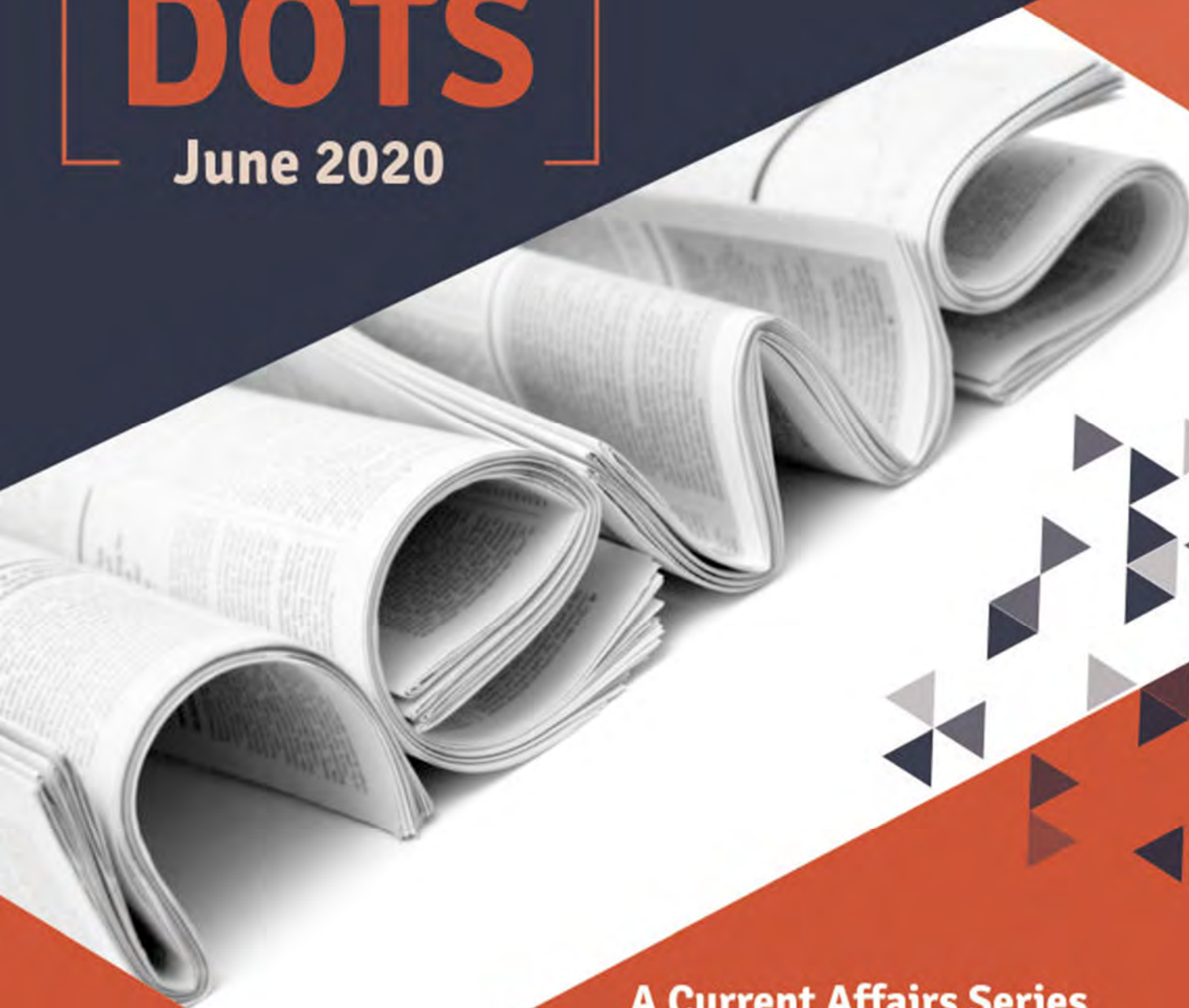


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June 2020



A Current Affairs Series for UPSC Examination

- SPIC MACAY's International Convention
- Oil Spill in Russia's Arctic Region
- Coral Triangle Day
- National Productivity Council (NPC)
- PM SVANidhi Scheme



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Prelims Perspicuous Pointers

Prelims Factoids

Jyeshtha Ashtami

Relevance IN – Prelims(about Jyeshtha Ashtami)

What's the NEWS

- Zyeth Atham also known as Jyeshtha Ashtami, is the eighth day of the bright half of Jyeshtha (May–June) month.
- It is the traditional gathering of **Kashmiri Pandit community** at Mata Kheer Bhawani Temple or Tulmula Mandir in Kashmir
- On this auspicious day, a grand feast and fest is held every year at Mata Kheer Bhawani Temple in Kashmir, also known as Tulmula.
- It is celebrated with full gusto and vigour, as it marks the pradurbhava of the Goddess Ragnya (Kheer Bhavani or Ragnya Bhavani Mata).

Prelims Factoids

UP to have 800-km Herbal belt

Relevance IN – Prelims(about the Herbal belt)

What's the NEWS

- The Uttar Pradesh government will develop 800 km roads as Herbal belt with medicinal and herbal trees along both sides of the road.

Know! about the Herbal road

- These herbal roads will have trees like Peepal, Neem, Sahjan along with other herb varieties like Brahmi, Ashwagandha and Jatropa.
- These plants will provide raw material for the medicines and will also help in curbing the erosion of land.
- This scheme will help both development and beautification of the area and bring medicinal benefits along with promoting bio diversity.
- These 800-kilometre roads will be along national and state highways passing through state and the herbal garden along with them will keep air free from pollution, bacteria and will also keep other diseases at bay.

Tropical Race 4 (TR4)



Relevance IN – Prelims(about *Fusarium wilt Tropical Race 4 (TR4)* + biopriming

What's the NEWS

- *Fusarium wilt* TR4, a **novel fungus strain** that has devastated plantations across the globe this year, is setting up new hotspots and threatening output in India, the world's largest producer of bananas.

Know! about Tropical Race 4 (TR4)

- The strain, Tropical Race 4 (TR4), was first identified in Taiwan, and has jumped from Asia to the Middle East and Africa, reaching as far as Latin America.
- It cripples plantations by first attacking the leaves, which turn yellow from their trailing edges before wilting away.
- There is no effective remedy yet. One could say it is the **Covid-19 of the plant world**.
- Hotspots have been found in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh
- According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, TR4 is one of the “the most destructive of all plant diseases”.
- India produces 27 million tonnes of bananas annually and grows about 100 named cultivars (varieties).
- **Ecuador, the largest exporter**, is currently the epicentre and scientists haven't been able to ascertain how TR4 entered India.

Fusarium wilt

- *Fusarium wilt* is not new. It entirely wiped out **Gros Michel**, the dominant export variety of bananas in 1950s.
- It was in response to this that a new resistant variety, **Grand Nain**, came up. That has now fallen to TR4.
- The challenge is to now identify or develop new resistant varieties.

Know! about Grain Nain variety of banana

- Grain Nain accounts for 55% of the banana area in the country and accounts for 62% of commerce, including exports
- Katihar and Purnea in Bihar and Maharajganj in Uttar Pradesh are the hotspots in India.
- In UP, several districts are thought to be affected

Know! about biopriming

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research is advocating a set of measures, known as “biopriming”.
- It has asked farmers whose plantations have been affected to abandon them.
- They must grow rice for a year or two before returning to banana.

Defence

Ultra Swachh



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Ultra Swachh)

What's the NEWS

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed a disinfection unit named Ultra Swachh **to disinfect a wide range of materials**, including Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), electronics items, fabrics, etc.
- Institute of Nuclear Medicine & Allied Sciences (INMAS), the Delhi based laboratory of DRDO has developed this product

Know! more about disinfection unit

- The system uses an **advanced oxidative process** comprising of multiple barrier disruption approach using **Ozonated Space Technology** for disinfection.
- The system is double layered with specialised **Ozone sealant technology** assuring trapping of ozone for the necessary disinfection cycle.

- It also has catalytic converter to ensure environment friendly exhaust *i.e.* only oxygen and water.
- The Ultra Swachh comes in two variants namely Ozonated Space and Trinetra Technology.
- Trinetra technology is the combination of Ozonated space and radical dispenser.

Prelims Factoids

SPIC MACAY's International Convention



Relevance IN – Prelims (all about Spic Macay)

What's the NEWS

- Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi today addressed the Spic Macay's International Convention via video conference.

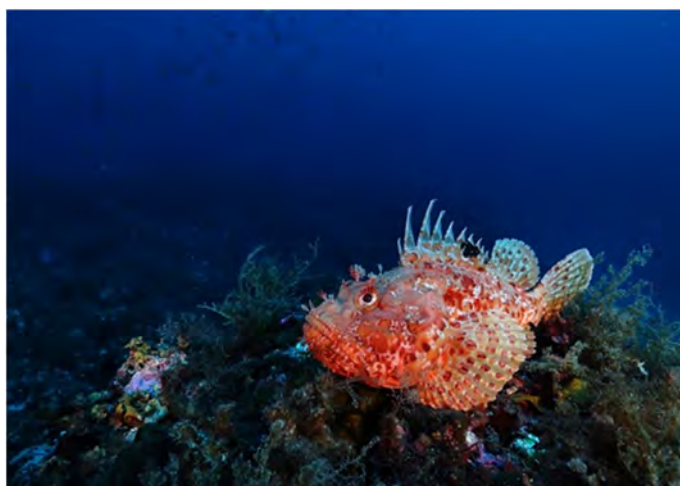
Know! all about SPIC MACAY

- SPIC MACAY (Society for the Promotion of Indian Classical Music And Culture Amongst Youth) is a non-political, nationwide, voluntary movement founded in 1977 by Dr Kiran Seth, Professor-Emeritus at IIT-Delhi
- SPICMACAY's intention is to enrich the quality of formal education by increasing awareness about different aspects of Indian heritage and inspiring the young mind to imbibe the values embedded in it.
- It seeks to inspire youth through experiencing the mysticism embodied in the rich and heterogeneous cultural tapestry of Indian and World Heritage
- For this, the most accomplished artistes of the country render programmes of Indian classical music and dance, folk, poetry, theatre, traditional paintings, crafts & yog primarily in schools and colleges.

- SPIC MACAY is supported nationally by the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, and the HRD Ministry.
- In 2011, SPIC MACAY was awarded the Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana award in recognition of its contribution to youth development.
- SPIC MACAY celebrates Nishkaam Seva - the spirit of volunteerism – of giving selflessly without expectation, a value that is intrinsic to our culture and important to nurture in today's world.
- SPICMACAY is a non-profit, voluntary, non-political and participatory student movement registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 and gets the benefit of Section 80(G) tax exemption under the IT Act 1961.
- People from all walks of life are welcome to join and contribute with their ideas, time, finance or any other resources.

Prelims Factoids

Rare bandtail scorpionfish found in Gulf of Mannar



Relevance IN – Prelims (about the features of bandtail scorpionfish + about the location of gulf of mannar + about CMFRI)

What's the NEWS

- Indian researchers have found a rare fish — capable of changing its colour— off the **Sethukarai coast in the Gulf of Mannar**, one of the world's richest region from a marine biodiversity perspective.

Know! about The bandtail scorpionfish (Scorpaenopsis Neglecta)

- It a rare marine species well-known for the stinging venomous spines and the ability to change colour, was found during an underwater exploratory survey of the seagrass ecosystem by CMFRI scientists.
- This was the first time this particular species was found live in the Indian waters

Bandtail scorpionfish (highlights)

- The fish is called 'scorpionfish' because its **spines contain neurotoxic venom**.
- "When the spines pierce an individual, the venom gets injected immediately and it can be extremely painful
- Eating this fish would lead to death.
- It is a nocturnal feeder, the band-tail scorpionfish lays motionless in the sea bottom and waits for the prey to come close to it.
- Most of them feed during night time with an ability to attack and suck its prey at lightning speed.

Know! about Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve



- The Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve (GOMMBR) is a hot spot for marine biodiversity located off the southeast coast of Tamil Nadu, India.
- This marine biosphere reserve comprises 21 coral islands, the environmental status of which is under serious threat due to natural and anthropogenic activities.
- Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park consist of small islands and coral reefs in the Gulf of Mannar in the Indian Ocean of Tamil Nadu.
- The park has a high diversity of plants and animals in its marine and shore habitats, Dugong, a vulnerable marine mammal also found here.
- The Gulf of Mannar's 4,223 species of plants and animals representing from primitive to higher forms make it one of the richest coastal regions in India.
- **Sethukarai** is a famous pilgrimage centre in Tamil Nadu, connected to Indian mythology. It is believed that Lord Ram constructed a bridge over the sea from Sethukarai to Sri Lanka.

Know! about Gulf of Mannar

- Gulf of Mannar, inlet of the Indian Ocean, between southeastern India and western Sri Lanka.
- It is bounded to the northeast by Rameswaram (island), Adam's (Rama's) Bridge (a chain of shoals), and Mannar Island.
- The gulf is 80–170 miles (130–275 km) wide and 100 miles (160 km) long.
- It receives several rivers, including the Tambraparni (India) and the Aruvi (Sri Lanka).
- The Gulf of Mannar is a large shallow bay forming part of the Laccadive Sea in the Indian Ocean .
- It lies between the southeastern tip of India and the west coast of Sri Lanka .
- A chain of low islands and reefs known as **Adam's Bridge** , also called Ramsethu, which includes **Mannar Island** , **separates the Gulf of Mannar from Palk Bay** , which lies to the north between India and Sri Lanka.
- The Thamirabarani River of south India and the Aruvi Aru of Sri Lanka drain into the Gulf.

Know! about Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute(CMFRI)

- It was established by Government of India on February 3rd **1947 under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare and later it joined the ICAR family in 1967.**
- The Institute has emerged as a leading tropical marine fisheries research institute in the world.
- The research effort contributed significantly to India's marine fisheries development from a predominantly artisanal, sustenance fishery till the early sixties to that of a complex, multi-gear, multispecies fisheries.

Stratified Multistage Random Sampling Method

- One of the major achievements of CMFRI is the development and refinement of a **unique method for estimation of fishery catch** and effort from the over 8000 km coastline called the "**Stratified Multistage Random Sampling Method**".
- With this methodology the Institute is maintaining the National Marine Fisheries Data Centre (NMFDC) with over 9 million catch and effort data records from all maritime states of India of more than 1000 fished species.

Khelo India Community Coach Development Programme

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the day Khelo India Community Coach Development Programme)

What's the NEWS

- Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports will begin a 25-day Khelo India Community Coach Development Programme
- The programme will be inaugurated by Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Kiren Rijiju.

Know! more about the Programme

- The programme will help in the professional **development of 15,000 Physical Education (PE) teachers and community coaches** and aims to equip them with skills to train students to take up fitness and sport as a way of life.
- The programme will see a host of international experts speaking to PE teachers and community coaches.
- Throughout the programme, participants will benefit from interactions from a host of international experts

PM-CARES Fund 'Not a Public Authority', Doesn't Fall Under RTI Act: PMO

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the provision of RTI act + about Public authority)

What's the NEWS

- The PMO has rejected an RTI application seeking details of the PM CARES Fund, stating that the fund is **not a public authority under the Act**.
- The Fund is not a public authority **under section 2 (h) of the Right to Information Act, 2005**, and therefore it won't be able to divulge information sought in the application.

PM CARES Fund

- The fund – Prime Minister's Citizen Assistance and Relief in Emergency Situations Fund –was created on March 28 to deal with any emergency posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The PM is the ex-officio chairman of the trust, and three cabinet ministers are its trustees.

- Its trustees are Union home minister Amit Shah, defence minister Rajnath Singh and finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- The opposition had questioned the need for a creation of the Fund as the PM's National Relief Fund (PMNRF) already exists to receive donations for such emergencies.

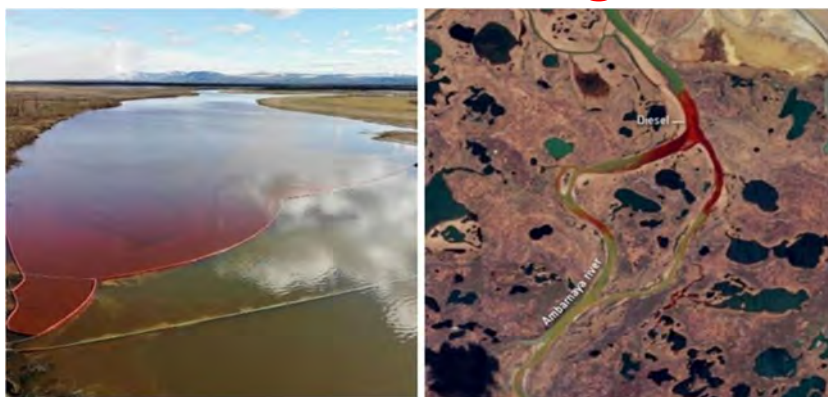
Know! about Public authority

As per the RTI Act, a public authority means any authority, body or institution of self-government established or constituted

- a) by or under the constitution;
 - b) by any other law made by parliament;
 - c) by any other law made by the state legislature and
 - d) by notification issued or order made by the appropriate government.
- It also includes “body owned, controlled or substantially financed; non-governmental organisation substantially financed directly or indirectly by funds provided by the appropriate government”.

International

Oil spill in Russia's Arctic region



Relevance IN – Prelims (Ambarnaya river – location)

What's the NEWS

- Russian President Vladimir Putin declared a state of emergency after 20,000 tonnes of diesel oil to spilled into a **Ambarnaya river**, turning its surface crimson red.

Know! more about it

- Russia declared a state of emergency five days after a power plant fuel **leak in its Arctic region** caused 20,000 tonnes of diesel oil to escape into a local river, turning its surface crimson red.
- The Ambarnaya river, into which the oil has been discharged, is part of a network that flows into the environmentally sensitive Arctic Ocean.
- The emergency measures were announced within Russia's **Krasnoyarsk Region**, located in the vast and sparsely populated Siberian peninsula.
- The power plant is located near the Region's Norilsk city, around 3000 km northeast of Moscow.

- **Ambarnaya is a river in Siberia** which flows in a northerly direction into Lake Pyasino. On leaving Lake Pyasino, the waters emerge as the Pyasina River.

Prelims Factoids

The virtual Global Vaccine Summit 2020



Virtual Conference

4 June 2020

The UK government will host Gavi's third donor pledging conference to mobilise at least US\$ 7.4 billion in additional resources to protect the next generation with vaccines, reduce disease inequality and create a healthier, safer and more prosperous world.

Relevance in – Prelims (about the GAVI Alliance)

What's the NEWS

- India has pledged 15 Million US Dollars to Gavi, **the international vaccine alliance.**
- Prime Minister of India participated in the virtual Global Vaccine Summit hosted by UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson in which over 50 countries

Know! about GAVI

- The GAVI Alliance (formerly the **Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation**) is a global health partnership of public and private sector organizations dedicated to “immunisation for all”
- GAVI brings together developing country and donor governments, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, the vaccine industry in both industrialised and developing countries, research and technical agencies, civil society, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other private philanthropists.
- **Gavi** was **created** to bring together the best of what key UN agencies, governments, the vaccine industry, private sector and civil society had to offer in order to improve childhood immunisation coverage in poor countries and to accelerate access to new vaccines.

Airborne Rescue Pod for Isolated Transportation (ARPIT)



Relevance IN – Prelims(about Airborne Rescue Pod for Isolated Transportation (ARPIT)).

What's the NEWS

- The Indian Air Force has designed, developed and inducted an **Airborne Rescue Pod for Isolated Transportation (ARPIT)**.

Know! about Airborne Rescue Pod for Isolated Transportation (ARPIT).

- This pod will be utilised for evacuation of critical patients with infectious diseases including COVID-19 from high altitude area, isolated and remote places.
- This indigenously designed system has been developed as a lightweight isolation system made from aviation certified material.
- It has a transparent and durable cast Perspex for enhanced patient visibility which is larger, higher and wider than the existing models.
- The ARPIT utilises High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) H-13 class filters and supports invasive ventilation using Transport Ventilator.
- Design requirements have been evolved and are based on the guidelines issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH) and Centre for Disease Control (CDC), USA. The IAF is inducting a total of 7 ARPITS as of now.

SAMUDRA SETU



Relevance IN – Prelims(about Operation Samudra Setu)

Know! the update

- Indian Navy had launched Operation Samudra Setu to repatriate Indian citizens commencing 08 May 2020.
- Indian Naval ships Jalashwa and Magar have already evacuated 2874 personnel from Maldives and Sri Lanka to ports of Kochi and Tuticorin.
- In the next phase of Samudra Setu, Indian Naval Ship Shardul will evacuate Indian citizens on 08 June 2020 from the port of Bandar Abbas, Islamic Republic of Iran, to Porbandar, Gujarat.

Prelims Factoids

Spandan Campaign

Relevance IN – Prelims(about Spandan Campaign)

What's the NEWS

- The Chhattisgarh government launched the Spandan Campaign to contain incidents of suicide and fratricide involving police personnel, and instructions were issued to senior officers to strictly adhere to guidelines in this regard.

Know! more about the campaign

- The order made it mandatory for superintendents of police to facilitate counselling and medical treatment for depressed officers and staff by psychiatrists or psychologists in their district headquarters.
- A total of 50 police personnel, including personnel of paramilitary forces, committed suicide in Chhattisgarh over the past two years.
- Eighteen of these cases were reported from seven districts of Maoist-affected Bastar division.

State Food Safety Index



Relevance IN – Prelims (about state food safety index + about world food safety day + about FSSAI)

What's the NEWS

- To mark the occasion of the World Food Safety Day, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has released the results of the second 'State Food Safety Index'

Know! the findings of the Index

- Gujarat has topped among larger States in terms of food safety index, while Chandigarh tops among UTs.
- Gujarat is followed by Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra
- Goa leads smaller States so far as food safety is concerned
- Among smaller States, Goa is followed by Manipur and Meghalaya. Among UTs, Chandigarh, Delhi and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands have secured top ranks.

Know! about the Index

- FSSAI has developed State Food Safety Index to measure the performance of states on various parameters of Food Safety.
- This index is based on performance of State/ UT on five significant parameters, namely, Human Resources and Institutional Data, Compliance, Food Testing – Infrastructure and Surveillance, Training & Capacity Building and Consumer Empowerment.
- The Index is a dynamic quantitative and qualitative benchmarking model that provides an objective framework for evaluating food safety across all States/UTs.

Know! about World Food Safety Day

- The principles of food safety aim to prevent food from becoming contaminated and causing food poisoning.



- The United Nations (UN) has assigned two of its agencies, **the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)** and **the World Health Organisation (WHO)** to lead efforts in promoting food safety around the world.
- In 2018, the United Nations General Assembly declared June 7 as the World Food Safety Day.
- June 7, 2019 marks the first anniversary of World Food Safety Day
- World Food Safety Day is observed on June 7 to draw global attention to the health consequences of contaminated food and water.
- This is the second anniversary of World Food Safety Day (WFSD).
- Through this day, **WHO pursues its efforts to** mainstream food safety in the public agenda and reduce the burden of food-borne diseases globally.
- Theme - 'Food safety, everyone's business'

Know! about FSSAI

- It is an autonomous body established under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India.
- The FSSAI has been established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, which is a consolidating statute related to food safety and regulation in India.
- FSSAI is responsible for protecting and promoting public health through the regulation and supervision of food safety.

World's first 'internet-controlled' robot for COVID-19 hospitals



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Coro-bot)

What's the NEWS

- A 23-year old Thane engineer has made a first-of-its kind '**Internet-controlled**' robot specifically to address the needs of hospitals treating COVID-19 patients.

Know! all about Coro-bot

- The gizmo, aptly called '**Coro-bot**' independently dispenses food, water, beverages, medicines - and even some good advice - to Corona patients without the needs for nurses, ward staff or other care-givers.
- Coro-bot eliminates the need of physical presence or contact of nurses or ward boys with the patient.
- It can deliver food, water, medicines and interact with the patients through a camera. Through a speaker, it can also advise patients on various precautions like sanitizing their hands before picking up anything from the robotic tray
- A special App has been created to operate Coro-bot from any location in the world using Internet of Things (IoT) technology - a first anywhere in the world that this technique is being deployed in the medical field

QCI Celebrates the World Accreditation Day 2020



Relevance IN – Prelims (about World Accreditation Day + about QCI) + Mains GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation + Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance)

What's the NEWS

- Quality Council of India (QCI) was set up in 1997 jointly by the Government of India (**Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion**) and the Indian Industry represented by the three premier industry associations i.e.
 1. Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)
 2. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and
 3. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)
- to establish and operate national accreditation structure and promote quality through National Quality Campaign.

Know! about World Accreditation Day (WAD)

- The World Accreditation Day (WAD) is celebrated on 9th June every year to highlight as well as promote the role of accreditation in trade & economy.
- The theme for WAD 2020 is “**Accreditation: Improving Food Safety**”, as decided by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC).



Know! about QCI

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- to establish and operate national accreditation structure and promote quality through National Quality Campaign.

QCI (highlights)

- QCI establish and operate national accreditation structure and promote quality through National Quality Campaign.
- QCI is registered as not-for-profit society with its own Memorandum of Association and Rules & Regulations.
- The Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, is the nodal ministry for QCI.

- QCI is governed by a Council comprising of 38 members including the Chairman and Secretary General.
- Chairman of QCI is appointed by the Prime Minister on recommendation of the industry to the government.
- The Council has an equal representation of Government, Industry and other Stakeholders.

Know! the importance of accreditation and role of QCI

- Accreditation facilitates international trade by way of establishing equivalence and global acceptance of certification, inspection and testing being undertaken by various conformity assessment bodies, in areas of quality, environment, food safety etc.
- National Quality Campaign aims at promoting quality by enabling manufacturers and suppliers of goods/ services to apply quality standards and tools and simultaneously empowering consumers to demand quality goods/services.
- The Council is the apex level body responsible for formulating the strategy, general policy, constitution and monitoring of various components of QCI including the accreditation boards with **objective to ensure transparent and credible accreditation system.**
- It provides accreditation services in the fields of **education, healthcare, industries, institutions, professionals**, quality promotion and quality assessment.
- It promotes the adoption of quality standards relating to **Quality Management Systems (ISO 14001 Series), Food Safety Management Systems (ISO 22000 Series)** and **Product Certification and Inspection Bodies** through the accreditation services provided by National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB).

Asiatic Lion

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Asiatic lion)

What's the NEWS

- The Prime Minister, has expressed his happiness over the increasing population of the majestic Asiatic Lion, living in Gujarat's Gir Forest.
- Population of the majestic Asiatic Lion, living in Gujarat's Gir Forest, is **up by almost 29%.**
- Geographically, distribution area is **up by 36%.**
- Over the last several years, the Lion population in Gujarat has been steadily rising.
- This is powered by community participation, emphasis on technology, wildlife healthcare, proper habitat management and steps to minimise human-lion conflict.

Asiatic Lions Fact File

Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*)

Status: Endangered

Found: In and around the Gir Forest, Gujarat, India

Body length: Up to 2.9 metres from nose to tail

Weight: males 160-190kg, females 110-120kg

Lifespan: 18-20 years

Diet: deer, antelope, boar and cattle



Know! about Asian lions

- There are only several hundred Asiatic lions in the wild, and they **only live in the Gir Forest, India**
- Asian lions are slightly smaller than African lions
- Asian lions used to range from Turkey, across Asia, to eastern India
- The most distinguishing characteristic of the Asiatic lion is the longitudinal fold of skin that runs along its belly. This is absent in African lions.

Know! more about Asian lions

- The Asian lion population has recovered from the brink of extinction to several hundred individuals.
- They occupy remnant forest habitats in the **two hill systems of Gir and Girnar** that comprise Gujarat's largest tracts of **dry deciduous forest, thorny forest and savannah**.
- **Five protected areas** currently exist to protect the Asian lion: Gir Sanctuary, Gir National Park and Pania Sanctuary to form the Gir Conservation Area (GCA) as a core protected area
- The other two wildlife sanctuaries, **Mitiyala and Girnar**, protect **satellite areas** within dispersal distance of the Gir Conservation Area.
- An additional sanctuary is being established in the nearby **Barda forest** to serve as an alternative home for Gir lions.

