually to Bangladesh

DOWN | Experts in Dhaka say that although it's becoming narrower, the country's trade gap with India is still high owing to non-tariff barriers that impact its exports

UP | Bangladesh has addressed almost all of India's security concerns vis-a-vis ISI operations, terrorists, FICN etc

DOWN | In recent months, Bangladesh has alleged that terrorists belonging to HuJI and JMB have found safe havens in West Bengal and Tripura

There are added concerns now after terror elements from Bangladesh surfaced in West Bengal, as seen in the 2014 blast in Burdwan



Teesta Water Issue

- > The Teesta deal was set to be inked during then PM Manmohan Singh's visit to Bangladesh in September 2011
- > It was postponed at the last minute due to objections by WB CM Mamata Banerjee
- > Teesta water is crucial for Bangladesh, especially in the leanest periods from Dec to March

Centre reportedly won't go ahead with deal without taking Mamata on board

MoUs on the plate during B'desh PM's visit?

1 Deepening cooperation in defence sector

> India set to announce a line of credit of USD 500 million for supply of military hardware to Bangladesh

2 Union cabinet approved 5 MoUs, including one on development of waterways on Kushiara and Jamuna rivers

> MoU will lower logistics cost of cargo movement to Northeast & check road congestion through Siliguri Corridor connecting India with Northeast

> MoU on passenger cruise services on coastal routes

3 MoU for strengthening cooperation between judiciaries through interaction among judges via exchange visits

4 MoU in mass media. The 2 countries to facilitate training and study tours for personnel in mass media and public relations

> Agreement on co-production of films, documentaries and animation films

5 India willing to help Bangladesh modernise its railway networks

> Dhaka-Kolkata Maitree Express to have more frequent trips, four trains from Dhaka and four from Kolkata every week

1 India & Bangladesh are key members of BIMSTEC, or the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation. Dhaka hosts the BIMSTEC headquarters

2 This emerging regional grouping that also includes Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan & Nepal, brings greater salience to Delhi-Dhaka relations

3 India & Bangladesh have also been part of the BCIM economic corridor, involving Bangladesh, China, India, and Myanmar

Government Schemes: Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship Programme



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship Programme) + Mains (GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation)

What's the NEWS

- Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship launches Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship Programme with IIM Bangalore
- Fellows in the two-year blended programme with academic module at IIM-B & district immersion program will train with district administration officials

Know! more about the programme

- Programme aims to provide academic inputs and field experience to understand and contribute to the creation of a district level skill development ecosystem
- Programme launched in 75 districts across Gujarat, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand
- To boost skill development at the district level, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) signed a contract with the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Bangalore for introducing a two-year fellowship programme Mahatma Gandhi National Fellowship (MGNF) programme.
- Designed under Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) the fellowship aims to address the challenge of non-availability of personnel for implementation of various programmes at national, state and district levels.
- The MGNF programme has an in-built component of on-ground practical experience with the district administration.
- Launched on a pilot basis in 75 districts across Gujarat, Karnataka, Meghalaya, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand, eligible fellows for the programme have to be in 21-30 years age-group, have a graduation degree from a recognized university and be citizens of India. Proficiency in official language of state of fieldwork will be mandatory.
- Individuals who can implement and manage skill development programmes at the grass roots level are needed and MGNF seeks to create a cadre of young individuals.

Know! the course of the training

- In the course of their training, fellows will work under the close supervision of state skill development missions (SSDM) and will spend time and effort in understanding skilling challenges and gaps in the district.
- They are expected to enrich skilling programmes by bringing in fresh thinking to local planning, execution, community interaction and outcome management.
- Fellows will receive a stipend of Rs. 50,000 in the first year and Rs. 60,000 in the second year.

- On completion of their engagement, they will be awarded a Certificate in Public Policy and Management from IIM Bangalore.

Know! about SANKALP

- Launched by the Government in January 2018, SANKALP is a World Bank loan assisted project that aims to strengthen institutional mechanisms for skill development and increase access to quality and market-relevant training for youth across the country.
- Four key result areas have been identified under SANKALP viz: (i) Institutional Strengthening; (ii) Quality Assurance; (iii) Inclusion; and (iv) Expanding Skills through PPPs.

Health Sector: WHO India Country Cooperation Strategy 2019–2023 launched

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

What's the NEWS

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

Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS)

- The Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) provides a strategic roadmap for WHO to work with the Government of India towards achieving its health sector goals, in improving the health of its population and bringing in transformative changes in the health sector.



Four areas identified for strategic cooperation of WHO with the country encompass:

- to accelerate progress on UHC;
- to promote health and wellness by addressing determinants of health;
- to protect the population better against health emergencies; and
- to enhance India's global leadership in health.

Know! more about Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS)

- The CCS builds upon the work that WHO has been carrying out in the last several years. "In addition, it identifies current and emerging health needs and challenges such as non-communicable diseases, antimicrobial resistance and air pollution.
- 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.
- The CCS outlines how WHO can support the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and other allied Ministries to drive impact at the country level.
- The strategy document builds on other key strategic policy documents including India's National Health Policy 2017, the many pathbreaking initiatives India has introduced — from Ayushman Bharat to its National Viral Hepatitis programme and promotion of digital health amongst others.

Human Resource Development: Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme (PMILP)- ‘DHRUV’

Relevance IN – Prelims (about PMILP-DHRUV) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

What’s the NEWS

- Union Human Resource Development Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ launched the Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme- ‘DHRUV’ from Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

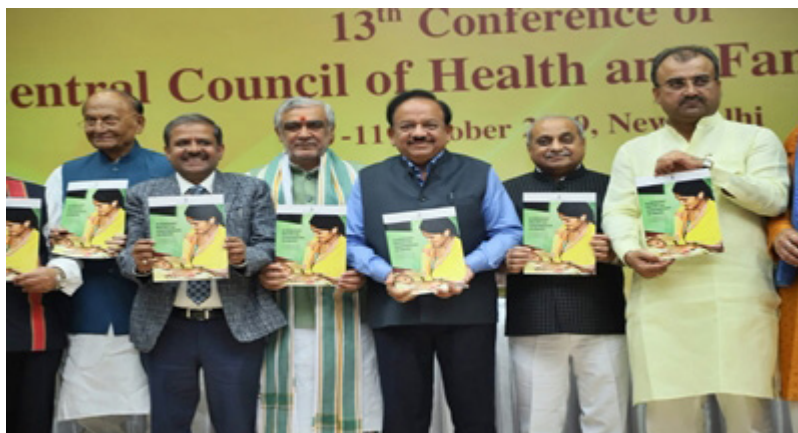
Know! about PMILP

- The objective of the Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme program would be to allow talented students to realize their full potential and contribute to society.
- The Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme is being started to identify and encourage talented children to enrich their skills and knowledge.
- In centres of excellence across the country, gifted children will be mentored and nurtured by renowned experts in different areas, so that they can reach their full potential.
- It is expected that many of the students selected will reach the highest levels in their chosen fields and bring laurels to their community, State and Nation

Know! about the DHRUV programme details

- The programme will be called DHRUV (after the Pole Star) and every student to be called ‘DHRUV TARA’. The students will thus both shine through their achievements and light a path for others to follow.
- It will cover two areas i.e. Science and Performing Arts. There will be 60 students in all, 30 from each area. The 60 students come from across the country
- The students will be broadly from classes 9 to 12, from all schools including government and private.

SUMAN scheme – Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan scheme launched



Relevance IN – Prelims (about SUMAN Scheme) + Mains (GS II Social issues + Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.)

What’s the NEWS

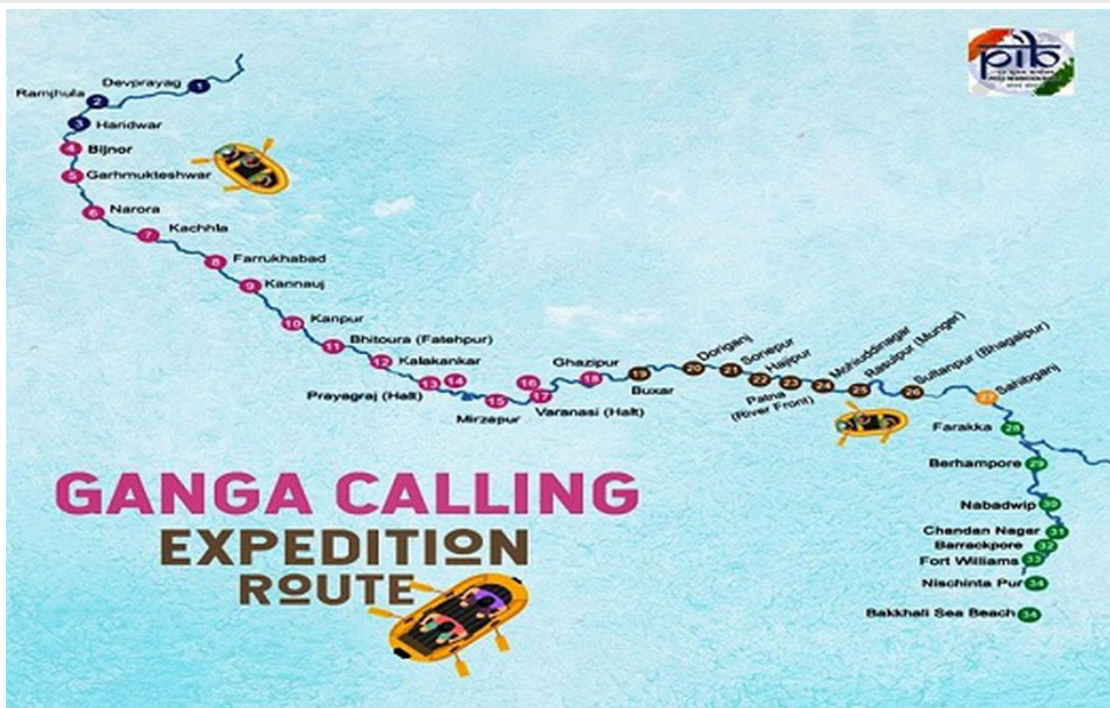
- Aiming zero preventable maternal and new born deaths in India, the central government launched the Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN) scheme, under which pregnant women, mothers up to 6 months after delivery, and all sick new borns will be able to avail free healthcare benefits.

Know! more about the scheme

- The scheme will largely help in bringing down maternal and infant mortality rates in the country.

- Under the scheme, the beneficiaries visiting public health facilities are entitled to several free services.
- These include at least four ante natal check-ups that also includes one checkup during the 1st trimester, at least one checkup under Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan, Iron Folic Acid supplementation, Tetanus diphtheria injection and other components of comprehensive ANC package and six home-based newborn care visits
- Under the scheme there will be zero expense access to identification and management of complications during and after the pregnancy.
- The government will also provide free transport from home to health institutions.
- Under the scheme, the pregnant women will have a zero expense delivery and C-section facility in case of complications at public health facilities
- The World Health Organization (WHO) defines quality of care for mothers and new borns as “the extent to which health care services provided to individuals and patient populations improve desired health outcomes.
- In order to achieve this, health care must be safe, effective, timely, efficiently integrated, equitable and people-centered.
- According to 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.

Government Initiatives: Ganga Aamantran – a unique initiative to connect with Ganga’s Stakeholders launched



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Ganga Aamantran) + Mains (GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

What’s the NEWS

- Namami Gange launches Ganga Aamantran – a unique social awareness initiative to connect with the people
- The ‘Ganga Aamantran Abhiyan’ is a pioneering and historic exploratory open-water rafting and kayaking expedition on the Ganga River
- Starting at Devprayag and culminating at Ganga Sagar, the expedition will cover the entire stretch of over 2500 kms of the Ganga River.

Know! more about Ganga Aamantran

- This is the first ever effort by National Mission for Clean Ganga to raft across the entire stretch of the river and 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.
- The expedition will draw attention to the ecological challenges being faced by Ganga.
- The expedition will encompass the five Ganga basin states including Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar and West Bengal with stops at Rishikesh, Haridwar, Kanpur, Allahabad, Varanasi, Patna, Sonapur and Kolkata.
- They will organise mass cleaning drives, interact with students of the village/city and will further the message of river conservation.
- Apart from the awareness campaign, the team from CSIR–Indian Institute of Toxicology Research will collect water samples from across diverse ranges of the river for the purpose of water testing, while members of the Wildlife Institute of India will undertake flora and fauna census for the year 2019.
- 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 Vichar Manch among others.
- The expedition is aimed to reach millions of people on Ganga Basin and would be the largest social outreach through an adventure sporting event ever.

Bilateral Relations: Second India-France Ministerial level Annual Defence Dialogue



Relevance IN – Mains GS II (bilateral relations India – France)

What's the NEWS

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh, recently visited France, where he participated in the Second India-France Ministerial level Annual Defence Dialogue with his French counterpart
- During the Annual Defence Dialogue held in Paris, the two Ministers comprehensively reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral defence cooperation, which is a key pillar of India-France Strategic Partnership.
- The two nations agreed to expand the scope and complexity of the existing regular bilateral joint exercises (SHAKTI, VARUNA and GARUDA).
- Recognising that India-France partnership in the Indian Ocean Region is crucial for preserving and promoting the common strategic and security interests, the two Ministers noted the continuing implementation of actions outlined in the “Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region” (March 2018).

Shri Rajnath Singh on October 07 attended a ceremony for the Handing over of the first of the 36 Rafale aircrafts being acquired by India from France.

Know! about Dassault Rafale

- The Dassault Rafale is a French twin-engine, canard delta wing, multirole fighter aircraft designed and built by Dassault Aviation.
- Equipped with a wide range of weapons, the Rafale is intended to perform air supremacy, interdiction, aerial reconnaissance, ground support, in-depth strike, anti-ship strike and nuclear deterrence missions.
- The Rafale is referred to as an “omnirole” aircraft by Dassault.

Bilateral Relations: Second Informal Summit between PM Modi, Chinese Prez Xi Jinping to be held in Tamil nadu



Relevance IN – Prelims (about the informal meeting) + Mains (GS II Bilateral relations)

What’s the NEWS

- Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu is getting decked up for the second informal meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and China’s President Xi Jinping, on Friday and Saturday.

The first informal meeting

- After the success of first informal meeting between the two leaders in Wuhan in April 2018, this meet has raised the expectations of exploring new possibilities.
- Wuhan summit in 2018 opened the doors for high level engagements at an informal level, a format in which the two leaders can engage in discussions on varying subjects.

The Venue - Mahabalipuram

- The old seaport town of Mahabalipuram, now known as Mamallapuram, is a UNESCO World Heritage site and the meeting between the two leaders can open the doors for exploring the historical and cultural connection between Mamallapuram and China.
- Mamallapuram, a major sea port, was used to establish trade links with South-East Asian countries, including China around 6th century.
- According to historians, Chinese used to visit this place a long time ago for trade and pilgrimage.
- It is expected that the visit will make these ancient cultural connections strong and will help in increasing the people to people contact which has largely remained unexplored between two big Asian neighbours.
- Trade and tourism between Mamallapuram and China are expected to get a big fillip.

Know! the Historical significance of the venue.

The Pallavas

Narasimhavarman I

- The name Mamallapuram derives from Mamallan, or “great warrior”, a title by which the Pallava King Narasimhavarman I (630-668 AD) was known.
- It was during his reign that Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese Buddhist monk-traveller, visited the Pallava capital at Kanchipuram.

Narasimhavarman II

- Narasimhavarman II (c.700-728 AD), also known as Rajasimhan, built on the work of earlier Pallava kings to consolidate maritime mercantile links with southeast Asia.
- The Descent of the Ganga/Arjuna's Penance, a rock carving commissioned by Narasimhavarman I, with its depiction of the Bhagirathi flowing from the Himalayas, may serve as a reminder of the geography of India-China relations, and their shared resources.

The Cholas

- Tamil-Chinese links continued after the Pallavas, flourishing under the Cholas as the Coromandel coast became the entrepot between China and the Middle East.
- The links extended to a wider area beyond Mahabalipuram, through a layered history that has left a rich tapestry of society, culture, art and architecture, which is diverse and complex, and reaches up to modern times.
- By the time Islam arrived on south India's east coast in the 9th century, Muslims had already started trading with China by maritime routes. The trading missions that the Cholas sent to the Song court included Muslims.
- In later centuries, the Coromandel coast retained its importance for trade between China and the west.

Health Sector: 13th Conference of Central Council of Health and Family Welfare (CCHFV)



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Conference of the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare (CCHFV) + Mains (GS II Social issues + Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.)

What's the NEWS

- The 13th Conference of the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare (CCHFV) has been inaugurated by the Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan

Know! the purpose of CCHFV

- The purpose of the CCHFV meeting is to build a consensus on the national health priorities i.e. Universal Health Coverage (UHC) through Ayushman Bharat, eliminating TB and other priority agenda such as strengthen medical infrastructure.
- This can be achieved by collective increase in healthcare spending by the States/UTs to meet the goals of healthcare spending of National Health Policy 2017- 2.5% of GDP by 2025.
- The four pillars of healthcare, which included universal health coverage; mission mode interventions; quality and accessible affordable healthcare services; and also adequate infrastructure.
- The Health Ministry also urged the state to increase the healthcare spending to a minimum 8% of their State budget so as to meet the goals of healthcare spending of National Health Policy 2017- 2.5% of GDP by 2025.

Recommendations by NITI Aayog

- NITI Aayog underscored two priority areas for the public health sector. “First is increasing the health budgets by the Centre and the States/UTs, and second in enhancing the health infrastructure.
- The NHP 2017 commitment to increasing the health budget cannot be achieved without States contribution.
- There is a need to engage more with the private sector for augmenting the efforts of the public sector to bring in equity to increase the number of beds and hospitals to meet the global standards of health infrastructure.

Know! about the Council of Health and Family Welfare

- The Council of Health and Family Welfare is an apex advisory body to consider and recommend broad lines of policy in regard to matters concerning Health and Family Welfare, in all its aspects.
- Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare is the Chairperson, while Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare is the Vice-Chairperson.
- Member, NITI Aayog, Ministers in charge of the Ministries of Health & Family Welfare, Medical Education and Public Health in the States/Union Territories with Legislatures, representatives of UTs, Members of Parliament (4), Non-Officials (6), Eminent Individuals (11) are Members of the Council. The first meeting of the CCHFV was held in 1988.

Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN)

- Dr Harsh Vardhan along with the other Ministers launched a new initiative – ‘Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN)’ for Zero Preventable Maternal and Newborn Deaths

Human Resource Development: Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme- DHRUV

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme- DHRUV) + Mains (GS II Social issues + Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.)

What's the NEWS

- Union Human Resource Development Minister Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ launched a unique initiative the Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme-DHRUV, which will act as a turning point in the lives of extra ordinarily talented students, from the premises of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).



Know! about DHRUV

- The new Programme DHRUV will act as a platform to explore the talent of outshining and meritorious students, and help them achieve excellence in their specific areas of interest may it be science, performing arts, creative writing, etc.
- The 60 selected talented children along with students of KVS also witnessed the launch of the DHRUV programme.
- The Pradhan Mantri Innovative Learning Programme has been started to identify and encourage talented children to enrich their skills and knowledge.
- In centres of excellence across the country, gifted children will be mentored and nurtured by renowned experts in different areas, so that they can reach their full potential.
- Each selected student will be christened as Dhruv.
- 60 outstandingly talented students have been selected in the first batch of DHRUV programme.



Time: 10:00 AM
Date: 10th October 2019
Venue: Antariksh Bhavan, Bangalore

- It will cover two areas i.e. Science and Performing Arts. There are 60 students in all, 30 from each area.
- The 60 students come from across the country. The students have been broadly chosen from classes 9 to 12, from all schools including government and private.

Social Issues/Social Justice: SARAS Aajeevika Mela

Ministry of Rural Development
Government of India

Enliven your homes
with a touch of rural India

EXHIBITION & SALE OF
RURAL ARTS & CRAFTS

**SARAS
AAJEEVIKA
MELA**

HALL No. 7, PRAGATI MAIDAN, NEW DELHI
23rd March to 1st April, 2018

ENTRY FREE Free Shuttle Bus Service available from Gate No. 1 and 10
Free Gate No. 1, 8 & 10
Timings : 11 AM - 6 PM

Salient Features

- Participation of 700 women artisans from Self Help Groups across rural India.
- Workshops and Buyers and Sellers Meet.
- Cultural programmes everyday, from 2:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

On Display and Sale :

- Handlooms
- Handicrafts
- Artefacts and Heritage products
- Fashion and Beauty products
- Cane and Bamboo products
- Tribal Ornaments
- Decorative Household items
- Metallic products
- Earthen utensils
- Paintings
- Organic Food items
- Spices
- Processed Food products
- Soft toys

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Relevance IN – Prelims (about SARAS Aajeevika Mela) + Mains (GS II Social Justice)

What's the NEWS

- SARAS Aajeevika Mela is an initiative by the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), with an objective to bring the rural women Self Help Groups (SHGs) formed with support of DAY-NRLM, under one platform to show-case their skills, sell their products and help them build linkages with bulk buyers.