Union Minister Launches "COVID BEEP" App For Coronavirus Patients

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the objective of COVID BEEP)



What's the NEWS

- Union Minister Launches 'COVID BEEP' App For Coronavirus Patients
- COVID BEEP is a wireless **physiological parameters monitoring system** for coronavirus patients.
- It is country's first indigenous wireless physiological parameters monitoring system for the affected patients.
- COVID BEEP would emerge as an effective antidote to the pandemic which the entire world is currently grappling with

Know! more about COVID BEEP

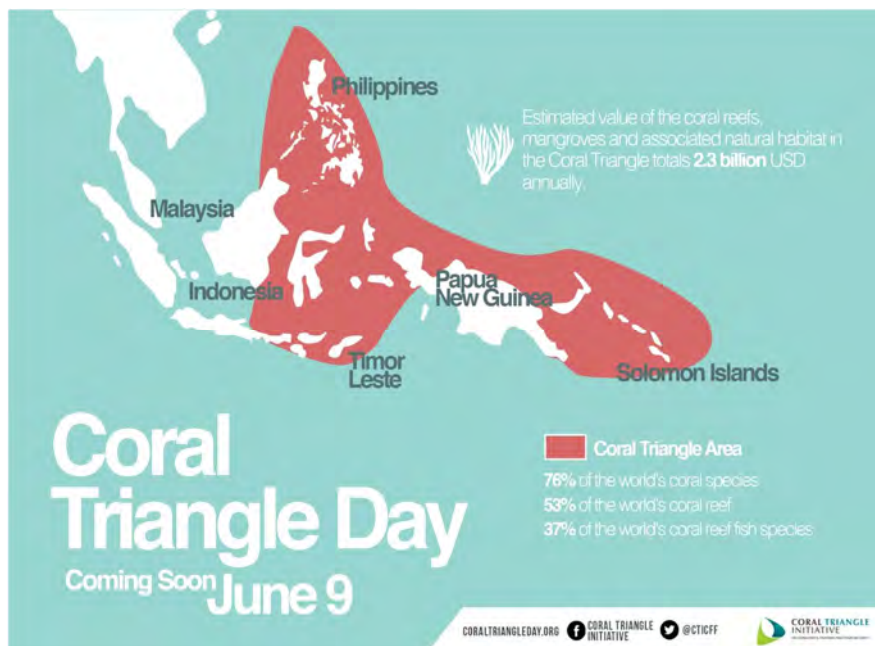
- It has been developed by Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) medical college, Hyderabad in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad and the Department of Atomic Energy
- COVID BEEP, that stands for **Continuous Oxygenation and Vital Information Detection Biomed ECIL ESIC Pod**, is India's first indigenous, cost effective, wireless physiological parameters monitoring system for COVID-19 patients
- The latest version of COVID BEEP has incorporated NIBP (non-invasive blood pressure) monitoring, ECG (electrocardiogram) monitoring and the respiratory rate
- COVID BEEP will greatly reduce the transmission risk as well as help save resources like personal protective equipment (PPEs)

Coral Triangle Day

Relevance IN – Prelims (about coral triangle day+ Coral Triangle Initiative(CTI))

What's the NEWS

- The Coral Triangle Day (held every June 9) is a massive celebration of the Coral Triangle, the world's epicentre of marine biodiversity, which encompasses the *seas of 6 countries in the Asia-Pacific region*:
- Indonesia, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Solomon Islands, and Timor Leste.
-



Know! about the Coral Triangle Day (9 June)

- The Coral Triangle Day is an annual, open-sourced event that brings together individuals, organizations, and establishments on one special day of the year to shed light on ocean conservation and the numerous ways to protect and conserve the Coral Triangle
- It is an annual event started by **Coral Triangle Initiative(CTI)** since 2012 in conjunction with the World Oceans Day on June 8.
- This celebration is not exclusive to these six nations though and includes other countries that benefit from the Coral Triangle's rich marine resources.
- The event is celebrated in several locations around the Coral Triangle region through numerous activities
- CTI is a multilateral partnership of six countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste).

Know! about the Coral Triangle

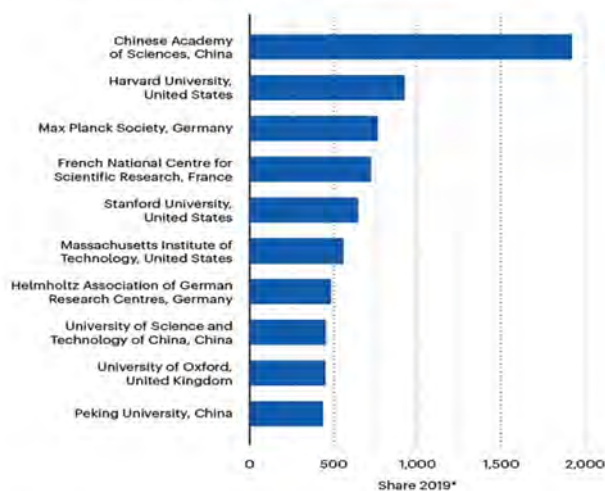
- The Coral Triangle, the world's epicentre of marine diversity, is **one of the 3 mega ecological complexes** on our planet, together with the **Congo Basin and the Amazon Rainforest**.
- It is a vast ocean expanse that geographically spreads across 6 countries in Asia and the Pacific: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, and Timor Leste (the "CT6" countries).
- The region contains 76% of all known coral species, 37% of all known coral reef fish species and 53% of the world's coral reefs.

Science & Technology

Nature Index 2020

10 LEADING INSTITUTIONS IN THE NATURE INDEX

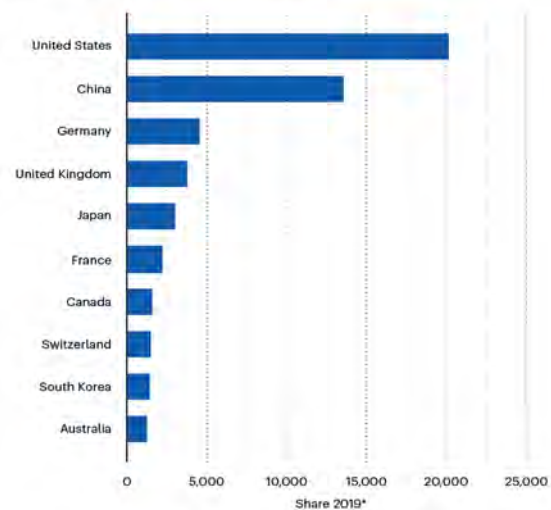
The University of Science and Technology of China and University of Oxford appear in positions 8 and 9, respectively, where The University of Tokyo and the University of Cambridge appeared in the 2019 Annual Tables.



*Based on Nature Index data from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019.

10 LEADING COUNTRIES IN THE NATURE INDEX

The United States dominates, but China is gaining ground. Ranks 1 through 10 are unchanged from the 2019 Annual Tables.



*Based on Nature Index data from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019.

Relevance IN -Prelims (all about Nature Index 2020)

What's the NEWS

- Three of the autonomous institutions of the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India have found their place **among top 30 Indian Institutions** including universities, IITs, IISERs, and Research Institutions and Labs as per Nature Index 2020 ratings **based on the research published in the top journals**, a measure of research quality.

Globally the top-rated Indian institutions in this list are

1. *Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)*, a group of 39 institutions at the **160th position**
2. *Indian Institute of Science (IISc)* Bangalore at the **184th position**.

Know! about Nature Index 2020

- The Nature Index 2020 Annual Tables highlight the institutions and countries that dominated high quality research in the natural sciences in 2019 as tracked by Nature Index.
- The rankings are based on an institution's or country's share of articles **published in the 82 prestigious scientific journals** selected by an independent panel of experts and tracked by the Nature Index database.
- Each year, the Nature Index publishes tables based on counts of high-quality research outputs in the previous calendar year.
- The Nature Index is a database of author affiliation information collated from research articles published in an independently selected group of 82 high-quality science journals.
- The database is compiled by Nature Research.
- The Nature Index provides a close to real-time proxy of high-quality research output and collaboration at the institutional, national and regional level.

Miscellaneous

Quality Council of India

Relevance IN – Prelims (about QCI)

What's the NEWS

- The Minister of Commerce and Industry has been reviewing the performance of the Quality Council of India(QCI)

Know! about QCI

- Quality Council of India is a **non-profit autonomous society**, under the Department of Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), with the mandate to establish an accreditation structure in the country and to spread quality movement in India by undertaking a National Quality Campaign.
- The Mission of QCI is to lead nationwide quality movement in India by involving all stakeholders for emphasis on adherence to quality standards in all spheres of activities primarily for promoting and protecting interests of the nation and its citizens.

Additional info

Read daily current notes of (11 June) to get more facts about QCI

- Quality Council of India (QCI) was set up in 1997 jointly by the Government of India (**Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion**) and the Indian Industry represented by the three premier industry associations i.e.
 1. Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)
 2. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and

3. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)
 - to establish and operate national accreditation structure and promote quality through National Quality Campaign.

Prelims Factoids

Operation Desert Chase

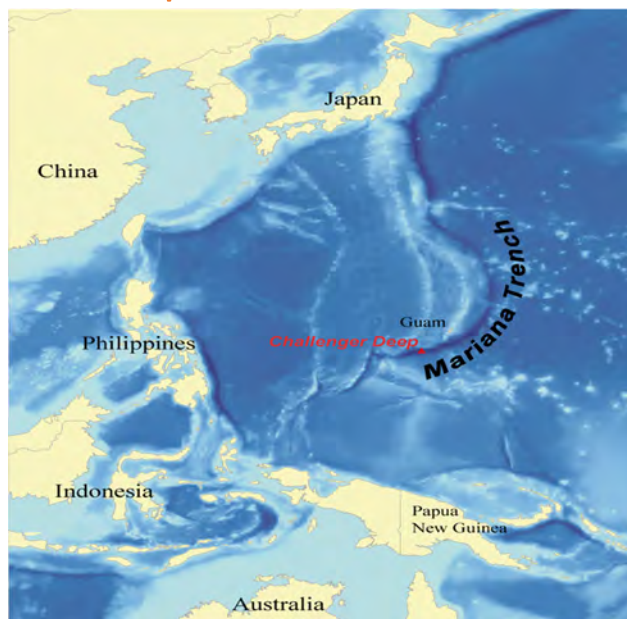
Relevance IN – Prelims (about operation Desert chase)

What's the NEWS

- The special branch of Rajasthan Police arrested two civil defence employees on espionage charges.
- The arrests were made based on the inputs provided by Military Intelligence (MI).
- Both were arrested under relevant sections of **Official Secrets Act, 1923**. Further investigation is on
- The operation was code named '**Desert Chase**'.

Prelims Factoids

Challenger Deep



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Challenger dep – geographical location)

What's the NEWS

- Sullivan is now the only human who has walked in space and reached the deepest point in the ocean.
- The **deepest known spot in the world's oceans**, called the Challenger Deep in the Mariana Trench, which is seven miles below the surface of the Pacific Ocean.

- She made her descent in the two-person submersible (vehicles that can be operated underwater) '**Limiting Factor**' as part of Caladan Oceanic's Ring of Fire Expedition.

Caladan Oceanic's Ring of Fire Expedition.

- Through the expedition, the team hopes to observe volcanic vents, identify new species and conduct the extensive mapping of the US Exclusive Economic Zone at the request of the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**.

Challenger Deep

- According to NOAA, the average depth of the ocean is about 12,100 feet and the deepest part is called the Challenger Deep, which is located below the surface of the **western Pacific Ocean**. It is approximately 36,200 feet deep.

Know! about National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is a U.S.A. scientific agency **within the United States Department of Commerce** that focuses on the **conditions of the oceans, major waterways, and the atmosphere**.
- NOAA warns of dangerous weather, charts seas, guides the use and protection of ocean and coastal resources and conducts research to provide the understanding and improve stewardship of the environment.

Prelims Factoids

GermiKlean



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Germiklean)

What's the NEWS

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed a sanitizing chamber named '**GermiKlean**' to **sanitise uniforms of security forces**.
- The sanitizing chamber has been set up at Parliament Street Police Station.

- DRDO designed and developed a dry heat treatment chamber named “GermiKlean”. This chamber is designed to sanitise 25 pairs of uniforms within 15 minutes

Prelims Factoids

Malathion 95% ULV Insecticides

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Malathion insecticides + about Horn of Africa)

What’s the NEWS

- HIL (India) Limited, a PSU under Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers and one of the leading manufacturer of insecticides in the country has supplied **25MT Malathion 95% ULV to Iran** under Government-to-Government initiative for Locust Control Programme
- Ministry of External Affairs placed an order with HIL (India) Limited, to manufacture and supply 25 MT of Malathion 95% ULV to Iran. The consignment is expected to reach Iran by 16th June 2020.

Know! the reason behind this move

- As per the reports of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the hopper stage population of locust is building up in **Sistan-Baluchistan Region of Iran**, which shall migrate to India in coming months leading to further crop devastation.
- Government of India has taken an initiative to counter the locust menace at its breeding ground itself and approached Iran for coordinated efforts.
- Desert Locust after severe crop devastation in **Horn of Africa**, East Africa and Arabian Peninsula has entered into India in March/April 2020 and it has affected the field crop, horticulture crops and other plantation in the State of **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh**.

Know! about Horn of Africa



- The Horn of Africa is a large extension of land that protrudes from the eastern edge of the continent of Africa, lying between the **Indian Ocean to the east and The Gulf of Aden** to the north, jutting for hundreds of kilometers into the Arabian Sea.
- The term "Horn of Africa" is also used to define a political region that consists of **Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia**.
- Some definitions also include the states of **Kenya, Sudan, and Tanzania**.
- The Horn of Africa is considered a subregion of the larger region known as East Africa, and is sometimes referred to as the Somali Peninsula.

Health

AarogyaPath portal for healthcare supply chain launched



Relevance IN – Prelims (facts about Aarogya Path)

What's the NEWS

- The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** has launched Aarogya Path, a web-based solution **for the healthcare supply chain**, which provides real-time availability of critical supplies.
- Aarogya Path **would serve manufacturers, suppliers, and customers through the web portal**

Know! more about Aarogya Path

- This national healthcare supply chain portal will remove supply chain bottlenecks during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The vision of this initiative is to set up an information management and forecasting database platform at national level.

- It will **capture demand and supply scenarios** for key healthcare needs items.
- This public platform will help healthcare users like hospitals, pathology laboratories, research institutes, medical colleges and patients.
- It will also **provide seamless access to suppliers, manufacturers and importers** for prevailing needs and demand related to medical equipment, diagnostic instruments, drugs, Personal Protective Equipment, respiratory assistance devices.

Prelims Factoids

Odisha's unique festival Raja Parba begins



Relevance IN – Prelims (about raja prabha festival)

What's the NEWS

- On Raja Praba, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has greeted the people Of Odisha

Know! about the fest

- Raja Parba, Odisha's three-day unique festival **celebrating the onset of monsoon and the earth's womanhood has begun.**
- As a mark of respect towards the earth during her menstruation days, all agricultural works, like ploughing, sowing are suspended for the three days.
- Raja Sankranti is the first day of the Ashara month. It is celebrated on the day prior to the Sankranti, (Pahili Raja), the day of Sankranti, and the day after, known as Bhu Daha or 'Basi Raja'.
- The festival is essentially the celebration of the earth's womanhood. It is believed that during this time the **Mother Earth or Bhudevi undergoes menstruation.** The fourth day is the day of the 'purification bath'.
- As it is a celebration of womanhood, a lot of the focus is on young women

Prelims Factoids

Hydroxychloroquine does not reduce mortality, RECOVERY trial finds

Relevance IN – Prelims (about RECOVERY trial + about Solidarity Trial)

What's the NEWS

- The RECOVERY trial, a **large randomised controlled trial in the U.K.** to test five drugs, including hydroxychloroquine, has found no clinical benefit from use of hydroxychloroquine in hospitalised patients with COVID-19.
- The trial investigators found that there was no significant benefit in mortality reduction in the intervention group, which was the primary objective.

Know! about the RECOVERY trial

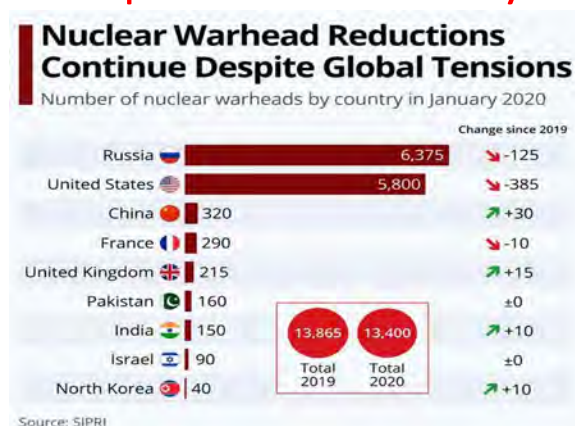
- The RECOVERY trial began in March. It is a dynamic trial assessing five candidate drugs and convalescent plasma therapy for treating COVID-19 in patients in U.K. hospitals.

Know! also about Solidarity Trial

- Solidarity” is an international initiative for clinical trials **launched by the WHO**, along with partners, to help find an effective treatment for Covid-19.
- It was originally supposed to look at four drugs or drug combinations: remdesivir, HCQ, ritonavir/lopinavir and lopinavir/ritonavir/interferon beta 1a.
- Now with HCQ trial enrolment stalled for at least the next few weeks, the Solidarity trial will proceed with the other three arms.

Prelims Factoids

India and China increased their nuclear weapons stockpile over last year



Relevance IN – Prelims (about SIPRI and its report takeaways)

What's the NEWS

- India and China have both increased their nuclear weapons stockpile over the last year but New Delhi's overall numbers are less than half of Beijing's and also slightly lower than what Pakistan possesses.

Know! the highlights of the report

- In its Yearbook 2020, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), a Swedish think tank, has pegged the number of nuclear warheads in the Chinese arsenal at 320, while Pakistan and India are estimated to have 160 and 150 weapons, respectively.
- In its 2019 report, SIPRI had calculated China's nuclear arsenal at 290 and India's at 130-140. Pakistan's nuclear arsenal was calculated at 150-160, a number which remains constant in the latest assessment too.
- The report states that **there has been a decrease in the overall number of nuclear weapons in the world in 2019.**
- This was largely due to Russia and the US — which together still possess over 90 per cent of global nuclear weapons — dismantling retired nuclear weapons.
- The nine nuclear-armed states — the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) — together possessed an estimated 13,400 nuclear weapons at the start of 2020,
- SIPRI had identified India as the third largest military spender in the world, just behind the US and China.

Know! about SIPRI

- It is an international institute based in Sweden, dedicated to research into conflict, armaments, arms control and disarmament.
- Established in 1966, SIPRI provides data, analysis and recommendations, based on open sources, to policymakers, researchers, media and the interested public. SIPRI is based in Stockholm.

Prelims Factoids

Khelo India State Centres of Excellence (KISCE)



Relevance IN – Prelims (about KISCE + Khelo India Scheme + about Khelo India Youth games)

What's the NEWS

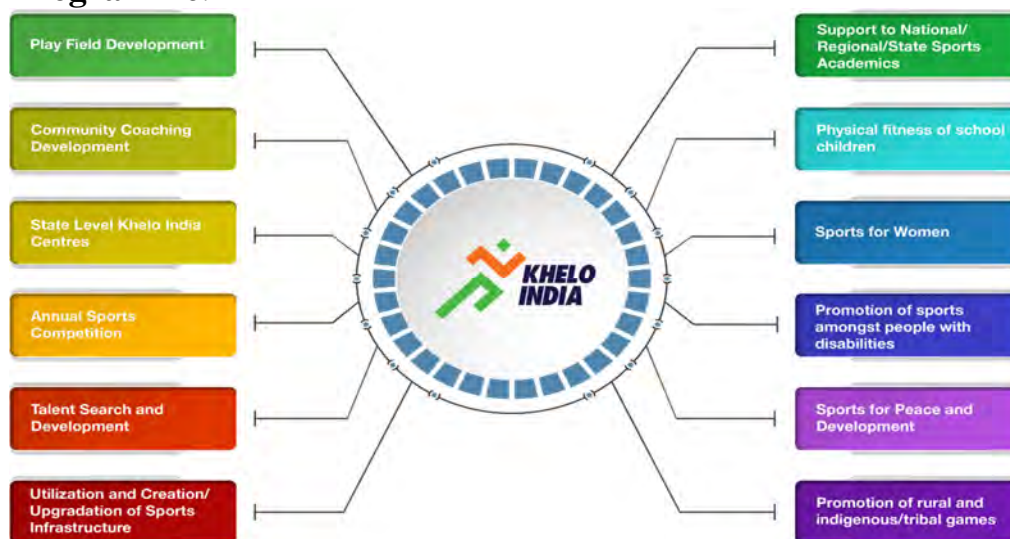
- The Sports Ministry is all set to establish Khelo India State Centres of Excellence (KISCE) under the ministry's flagship, Khelo India Scheme.

Know! all about KISCE

- **One KISCE will be identified in each state and union territory**, with an effort to create a robust sporting ecosystem in the entire country.
- In the first leg, the Ministry has identified state-owned sports facilities in **eight states of India**, including, Karnataka, Odisha, Kerala, Telengana and the north east states of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram and Nagaland which will be upgraded into Khelo India State Centre of Excellence (KISCE).
- The Khelo India State Centre of Excellence are being established to **strengthen India's pursuit for excellence in Olympics**.
- The objective is **to scale up the best sporting facilities** available in each state in India into academies of world-class standard, where athletes from all over the country will want to train in their specific discipline.

Khelo India Scheme.

- It is a scheme **launched in the year 2018** by the Ministry of youth affairs and sports for the development of sports in India.
- The Khelo India programme has been introduced to revive the sports culture in India at the grass-root level by building a strong framework for all sports played in our country
- The Khelo India programme was launched by the ministry last year by merging three schemes – **Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan, Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme and National Sports Talent Search Programme**.



Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG) formerly Khelo India School Games (KISG)

- Khelo India School Games, which are a part of the Khelo India programme, held annually in January or February, are the national level multidisciplinary grassroot games in India held for two categories, namely **under-17 years school students and under-21 college students**.
- Every year best 1000 kids will be given an annual scholarship of ₹5 lakh for 8 years to prepare them for the international sporting events.

Khelo India Youth games

- 2018 – Delhi
- 2019- Pune, Maharashtra
- 2020 – Guwahati, Assam

Training of Trainers (TOT) Programme

- The Training of Trainers (TOT) Programme held in December 2018-January 2019 in the first phase.
- Total of 160 trainers trained in 4 batches of 40 each in December-January period.
- This TOT Programme will be carried out semi-annually or quarterly to include **all the interested teachers, principals, vice-principals and physical education trainers**.

Khelo India University

- On 22 February 2020, Prime inaugurated the first edition of the Khelo India University Games in Cuttack to give athletes the exposure of multi-disciplinary events at the university level.

Prelims Factoids

Coronavirus Drug Dexamethasone

Relevance IN – Prelims (about dexamethasone)

What's the NEWS

- In a major breakthrough in Covid-19 treatment, scientists in UK have claimed that the generic steroid drug dexamethasone reduced deaths by up to one third in severely ill hospitalised patients.
- The results are a part of **UK-based RECOVERY trial**, one of the world's largest randomised trial of drugs to treat COVID-19 patients.
- This is the same study that earlier this month showed the malaria drug hydroxychloroquine was not working against the coronavirus.

Know! about Dexamethasone

- It is a generic steroid widely used in other diseases to reduce inflammation.
- The drug helps stop some of the damage that can happen when the body's immune system goes into overdrive as it tries to fight off coronavirus.

- The steroid medicine has been available as a generic for decades. It is used to treat a **range of diseases including rheumatism, asthma, allergies** and even to help cancer patients better handle the nausea triggered by chemotherapy.
- Steroid drugs reduce inflammation, which sometimes develops in Covid-19 patients as the immune system overreacts to fight the infection.

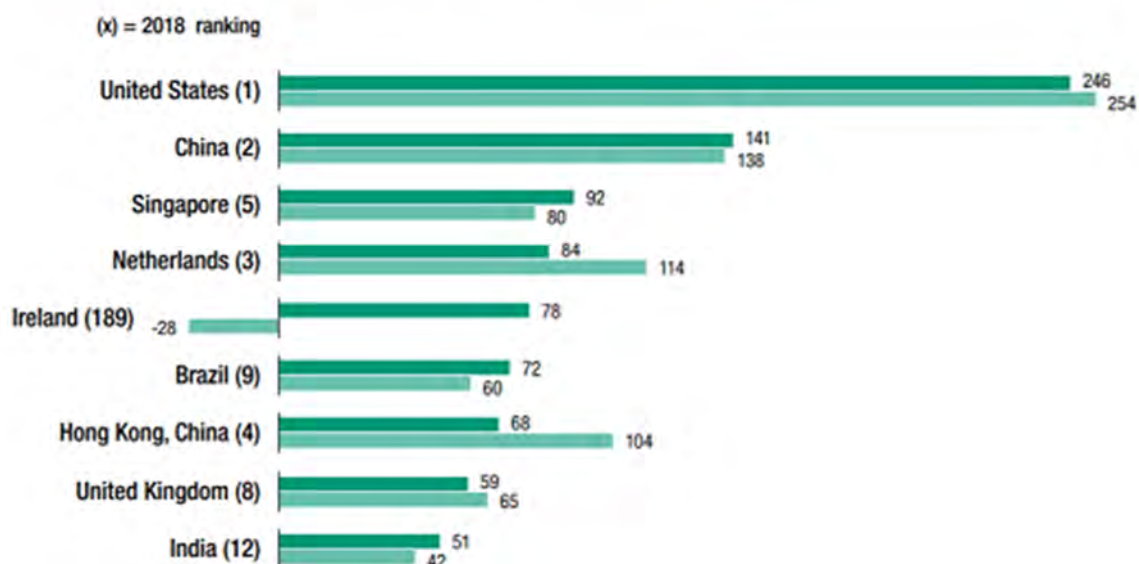
RECOVERY trial

- The RECOVERY trial began in March. It is a dynamic trial assessing five candidate drugs and convalescent plasma therapy for treating COVID-19 in patients in U.K. hospitals.

Prelims Factoids

World Investment Report 2020

FDI inflows, top 20 host economies, 2018 and 2019 (Billions of dollars)



Relevance IN – Prelims (about UNCTAD + about World Investment Report and its findings)

What's the NEWS

- **India received USD 51 billion in foreign investment in 2019** and was the world's **9th largest recipient** of foreign direct investments (FDI) in 2019, according to a report by the UN's trade body.

Know! the highlights of the report

- UNCTAD said in a report that in the post-COVID19 pandemic period India's large market will continue to attract market-seeking investments to the country.
- India was the 9th largest recipient of FDI in 2019, with **51 billion dollars** of inflows during the year, an increase from the **42 billion dollars** of FDI received in 2018, when India ranked 12 among the top 20 host economies in the world.

- In the "developing Asia" region, India was among the top five host economies for FDI.
- The report said that global FDI flows are forecast to decrease by up to 40 per cent in 2020, from their 2019 value of USD 1.54 trillion.
- This would be for the first time since 2005 that global FDI falls below the USD 1 trillion mark.

Know! about UNCTAD

- The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was established in 1964 as a permanent intergovernmental body. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland
- UNCTAD is the part of the United Nations Secretariat dealing with trade, investment, and development issues.

Reports published by UNCTAD

- The Trade and Development Report
- The Trade and Environment Review
- The World Investment Report
- The Least Developed Countries Report
- The Information Economy Report
- The Review of Maritime Transport
- The Technology and Innovation Report

Prelims Factoids

World Competitiveness Index

Relevance IN – Prelims (about World Competitiveness Index and its findings)

What's the NEWS

- India continues to remain ranked 43rd on an annual World Competitiveness Index compiled by **Institute for Management Development (IMD)** published since 1989.
- It ranks 63 countries using 235 indicators grouped under four factors: economic performance, government efficiency, business efficiency and infrastructure.

Index Highlights (World Specific)

- Singapore has retained its top position on the 63-nation list.
- Denmark has moved up to the second position (from 8th last year), Switzerland has gained one place to rank 3rd
- The US has moved down to 10th place (from 3rd last year), while China has also slipped from 14th to 20th place.
- Among the BRICS nations, India is ranked second after China, followed by Russia (50th), Brazil (56th) and South Africa (59th).