Know! about SARAS

- Through participation in SARAS Aajeevika Mela, these rural SHG women get vital national level exposure to understand the demand and taste of urban customers.
- The Mela is organised by the marketing arm of the Ministry, Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART).
- The Ministry of Rural Development is organising SARAS Aajeevika Mela at India Gate Lawns from 10th October to 23rd October, 2019.
- Over 200 stalls have been set-up at the Mela venue, where nearly 500 rural SHG craftswomen from 29 States and UTs will show-case varied range of products

Social Issues/Justice: International Day of Girl Child 2019

Relevance IN – Prelims (about international day of girl child) + Mains (GS II Social justice)

What's the NEWS

- Since 2012, October 11 has been marked as International Day of the Girl and aims to highlight and address the needs and challenges girls' face.

Know! more about it

- It aims at promoting girls' empowerment and the fulfillment of their human rights.
- The observation supports opportunities for girls and increases awareness of gender inequality faced by girls worldwide.
- Access to education, nutrition, legal rights, medical care and protection from discrimination, violence against women and forced child marriage are a few areas of inequality faced by girls around the world.
- The day also reflects the successful emergence of girls and young women as a distinct cohort in development policy, programming, campaigning and research.
- The theme for 2019 International Day of the Girl is Girl Force: Unscripted and Unstoppable.
- In 1995, some 30,000 women and men from nearly 200 countries arrived in Beijing, China for the Fourth World Conference on Women.
- They were determined to recognise the rights of women and girls as human rights. The conference saw the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action: the most comprehensive policy agenda for the empowerment of women.
- The years that followed the conference saw women pressing the agenda forward, leading global movement on a variety of issues.
- This year, the theme, "GirlForce: Unscripted and unstoppable", celebrates achievements by, with and for girls since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Government Schemes: 38th India Carpet Expo in Varanasi

Relevance IN – Prelims (about CEPC) + Mains (GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation)

What's the NEWS

- The Carpet Export Promotion Council (CEPC) is organizing the 38th India Carpet Expo (15th in Varanasi) with an aim to promote the cultural heritage and weaving skills of Indian hand-made carpets and other floor coverings for the visiting overseas carpet buyers.

Know! more about India – Carpet Expo

- India carpet expo is a platform for international carpet buyers, buying houses, buying agents, architects and Indian carpet manufacturers and exporters to meet and establish business relationship. The Expo is organized twice a year in Varanasi and Delhi.
- India Carpet Expo is one of the largest handmade carpet fairs in Asia. India's unique capability in adapting any type of design, colour, quality and size as per the specifications of the carpet buyers has made it a household name in the international market.

Know! about Carpet Export Promotion Council

- The Carpet Export Promotion Council has 2700 members from all over the country and the prime objective of the Carpet Export Promotion Council in holding the India Carpet Expo in the major carpet producing belt of Varanasi is to provide unique pick and choose business opportunity to all overseas carpet buyers.
- It is the endeavour of the Council to provide exclusive business environment to the both carpet importers as well as manufacturer and exporters. Around 200 members from all over India are participating in this Expo.
- The major carpet producing centres in India are in the states of Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, North East Region of India, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

Health Sector: Release of two diagnostic kits developed under 'Make in India' initiative by Indian Council of Agricultural Research - Indian Veterinary Research Institute

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the two diagnostic kits developed by ICAR and IVRI) + Mains (GS II - Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources)

What's the NEWS

- Two diagnostic kits developed by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) - Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) under the 'Make in India' initiative, namely the Bluetongue sandwich ELISA (sELISA) and the Japanese Encephalitis IgM ELISA kit for the control of Swine and Detection of Antigen.
- This indigenous technology will not just help save foreign exchange as the newly developed kits cost ten times lesser than the imported ones but also has the potential to earn foreign exchange.

The Japanese Encephalitis (JE) ELISA Kit (IgM) for Swine –

- The JE is a re-emerging viral zoonotic disease leading to death of children every year in the country.
- The kit developed by the ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute is really helpful for assessing the active infection of JE virus in the swine population which predicts the outbreak of JE in the humans.

Bluetongue: Sandwich ELISA for detection of Antigen

- The Bluetongue (BT) virus 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, the Bluetongue Virus can be controlled with the vaccination of susceptible animals, vector control and quarantine of infected animals with the good management practices.
- Apart from the vaccination, the early diagnosis and isolation of the infected animals are one of the commonly suggested preventive methods for controlling the spreading of the disease.

Bilateral Relations: India and Netherlands launched the second phase of the LOTUS-HR (Local Treatment of Urban Sewage streams for Healthy Reuse plant)

Relevance IN – Prelims (about LOTUS-HR) + Mains (GS II bilateral relations)

What's the NEWS

- India and the Netherlands jointly launch the second phase of the Local Treatment of Urban Sewage streams for Healthy Reuse (LOTUS-HR) program was done by the Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan,.
- The launch programme was held during the visit of Netherlands King & the Queen to the India-Netherlands water laboratory at the Barapullah drain in Delhi.

Know! about LOTUS -HR

- LOTUS-HR for treatment of sewage water is going to enter into the second phase, wherein 10 thousand L sewage water will be treated per day.
- Dutch and Indian companies are contributing to the project by sharing their existing technologies and will showcase how one can treat urban waste water into clean water for various purposes.
- The project was initiated in July 2017 and aims to demonstrate a novel holistic (waste) water management approach that will produce clean water which can be reused for various purposes.
- The innovative pilot scale modular plant upon commissioning will treat 10,000 L sewage water per day and will showcase a self-sustaining model for the end user.
- This pilot scale facility will employ multiple technologies so that the data generated at the pilot scale becomes a tool-box of treatment technologies for replication at other sites in Delhi as well as other parts of India where

similar drains exist.

- The rationale is that the mixing and matching of technologies from this tool-box will depend on the quantity (flow rate) and quality (pollutant load) of drain water, land availability, site accessibility as well as topography.
- 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.

Tribal Affairs: Shri Arjun Munda launches Van Dhan Internship Programme of TRIFED

Relevance IN – Prelims (about TRIFED + Van Dhan Internship Programme) + Mains (GS II Social Justice Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

What's the NEWS

- Shri Arjun Munda, Union Minister of Tribal Affairs launched the “Van Dhan Internship Programme” organised by TRIFED under Ministry of Tribal Affairs
- These interns will help the tribal population in becoming self reliant and entrepreneurs.

Know! more about Van Dhan programme

- 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 “Van Dhan Internship Programme”.
- These interns have been selected to go and work on Van Dhan programme in the field. These interns have an inclination towards involving in matters related to tribal livelihood.
- These interns are undergoing a one week training programme. The period of internship is 6 months (extendable developing upon the need of the organisation and mutual sustainability).
- These interns will work with the team of TRIFED in various states and districts in tribal areas in development of tribal welfare and inclusive growth (a dissertation has to be submitted on conclusion of the internship).
- They will support the TRIFED activities on livelihood promotion, value addition of NTFTs, marketing and credit linkages.
- They will develop tools and techniques on institutional development including mechanism for determination of a just price or producer price of Minor Forest Products.

Know! about Van Dhan Scheme

- The Van Dhan Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED. It was launched on 14th April, 2018 and seeks to improve tribal incomes through value addition of tribal products.
- The scheme will be implemented through Ministry of Tribal Affairs as Nodal Department at the Central Level and TRIFED as Nodal Agency at the National Level.
- At State level, the State Nodal Agency for MFPs and the District collectors are envisaged to play a pivot role in scheme implementation at grassroot level.
- Locally the Kendras are proposed to be managed by a Managing Committee (an SHG) consisting of representatives of Van Dhan SHGs in the cluster.

Know! the working of Van Dhan Scheme

- At unit level, aggregation of produce would be done by SHGs having about 30 members each forming Van Dhan Vikas ‘Samuh’.

Minor Forest Produce (MFP)

- MFP is a major source of livelihood for tribals living in forest areas. The importance of MFPs for this section of the society can be gauged from the fact that around 100 million forest dwellers depend on MFPs for food, shelter, medicines and cash income
- The SHGs would also undertake primary value addition of the MFPs using equipment such as small cutting and sieving tools, decorticator, dryer, packaging tool etc based on MFPs available in the area.

Van Dhan Vikas Kendra

- A cluster of ten such SHGs within the same village shall form a Van Dhan Vikas Kendra.
- Under Van Dhan, 10 Self Help Groups of 30 Tribal gatherers is constituted. The establishment of “Van Dhan Vikas Kendra” is for providing skill upgradation and capacity building training and setting up of primary processing and value addition facility.
- The stock after primary processing shall be supplied by these SHGs to the State Implementing Agencies or direct tie up for supply to corporate secondary processor.
- The Van Dhan Vikas Kendras will be important milestone in economic development of tribals involved in collection of MFPs by helping them in optimum utilization of natural resources and provide sustainable MFP-based livelihood in MFP-rich districts.

Health and Family Welfare: Dr Harsh Vardhan launches Food Safety Mitra (FSM) scheme for strengthening and scaling up ‘Eat Right India’ movement ‘Eat Right Jacket’ and ‘Eat Right Jhola’ on World Food Day 2019

Relevance IN – Prelims (about food safety mitra + eat right India + eat right jacket and Eat right jhola) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

World Food Day 2019

- The theme for this day was ‘Healthy Diets for a Zero Hunger World’. To mark the occasion, Dr Harsh Vardhan also launched the ‘Food Safety Mitra (FSM)’ scheme, along with the ‘Eat Right Jacket’, and ‘Eat Right Jhola’ to strengthen food safety administration and scale up the ‘Eat Right India’ movement.
- The Eat Right India movement is a crucial trigger for the much needed social and behavioural change.
- This campaign along with the ‘Fit India’ Movement’ can achieve huge success if the right strategy is adopted and efforts are made to reach out to every section of the society.

Food Safety Mitra (FSM) scheme

- The ‘Food Safety Mitra (FSM)’ scheme will support small and medium scale food businesses to comply with the food safety laws and facilitate licensing and registration, hygiene ratings and training.
- Apart from strengthening food safety, this scheme would also create new employment opportunities for youth, particularly with food and nutrition background.
- The FSMs would undergo training and certification by FSSAI to do their work and get paid by food businesses for their services.

Eat Right Jacket

- The ‘Eat Right Jacket’ launched will be used by the field staff. This jacket has a smart design to hold tech devices like tablets/smart phone, a QR code and RFID tag for identification and tracking. Apart from providing safety to field staff on duty, this would bring in efficiency, professionalism and transparency in food safety administration and bring in a sense of ownership & visibility of FSOs.

Eat Right Jhola

- The ‘Eat Right Jhola’, a reusable cloth bag shall replace plastic bags for grocery shopping in various retail chains. Since on repeated use, bags are often contaminated with microorganisms and bacteria, proper and regular washing of cloth bags is essential to ensure safety and hygiene.
- These cloth bags are being provided on rental basis through a private textile rental service company.

Social Issues: India slips to 102nd rank in Global Hunger Report, behind Nepal, Pak, Bangladesh

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Global Hunger Index and its findings) + Mains (GS II Social issues and social justice + Issues relating to poverty and hunger.– to quote the report findings in social issues related questions and in essay)

What's the NEWS

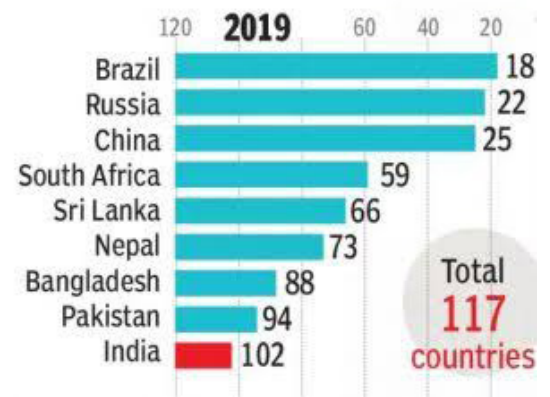
- India slipped to 102 position in the 2019 Global Hunger Index featuring 117 countries, behind Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- Over one in every five children in India is “wasted” (low weight for height), the highest for any country in the report.
- The share of wasting (or low weight for height) 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”

Know! about Global Hunger Index

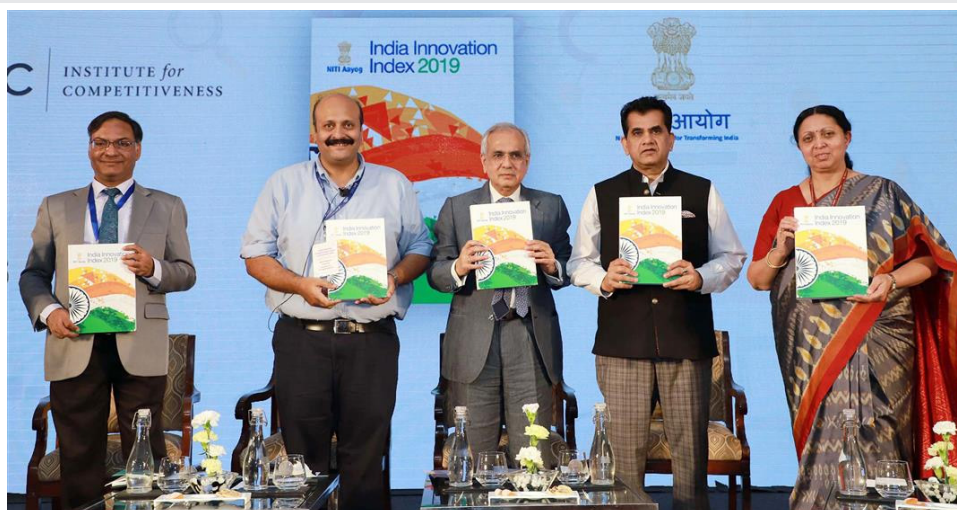
- The Global Hunger Index measures countries on a 100 points scale, where a score of 0 (zero) is considered as best performing countries and 100 is the worst.
- India suffers from a level of hunger that is “serious”, at the very end of the category with a 30.1 GHI score.
- The Global Hunger Index report, prepared and published jointly by Irish aid agency Concern Worldwide and German organization Welt Hunger Hilfewas.
- The major focus of the index was on the relation between climate change and hunger. The report also explains the impact of extreme weather on food production and food security.
- The GHI score is calculated on four indicators — undernourishment; 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); child stunting, children under the age of five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition; and child mortality, the mortality rate of children under the age of five.

Know! the findings of the report

- In 2000, India was ranked 83 out of 113 countries. Now, with 117 countries in the fray, it has dropped to 102 rank.
- Its GHI score has also decelerated — from 38.9 in 2005 to 32 in 2010 and then from 32 to 30.3 between 2010 and 2019.
- Seventeen countries, including Belarus, Ukraine, Turkey, Cuba and Kuwait, shared the top rank with GHI scores of less than five.
- Neighbouring countries like Nepal (73), Sri Lanka (66), Bangladesh (88), Myanmar (69) and Pakistan (94) are also in the ‘serious’ hunger category, but have fared better at feeding its citizens than India, according to the report. China (25) has moved to a ‘low’ severity category and Sri Lanka is in the ‘moderate’ severity category.
- However, India has shown improvement in other indicators such as the under-5 mortality rate, prevalence of stunting among children and prevalence of undernourishment owing to inadequate food.



NITI Aayog: NITI Aayog launches India Innovation Index 2019



Relevance IN – Prelims (about India Innovation Index) + Mains (GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

What's the NEWS

- NITI Aayog with Institute for Competitiveness as the knowledge partner released the India Innovation Index (III) 2019.
- Karnataka is the most innovative major state in India. Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Telangana, Haryana, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Gujarat, and Andhra Pradesh form the remaining top ten major states respectively.
- The top ten major states are majorly concentrated in southern and western India.
- Sikkim and Delhi take the top spots among the north-eastern & hill states, and union territories/city states/small states respectively. Delhi, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Uttar Pradesh are the most efficient states in translating inputs into output.

Know! about the index objectives

- The India Innovation Index would create synergies between different stakeholders in the innovation ecosystem and India would shift to competitive good governance.
- The index is a great beginning to improve the environment of innovation in the country as it focuses on both the input and output components of the idea
- The index is a good effort to benchmark the performance of the state with each other and promote competitive federalism.
- The aim 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.

Know! more about Innovation Index 2019

- The aim 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 index attempts to create an extensive framework for the continual evaluation of the innovation environment of 29 states and seven union territories in India and intends to perform the following three functions-
 1. ranking of states and UTs based on their index scores.
 2. recognizing opportunities and challenges, and
 3. assisting in tailoring governmental policies to foster innovation.

Know! the process of India Innovation Index

- The India Innovation Index 2019 is calculated as the average of the scores of its two dimensions - Enablers and Performance.

Enablers

- The Enablers are the factors that underpin innovative capacities, grouped in five pillars: (1) Human Capital, (2) Investment, (3) Knowledge Workers, (4) Business Environment, and (5) Safety and Legal Environment.

Performance

- The Performance dimension captures benefits that a nation derives from the inputs, divided in two pillars: (6) Knowledge Output and (7) Knowledge Diffusion.

Some other findings

- The Report offers a comprehensive snapshot of the innovation ecosystem of 29 states and seven union territories.
- The index shows that the innovation ecosystem of the country is strong in south and western parts of India.
- The states have been bifurcated into three categories: major states, north-east and hill states, and union territories / city states / small states.
- Karnataka is the leader in the overall rankings in the category of major states.
- Among the category of major states, Maharashtra performs the best in the dimension of Enablers.

Suggestions

- There is a need for greater coordination and collaboration between the industry and educational institutions for enhancing innovation capability.
- A collaborative platform consisting of all the stakeholders of innovation - innovators, researchers, and investors from the industry should be developed.
- This will help in strengthening the industry-academia linkages and will ease the process of technology transfer by providing a platform for innovators to showcase their inventions.
- At the state level, broad level key learning includes forming policies at the state level that seek to improve the innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem.
- Cluster development programs are also an area in need of greater coordination and can benefit from a more open collaborative approach.

Bilateral Relations: 2nd Indo-French Knowledge Summit

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Indo – French knowledge summit) + Mains (GS II Bilateral relations)

What's the NEWS

- The second edition of Indo-French Knowledge Summit is being held from 17-18 October 2019 at University of Lyon in France.

Know! more about the summit

- The summit is dedicated to higher education, research and innovation.
- The two-day summit is being organised by Embassy of France in India in association with Union Ministry of Science and Technology and Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry.
- The summit will launch concrete initiatives as well as will allow participants to deepen academic and scientific cooperation between two countries.
- This summit is an essential step to develop and structure India-France collaborations in fields of education and research, stimulate connections between research and industry, and encourage the mobility of students and scholars.
- The first edition of Indo-French Knowledge Summit was held during 2018 state visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to India.
- After the success of first edition in India, the second edition of Knowledge Summit is taking place in France.

Social Justice: GOAL – Digital Skill Training Programme for Tribal Women



Relevance IN – Prelims (about GOAL) + Mains (GS II Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes; mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections

What's the NEWS

- Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda announced the second phase of programme GOAL (Going Online as Leaders) for tribal women.
- The programme GOAL aims at encouraging, inspiring and guiding tribal women from across India to become local level digitally literate leaders.

Know! more about GOAL Programme

- Ministry of Tribal Affairs partners with Niti Aayog and Facebook are running GOAL for tribal women.
- The objective of this program is to digitally mentor 5000 young women in India's tribal-dominated districts.
- The GOAL program will give technical support to the socially and economically marginalized women for their needs to succeed, using the technology they may otherwise have not had access to
- The GOAL program will include one-to-one weekly mentoring sessions. These sessions will focus on various types of programs like entrepreneurship, online safety and digital literacy.
- Facebook and Tribal Affairs Ministry are jointly working on this project with an aim to close the digital gender gap.

Statics of Tribal Population

- About 104 million tribal people are living in India. Most of the tribal people are living in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andaman Nicobar Islands and some north-eastern states.

International Organisations: FATF puts Pakistan on 'grey list'

Relevance IN – Prelims (about FATF) + Mains (GS II international relations)

What's the NEWS

- FATF - Financial Action Task Force on October 16, 2019, decides to keep Pakistan on its 'Grey List' till February 2020.
- FATF directs Pakistan to take extra strict measures to eliminate terror funding and money laundering.
- The final decision in this regard will be taken by the FATF in February 2020.
- Pakistan was added to the FATF's 'grey list' on June 27, 2018.
- The list contains the names of countries that are involved in providing monetary assistance to terrorism and related causes. The decision was taken during the FATF meeting on Money Laundering in Paris.

Know! the impact of being on the grey list

- It would make it harder for foreign investors and companies to do business in the country that is blamed for funding terror activities.
- Being on the grey list could make borrowing from international debt markets harder and costlier for Pakistan. It might reduce Pakistan's credibility in the international market.
- Block the way for foreign banks to deal with Pakistani counterparts:
- Widen Pakistan's CAD
- Grey listing would lessen the investors' confidence in the country.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 by the Ministers of its Member jurisdictions.
- Established during the G7 Summit in Paris (France), the organisation aims to establish international standards for combating money laundering and terrorist financing and seeks to combat the growing problem of money laundering.

- FATF Secretariat is housed at the headquarters of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris.
- FATF's decision making body is the 'FATF Plenary'. The FATF plenary sessions are held in February, June and October every year.
- It consists of over 39 member countries including India. Currently, China is the Vice President of the FATF.

World Food Day 2019

Relevance IN – Prelims (about World food day) + Mains (GS II Social justice + Issues relating to poverty and hunger).



What's the NEWS

- World Food Day is celebrated to create awareness among masses about food security. United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) released data that says approximately one in nine people around the world are hungry.
- Aim - Providing healthy diets for a zero hunger world.
- In India, about 23% of the world's hungry people live.

Theme of World Food Day 2019

- "Our Actions Are Our Future. Healthy Diets for A #ZeroHunger World."

Know! more about FAO and its findings

- Its objective is to pay attention to food security, hunger, inequality, unemployment, environmental degradation and climate change.
- According to the report released by FAO on World Food Day, about one in every three people is affected by obesity and other forms of malnutrition.
- If the situation will not change the number will be one in every two by 2025.
- More than 93 lakh children in the country are suffering from severe malnutrition.
- More than 21 percent of children in the country are malnourished.

Bilateral Relations: India, Philippines sign four agreements in Manila



Relevance IN – Prelims (India – Philippines takeaways) + GS II (bilateral relations)

What's the NEWS

- India-Philippines signed four bilateral agreements during President Ram Nath Kovind's Manila visit. Indian President Ram Nath Kovind is on an official tour to the Philippines and Japan.
- Kovind's visit will make an impact in the region as China claims most of the sea area.
- China had claimed its possession on the South China Sea many times despite UN-backed international tribunal ruled that China's claim was without any legal basis.



Know! about the Agreements signed

- India and Philippines had four agreements including Science and Technology, Maritime, Tourism and Culture.
- These agreements include exchanging of white shipping data that includes identification and information about the movement of commercial and non-military vessels.
- Kovind's visit coincides with the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.
- Philippines is one of the strong countries in the region. The Philippines is located on the east of the Philippines Ocean and near South China Sea.
- Agreements between both countries will not only strengthen the bilateral relations but also put an impact on China and its dominating image in the region.

Bilateral Relations: Nepal PM Oli and Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina to attend 18th NAM Summit at Baku in Azerbaijan

Relevance IN – Prelims (about NAM) + Mains (GS II international relations + international organisations)

What's the NEWS

Nepal

- Nepal's Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli will attend 18th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) at Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan from 25-26 October 2019.
- Oli will address the general debate of Summit on October 26. The theme of general debate is "Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of contemporary world".
- The 18th NAM Summit will be preceded by the Preparatory Ministerial Meeting on 23-24 October and Senior Officials Meeting on 21-22 October 2019.
- The Summit will consider report of Preparatory Ministerial Meeting, review the progress achieved in implementation of outcomes of 17th Summit held in 2016 and conclude with the adoption of the Baku Declaration.
- Nepal is one of the founding members of Non-Aligned Movement and has been actively participating in all NAM Summits since its inception.
- Principles of non-alignment constitute one of the basic tenets of Nepal's foreign policy.

Bangladesh

- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will attend the 18th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to be held on October 25-26 in Baku, Azerbaijan.
- Host Azerbaijan will formally take over the chairmanship of NAM for the next three years at the Baku Summit, said an official.

Know! about NAM

- NAM was founded during the collapse of the colonial system and the independence struggles of the peoples of Africa, Asia, Latin America and other regions of the world and at the height of the Cold War.
- Its actions were a key factor in the decolonisation process, which later led to the attainment of freedom and independence by many countries and people and to the founding of tens of new sovereign states.
- Throughout its history, the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries has played a fundamental role in the preservation of world peace and security.
- The chairmanship of NAM will be built on three main priorities, among others increasing the effectiveness of the Movement to further enhance the reputation of the organisation on the global stage.
- Other priorities are the promotion of the Bandung principles and the strengthening of the unity within the Movement.
- NAM has 120 member-countries, 17 observer countries and 10 observer organisations.
- NAM had its first summit in Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1961.

Health and Family Welfare: October 2019 marks 25 years of Pulse Polio Programme in India

Relevance IN -Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Know! more about the Pulse Polio Programme (How India achieved it)

- India being declared Polio free in 2014 was a long and momentous . It all began with a single thought that if ballot papers can reach each person, two life saving drops of vaccination too can reach every child”.
- The success of administering polio vaccination drops to 12 lakh children through 4000 ‘polio kendras’ on 2nd October, 1994 in the city of Delhi, led to a countrywide movement and Pulse Polio Program was taken countrywide a year later in 1995.
- India achieved this monumental triumph with the strong Government leadership, hard work and dedication of frontline health workforce, community and religious influencers, health officials, state governments, civil society organizations, professional bodies like IMA, IAP etc., partners such as WHO, Rotary and UNICEF and most importantly the support of our countrymen.
- The best practices and the systems established by the Pulse Polio programme have benefitted other health programs, viz. the community mobilization, logistics management, reaching the last mile or setting up a surveillance system.
- The learnings from Pulse Polio programme have helped implementation of other immunization programme i.e. the Mission Indradhanush (MI) and the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI).
- In 1988, the World Health Assembly (WHA) passed a resolution to launch the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).
- The Government of Delhi, piloted the first ever large scale supplementary immunization campaign with OPV in 1994 giving birth to the “Pulse Polio” immunization campaign with the iconic ‘Do Boond Zindagi Ki’ tagline, on 2nd October 1994, Mahatma Gandhi’s birthday.
- India’s attainment of **polio-free status in 2014** was coined by the World Health Organization as “one of the most significant achievements in public health,” and marked not just India but the entire South East Asia Region being declared polio-free.

Health Sector: Guidelines for Evaluation of Nanopharmaceuticals in India

Relevance IN – Prelims (about nano pharmaceuticals) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Know! the guidelines released by the Government

- These “Guidelines for Evaluation of Nanopharmaceuticals in India” is one of the most important steps for delineating quality, safety and efficacy assessment of the novel nanoformulations.
- These guidelines are intended to provide transparent, consistent and predictable regulatory pathways for nanopharmaceuticals in India.
- Nanocarrier based targeted drug delivery is an emerging field with introduction of nanopharmaceuticals in the market.
- These nanoformulations have higher efficacy, lower toxicity and are safer than the conventional drugs.

Know! about Nanopharmaceuticals

- Nanopharmaceuticals offer the ability to detect diseases at much earlier stages and the diagnostic applications could build upon conventional procedures using nanoparticles.
- Nanopharmaceuticals represent an emerging field where the sizes of the drug particle or a therapeutic delivery system work at the nanoscale.
- In the pharmaceutical industry, a long standing issue is the difficulty of delivering the appropriate dose of a particular active agent to specific disease site.
- Nanopharmaceuticals have enormous potential in addressing this failure of traditional therapeutics which

offers site-specific targeting of active agents.

- Such precision targeting via nanopharmaceuticals reduces toxic systemic side effects, resulting in better patient compliance.
- Nanopharmaceutical reduces the cost of drug discovery, design & development and enhances the drug delivery process.
- This results in the improved Research & Development success rate which enables faster introduction of new, cost-effective products to the marketplace.
- The Guidelines are developed by Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and is an outcome of all concerned Inter-Ministerial efforts coordinated by DBT.

Bilateral Relations: India signs the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor Agreement with Pakistan



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Kartarpur Sahib Corridor) + Mains (GS II Bilateral relations)

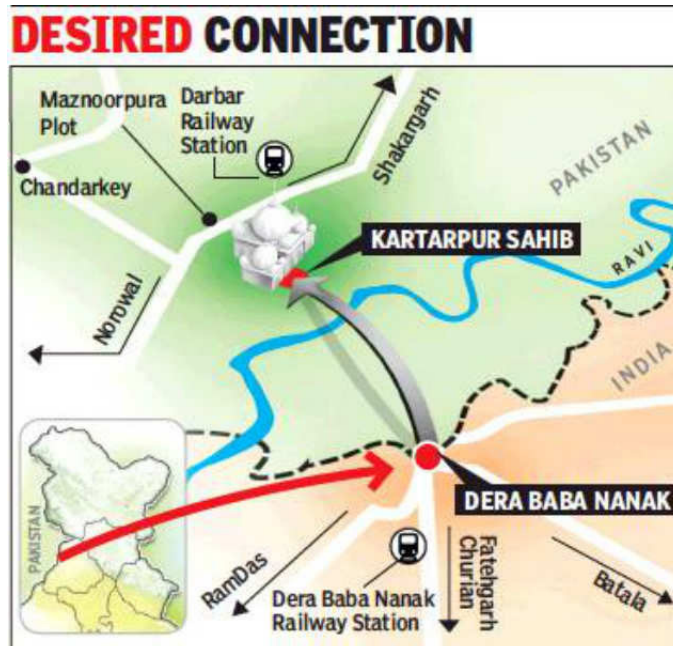
What's the NEWS

- India has signed the Agreement with Pakistan on the modalities for operationalisation of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor at Zero Point, International Boundary, Dera Baba Nanak.
- Representatives from the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Defence, and Ministry of Home Affairs along with the representatives from Government of Punjab have been present during the signing ceremony.
- The Union Cabinet passed a resolution on 22 November 2018 to celebrate the historic occasion of 550th Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Nanak Devji in a grand and befitting manner, throughout the country and across the globe.
- In a landmark decision, the Union Cabinet also approved the building and development of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor from Dera Baba Nanak to the International Boundary, to facilitate pilgrims from India to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, round the year, in a smooth and easy manner.
- With the signing of this Agreement, a formal framework has been laid down for operationalisation of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor.

The highlights of the Agreement are: -

- Indian pilgrims of all faiths and persons of Indian origin can use the corridor;
- The travel will be Visa Free;
- Pilgrims need to carry only a valid passport;
- Persons of Indian Origin need to carry OCI card along with the passport of their country;
- The Corridor is open from dawn to dusk. Pilgrims travelling in the morning will have to return on the same day;
- The Corridor will be operational throughout the year, except on notified days, to be informed in advance;
- Pilgrims will have a choice to visit as individuals or in groups, and also to travel on foot

Human Resource Development: Tamanna aptitude test for Class 9, 10 students to be launched by CBSE & NCERT



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Tamanna) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

What's the NEWS

- In a bid to help students make the right career choices, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) have launched an online aptitude test called as 'Tamanna' (Try And Measure Aptitude And Natural Abilities).

Know! more about Tamanna

- Tamanna is an aptitude test that aims at helping students of Class 9 and 10 make a better choice of subjects, eventually helping them in making an informed decision while choosing subjects in Class 11 and 12.
- In short, the CBSE (Know your aptitude) KYA exam will assess a student's weaknesses and strengths in academics.
- Under the aegis of Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi have developed Tamanna - an Aptitude Test for Senior School Students to enable stakeholders knowing the aptitude of students of classes IX and X"
- The registration process for KYA will begin from January 29, 2020 on its official website - cbse.nic.in
- Students can appear for the test using the school's log-in id on any working day.
- Tamanna provides information about strengths of students and there is no pass or fail in this test.
- It should be taken voluntarily by interested students and must not be used to impose any subject, courses of study and/or vocations etc. on the students.

Bilateral Relations/International Organisations: India Approaches World Body After Pakistan Denies Airspace Use For PM Modi's Flight

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ICAO) + Mains (GS II bilateral relations)

What's the NEWS

- India has approached the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) after Pakistan denied Prime Minister Narendra Modi's special flight the use of its airspace.

- Overflight clearances are sought, and granted by other countries as per prescribed ICAO guidelines and India will continue to seek such overflight clearances.
- This is the third time in recent weeks that Islamabad has refused to allow Indian leaders to use its airspace after turning down last month requests by President Ram Nath Kovind and Modi.
- Modi will travel to Saudi Arabia on Monday where he will attend an international business forum and hold talks with top Saudi leadership.

Know! about ICAO

- ICAO is International Civil Aviation Organization.
- It is an UN specialized agency that was established in 1944 to manage governance and administration of Convention on International Civil Aviation (Chicago Convention).
- The organization classifies the principles and techniques of international air navigation. It also plans and develops international air transport to ensure safety and security

Electoral Reforms: Postal ballot facilities for Absentee voters of essential services, Senior citizens of more than 80 years and marked PwD electors

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the amendments done in the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961) + Mains (GS II electoral reforms)

What's the NEWS

- The disabled and people over 80 years of age can now cast their vote through postal ballot, the government said on Saturday, in a move that will help increase voter turnout.
- At present, voting through postal ballot is available to armed forces and those assigned poll duties.

Know! about the amendments done

- On the recommendation of the Election Commission, the Ministry of Law and Justice has amended the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, on October 22, allowing senior citizens and person with disabilities in the absentee voter list.
- The absentee voter refers to a vote cast by someone who is unable to go to the polling station.
- Officials said that in both these categories there are people who are unable to reach the polling stations and thus are unable to cast their votes.
- This will enable people from these two categories to cast their votes with ease and will also thus increase the voter turnout
- The poll officer will attest the absentee voter in the case of senior citizens and person with disability in the form 13A.
- Election Commission of India has started working on detailed guidelines and SoPs to facilitate the process of postal ballot paper for Absentee voters of essential services, Senior citizens of more than 80 years and marked PwD electors.
- These guidelines will include the identification of such voters, the manner of outreach, the methods of collection as well as voting in the specified centres in each constituency.
- The Commission is also taking a number of steps including personal contact under its SVEEP initiatives to make the electors aware of this new facility so that such electors can exercise their voting right in the manner they intend to do.
- The Election Commission is committed to ensure the ease of voting to all such categories of electors. With this new initiative, the Commission is sure that the senior citizens of more than 80 years of age and the PwD electors will have the choice of exercising their right to franchise from their homes.
- However, such voters have both the choices available either voting through postal ballot by following due procedure or going to the polling station on polling day for voting to exercise their electoral rights in the largest democracy in the world.



Relevance IN – Prelims (about National Digital Health Blueprint (NDHB) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

What's the NEWS

- Urging the stakeholders to work towards implementing the National Digital Health Blueprint (NDHB) in a time bound manner, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that “Government of India is committed to ensuring high quality healthcare, accessible to all upto the last mile.
- The digital health interventions are accelerating this transformation and have a huge potential for supporting Universal Health care

What's the need of digital intervention in Health Care

- The need of the hour is to create an ecosystem which can integrate the existing disparate health information systems and show clear path for upcoming programmes.
- There is a need to ensure convergence across these IT systems to monitor and provide health services in a robust and efficient manner.
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has initiated efforts in the direction of a comprehensive, nationwide integrated e-Health system under National Digital Health Blueprint.
- NDHB will help in providing a common platform for integration of existing applications in health domain and data which has existed in silos, either in public health facility, or, in private healthcare facility, in India.

Know! more about NDHB

- National Digital Health Blueprint aims to create a **National Digital Health Eco-system** that will support Universal Health Coverage in an inclusive, easily accessible, affordable, efficient, timely and safe manner.
- The digital blueprint will aim to ensure a **wider reach of healthcare services** through the provision of a wide range of data, information and infrastructure services. At the same time, it will ensure security, confidentiality and privacy of health-related personal information.
- The National Digital Health Blueprint is in line with the government's vision to provide doorstep services to each individual in the country under Digital India Programme.
- While releasing the blueprint report, Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said that the government is committed to ensuring high-quality healthcare for all. He appealed to all the concerned stakeholders to provide valuable inputs to the blueprint to make it more inclusive.

Bilateral Relations: PM Modi is on a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the important takeaways + about Strategic Partnership Council) + Mains (GS II Bilateral relations)

What's the NEWS

- PM Modi is on a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia. He is visiting the country to attend the third Future Investment Initiative and to hold bilateral discussion with King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud. PM will sign minimum of 12 agreements during his visits in areas such as defence, civil aviation, infrastructure, non renewable energy sector

Know! more about the bilateral discussion

- PM will sign minimum of 12 agreements during his visits in areas such as defence, civil aviation, infrastructure, non renewable energy sector, etc.



Strategic Partnership Council

- PM Modi will sign a bilateral “Strategic Partnership Council” pact. India is the fourth country with which Saudi Arabia is signing the pact with. The three other countries are UK, France and China.
- Strategic Partnership Council will include multiple sections from NITI Aayog, External Affairs Ministry and counterpart organizations from Saudi Arabia
- The council is to be led by Mr Modi and King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.
- The Council will have two parallel tracks Political, Security, Culture and society headed by both countries foreign ministers Economy and Investment headed by India’s Commerce and Industry minister and Saudi Arabia’s energy minister.
- The Council being formed will open era of cooperation across various sectors like security, Trade, investment, defence and cooperation. There are over 8 million Indian diaspora in the region.
- The visit gains its importance as the visit comes three months after India ended the special status of Kashmir.
- The Council being formed will open era of cooperation across various sectors like security, Trade, investment, defence and cooperation. There are over 8 million Indian diaspora in the region.

Bilateral Relations: Philippine Army Plans To Buy India’s BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile To Strengthen Its Coastal Security

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Brahmos missile) + Mains (GS II Bilateral relations)

What's the NEWS

- BrahMos missile is regarded as one of the world’s fastest supersonic missiles and the Philippine Army is interested in acquiring the Indian-manufactured weapons system, in order to strengthen its coastal defences

Know! more about it (India – Philippine relations)

- Philippines is very much interested in the possible acquisition of the BrahMos missile, which can be launched from all four platforms (ship, a plane, submarine, or on land).
- Philippine Army wants BrahMos missile as its First Land-Based Missile System Battery (1LBMS).
- Last year when Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the Philippines, New Delhi and Manila signed four agreements, including one to step up bilateral cooperation in the defence and logistics sector.

- India's "Act East Policy" was created to develop bilateral relationship with South East Asian countries and with Philippines India has diversified to include security and defence.
- Last year, much To China's displeasure, India held its first-ever naval exercise with Vietnam and India will soon activate a satellite tracking and imaging station in Vietnam that will give Hanoi access to pictures from earth observation satellites launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Know! about BrahMos

- The BrahMos is a medium-range ramjet supersonic cruise missile that can be launched from submarine, ships, aircraft, or land. It is the fastest supersonic cruise missile in the world.
- It is a joint venture between the Russian Federation's NPO Mashinostroyeniya and India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), who together have formed BrahMos Aerospace.
- The name BrahMos is a portmanteau formed from the names of two rivers, the Brahmaputra of India and the Moskva of Russia.
- It is the world's fastest anti-ship cruise missile in operation

INDIA COMPLETES MISSILE TRIAD
Air variant of BrahMos missile test-fired from a Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jet to hit a sea-based target in the Bay of Bengal. A snapshot:

Strike range
290 km

Speed
Mach 2.8
2.8 times the speed of sound

Weight
2.5 tonnes
Air Force variant

Can be launched from

- Air**
A missile is carried at the belly of the aircraft
- Land**
- Sea/water**

3 TONNES: Weight of Navy and Army variants
"Such a capability can be a game changer for any air force in the world"
SUDHIR MISHRA, CEO, BrahMos Aerospace

The missile launch PTI

Boosting India's aerial prowess

- It is the world's fastest supersonic cruise missile, from land, sea and air, completing the country's tactical cruise missile triad
- It is the heaviest weapon to be deployed on India's Su-30
- The reach of Sukhoi-30 jets and Brahmos' accuracy gives India a dominant position

Appointments: President Kovind appoints Justice Bobde as next CJI, to take oath on November 18

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the process of appointment of CJI)

What's the NEWS

- President Ram Nath Kovind signed a warrant under Article 124 of the Constitution of India appointing Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde as the next Chief Justice of India (CJI).

Know! more about it

- Justice Bobde will take oath as CJI on November 18.
- The oath will be administered by President Kovind. With a long stint of eight years under his belt as SC judge, Justice Bobde would become the 47th CJI and is expected to demit office on April 23, 2021.
- The development comes a few days after present CJI Ranjan Gogoi initiated the process of appointment of Justice Bobde as the next CJI and wrote a letter to the Centre recommending his name.
- This process is followed by all CJIs ahead of their retirement. Gogoi will retire from his post on November 17, just a day before Justice Bobde takes oath.
- Justice Bobde is the second senior-most judge in the Supreme Court to take up the judiciary's top post.
- Article 124 of the Constitution of India provides the matter of appointing judges of the Supreme Court. Though no specific provision exists in the Constitution for appointing the Chief Justice, who as a result, is appointed like the other judges conventionally, the outgoing CJI recommends the name of the senior-most judge (i.e. by date of appointment to the Supreme Court) for appointment by the President of India, as his successor.



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GENERAL STUDIES III

**Technology , Economic Developments,
Biodiversity, Environment, Security
and Disaster management**

Cyber Security/Awareness: National e-Governance Division (NeGD), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) signed an MoU with The National Law Institute University (NLIU), Bhopal

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the objective of MoU) + Mains (GS III Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology. Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology

Objective

- To implement an 'Online Capacity Building Programme on Cyber Law, Crime Investigation and Digital Forensics through NeGD Learning Management System (LMS)'.