Index Highlights (India Specific)

- **India was ranked 41st** on the IMD World Competitiveness Ranking being produced by the business school based in Switzerland and

Singapore every year since 1989, but had slipped to **45th in 2017** before improving to **44th in 2018** and then to **43rd in 2019**.

- While its overall position has remained unchanged in the 2020 list, it has **recorded improvements in areas** like long-term employment growth, current account balance, high-tech exports, foreign currency reserves, public expenditure on education, political stability and overall productivity
- It has moved down in areas like exchange rate stability, real GDP growth, competition legislation and taxes.
- Traditional weaknesses of India -- poor infrastructure, an important deficit in education investment, and a health system that does not reach everybody.

Prelims Factoids

New fish species discovered in Arunachal Pradesh



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Schizothorax sikusirumensis + about River Siku and Sirum)

What's the NEWS

- A new species of fish has been discovered in Arunachal Pradesh

Know! about the new fish species

- The new fish species is from genus Schizothorax.
- The fish species is named as **Schizothorax sikusirumensis**.
- The name of this fish species has been derived from the name of the rivers where it was found.

- This fish was collected from the junction of **River Siku and Sirum** near Gakang area under Mebo circle of East Siang District.
- The fish inhabits the water logged area of torrential river drainage.

Know! about Siang river

- The Brahmaputra, called Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet, **Siang/Dihang River in Arunachal Pradesh** and Luit, Dilao in Assam, is a trans-boundary river which flows through China, India and Bangladesh.
- It is the ninth largest river in the world by discharge, and the 15th longest
- River Siku and Sirum are the tributaries of Siang river

Prelims Factoids

KVIC rolls out project to produce neera, palmgur



Relevance IN – Prelims (about neera palmgur)

What's the NEWS

- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has rolled out a project under which tool kits have been distributed to artisans for extraction of **neera and making of palmgur (jaggery)**.

Know! about Neera

- **Neera, extracted from palm trees before sunrise**, is a nutrient-rich health drink consumed in many states.
- The project has been rolled out on the initiative of MSME Ministry to start using Neera as soft drinks to make it commercially useful
- Tool kits were distributed to 200 local artisans who were given seven days training.
- KVIC has proposed to start standardised collection, processing and packing of neera under controlled conditions.
- On the lines of coconut water, MSME is working to promote Neera as a substitute to the soft drinks available in the market.
- **Neera is organic and rich in nutrients** and thus a complete health drink.
- Neera has high export potential as it is also consumed in Sri Lanka, Africa, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Myanmar.

- India has an abundance of palm fields in states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Daman & Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar that can make India a leading producer of Neera globally

Culture

6th annual International Yoga Day



Relevance IN – Prelims (about International Yoga Day 2020)

What's the NEWS

- Ministry of Culture is Celebrating International Yoga Day 2020 by organising a campaign **Namaste Yoga** from 19th to 21st June, 2020 to achieve the goal of making yoga an indispensable part of everyone's life.
- **2020 Theme: "Yoga for Health - Yoga at Home"**

Know! all about International Yoga Day

- Yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India. The word 'yoga' derives from Sanskrit and means to join or to unite, symbolizing the union of body and consciousness.
- Recognizing its universal appeal, on **11 December 2014**, the United Nations proclaimed 21 June as the International Day of Yoga by **resolution 69/131**.
- The International Day of Yoga aims to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practicing yoga.
- The draft resolution establishing the International Day of Yoga was proposed by India and endorsed by a **record 175 member states**.
- The proposal was first introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address during the opening of the 69th session of the General Assembly

World Refugee Day 2020



Relevance IN – Prelims (about World refugee day + conventions)

What's the NEWS

- World Refugee Day, international observance observed June 20 each year, is dedicated to raising awareness of the situation of refugees throughout the world.
- According to the United Nations, every minute, 20 people are forced to leave behind everything, and escape conflict and war.
- The **theme** of World Refugee Day this year is "**every action counts.**" The focus is to bring about changes to make the world more inclusive.

Know! about refugee

- According to the **United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention**, people who fled their homes and countries due to "a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion" is a refugee.

Know! about World Refugee Day

- On December 4, 2000 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution relating to the status of refugees, and decided that June 20 would be marked as World Refugee Day, to spread awareness and honour the resilience of refugees.
- **Non-refoulement is a fundamental principle of international law** that forbids a country receiving asylum seekers from returning them to a country in which they would be in likely danger of persecution based on "race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion".
- **India is not party to the 1951 Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol** and does not have a national refugee protection framework.
- However, it continues to grant asylum to a large number of refugees from neighbouring States and respects UNHCR's mandate for other nationals, mainly from Afghanistan and Myanmar.

- While the Government of India deals differently with various refugee groups, in general it respects the principle of for holders of UNHCR documentation.

Prelims Factoids

Golden Langurs



Relevance IN – Prelims (all about golden langurs)

What's the NEWS

- Primatologists have observed that the Gee's golden langur (induce stillbirth of babies killed inside the womb of females, besides practising infanticide

Know! about golden langurs

- It is an endangered species of monkey, found only in Assam and parts of Bhutan
- Conservation Status – Endangered



- Golden langurs are endemic to the semi-evergreen and mixed-deciduous **forests straddling India and Bhutan**
- The golden langurs in Assam are hemmed in by three rivers — **Brahmaputra in the south, Manas in east and Sonkosh in west.**
- Their northern limit is the range of hills in Bhutan up to 2,400 metres above sea level.

Threats

- Obstructions such as wires, and gaps in the forest due to felling, have increased the threat of inbreeding among golden langurs
- Electrocution has also killed the monkeys in groups

- Their habitat in Assam has been encroached upon and fragmented drastically in the last 30 years
- They survive mostly on a variety of juicy leaves. But fragmentation of forests and selective logging is making their food scarcer,”

Know! more about golden langur

- Golden langur also known as simply the golden langur, is an Old World monkey found in a small region of western Assam, India and in the neighbouring foothills of the Black Mountains of Bhutan.
- It is one of the most endangered primate species of India.

Prelims Factoids

Play little, Study little scheme

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the scheme)

What's the NEWS

- The **Tripura government** has decided to start a scheme called ‘Ektu Khelo, Ektu Padho’ which means ‘Play little, Study little’, from June 25.

Know! more about the Scheme

- As per the scheme, the students would be getting audio and video contents on learning activities , projects alongwith fun and gaming activities via SMS or WhatsApp services.
- The students can access the scheme through smartphones of their parents.
- If any children can't access through smartphone, they will get learning activities via SMS services.

Prelims Factoids

Ashadhi Bij

Relevance IN – Prelims (about about Ashadhi Beej Kutchi New Year)

What's the NEWS

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has greeted the Kutchi community people on the special occasion of **Ashadhi Bij, the Kutchi New Year.**

Know! all about Ashadhi Beej Kutchi New Year

- As for people of Kutch, this day is associated with beginning of rains in Kutch, Gujarat. Kutch is largely a desert area therefore people living value rain very much.
- Ashadhi-beej is celebrated mainly at two places in India – VishvaNath temple in Varanasi, UP and Mulesh Mahadev in Umreth, Gujarat.
- Other than these Kutchi people all around the world celebrate this day at their level best.

- The Kutchi people celebrate their Kutchi New Year on Ashadi Beej. It is the 2nd day of Shukla paksha of Aashaadha month of Hindu calendar (June – July).
- Spring season to predict the weather, during the pre-monsoon, there is a small festival called Ashadhi-beej to predict the monsoon.
- During Ashadhi-beej, they check the moisture in the atmosphere to help predict which crop would do best in coming monsoon.
- Moisture in the air makes the seed and soil gain weight. If the pre-monsoon air has a lot of moisture in it, that is a fairly good indication that the season will be well.
- Coincidentally on Ashadi Beej the famous Jagannath Rath Yatra takes place in Ahmedabad and Puri.
- As for people of Kutch, this day is associated with the beginning of rains in Kutch, Gujarat.

Prelims Factoids

Japanese supercomputer, crowned world's fastest

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Japan's Fugaku supercomputer + about Summit)

What's the NEWS

- **Japan's Fugaku supercomputer** claimed the top spot , carrying out 2.8 times more calculations per second than an IBM machine in the US.
- The US machine, called Summit, came top of the bi-annual Top500 list the previous four times.

Know! more about Fugaku supercomputer

- Fugaku's victory broke a long run of US-China dominance, returning Japan to the top for the first time in 11 years.
- The room-sized machine lives in the city of Kobe and was developed over six years by Japanese technology firm Fujitsu and the government-backed Riken Institute. Its name is another way of saying Mount Fuji.
- Its performance was measured at 415.53 petaflops, 2.8 times faster than second-place Summit's 148.6 petaflops.
- Third place in the list went to another IBM system, at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, while the fourth and fifth places were taken by computers in China.
- A supercomputer is classified by being more than 1,000 times faster than a regular computer.

Navigating the New Normal



Relevance IN – Prelims(facts about the behaviour change campaign)

What's the NEWS

- NITI Aayog, in partnership with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Centre for Social and Behavioural Change (CSBC), Ashoka University, and the Ministries of Health and WCD, today launched a behaviour change campaign called '**Navigating the New Normal**', and its website.

Know! about campaign

- Developed under the guidance of Empowered Group 6, constituted by the Government of India and chaired by CEO, NITI Aayog, the campaign has two parts.
- The first is a web portal, <http://www.covidthenewnormal.com/>, containing resources informed by behavioural science and the use of nudge and social norms theory, related to Covid-safe behavioural norms during the ongoing Unlock phase, and the second is a media campaign focused on the wearing of masks.

Know! more about the web portal

- Developed in consultation with MoHFW and other stakeholders, the website aims to increase public participation and engage CSOs and NGOs.
- It will become a repository of strategies and collaterals to practise Covid-safe behaviours in different sectors.
- It aims to provide open-source access to anyone, including CSOs, NGOs, the public, institutions, *anganwadi* workers and district administration.

- With the availability of this information, institutions and civil society organisations can plan to resume their normal activities while practising Covid-safe behaviours.

The portal focuses on easy implementation of four key behaviours in the unlock phase:

- *mask-wearing*
- *social distancing*
- *hand hygiene*
- *not spitting in public*

Defence

Defence Conclave 2020



Relevance IN – Prelims(Defence Conclave 2020 + Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM)).

What's the NEWS

- Two-day digital conference on the defence & aerospace manufacturing sector 'Defence Conclave 2020, Gujarat' via video conferencing has been inaugurated
- It is jointly organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Gujarat and Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM).

Know! about the conclave

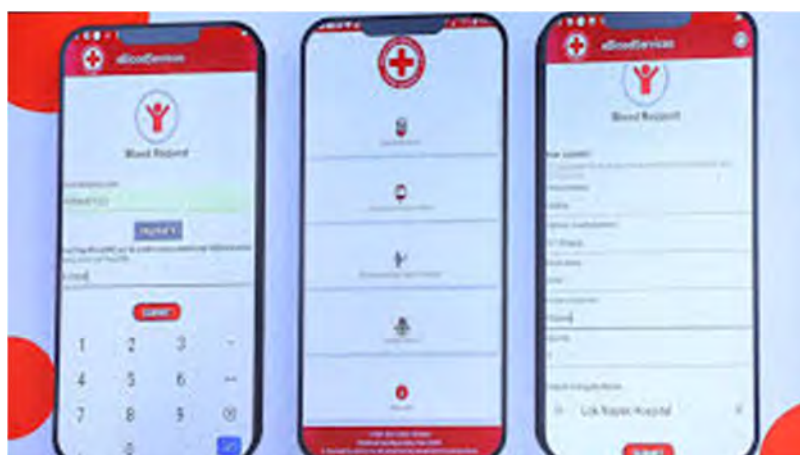
- The Conclave will bring together high-level government representatives, key industry and academia to discuss, deliberate and exchange ideas, viewpoints and knowledge about critical defence offset policies, sector analyses and review choices of technology available globally for the manufacturing and production of indigenous defence systems.
- The Conclave intends to build on the positives of the 'Make in India' vision for boosting the defence manufacturing.

Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM).

- The Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers (SIDM) is a not-for-profit association formed to be the apex body of the Indian defence industry.
- SIDM plays a proactive role as an advocate, catalyst, and facilitator for the growth and capability building of the defence industry in India.
- It works closely with the government towards enabling the growth of the defence industry.
- Collaborate with experts from the armed forces, academia and defence industry to optimize the industry's development capabilities.

Health and Family Welfare

eBloodServices Mobile App



Relevance IN – Prelims(about eblood services mobile app)

What's the NEWS

- The Health & Family Welfare Ministry has launched the 'eBloodServices' mobile App developed by The Indian Red Cross Society (ICRS)
- This application is developed by the E-Raktkosh team of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) under the Digital India scheme

Know! the objective of this app

- Many people require blood related services on regularly because of certain medical conditions in their families.
- Through this App, four units of blood can be requisitioned at a time and the blood bank will wait for as long as 12 hours for the person to collect it.
- This app makes it easy for those in need to request for Blood units at IRCS NHQ.
- At a time when the country is facing such a pandemic, the Mobile App will provide succor to all those who direly require blood

- Once the request is placed through the app, the requisite units become visible to IRCS, NHQ blood bank in its E-Raktkosh dashboard and this allows assured delivery within the specified time.
- This feature will make it easy for a blood seeker to obtain blood & shall bring the added advantage of complete transparency & single window access to the service.

Prelims Factoids

KVIC launches Sandalwood and Bamboo plantation

Relevance IN – Prelims (about KVIC and bamboo and sandalwood plantation)

What's the NEWS

- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), in a first of its kind initiative has begun exploring the untapped but highly profitable venture of sandalwood and bamboo tree plantation for monetization of its assets.

Know! about the initiative of KVIC

- The plantation of the Sandalwood has also been planned with an eye on creating an asset for the KVIC as it is estimated to fetch between Rs 50 crore to Rs 60 crore in the next 10 to 15 years.
- Likewise, a special variety of bamboo, Bambusa Tulda, used for making Agarbatti sticks, brought from Assam has been planted in Maharashtra with an aim to support the local Agarbatti industry and to create regular income for the training center.

Know! about KVIC

- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is a statutory body formed in April 1957 (as per an RTI) by the Government of India, under the Act of Parliament, 'Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956'.
- It is an apex organisation under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, with regard to khadi and village industries within India
- It seeks to - "plan, promote, facilitate, organise and assist in the establishment and development of khadi and village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary

Indian Navy inducts indigenously developed anti-torpedo decoy system Maareech



Relevance IN – Prelims(all about anti-torpedo decoy system Maareech)

What's the NEWS

- The Indian Navy has inducted an advanced anti-torpedo decoy system called 'Maareech'

Know! all about Maareech

- It has been designed and developed indigenously by the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) and it is capable of detecting, locating and neutralizing incoming torpedo.
- The Advanced Torpedo Decoy System Maareech is capable of being fired from all frontline warships.
- Design & Development of this anti-torpedo decoy system has been undertaken **indigenously by DRDO labs** - Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL) and Naval Physical & Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL).
- Bharat Electronics Limited, a Defence PSU, would undertake the production of this decoy system.
- The prototype of this system installed onboard a nominated naval platform had successfully completed all user evaluation trials and demonstrated the features as per the Naval Staff Qualification Requirements.

Know! the working mechanism of anti-torpedo decoy system (ATDS)

- Christened as Maareech, the fully indigenous decoy system can divert under-water torpedo attacks on ships and submarines.

- Maareech detects and locate the incoming torpedo and apply countermeasures to protect naval platform against attack.
- The ATDS first detects and then confuse and divert the torpedo attacks on ships from under the water.
- By diverting the torpedoes' original course, it forces it to lose its energy thus preventing it from being effective on target.
- Torpedoes are self propelled weapon with a warhead and can be used under or on the water surface. They are one of the mainstay of sea-warfare attack systems.

Way forward

- This induction not only stands testimony to the joint resolve of the **Indian Navy and DRDO** towards indigenous development of Defence technology, but has also given a major fillip to the Government's 'Make in India' initiative

Science & Technology

DST Golden Jubilee Commemoration Year

Relevance IN – Prelims(about Department of Science and Technology (DST))

What's the NEWS

- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) has launched the official Logo to celebrate Golden Jubilee Commemoration Year



Know! all about DST

- Department of Science & Technology, which was established on 3rd May 1971, is observing Golden Jubilee Commemoration Year during the period **3rd May 2020 to 2nd May 2021** with activities like lecture series, bringing out publications, documentaries, updating Wikipedia pages of

Survey of India, and Autonomous Institutions under DST and events by DST autonomous organisations across the country.

- Department of Science & Technology (DST) was established in May 1971, with the **objective of promoting new areas of Science & Technology** and to play the role of a **nodal department for organising, coordinating and promoting S&T activities in the country**.
- **DST operates within the Indian Ministry of Science and Technology**.
- Among other initiatives, it funds scientific research and international science engagement by Indian researchers.

Prelims Factoids

Statistics Day, 2020



Relevance IN – Prelims (about statistics day + about MoSPI)

What's the NEWS

- The National Statistics Day is celebrated every year on the birth anniversary of **Prof. P C Mahalanobis** (often referred to as the 'father of Indian statistics') on 29th June, in recognition of his invaluable contribution in establishing the National Statistical System.
- On June 29, 2006, the first Statistics Day was observed.
- The MoSPI pays tribute to Prof PC Mahalanobis for the notable contribution made by him in the field of economic planning and statistical development on his birth anniversary
- The theme of Statistics Day, 2020 was Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)- 3 (Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages) & SDG- 5 (Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls).

Know! about MoSPI

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is a ministry of Government of India concerned with coverage and quality aspects of statistics released. The surveys conducted by the Ministry are based on scientific sampling methods.
- The Ministry has two wings, one relating to Statistics and the other Programme Implementation. The Statistics Wing called the National

Statistical Office (NSO) consists of the Central Statistical Office (CSO), the Computer center and the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).

- The Programme Implementation Wing has three Divisions, namely, (i) Twenty Point Programme (ii) Infrastructure Monitoring and Project Monitoring and (iii) Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme.
- Besides these two wings, there is National Statistical Commission created through a Resolution of Government of India (MOSPI) and one autonomous Institute, viz., Indian Statistical Institute declared as an institute of National importance by an Act of Parliament.

P. C. Mahalanobis National Award

- MoSPI has instituted a new award '**Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis National Award in Official Statistics**' for recognizing outstanding achievement of official statisticians in Central Government, State/UT Governments and institutions.

Here's Why Our Students Love Us



“The course has made learning easy for me. After attending classes, I can read and understand the same chapters at a faster pace. The explanations are quite deep and sufficient to understand the basics. Also, the teachers respond to queries on time. The course is worth the money.”

Deepankar Singh
Enrollment Id: 11439987

New batches starting. Join now!

-: Our UPSC 2020 Students' Feedback :-

Course ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 4.8

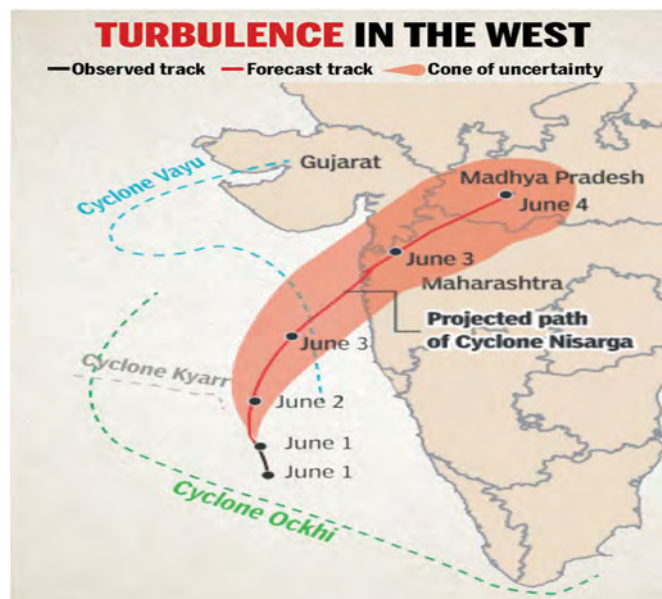
Mentors ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 4.9

General Studies- I :

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

Geophysical phenomena

Cyclonic Storm 'NISARGA'



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Cyclone Nisarga + about the naming of cyclone + colour coded weather warning +Mains GS I (Important Geophysical phenomena)

What's the NEWS

- A low pressure is currently over east-central Arabian Sea and the Lakshadweep Islands.
- It is likely to intensify into a depression in the next 12 hours and a cyclonic circulation in the next 24 hours
- **A low pressure area is the first stage of any cyclone.**
- It is likely to cross north Maharashtra and south Gujarat coasts between Harihareshwar town in Maharashtra's Raigad district and Daman as a severe cyclonic storm

Know! about Nisarga (named by Bangladesh)

- India is now bracing to face another cyclone (**last week Cyclone Amphan caused widespread destruction in West Bengal and parts of Odisha**) which is headed towards the coastline of Maharashtra and Gujarat.

- "Nisarga", which is currently brewing in the Arabian Sea, means nature and was termed by India's neighbouring country -- **Bangladesh**.
- The name was accorded in a list formulated by a group of countries.
- Bangladesh had also suggested "**Fani**", which had made a landfall in Odisha on May 3, 2019. **The extremely severe cyclone** had caused extensive damage.

Know! about the naming of Cyclone

- The naming of cyclones in the Indian Ocean began in 2000 and a formula was agreed in 2004.
- The next few cyclones will be named Gati (named by India), Nivar (Iran), Burevi (Maldives), Tauktae (Myanmar) and Yaas (Oman).
- Tropical cyclones are named to help the scientific community and disaster managers to identify cyclones, create awareness and effectively disseminate warnings to wider audiences.
- The World Meteorological Organisation and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific had, at its twenty-seventh Session held in 2000, agreed to assign names to the tropical cyclones in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea.
- Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand were part of the panel. Later in 2018 Iran, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Yemen were added to the list.
- Cyclones around the world are named by **Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres and Tropical Cyclone Warning Centres**.
- There are a total of **six RSMCs and five TCWCs**, including the India Meteorological Department.
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has been mandated with the duty to name cyclones that develop over the North Indian ocean, including Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal, by following a standard procedure.
- As suggested by the 13 countries, **IMD released a list of cyclone names in April, 2020**.
- The names like Arnab, Nisarga, Aag, Vyom, Azar, Prabhanjan, Tej, Gati, Lulu among 160 other names were listed.
- The new list included the last name from the previous list "Amphan" as it remained unused at the time of release.
- After "Amphan", "Nisarga" name was picked up for the ensuing cyclone.

The Indian Meteorological Department classifies Cyclones based on their wind speeds.

- When the wind speed is around 31-50 km/hr, it is called depression.
- When the wind speed is between 51-62 km/hr, it is called Deep Depression. Beyond these speeds, the depression becomes storm.

The wind speeds of different storms as follows

- Cyclonic Storm: 63-88 km/hr
- Severe Cyclonic Storm: 89-117 km/hr
- Very Severe Cyclonic Storm: 118-165 km/hr
- Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm: 166-220 km/hr
- Super cyclonic Storm: greater than 220 km/hr

Why Is The Bay of Bengal So Prone To Cyclones?

- Tropical cyclones—also called typhoons or hurricanes—are intense water-rotating systems formed by **strong winds** (of speeds **at least 62 kilometres/hour**) around **low-pressure areas**.
- They have a spiral, **anticlockwise movement**. Additional weather conditions like high sea surface temperature, vertical changes in wind speed inside the spiral, and high relative humidity help cyclones form and intensify.
- Since sea surface temperatures and humidity both directly correlate with chances of cyclone formation, the Bay of Bengal is a more likely target because it gets higher rainfall, and because the sluggish winds around it keep temperatures relatively high: about 28 degrees around the year.
- Warm air currents enhance this surface temperature and aid the formation of cyclones.
- In addition, the Bay receives higher rainfall and constant inflow of fresh water from the Ganga and Brahmaputra rivers.
- This means that the Bay's surface water keeps getting refreshed, making it impossible for the warm water to mix with the cooler water below, making it ideal for a depression.
- On the other hand, the Arabian Sea receives stronger winds that help dissipate the heat, and the lack of constant fresh water supply helps the warm water mix with the cool water, reducing the temperature.

Mumbai's low risk from cyclones

- The reason for Mumbai's low risk lies in the weather dynamics of the Arabian Sea.
- When they do form, they tend to go west towards **Oman and the Gulf of Aden**.
- Some go north towards Gujarat, like 2017's **Cyclone Vayu**. Very rarely does a cyclone turn east towards Mumbai, like it happened in 2017 with **Cyclone Ockhi**. However, Ockhi, weakened into a storm by the time it made landfall, a not unusual phenomenon.
- Most cyclones that form in the Arabian Sea tend to head west towards Oman, as in 2019 when **Cyclone Kyarr** struck.
- This typical north/west trajectory springs from a few factors. Easterlies nudge the system away from the northwestern coast,

- A pre-monsoon formation of an area of high pressure, known as a subtropical ridge, along the western coast also creates a barrier. Cyclones tend to move along the ridges. Even when a strong cyclone forms, it can weaken as it approaches land

Colour Coded Weather Warnings

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a **red-colour coded warning** to coastal Maharashtra and Gujarat for June 4 in view of a cyclonic storm in the Arabian Sea.

Know! more about colour coded weather warning

- IMD issues weather warnings using colour codes.
- These warnings are mainly meant for administrators to keep ready and position their resources to handle situations arising out of weather related disastrous events.
- The following colour codes are used by IMD to provide inputs to disaster management authorities for management of severe weather events:



Four colour codes are issued to indicate various categories of alerts.

Green (All is well):

- No advisory is issued

Yellow (Be aware):

- Severely bad weather is possible over the next few days, plan ahead thinking about possible travel delays and disruption of day-to-day activities possible.
- It indicates the weather may change or worsen in the next few days.

Orange/Amber (Be prepared):

- There is an increased likelihood of extremely bad weather, which could potentially cause travel delays, road and rail closures, and interruption of power supply.
- There could be risk to life and property.
- Amber means people need to be prepared to change plans and protect themselves, their family and community from the impacts of the severe weather based on the forecast from the Met Office.

Red (Take action):

- Extremely bad weather is expected. People need to take action to keep themselves and others safe.
- Widespread damage, travel and power disruption and risk to life are likely.
- People must avoid dangerous areas and follow the advice of the emergency services and local authorities.

Know! about India Meteorological Department (IMD)

- IMD was established in 1875. It is an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India.
- It is the principal agency responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology.

Culture

NAIMISHA 2020

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ONLINE NAIMISHA 2020)

What's the NEWS

- National Gallery of Modern Art, New Delhi has announced ONLINE NAIMISHA 2020- Summer Art Program from 8th June 2020 to 3rd July 2020.

Know! more about NAIMISHA 2020

- The month-long ONLINE summer program by NGMA, New Delhi is an initiative to provide a chance to its participants **to create and learn from practicing artists** without compromising their health.
- Four inclusive workshops have been planned by NGMA to engage and increase engagement virtually.
- In the online NAIMISHA 2020 program, four workshops will be organized entitled **Painting workshop, Sculpture workshop, Printmaking and Indrajaal** - The Magic of Art (Interdisciplinary creative workshop to understand Freedom
- The title of the program NAIMISHA-represents **a sacred place where people offer their shraddha or devotion.**
- The exhibition of selected artworks from NAIMISHA 2020 Summer Art Program will be displayed virtually on **SO-HAM** the Cultural media platform of NGMA

No Ambubachi Mela in Kamakhya Temple for the first time in history

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ambubachi mela + about Kamakhya temple) + Mains (GS I Indian heritage and culture)

What's the NEWS

- For the first time in recorded history, the annual Ambubachi rituals at the sacred Kamakhya temple in Guwahati are wearing a deserted look.
- The biggest religious congregation of eastern India, the Ambubachi Mela, has been cancelled this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown.

Know! all about Ambubachi Mela

- Located atop the Nilachal Hills, Kamakhya temple is one of the **51 Shakti Peeths** in the country.
- The Ambubachi Mela is an annual fair which is held at the temple premises is the celebration of the annual mensuration course of the **goddess Maa Kamakhya**.
- The temple's sanctum sanctorum houses the yoni (female genital) symbolised by a rock.
- This celebration attracts lakhs of devotees and pilgrims from all the corners of the globe.
- The Kamakhya temple is one of 51 Shakti Peethas, important shrines in the Hindu tradition of Shaktism (followers of the Shakti cult) that are spread across India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, China and Sri Lanka.
- There are 51 shakti peethas and each represents a body part of the Sati, Lord Shiva's companion.
- The festival is celebrated around mid-June to mark the annual menstruation cycle of the temple's presiding deity, Goddess Kamakhya.
- It was built by the **demon king Narakasura** but records are available only from 1565 when Koch king Naranarayana rebuilt the temple.
- The ritualistic fair celebrates the Goddess' period due to which taboo associated with menstruation is less in Assam compared to other parts of India.
- The attainment of womanhood of girls in Assam is celebrated with a ritual called **Tuloni Biya**, meaning small wedding.
- The fair is also an occasion to promote menstrual hygiene among the visitors through the use of sanitary pads.

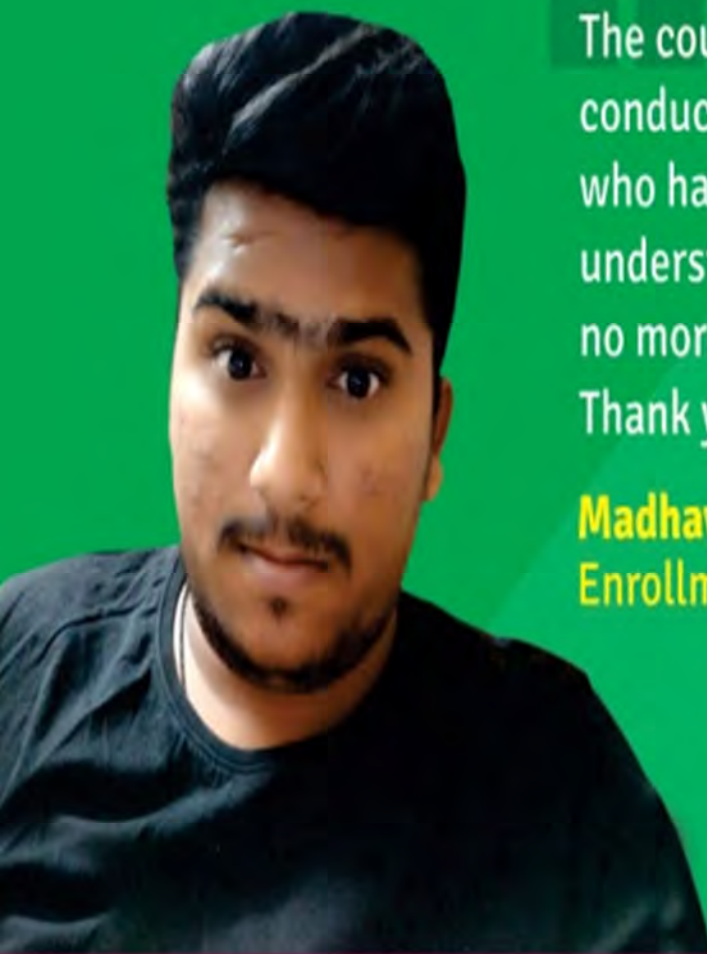
Know! about Kamakhya temple

- The current structural temple, built and renovated many times in the period 8th-17th century, gave rise to a hybrid indigenous style that is sometimes called the Nilachal type a temple with a hemispherical dome on a cruciform base.
- The current structure has been built during the Ahom times, with remnants of the earlier Koch temple carefully preserved.



- **Nilachal** is a style of Hindu temple architecture in Assam, India, that is characterized by a bulbous polygonal dome over a cruciform ratha type bada.
- This **hybrid style** developed first in the Kamakhya temple on the Nilachal hills under the Koch kingdom and became popular as a style later under the Ahom kingdom.

Here's Why Our Students Love Us



The course is excellent; and the classes are conducted in a way that even students like me, who have no idea about UPSC subjects can understand easily. The teachers are awesome; no more words to say about them.
Thank you, Career Launcher, Team!

Madhav Pawar

Enrollment ID: 11471864

New batches starting. Join now!

-: Our UPSC 2020 Students' Feedback :-

Course ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 4.8

Mentors ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ 4.9



General Studies – II

Governance, Constitution, Polity, Social Justice and International relations

Health

COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP)

Relevance IN – Prelims(about C-TAP + Solidarity Call to Action

What's the NEWS

- Thirty countries and multiple international partners and institutions have signed up to support the COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP) an initiative **aimed at making vaccines, tests, treatments and other health technologies to fight COVID-19 accessible to all.**

Know! about COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP)

- The COVID-19 Technology Access Pool will ensure the latest and best science benefits all of humanity
- Vaccines, tests, diagnostics, treatments and other key tools in the coronavirus response must be made universally available as global public goods
- The COVID-19 (Technology) Access Pool will be voluntary and based on social solidarity.
- It will provide a one-stop shop for scientific knowledge, data and intellectual property to be shared equitably by the global community.
- The aim is to accelerate the discovery of vaccines, medicines and other technologies through open-science research, and to fast-track product development by mobilizing additional manufacturing capacity.
- This will help ensure faster and more equitable access to existing and new COVID-19 health products.

Solidarity Call to Action

- WHO, Costa Rica and all the co-sponsor countries have also issued a “Solidarity Call to Action” **asking relevant stakeholders to join and support the initiative**
- The ‘Solidarity Call to Action’ promotes a one-size-fits all model that disregards the specific circumstances of each situation, each product and each country.

US has joined the G7 nations to counter China's use of artificial intelligence.

Relevance IN – Prelims(about Global Partnership on AI + about G7) + Mains (GS II international organisations)

What's the NEWS

- The US has joined an international panel for setting **ethical guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence**.
- The Trump administration had earlier dismissed the idea.
- The Trump administration had been the lone holdout among leaders of the Group of Seven — the world's wealthiest democracies — in setting up the Global Partnership on AI.
- The partnership launched after a virtual meeting between national technology ministers.
- It was nearly two years after **the leaders of Canada and France announced** they were forming a group to guide the **responsible adoption of AI based** on shared principles of "human rights, inclusion, diversity, innovation and economic growth.

US President Donald Trump wants to reformat G7

- US President Donald Trump said he will delay the G7 summit scheduled to take place in June and invite other countries -- **including Russia, South Korea, Australia and India** to join an expanded summit in the fall.
- It could happen in September, either before or after the UN General Assembly

Know! about G7

- The G7 major advanced countries -- Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States -- hold annual meetings to discuss international economic coordination.
- The Group of Seven is an informal block of international intergovernmental economic organization consisting of the seven largest IMF- advanced economies in the world
- G7 meets annually to discuss issues such as global economic governance, international security and energy policy.

CHAMPIONS: Technology Platform to empower MSMEs



Relevance IN – Prelims (about CHAMPOINS portal and its objective) + 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

- Prime Minister launched the technology platform **CHAMPIONS** which stands for **C**reation and **H**armonious **A**pplication of **M**odern **P**rocesses for **I**ncreasing the **O**utput and **N**ational **S**trength.

Know! more about the portal

- The portal is basically for making the smaller units big by solving their grievances, encouraging, supporting, helping and handholding.
- It is a technology packed control room-cum-management information system.
- It is a real one-stop-shop solution of MSME Ministry.

Know! the objectives of CHAMPIONS:

- Grievance Redressal:** To resolve the problems of MSMEs including those of finance, raw materials, labor, regulatory permissions etc particularly in the Covid created difficult situation;
- To help them capture new opportunities:** including manufacturing of medical equipments and accessories like PPEs, masks, etc and supply them in National and International markets;
- To identify and encourage the sparks:** i.e. the potential MSMEs who are able to withstand the current situation and can become national and international champions.

Know! more about the portal

- In addition to ICT tools including telephone, internet and video conference, the system is enabled by Artificial Intelligence, Data Analytics and Machine Learning.
- It is also fully integrated on real time basis with GOI's main grievances portal CPGRAMS and MSME Ministry's own other web based mechanisms.

Hub & Spoke Model

- As part of the system a network of control rooms is created in a Hub & Spoke Model.
- The Hub is situated in New Delhi in the Secretary MSME's office.
- The spokes are in the States in various offices and institutions of MSME Ministry.

Health Reforms

Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H)



Relevance IN – Prelims (about PCIM&H and about the laboratories – PLIM and HPL + about ASUDTAB + Drugs & Cosmetics Rules, 1945.+ Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

What's the NEWS

- The Union Cabinet has given its approval to re-establish Pharmacopoeia Commission for **Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H)** as Subordinate Office under Ministry of AYUSH by merging into it **Pharmacopoeia Laboratory for Indian Medicine (PLIM)** and **Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia Laboratory (HPL)**- the two central laboratories established at Ghaziabad since 1975.
- PLIM & HPL being the subordinate offices and PCIM&H- an autonomous organization under Ministry of AYUSH are going to be merged to establish PCIM&H, as a subordinate office of the Ministry with a common administrative control.

Know! about the merger and its benefits

- Presently, Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) is an autonomous body under the aegis of Ministry of AYUSH established since 2010.
- The merger is aimed at optimizing the use of infrastructural facilities, technical manpower and financial resources of the three organizations for enhancing the standardization outcomes of **Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani** and Homoeopathy drugs towards their effective regulation and quality control.
- It is also intended to accord legal status to the merged structure of PCIM&H and its laboratory by virtue of making necessary amendment and enabling provisions in the **Drugs & Cosmetics Rules, 1945**.
- Consultation in this regard has been done with the Director General Health Services, Drugs Controller General and Ayurveda, Siddha and **Unani Drugs Technical Advisory Board (ASUDTAB)**,

Unani Drugs Technical Advisory Board (ASUDTAB),

- It is a statutory body under the provisions of Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 meant for advising Central and State Governments in regulatory matters of ASLT drugs.

Know! about PCIM&H

- Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) is an **autonomous organization** under Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India with a primary mandate of **publishing Pharmacopoeias and Formularies for drugs/formulations** used in Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani (ASU) and Homoeopathy (ASU&H) systems of Medicine.
- The Commission serves as an **umbrella organization** for Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia Committee (APC), Siddha Pharmacopoeia Committee (SPC), Unani Pharmacopoeia Committee (UPC) and Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia Committee (HPC).

The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules

- The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 is an Act of the Parliament of India which regulates the **import, manufacture and distribution of drugs** in India.
- The primary objective of the act is to ensure that the drugs and cosmetics sold in India are safe, effective and conform to state quality standards.
- The related Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 contains provisions for classification of drugs under given schedules and there are guidelines for the storage, sale, display and prescription of each schedule.
- The term "drug" as defined in the act includes a wide variety of substance, diagnostic and medical devices.
- In 1964, the act was amended to **include Ayurveda and Unani drugs**.

Government Schemes

Centre launches three new schemes to promote electronics manufacturing in India

The image shows a press conference by Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad. On the left, a video feed shows him speaking at a podium. On the right, a presentation slide titled 'New Schemes for Electronics Manufacturing' is displayed. The slide lists three schemes: Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) leading to Large Scale Mobile Manufacturing; Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Components and Semiconductors (SPECS) leading to Domestic Electronics Supply Chain of Components; and Electronics Manufacturing Cluster Scheme (EMC 2.0) leading to Infrastructure and Common Facilities. A table on the right shows 5 Year Outcomes: Production (INR 8.0 Lakh Cr / USD 106 Bn), Exports (INR 5.8 Lakh Cr / USD 77 Bn), and Employment (10 Lakh). At the bottom, it states 'Total incentives of up to INR 50,000 Crore (~\$6.7 Bn)'. Logos for the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, Digital India, and Electronics India are also present.

Press conference by Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad

New Schemes for Electronics Manufacturing

Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI) → Large Scale Mobile Manufacturing

Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Components and Semiconductors (SPECS) → Domestic Electronics Supply Chain of Components

Electronics Manufacturing Cluster Scheme (EMC 2.0) → Infrastructure and Common Facilities

5 Year Outcomes	
Production	INR 8.0 Lakh Cr (USD 106 Bn)
Exports	INR 5.8 Lakh Cr (USD 77 Bn)
Employment	10 Lakh

Total incentives of up to INR 50,000 Crore (~\$6.7 Bn)

Press Information Bureau, National Media Centre 02.06.2020

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the new schemes and its objectives) + 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

- To make India a global leader in electronic manufacturing, the government has announced three schemes worth of Rs 50,000 crore.

The new schemes –

1. Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI)
 2. Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors(SPECS)
 3. Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters Scheme (EMC 2.0)
- It will be implemented from June 2 for the development of electronics manufacturing sector in India.

Know! the objective of these schemes and its benefits

- These three schemes that entail an outlay of about Rs 50,000 crore (approximately \$7 billion), will help offset the disability for domestic electronics manufacturing, which will **strengthen the electronics manufacturing ecosystem in the country.**
- The three schemes together will enable **large scale electronics manufacturing**, the **domestic supply chain** of components and state-of-

the-art infrastructure and common facilities for large anchor units and their supply chain partners.

- These schemes are expected to contribute significantly to achieving a \$1 trillion digital economy and a \$5 trillion GDP by 2025.
- The three new schemes are expected to attract substantial investments, increase the production of mobile phones and their components to around Rs 10,00,000 crore by 2025 and generate around 5 lakh direct and 15 lakh indirect jobs.

Know! more about these schemes

Production linked incentive (PLI)

- To boost domestic manufacturing and attract large investments in mobile phone manufacturing and specified electronic components.
- The PLI Scheme shall extend an **incentive of 4 per cent to 6 per cent** on incremental sales (over base year) of goods manufactured in India and covered under the target segments, to eligible companies, for a period of five years subsequent to the base year.

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- The SPECS shall provide a financial incentive of **25 per cent on capital expenditure** for the identified list of electronic goods that constitute the supply chain of electronic products such as electronic components, semiconductor, specialized sub-assemblies.

Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters Scheme (EMC 2.0)

- The EMC 2.0 shall provide support for the creation of world-class infrastructure along with common facilities and amenities, including Ready Built Factory (RBF) sheds / Plug and Play facilities for attracting major global electronics manufacturers, along with their supply chains.

Human Resource Development

The Urban Learning Internship Program (TULIP)



Relevance IN – Prelims (about TULIP and its aim and objective) + Mains (GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and

issues arising out of their design and implementation +Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development, Housing & Urban Affairs, and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) have jointly launched an online portal for 'The Urban Learning Internship Program (TULIP)'
- A program for providing internship opportunities **to fresh graduates in all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Smart Cities** across the country.
- The Ministries also launched the portal for this programme on the occasion.

Know! all about the TULIP program

- TULIP programme will provide access to internship opportunities through 4400 Urban local bodies and smart cities pan India.
- TULIP platforms will give an opportunity to youth to generate new ideas to reform Urban local bodies by modern techniques and innovative methods.
- 25000 fresh graduates will receive opportunity of internship in the first year itself.
- **Any graduate** who have completed B. Tech, B. Arch, B. Plan, BSc etc. can apply within 18 months from date of its graduation
- TULIP- "The Urban Learning Internship Program" helps **fulfill twin goals of providing interns with hands-on learning experience as well as infusing fresh energy and ideas** in the functioning of India's ULBs and Smart Cities.
- This launch is also an important stepping stone for fulfillment of MHRD and AICTE's goal of 1 crore successful internships by the year 2025.

Bilateral Relations

Kohala hydropower project

Relevance IN – Prelims (about CPEC + Kohala hydropower project + Diamer-Bhasha dam – location based questions + Mains (GS II Bilateral relations)

What's the NEWS

- China under the multi-billion-dollar CPEC will set up a 1,124-megawatt power project in **Pakistan-occupied Kashmir** despite India's objection to it

Know! more about the project

- A tripartite agreement has been finalised among China's Three Gorges Corporation, the authorities in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and the Private Power and Infrastructure Board (PPIB) to implement the 1,124-megawatt **Kohala hydroelectric power project** under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework.
- The project will be built on the **Jhelum River** and aims at annually providing more than five billion units of clean and low-cost electricity for consumers in Pakistan.

Diamer-Bhasha dam.



- Last month, India protested to Pakistan awarding a mega contract to build a dam in Gilgit-Baltistan
- The Pakistan government has signed a whopping Rs 442 billion contract with a joint venture of a Chinese state-run firm and a commercial arm of Pakistan's army's commercial body Frontiers Works Organisation for construction of the **Diamer-Bhasha dam**.
- Diamer Bhasha Dam, probably the world's highest concertized dam, will stand at a height of 272m with the capacity to hold 8 mn acre feet of water. It plans to generate 4,500 mw of power.
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- The dam, to be constructed on the **River Indus** in the northern Gilgit-Baltistan region, which borders China, is set to produce 4,500 MW.
- Role of China in the construction of the Dam will allow Beijing to expand its presence in the area.

Know! about CPEC

- The 3,000-km-long CEPC is aimed at connecting China and Pakistan with rail, road, pipelines and optical cable fiber networks.
- It connects China's Xinjiang province with Pakistan Gwadar port, providing access to China to the Arabian Sea.

- The CPEC passes through PoK, over which India has conveyed its protests to China.



- The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a part of the One Belt One Road (OBOR)
- OBOR has two main components, One Belt - the land-based belt, and One Road refers to the ocean going 'Maritime Silk Road', which aims to connect the East Asian economic region with the European economic circle and runs across the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa.

Health Reforms

Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H)



Relevance IN – Prelims (about PCIM&H and about the laboratories – PLIM and HPL + about ASUDTAB + Drugs & Cosmetics Rules, 1945. + Mains (GS

II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

What's the NEWS

- The Union Cabinet has given its approval to re-establish Pharmacopoeia Commission for **Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H)** as Subordinate Office under Ministry of AYUSH by merging into it **Pharmacopoeia Laboratory for Indian Medicine (PLIM) and Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia Laboratory (HPL)**- the two central laboratories established at Ghaziabad since 1975.
- PLIM & HPL being the subordinate offices and PCIM&H- an autonomous organization under Ministry of AYUSH are going to be merged to establish PCIM&H, as a subordinate office of the Ministry with a common administrative control.

Know! about the merger and its benefits

- Presently, Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) is an autonomous body under the aegis of Ministry of AYUSH established since 2010.
- The merger is aimed at optimizing the use of infrastructural facilities, technical manpower and financial resources of the three organizations for enhancing the standardization outcomes of **Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani** and Homoeopathy drugs towards their effective regulation and quality control.
- It is also intended to accord legal status to the merged structure of PCIM&H and its laboratory by virtue of making necessary amendment and enabling provisions in the **Drugs & Cosmetics Rules, 1945**.
- Consultation in this regard has been done with the Director General Health Services, Drugs Controller General and Ayurveda, Siddha and **Unani Drugs Technical Advisory Board (ASUDTAB)**,

Unani Drugs Technical Advisory Board (ASUDTAB),

- It is a statutory body under the provisions of Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 meant for advising Central and State Governments in regulatory matters of ASLT drugs.

Know! about PCIM&H

- Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H) is an **autonomous organization** under Ministry of AYUSH, Govt. of India with a primary mandate of **publishing Pharmacopoeias and Formularies for drugs/formulations** used in Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani (ASU) and Homoeopathy (ASU&H) systems of Medicine.

- The Commission serves as an **umbrella organization** for Ayurvedic Pharmacopoeia Committee (APC), Siddha Pharmacopoeia Committee (SPC), Unani Pharmacopoeia Committee (UPC) and Homoeopathic Pharmacopoeia Committee (HPC).

The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules

- The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 is an Act of the Parliament of India which regulates the **import, manufacture and distribution of drugs** in India.
- The primary objective of the act is to ensure that the drugs and cosmetics sold in India are safe, effective and conform to state quality standards.
- The related Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 contains provisions for classification of drugs under given schedules and there are guidelines for the storage, sale, display and prescription of each schedule.
- The term "drug" as defined in the act includes a wide variety of substance, diagnostic and medical devices.
- In 1964, the act was amended to **include Ayurveda and Unani drugs**.

Prelims Factoids

Khelo India Community Coach Development Programme

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the day Khelo India Community Coach Development Programme)

What's the NEWS

- Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports will begin a 25-day Khelo India Community Coach Development Programme
- The programme will be inaugurated by Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Kiren Rijiju.

Know! more about the Programme

- The programme will help in the professional **development of 15,000 Physical Education (PE) teachers and community coaches** and aims to equip them with skills to train students to take up fitness and sport as a way of life.
- The programme will see a host of international experts speaking to PE teachers and community coaches.
- Throughout the programme, participants will benefit from interactions from a host of international experts

Centre launches three new schemes to promote electronics manufacturing in India

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the new schemes and its objectives) + Mains (GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation + GS III Economic development)

What's the NEWS

- To make India a global leader in electronic manufacturing, the government has announced three schemes worth of Rs 50,000 crore.

The new schemes –

4. Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PLI)
 5. Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semiconductors (SPECES)
 6. Modified Electronics Manufacturing Clusters Scheme (EMC 2.0)
- It will be implemented from June 2 for the development of electronics manufacturing sector in India.

Know! the objective of these schemes and its benefits

- These three schemes that entail an outlay of about Rs 50,000 crore (approximately \$7 billion), will help offset the disability for domestic electronics manufacturing, which will **strengthen the electronics manufacturing ecosystem in the country.**
- The three schemes together will enable **large scale electronics manufacturing**, the **domestic supply chain** of components and state-of-the-art infrastructure and common facilities for large anchor units and their supply chain partners.
- These schemes are expected to contribute significantly to achieving a \$1 trillion digital economy and a \$5 trillion GDP by 2025.
- The three new schemes are expected to attract substantial investments, increase the production of mobile phones and their components to around Rs 10,00,000 crore by 2025 and generate around 5 lakh direct and 15 lakh indirect jobs.

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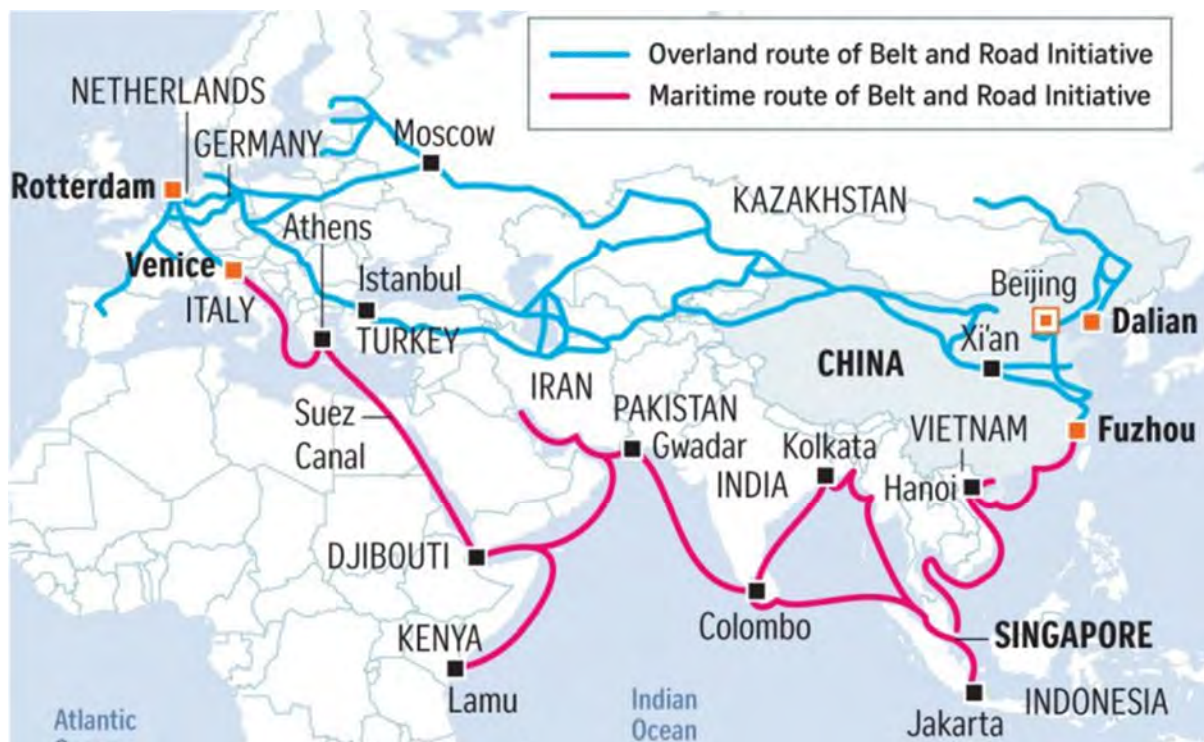
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Social Issues

WCD Ministry constitutes task force to examine issues related to lowering Maternal Mortality Rate

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the role of task force + about MMR and IMR) + Mains (GS II Social issues)

What's the NEWS

- Government has constituted a task force to examine issues related to age of motherhood, lowering Maternal Mortality Rate and improvement of nutritional levels.
- Union Finance Minister, during her Budget Speech for 2020-21 in the Parliament stated that "Women's age of marriage was increased from fifteen years to eighteen years in 1978, by amending erstwhile **Sharda Act of 1929**.

Know! the objective of task force

- The task force will be headed by Jaya Jaitly and it will submit its report by 31st July of next month.
- The task force set up by the Women and Child Development Ministry will suggest suitable legislations and amendments in existing laws and also chalk out a detailed roll-out plan with timelines to implement these recommendations.
- The task Force will examine the issues related to Infant Mortality Rate, Maternal Mortality Rate, Total Fertility Rate, Sex Ratio at Birth, Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and any other issues pertaining to health and nutrition.
- It will also suggest measures for promoting higher education among women.

Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR)

- India has registered a 26.9 per cent reduction in Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) since 2013
- The decline in MMR has been from 77 to 72 per 100,000 live births among southern states and in the other states, from 93 to 90, it stated.
- The maternal mortality ratio has declined from 130 in 2014-2016 to 122 in 2015-17
- **Maternal mortality ratio**, measured as the number of **maternal deaths** per lakh live births,
- The WHO last year lauded India's progress in reducing the MMR saying the progress puts the country on track towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of an MMR below 70 by 2030.

Infant mortality rate (IMR)

- India's infant mortality rate (IMR) has improved very marginally from 33 per 1,000 live births in 2017 to 32 in 2018
- The IMR has declined significantly over the years; in 1971, it was 129.
- **Infant mortality** is the death of young children under the age of 1. This death toll is measured by the **infant mortality rate (IMR)**, which is the number of deaths of children under one year of age per 1000 live births.

Government Schemes

Govt changes public procurement rules, more preference to local suppliers

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the changes in procurement rules) + 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 government has modified public procurement norms to give maximum preference to companies whose goods and services have 50 per cent or more local content
- It aimed at promoting 'Make in India' and making the country self-reliant.
- The revised Public Procurement (Preference to Make in India), Order 2017, has **introduced a concept of Class-I, II and non-local suppliers**, based on which they will get preference in government purchases of goods and services.

Know! the concept of different class

- Class-I local suppliers will get the most preference in all government purchases because their domestic value addition is 50 per cent or more.
- It means a supplier or service provider, whose goods, services or works offered for procurement, has local content equal to or more than 50 per cent
- It will be followed by Class-II suppliers, whose value addition range is more than 20 per cent but less than 50 per cent.
- Companies with less than 20 per cent of domestic content in their goods or services will not be able to participate in most of the government tenders and they are categorised as "non-local suppliers".
- Purchases of goods/services with an estimated value of less than Rs 200 core, global tender enquiry will not be issued except with the approval of the competent authority as designated by the Department of Expenditure.
- The earlier order had defined a local supplier as one whose goods/services offered for government procurement had a minimum local content of 50 per cent. There was no categorisation of local suppliers.

Know! about local content


- Local content means the amount of value added in India, which shall be the total value of the item procured (excluding net domestic indirect taxes) minus the value of imported content in the item (including all customs duty) as a proportion of the total value, in per cent.

Human Resource Development


NCERT and Rotary India digitally sign MoU for e-learning content telecast for class 1-12 over all NCERT TV channels

Relevance IN – Prelims (facts related to MoU + different platforms supported and enhanced by the government to promote e-learning) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.