Know! why its needed

- With advent of digital age and increased use of mobiles and computers, there has been a significant increase in cybercrimes over the past few years which pose a major challenge for the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA).
- The goal of this programme is to enable Police Officers, State Cyber Cells, Law Enforcement Agencies, Prosecutors and Judicial Officers to acquire the requisite skills to deal with Cyber Forensics cases efficiently & effectively as per the Indian Cyber Law while adopting global best practices, standards and guidelines.
- NeGD, under the Digital India Programme in collaboration with NLIU Bhopal has taken this initiative to offer 9 months Online PG Diploma Course in Cyber Law, Crime Investigation & Digital Forensics to 1000 officials through its Learning Management System (LMS).

Economic Development: Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2019 -20

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Sovereign gold bond) + Mains (GS III Economic development)

What's the NEWS

- Government of India, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, has decided to issue Sovereign Gold Bonds. The Sovereign Gold Bonds will be issued in six tranches from October 2019 to March 2020.
- The Bonds will be sold through Scheduled Commercial banks (except Small Finance Banks and Payment Banks), Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL), designated post offices, and recognised stock exchanges viz., National Stock Exchange of India Limited and Bombay Stock Exchange Limited.

Know! the features of the Bond are:

- The intention of this scheme is to mobilise finances and reduce the economic strains caused by imports of physical gold and reduce the Current Account Deficit (CAD).
- Under the scheme, each bond is equivalent to one gram of gold. Minimum investment is kept at 1 grams and the maximum limit of investment is up to 4 kg per fiscal.
- Price of the bond is fixed in Indian rupees on the basis of the closing price for gold of 999 purity during the last three business days of the week preceding the subscription period.
- The Bonds will be restricted for sale to resident individuals, HUFs, Trusts, Universities and Charitable Institutions.
- The Bonds will be denominated in multiples of gram(s) of gold with a basic unit of 1 gram.
- The tenor of the Bond will be for a period of 8 years with exit option after 5th year to be exercised on the interest payment dates.



SOVEREIGN GOLD BONDS SCHEME
INVEST WISELY. EARN SAFELY

Unique Features

- Bonds issued in denominations of a gram of gold and in multiple thereof
- Minimum Investment - 2 gm; Maximum investment - 500 gm
- Available in DEMAT & Paper form
- Tradable on Stock Exchange
- Earn Interest
- Tenure of Bond: 8 years with an exit option in 5th, 6th & 7th year
- Can be used as collateral for Loans
- Zero risk of Handling actual gold

- Minimum permissible investment will be 1 gram of gold.
- The maximum limit of subscribed shall be 4 KG for individual, 4 Kg for HUF and 20 Kg for trusts and similar entities per fiscal (April-March) notified by the Government from time to time.
- Payment for the Bonds will be through cash payment (upto a maximum of Rs. 20,000) or demand draft or cheque or electronic banking.
- The Gold Bonds will be issued as Government of India Stock under GS Act, 2006. The investors will be issued a Holding Certificate for the same. The Bonds are eligible for conversion into demat form.
- The investors will be compensated at a fixed rate of 2.50 percent per annum payable semi-annually on the nominal value.
- Bonds can be used as collateral for loans. The loan-to-value (LTV) ratio is to be set equal to ordinary gold loan mandated by the Reserve Bank from time to time.
- The interest on Gold Bonds shall be taxable as per the provision of Income Tax Act, 1961 (43 of 1961). The capital gains tax arising on redemption of SGB to an individual has been exempted. The indexation benefits will be provided to long term capital gains arising to any person on transfer of bond.
- Bonds will be tradable on stock exchanges within a fortnight of the issuance on a date as notified by the RBI.

Environment Conservation: Global Student Solar Assembly to commemorate 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the global student solar assembly) + Mains (GS III Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment)

What's the NEWS

- To commemorate 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and to promote the Gandhian idea of sustainable living, the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy in association with IIT Bombay, **is organizing the Global Student Solar Assembly on 2nd October 2019.**
- These students will be accompanied by their trainers who would provide them hands-on training on how to assemble their own solar study lamps.

Know! the need of such awareness

- With the severe threat of climate change looming large, world is increasingly turning towards Gandhian ideas of environmental care and sustainable living.
- Gandhi Ji's concept of non-violence went beyond human race and envisaged non violence towards environment as well.
- His maxim that, "The earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed" has to be our guiding principal in our fight against climate change.
- For India fight against climate change is a matter of faith and commitment. India has committed to reduce its carbon intensity by 33-35% by the year 2030 and to install cumulative renewable energy capacity of 175 GW by 2022 and 450 GW by 2030.
- This Workshop aims at sensitizing young minds **about energy sustainability and environmental care.** While making their own solar lamps, the students will also get introduced to the concept of self sufficiency

LCA (Navy) crosses path breaking milestone: Indian Navy LCA Jet Completes Launch and Recovery Cycle in a Single Sortie



Relevance IN – Prelims (LCA Naval aircraft)+ Mains (GS III Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

What's the NEWS

- A seminal achievement was accomplished in the quest for technologies related to operation of indigenous fighter aircraft from aircraft carriers.

Know! about the launch and recovery process

- LCA Naval Prototype-2 launched off the ski jump at 1621 hours and then subsequently “trapped” at 1631 hrs on the arresting gear site (both locations situated at Shore Based Test Facility INS Hansa, Goa).
- While both these activities had been achieved individually earlier, this was the first occasion when the complete cycle of launch and recovery necessary for aircraft carrier operations was accomplished in a single sortie.

Short Take-Off but Arrested Recovery (STOBAR) concept

- Being a pioneering technology acquisition and demonstration program for the unique Short Take-Off but Arrested Recovery (STOBAR) concept of aircraft operations, the LCA (Navy) team has had to conceptualise and experiment with complex software modes from a clean slate.
- All this had to be done while tentatively exploring and incrementally expanding the structural capabilities of the aircraft to withstand the brutal requirements of carrier operations.
- The event demonstrate the completion of the basic exploration phase of the programme and transition to refinement and improvement iterations.

Environment Conservation: Week-Long IPCC Meet on Climate Change begins in New Delhi

Relevance IN – Prelims (about IPCC and its assessment report) + Mains (GS III Environment conservation)

What's the NEWS

- India is hosting the Second Lead Author Meeting of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group III Sixth Assessment Report at New Delhi
- More than 200 experts/authors including 12 from India and others from around 65 countries are expected to participate in this week-long meeting at New Delhi.

Know! about AR6

- This report will emphasize what can be done in the near term to mitigate climate change, and how mitigation actions can be enabled through policy, institution-building and finance.
- The Sixth Assessment Report (AR6) will examine topics such as the link between consumption and behaviour and greenhouse gas emissions, and the role of innovation and technology.
- The report will assess the connection between short to medium-term actions and their compatibility with the long-term temperature goal in the Paris Agreement.
- It will assess mitigation options in sectors such as energy, agriculture, forestry and land use, buildings, transport and industry.
- The IPCC Panel is due to consider the Working Group III contribution to the IPCC Sixth Assessment Report at a plenary session on 12 to 16 July 2021.
- Each of the three IPCC Working Groups will release their contributions to the Sixth Assessment Report in 2021.

Know! about IPCC

- The IPCC is the UN body for assessing the science related to climate change.
- It was established by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988 to provide political leaders with periodic scientific assessments concerning climate change, its implications and risks, as well as to put forward adaptation and mitigation strategies. It has 195 member states.
- Thousands of people from all over the world contribute to the work of the IPCC. For the assessment reports, IPCC scientists volunteer their time to assess the thousands of scientific papers published each year to provide

a comprehensive summary of what is known about the drivers of climate change, its impacts and future risks, and how adaptation and mitigation can reduce those risks.

- The IPCC has three working groups: Working Group I, dealing with the physical science basis of climate change; Working Group II, dealing with impacts, adaptation and vulnerability; and Working Group III, dealing with the mitigation of climate change. It also has a Task Force on National Greenhouse Gas Inventories that develops methodologies for measuring emissions and removals.

Infrastructure Development/ Energy/Environment Conservation: SLNP Crosses 1-Crore Mark For LED Streetlights



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP) + EESL + Mains (GS III Environment conservation + Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways etc. + GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

What's the NEWS

- Under the Government of India's Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP), Union power minister R.K. Singh recently dedicated 1 crore smart LED streetlights to the nation, which are illuminating 2.7 lakh km of roads in India.

Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP)

- Launched in January 2015, SLNP is the world's largest streetlight replacement programme, being implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Ltd, a joint venture of Central PSUs under the power ministry.

Know! more about the programme

- The 1 crore smart LED streetlights have been installed and helping generate employment for around 13,000 people in the country.
- The installation of 1 crore LED streetlights has resulted in annual energy savings of 6.71 billion kwh and avoided 1,119.40 mw of peak demand, resulting in reduction of GHG emission by 4.63 million tonnes of CO₂ every year.
- Under SLNP, Andhra Pradesh is leading with an installation of 28.9 lakh LED streetlights followed by Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh with 10.3 lakh and 9.3 lakh, respectively.
- As on October 1, 2019, 1,502 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across India have been enrolled under the programme out of which work has been completed in around 900 ULBs.
- EESL has adopted the Pay-As-You-Save (PAYS) model where EESL makes the entire upfront investment in installation of the LED streetlights and no additional budget allocation from the municipalities is required.
- The contract with the municipalities/ULBs is for a period of 7 years. The seven-year contract with the local bodies guarantees a minimum energy saving of typically 50 per cent and provides free replacements and maintenance of lights at no additional cost to the civic partners.
- The municipalities pay EESL from their savings in energy and maintenance cost over a 7-year period, making the LED lights affordable and accessible.

- By March 2020, SLNP aims to replace a total of 1.34 crore conventional streetlights in India with smart LEDs. This includes the 1 crore lights already installed.
- EESL intends to bring investment to the tune of Rs.8,000 crore by 2024 by covering entire rural India. It is expected that more than 30 million LED streetlights would be retrofitted/installed by EESL.

Know! about EESL

- Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) is an energy service company (ESCO) of the Government of India and is the world's largest public ESCO.
- It is 100% government owned, a joint venture of state-owned NTPC Limited, Power Finance Corporation, Rural Electrification Corporation and POWERGRID.
- EESL was formed under India's Ministry of Power to facilitate energy efficiency projects. Innovative business and implementation models can significantly reduce consumption and costs.
- The programme runs without any budgetary allocation from the central government. The cost of using efficient lighting is repaid by municipalities from savings in energy and maintenance expenditure over a period of time.

Science and Technology/ Human Resource: AIM, NITI Aayog's Atal Tinkering Labs and UNICEF India launches 'The Gandhian Challenge'



Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Gandhian Challenge + about AIM and ATL) + Mains (GS III Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life, Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology + GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

What's the NEWS

- On the 150th birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, AIM, NITI Aayog's Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) and UNICEF India, including Generation Unlimited, have launched 'The Gandhian Challenge'.

Know! about The Gandhian Challenge

- This innovation challenge provides a platform for every child across India to ideate innovative solutions for a sustainable India of their dreams, using Gandhi's principles.
- The winners of The Gandhian Challenge will be awarded in New Delhi by NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission and UNICEF on the occasion of Children's Day in November.
- The contest – open for every child in India from 2 October to 20 October – also celebrates 70 years of partnership between Government of India and UNICEF India to enable Every Right for Every Child.
- Through this partnership, AIM and UNICEF recognize every child's ability and right to voice their dreams for a world of their choice, following Gandhi's principles.

- The problem statement for the Gandhian Challenge is: “Share your innovative solutions/ideas to create a futuristic and sustainable world of your dreams, following Gandhi’s principles.”
- Ideas and solutions to the Gandhian Challenge may be expressed through broad categories: Art & Innovation (Letters, poems, painting, videos and photos, among others) and Science, Technology & Innovation (Robotics, IoT, sensors and 3D printers, among others).
- Challenges like this help us understand children’s point of view with a willing to re-examine our own opinions and attitudes, and envisage solutions through a child-rights lens.
- The most innovative, sustainable solutions/ideas will be showcased as a symbol of a larger movement by children taking root in every district of India. Children across India can access to more than 8000 Atal Tinkering Labs across all districts to support their innovative ideas.
- In ATLS, students of class 6th to 12th acquire a problem-solving attitude, develop innovative solutions leveraging technologies like 3D printers, robotics, miniaturised electronics, IOT and programming and DIY kits, with support from teachers and mentors.

Know! about AIM:

- AIM is the Government of India’s flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.
- AIM’s objective is to develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy, provide platform and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders, create awareness and create an umbrella structure to oversee innovation ecosystem of the country.

Six major initiatives of AIM:

- Atal Tinkering Labs-Creating problem-solving mindset across schools in India.
- Atal Incubation Centers-Fostering world class start-ups and adding a new dimension to the incubator model.
- Atal New India Challenges-Fostering product innovations and aligning them to the needs of various sectors/ ministries.
- Mentor India Campaign- A national Mentor network in collaboration with public sector, corporates and institutions, to support all the initiatives of the mission.
- Atal Community Innovation Center- To stimulate community centric innovation and ideas in the unserved / underserved regions of the country including Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.
- ARISE-To stimulate innovation and research in the MSME industry.

Know! about UNICEF India and Generation Unlimited:

- UNICEF, an integral part of the United Nations, works with governments, communities, civil society organizations, the private sector, and other partners worldwide to advance children’s rights, and is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Generation Unlimited is a new UNICEF-led global partnership that aims to ensure that every young person age 10-24 is in some form of school, learning, training, self-employment, or age-appropriate employment by 2030.
- It aims to co-create and scale up proven solutions related to secondary age-education, skills for learning, employability and decent work, and empowerment, with a focus on girls.

NITI Aayog: AIM NITI Aayog, UNDP India Jointly Launch Youth Co: Lab to accelerate youth-led social entrepreneurship and innovation in India

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Youth Co:Lab) + Mains (GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation + GS III Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

What’s the NEWS

- In a latest initiative to recognize young people as critical drivers of sustainable development, Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) India launched Youth Co:Lab which aims at accelerating social entrepreneurship and innovation in young India.



- To mark the launch, a Letter of Intent (LOI) was signed between AIM, NITI Aayog and UNDP India.

Know! more about Youth Co : Lab

- Through Youth Co:Lab, young entrepreneurs and innovators will get a chance to connect with governments, mentors, incubators and investors, who will help equip them with entrepreneurial skills.
- The initiative will also convene a series of youth dialogues across several cities such as New Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Mumbai to promote entrepreneurship across India.
- AIM and UNDP, as part of UNSDF signed between NITI Aayog and UN India, are collaborating to spread awareness about different issues pertaining to youth, the future of work and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) through Youth Co:Lab.
- The first phase of Youth Co:Lab will focus on six SDGs: *SDG 5 (Gender Equality)*, *SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation)*, *SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy)*, *SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth)*, *SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production)* and *SDG 13 (Climate Action)*.
- Targeted at supporting young people overcome challenges, UNDP and AIM, NITI Aayog will empower young people through innovative development ideas.
- Youth Co:Lab will convene social innovation challenges at the national and sub-national level, which will invite young people in the age group of 18-29 years and start-ups to showcase their proposed ideas and solutions to tackle some of the region's biggest social challenges.

About Youth Co:Lab

- It is an innovative platform for young people to explore their ideas and potentials, and bring to scale viable solutions, to accelerate India's progress on the SDGs.
- Co-created in 2017 by UNDP and the Citi Foundation, and operational in 25 countries across the Asia Pacific region, the Youth Co:Lab initiative aims to create an enabling ecosystem to promote youth leadership, innovation, and social entrepreneurship.

About Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)

- AIM including Self-Employment and Talent Utilisation (SETU) is Government of India's endeavour to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.

Its objective is to serve as a platform for the promotion of world-class innovation hubs, grand challenges, start-up businesses and other self-employment activities, particularly in technology driven areas.

Bilateral Relations: India - Bangladesh Business forum meets in New Delhi

Relevance IN – Prelims (about India – Bangladesh relations and important agreements signed) + Mains (GS III Bilateral relations + India and its neighborhood- relations.)

Know! the important takeaways of the visit

- Bangladesh Prime Minister informed that three Special Economic Zones have been set up in Bangladesh for Indian investors and hoped that this will broaden the export base of Bangladesh.
- On this occasion two Government to Business (G2B) MoUs were signed between Start up Bangladesh and Tech Mahindra and Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority and Adani Ports and SEZs.

- Bangladesh is India's biggest trade partner in South Asia. Bilateral trade between India and Bangladesh has grown steadily over the last decade.
- India's exports to Bangladesh for the financial year 2018-19 (April-March) stood at USD 9.21 billion and imports from Bangladesh for the same period stood at USD 1.22 billion.
- India and Bangladesh have trade agreement which is facilitative in nature. India and Bangladesh are members of various regional trade agreements including the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), SAARC Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) and the Agreement on South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) which govern the tariff regimes for trade.
- Under SAFTA, India has granted duty free quota free access to Bangladesh on all items except alcohol and tobacco.
- Four Border Haats, two each in Tripura (Srinagar and Kamalasagar) and Meghalaya (Kalaichar and Balat), have been established for the benefit of communities living along the border areas of both countries. Ten additional Border Haats on the India-Bangladesh border are under implementation.
- Cumulative Foreign Direct Investment from India to Bangladesh has more than doubled from USD 243.91 million in 2014 to USD 570.11 million in December 2018.
- Bangladesh is the biggest development partner of India today. India has extended 3 Lines of Credits (LOCs) to Bangladesh in the last 8 years amounting to USD 8 billion.
- In addition to LOCs, the Government of India has also been providing grant assistance to Bangladesh for various infrastructure projects such as the Agartala- Akhaura rail link, dredging of inland waterways, India Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, and High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) in the areas of education, health, water, culture, urban development, disaster management and community welfare.

Environment Conservation: India launches “Green Crackers” in its bid to curb air pollution



Relevance IN – Prelims (about the green crackers) + Mains (GS III environment conservation – steps taken by the government)

What's the NEWS

- In a bid to resolve the crisis of air pollution, the Government launched green firecrackers.
- The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) labs have been successful in developing various environment-friendly fireworks such as sound emitting crackers, flowerpots, pencils, chakkar and sparklers.

Know! about the green firework

- These fireworks, based on new formulations developed by CSIR, have been manufactured and are available in the Indian market for consumers and sellers.

- CSIR has developed new formulations for reduced emission light and sound emitting crackers with 30% reduction in particulate matter using Potassium Nitrate as an
- Also these green crackers will be equipped with a green logo as well as a Quick Response (QR) coding systems which have been developed for differentiation of green crackers from conventional crackers. This QR coding system will also help the consumers to track the cracker using smart phones and other devices as well.
- The emissions testing facilities for the new fire crackers have been set up at CSIR-NEERI as well as their approved National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration (NABL) facilities
- A Raw Materials Compositional Analysis (RACE) facility has been launched in Sivakasi to facilitate manufacturers for testing their raw materials and chemicals. About 530 emissions testing certificates have been issued to fireworks manufactures for new and improved formulations meeting the stipulated guidelines of green crackers.
- Firstly, for immediate improvement CSIR-NEERI developed improvements in conventional formulations based on Barium Nitrate to meet the stipulated norms of green crackers.
- CSIR-NEERI has also developed new formulations for reduced emission light and sound emitting crackers with 30% reduction in particulate matter.

Clear definition of green crackers

- CSIR-NEERI along with Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO), Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEFCC) have also evolved a clear definition of green crackers with a view to educate the regulators and the public on ways and means to demarcate green crackers from conventional crackers.
- Apart from defining green crackers, baseline values for benchmarking green crackers and assessing Barium levels in conventional crackers and green crackers, have been laid down for legal and policy interventions.
- A green logo as well as a Quick Response (QR) coding system has also been developed for differentiation of green crackers from conventional crackers.

Economic Development: National e-Assessment Centre

Relevance IN – Prelims (about National e-Assessment Centre (NeAC) + Mains (GS III economic developments – ease of doing business

What's the NEWS

- The Income Tax Department is ushering in a paradigm shift in its working by introducing faceless e-assessment to impart greater efficiency, transparency and accountability in the assessment process. There would be no physical interface between the tax payers and the tax officers.

Know! about NeAC

- The setting up of National e-Assessment Centre (NeAC) of the Income Tax Department is a momentous step towards the larger objectives of better taxpayer service, reduction of taxpayer grievances
- Under the new system, tax payers have received notices on their registered emails as well as on registered accounts on the web portal www.incometaxindiaefiling.gov.in with real time alert by way of SMS on their registered mobile number, specifying the issues for which their cases have been selected for scrutiny.
- The replies to the notices can be prepared at ease by the tax payers at their own residence or office and be sent by email to the National e-Assessment Centre by uploading the same on the designated web portal.
- This is another initiative by CBDT in the field of ease of compliance for our tax payers.