Aatmanirbhar Bharat



Technology Driven Education with Equity Post-COVID (1/2)



- **PM eVIDYA**- A programme for multi-mode access to digital/online education to be launched immediately; consisting of:
 - DIKSHA for school education in states/UTs; e-content and QR coded energized textbooks for all grades (**one nation, one digital platform**)
 - One earmarked TV channel per class from 1 to 12 (**one class, one channel**)
 - Extensive use of **radio, community radio and podcasts**
 - **Special e-content for visually and hearing impaired**
 - **Top 100 universities** will be permitted to automatically start online courses by 30th May, 2020

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What's the NEWS

- To make e-learning more constructive, NCERT and Rotary India digitally signed MoU for e-learning content telecast for class 1-12 over all NCERT TV channels

Know! about the MoU

- The collaboration of Rotary India Humanity Foundation and NCERT with the guidance and support of MHRD will ensure that e-learning reaches children across the country with NCERT approved content.
- **Under Vidya Daan 2.0** Rotary International will provide the e - content in **Hindi language** to NCERT for classes I to XII for all subjects.
- This material is of high class and very high quality; it will benefit the children very much.
- Rotary International will also provide material for special needs children as well as contribute its entirety to the Adult Literacy Mission.
- They will also provide the Teacher Training (including professional development) content

MoU highlights

- **NCERT TV Tie-up:** There will be curriculum modules telecast for classes 1-12, through twelve national Television channels of NCERT
- **DIKSHA App tie-up:** The e-Learning modules would also be available through GOI's national mobile app, DIKSHA, at the same time.

Know! about Rotary India

- Rotary has curated e-Learning content for classes 1-12 and plans to provide it free to the nation, as a home-based teaching solution related to their school curriculum.

- Rotary has a vast experience in e-Learning, having installed e-Learning software/hardware to over 30,000 Govt. schools across India, in the past 5 years”.
- It is a non-political and non-religious organization open to all.
- Rotary Foundation (India) (“RFI”) is a society registered under the Societies Registration Act of 1860
- Rotary Foundation (India) is registered under Foreign Contribution and Regulation Act (FCRA) with the Ministry of Home affairs, Government of India. Rotary Foundation (India)

Steps taken by the MHRD to promote e-learning

- Ministry of Human Resource Development is focusing on creating e-learning, accurate and updated study material for all and learning enhancements so that students can access quality education at home.
- MHRD have been working on integration of technology in education through various schemes and initiatives like Operation Digital Board, DIKSHA, E – Pathshala, SWAYAM and SWAYAM PRABHA.

VidyaDaan 2.0

- Govt of India has launched a national program VidyaDaan 2.0 in April 2020 for inviting **e-learning Content contributions**.
- VidyaDaan 2.0 is a common national program to develop and contribute e-learning content and a chance to be recognised nationally.
- The content will be monitored by a panel of academic experts and released for use on the DIKSHA app to help millions of children across the country continue learning anytime and anywhere.

DIKSHA portal

- In 2017, the government has launched DIKSHA portal to serve as a dedicated national digital infrastructure for teachers.
- The platform will enable teachers to create training content, in-class resources, profiles, assessment aids, and connect with other teachers more seamlessly.
- The DIKSHA portal can be used by both public and private institutions as per their unique goals, needs, and capabilities required for teacher training.

SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active learning for Young Aspiring Minds)

- Launched in 2014, SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active learning for Young Aspiring Minds) envisions extending best-quality education to over 3 crore students in India.
- The platform has been developed by the Ministry of HRD in collaboration with IIT Madras, NPTEL, and Google.
- It includes various training courses by AICTE, UGC, NCERT, NPTEL, CEC, IGNOU, NIOS, NITTTR, and IIM-Bombay.
- All training courses are free of cost on SWAYAM.

- The reach of SWAYAM further gets amplified via 32 SWAYAM Prabha DTH channels, especially amongst less-digitized regions.

SWAYAMPARBHA

- Swayamprabha is a group of **32 DTH channels** providing high-quality educational curriculum-based course contents covering diverse disciplines such as arts, science, commerce, performing arts, social sciences and humanities subjects, engineering, technology, law, medicine, agriculture, etc to all teachers, students and citizens across the country interested in lifelong learning.

e-PG Pathshala

- e-PG Pathshala hosts high quality, curriculum-based, interactive e-content containing 23,000 modules (e-text and video) in **70 Post Graduate disciplines** of social sciences, arts, fine arts and humanities, natural & mathematical sciences.

Operation Digital Board

- Digital boards will be available for students from **class 9 to 12 in schools**, in addition, to classes in higher education institutions.
- Seven lakh classrooms in schools and two lakh in universities and colleges will have digital boards by 2022.

For the Visually Impaired Children

- Special e-content will be provided for visually and hearing impaired children.
- It is developed on **Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY)** and in sign language on NIOS website/ YouTube
- Learners can access all study material of NIOS through DAISY
- These lessons are broadcast on Gyanamrit, Channel 30 of Swayam Prabha

Other initiatives to promote online education

- One earmarked TV channel for each class from standard 1 to 12 under '**one class one channel programme**'
- Podcast called **Shiksha Vani** of CBSE disseminates audio content for various subjects of grades 9 to 12
- **Manodarpan:** an initiative for psychological support and counselling of students, teachers and families for mental health and emotional well-being.
- **New National Curriculum and Pedagogical framework for school, early childhood** .It will be integrated with global and 21st century skill requirements.
- **National Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission** for ensuring that every child attains learning levels and outcomes in grade 5 by 2025 will be launched by December 2020.

Coal trading platform



*Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Coal trading platform and its objective)
+Mains GS II - Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance)*

What's the NEWS

- India has decided to set up a coal trading platform, taking a giant leap towards completely throwing open the sector to market forces
- India gears up for commercial coal mining auctions, which will increase the number of sellers of coal.
- The coal ministry is likely to begin auctions of about 50 coal blocks for commercial coal mining
-

Know! about Coal Exchange

- As per the proposal, entire coal produced in the country will be traded on a 'Coal Exchange,' an online platform **where pricing is determined transparently through demand and supply.**
- The exchange is being thought out on the lines of commodity exchanges, power bourses or the proposed gas exchange.
- This could mean the end of new Fuel Supply Agreements (FSA) regime of Coal India where the state-run miner signs contracts for coal supply with consumers.

Know! about Fuel Supply Agreements (FSA)

- FSAs will be signed with power plants that have entered long term power purchase agreements (PPAs) with distribution companies
- The FSAs will be signed for a period of 20 years and will be reviewed after every five years

India Rankings 2020 for Higher Educational Institutions



Relevance IN – Prelims (about India Rankings 2020 highlights + about National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development released “India Rankings 2020” of Institutions of Higher Education in various categories on the basis of their performance on **five broad categories of parameters**.

India Rankings 2020 (Highlights)

- **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras** is the best educational institute in the country, as per the National Institutional Ranking Framework Rankings (NIRF) India Rankings 2020 of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).
- Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru took the second spot while IIT Delhi was in the third position in this year's NIRF India Rankings.
- This year, a total of 5,805 applications have come in for participation in the process of the rankings.
- The Ministry has released India Rankings 2020 virtually in **10 categories**
- This is the **fifth consecutive edition** of India Rankings of the institutions of higher education in India.
- In 2020, an addition to nine rankings ie one domain “Dental” has been introduced for the first time bringing the total tally to 10 categories / subject domains.

The ranking framework evaluates institutions on five broad generic groups of parameters

1. *Teaching, Learning and Resources (TLR)*
 2. *Research and Professional Practice (RP)*
 3. *Graduation Outcomes (GO)*
 4. *Outreach and Inclusivity (OI)* and
 5. *Perception (PR)*.
- Ranks are assigned based on total sum of marks assigned for each of these five broad groups of parameters

Know! about National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)

- The Ministry of HRD has taken this important initiative of creating a National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), which is being used for past five years for ranking of institutions of higher education
- These rankings were **launched in September 2015** and till now the list has been published in 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. These rankings are expected to act as a guide to students looking for higher educational institutions in India.
- Apart from overall ranking, category-specific rankings are done for colleges and universities and subject-specific rankings are done for **Engineering, Management, Pharmacy, Architecture, Law and Medicine**.
- A new subject domain, i.e. “**Dental**” is introduced from 2020 onwards.

Third party sources

- Besides, sourcing data on various parameters from applicant institutions, third party sources of data have also been used
- Scopus (**Elsevier Science**) and Web of Science (**Clarivate Analytics**) were used for retrieving publications and citations data.
- **Derwent Innovation** was used for retrieving data on patents.

QS World University rankings 2021

Relevance IN – Prelims (about QS World University rankings -highlights)

What's the NEWS

- The top five Indian Institutes of Technology and the Indian Institute of Science have all dropped in this year's QS World University rankings
- Only the newer IITs in Guwahati and Hyderabad were able to show improvement.
- The total number of Indian institutions in the top 1,000 global list **has also fallen from 24 to 21**, despite the Centre's flagship **Institutes of Eminence scheme (IoE)**, launched two years ago in a bid to boost the Indian presence in these global rankings.

QS World University rankings (highlights)

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) secured Rank 1, Stanford and Harvard universities secured the next two ranks in the list of the world's best universities.
- India performs poorest on the parameter of internationalisation while scoring well on research impact, measured through citations per faculty.
- Out of the six parameters, Indian institutions get zero score on ratio of international faculty and students.
- India also scores poorly on faculty-student ratio
- India did quite well on the research impact parameter
- IIT-Bombay still maintains its position as the top institution in India in the QS rankings, but has slipped 20 places from 152 to 172 in the global list.
- IISc overtook IIT Delhi to make it to the second place, but still dropped a rank to 185.
- IIT Delhi fell more than 10 places in the rankings to 193 rank, while IIT Madras is at 275.
- Both IIT Kharagpur and IIT Kanpur crashed out of the top 300.
- IIT Roorkee maintained its ranking at 383, while IIT Guwahati improved from 491 to 470.
- IIT Hyderabad entered the top 1,000 for the first time.

Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU)

- The state university has made considerable progress as it was ranked among the top 700 (651-700 bracket), jumping nearly 150 positions from the 800+ bracket it was in last year.

Know! about QS World University Rankings

- QS World University Rankings is an annual publication of university rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS).
- Previously known as Times Higher Education–QS World University Rankings, the publisher had collaborated with Times Higher Education (THE) magazine to publish its international league tables from 2004 to 2009 before both started to announce their own versions.
- The QS World University Rankings measures institutes on **6 factors reputation, faculty/student ratio, citations per faculty, employer reputation, international faculty ratio, and student ratio.**

Additional info.

Connect to the Past Current Capsules (August 2019 and 2018)

[20 Institution recommended for status of 'Institutions of Eminence \(IoE\)](#)

Public institutions (5)

- Union Human Resource Development Ministry, following the recommendation from UGC, decided to grant Institution of Eminence status to five public institutions.
- The public institutions on the list will then be eligible for a Government grant of Rs. 1,000 Cr spread over 5-years.
- They are required to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry, laying out their plans to achieve the objective of becoming world class institutions.

Private institutions (5)

- Letter of Intent has also been sent to five private institutions for the IoE status.
- Government do not give any financial support to them.

Six Institutions that were granted Institutions of Eminence Status in 2018

- **Public Institutions** – Indian Institute of Science, IIT Bombay, IIT Delhi
- **Private Institutions** – Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Manipal academy of Higher education, Jio Institute

10 Institutions granted Institution of Eminence Status now in 2019

Public Institution

- IIT Madras, IIT Kharagpur, Banaras Hindu University , University of Hyderabad , University of Delhi

Private Institutions

- Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham , Vellore Institute of Technology , Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology , Bharti Institute(Satya bharti foundation Mohali) – *These Private institutes will need to submit their readiness for commencing academic operations as IoEs*

4 Institutes have to fulfil certain technical aspects

- **Public Institutions** - Jadavpur University (West Bengal) and Anna University (Tamil Nadu) – the Tamil Nadu and West Bengal governments must commit themselves to contributing half of the funds required for Anna University and Jadavpur University respectively
- **Private Institutions** – Shiv Nadar University and O.P Jindal global university – letters were issued to the state governments *to pass legislation in the state assembly* to cease the status of these universities as private Universities so as to enable them to be considered as Deemed University

Know! the Salient Features of the Institutions of Eminence (IoE)

- Government Institutions to get additional funding up to Rs. 1,000 Cr.
- They will have complete academic and administrative autonomy.
- They will have complete financial autonomy to spend the resources raised and allocated, subject to general conditions and restrictions.
- Academic collaboration with foreign higher educational institutions (in top 500) would be exempt from Government approvals.

- Freedom to hire personnel from industry.
- Freedom to recruit faculty from outside India (with limit of 25% of faculty strength).
- Freedom to admit additionally foreign students on merit subject to a maximum of 30% of the strength of admitted domestic students.
- Freedom to fix and charge fees from foreign students without restriction.
- Freedom to fix the domestic student fees, subject to the condition that no student, who gets admission is turned away for lack of finance.
- Freedom to enter into academic collaborations with other Institutions within the country.
- Freedom to have own transparent merit based system for admission of students.
- Every Institute to encourage scholarships and extension of loans facility.
- Freedom to offer courses within a program, as well as to offer degrees in newer areas, including inter-disciplinary ones.
- Freedom to have the flexibility of course structure in terms of number of credit hours.
- Flexibility in fixing of curriculum and syllabus, with no UGC mandated curriculum structure.
- Freedom to offer online courses as part of their programmes with a restriction that not more than 20% of the programmes should be in online mode.
- Students enrolment capacity to be 10,000 in 15 years.
- Faculty-Student Ratio should be 1:20 at the time of Notification and should increase to 1:10 in five years.
- UGC Inspections shall not apply to Institutions of Eminence.

Infrastructure Development

NHAI becomes first construction sector organisation to go 'Fully Digital'



Relevance IN – Prelims (factual info about the fully digital NHAI) + Mains (GS II Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance-applications)

What' the NEWS

- The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) under Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has gone 'Fully Digital', with the launch of unique **cloud based and Artificial Intelligence powered Big Data Analytics platform** – Data Lake and Project Management Software.

Data Lake and Project Management Software.

- The entire project management work flow of NHAI is transformed from manual to online portal based, wherein the complete project execution operations including 'workflow with time lines' and 'alert mechanism' have been configured.
- **All project documentation, contractual decisions and approvals are now being done through portal only.**

Data Lake software

- The Data Lake will bring revolutionary changes to NHAI with benefits like No delays, Quick decision making, No question of missing records, Work from anywhere/anytime.
- It will enhance transparency, as all officers and stakeholders, connected with the project can see what is going on real time basis which will amount to concurrent performance audit by the seniors.
- With advance analytics, the Data Lake software will forecast the delays, likely disputes and will give advance alerts.

Social Justice

First ever distribution of assistive aids & devices to divyangjan through virtual platform under ADIP Scheme

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ALIMCO + ADIP Scheme + Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana-(RVY) + Mains (GS II Development processes and the development industry- the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders +Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre)

What's the NEWS

- A Virtual ADIP Camp for free distribution of assistive aids and devices at Block level for Divyangjans under **the ADIP scheme** of Government of India was organized

- This is the first camp being organized **by the ALIMCO under DEPwD**, M/o Social Justice and Empowerment under the ADIP Scheme of the Government of India after opening of lockdown

Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO)

- It is a Schedule 'C' Miniratna Category II Central Public Sector Enterprises, registered under Section 8 (**Not for Profit motive**) of the Companies Act 2013, is functioning under the Administrative Control of Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
- It is **100% owned Govt. of India Central Public Sector Enterprises** with an objective of benefiting the persons with disability to the maximum extent possible by manufacturing Rehabilitation Aids for persons with disabilities and by promoting, encouraging and developing the availability, use, supply and distribution of Artificial Limbs and other Rehabilitation Aids to the disabled persons of the country.
- The Corporation is the only manufacturing company producing various types of assistive devices under one roof to serve all types of disabilities across the country.

Assistance to Disabled persons for purchasing / fitting of aids / appliances (ADIP) scheme

- The main objective of ADIP scheme is **to assist the needy disabled persons** in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactured, modern, standard aids and appliances that can promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation, by reducing the effects of disabilities and enhance their economic potential.
- The scheme is implemented through implementing agencies such as **the NGOs, National Institutes under this Ministry and ALIMCO (a PSU)**.
- Grant-in-aid under the Scheme will not be given for commercial supply of aids/appliances.
- The agencies should preferably possess professional/technical expertise in the form of professionally qualified staff (from recognized courses) for the identification, prescription of the required artificial aids/appliance, fitment and post-fitment care of the beneficiaries as well as the aid/appliance.
- The agency should also preferably possess infrastructure in the form of machinery/equipment for the fabrication, fitment and maintenance of artificial aid/appliance to be given to a disabled person under ADIP Scheme.

A person with disabilities fulfilling following conditions would be eligible for assistance under ADIP Scheme through authorized agencies:

- He/she should be an Indian citizen of any age.

- Should be certified by a Registered Medical Practitioner that he/she is disabled and fit to use prescribed aid/appliance. Holds a **40% Disablement Certificate**.
- Person who is employed/self-employed or getting pension and whose monthly income from all sources does not exceed Rs. 20,000/- per month.
- In case of dependents, the income of parents/guardians should not exceed Rs. 20,000/- per month.
- Persons who have not received assistance from the Government, local bodies and Non-Official Organisations during the last 3 years for the same purpose. However, for children below 12 years of age this limit would be 1 year.

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana-(RVY)

- It is scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-living Devices for **Senior citizens belonging to BPL category**.
- This is a Central Sector Scheme, fully funded by the Central Government.
- The expenditure for implementation of the scheme is being met from the "Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund".
- The Scheme is being implemented by the Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO), a PSU under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- The Government has devised this Central Sector Scheme to provide Physical aids and Assisted Living Devices for such senior citizens suffering from age related disabilities/ infirmities, who belong to BPL category.
- The Scheme duration is for period of the 3 years ie. upto 2019-20.
- The main criteria for the senior citizens to get full benefits of Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY) scheme is that they **must belong to BPL family and should hold valid BPL card issued by the concerned authority**.

Governance

Feedback Call Centres on Public Grievances

Relevance IN – Prelims (about CPGRAMS + about Public Grievances Redressal) + Mains (GS II Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications)

What's the NEWS

- DARPG has launched the “**Feedback Call Centres on Public Grievances**” and interacted live with citizens whose grievances have been successfully redressed on the COVID-19 National Monitor for Public Grievances.



- The DARPG has in **collaboration with BSNL** operationalized Feed Back Call Centers in Bhubaneshwar, Guwhati, Jamshedpur, Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Ajmer, Guntur, Coimbatore and Guntakal with 1406 call centre operators.
- The Feedback Call Centres would seek feedback from individual citizens on citizen satisfaction on 1.28 lac COVID-19 Public Grievances that have been filed on CPGRAMS

Know! about CPGRAMS

- CPGRAMS (Central Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System) is a standardized web based solution and an integrated application to register and to **redress the grievances** received online, by post and by hand.
- The Centralized Public Grievance Redress And Monitoring System, is an **online web-enabled. system over NICNET developed by NIC in association with the Department of Administrative. Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)** with an objective of speedy redress and effective.

Public Grievances Redressal

- It was created in June 2007 by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances.
- Under the public grievance mechanism any citizen of India can raise their problems, grievance or pleas to the **central govt and state government Ministries and Departments.**
- The system has been designed in-house by the National Informatics Centre team. It has a telephonic feedback feature also.
- **Prime Minister is the supreme head** of the public grievances.

India looks to deploy naval liaisons at Madagascar, Abu Dhabi for information exchange



INDIAN OCEAN
COMMISSION

Relevance IN – Prelims (about IOC + about RMIFC+EMASOH+IFC-IOR) + Mains (GS II Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests)

What's the NEWS

- After joining the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) as Observer in March, India is looking to post Navy Liaison Officers at the **Regional Maritime Information Fusion Centre (RMIFC) in Madagascar** and at the **European Maritime Awareness in the Strait of Hormuz (EMASOH) in Abu Dhabi** for improved Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA).

Know! about RMIFC+EMASOH+IFC-IOR

- These two navy liaisons will be in the overall realm of improving linkages of the Navy's **Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)** in Gurugram with other IFCs and become the repository for all maritime data in the IOR
- The RMFIC functions under the aegis of the IOC of which India became an Observer in March 2020 along with **Japan and the United Nations**.
- The IOC is a regional forum in the southwest Indian Ocean, comprising five nations — **Comoros, France (Reunion), Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles**.
- China and the European Union (EU) have been Observers in the IOC since 2016 and 2017, respectively.
- The Navy LO is expected to be posted at EMASOH by July and at the RMIFC by September or October
- India has an LO at the IFC in Singapore for over four years now.

EMASOH

- The EMASOH headquarters is composed of Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and French officers and based at the French naval base in Abu Dhabi.
- The aim is “to monitor maritime activity and guarantee freedom of navigation in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz.

Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)

- IFC-IOR is established with the vision of strengthening maritime security in the region and beyond, by building a common coherent maritime situation picture and acting as a **maritime information hub for the region.**
- Establishment of IFC- IOR would ensure that the entire region is benefitted by mutual collaboration and exchange of information and understanding the concerns and threats which are prevalent in the region.
- The information Exchange at the IFC-IOR would be initially undertaken by virtual means, using telephone calls, faxes, emails and video conferencing over internet.
- Subsequently, to enable better interconnection, quicker analysis of information and provide timely inputs, the IFC-IOR would host Liaison Officers from partner countries.
- **France became the first country** to deploy a Liaison Officer at the IFC-IOR followed by the U.S. and several other countries including Australia, Japan and the United Kingdom have announced their intention to post LOs.

International

India elected unopposed to UNSC's non-permanent member seat



Relevance IN – Prelims (about UN and UNSC) + Mains (GS II Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.)

What's the NEWS

- India elected to the UN Security Council as non-permanent member with 184 of the 192 votes for a two-year term starting January 1, 2021.

Know! more about it

- India will begin **its eighth two-year term** on January 1
- India is hoping to use it to further bolster its claim to a promotion to the permanent seat in a reformed UN Security Council.
- India was the endorsed candidate of the **Asia-Pacific Group of UN** member countries and faced no competition.
- It is elected to one of the five open seats on the 15-member council
- The 193 UN members countries were vote to elect five non-permanent members in a phased manner, for the first time in the world body's 75-year history.
- India won 187 votes in 2010, and started its seventh term on January 1, 2011. Its previous terms were 1950-1951, 1967-1968, 1972-1973, 1977-1978, 1984-1985 and 1991-1992.
- **Mexico** was the other endorsed candidate that is likely to go through unopposed from the **Latin American and the Caribbean Group seat**.
- **Canada, Ireland and Norway** were contesting for the the two seats for the **Western European and Other Group** and **Kenya and Djibouti** were running for the **African Group seat**.

Know! about Security Council

- The **Security Council has 15 members**. Five of them are permanent members — the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia and China — and 10 are non-permanent.
- Half the non-permanent members are elected every year, each for a two-year term, starting January 1.

How this position will be Used by India?

- India expects to use its eighth term to further build its case for a permanent seat in a reformed Security Council
- It has been pushing for years along with other claimants such as **Japan, Germany and Brazil — the G-4** — calling the current council outdated and out of sync with the changed global realities.
- India will pursue these priorities through a **Five-S approach**, according to the “priorities paper”: Samman (respect), Samvad (dialogue), Sahyog (cooperation) and Shanti (peace); to create Samridhi (Prosperity).

Know! all about United Nations

- The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945. It is currently made up of 193 Member States.

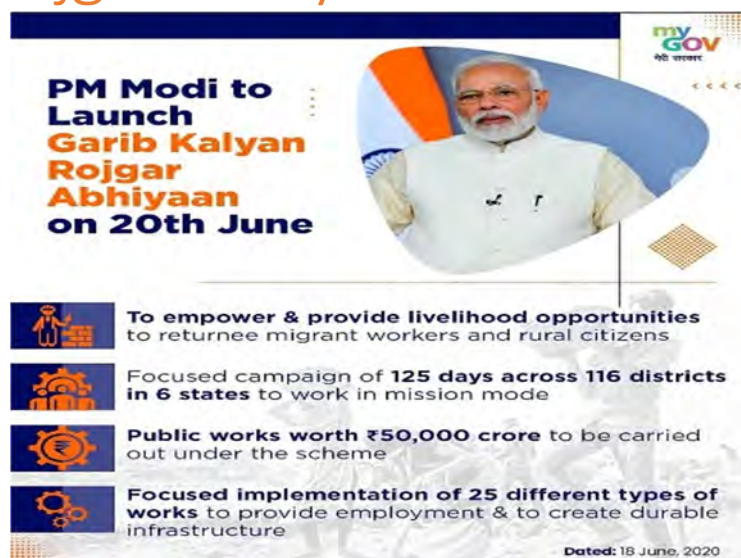
- The mission and work of the United Nations are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter.
- Each of the 193 Member States of the United Nations is a member of the General Assembly.
- States are admitted to membership in the UN by a decision of the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council.

The main organs of the UN are

1. the General Assembly
 2. the Security Council
 3. the Economic and Social Council
 4. the Trusteeship Council
 5. the International Court of Justice, and
 6. the UN Secretariat.
- All were established in 1945 when the UN was founded.
 - The Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.
 - It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. Under the Charter of the United Nations, all Member States **are obligated to comply with Council decisions.**

Social Issues

Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan) + Mains (GS II Social issues, Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes)

What's the NEWS

- To mitigate their difficulties during next 4 months, Government of India has decided to launch a massive **rural public works scheme 'Garib**

Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan' to empower and provide livelihood opportunities to the **returnee migrant workers and rural citizens**.

Know! about the Abhiyaan

- The Prime Minister launched this Abhiyaan on 20th June, 2020 from Village – Telihar, Block- Beldaur of Khagaria District of Bihar.
- This **campaign of 125 days, which will work in mission mode**, will involve intensified and focused implementation of 25 different types of works to provide employment to the migrant workers on one hand and create infrastructure in the rural regions of the country on the other hand, with a resource envelope of Rs. 50,000 crore.
- The Abhiyaan will be a coordinated **effort between 12 different Ministries/Departments**, namely, Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Road Transport & Highways, Mines, Drinking Water & Sanitation, Environment, Railways, Petroleum & Natural Gas, New & Renewable Energy, Border Roads, Telecom and Agriculture.

International

COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support Programme

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the CARES program) + Mains (GS II India and its neighbourhood- relations. Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests)

What's the NEWS

- The Government of India and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) signed a \$750 million “**COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support Programme**” to assist India to strengthen its response to the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on poor and vulnerable households.

Know! more about the support programme

- This is the **first ever budgetary support programme from the AIIB** to India.
- AIIB's timely financial support will contribute to the effective implementation of the government's COVID-19 Emergency Response Programme.
- The Programme will provide the Government of India with budget support to mitigate the severe adverse social and economic impact of COVID-19.

Know! about the financing pattern

- The current loan will be the **second to India from AIIB under its COVID-19 crisis recovery facility** apart from the earlier approved \$500 million loan for the COVID-19 Emergency Response and Health Systems Preparedness Project.
- The project is being financed by the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Asian Development Bank (ADB)** in the amount of \$2.250 billion, of which \$750 million will be provided by AIIB and \$1.5 billion will be provided by ADB.
- The project will be executed by the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, through various line ministries.

Know! about AIIB

- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia.
- Headquartered in Beijing, AIIB began operations in January 2016 and have now grown to 102 approved members worldwide.

Know! about COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support (CARES) Program

- The Program's objective is to mitigate the adverse impacts of COVID-19 on the health and economic opportunities of the population by providing **budgetary support to the government's** COVID-19 Response Program.
- The CARES Program is proposed to be supported under AIIB's COVID-19 Crisis Recovery Facility (Facility) and **cofinanced with the Asian Development Bank (ADB)** as a policy-based loan under its Countercyclical Support Facility COVID-19 Pandemic Response Option (CPRO).
- The Program will provide critically needed support to help the Government mitigate the severe health, social, and economic impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Human Resource Development

NTA launches Hindi Tests feature on National Test Abhyas mobile app

JEE & NEET Mock Tests



National Testing Abhayas

NTA eGov Mobile Apps Education



This app is compatible with your device.



Add to wishlist

Relevance IN – Prelims (about National Testing Agency + about National Test Abhyas) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources)

What's the NEWS

- The Human Resource Development Ministry announced that National Testing Agency (NTA) has launched **Hindi Tests feature on National Test Abhyas mobile app.**
- Competitive exam students preferring Hindi can now practice on their mobile devices with Hindi mock tests released on the National Test Abhyas smartphone app by NTA.