Defence: Army's biggest mountain combat exercise 'Him Vijay' begins in Arunachal Pradesh

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the exercise Him Vijay) + Mains (GS III various security challenges and their management in border areas)

What's the NEWS

- Indian Army undergoing its biggest transformation has started its biggest mountain assault exercise.
- Exercise 'Him Vijay' has begun. As it is in phases the first important phase will be from 7-10 October and the other phase will be from 20-24 October.



Know! about the exercise

- The exercise is to test mobility, communication and coordination of such huge body of fast-moving troops in difficult terrain. Indian Army is metamorphosing itself to incorporate changes for modern and quick and short war
- Three Battle Groups, each comprising around 4000 soldiers, are participating which will include troop mobilisation, mountain assault and air assault. Elements of special forces will also be part of it.
- The exercise will include three battle groups, each comprising of 4,000 soldiers. This is the largest military exercise in the history of Indian defense.
- The exercise includes mountain assault and air assault as well. Air force and Army helicopters will be transferring troops and equipment at the terrain of upto 15,000 ft.
- The exercise is being done more than 100 kilometres inside the Indian Territory from the Line of Actual Control. It has been positioned with the annual 'Op Alert' which the Army's 3 Corps (Tezpur) and 4 Corps (Rangapahar) carry.
- The sensitivities arose as Chinese President Xi Jinping will be in India from October 11-13 for the second informal bilateral meeting with the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Chennai.

Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs)

- It is an important exercise for validation of the operational concepts of the newly raised Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) to meet the requirements of modern warfare keeping the military progress of the enemy threats in mind.”
- It was in late 2018 that Army, after a major study and discussions, decided to re-configure certain fighting formations of the Army. Integrated Battle Groups both on the Western and Northern borders have been created for quicker and formidable launch of attack on enemy.
- The IBGs will be a body of about 5-6 Units but their configuration will depend on the operational terrain and aim Indian forces want to achieve.
- The Combat Arms like the Infantry, Armoured, Artillery and Mechanised Infantry will be at one place to train together. Depending on mountain, desert or plains the combat support units of the engineers, signals, ordinance and supply will be integrated. There will be Integrated Infantry Battle Groups, Integrated Armoured Battle Groups and Integrated Artillery Battle Groups.

India – China

- India and China share a boundary (Line of Actual Control- LAC) of 3488 kilometres of which 1126 kilometres lie between Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet. There are differences regarding the perception of Line of Actual Control

Environment Conservation: The Wildlife Week

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the wildlife week + about National Board of Wildlife) + Mains (GS III environment conservations)

What's the NEWS

- Wildlife Week is celebrated all over the country in the month of October from 2nd to 8th October every year with the view to preserve the fauna means the animal life of the India.

- Wildlife Week is celebrated every year from 2nd October to 8th October to raise awareness about protection of wildlife.
- A Wild Life Week celebration was planned to arouse the general awakening of the normal people in the country towards the protection of wildlife
- Theme: Life Below Water: For people and planet

Know! more about it

- The week was first celebrated in 1972. The event is organized by National Board of Wildlife since its establishment in 1972.

Know! about National Board of Wildlife:

- The NBWL has been constituted under the Wildlife Protection Act,1972. NBWL advises the government on policy and strategy for wildlife conservation.
- It also reviews proposals for non-forestry use of forestland within National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries and issue or deny permissions.
- The NBWL is chaired by the Prime Minister. It also comprises of a Standing Committee headed by Union Environment Minister.
- The Wildlife Protection Act,1972 specifies that the committee should comprise of 10 eminent ecologists and five NGOs. The committee considers the merits of projects that come to it for scrutiny.

Disaster Management: Gagan Enabled Mariner's Instrument for Navigation and Information (GEMINI), Low cost device for ocean states forecast and mapping potential fishing zones launched



Relevance IN – Prelims (about GEMINI + OSF and about PFZ) + Mains (GS III disaster management)

What's the NEWS

- For seamless and effective dissemination of emergency information and communication on disaster warnings, Potential Fishing Zones (PFZ) and Ocean States Forecasts (OSF) to fishermen, the Government launched the Gagan Enabled Mariner's Instrument for Navigation and Information (GEMINI) device.
- The satellite based communication is the only suitable solution for the dissemination of such emergency information and affordable satellite based communication system should be made part of the dissemination chain to deal with cyclones, high waves and tsunamis.

Know! more about Ocean State Forecasts (OSF)

- While PFZ Advisories provide information on the probable locations on fish aggregation in the seas, OSF provide the accurate state of the ocean.
- Ocean State Forecasts include the forecasts on winds, waves, ocean currents, water temperature, etc. at every 6 hrs on daily basis for next 5 days helping fishermen in maximizing their earnings, ensuring safety and in planning of fishing activities.

Know! what were the limitations

- Though the advisories and forecasts are disseminated through multiple communication modes, none of them could provide such information, including the disaster warnings when the fishermen move away from the coast beyond 10-12 km (typical ranges of mobile phones and VHF).
- That remained as a major limitation in disseminating the information to fishermen who go in the sea beyond 50 nautical miles; sometimes up to 300 nautical miles and beyond to conduct multiday fishing.
- This lacuna was severely felt during 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.
- This communication gap resulted in loss of life, serious injuries to those rescued and severe damages to fishing boats and fishing gear.

To overcome the limitations

- To overcome this difficulty, Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), an autonomous body under the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) joined hands with Airports Authority of India (AAI) to utilize 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. To receive the messages transmitted through the GAGAN satellites, INCOIS together with AAI developed a low-cost GAGAN system-enabled GEMINI (GAGAN Enabled Mariner's Instrument for Navigation and Information) device
- 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.

PFZ forecasts

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan also inaugurated the PFZ forecasts, newly developed by INCOIS which will provide advisories on PFZ to fishermen 3 days in advance.
- PFZ advisories have become part of the value chain of the fishing community, over 6 lakh fishermen are regularly accessing advisories directly through their mobiles to avoid the wastage of time for searching shoals of fish
- The PFZ forecasts are generated using numerical models operationalized by INCOIS and helps overcome the operational difficulties in providing the PFZ advisories during overcast skies based on satellite data.

Economic Development/ Farmer Welfare: India International Cooperatives Trade Fair

Relevance IN -Prelims (about India International Cooperatives Trade Fair) + Mains (GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

What's the NEWS

- Aimed at achieving the goal of doubling farmers' income, first ever 'India International Cooperatives Trade Fair' to be held from 11-13 October, 2019 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi

Know! about India International Cooperatives Trade Fair'(IICTF)

- As 94% of total farmers in India are members of at least one cooperative institution, IICTF is aimed at furthering government's vision and goal of doubling farmers' income by promoting cooperative-to-cooperative trade within India & abroad and promoting exports of key agriculture commodities and products leading to enhanced rural and farm prosperity.



- IICTF also offers a huge opportunity for the industry and business houses from India and abroad to build alliances, business networking, product sourcing and above all, interacting with the primary producers of a wide range of products and service providers.
- More than 120 Indian cooperatives and 20 organizations from Centre / State / UTs and as many as 35 countries from six continents having purchased exhibition booths for participating in IICTF

Youva Sahakar Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme 2019

- In line with Government's focus on programmes like Start-up India and Stand-up India aimed at young entrepreneurs with new and innovative ideas, National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) has formulated Yuva Sahakar Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme 2019
- The Scheme has 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.
- SahakarBharati, the single largest organisation focusing to enlighten the masses about the benefit of cooperative movement also plans to showcase and launch 'Simplydesi' brand at the inaugural of the Fair.

Know! the role of cooperative sector

- The cooperative sector has a formidable role in increasing agriculture exports from the present US \$ 30 billion+ to US\$ 60 billion+ by 2022 as envisaged in the Agriculture Exports Policy 2018.
- IICTF is conceived as a major platform to promote exports of Indian cooperative produce and is packed with exhibitions
- IICTF covers exhibitors / sellers / buyers from India and abroad focussing on sectors such as agriculture and its allied sectors' complete value chains, cold chain, dairy, commodities, exports, technology, climate smart agriculture, processing, packaging, storage, machinery, brand promotion, marketing, cooperative banking, agri-tech and various other sectors.
- The Fair is expected to evolve a conducive environment for cooperative trade in the global arena, help in expansion and diversification of business, technology transfer, help lay international quality benchmark for cooperative products etc.
- Fair is also likely to result in sharing of best practices, collaborations and partnerships.
- In the Indian context, the Fair would help more cooperatives to foray into exports and bring to the fore the cooperative visibility and its strength as a viable business model.
- The Fair is jointly organised by NCDC in association with the Bangkok based international organization (NEDAC) and leading organizations in India (NAFED, APEDA, ITPO etc.) with the support of Ministries of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Commerce and Industry and External Affairs.
- Six State Governments/UTs, namely, Telangana, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Puducherry, Meghalaya and Goa are partners of IICTF.

Economic Development: RBI gives final nod for formation of Kerala Bank

Relevance IN – Prelims (about kerala bank) + Mains (GS III economic development)

What's the NEWS

- The Kerala government's long pending dream of setting up its own bank, by merging district co-operative banks, is all set to become a reality with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) giving the final nod for the move.
- With its formation, the proposed "Kerala Bank" will be largest banking network in the state.
- The "Kerala Bank" would be formed amalgamating the district co-operative banks (DCBs) with Kerala State Co-operative Bank.
- According to government sources, 13 DCBs would be merged with the Kerala State Co-operative Bank for forming the proposed Kerala Bank.
- The government had claimed that the objective of the formation of the Kerala Bank was to strengthen the cooperative sector

Space Awareness: First-of-Its-Kind Satellite Servicing Spacecraft Launches on Russian Rocket



Relevance IN – Prelims (about MEV-1) + Mains (GSIII awareness in the field of space)

What's the NEWS

- MEV-1 is the first commercial satellite-servicing craft to take flight.
- The robotic Mission Extension Vehicle-1 (MEV-1) launched atop a Russian Proton rocket from Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan

Know! all about MEV-1

- MEV-1, which was built by Virginia-based company Northrop Grumman, launched along with the Eutelsat 5 West B communications satellite.
- If all goes according to plan, both spacecraft will deploy into a super synchronous transfer orbit about 16 hours after lift off.
- MEV-1 will then make its way to geostationary orbit and eventually link up with the Intelsat 901 communications satellite, which has been circling Earth since June 2001 and is low on fuel.
- Using its onboard electric thrusters, MEV-1 will take control of the pointing and orbit-maintenance duties for Intelsat 901 — something no other commercial satellite has ever done.
- The servicing craft will extend the older spacecraft's life by five years. After that, MEV-1 could theoretically depart and help out another aging satellite.

Science and Technology: NASA Launches Long-Delayed ICON Space Weather Satellite to Study Earth's Ionosphere



Relevance IN – Prelims (about ICON space weather satellite) + Mains (GS III Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology)

What's the NEWS

- A long-awaited NASA mission designed to probe Earth's upper atmosphere has finally taken off after years of delays.
- The Ionospheric Connection Explorer (ICON) spacecraft launched aboard a Northrop Grumman Pegasus XL rocket, which was released in midair from its carrier plane, a Stargazer L-1011.

Know! more about the mission

- ICON will make its way to Earth orbit on a mission to study the planet's ionosphere, a massive layer of our atmosphere that overlaps with the boundary of space.
- The spacecraft's measurements will help scientists better understand the link between space weather and terrestrial weather, and how the two interact in the ionosphere.
- This mission is operated by the University of California. It was originally planned to launch in late 2017 but delayed due to the problems with the Pegasus XL rocket.
- Ionosphere Connection Explorer (ICON) is equipped with 780-watt solar arrays to power the instruments.

Ionosphere

- The ionosphere lies between 80 to 400 Km above the mesosphere.
- It contains electrically charged particles, which are called ions and hence it is known as the ionosphere.
- Radio waves sent by Earth return to Earth through its layers. The temperature starts increasing as the height increases right from the Ionosphere.
- The amount of ionization in the ionosphere, the height and thickness of the layers, the number of particles located in and the independent electrons, generally grows and shrinks.

Earth's Atmosphere

- The Earth's atmosphere has 6 different layers such as Troposphere, Stratosphere, Mesosphere, Thermosphere, Ionosphere and Exosphere.

Science and Technology: UNICEF Launches Cryptocurrency Fund, Will Accept Donations Through Bitcoin and Ether



Relevance IN – Prelims (about UNICEF cryptocurrency fund) + Mains GS III (Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life, Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology)

What's the NEWS

- The Children's agency of the United Nations, known as UNICEF, has now become the first UN organization to hold and make transactions in cryptocurrency.
- The UN Children's agency has established UNICEF Cryptocurrency Fund, making UNICEF able to receive, hold and disburse donations via cryptocurrencies.

Know! more about it

- UNICEF joins a number of aid agencies that accept donations in cryptocurrencies, including the American Red Cross and the UN World Food Programme.
- UNICEF will now receive and disburse donations in cryptocurrency through the newly launched UNICEF Cryptocurrency Fund. UNICEF will be carrying out transactions on Ether and Bitcoin platforms.
- The first donation to the UNICEF Cryptocurrency Fund will be received from the Ethereum Foundation.

International Organisations: Piyush Goyal attended the 9th RCEP Intersessional Ministerial Meeting in Thailand

Relevance IN – Prelims (about RCEP) + Mains (GS II Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.



What's the NEWS

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Railways, Piyush Goyal attended the 9th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Intersessional Ministerial meeting held on 11-12 October 2019 at Bangkok in Thailand.
- This will be the last Ministerial before the 3rd Leaders Summit to be held on November 4th 2019 in Bangkok.
- The Prime Minister of India is expected to attend the Summit. The 9th Intersessional Ministerial Meeting comes at a crucial stage where the RCEP is scheduled to be announced as concluded in November 2019.

28th round of negotiations for RCEP

- The 28th round of negotiations for RCEP at the expert level had concluded at Da Nang, Vietnam, held from September 19 – 27, 2019.
- Trade Negotiating Committee meeting was held in which senior officials participated in negotiations regarding market access on Trade in Goods, Trade in Services and Investment as well as on other areas like Rules of Origin, Intellectual Property and Electronic Commerce.
- Out of 25 chapters 21 chapters have been concluded. Crucial chapters of Investment, Electronic Commerce, Rules of Origin and Trade Remedies are yet to be settled.

India's concern and stand

- In preparation for the crucial Bangkok Ministerial round this month, Commerce and Industry Minister held several consultations with Indian industry for firming up India's position and for taking into consideration industry concerns and sensitivities.
- The focus and emphasis of the meetings chaired by the Commerce and Industry Minister was on putting in place appropriate safeguards including auto-trigger mechanism against sudden surge in imports from RCEP countries.
- 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).

Know! about RCEP

- The RCEP negotiations were launched by leaders from 10 ASEAN member states (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam) and 6 ASEAN FTA partners (Australia, People's Republic of China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea and New Zealand).
- 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. The RCEP negotiations commenced in early 2013.

Defence: Defence of Andaman and Nicobar Islands exercise 2019 (Danx-19)

Relevance IN – Prelims (about DANX) + Mains (GS III security challenges and their management in border areas)

What's the NEWS

- Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) has conducted the second edition of Defence of Andaman & Nicobar Islands 2019 (DANX-19), a large scale joint services exercise from 14 Oct to 18 Oct 19.

Know! more about it

- Spanning over a period of five days, components of the Indian Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard carried out mobilisation and field manoeuvres to validate defensive plans of Headquarters ANC towards pursuance of the Command's responsibility, namely ensuring territorial integrity of the A&N Islands.
- In addition to internal forces from ANC, accretional forces from Mainland comprising ships and aircraft, Special Forces from the newly formed Armed Forces Special Operations Division (AFSOD), also participated in this edition.

Economic Development: World Economic Outlook 2019 Report

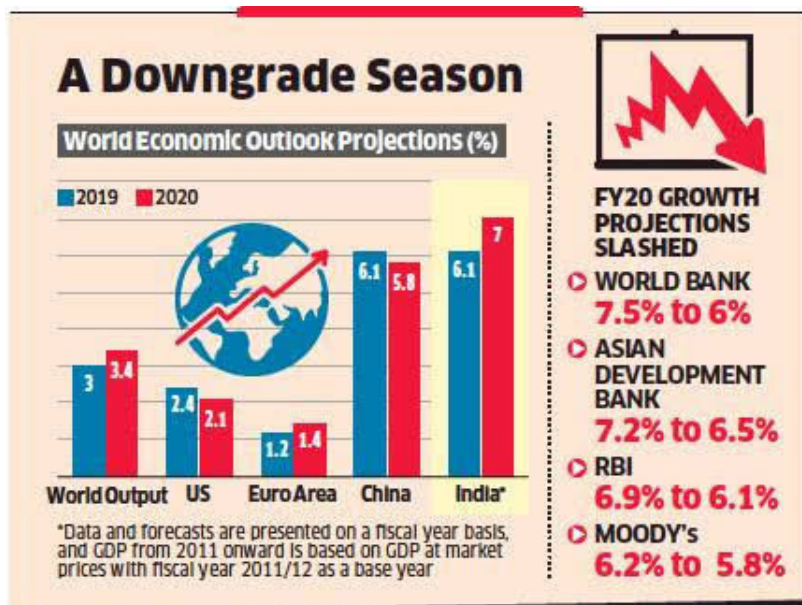
Relevance IN – Prelims (about world economic outlook and its findings) + Mains (GS III Economic development)

What's the NEWS

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has released its biennial report – World Economic Outlook .
- The report indicates that over the past year, global growth has fallen sharply. For advanced economies, growth is projected to soften to 1.7 percent in 2019 and 2020. However, India's GDP growth has been estimated at 6.1 percent.

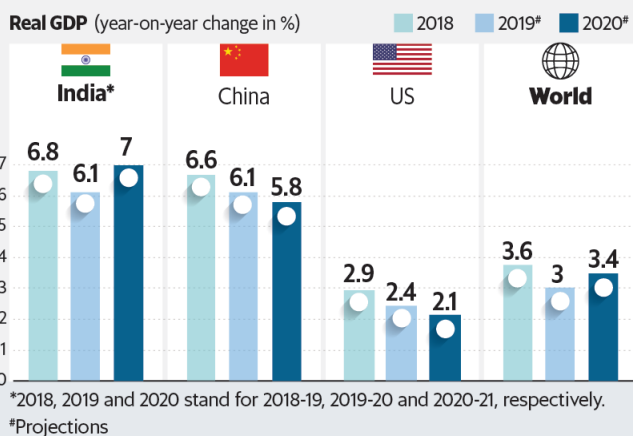
India Specific Findings

- India's GDP growth will touch a mark of 6.1% in 2019 while it will go up to 7% in 2020.
- The report suggests that India's trade volume has reached its lowest level since 2012. Also, It has reduced by 1% since 2012.
- The report highlights that India's economic growth softened in 2019 because corporate and environmental regulatory uncertainty, together with concerns about the health of the non bank financial sector, weighed on demand.



MINT GRAPHITI HURDLES TO GROWTH

The global economy is in a synchronized slowdown, according to IMF, which has downgraded global growth for 2019 to 3%, the slowest pace since the 2008 financial crisis.



There is no room for policy mistakes and an urgent need for policymakers to cooperatively de-escalate trade, political tensions.

GITA GOPINATH
IMF chief economist

Source: IMF

India halved its poverty rate

- The World Bank has released a statement on October 15 that India has halved its poverty rate since the 1990s and achieved a seven-plus growth rate over the last 15 years.
- The World Bank also mentioned that India enjoyed strong improvements in most human development outcomes in last 15 years.
- Along with this, the World Bank recommended that India will need to achieve greater resource efficiency to keep its growth rate on the right track.

Recommendations given by IMF

- IMF report recommends that monetary policy and broad-based structural reforms should be used to address cyclical weakness and strengthen confidence in India.
- Apart from other measures, a credible fiscal consolidation path is required to bring down India's elevated public debt over the medium term.
- Some steps should be supported by subsidy-spending rationalization and tax-base enhancing measures.
- Public sector banks and their credit allocation need strengthening, and role of the public sector in the financial system needs to be reduced.
- Reforms are also required for hiring and dismissal regulations because it would help incentivize job creation and absorb the country's large demographic dividend.

Defence: Naval Commanders' Conference



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Naval Commanders' Conference) + Mains (GS III security challenges their management in border areas)

What's the NEWS

- The Naval Commanders' Conference of 2019 is the apex level biannual event for interaction between the Naval Commanders for deliberation and formulation of important policy decisions.

Know! more about the conference

- During the course of three days, the Chief of the Naval Staff, with the Commanders-in-Chief, will review major operational, materiel, logistics, HR, training and administrative activities undertaken during the previous six months and deliberate upon the course to be steered in the ensuing months.
- The conference also provides an opportunity for institutionalised interaction of Naval Commanders with senior Government officials to take ahead a number of inter-Ministerial initiatives towards development of a safe and secure maritime environment essential for holistic economic growth of the country.
- The theme of discussions will focus on the 'Functional Reorganisation of Indian Navy towards improving Operational Efficiency' and 'Optimal Manning' wherein contemporary issues pertaining to 'operations', 'maintenance', 'op-logistics', 'data management' and 'improvement of organisational practices' are listed for deliberations.

Some Maritime Organisations

SAGAR Programme (Security and Growth for All in the Region)

- Focus – enhancing blue economy
- Security and Growth for All in the Region is a maritime initiative which gives priority to Indian Ocean region for ensuring peace, stability and prosperity of India in Indian Ocean region.
- The goal is to seek a climate of trust and transparency; respect for international maritime rules and norms by all countries; sensitivity to each other's interests; peaceful resolution of maritime issues; and increase in maritime cooperation.
- It is in line with the principles of Indian Ocean Rim Association.

IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association)

- The Indian Ocean Rim Association, formerly known as the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative and Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation, is an international organisation consisting of 22 coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean
- Established in 1997 in Ebene Cyber City, Mauritius
- First established as Indian Ocean Rim Initiative in Mauritius on March 1995 and formally launched in 1997 by the conclusion of a multilateral treaty known as the Charter of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation.
- It is based on the principles of Open Regionalism for strengthening Economic Cooperation particularly on Trade Facilitation and Investment, Promotion as well as Social Development of the region.

Energy Security: 11th Nuclear Energy Conclave 2019

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Nuclear energy conclave) + Mains (GS III infrastructure development – energy)

- Organised by -India Energy Forum
- Objective and theme - focused on economical importance of Nuclear Energy and its theme was - Economics of Nuclear Power- Innovation towards Safer & Cost-Effective Technologies.

Facts related to Nuclear energy

- A hall of nuclear energy was recently opened in New Delhi to create awareness about the application of nuclear energy.
- Light Water Reactors and Fast Breeder Reactors were also deployed in the country.
- Light water reactors are those power reactors that are moderated and cooled with ordinary water.
- There are two basic types of reactors – Boiling water reactor and pressurised water reactor.
- India can access to the imported uranium that will help us to increase nuclear program size.

Know! about India Energy Forum (IEF)

- It was established in 2001 with an objective to understand India's Nuclear Energy Program.
- Several public and private nuclear organizations, oil and gas organizations, Renewable energy organizations are members of India Energy Forum. Some of them are – NHPC, NTPC, Power Grid Corporation, ONGC, Power Finance Corporation among others.
- IEF is the spokesman of India's total energy sector

Government Schemes: MeitY launches startup hub to further technology innovations in India

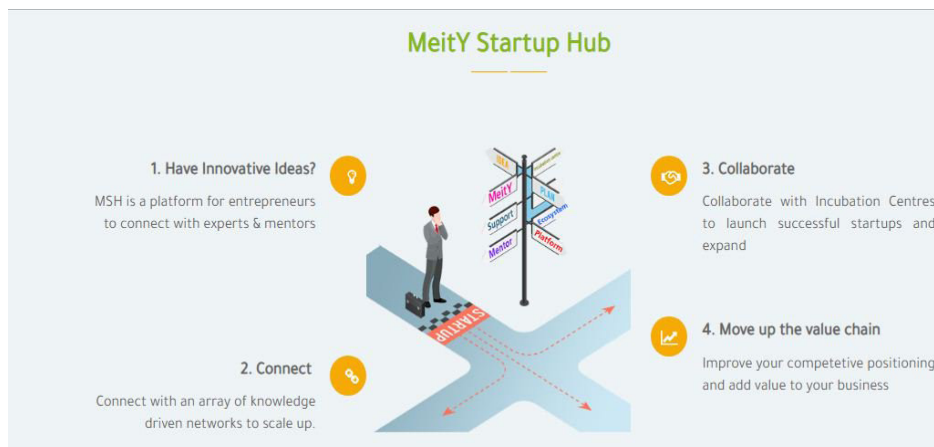


Relevance IN – Prelims (about MeitY startup Hub (MSH) + Mains (GS III Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights).

What's the NEWS

- Minister for Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) Startup Hub (MSH), a platform to connect the startup ecosystem, has been formally inaugurated by Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister for Electronics & Information Technology, Communications and Law & Justice at the MeitY Startup Summit 2019.
- A single-window platform to collect Indian software product database, Indian software products registry.
- The objective of this summit is to provide an environment where entrepreneurs and startups can share strategies and techniques that they find effective with one another.

Know! about MeitY Startup Summit 2019.



- It is supposed to work like a social media platform for all the stakeholders of the ecosystem, including incubators, accelerators, mentors, angel funds, and venture capitalists. At present, India has about 23,974 DPIIT recognised startups in the country.

- Apart from that, an overarching collaborative platform, MeitY StartUp Hub (MSH), has been envisioned to act as national coordination, facilitation and interconnected centre for all activities in the tech startup ecosystem.
- This platform will support startups to reach out to mentors and facilitate startups to scale from ideation to the marketplace.

Know! more about MeitY Startup Hub (MSH)

- MSH will act as a national coordination, facilitation, and monitoring centre that will integrate all the incubation centres, startups, and innovation related activities of MeitY.
- The hub will promote technology innovation, startups, and the creation of Intellectual Properties. According to a media report, former entrepreneur Deepak Agarwal will put together a team to run this platform.
- Besides this, at the event, the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) signed four different MoUs with Intel India Pvt Limited, IIM Calcutta Innovation Park, Pontacq, and IBM to promote innovation in Information and Communications Technology and related emerging fields.
- These MoUs will help in knowledge exchange and enhancing cooperation between technological institutions, venture capitalists, industries, and government agencies. The platform will leverage and bring startup intervention programme to STPI.
- They are meant to promote entrepreneurship and create a nurturing ecosystem for STPI CoEs in areas such as digital and mobile payments, blockchain, IoT, big data, and other emerging technologies.

Prelims Factoids: Most advanced Electronic Interlocking System installed

Relevance IN – Prelims 9 about electronic interlocking system + grand chord route)

Know about electronic interlocking system and about grand chord route

- Most advanced Electronic Interlocking System has been installed on the Grand Chord route.
- The measure is expected to help Indian Railways speed up trains and to achieve its future objective of reducing the travel time between Delhi and Howrah to about 12 hours from the existing 17-19 hours.
- *Grand Chord is part of the Howrah-Gaya-Delhi line and Howrah-Allahabad-Mumbai line.*
- This achievement become possible by replacement of the 65-year old outdated Mechanical Signaling System with the most advanced and safer Electronic Interlocking System at Tundla station in Uttar Pradesh now.

Economic Development: Govt launches BHIM 2.0 with new functionalities

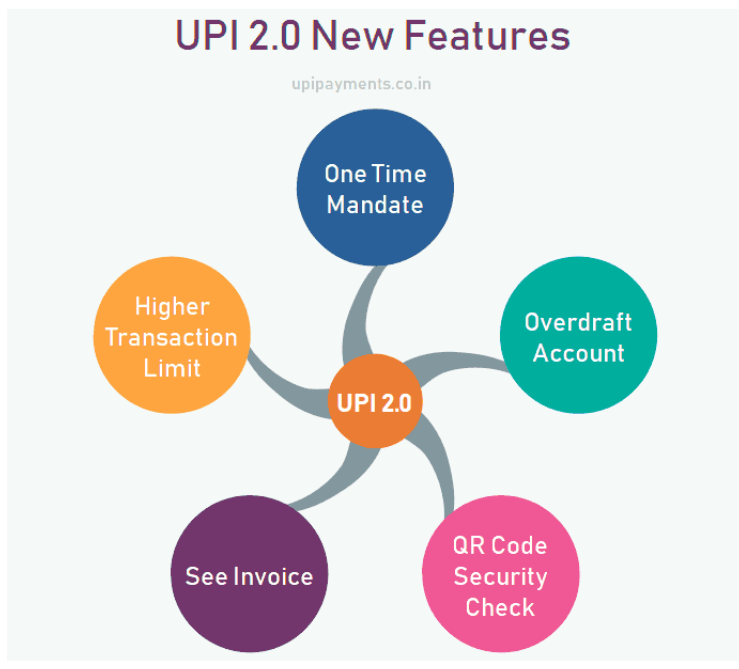
Relevance IN -Prelims (about BHIM 2.0 + Mains (GS III economic development)

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Information Technology announced new initiatives and programs including BHIM 2.0 on October 21.
- The new version of BHIM 2.0 mobile app includes additional languages, new functionalities and increased transaction limits among other features.

Know! about BHIM 2.0

- BHIM app, a UPI based payment interface developed by NPCI that allows real time fund transfer
- BHIM 2.0 is developed by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI).
- It was established in December 2016 that allows real-time fund transfer.
- BHIM 2.0 offers additional features including increasing transaction limits with additional languages.



- BHIM 2.0 will be more useful and effective with new features added to it.
- BHIM 2.0 is already available in 13 languages and it will be available in three additional languages – Haryanvi, Bhojpuri and Konkani.
- Some of the striking features marking BHIM 2.0 include a ‘Donation’ gateway, increased transaction limits for high value transactions, linking multiple bank accounts, offers from merchants, option of applying in IPO, gifting money

Know! more about MeitY StartUp Hub (MSH)

- MeitY StartUp Hub (MSH) has been envisioned as an overarching collaborative platform to act as a national coordination, facilitation and interconnected centre for all activities in the tech startup ecosystem.
- MSH will support startups to reach out to mentors and facilitate startups to scale from ideation to marketplace.
- MSH portal brings onboard key constituents of the tech startup ecosystem with startups, technology incubation centres, Centres of Excellence (CoEs), mentors, VCs and angels together.
- The minister also launched an Indian **software products registry**, which will act as a single window portal to collate Indian software product database.

Environment Conservation: First National Protocol to Enumerate Snow Leopard Population in India Launched

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Snow Leopard Population Assessment) + Mains (GS III Environment conservation)

What’s the NEWS

- In a major boost towards protecting and conserving Snow Leopards the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has launched the First National Protocol on Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India, on the occasion of International Snow Leopard Day at the 4th steering committee meeting of the Global Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Program



Know! more about Snow leopard

- Snow Leopard enumeration of the Nation, which is the first of its kind, has been developed by scientific experts in association with the Snow Leopard States/UTs namely, *Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.*
- The snow leopard, is a large cat native to the mountain ranges of Central and South Asia.
- It is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List because the global population is estimated to number less than 10,000 mature individuals and is expected to decline about 10% by 204
- These conferences provide an opportunity to learn about the best practices of other countries.
- It is noteworthy to mention that Snow Leopard is found in 12 countries. They are *India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Mongolia, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.*
- The two day international meeting of GSLEP Program is being organized by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Know! more about the 4th Steering Committee meeting of the GSLEP

- The 4th Steering Committee meeting of the GSLEP is being attended by Ministers from Nepal, Russia, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia along with senior officials from nine of the Snow Leopard countries.
- The Steering Committee meeting of GSLEP chaired by Nepal and Co-Chaired by Kyrgyzstan, will be sharing their experiences to intensify collaborative efforts towards conserving the Snow Leopards and its ecosystem.

- Discussing sustainable development efforts to be made in the Snow Leopard habitats and take into consideration green economic development, innovative conservation financing and population assessment of global Snow Leopards.
- The Steering Committee will also assess efforts in combating poaching and illegal wildlife trade of Snow Leopards.

Economic Development: India ranks 63 in World Bank's Doing Business Report

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Ease of doing business report and about 10 indicators) + Mains (GS III Economic development)

What's the NEWS

- The World Bank released its latest Doing Business Report (DBR, 2020)
- India has recorded a jump of 14 positions against its rank of 77 in 2019 to be placed now at 63rd rank among 190 countries assessed by the World Bank.
- India's leap of 14 ranks in the Ease of Doing Business ranking is significant considering that there has been continuous improvement since 2015 and for the third consecutive year India is amongst the top 10 improvers.
- As a result of continued efforts by the Government, India has improved its rank by 79 positions in last five years [2014-19].

Know! more about the report

- The Doing Business assessment provides objective measures of business regulations and their enforcement across 190 economies on ten parameters affecting a business through its life cycle.
- The DBR ranks countries on the basis of Distance to Frontier (DTF), a score that shows the gap of an economy to the global best practice.
- This year, India's DTF score improved to 71.0 from 67.23 in the previous year.
- India has improved its rank in 7 out of 10 indicators and has moved closer to international best practices (Distance to Frontier score).
- Significant improvements have been registered in 'Resolving Insolvency', 'Dealing with Construction Permits', 'Registering Property', 'Trading across Boards' and 'Paying Taxes' indicators.

The changes in seven indicators where India improved its rank are as follows:

S.No.	Indicator	2018	2019	Change
1	Resolving Insolvency	108	52	+56
2	Construction Permits	52	27	+25
3	Trading Across Borders	80	68	+12
4	Registering Property	166	154	+12
5	Paying Taxes	121	115	+6
6	Getting Electricity	24	22	+2
7	Starting a Business	137	136	+1
Overall rank		77	63	+14



The important features of India's performance this year are:

- The World Bank has recognized India as one of the top 10 improvers for the third consecutive year.
- Recovery rate under resolving insolvency has improved significantly from 26.5% to 71.6%.
- The time taken for resolving insolvency has also come down significantly from 4.3 years to 1.6 years.
- India continues to maintain its first position among South Asian countries. It was 6th in 2014.

Other highlights

- Apart from India, the other countries on this year's 'top 10 performers' list are Saudi Arabia (62), Jordan (75), Togo (97), Bahrain (43), Tajikistan (106), Pakistan (108), Kuwait (83), China (31) and Nigeria (131).
- New Zealand, Singapore and Hong Kong topped the list in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business ranking.

Environment Conservation: New World Bank Project to Support Climate Resilient Agriculture

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the benefits of climate resilient agriculture) + Mains (GS III issues related to farmers and environment conservation)

What's the NEWS

- The Government of India, Government of Odisha and the World Bank signed a US\$165 million loan agreement to support smallholder farmers strengthen the resilience of their production systems as well as diversify and improve the marketing of their produce, for increased income.

Know! more about the agreement

- The **Odisha Integrated Irrigation Project for Climate Resilient Agriculture** will be implemented in rural areas vulnerable to droughts and largely dependent on rainfed agriculture.
- It will benefit about 125,000 smallholder farmer households from 15 districts of Odisha managing 128,000 ha of agricultural land.
- The project will strengthen the resilience of smallholder farmers against adverse climate by improving access to resilient seed varieties and production technologies, diversifying towards more climate-resilient crops, and improving access to better water management and irrigation services.

Know! about the Project

- The project will support the rehabilitation of 532 water tanks - expected to irrigate 91,435 ha; promote productivity improvements at the farm level; support farmers to reduce the current emphasis on food grains (especially paddy and wheat) and increase the share of high-value and more nutritious products like fruits and vegetables; and provide marketing support to farmers who are able to generate a marketable surplus.
- The project will also support aquaculture in rehabilitated tanks, help farmers access affordable and quality fingerlings, and disseminate improved aquaculture practices and post-harvest management.

Science and Technology: CSIR conducts Whole Genome Sequencing of over 1,000 Indians for Biomedical Applications



Relevance IN – Prelims (about genome sequencing + achievements made by CSIR in this) + Mains (GS III Science and technology)

What's the NEWS

- The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) has conducted Whole Genome Sequencing of 1,008 Indians from different populations across the country.

IndiGen Genome project (Objective)

- The whole genome data will be important for building the knowhow, baseline data and indigenous capacity in the emerging area of Precision Medicine.
- The outcomes of the IndiGen will have applications in a number of areas including predictive and preventive medicine with faster and efficient diagnosis of rare genetic diseases,
- The IndiGen initiative was undertaken by CSIR in April 2019, which was implemented by the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), Delhi and CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad.
- This has enabled benchmarking the scalability of genome sequencing and computational analysis at population scale in a defined timeline.

Benefits of genome sequencing

- The ability to decode the genetic blueprint of humans through whole genome sequencing will be a major driver for biomedical science.
- The benefits of this initiative include epidemiology of genetic diseases to enable cost effective genetic tests, carrier screening applications for expectant couples, enabling efficient diagnosis of heritable cancers and pharmacogenetic tests to prevent adverse drug reactions.

IndiGenome card IndiGen and mobile application launched

- The IndiGenome card and accompanying IndiGen mobile application that enables participants and clinicians to access clinically actionable information in their genomes.
- The outcomes of the IndiGen will be utilized towards understanding the genetic diversity on a population scale, make available genetic variant frequencies for clinical applications and enable genetic epidemiology of diseases.
- The whole genome data and knowhow for the analysis of largescale genomic data is expected to enable evidence and aid in the development of technologies for clinical and biomedical applications in India.

Role of CSIR

- CSIR has led human genomic sciences in India and has made major contributions in understanding the “Indian Genome Variation”.
- CSIR contributed towards the first personal human genome in India and in understanding ancestral population in India and early migrations that led to what we know today on distinct ethnic groups.
- CSIR also pioneered the application of genomics in clinical settings in the area of rare genetic diseases in India by means of DNA/Genome based diagnostics and interaction with large number of clinical collaborators.

Know! about genome sequencing

- Genome sequencing is ostensibly the process of determining the complete DNA sequence of an organism's genome at a single time.
- This entails sequencing all of an organism's chromosomal DNA as well as DNA contained in the mitochondria and, for plants, in the chloroplast. In practice, genome sequences that are nearly complete are also called whole genome sequences.

Environment Conservation: Trans-boundary wildlife conservation ‘peace park’

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the trans-boundary wildlife conservation ‘peace park’ + Mains (GS III Environment conservation)

What's the NEWS

- India, Nepal and Bhutan have drafted a memorandum of understanding to create a trans-boundary wildlife conservation ‘peace park’

- The process is in its final stage. The MoU is currently going back and forth among the countries for final changes



Know! about the trans-boundary park

- The proposed Park will include biodiversity-rich landscapes in adjoining areas of the three countries
- The trans-boundary parks present a fundamental shift in which wildlife conservation is done. From a species focused approach, it is moving to a landscape based approach
- There is already one trans-boundary Protected Area in India and Bhutan, which includes the Manas landscape of Assam, and the new tripartite park will be an extension of this
- This initiative was taken by India keeping in view the migratory wildlife species such as elephant
- The process started this year, with the idea that wildlife species, their movement and conservation should not be interrupted by political boundaries.
- This project will maintain the natural connectivity of wildlife species, undisturbed by political boundaries.
- The project will also help the local communities through ecotourism. It will also maintain the traditional and cultural continuity of villages that share similar traditions from time immemorial, but have been separated by the political boundary. In this sense this park will be a harbinger of peace in the area.
- The process, although started by the MoEF&CC, has to involve the Ministry of External Affairs, given the multinational nature of the project.

Environment Conservation: Four Indian start-ups selected for 2019 SEED Awards

Relevance IN – Prelims (about SEED awards) + Mains (GS III environment conservation)

What's the NEWS

- Four Indian start-ups working on sustainable development among the awardees
- Fourteen Start-ups have been selected for this year's SEED awards in which four are Indian – start – ups.

Know! more about the award

- The awards, an annual affair, are granted to organisations working on sustainable development. For 2019, out of 906 applications across nine countries, 14 winners and 52 finalists have been selected for innovative and locally-led start-up eco-inclusive enterprises.
- The award highlights the contribution of green and social enterprises to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Every year, awards are decided under various categories.
- This year's categories includes SEED Low Carbon, SEED Africa Awards, SEED South Africa Climate Adaptation Awards and SEED Gender equality award.

Know! more about SEED

- SEED was founded by the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg.

- The SEED awards are granted to organizations working towards achieving sustainable development goals (SDG).
- It is a global partnership for action on sustainable development and the green economy.
- This initiative works in Asian and African countries including Ghana, India, Indonesia, South Africa, Thailand and Uganda and supports small and growing enterprises with business and capacity-building support.

Know! the Indian start-ups who won the award

- Under the SEED Low Carbon category, an organisation called Aikya Organics, located in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh, has won the award from India.
- Aikya Organics has been working on promoting gender equality by training 1,200 women farmers.
- Apart from Aikya, four more finalists have been selected from India which include Stonesoup, Aarohana Ecosocial Development, Ecozen Solutions and Farmers Fresh Zone.

Defence: Defence Acquisition Council Chaired by Raksha Mantri gives a big impetus to indigenous industry

Relevance IN – Prelims (about DAC and the types of approvals sanctioned by DAC) +Mains (GS III indigenisation of technology)

What's the NEWS

- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh accorded approval for Capital Procurement for the Defence forces amounting over Rs. 3300 crores of indigenously designed and developed equipment.