National Test Abhyas mobile app.

- It was launched last month by NTA which conducts competitive exams like JEE and NEET
- It is an **Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered smartphone app** to empower engineering and medical aspirants to prepare safely from their homes, for **entrance exams including JEE Main, NEET.**
- So far, more than 16.5 lakhs tests have been given by students on this app, and more than 9.56 lakh students have downloaded the App.
-
- Similar to the experience in English language, every day, the NTA will release one new test in Hindi on the app, which students can download to attempt.
- With a list of daily tests for exams including JEE Main, NEET and other exams to be added soon

Know! about National Testing Agency (NTA)

- National Testing Agency (NTA) has been established as a premier, specialist, autonomous and self-sustained testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for admission/fellowship in **higher educational institutions.**
- National Testing Agency (NTA) is a registered society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- NTA is responsible for conducting the Joint Entrance Examination – Main (JEE Main), National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET UG), National Eligibility Test (NET), Common Management Admission Test (CMAT) and Graduate Pharmacy Aptitude Test (GPAT).
- NTA holds the Joint Entrance Examination – Main (JEE Main) and the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET UG) **twice a year**
- The NTA will be chaired by an eminent educationist who will be appointed by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Scheme of Special Micro-Credit Facility launched for Street Vendors



Relevance IN – Prelims (about PM SVANidhi) + 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

- A Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), **in order to engage SIDBI as the Implementation Agency for PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi)** - a Special Micro-Credit Facility for Street Vendors.

Know! about the Memorandum of Understanding (highlights)

- SIDBI will implement the PM SVANidhi Scheme under the guidance of MoHUA.
- It will also manage the credit guarantee to the lending institutions through **Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE)**.
- It will develop and maintain a **customized and integrated IT Platform** providing end-to-end solutions, including documentation of all the processes and workflows for an end-to-end solution, through a Portal and a Mobile App, to ensure engagement and information flow between Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), Lending Institutions, Digital Payment Aggregators and other stakeholders.

- It will leverage the network of lending Institutions like Scheduled Commercial Banks (SCBs), Non-Bank Finance Companies (NBFCs), Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), Co-operative Banks, Small Finance Banks (SFBs), Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), etc. for the **Scheme implementation**.

Know! about PM SVANidhi

- PM SVANidhi was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, on June 01, 2020 for providing **affordable Working Capital loan to street vendors** to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to Covid-19 lockdown.
- This scheme targets to benefit over 50 lakh Street Vendors. Under the Scheme, the vendors can avail a **working capital loan of up to Rs. 10,000**, which is repayable in monthly instalments in the tenure of one year.
- On timely/ early repayment of the loan, an interest subsidy @ 7% per annum will be credited to the bank accounts of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer on quarterly basis.
- There will be no penalty on early repayment of loan.
- The scheme promotes digital transactions through cash back incentives up to an amount of Rs. 100 per month.

Social Issues

The Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan launched by Prime Minister (Part -II)

GARIB KALYAN ROJGAR ABHIYAAN

GARIB KALYAN ROJGAR ABHIYAAN - THE KEY DETAILS

- 116 districts spread across 6 states that received more than 25,000 migrants identified
- Centre and state governments mapped skillsets of these people - unskilled, partly skilled, construction workers etc.
- Skills of returned shramiks to be utilized for getting work done under 25 government schemes to achieve targets
- 25 scheme-related works will see saturation in 125 days
- ₹50,000 crore being pooled from allocations for the 25 different projects for these works in the 116 districts
- Creating jobs, creating assets and generating welfare and fulfilling the dream of rural development

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Relevance IN – Prelims (about Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan) + Mains (GS II Social issues, Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes

What's the NEWS

- Prime Minister launched a massive employment -cum- rural public works Campaign named '**Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan**' to empower and provide livelihood opportunities in areas/ villages witnessing large number of returnee migrant workers affected by the devastating COVID-19.

Know! more about the abhiyaan

- The Abhiyaan was flagged off from village Telihar, Block Beldaur, district Khagaria, Bihar on June 20
- The Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan is being undertaken in **116 districts of 6 states**.
- It will be implemented at the grassroots level with active **coordination between 11 ministries of the Central Government**.
- The Abhiyaan **will continue for 125 days**, and 25 works have been identified which will be taken up for completion.
- The Abhiyaan will be a **convergent effort between different Ministries/Departments**, namely; Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Road Transport & Highways, Mines, Drinking Water & Sanitation, Environment, Railways, Petroleum & Natural Gas, New & Renewable Energy, Border Roads, Telecom and Agriculture, to expedite implementation of 25 public infrastructure works and works relating to augmentation of livelihood opportunities.
- **The Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal Ministry** for this campaign and the campaign will be implemented in close coordination with the State Governments.

The major objectives of the initiative include:

- Provide livelihood opportunity to returning migrants and similarly affected rural citizens
- Saturate villages with public infrastructure and create livelihood opportunities
- The basket of a wide variety of works will ensure that each migrant worker is able to get an opportunity of employment according to his skill, in the coming 125 days.
- The Program will also prepare for expansion and development of livelihoods over a longer term.

EAG plenary meet

Relevance IN – Prelims (facts about EAG+FATF + black and grey list) + Mains (GS II Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate + Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests)

What's the NEWS

- Indian officials attended the virtual 32nd special Eurasian Group on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (EAG) plenary meeting, under the aegis of the **Financial Action Task Force**.

Know! about EAG

- The EAG is a regional body comprising **nine countries**: India, Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Belarus. It is an associate member of the FATF.

Know! about FATF's plenary meet

- The FATF's virtual plenary meet will be held on June 24, which will also be attended by the officials concerned through video-conferencing.
- The FATF Plenary, the decision making body, meets three times a year around February, June and October

Know! about FATF

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog.
- The inter-governmental body sets international standards that aim to prevent these illegal activities and the harm they cause to society.
- As a policy-making body, the FATF works to generate the necessary political will to bring about national legislative and regulatory reforms in these areas. (It does not have any role in law enforcement matters, investigations or prosecution.)
- The FATF has developed the FATF Recommendations, or FATF Standards, which ensure a co-ordinated global response to prevent organised crime, corruption and terrorism.
- The FATF monitors countries to ensure they implement the FATF Standards fully and effectively, and holds countries to account that do not comply.

Know! about the genesis of FATF

- The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) was established in July 1989 by a **Group of Seven (G-7) Summit** in Paris, initially to examine and develop measures to combat money laundering.
- In October 2001, the FATF expanded its mandate to incorporate efforts to combat terrorist financing, in addition to money laundering.

- In April 2012, it added efforts to counter the financing of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.
- Since 2000, FATF has maintained the FATF blacklist and the FATF grey list

FATF blacklist

- Only those countries are included in this list that FATF considers as uncooperative tax havens for terror funding.
- Countries that are supporting terror funding and money laundering activities are placed in the Blacklist
- These countries are known as Non-Cooperative Countries or Territories (NCCTs)

Grey list

- Grey list is a warning given to the country that it might come in Black list
- If a country is unable to curb mushrooming of terror funding and money laundering; it is shifted from grey list to black list by the FATF.

Grey list (what if a country comes under the list)

- Economic sanctions and problem in getting loans from international institutions (IMF, World Bank, ADB etc.)
- International boycott and Overall Reduction in its international trade

Know! the status of Pakistan

- Pakistan, which continues **to remain on the “grey list” of FATF**, had earlier been given the deadline till the June plenary to ensure compliance with the 27-point action plan against terror funding networks and money laundering syndicates, or face “black listing”.
- The deadline has been shifted to the October 18-23 plenary and working group meetings, scheduled to be held in Paris owing to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic
- Pakistan was included in the grey list for the first time in 2012
- On 29 June, 2018 **FATF Grey listed Pakistan for the second time.**
- **India, USA and UK want** that Pakistan should be included in the black list of FATF while **China and Turkey are opposing this move.**

Health Sector

FICCI Launches ‘Virtual Healthcare and Hygiene Expo 2020’; First Virtual International Expo



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Virtual Healthcare & Hygiene EXPO 2020 + about FICCI) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources)

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilisers inaugurated India's one the largest 1st Virtual Healthcare & Hygiene EXPO 2020 .
- The Expo has been **organised by FICCI**.
- The event was inaugurated virtually which will be live daily from 22nd to 26th June, 2020.

Know! all about VH&H Expo 2020

- The first edition of VH&H Expo 2020 will comprise of five-day comprehensive virtual exhibition on sectors like **AYUSH & Wellness, Medical Devices, Medical Textiles and Consumables, Pharmaceuticals and Sanitization**.
- The virtual event will also feature webinars and discuss various issues and opportunities in focus sectors, post COVID-19.
- This is the first ever largest virtual exhibition in India making a new beginning.
- This is the new norm, wherein business will happen virtually as Digital India is now making a way forward.
- VH&H Expo 2020 will comprise of a Dedicated Virtual Exhibition showcasing products and services of over 100 manufacturers.

- Various webinars and digitally enabled B2B meetings will also be organised between the exhibitors and buyers.

Know! about FICCI

- Established in 1927, FICCI is the largest and oldest apex business organisation in India.
- **A non-government, not-for-profit organisation**, FICCI is the voice of India's business and industry.
- From influencing policy to encouraging debate, engaging with policy makers and civil society, FICCI articulates the views and concerns of industry.
- FICCI draws its membership from the corporate sector, both private and public, including SMEs and MNCs.
- The chamber has an indirect membership of over 250,000 companies from various regional chambers of commerce.
- It is headquartered in the national capital New Delhi and has a presence in 12 states in India and 8 countries across the world
- FICCI provides a platform for networking and consensus building within and across sectors and is the first port of call for Indian industry, policy makers and the international business community.

Bilateral Relations

India Ideas Summit 2020



Relevance IN – Prelims (about India Idea Summit + about USCC) + Mains (GS II Bilateral relations)

What's the NEWS

- The two-day India Ideas Summit 2020 is all set to be held virtually on July 21-22, marking its 45th annual meeting, with the **focus on geopolitics in the post-COVID-19 world**
- The summit will focus on shifting supply chains, digitization and technology trends, the future of healthcare, and equitable growth.

- The summit will witness conversations with senior business and government leaders on geopolitics in the post-COVID world, shifting supply chains, digitization and technology trends, the future of healthcare, equitable growth

About the India Ideas Summit

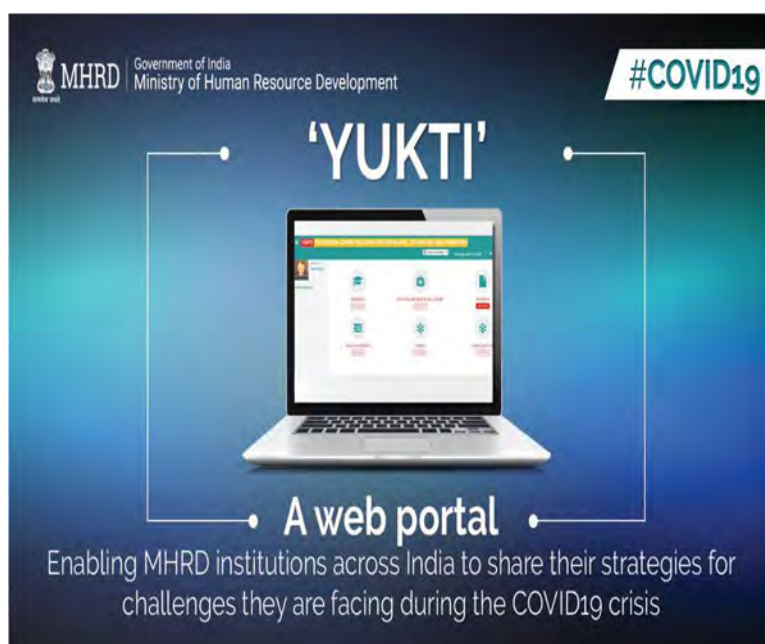
- The India Ideas Summit is organized by the **US India Business Council (USIBC)** and is a platform to convene scholars, practitioners, diplomats, and think tanks for high-level dialogue on key issues related to India.
- Last year, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had last year addressed the Summit in Washington at the US Chamber of Commerce on June 12.

Know! about United States Chamber of Commerce (USCC) and USIBC

- The United States Chamber of Commerce (USCC) is a business-oriented American lobbying group.
- The Chamber is the largest lobbying group in the U.S., spending more money than any other lobbying organization on a yearly basis.
- The U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) was formed in 1975 as a business advocacy organization to enlighten and encourage the private sectors of both India and United States to enhance investment flows.

Human Resource Development

YUKTI 2.0



Relevance IN – Prelims (about YUKTI and YUKTI 2.0) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources)

What's the NEWS

- The HRD Ministry has launched an initiative 'YUKTI 2.0 to help systematically assimilate technologies having commercial potential and

information related to **incubated startups** in our higher education institutions.

- It is an initiative of MHRD's Innovation Cell for Higher Education Institutes and AICTE

Know! about YUKTI 2.0

- YUKTI 2.0' is a systematic attempt to collate the technologies and innovations developed by **students, faculty, startups** in HEIs and to ensure that innovators from our education institutes get suitable opportunities and support for commercialization of their innovations.
- YUKTI 2.0 is logical extension of earlier version of 'YUKTI', an initiative of MHRD, to identify ideas relevant in COVID pandemic.

Know about YUKTI (launched in April 2020)

- Earlier, the Minister had launched the YUKTI (Young India combating COVID with Knowledge, Technology and Innovation) web portal on 11 April, 2020.
- The portal intends to cover the different dimensions of COVID-19 challenges in a very holistic and comprehensive way.
- Through this portal, the Ministry of Human Resource Development will endeavor to ensure that **students, teachers and researchers in higher educational institutions are getting appropriate support** to meet the requirements needed to advance their technologies and innovations.
- It is a unique portal with a dashboard to monitor and record the efforts and initiatives of MHRD.
- The database will provide a clear picture of the state of the innovation ecosystem of our higher educational institutions
- The portal will cover various initiatives and efforts of the institutions in academics, research especially related to COVID-19, social initiatives by institutions and the measures taken for the betterment of the well-being of the students.

Health/International

Favipiravir is now the first oral COVID-19 treatment approved in India

Relevance IN – Prelims (about drug favipiravir)

What's the NEWS

- The Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) has approved a new treatment for COVID-19 as of 19 June, in India.
- The drug favipiravir has been okayed for emergency medical use under the fast-tracked approval process.

- Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, the drug's manufacturer, was given the permission to make and market favipiravir (200 mg) in a tablet form.
- Favipiravir is now the first oral approved medication in India for the treatment of COVID-19 and will be sold **under the name FabiFlu**.

Know! about Favipiravir

- Favipiravir is an antiviral medication that was developed in Japan and got approval for treating people with influenza.
- It reportedly showed anti-viral activity against all subtypes of influenza virus strains.
- Favipiravir is among the many drugs currently being trialled to treat COVID-19 (alongside Ebola drug Remdesivir, the HIV drug combination lopinavir/ritonavir, and a combination of lopinavir/ritonavir with Interferon beta, and others).
- Favipiravir was given approval for the treatment of COVID-19 in hospital settings in Russia
- Favipiravir can be used in COVID-19 patients with co-morbid conditions such as diabetes and heart disease with mild to moderate COVID-19 symptoms

International Relations

Senkaku Islands

Relevance IN – Prelims (all about Senkaku Island) + Mains (GS II Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests)

What's the NEWS

- Japan's Ishigaki city assembly passed a bill to rename an administrative area covering a group of **islands in the East China Sea**, immediately triggering backlash from China and Taiwan, both of which also claim the uninhabited islets as their own.
- The assembly changed the name of the southern Japan area containing the Senkaku Islands from "**Tonoshiro**" to "**Tonoshiro Senkaku**"
- The renaming takes effect on Oct. 1 and it is aimed at resolving administrative confusion between a locale in downtown Ishigaki, which shares the name "Tonoshiro" with the isles.

Know! about Senkaku Islands



- These are a group of uninhabited islands in the East China Sea. Japan administers and controls the Senkaku islands.
- The islands are known as Diaoyu Islands in China and the Diaoyutai Islands in Taiwan.
- Territorial sovereignty over the *islands* and the maritime boundaries around them are disputed between the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan), and Japan.

Government Schemes

Skills Build Reignite



Relevance IN – Prelims (about skills build reignite + about DGT +bharat skill learning platform) + Mains (GS II Social issues + Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

What's the NEWS

- IBM has committed to provide multifaceted **digital skill training** in the area of Cloud Computing and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to students & trainers across the nation in the National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs) and Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).
- It is a partnership between DGT and IBM India with some unique and first of a kind program.

Know! about Directorate General of Training (DGT)

- DGT under the aegis of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE), is responsible for implementing long term institutional training to the nation's youth through its network of training institutes and infrastructure.
- It plays a key role in the execution of vocational training schemes and in making 'Digital India' dream become a reality.
- Creating opportunities for Young India with focus on new-age skills like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Big Data, 3D - Technology, Cloud Computing, Cyber Security, etc. which are aligned to Industry 4.0 requirements, has become the prime focus for DGT.

BharatSkills learning platform of DGT

- DGT is lining up with the industry partners enabling e-learning with a combination of multimedia and similar digital resources for the students/trainees, trainers and the administrators, by providing anytime, anywhere online digital content through its **BharatSkills learning platform** (<https://bharatskills.gov.in>).

Know! about SkillsBuild Reignite and the SkillsBuild Innovation Camp.

- The SkillsBuild Reignite tends to provide job seekers and entrepreneurs, with access to free online coursework and mentoring support designed to help them reinvent their careers and businesses.
- Job seekers, individual business owners, entrepreneurs and any individual with learning aspirations can now tap into host of industry relevant content on topics including Artificial intelligence, Cloud, Data analytics and security to reskill and upskill themselves, at no cost.
- Its special feature is the personalized coaching for entrepreneurs, seeking advice to help establish or restart their small businesses as they begin to focus on recovery to emerge out of the COVID 19 pandemic.

The SkillsBuild Innovation camp

- **It** is a 10 week program which supports 100 hours of structured learning to learners who are interested in gaining hands-on project experience to

enhance learning and are intent on building their network and enhance their employability.

- The SkillsBuild Innovation Camp concludes with a pitch to facilitators, other teams, stakeholders and potential employers or investors.

Know! the genesis of Skillsbuild

- In November 2019, IBM India, in partnership with Directorate General of Training (DGT), Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India, and its implementation partners, made the **SkillsBuild online learning platform** available to Indian students through Bharatskills (<https://bharatskills.gov.in>) of DGT.

Bharat Skills Learning platform

- Bharat Skills is a e-learning portal of the Directorate General of Training (DGT), Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- Bharat Skills is a Central Repository for skills which provides NSQF curriculum, course material, videos, question banks and mock test etc. for ITI/NSTI Students and Teachers.

Social Justice & Empowerment

Nasha Mukht Bharat

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the action plan and about UNODC) + Mains (GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources. Development processes and the development industry- the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups

What's the NEWS

- **Nasha Mukht Bharat: Annual Action Plan (2020-21)** for 272 Most Affected Districts' was e-launched by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on the occasion of "International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking"

Know! the role of the Ministry

- The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment observes 26th June every year as "International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking".
- It is the nodal Ministry for drug demand reduction which coordinates and monitors **all aspects of drug abuse prevention** which include assessment of the extent of the problem, preventive action, treatment and rehabilitation of addicts, dissemination of information and public awareness.

Know! about Nasha Mukht Bharat Annual Action Plan for 2020-21

- Nasha Mukht Bharat Annual Action Plan for 2020-21 would focus on 272 most affected districts and launch a three-pronged attack combining

efforts of Narcotics Bureau, Outreach/Awareness by Social Justice and Treatment through the Health Dept.

The Action Plan has the following components:

- Awareness generation programmes
- Focus on Higher Educational institutions
- Community outreach and identification of dependent population
- Focus on Treatment facilities in Hospital settings
- Capacity Building Programmes for Service Provider.

Know! the steps taken by the ministry

- Ministry provides community based services for the identification, treatment and rehabilitation of addicts through Voluntary Organizations.
- It provides financial assistance to NGOs across the country for running de-addiction centres.
- The Ministry has also set up a 24x7 National Toll Free drug de-addiction helpline number 1800110031 to help the victims of drug abuse, their family and society at large.
- The Ministry has also prepared a **National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction for the period 2018-2025** which aims at reduction of adverse consequences of drug abuse through a multi-pronged strategy involving education, de-addiction and rehabilitation of affected individuals and their families.

Know! about International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

- The International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, also known as 'World Drug Day', is celebrated annually on June 26. The theme of World Drug Day 2020 is Better Knowledge for Better Care.
- By resolution 42/112 of 7 December 1987, the General Assembly decided to observe 26 June as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
- The day is also meant to commemorate Lin Zexu's efforts towards the strategic dismantling of the opium trade in Humen, Guangdong in China right before the **First Opium War on the Chinese Mainland**.



- The day is dedicated to eradicating drug abuse and neutralise the systemic challenges which sustain the illegal drug issues.

- Drug abuse, however, does not only include consumption of drugs such as cocaine, hallucinogens, cannabis, opiates among others, but also **includes prescription medications such as painkillers and sleeping pills.**
- According to the World Drug Report 2017, released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), about a quarter of a billion people used drugs at least once in 2015.

Government Schemes

Aatma Nirbhar Uttar Pradesh Rojgar Abhiyan



Relevance IN – Prelims(facts related to AatmaNirbhar Uttar Pradesh Rojgar Abhiyan)

What's the NEWS

- Prime Minister inaugurated 'AatmaNirbhar Uttar Pradesh Rojgar Abhiyan'

Know! more about the abhiyan

- It is a campaign to provide employment to 1.25 crore migrant workers and others in Uttar Pradesh, who lost their jobs during the coronavirus pandemic.
- The Atma Nirbhar Uttar Pradesh Rojgar Abhiyan will cover 31 districts of Uttar Pradesh, which has seen more than 30 lakh migrant labourers return home following the lockdown in the country.
- It will be undertaken as part of the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan that the Prime Minister started on June 20 for 116 districts in six states in the country
- Under this, local entrepreneurship will be promoted along with providing employment opportunities to migrant workers.

Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan web portal



Relevance IN – Prelims (about the web portal of the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan) + Mains GS II (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 of Rural Development launched the web portal of the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan

Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan

- The Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan is the massive employment generation-cum-rural infrastructure creation programme of the Government of India which was inaugurated on 20th June 2020
- Its objective is to provide employment to returnee migrant workers at their native places for next four months
- 116 Central Nodal Officers appointed by the Government for monitoring the implementation of the Abhiyaan in the identified districts, and top officials of the Ministries and State Governments associated with the Abhiyaan.

Know! about the Portal

- The portal will provide **information to the public** about the various district-wise and scheme-wise components of the Abhiyaan
- It will also help to monitor the progress of completion of the works being undertaken with a fund outlay of Rs. 50,000 crore in 116 districts of 6 states, where there are more than 25000 returnee migrant workers per district.

- The Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyaan was launched with a funding of Rs. 50,000 crore on 20th June 2020 for which the **Ministry of Rural Development is the nodal Ministry**, working in close coordination with 12 other ministries of the Government of India for the 25 categories of works which are to be completed in the identified districts in 125 days.

Social Issues

TRIFED Goes Digital



What's the NEWS

Relevance IN – Prelims(about TRIFED + Tribes India +GeM + VanDhan Yojana) + Mains (GS II Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States + Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance)

What's the NEWS

- The webinar 'TRIFED Goes Digital' and "Be Vocal for Local' #GoTribal was organised recently by TRIFED

Know! more about the launches

- The main highlight was the launch of the TRIBES India products on the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) (with a diverse range on display) and TRIFED's new website (<https://trifed.tribal.gov.in>)
- The Union Minister of Tribal Affairs inaugurated the TRIBES India store on Government eMarket place which can now help in facilitating purchases by Government and the revamped website (<https://trifed.tribal.gov.in/>), which has all relevant details about the schemes and initiatives underway to the benefit of tribal communities.

Know! about TRIFED and Tribes India

- TRIFED was established in August 1987 under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 1984 by the Government of India as a National level Cooperative body.
- Under the administrative control of the then Ministry of Welfare of India, TRIFED is mandated to ringing about socio-economic development of tribals of the country by institutionalising the trade of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) & Surplus Agricultural Produce (SAP) collected/ cultivated by them.
- TRIFED is involved actively in capacity building of the tribal people through sensitisation and the formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs).
- TRIFED is engaged in training the tribals in several activities, so that they can effectively carry them out.
- TRIBES India is the brand under which the sourced handcrafted products from the tribal people are sold.

Know! about GeM

- GeM is a short form of one stop Government e-Market Place hosted by Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals (**DGS&D**) where common user goods and services can be procured.
- GeM is dynamic, self sustaining and user friendly portal for making procurement by Government officers.
- Government e-Marketplace (GeM - gem.gov.in) is a very bold step of the Government with the aim to transform the way in which procurement of goods and services is done by the Government Ministries and Departments, Public Sector Undertakings and other apex autonomous bodies of the Central Government.
- DGS&D with technical support of National e Governance Division (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology) has developed GeM portal for procurement of both Products & Services.
- The portal was launched on 9th August 2016 by the Commerce & Industry Minister.
- GeM is a completely paperless, cashless and system driven e-market place that enables procurement of common use goods and services with minimal human interface.

About DGS&D

- The nearly 100-year-old procurement arm of the Central Government — the Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals (DGS&D) — has been close down on October 31 2017
- The closure of DGS&D, follows the government's shift to the Commerce Ministry's e-market platform (GeM) set up for public procurement of goods and services.

Know! about VanDhan Yojana

- Pradhan Mantri Van Dhan Yojana or Van Dhan Scheme launched on 14th April, 2018 by the Prime Minister with Ministry of Tribal Affairs as nodal department at central level and TRIFED as nodal agency at national level
- It is a well thought master plan for the socio-economic development of the tribal population of the country.

Its crucial steps are enumerated below



- Initiative targeting livelihood generation for tribal gatherers and transforming them into entrepreneurs.
- Idea is to set-up tribal community owned Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) in predominantly forested tribal districts.
- A Kendra shall constitute of 15 tribal SHGs, each comprising of up to 20 tribal NTFP gatherers or artisans i.e. about 300 beneficiaries per Van Dhan Kendra.
- 100% Central Government Funded with TRIFED providing Rs. 15 lakhs for each 300 member Van Dhan Kendra.



Infrastructure Development

National Productivity Council (NPC)

Relevance IN – Prelims(about National Productivity Council+ Asian Productivity Organisation Mains (GS III Economic development + 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 49th Governing Council Meeting of National Productivity Council (NPC), an autonomous body under Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India was held recently
- It was chaired by the Commerce & Industry Minister and President of NPC Governing Council.
- The GC Meeting has been conducted after a lapse of fifteen years.
- The Meeting was attended by about 180 participants, comprising of Government Officers, Leaders of Industry Associations, Industry captains, Trade Union leaders, financial institutions, Productivity Councils of States and other eminent personalities.

Know! about National Productivity Council of India (NPC)

- National Productivity Council of India (NPC), established in the year 1958, is an autonomous organization under Department for Promotion of Industry & Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.
- Besides undertaking research in the area of productivity, NPC has been providing consultancy and training services in areas of Industrial Engineering, Agri-Business, Economic Services, Quality Management, Human Resources Management, Information Technology, Technology Management, Energy Management, Environmental Management etc., to the Government and Public & Private sector organizations.
- NPC is a constituent of the Tokyo-based Asian Productivity Organisation (APO), an Inter-Governmental Body of which the Government of India is a founding member.

Asian Productivity Organisation (APO)

- The APO is an intergovernmental organization established in 1961 to increase productivity in the Asia-Pacific region through mutual cooperation.
- The APO contributes to the sustainable socioeconomic development of the region through policy advisory services, acting as a think tank, and undertaking smart initiatives in the industry, agriculture, service, and public sectors.
- The APO is shaping the future of the region by assisting member economies in formulating national strategies for enhanced productivity and through a range of institutional capacity-building efforts, including research and centers of excellence in member countries. It is nonpolitical, nonprofit, and nondiscriminatory.