Know! more about the approvals made under DAC

- Maintaining its impetus on the 'Make in India' initiative, the DAC accorded approval for three projects to be indigenously designed, developed and manufactured by the Indian industry.
- The first two projects include third generation Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM) and the Auxiliary Power Units (APUs) for the T-72 and T-90 Tanks.
- While the third generation ATGM would provide 'Fire and Forget' and "Top Attack" capabilities to the troops in an armoured battle, the APUs would enable incorporation of various upgrades to Fire Control System and Night Fighting capabilities of the Tanks.
- Both these projects will be progressed under the 'Make-IP' Category and will provide a boost to indigenous research and development in the Private Sector.
- With this, for the first time the Ministry of Defence has offered complex Military equipment to be designed, developed and manufactured by the Indian private industry.
- The third indigenous project pertains to discrete Electronic Warfare (EW) systems for the mountain and High Altitude terrain, which would be designed and developed by DRDO and manufactured by design cum production partner from the Indian industry.

Know! more about DAC

- The DAC is Defence Ministry's highest decision making body for capital acquisition proposals forwarded by the Indian armed forces.
- It was set up in 2001 as part of the post-Kargil reforms in defence sector
- It approves the long-term integrated perspective plan for the forces, accords acceptance of necessity (AON) to begin acquisition proposals, and grant's its approval to all major deals through all their important phases.
- It also has the power to approve any deviations in an acquisition, and recommends all big capital defence purchases for approval of the Cabinet committee on security (CCS) headed by Prime Minister.

Space Awareness: First all-female spacewalk



Relevance IN – Prelims (about the first all-female spacewalk) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of space)

What's the NEWS

- NASA astronauts Christina Koch and Jessica Meir recorded history by completing the first all-female spacewalk, wherein the duo fixed the broken part of the International Space Station (ISS).

Know! more about the first all-female spacewalk

- Both the astronauts carried out the Extravehicular Activity (EVA) to replace a power controller of the ISS that got damaged recently.
- Koch and Meir were able to fix the damaged part by using wrenches, screwdrivers and power-grip tools. No man was involved in this mission.
- Koch was first to move out of the ISS and Meir came after with a tool bag. Initially, the mission was scheduled for 5.5 hours, however, it stretched up to 7 hours due to some additional tasks.
- While Meir made her debut in spacewalking through this mission, it was the 4th spacewalk for Koch.
- This ISS power controller failure had interrupted various space missions of NASA. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has scheduled a series of spacewalks to change the exterior-mounted batteries of the ISS.
- This was the 221st spacewalk carried out by the NASA for maintenance of the ISS. During their Extravehicular Activity, both the astronauts received a call from the US President Donald Trump, who encouraged the young astronauts and hailed their work.
- The first woman to do a spacewalk was cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya

The International Space Station (ISS)

- The International Space Station (ISS) is a space station in low Earth orbit. The ISS programme is a joint project between five participating space agencies: NASA (United States), Roscosmos (Russia), JAXA (Japan), ESA (Europe), and CSA (Canada).
- The ownership and use of the space station is established by intergovernmental treaties and agreements.
- The ISS serves as a microgravity and space environment research laboratory in which crew members conduct experiments in biology, human biology, physics, astronomy, meteorology, and other fields.
- The station is suited for the testing of spacecraft systems and equipment required for missions to the Moon and Mars.
- The ISS maintains an orbit with an average altitude of 400 kilometres (250 mi) by means of reboost manoeuvres using the engines of the Zvezda module or visiting spacecraft. It circles the Earth in roughly 92 minutes and completes 15.5 orbits per day.

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Prelims Factoids/ Miscellaneous Topics

Defence: BRAHMOS Supersonic Cruise Missile, with major indigenous systems, successfully test-fired



Relevance IN – Prelims (about BrahMos Missile)

What's the NEWS

- BRAHMOS supersonic cruise missile featuring Indian propulsion system, airframe, power supply and other major indigenous components, was successfully test fired from ITR, Chandipur in Odisha.
- The missile was successfully test-fired for its full range of 290-km during the launch jointly conducted by DRDO and BrahMos Aerospace.
- With this successful mission, the indigenous content in the formidable weapon has reached a high value, thus bolstering India's defence indigenisation and the flagship 'Make in India' programme.
- Jointly developed by India and Russia, the versatile BRAHMOS has been operationalised in the Indian Armed Forces with all the three services.

BRAHMOS Supersonic Cruise Missile

- BRAHMOS is a two-stage missile with a solid propellant booster engine as its first stage which brings it to supersonic speed and then gets separated.
- The liquid ramjet or the second stage then takes the missile closer to 3 Mach speed in cruise phase.
- Stealth technology and guidance system with advanced embedded software provides the missile with special features.
- The missile has flight range of up to 290-km with supersonic speed all through the flight, leading to shorter flight time, consequently ensuring lower dispersion of targets, quicker engagement time and non-interception by any known weapon system in the world.
- It operates on 'Fire and Forget Principle', adopting varieties of flights on its way to the target.

Defence: Indo-Thailand Joint Military Exercise Maitree – 2019

Relevance IN – Prelims (about MAITREE- 2019)

What's the NEWS

- Exercise MAITREE-2019, the joint military training exercise between Indian Army (IA) & Royal Thailand Army (RTA) which commenced on 16 Sep 19, culminated on 29 Sep 2019 at Foreign Training Node, Umroi (Meghalaya).
- During the last 14 days, contingents of both armies shared their expertise and experiences in counter terrorism operations and enhanced interoperability. The scope of the exercise encompassed joint training in various facets of counter terrorism operations in urban and jungle environments.

- The training culminated with a 48 hours outdoor exercise in which troops of both contingents carried out a cordon and search operation in a mock village.

Science & Technology: Digital Exhibition on Mahatma Gandhi titled “Digital Gandhi Gyan-Vigyan” inaugurated

Relevance IN – Prelims (Digital Gandhi Gyan Vigyan Exhibition)

What’s the NEWS

- Bringing a scientific context to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Department of Science & Technology inaugurated an exhibition titled “Digital Gandhi Gyan Vigyan Exhibition”.
- The exhibition has been organised in collaboration with a technology start-up under incubation by IIT, namely, M/s Vizara Technologies Pvt. Ltd, Delhi. The exhibition has the following components :
- **VR Experience:** This is an Immersive Virtual Reality experience based on the life of Gandhi ji, with special focus of his life at the Sabarmati Ashram.
- **Charkha with an AR App:** This is a fabricated physical model of a Charkha which gets animated when seen through an AR app on a hand-held device such as a smart-phone or tablet. Users get to know about its history, mechanics and linkage to Gandhi ji from the AR App.

Defence: Joint Military Exercise Ekuverin

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Joint Military Exercise Ekuverin)

What’s the NEWS

- Tenth edition of the Joint Military Exercise Ekuverin between the Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Force will be organised from 07 to 20 October 2019 at Aundh Military Station in Pune, Maharashtra.

Know! more about Exercise Ekuverin

- The Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Forces have been conducting Exercise Ekuverin meaning ‘Friends’ in the Dhivehi language since 2009.
- The 14 days Joint Exercise 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.
- The focus of the exercise will be on sharing of best practices and acquainting each other with the operating procedures being followed while undertaking counter insurgency and counter-terrorism operations.
- The last exercise was held in 2018 at Northern Area Headquarters, Lh. Maafilaafushi of Maldives.
- India shares very close ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious and commercial ties with the Maldives and Exercise Ekuverin will assist in further strengthening of these ties between the two nations.

Indo-Mongolian Joint Exercise Nomadic Elephant 2019

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Exercise Nomadic Elephant-XIV)

What’s the NEWS

- 14th edition of Indo – Mongolian joint military training, Exercise Nomadic Elephant-XIV, being conducted over a period of 14 days, will commence from 05 Oct 2019.
- The exercise will be conducted from 05 Oct 19 to 18 Oct 19 at Bakloh (Himachal Pradesh)

Know! about Nomadic Elephant-XIV

- Nomadic Elephant-XIV is aimed at training troops in counter insurgency & counter terrorism operations under United Nations mandate.
- The Joint Exercise will enhance defence co-operation and military relations between the two nations. It is an ideal platform for the armies of both the nations to share their experiences & best practices and gain mutually during the joint training.
- The joint training aims at evolving various tactical drills in counter-terror environment like Convoy Protection

Drill, Room Intervention Drills, Ambush/ Counter Ambush Drills, while jointly conducting counter terrorist operations under UN mandate.

- The joint training will also lay emphasis on conducting operations by a cohesive subunit, comprising of troops from both the armies, in an adverse operational conditions thus enhancing the interoperability between the two armies.
- The training planned by both the contingents will go a long way in capacity building for conducting joint operations by the two armies.

India Kazakhstan Joint Military Exercise KAZIND

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the military exercise KAZIND 2019)

What's the NEWS

- The 4th edition of annual military exercise KAZIND 2019 between India and Kazakhstan army commenced at Pithoragarh.

Know! about Exercise KAZIND

- The aim of exercise is joint training of troops in Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorism operations in both Jungle and Mountainous terrain. Exercise KAZIND 2019 can be termed as a facade of long standing strategic ties between India and Kazakhstan.
- As part of exercise, important lectures, demonstrations and drills related to counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations will be conducted. Both the Armies will also share their valuable experiences in countering such situations and also refine drills and procedures for joint operations whenever the need so arises.
- The culmination of exercise will be done on 15 Oct 2019 with a 72 hour exercise which will showcase the joint skills of soldiers while conducting Counter Terrorism and counter insurgency operations.



Defence: Goa Maritime Conclave – 2019 Inaugurated

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Goa Maritime Conclave + about Indian Ocean littoral countries)

What's the NEWS

- The Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC)-2019 was inaugurated by the National Security Advisor, Shri Ajit Kumar Doval, at Goa conducted by the Naval War College.
- The theme for the conclave is “Common Maritime Priorities in IOR and need for Regional Maritime Strategy”.

Know! more about it

- The deliberations, which were held over three sessions during the day were focused on capacity building among IOR Navies to tackle emerging maritime threats, in addition to discussing cooperative strategies for enhancing interoperability among partner maritime agencies.
- On the side-lines of the conclave, various bilateral meetings were also held, between the Chiefs of Navies, to further build on the existing bonds of friendship and also discuss issues specific to both countries.
- The Chief of the Naval Staff and attended by Chiefs of Navies and senior representatives from 10 Indian Ocean littoral countries which included *Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand from South East Asia, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Sri-Lanka from India's immediate neighbourhood and the islands of Seychelles, Maldives and Mauritius.*

National Events: Golden Jubilee Edition of International Film Festival of India (IFFI)

Relevance IN – Prelims (about IFFI)

What's the NEWS

- The 50th International Film Festival of India, 2019 will witness over 200 best films from 76 countries, 26 feature films and 15 non feature films in Indian panorama section and around 10,000 people and film lovers are expected to participate in the golden jubilee edition.

Know! more about IFFI Golden jubilee edition

- The IFFI is celebrating its Golden Jubilee edition, 12 prominent films in different languages that have completed 50 years in 2019, will also be showcased from 20th to 28th November.
- DadasahebPhalke Award winner Shri. Amitabh Bachchan's outstanding contribution to Cinema will be honoured and celebrated through a package of his impactful and entertaining films in the 50th edition.
- Indian Panorama is a flagship section of IFFI, which showcases the best of contemporary Indian Feature and Non-Feature Films of the years. This year, the Feature Film Jury was headed by acclaimed filmmaker and screenwriter Shri Priyadarshan. The Jury has chosen the film HELLARO (Gujarati) directed by Abhishek Shah as the Opening Feature Film of Indian Panorama 2019.

Know! about IFFI

- The International Film Festival of India (IFFI), founded in 1952, is one of the most significant film festivals in Asia.
- Held annually, currently in the state of Goa, on the western coast of the country, the festival aims at providing a common platform for the cinemas of the world to project the excellence of the film art; contributing to the understanding and appreciation of film cultures of different nations in the context of their social and cultural ethos; and promoting friendship and cooperation among people of the world.
- The festival is conducted jointly by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Directorate of Film Festivals and the Government of Goa.

The 39th World Congress of Poets (WCP)

Relevance IN – Prelims (about world congress of poet)

What's the NEWS

- The valedictory session of the 39th World Congress of Poets (WCP)
- The 39th World Congress of Poets was inaugurated at the Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology at Bhubaneswar in Odisha
- Theme: Compassion through Poetry.
- The theme aims to promote peace and brotherhood through poetry.
- The event was inaugurated by the Odisha Chief Minister. Vice President Venkaiah Naidu attended the event.

Know! about World Congress of Poetry (WCP)

- The WCP was founded in 1969. It was held at Manila, Philippines the first time. It is being organized by WAAC – World Academy of Arts and Culture.
- The WAAC conducts poetry workshops, art exhibits, dance, music, cultural exchange programs.
- The organization maintains a library at Taipei, Taiwan. WAAC serves UIA – Union of International Associations. UIA is a research institute and documentation center headquartered at Brussels. It was founded in 1907. It monitors international organizations, association and their challenges.

Environment Conservation: Mobile App, “mHariyali” Launched for ‘Environment Protection

Relevance IN – Prelims (about mHariyali)

What’s the NEWS

- The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs launched the mobile app, *mHariyali*

Know! about mHariyali

- The app is aimed to encourage Public engagement in planting trees and other such Green drives.
- People can now upload information/photos of any plantation done by them, which is linked to app and will be displayed on the website www.epgc.gov.in.
- The App provides for automatic geo-tagging of plants. This app will also enable nodal officers to periodically monitor the plantation. The App is user friendly and works on any android mobile phone.
- A mass plantation drive “Haryali Mahotsav” was launched in San Martin Park, Chanakyapuri in which approx 500 plants were planted and about 150 people, including students, participated.

Nobel Peace Prize 2019



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Noble peace prize)

What’s the NEWS

- Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali has been awarded Nobel Peace prize 2019 for his efforts to resolve 20-year-long border conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea.
- The announcement was made by the Chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, Berit Reiss-Andersen.
- Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali has been recognized with the highest peace honour for his efforts to achieve peace and international cooperation, especially for his active role in resolving Ethiopia’s border dispute with neighbour Eritrea.

Nobel peace prize 2019

- The 2019 Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded in recognition of all those who have contributed towards the peaceful reconciliation in Ethiopia and in the east and north-east African regions.
- The Ethiopian PM, Abiy Ahmed Ali had in close cooperation with the President of Eritrea, Isaias Afwerki secured a peace agreement to end the long-drawn standoff between Ethiopia and Eritrea.
- Abiy Ahmed Ali is the first Nigerian to ever receive a Nobel Prize.
- The 2019 Nobel Peace Prize was the 100th Nobel Peace Prize to be awarded.
- The 2018 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded jointly to Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad to recognize their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.

Kamini Roy Honoured by Google Doodle on her 155th Birth Anniversary

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Kamini Roy)



What's the NEWS

- Kamini Roy was a Bengali social activist and India's first woman honours graduate.

Know! all about Kamini Roy

- Kamini Roy was a Bengali poetess, activist and educationist
- She has dedicated her life to women's education and rights during British India. Kamini Roy was the first woman who received a graduation degree in pre-independence India.
- Kamini Roy supported Ilbert Bill as it was introduced in 1883 during the tenure of Viceroy Lord Ripon. According to the Ilbert Bill, Indian judges were also empowered to hear cases in which European citizens were involved.
- In order to give women the right to vote in the then Bengal, she ran a long campaign.
- Finally, women were given the right to vote in the 1926's general election. She died in 1933.

Indian Railways launches 09 'Sewa Service' Trains

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Sewa Service trains)

Sewa Service trains

- These Sewa trains will provide connectivity to the far-flung areas where stoppages of premiere trains were not possible
- Sewa Service' trains have been planned with spare rakes as a part of 'sweating of assets' initiative by the Indian Railways to have better utilization of the rolling stock
- Indian Railways launches 09 'Sewa Service' Trains today to connect smaller towns around major cities.
- These services were launched by the Minister of Railways by inaugurating Delhi-Shamli passenger train.
- These trains will run on the "Hub and Spoke" Model, thereby facilitating passengers to use these trains to reach the "Hub" for availing onward journey to other major stations.

DAILY SERVICES

 Murkongselek - Dibrugarh

 Delhi - Shamli

 Bhubaneswar - Nayagarh Town

 Kota - Jhalawar City

 Palani - Coimbatore

6 DAYS A WEEK

 Vadnagar - Mahesana

 Asarva - Himmatnagar

 Karur - Salem

 Yesvantpur - Tumkur

 Coimbatore - Pollachi

- Indian Railways plans to run more trains on similar model to serve the passengers of smaller towns and cities. These measures are also expected to boost the earnings of the Indian Railways to help in strengthening the economy.

Map Bases Facts: Vice President returns after a two-nation tour to Africa

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the geographical locations of Comoros and Sierra Leone) + Mains (GS II bilateral ties signed + bilateral relations)



What's the NEWS

- Seeking to expand India's footprint and forge closer ties with Africa, the Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu concluded his tour to Comoros and Sierra Leone.

India- Comoros

- It was the first-ever visit by such a high-level Indian dignitary to Comoros, an archipelago situated off the Southeast coast of Africa and to Sierra Leone.
- The President of Comoros, in an extraordinary gesture of friendship, conferred the 'Order of the Green Crescent', the highest civilian honour of the Union of Comoros on the Vice President.
- Accepting the honour "with utmost humility on behalf of 1.3 billion Indians", Shri Naidu declared that he was touched by the extra-ordinary gesture and said: "a common vision unites us, a common ocean joins us--it is an ocean of friendship and a vision of growing together".
- The two countries signed six MoUs for cooperation in various fields including defense, health and medicine, arts and culture and tele-education (e-Vidya Bharati) and tele-medicine (e-Arogya Bharati).

India - Sierra Leone

- The Vice President appreciated Sierra Leone's role in international affairs, especially as the Chair of the African Union Committee of Ten on UNSC reforms (C-10 group).
- India and Sierra Leone signed 6 agreements to expand the bilateral relations in various fields and also agreed to push for UNSC reforms so that one-third of mankind residing in Africa and India occupy their rightful place in decision making bodies of the UN.
- The Vice President announced to establish a High Commission in Sierra Leone
- The Vice President expressed his happiness on Sierra Leone joining the International Solar Alliance in which India is playing a leading role to enable rapid deployment of solar energy globally and to facilitate the transfer of technology.

Defence: Dilli Series' Sea Power Seminar - 2019 to be conducted at Indian Naval Academy

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Dilli Series sea power seminar) + Mains (GS III Security challenges and their management in border areas)

What's the NEWS

- Indian Naval Academy (INA), Ezhimala will host the the prestigious Dilli Series Sea Power Seminar on 17th and 18th of October 2019. The theme for this year's seminar is "Role of Sea Power in Shaping of Nations".
- The seminar will be covered under three sub – themes, Sea Power Vs Land Power – A Historical Perspective, Sea Power and Geo Economics and Centrality of Sea Power to Global Politics.

Know! more about Dilli Seminar

- The seminar, named after the historic Mount Dilli located within the INA, with considerable historical importance, has witnessed five earlier editions conducted to date.
- The annual Dilli seminar helps young officers and cadets to keep an eye on developments in the maritime domain whilst simultaneously laying a strong foundation of history.
- The Dilli series of seminar has always been an intellectually stimulating experience for all participants especially the young cadets and college students.
- The sixth edition of the Dilli Series Sea Power seminar promises to be equally informative.

Government Schemes: 10th edition of Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav' + Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat

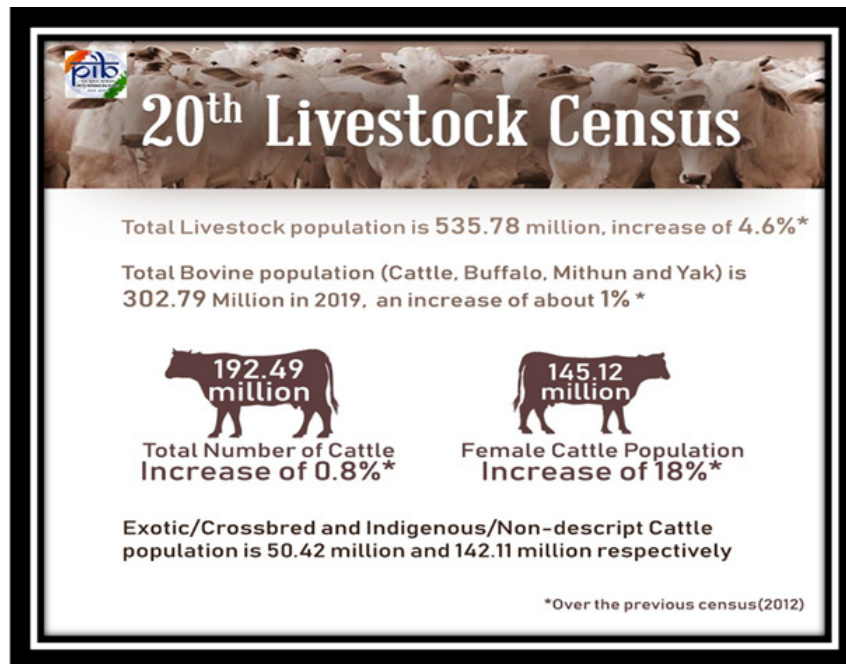
What's the NEWS

- 10th edition of 'Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav' inaugurated by Madhya Pradesh Governor Shri Lalji Tandon in Jabalpur
- Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav under the Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat initiative will be celebrated till 21st October 2019

Know! more about the Mahotsav

- To Celebrate India's plural traditions and culture, Under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat Matrix, 10th edition of Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav was inaugurated
- Ministry of Culture, Government of India is organizing week long diversified cultural carnival in the cities of Jabalpur, Sagar and Rewa of Madhya Pradesh from 14th to 21st October 2019. .
- Madhya Pradesh, being the cultural capital of India is hosting the 10th chapter of the biggest cultural event of the country and a considerable count of craftsmen-artists-culture practitioners of different states of India are coming together at the heart of the country to showcase their art forms, works and exhibitions'.