India against easing farm export tariffs amid Covid

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Cairns Group initiative and an Ottawa Group) + GS II (Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests)

What's the NEWS

- India has questioned the rationale of joint statements issued by some countries at the World Trade Organization (WTO) pushing for greater opening of markets for agricultural products.
- It has argued that for developing countries, export restrictions are a tool to prevent domestic shortages and are essential.
- A recent Canada-led joint statement, a new Cairns Group initiative and an Ottawa Group statement, all made a case for open and predictable trade amidst the Covid-19 crisis.

Know! about Cairns Group

- The Cairns Group (Cairns Group of Fair Trading Nations) is an interest group of 20 agricultural exporting countries, composed of Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Uruguay, and Vietnam.
- The Cairns Group seeks to liberalize global trade in agricultural produce.
- In particular, its members aim to abolish export subsidies and trade-distorting ("amber box") domestic support for agricultural products and seek to improve market access for agricultural exports.

Know! about Ottawa Group

- Canada is leading efforts on WTO reform through the Ottawa Group, which acts as an impartial sounding board for key issues and ideas on how to advance WTO reform.
- In addition to Canada, the Ottawa Group comprises Australia, Brazil, Chile, the European Union, Japan, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Singapore, Korea, and Switzerland.
- The Ottawa Group supports its members in advancing concrete proposals to improve how the WTO functions over the short, medium, and long terms.
- This includes the dispute-settlement system, to ensure that trade rules are enforceable; the negotiating function, to ensure trade rules are relevant in the 21st century; and the day-to-day committee work at the WTO, to improve its efficiency and effectiveness.

Project PLATINA



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

What's the NEWS

- Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray inaugurated 'Project PLATINA world's largest convalescent plasma therapy trial cum treatment of severe COVID-19 patients.

Know! more about Project Platina

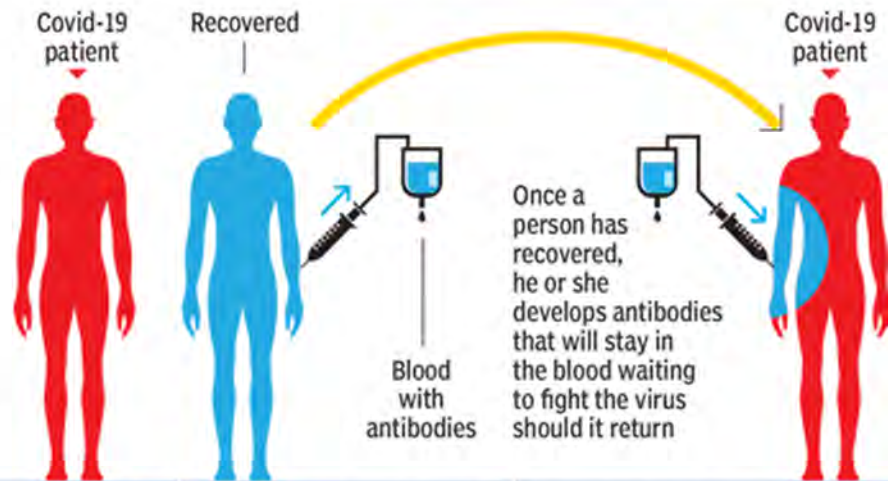
- Project PLATINA -World's Largest convalescent plasma therapy trial cum treatment of severe COVID-19 patients was launched by Maharashtra Medical Education and Drugs Department
- **Convalescent plasma therapy** is now coming up as one of the most important methods in the treatment of severe COVID-19 patients in the absence of definite treatment or drugs for the same.
- This is the world's largest trial cum treatment project, which is to benefit 500 lives of critically ill COVID-19 patients in Maharashtra
- The trial will be carried out in 17 medical colleges under Medical Education and Drugs Department and 4 medical colleges of BMC in Mumbai (21 centres)
- All critical patients will receive two doses of 200 ml of **convalescent plasma**.
- The plasma of recovered COVID-19 patients contains antibodies thereby fighting infection and helping critically ill patients recover

WHAT IS CONVALESCENT PLASMA THERAPY?

It involves transfusing plasma retrieved from the blood of people who have recovered from Covid-19 into people suffering from the disease

How does it work?

As people fight the Covid-19 virus, they produce antibodies that attack the virus. These antibodies are secreted by immune cells known as B lymphocytes, found in plasma or liquid part of blood, which helps the blood clot when needed and supports immunity



How many patients can be treated with plasma from a donor?

One person's donation of plasma can help two people. Scientists say that a patient needs only one transfusion to get enough antibodies to fight the virus

Is it a new treatment?

No, it isn't. The idea of using one person's plasma to help another has been used during the outbreak of SARS, also caused by a coronavirus

How many states in India are using it?

None. Delhi, Maharashtra, Kerala and Gujarat, among others, have sought approval from the regulatory bodies for clinical trials

TOI

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New

New

price drop

Delhi's plasma bank

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

What's the NEWS

- The Delhi government will set up a plasma bank within the next two days for coronavirus patients at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS)
- The creation of the repository is a first-of-its-kind initiative in the entire country and appealed to recovered patients to donate their plasma.
- The state government will issue dedicated helplines for those willing to donate plasma.

Know! all about plasma bank and plasma therapy

- Like in blood banks, where blood is extracted and stored for those who might be in need, the idea is to extract and store plasma from people who have recovered from Covid-19 and give it to someone suffering from the disease.
- Delhi was among the first few states to get ICMR approval to conduct trials with plasma therapy, which is still at trial stage.
- Once a person contracts the virus, the blood produces antibodies and certain cells 'remember' the antigen and produce antibodies when they come in contact with the same virus again.
- The plasma trial is examining if the plasma containing antibodies from recovered patients is beneficial to others as well.

Social Justice

Tribes India e-Mart

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Tribes India e-Mart) + Mains (GS II Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States)

What's the NEWS

- Tribal artisans will soon be able to sell their products at the click of a mouse with the government gearing up to launch a specialised e-marketplace for them this Independence Day.

Know! more about Tribes India e-Mart

- Tribal Ministry will launch the website – **Tribes India e-Mart** – on Independence Day on August 15.
- It will be similar to selling your products on e-commerce giants Amazon or Flipkart. The difference is just that **it will be only for tribals**
- The government had set up Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India in 1987 with an aim to provide fair price for products of tribals across the country.
- The agency functions under the Union Tribal Affairs Ministry.
- The tribal artisans will be trained and asked to register themselves as sellers on the website.
- TRIFED will train these tribals and help them get registered,
- The objective is to bring around 5 lakh tribal artisans online, thus connecting them to a larger national and international market, he said.
- Around 5 lakh tribal items across 20,000 categories, including textiles, paintings, home decor items, jewelry, and metal crafts, will be available on the website.
- The products of tribal sellers will undergo a strict quality check and a committee will fix prices for each item.
- There will be local collection centres from where the products will be supplied across the country.

- For every Rs 100, Rs 70 will go to the tribals sellers

Connect to the past (current capsules 29 June 2020)

- Recently the Tribal Affairs Ministry has launched tribal products on Government e-Marketplace (GeM).
- This will help government departments and officers purchase tribal products directly from the website without going through a lengthy process of floating a tender and receiving bids

Governance

Online portal for issue of NOC for power, oil and gas exploration projects launched

Relevance I – Prelims (about the online NOC and its benefits + about TW and EEZ) + Mains (GS II Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications)

What's the NEWS

- The Defence Minister of India has launched a new web portal for issue of No Objection Certificate (NOC) for power projects and Research Survey Exploration Exploitation (RSEE) activities in the Indian Territorial Waters (TW) and Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

Know! more about the web portal

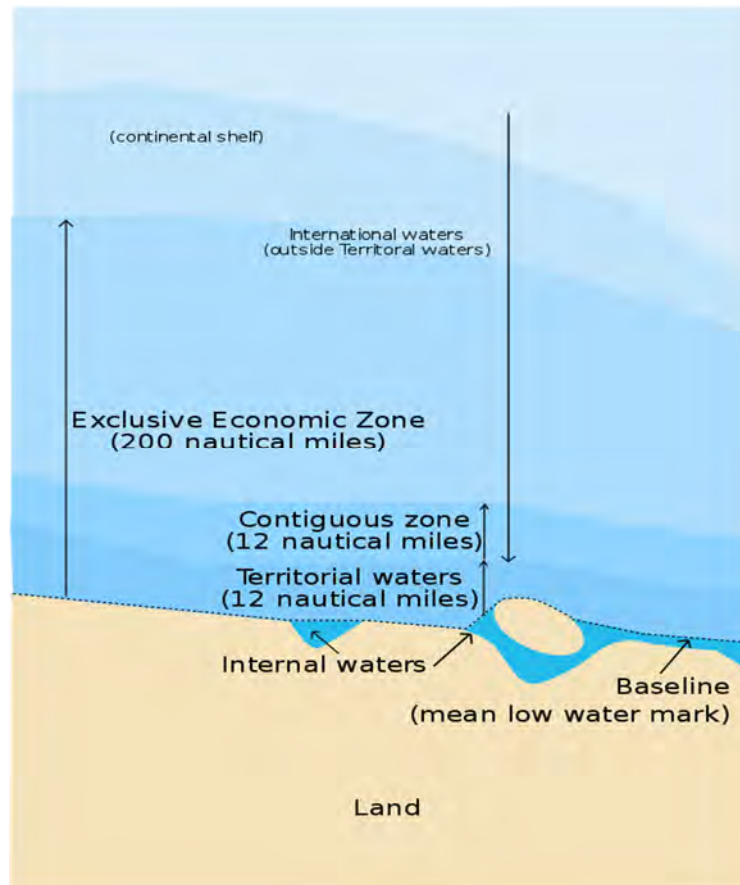
- To ensure ease of business and transparency in issuing NOC for such projects, the Ministry has developed the online application portal with the assistance of National e-Governance Division (NeGD), Bhaskaracharya Institute for Space Applications and Geo-informatics (BISAG) and National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- The portal will facilitate the applicants in submitting their proposals online for seeking MoD Security Clearance for undertaking Power Projects/RSEE activities.

The MoD Security clearance

- **Ministry of Defence (MoD) accords security clearances** to various private/Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs)/Government organisations for power/wind/solar projects in areas nearby defence installations and also RSEE activities in the Indian TW and EEZ for applications received through different Ministries

Know! about TW and EEZ

- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982, also known as Law of the Sea divides marine **areas into five main zones** namely- Internal Waters, Territorial Sea, Contiguous Zone, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and the High Seas.



- According to rules of UNCLOS, all areas extending up to 12 nautical miles from a country's coastline are its territorial waters (TW). All areas extending up to 200 nautical miles from a country's coastline are its exclusive economic zones (EEZ).

Education

Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS)

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

What's the NEWS

- The World Bank announced the approval of project 'Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS)' for India.
- The approval includes an assistance of \$500 million (around ₹3,700 crore).
- The project aims to improve the quality and governance of school education in six States.

Know! all about STARS program

- The project, Strengthening Teaching-Learning and Results for States Program (STARS), **will be implemented through the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan**, the flagship central scheme, in Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan.
- STARS will help improve the learning assessment systems, strengthen classroom instruction, and remediation, facilitate school-to-work transition, and strengthen governance and decentralized management
- It will also address “**the ‘learning outcome’ challenge** and help students better prepare for the jobs of the future
- It will give special attention to students from vulnerable sections – with over 52 per cent (as a weighted average) of children in the government-run schools in the six project States belonging to vulnerable sections
- STARS builds on the partnership between India and the World Bank since 1994 for strengthening the school education system and to support the goal of providing education to all. Before STARS, the World Bank had provided assistance of over \$3 billion towards this.

Know! about Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan

- Samagra Shiksha is an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class 12.
- The scheme has been prepared with the broader goal of improving school effectiveness measured in terms of equal opportunities for schooling and equitable learning outcomes.
- It **subsumes the three Schemes** of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).



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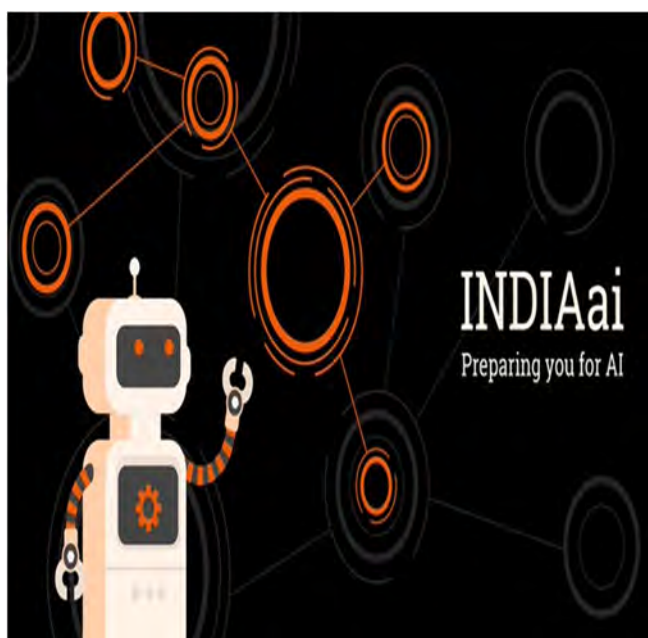
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General Studies – III

Science & Technology Economic Developments, Biodiversity, Environment, Internal Security and Disaster management

Government Schemes

National AI Portal of India- www.ai.gov.in



Relevance IN – Prelims (about national Artificial Intelligence Portal + responsible AI for youth programme) + Mains (GS III Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology)

What's the NEWS

- The Union Minister for Electronics and IT, Law and Justice and Communications launched India's national Artificial Intelligence Portal called www.ai.gov.in

Know! more about the portal

- This portal has been jointly developed by the **Ministry of Electronics and IT and IT Industry.**
- **National e-Governance Division** of Ministry of Electronics and IT and **NASSCOM** from the IT industry will jointly run this portal.
- This portal shall work as a one stop digital platform for AI related developments in India, sharing of resources such as articles, startups,

investment funds in AI, resources, companies and educational institutions related to AI in India.

- The portal will also share documents, case studies, research reports etc. It has section about learning and new job roles related to AI.

National Program for the youth, “Responsible AI for Youth” also launched

- The aim of this Program is to give the young students of our country a platform and empower them with appropriate new age tech mind-set, relevant AI skill-sets and access to required AI tool-sets to make them digitally ready for the future.
- The Program has been created and launched by the National e-Governance Division, Ministry of Electronics & IT in collaboration with Intel India, with support from **Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSE&L)**, Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- DoSE&L will help reach-out to State Education Departments to nominate teachers as per eligibility criteria.
- **“Responsible AI for Youth”** will empower the youth to become AI ready and help reduce the skill gap, while enabling youth to create meaningful social impact solutions.
- The Program is designed to reach out to students from Government schools pan India and provide them with an opportunity to become part of the skilled workforce in an inclusive manner.

Know! more about the Responsible AI for Youth Programme:

- It is open to students of **classes 8 - 12** from **Central and State government-run schools** (including KVS, NVS, JNV) from across the country - all 28 States and 8 Union Territories
- It will be implemented in a **phase-wise manner** and in its first phase, each of the State Education Department will nominate 10 teachers as per the eligibility criteria.
- Teachers may also self nominate themselves by fulfilling the eligibility criteria.
- These teachers will be provided orientation sessions aimed to help them understand the premise and identify 25-50 potential students for the Program.
- The identified students will attend online training sessions on AI and submit their ideas through a 60 seconds video explaining a proposed AI enabled solution.
- Top 100 ideas will be shortlisted and these students will be invited to attend residential boot camps or online sessions to take them through a deep dive AI journey.



Infrastructure Development

Pan-India Real Time Market in electricity launched

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the objective of Real Time Market and its benefits) + Mains (GS III infrastructure development- energy sector)

What's the NEWS

- The Power Ministry has launched pan-India Real Time Market in electricity
- This has placed Indian electricity market amongst a league of few electricity markets in the world, which have real time market.

Know! about Real time market

- Real time market is an organized market platform to **enable the buyers and sellers pan-India to meet their energy requirement closer** to real time of operation.
- It will bring required flexibility in the market to provide real time balance while ensuring optimal utilization of the available surplus capacity in the system.

Know! the working mechanism

- The proposed real time market would provide an alternate mechanism for Discoms to access larger market at competitive price.
- National Load Despatch Centre-POSOCO** is facilitating necessary automation in coordination with power exchanges to ensure faster transactions and settlements in the real time market framework.

- The real time market would help to **mitigate challenges to the grid management due to intermittent and variable nature of renewable energy** generation and therefore, help to integrate higher quantum of renewable energy resources into the grid.
- It is expected that shorter bidding time, faster scheduling, and defined processes (e.g. gate closure) are expected to enable the participants to access resources throughout the all India grid, promoting competition.

Environment

World Environment Day



Relevance IN – Prelims (about World Environment Day) + Mains (GS III Environment conservation – steps taken by various organisations)

What's the NEWS

- World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated on 5th June every year.
- Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change celebrates WED focusing on the theme declared by UNEP
- This year, the theme is 'Celebrating Biodiversity'.
- The day will be hosted in Colombia in partnership with Germany.

Know! more about the events and about India's biodiversity

- The ministry will be holding virtual celebrations of World Environment Day on this year's theme with focus on **Nagar Van (Urban Forests)**.
- India though having less land mass and more human and cattle population has nearly **8 percent of biodiversity**.
- The country is endowed with rich biodiversity having several species of animals and plants and hosts **4 of the 35 global bio-diversity hotspots** containing several endemic species.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change relaunched a scheme for **creating urban forest in 200 corporations and cities** because all these cities have gardens but not forest.
- The urban forest will help in creating and enhancing the lung capacities of these cities.

Navy in protecting ocean ecology

- Environment Protection and Green Initiatives have always been a key focus area of the Indian Navy.
- The World Environment Day has grown to become a global platform for raising awareness on environmental issues such as marine pollution, global warming and sustainable consumption
- With the aim of reducing pollution from engine exhausts, the Indian Navy **collaborated with IOCL** to revise the fuel specifications.
- The new specification surpasses international norms and **includes reduced sulphur content** which in the long run will reduce emissions levels as well as maintenance requirements onboard.
- Indian Navy has voluntarily implemented **all six schedules of International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) regulations.**
- All Naval ships have been fitted with MARPOL compliant pollution control equipment such as Oily Water Separators (OWS) and Sewage Treatment Plants (STP) for treating waste generated onboard.

The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL)

- It is the main international convention **covering prevention of pollution of the marine environment** by ships from operational or accidental causes.
- It was developed by the International Maritime Organization with an objective to minimize pollution of the oceans and seas, including dumping, oil and air pollution.
- The Convention includes regulations aimed at preventing and minimizing pollution from ships - both accidental pollution and that from routine operations - and currently **includes six technical Annexes.**

Know! about UNEP

- **The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global environmental authority**
- **It sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system**
- **It serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.**
- It is responsible for coordinating the UN's environmental activities and assisting developing countries in implementing environmentally sound policies and practices.
- Policies such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. In 1988, it joined the World Meteorological Organization to establish the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

- UNEP is also one of several "Implementing Agencies" for the Global Environment Facility (GEF)

Know! about GEF

- The **Global Environment Facility (GEF)** was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems.
- An independently operating financial organization, the GEF provides grants for projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, persistent organic pollutants (POPs), mercury, sustainable forest management, food security, sustainable cities.

The GEF also serves as financial mechanism for the following conventions:

- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
- Minamata Convention on Mercury

Science & Technology

CSIR-Summer Research Training Programme (CSIR-SRTP-2020)

Relevance IN – Prelims (about CSIR-SRTP-2020). + Mains (GS III Achievements of Indians in science & technology; indigenization of technology and developing new technology.

What's the NEWS

- Jorhat-based CSIR-NEIST (North East Institute of Science and Technology) got the mandate to organize and coordinate a country-wide **CSIR-Summer Research Training Programme (CSIR-SRTP-2020)**.

Know! more about CSIR-SRTP-2020

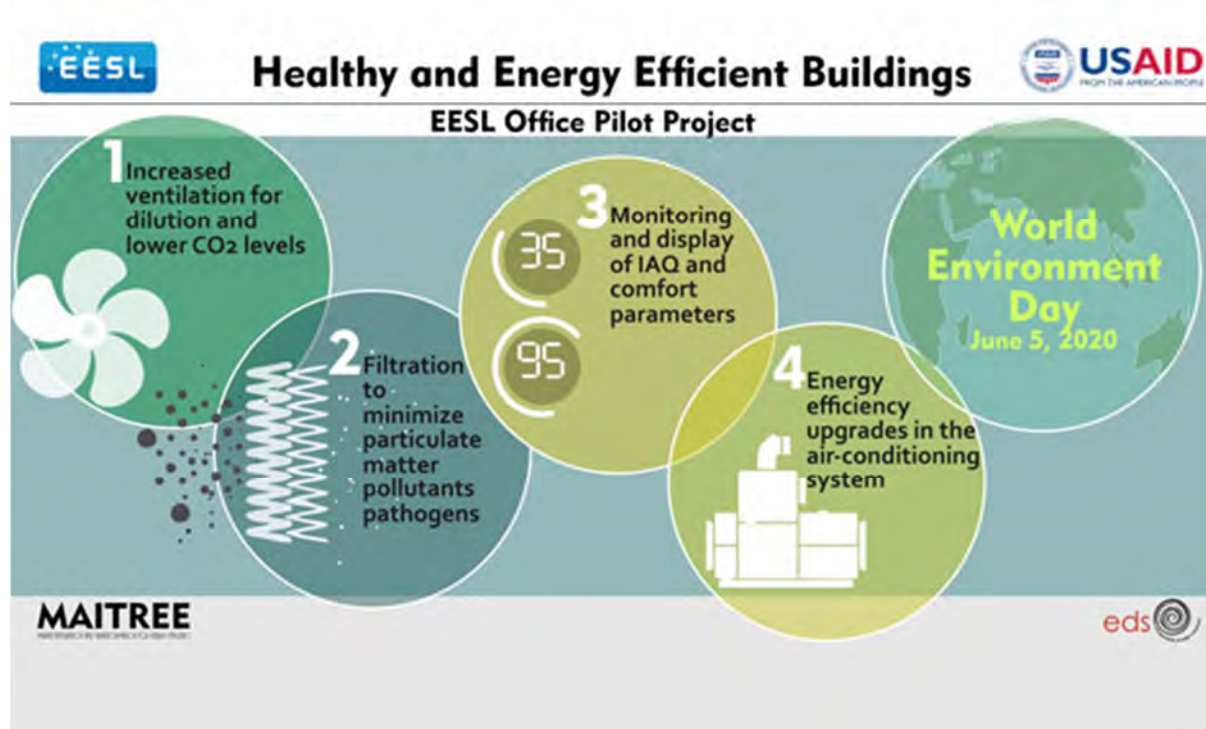
- An online programme (CSIR-SRTP-2020) is going to be discharged **through the faculties and mentors** from 38 CSIR laboratories spread across the length and breadth of the country.
- A website <http://www.neist.res.in/srtp2020/> has been launched where aspiring students can log on to avail the online application form and the detailed brochure of the programme.
- The online programme has been designed for students pursuing such programmes as **BSc, MSc, BTech/B.E., MCA, M.Tech, and M. Pharma** and with excellent academic record throughout.
- The programme is also open to faculties from various colleges affiliated to UGC/AICTE/State/Central/Private Universities.

Know! about CSIR

- The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), known for its cutting edge R&D knowledgebase in diverse S&T areas, is a contemporary R&D organization.
- Having a pan-India presence, CSIR has a dynamic network of 38 national laboratories, 39 outreach centres, 3 Innovation Complexes and 5 units. CSIR's R&D expertise and experience is embodied in about 4600 active scientists supported by about 8000 scientific and technical personnel.

Infrastructure Development – Energy

Healthy and Energy Efficient Buildings Initiative



Relevance IN – Prelims (about the Healthy and Energy Efficient Buildings initiative + about MAITREE program + about EESL) + Mains (GS III infrastructure development -energy)

What's the NEWS

- On occasion of World Environment Day, Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), in partnership with the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) MAITREE program, launched the "Healthy and Energy Efficient Buildings" initiative that will **pioneer ways to make workplaces healthier and greener.**

Know! more about the initiative

- This initiative is addressing the challenges of retrofitting existing buildings and air conditioning systems so that they are both healthy and energy efficient.
- This pilot will pave the way for other buildings to take appropriate steps to be healthy and energy efficient.
- EESL has taken the lead by being the first to implement the idea in its own office in New Delhi.

Know! about MAITREE program

- The Market Integration and Transformation Program for Energy Efficiency (MAITREE), under which this initiative has been launched, is a part of the US-India bilateral Partnership between the Ministry of Power and USAID and is **aimed at accelerating the adoption of cost-effective energy efficiency** as a standard practice within buildings, and specifically focuses on cooling.

Know! about Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)

- It is a Super-Energy Service Company (ESCO)
- It enables consumers, industries and governments to effectively manage their energy needs through energy efficient technologies.
- EESL is implementing the **world's largest non-subsidised energy efficiency portfolio** across sectors like lighting, buildings, e-mobility, smart metering and agriculture
- EESL focuses on solution-driven innovation with **no subsidy or capital expenditure (CAPEX)**.
- It is able to do so using its **Pay-As-You-Save (PAYS) model**, which obviates the need for any upfront capital investment by the consumer.
- The entire investment by EESL is recovered through monetised energy savings over a scheduled project period.
- EESL is promoted by the Ministry of Power Government of India as a Joint Venture of **four reputed public-sector undertakings** - NTPC Limited, Power Finance Corporation Limited., REC Limited, and POWERGRID Corporation of India Limited

Know! about United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

- USAID is the world's premier international development agency and a catalytic actor driving development results.
- It is an independent agency of the United States federal government that is primarily responsible for administering civilian foreign aid and development assistance.

iCommit initiative launched on World Environment Day

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ‘#iCommit’ initiative) + Mains (GS III infrastructure development -energy + 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 Ministry of Power has initiated the ‘#iCommit’ campaign, on the occasion of World Environment Day.
- The initiative is a clarion call to all stakeholders and individuals to continue moving towards energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainability to **create a robust and resilient energy system in the future.**

Know! more about the initiative

- The ‘#iCommit’ initiative, **driven by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)**, under the administration of Ministry of Power, Government of India is uniting a diverse set of players such as Governments, Corporates, Multilateral and Bilateral Organisations, Think Tanks and Individuals.
- The #iCommit initiative, especially in the backdrop of World Environment Day can bring together a diverse spectrum of government and private players to build a new energy future for India.
- The ‘#iCommit’ initiative is centred around the idea of building an energy resilient future.
- The pre-requisite for that goal is to create a flexible and agile power system.

The initiative will also celebrate and promote key undertakings of Government of India such as

- National Electric Mobility Mission 2020
- FAME 1 and 2
- DeenDayalUpadhyaya Gram JyotiYojana
- the Saubhagya Scheme
- Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojna (UDAY)
- Atal Distribution system Improvement Yojna (AJAY)
- Smart Meter National Programme, PradhanmantriKisanUrja Suraksha evamUtthanMahaabhiya (KUSUM)
- Solar Parks
- Grid Connected Rooftop

- Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LED for All (UJALA)
- Atal Jyoti Yojna (AJAY)

Government Schemes


Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2020-21

Relevance IN -Prelims (about Sovereign Gold Bonds scheme and its features)

What's the NEWS

- The Sovereign Gold Bonds 2020-21 (Series III) will be opened for the period June 08-12, 2020 with Settlement date June 16, 2020.
- The issue price of the Bond during the subscription period shall be Rs 4,677 (Rupees Four thousand Six hundred Seventy seven only) – per gram
- The central bank in April had announced that the government will issue Sovereign Gold Bonds in six tranches from April 20 till September.
- Sovereign Gold Bonds 2020-21 will be issued by Reserve Bank India on behalf of the Government of India.