Government Schemes: Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying 20th Livestock Census



Relevance IN – Prelims (about 20th livestock census)

What’s the NEWS

- Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has released the 20th Livestock Census
- The Census will prove beneficial not just for policy makers but also for agriculturists, traders, entrepreneurs, dairying industry and masses in general.

20th Livestock Census (key highlights)

- 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 previous Census.
- The Female Cattle (Cows population) is **145.12 million**, increased by **18.0%** over the previous census (2012).
- The total buffaloes in the country is **109.85 million** showing an increase of about 1.0% over previous Census.

Know! more about 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. So far 19 such censuses have been conducted in participation with State Governments and UT Administrations.
- The 20th Livestock Census was conducted in participation with all States and Union Territories.
- The enumeration was done both in rural and urban areas. Various species of animals (Cattle, Buffalo, Mithun, Yak, Sheep, Goat, Pig, Horse, Pony, Mule, Donkey Camel, Dog, Rabbit and Elephant)/poultry birds (Fowl, Duck, Emu, Turkeys, Quail and other poultry birds) possessed by the households, household enterprises/non-household enterprises and institutions have been counted at their site.
- The 20th livestock census is indeed a unique attempt as for the first time such a major initiative has been take to digitise household level data through online transmission from the field.
- National Informatics Centre (NIC) has developed a mobile Application software and was used for data collection as well as online transmission of data from the field to the NIC server.

Environment Conservation: Textiles Secretary Inaugurates IHGF-Delhi Fair

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the 48th edition of the Indian Handicrafts and Gifts Fair (IHGF))

What's the NEWS

- IHGF Delhi Fair (Autumn) 2019 endeavours to focus on 'Refuse, Reduce, Reuse and Recycle' this year to encourage sustainable development and preservation of the environment
- Textiles Secretary, Ravi Capoor, inaugurated the 48th edition of the Indian Handicrafts and Gifts Fair (IHGF)

Know! more about IHGF

- Overseas buyers from 110 countries are in India to source home, lifestyle, fashion, furniture and textiles products from around 3200 Indian exhibitors who are participating in the Fair
- The Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) must explore the possibility of opening handicrafts parks in India and develop those parks as tourism and crafts centres.

Know! about EPCH

- EPCH is a nodal agency for promoting exports of handicrafts from the country to various destinations of the world and projecting India's image abroad as a reliable supplier of high quality handicrafts goods and services.
- EPCH has set up Handicrafts Carpet Sector Skill Council which has set up the initiative VRIKSH, the Indian Timber Legality Assessment and Verification Scheme, to establish the chain of custody and legality of the wood which has further been mapped with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- VRIKSH ensures, encourages and supports sustainable development and encourages women entrepreneurs.

Defence: EX EASTERN BRIDGE-V



Relevance IN – Prelims (about EX EASTERN BRIDGE -V)

What's the NEWS

- Indian Air Force is participating in a Bilateral Joint exercise with Royal Air Force Oman (RAFO), named EX EASTERN BRIDGE-V, scheduled from 17-26 Oct 19, at Air Force Base Masirah.
- The last exercise, EX EASTERN BRIDGE-IV was held in 2017 at Jamnagar.

Know! more about the exercise

- For the first time, MiG-29 fighter aircraft will be participating in an International Exercise outside India.

- IAF contingent comprises of MiG-29 and C-17 aircraft. MiG-29 will be exercising with Royal Air Force Oman's Eurofighter Typhoon, F-16 and Hawk.
- 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.
- The participation of Indian Air Force in the exercise will also promote professional interaction, exchange of experience and operational knowledge.
- Besides strengthening bilateral relations, it will also provide a good opportunity to the air-warriors to operate in an international environment.

Culture/Heritage: India wins four 2019 UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation



Relevance IN – Prelims (UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation)

What's the NEWS

- UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation announced recently where Indian bagged four awards in three categories. India's Flora Fountain and three other landmarks in Mumbai are among the four sites that have been chosen from India.
- UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation were declared at a function held in Malaysia.

Know! more about the awards given

Award of Distinction

- Vikram Sarabhai Library, Indian Institute of Management, (Ahmedabad) India

Award of Merit

- Our Lady of Glory Church (Mumbai) India
- Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue (Mumbai) India

Honourable Mention

- Flora Fountain (Mumbai) India

Know! about UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards 2019

- These awards were given away in four categories – Award of Distinction, Award of Merit, Honourable Mention and New Design in Heritage Contexts.
- The UNESCO award highlights the spirit and efforts of private organisations or individuals that have successfully restored and conserved structures of heritage value in their regions.
- These awards aim to encourage and support other people and organization to take action for conservation within their communities, either independently or by seeking public-private partnerships (PPP). The jury reviewed 57 entries from 14 countries across the South-Asia region.
- UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation was established in the year 2000. UNESCO established this award to motivate the protection of cultural heritage sites by any individual organization or by any private sector entity.

Defence: IAF and Royal Air Force of Oman begins Joint Exercise 'Ex-Eastern Bridge-V'



Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Ex-Eastern Bridge-V)

What's the NEWS

- Indian Air Force (IAF) and Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO) started participating in a bilateral joint exercise named Ex-Eastern Bridge-V. The joint exercise will be held at Air Force Base Masirah in Oman. Earlier in 2017, the exercise Ex-Eastern Bridge-IV was held at Jamnagar, India.
- Indian Air Force and Royal Air Force of Oman will also promote the exchange of experience, operational knowledge and professional interaction during the participation in a joint exercise. The Ex-Eastern Bridge-V joint exercise will conclude on October 26, 2019.

Know! more about the exercise

- It is for the first time when MiG-29 fighter aircrafts are participating in an international military exercise outside India.
- The Indian Air Force's contingent comprises of C-17 aircraft, MiG-29 fighter jets, and other fighting art latest equipment.
- On the other hand, Royal Air Force of Oman contingent comprises of F-16 next-generation fighter jet, Hawk fighter aircraft and Oman's Eurofighter Typhoon.
- As per the reports, this joint exercise can improve inter-operability during mutual operations between both Air Forces and it will provide an opportunity to learn from each other's best practices.

India-Oman bilateral relations

- India-Oman established diplomatic relations in 1955 with share shared interests, respect of each other and mutual understanding.
- India and Oman cover cooperation in the several areas like defence, outer space, tourism, education, criminal matters, cultural cooperation, visa exemption, joint investment front among other fields.
- Both the countries organise Joint Military Cooperation Committee Meeting every year to understand challenges and improvements in the relations and requirements.
- India exports some items to Oman like mineral oils, mineral fuels, boilers, heavy machinery, coffee, spices and meat products among several other items.
- However, India imports from Oman include organic chemicals, stones, lime and cement, sulphur, aluminium and fertilizers.

Defence: DRDO starts work on 'next-gen' hypersonic weapon

Relevance IN – Prelims (about next-gen hypersonic weapon)



What's the NEWS

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has started work to produce a hypersonic weapon - missiles that travel at five times speed of sound, or a little over a mile every second.
- A wind tunnel to test and fine tune the technology will be operational soon

Know! more about it (Hypersonic missiles)

- Billed as a “next-gen” weapon system, the race to acquire hypersonic weapons technology is heating up.
- China, Russia, and the United States are testing hypersonic weapons of various types to enhance strategic nuclear deterrence and strengthen front-line combat units.
- Existing intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) re-entry vehicles also travel at those super fast speeds, but the hypersonic glide vehicles now in development are far more manoeuvrable, making their tracking and interception nearly impossible.
- Hypersonic weapons are specifically designed for increased survivability against modern ballistic missile defence systems.
- These missiles are capable of delivering conventional or nuclear payloads at speeds not imagined hitherto over long ranges.

What's the need of having it

- Hypersonic weapons will become very critical in the near future. China has demonstrated that it has the technology. Others like US and Russia may already possess such weapons. It's time that India also starts looking at these technologies

Steps taken by DRDO to boost defence manufacturing

- In a bid to boost defence manufacturing in India, the DRDO is also **offering 1,500 of its patents**, including critical missile technology, life sciences, and naval technology, for use by Indian Industry
- The patents can be accessed by free of cost even by start-ups and medium and small manufacturing enterprises.
- DRDO is determined to encourage industry to develop advanced defence equipment thereby making the Make-In-India programme a success.
- Indian industry **will not have pay “license fee or royalty”** for any of the patented . DRDO won't be just offering the technology but will also be handholding the industry and help them produce the product
- DRDO has also tweaked its policy for “Transfer of Technology” (ToT) to the industry. **No, ToT fee** will be charged from the industry, DRDO Development Partners developing systems or sub-systems for military applications.
- And, for other industries, the ToT fee is reduced to 5% against an earlier rate of 20%. Also, no royalty is charged for supply to Indian Armed forces and other government departments. A nominal royalty of 2% will be charged for supply in the commercial market and for exports.

Defence: Raksha Mantri approves two Open General Export Licences

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Open General Export Licences (OGELs))

What's the NEWS

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has approved issuance of two Open General Export Licences (OGELs) for export of certain parts & components and intra-company transfer of technology to select countries.

Benefits of OGEL

- It will give a boost to defence exports and enhance ease of doing business. The application for grant of OGEL will be considered by Department of Defence Production (DPP) on a case-to-case basis.
- The countries allowed under the OGELs are: Belgium, France, Germany, Japan, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, UK, USA, Canada, Italy, Poland and Mexico. Export of items to a 'Special Economic Zone' is not permitted.
- The transfer of technology to the countries is subject to the condition that the export is an intra-company transfer from an Indian subsidiary (applicant exporter) to its foreign parent company and/or to subsidiaries of the foreign parent company.
- The OGEL is a one-time export licence to be granted to a company for a specific period (two years initially).

India's defence exports

- India has made significant strides in improving its defence exports.
- This has been made possible due to the reforms brought in the standard operating procedure and ushering in a portal for online clearance of applications. The processing time has been brought down significantly.

Defence: DEFCOM 2019

Relevance IN -Prelims (about DEFCOM defence communication)

WHAT'S the NEWS

- DEFCOM seminar, jointly organised by the Corps of Signals and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has evolved over the years to become a landmark symposium for collaboration between the Indian armed forces, academia, research and development organisations, and the Industry on aspects *pertaining to Information and Communications Technology*.
- DEFCOM 2019 theme, "*Communications as a Decisive Catalyst for Jointness*".

Know! about DEFCOM

- DEFCOM Objective - to enhance defence communications.
- The need for the three services to be able to seamlessly communicate with each other from the strategic to the tactical level
- DEFCOM over the years played the crucial role in promoting collaboration between the armed forces and the industry in the Information and Communications Technology domain.

Know! more about the objective behind DEFCOM

- The Joint Doctrine of the Indian Armed Forces (JDIAF), 2017 states; "The nature of war demands that the Services fight as an integrated cohesive force. Rapid advances in technology necessitate, forces on land, sea and air to reinforce and complement each other to achieve the objectives set forth.
- In order to realise this vision the first and probably most significant step is building the ability to seamlessly communicate with each other from the strategic to the tactical level. Aligned with this central precept, DEFCOM 2019 is being held on the seminal topic, "*Communications as a Decisive Catalyst for Jointness*".
- The aim of DEFCOM 2019 is to collaborate with all stakeholders, including HQ Integrated Defence Staff, Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Air Force, DRDO, academia and the Industry on the ways, means and ends to leverage Communications as a Decisive Catalyst for Jointness.

Defence: Indo-French Joint Exercise Shakti-2019

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Exercise Shakti)

What's the NEWS

- Series of 'Exercise SHAKTI' between India and France commenced in year 2011.
- Its a biennial exercise and is conducted alternately in India and France.
- As part of Exercise SHAKTI – 2019, French Army troops arrived in India on 26 October 2019 for training with Indian Troops.
- The bilateral training exercise will be conducted at Foreign Training Node at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges, Rajasthan.
- The bilateral exercise will be conducted from 31 October 2019 to 13 November 2019.



Know! more about the joint exercise

- The joint exercise will focus on Counter Terrorism operations in backdrop of semi-desert terrain under United Nations Mandate.
- The training will focus primarily on high degree of physical fitness, sharing of drill at tactical level and learning of best practices from each other.
- The exercise aims at enhancing understanding, cooperation and interoperability between the two Armies.
- The exercise will culminate in a 36 hrs long validation exercise which will involve neutralization of terrorists in a village hideout.

State Specific/Prelims Factoids: First-ever Ladakh Literature festival from Oct 29

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the literature fest)

What's the NEWS

- Ladakh is all set to host the first ever Ladakh Literature Festival (LLF) from 29th to 31st October this year.
- The Ladakh Literature Festival, a festival of literature, culture and art, will begin in the State of Jammu & Kashmir state and culminated in the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh, as Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh will officially become two separate UTs on 31st October.

Know! more about the festival

- The Ladakh Literature Festival 2019 is being jointly organised by J&K Tourism, Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Leh, Ladakh Media & Art Organisation (LAMO) and All Ladakh Tours Operators' Association (ALTOA).

State Specific: Kanya Sumangala Yojana

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Kanya Sumangala Yojana)

What's the NEWS

- The Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath launched the government's flagship scheme 'Mukhya Mantri Kanya Sumangala Yojana'.

Know! more about the scheme

- Kanya Sumangala yojana will provide a fund worth Rs 15000 to every family where a girl child is born. The amount will be released to the family in a phased manner.
- Kanya Sumangala scheme has been designed in a way that the parents will have to take proper care of the girl child with respect to her health and education and other aspects, in order to get the benefit.
- The funds under the scheme will be released in various instalments when the girl child completes various milestones such as at the time of birth, vaccination, admission to Class 1, 5, 9 and graduation.

- The UP CM also launched the Kanya Sumangala web portal and conferred symbolic cheques and certificates to some of the beneficiaries. The actual amount, however, will be transferred directly into the accounts of the beneficiaries.
- Over 1.25 lakh registrations have already been initiated under the scheme. All girl children born after April 1, 2019 are eligible for the full fund.
- For the girl children born before April 1, 2019, the date will be used as a cut-off for other levels, in which they will be entitled to receive a part of the fund.
- For eg, if a girl child has taken admission in Class 1 after April 1, 2019, the funds that would have been released at her birth and completion of first vaccination will be subtracted and the remaining will be given to her in the scheduled instalments.

Prelims Factoids: Delhi Police doubles 'PRAKHAR' anti-street crime vans



Relevance IN – Prelims (about PRAKHAR)

What's the NEWS

- Delhi Police flagged off 15 'PRAKHAR' vans, with the latest addition taking the number of such special vehicles to curb street crimes in the national capital to 30.

Know! more about PRAKHAR

- These patrol vans tasked especially to curb street crimes as well as crimes against women in the vulnerable areas are specially designed and equipped with latest gadgets for quick transmission of information about any crime
- Each 'PRAKHAR' van is also equipped with Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) with inbuilt GPS besides the wireless set.
- The MDT immediately transmits the calls related to street crimes as soon as it is received in Command Room to the concerned nearest PRAKHAR' van for immediate action
- These vans conduct intensive patrolling and dedicated checking at the vulnerable points in the crime-prone areas of the districts, he said.
- With the latest induction, each district will now have two such vans to cover the vulnerable stretches

Prelims Factoids: EU's Sakharov Prize

Relevance IN – Prelims (about EU's Sakharov Prize)

What's the NEWS

- Ilham Tohti is a renowned Uighur activist who recently announced as a winner of Sakharov Prize of European Union.

Know! about him

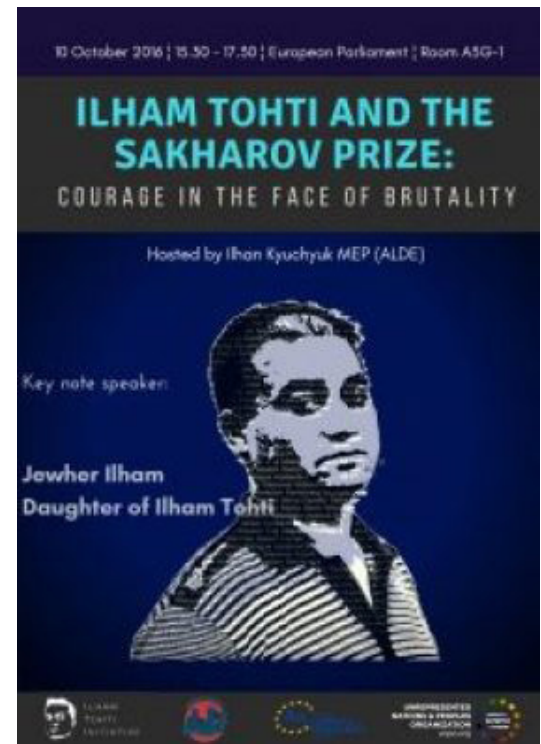
- He is a human rights defender and advocate of China's Uighur minority. He has been working for over two decades to foster dialogues between Chinese People and Uighur Muslims.
- He was sentenced to life in prison in September 2014 for his activism.
- Chinese government convicted him of creating hatred and terror through his teaching on Uighur issues.

Know! about the award given by European Parliament

- European Parliament awarded him Sakharov Prize of human rights and described him a voice of moderation and reconciliation.
- He was the host of Uyghur Online website where he used to criticize policies of the Chinese government for the exclusion of China's Uyghur population from Chinese development.
- He was creating greater awareness about the status of the Uighur community in Chinese society.
- The Chinese government declared him a separatist because of his actions and finally sentenced to life in prison.

Know! about the Uighur issue

- In recent years, Uighur people have become a subject of unparalleled repression by the Chinese government.
- As per the data provided by European Union Parliament, more than 1 million Uighur Muslims have been detained in internment camps where they are forced to give up their religious and ethnic identity and swear loyalty of Chinese government.



National Affairs: Data on Police Organizations released by BPRD

Relevance IN – Prelims (about DoPO 2018) and about BPRD)

What's the NEWS

- Data on Police Organizations (DoPO 2018) has been released by the Bureau of Police Research and Development's (BPRD) flagship publication
- This data comprises of important information on manpower, police infrastructure, resources and much more.

Know! about the report highlights

- There has been an increase of 16,051 in the strength of Central armed police forces (CAPFs) and 19,686 personnel in the sanctioned strength of the state police in the one year since 2017.
- Police Stations in India have increased from 15579 to 16422. The number of increased police stations are included with Cyber Police stations whose strength has increased from 84 to 120 in the country.
- The department has recorded 20.95% increase in the strength of Woman Police in the State Police Forces to 1,69,550. Now, the total share of women police personnel in Indian Police is 8.73%.

Know! about BPRD

- Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) works under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Its primary objective is to modernization of the police to ensure the speedy and authentic study of police department issues.
- BPRD has two divisions - Research, Statistics, Publication and Development.
- The government of India established a National Police Mission under supervision of BPRD to modernize and transform the police forces in the country. National Police Mission is trying to ensure equip the police personnel with necessary resources, material and intellectual.

Prelims Factoids: Col Chewang Rinchen bridge



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Col Chewang Rinchen Setu’)

What’s the NEWS

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the strategically important ‘Col Chewang Rinchen Setu’, a bridge built by Border Roads Organisation (BRO) over River Shyok, connecting Durbuk and Daulat Beg Oldie in Eastern Ladakh.

Know! the importance of the bridge

- Keeping in view the current security situation, strengthening the borders is the need of the hour. Border area development is an integral part of our Government’s plan and this bridge is a part of that strategy
- The ‘Col Chewang Rinchen Setu’ is as a symbol of the Government’s resolve of positive change and all-round development of the nation.
- The bridge not only connects Durbuk with Daulat Beg Oldie but also links the people of Ladakh and all interior areas of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of the country.
- Through initiatives like these, the people of this region will have the opportunity to become part of India’s growth story

Know! about the bridge

- Sandwiched between strategic Karakoram and Chang Chenmo ranges, the ‘Col Chewang Rinchen Setu’ is a 430-metre bridge built at an altitude of about 15,000 feet using Micro Piling Technology. The construction has been completed in record time within 15 months.

Col Chewang Rinchen

- Col Chewang Rinchen, born on November 11, 1931 at Sumur, Nubra Valley in Ladakh region, is known as the “Lion of Ladakh” for his extraordinary acts of courage in defending Leh and Partapur sector.
- He is one of only six Armed Forces personnel to have been twice awarded the Maha Vir Chakra, the second highest Indian Gallantry Award.

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