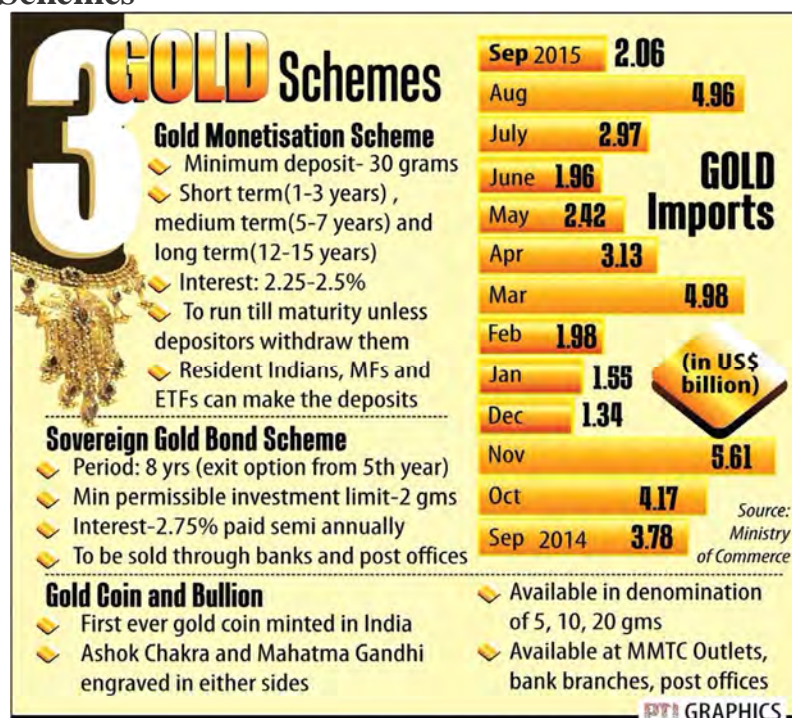
Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme

MAIN FEATURES OF THE SOVEREIGN GOLD BOND			
ISSUANCE To be issued by Reserve Bank of India on behalf of the Government	TAXATION Interest on the bonds shall be taxable as per the provision of Income Tax Act, 1961 (43 of 1961). Physical gold rules apply to capital gains tax too		SALES CHANNEL Bonds will be sold through banks and designated Post Offices, as may be notified, either directly or through agents
ELIGIBILITY The bonds will be restricted for sale to resident Indian entities including individuals, HUFs, trusts, universities, charitable institutions	DENOMINATION The bonds will be denominated in multiples of grams of gold with a basic unit of 1 gram		MAXIMUM LIMIT Not more than 500 grams per person per fiscal year (April-March). A self-declaration to this effect will be obtained
TENOR The tenor of the bond will be for a period of 8 years with exit option from 5th year to be exercised on the interest payment dates	MINIMUM SIZE Minimum permissible investment will be 2 units (i.e. 2 grams of gold)		

- It was launched by Govt in November 2015, under Gold Monetisation Scheme
- Under the scheme, the issues are made open for subscription in tranches by RBI in consultation with GOI.
- **RBI Notifies the terms and conditions** for the scheme from time to time.
- The **rate of SGB will be declare by RBI** before every new tranche by issuing a Press Release.
- The bonds will be denominated in multiples of gram(s) of gold with a basic unit of 1 gram and the tenor of the Sovereign Gold Bond **will be eight years with exit option after fifth year to be exercised** on interest payment dates.

- The bonds are restricted for sale to resident individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), trusts, universities and charitable institutions.
- The minimum permissible investment will be 1 gram of gold, and the maximum limit of subscription shall be 4 kg for individual, 4 kg for HUF and 20 kg for trusts and similar entities per fiscal (April-March).
- The gold bonds will be sold through banks (**except small finance banks and payment banks**), Stock Holding Corporation of India (SHCIL), designated post offices, and recognised stock exchanges (NSE and BSE).
- It was launched with an objective to reduce the demand for physical gold and shift a part of the domestic savings, used for purchase of gold, into financial savings.

Other Gold Schemes



Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

President promulgates two Ordinances with the aim of giving a boost to rural India and agriculture

Relevance IN – Prelims (facts regarding these two schemes) + Mains (GS III farmer's welfare + GS II government policies and interventions)

What's the NEWS

- The President of India has promulgated the following Ordinances with the aim of giving a boost to rural India for farmers engaged in agriculture and allied activities;

- i. **The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation) Ordinance 2020**
- ii. **The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance 2020**

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation) Ordinance 2020

- It will provide for the creation of an ecosystem where the farmers and traders enjoy the freedom of choice **relating to sale and purchase of farmers' produce** which facilitates remunerative prices through competitive alternative trading channels.
- It will promote efficient, transparent and **barrier-free inter-State and intra-State trade and commerce of farmers' produce** outside the physical premises of markets or deemed markets notified under various State agricultural produce market legislations.

The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance 2020

- It will provide for a **national framework on farming agreements** that protects and empowers farmers to engage with agri- business firms, processors, wholesalers, exporters or large retailers for farm services and sale of future farming produce at a mutually agreed remunerative price framework in a fair and transparent manner

Benefits is these two ordinances

- The above two measures will **enable barrier-free trade in agriculture produce, and also empower the farmers to engage with sponsors of his choice**. The freedom of the farmer, which is of paramount importance, has thus been provided.

Environment, Forest and Climate Change

Urban Forest scheme to develop 200 'Nagar Van' across the country in next five years

Relevance IN – Prelims (about World Environment day + about Urban forest Scheme) + Mains (GS III Environment conservation)

What's the NEWS

- On the occasion of World Environment Day, the government announced implementation of the Nagar van scheme **to develop 200 Urban Forests across the country in next five years** with a renewed focus on people's participation and collaboration between Forest Department, Municipal bodies, NGOs, Corporates and local citizens.



Know! about WED

- World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated on 5th June every year. Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change celebrates WED focusing on the theme declared by **United Nation's Environment Programme (UNEP)**
- This year's theme is 'Biodiversity'.
- The ministry held virtual celebrations of World Environment Day on this year's theme with focus on **Nagar Van (Urban Forests)**.

Know! about Nagar Van scheme (benefits)

- These forests will work as lungs of the cities and will primarily be on the forest land in the City or any other vacant land offered by local urban local bodies.
- Biodiversity is vital for survival of all life form on this planet and is a key to providing various ecological services.
- Biodiversity conservation has traditionally been considered confined to remote forest areas but with increasing urbanisation a need has arisen to safeguard and save biodiversity in urban areas also.
- Urban forest is the best way to bridge this gap.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change has therefore, appropriately adopted Nagar van as the theme of WED celebrations 2020 to promote and conserve biodiversity in urban landscapes.

The Warje Urban Forest (fact to substantiate your answer)

- The **initiatives of Punaikars** along with Forest Department and local body has converted 16.8 ha of a barren hill into green forests.
- This Urban Forest project started in 2015 as a pilot project under PPP is now helping maintain ecological balance, serving both environmental and social needs. **The Warje Urban Forest(Pune)** is now a role model for the rest of the country.

Know! the Indian Biodiversity statics

- India has 8 percent of world's biodiversity, despite having many constraint like only 2.5 % of the world's landmass, has to carry 16% of human as well as cattle population and having only 4% of fresh water sources
- India is endowed with rich biodiversity having several species of animals and plants and hosts 4 of the 35 global bio-diversity hotspots containing several endemic species.

Infrastructure Development

PM SVANIDHI scheme

Relevance IN – Prelims (about PM SVANIDHI - Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi + 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

- To provide affordable loan to street vendors, the Union Government today launched PM SVANIDHI - Pradhan Mantri Street Vendor's Atmanirbhar Nidhi - a **special micro-credit facility scheme**.

Know! more about the Scheme

- The scheme is aimed at enabling the street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to COVID-19 lockdown.
- Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry launched the scheme in pursuance of the announcement made by Finance Minister last month.
- The scheme targets to benefit over 50 lakh street vendors, who had been vending on or before March 24, 2020, in urban areas.
- The duration of the scheme is until March 2022.
- The street vendors belonging to the surrounding peri-urban or rural areas are being included as beneficiaries under the urban livelihoods programme for the first time.
- The vendors can avail a working capital loan of up to Rs 10,000, which is repayable in monthly instalments in the tenure of one year.
- On timely and early repayment of the loan, an interest subsidy at the rate of seven per cent per annum will be credited to the bank accounts of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer on six monthly bases.
- Urban Local Bodies will play a pivotal role in the implementation of the scheme.
- The lending institutions under the Scheme include **Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Small Finance Banks, Cooperative Banks, NBFCs, Micro Finance institutions and Self Help Group banks.**
- In order to ensure fast implementation of the scheme with transparency, a digital platform with a web portal and mobile app is being developed to administer the scheme with an end-to-end solution.

Science & Technology

Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy (STIP)

Relevance IN -Prelims(about the formulation of national Science Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP 2020) + about PSA + PM-STIAC + Mains(GS III – developments in the field of Science & Technology)

What's the NEWS

- The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India (**Office of PSA**) and the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)** have jointly initiated a decentralized, bottom-up, and inclusive process for the formulation of a new national Science Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP 2020).

- The government is working on a new National Science, Technology and Innovation Policy, **to replace the existing policy framed in 2013**, which will be forward-looking and have both a vision document as well as an action plan on the fundamental research required in crucial areas such as space, health, atomic physics and bio-technology

Challenges - Private investment in India in R&D

- The private investment in India in R&D was still very low and a suitable environment needed to be created to induce entities to invest.
- Restoring the 200 per cent income tax deduction for in-house R&D spend, which was reduced to 150 per cent from April 1 2017, could be one way to encourage investment in the area. T
- Of the total R&D investments made in the country, **70 per cent is made directly by the government while 30 per cent of the investment comes from the industry.**
- As much as 90 per cent of the industry investment is also made by the public sector units with private sector accounting for just 10 per cent (of 30 per cent)

Know! about Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA)

- The Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) is the **chief advisor to the government on matters related to scientific policy.**
- It is currently a Secretary level position created in 1999 by the AB Vajpayee government.
- At the time, the position was a Cabinet rank position, with the first PSA being APJ Abdul Kalam.
- The 'Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser', through the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC) helps scientific cross-sectoral synergy across ministries, institutions and the industry.
- The vision of PSA is to facilitate, enable and empower all spheres of science, technology and innovation towards effective execution of programmes meant for the enhancement of the society and betterment for the economy.
- To translate the vision of into strategy and action, the Prime Minister has constituted the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM's STIAC). The PSA is Chair of the PM's STIAC.

PM-STIAC

- The PM-STIAC is an overarching Council that facilitates the PSA's Office to assess the status in specific science and technology domains, comprehend challenges in hand, formulate specific interventions, develop a futuristic roadmap and **advise the Prime Minister accordingly.**

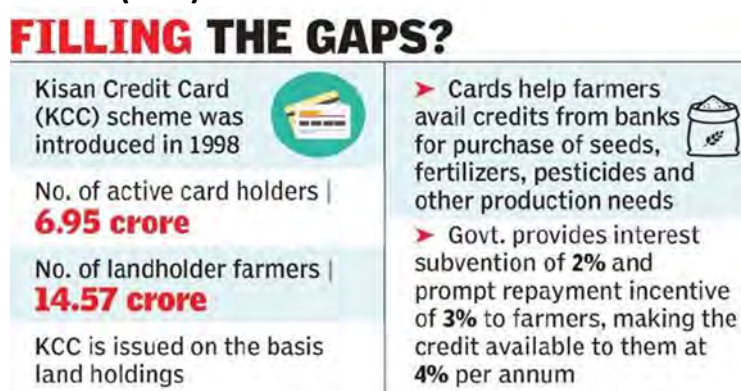
Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) campaign launched for 1.5 crore dairy farmers

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the features of Kisan Credit Card (KCC) + Mains (GS III e-technology in the aid of farmers + inclusive growth + GS II Government policies and interventions)

What's the NEWS

- The Government will provide Kisan Credit Card (KCC) to 1.5 crore dairy farmers belonging to Milk Unions and Milk producing Companies within the next two months (1st June-31st July 2020) under a special drive.
- Under the **dairy cooperative movement**, approximately 1.7 crore farmers are associated with 230 Milk Unions in the country.
- Finance Minister on 15 May 2020 has announced to cover 2.5 crore new farmers under the KCC scheme.
- This will provide an additional liquidity of Rs.5 lakh crore in the hands of farmers, who are suffering from the recent downturn of economy.

The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme



- It is a credit scheme introduced in August 1998 by Indian banks. This model scheme was prepared by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) on the recommendations of R.V.GUPTA committee to provide term loans for agricultural needs.
- Owner cultivators, tenant and small farmers, marginal farmers, Self Help Groups (SHGs) or Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) can avail loans to meet their agricultural needs under this scheme at attractive rates of interest.
- **Regional Rural Banks, Cooperative Banks and Public Sector Commercial Banks** have implemented the Kisan Credit Card scheme in India.
- Its primary objective is to provide easily attainable short term loans to farmers.

The basic features associated with the card are mentioned below:

- Credit to meet the financial requirements of agricultural and other allied activities.
- Ancillary credit for crop production and other contingencies.
- Investment credit for agricultural requirements such as dairy animals, pump sets etc.
- Produce marketing loans.
- Post-harvest expenses.
- Insurance coverage for Kisan Credit Card holders, including asset insurance and personal accident insurance scheme (PAIS).

Infrastructure Development

Pan-India Real Time Market in electricity launched

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the objective of Real Time Market and its benefits) + Mains (GS III infrastructure development- energy sector)

What's the NEWS

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- This has placed Indian electricity market amongst a league of few electricity markets in the world, which have real time market.

Know! about Real time market

- Real time market is an organized market platform to **enable the buyers and sellers pan-India to meet their energy requirement closer** to real time of operation.
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Know! the working mechanism

- The proposed real time market would provide an alternate mechanism for Discoms to access larger market at competitive price.
- **National Load Despatch Centre-POSOCO** is facilitating necessary automation in coordination with power exchanges to ensure faster transactions and settlements in the real time market framework.
- The real time market would help to **mitigate challenges to the grid management due to intermittent and variable nature of renewable energy** generation and therefore, help to integrate higher quantum of renewable energy resources into the grid.

- It is expected that shorter bidding time, faster scheduling, and defined processes (e.g. gate closure) are expected to enable the participants to access resources throughout the all India grid, promoting competition.

Environment

World Environment Day



Relevance IN – Prelims (about World Environment Day) + Mains (GS III Environment conservation – steps taken by various organisations)

What's the NEWS

- World Environment Day (WED) is celebrated on 5th June every year.
- Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change celebrates WED focusing on the theme declared by UNEP
- This year, the theme is 'Celebrating Biodiversity'.
- The day will be hosted in Colombia in partnership with Germany.

Know! more about the events and about India's biodiversity

- The ministry will be holding virtual celebrations of World Environment Day on this year's theme with focus on **Nagar Van (Urban Forests)**.
- India though having less land mass and more human and cattle population has nearly **8 percent of biodiversity**.
- The country is endowed with rich biodiversity having several species of animals and plants and hosts **4 of the 35 global bio-diversity hotspots** containing several endemic species.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change relaunched a scheme for **creating urban forest in 200 corporations and cities** because all these cities have gardens but not forest.
- The urban forest will help in creating and enhancing the lung capacities of these cities.

iCommit initiative launched on World Environment Day

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ‘#iCommit’ initiative) + Mains (GS III infrastructure development -energy + 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 Ministry of Power has initiated the ‘#iCommit’ campaign, on the occasion of World Environment Day.
- The initiative is a clarion call to all stakeholders and individuals to continue moving towards energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainability to **create a robust and resilient energy system in the future.**

Know! more about the initiative

- The ‘#iCommit’ initiative, **driven by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)**, under the administration of Ministry of Power, Government of India is uniting a diverse set of players such as Governments, Corporates, Multilateral and Bilateral Organisations, Think Tanks and Individuals.
- The #iCommit initiative, especially in the backdrop of World Environment Day can bring together a diverse spectrum of government and private players to build a new energy future for India.
- The ‘#iCommit’ initiative is centred around the idea of building an energy resilient future.
- The pre-requisite for that goal is to create a flexible and agile power system.

The initiative will also celebrate and promote key undertakings of Government of India such as

- National Electric Mobility Mission 2020
- FAME 1 and 2
- DeenDayalUpadhyaya Gram JyotiYojana
- the Saubhagya Scheme
- Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojna (UDAY)
- Atal Distribution system Improvement Yojna (AJAY)
- Smart Meter National Programme, PradhanmantriKisanUrja Suraksha evamUtthanMahaabhiya (KUSUM)
- Solar Parks
- Grid Connected Rooftop

- Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LED for All (UJALA)
- Atal Jyoti Yojna (AJAY)

Government Schemes


Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2020-21

Relevance IN -Prelims (about Sovereign Gold Bonds scheme and its features)

What's the NEWS

- The Sovereign Gold Bonds 2020-21 (Series III) will be opened for the period June 08-12, 2020 with Settlement date June 16, 2020.
- The issue price of the Bond during the subscription period shall be Rs 4,677 (Rupees Four thousand Six hundred Seventy seven only) – per gram
- The central bank in April had announced that the government will issue Sovereign Gold Bonds in six tranches from April 20 till September.
- Sovereign Gold Bonds 2020-21 will be issued by Reserve Bank India on behalf of the Government of India.

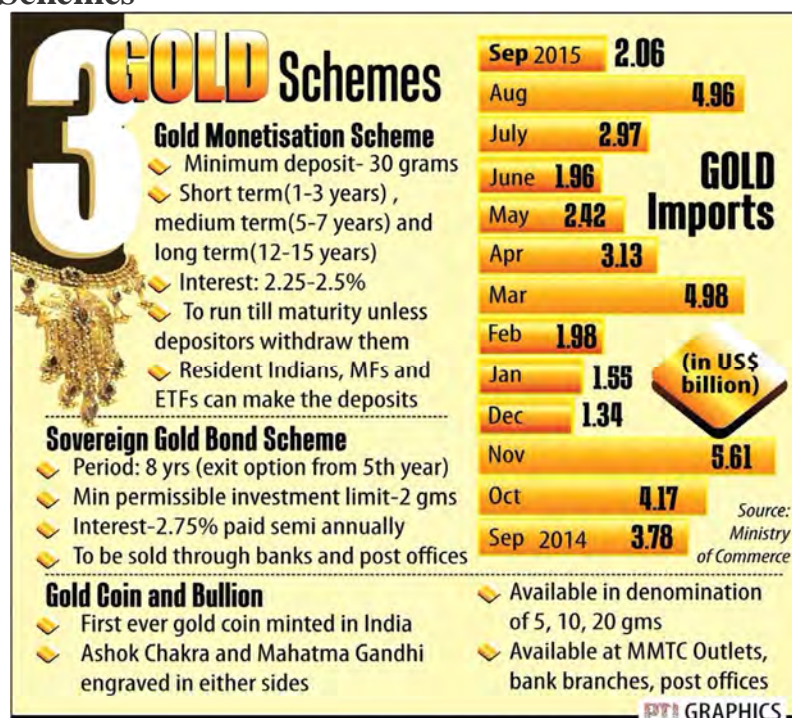
Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme

MAIN FEATURES OF THE SOVEREIGN GOLD BOND			
ISSUANCE To be issued by Reserve Bank of India on behalf of the Government	TAXATION Interest on the bonds shall be taxable as per the provision of Income Tax Act, 1961 (43 of 1961). Physical gold rules apply to capital gains tax too		SALES CHANNEL Bonds will be sold through banks and designated Post Offices, as may be notified, either directly or through agents
ELIGIBILITY The bonds will be restricted for sale to resident Indian entities including individuals, HUFs, trusts, universities, charitable institutions	DENOMINATION The bonds will be denominated in multiples of grams of gold with a basic unit of 1 gram		MAXIMUM LIMIT Not more than 500 grams per person per fiscal year (April-March). A self-declaration to this effect will be obtained
TENOR The tenor of the bond will be for a period of 8 years with exit option from 5th year to be exercised on the interest payment dates	MINIMUM SIZE Minimum permissible investment will be 2 units (i.e. 2 grams of gold)		

- It was launched by Govt in November 2015, under Gold Monetisation Scheme
- Under the scheme, the issues are made open for subscription in tranches by RBI in consultation with GOI.
- **RBI Notifies the terms and conditions** for the scheme from time to time.
- The **rate of SGB will be declare by RBI** before every new tranche by issuing a Press Release.
- The bonds will be denominated in multiples of gram(s) of gold with a basic unit of 1 gram and the tenor of the Sovereign Gold Bond **will be eight years with exit option after fifth year to be exercised** on interest payment dates.

- The bonds are restricted for sale to resident individuals, Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs), trusts, universities and charitable institutions.
- The minimum permissible investment will be 1 gram of gold, and the maximum limit of subscription shall be 4 kg for individual, 4 kg for HUF and 20 kg for trusts and similar entities per fiscal (April-March).
- The gold bonds will be sold through banks (**except small finance banks and payment banks**), Stock Holding Corporation of India (SHCIL), designated post offices, and recognised stock exchanges (NSE and BSE).
- It was launched with an objective to reduce the demand for physical gold and shift a part of the domestic savings, used for purchase of gold, into financial savings.

Other Gold Schemes



Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

President promulgates two Ordinances with the aim of giving a boost to rural India and agriculture

Relevance IN – Prelims (facts regarding these two schemes) + Mains (GS III farmer's welfare + GS II government policies and interventions)

What's the NEWS

- The President of India has promulgated the following Ordinances with the aim of giving a boost to rural India for farmers engaged in agriculture and allied activities;

- iii. **The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation) Ordinance 2020**
- iv. **The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance 2020**

The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion & Facilitation) Ordinance 2020

- It will provide for the creation of an ecosystem where the farmers and traders enjoy the freedom of choice **relating to sale and purchase of farmers' produce** which facilitates remunerative prices through competitive alternative trading channels.
- It will promote efficient, transparent and **barrier-free inter-State and intra-State trade and commerce of farmers' produce** outside the physical premises of markets or deemed markets notified under various State agricultural produce market legislations.

The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance 2020

- It will provide for a **national framework on farming agreements** that protects and empowers farmers to engage with agri- business firms, processors, wholesalers, exporters or large retailers for farm services and sale of future farming produce at a mutually agreed remunerative price framework in a fair and transparent manner

Benefits is these two ordinances

- The above two measures will **enable barrier-free trade in agriculture produce, and also empower the farmers to engage with sponsors of his choice**. The freedom of the farmer, which is of paramount importance, has thus been provided.

Science & Technology

Scientists develop indigenous nasopharyngeal swabs

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Nasopharyngeal swab) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of S&T + GS II Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health)

What's the NEWS

- CSIR-National Chemical Laboratory (CSIR-NCL), Pune, has developed an indigenous NP swab for collecting samples from the throat cavity of COVID-19 patients.

Know! about Nasopharyngeal swab


- Nasopharyngeal swab is a medical device with stringent specifications of quality, polymer grade, dimensions and sterilization.

- An NP swab consists of a cylindrical plastic stick with a brush-like tip of synthetic bristles/flocks.
- The flocking process helps align the fine bristles in a parallel orientation on the stick head, much like a tooth brush, except that this has round uniform geometry and the NP swab bristles are of micron diameter.

Economy


Payment Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF)

 **INVEST INDIA.GOV.IN**



RBI's boost to digital payments in India

- Announces Payments Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF)
- Aims to encourage the adoption of 'Points of Sale' machines by businesses in tier-3 to tier-6 centres and Northeastern states
- To make an initial contribution of INR 250 Cr to PIDF covering half the fund*



*Remaining contribution to come from card-issuing banks and card networks operating in India | Source: RBI

Relevance IN – Prelims (about PIDF – objective + about Acceptance Development Fund) + Mains (GS III Economic development)

What's the NEWS

- In an effort to give a push to digital payments across the country, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is coming up with a Payment Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) of Rs 500 crore.

Know! more about PIDF

- The RBI has made an initial contribution of Rs 250 crore covering half the fund.
- The remaining will come from the card issuing banks and card networks operating in the country.
- This fund has been created **to encourage acquirers to deploy point of sale (PoS) infrastructure**, both physical and digital, in tier-3 to tier-6 centres and north eastern states.
- This is in line with the measures proposed by the vision document on payment and settlement systems in India 2019-2021.

- The fund will be **governed through an advisory council but it will be managed and administered by the RBI.**

Acceptance Development Fund

- Last year, the RBI had also proposed to set up an Acceptance Development Fund which will be used to develop card acceptance infrastructure across small towns and cities.

Environment ministry issues advisory to import live exotic animals

Relevance IN – Prelims (about exotic animals + about CITES) + Mains (GS III Environment conservation)

What's the NEWS

- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) issued an advisory to streamline and formalise the process of importing live exotic animals.

Know! about exotic animals

- The advisory has defined them as those that are mentioned under the Appendices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), but not under the schedules of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

Know! about the import of exotic species

- Many exotic species of birds, reptiles and amphibians are imported into India for commercial purposes.
- These imports were happening though the Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)
- Earlier the imports were beyond the purview of the forest departments and the chief wildlife wardens and they weren't aware about them. Now, with this advisory, they'll be kept in the loop.
- The advisory has provisions for import and disclosure of exotic animals and their progeny already in India.
- A person trying to import a live exotic animal will have to submit an application for grant of a licence to the DGFT, under the provisions of the advisory.

Know! about CITES

- CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an **international** agreement between governments.
- Its aim is to ensure that **international trade** in specimens of **wild animals** and plants does not threaten their survival.

Know! about the Wild Life Protection Act, 1972

- It is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted for protection of plants and animal species.
- The Act provides for the protection of wild animals, birds and plants; and for matters connected there with or ancillary or incidental thereto.
- It extends to the whole of India. It has six schedules which give varying degrees of protection.
- Schedule I and part II of Schedule II provide absolute protection - offences under these are prescribed the highest penalties.
- Species listed in Schedule III and Schedule IV are also protected, but the penalties are much lower.
- Schedule V includes the animals which may be hunted.
- The specified endemic plants in Schedule VI are prohibited from cultivation and planting.

Environment

Environment performance index

Relevance IN – Prelims(about Environment Performance Index -highlights) + Mains (GS III Environment conservation)

What's the NEWS

- India secured 168 rank in the 12th edition of the biennial Environment Performance Index (EPI Index 2020) — that measured the environmental performance of 180 countries — and was released by the Yale University.

EPI Index 2020 -Report Highlights

- India's rank was 177 (with a score of 30.57 out of 100) in 2018.
- The country scored 27.6 out of 100 in the 2020 index.
- The 11 countries lagging behind India were — Burundi, Haiti, Chad, Solomon Islands, Madagascar, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Myanmar and Liberia.
- All South Asian countries, except Afghanistan, were ahead of India in the ranking.
- India's rank on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) among the South Asian countries was low
- India scored below the regional average score on all five key parameters on environmental health, including air quality, sanitation and drinking water, heavy metals and waste management.
- It has also scored below the regional average on parameters related to biodiversity and ecosystem services too.
- The performance on climate change was assessed based on eight indicators — adjusted emission growth rates; composed of growth rates

of four greenhouse gases and one pollutant; growth rate in carbon dioxide emissions from land cover; greenhouse gas intensity growth rate; and greenhouse gas emissions per capita.

Environment Conservation

Online waste management platform



Relevance IN – Prelims(about the online waste management platform) + Mains (GS III Environment conservation)

What's the NEWS

- On World Environment Day, Andhra Pradesh launched an online waste management platform to handle liquid waste, hazardous, and non-hazardous solid waste and air pollutants.

Know! the working mechanism of online waste exchange platform

- The **Andhra Pradesh Environment Management Corporation (APEMC)**, which will handle the platform, will henceforth be responsible for safe disposal of all industrial waste generated in the state.
- The APEMC will streamline collection of the waste from industries, sort and streamline the waste as hazardous or non-hazardous or e-waste according to category, and scientifically dispose it off at various waste disposal centres.
- Through the online platform, industries which do not have their own waste disposal systems can approach the APEMC, which will arrange for collection and safe disposal of the waste.
- APEMC will handle the waste from its generation till the end of its lifecycle.

- **It will work in close coordination with Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board (APPCB)**, with a strong regulatory framework to handle the waste from cradle to grave,
- The role of the pollution control board would be to consider and make necessary provisions for industries and organisations to hand over the waste generated by their units, which cannot be treated within their premises, to APEMC for management of waste, in accordance with Environmental Rules & Regulations.
- APEMC will track the waste till it is disposed off safely while working with industries to implement the 6 Rs — Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Refurbish, Redesign and Remanufacture.
- It is India's first online waste exchange platform aimed at ensuring safe and scientific disposal of industrial wastes.

Space Awareness

ISRO signs MoU with ARIES for cooperation in Space Situational Awareness, Astrophysics

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the MoU + about Space Situational Awareness) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of space)

What's the NEWS

- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) has entered into an agreement with Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES) Nainital for cooperation in the field of Space Situational Awareness (SSA) and Astrophysics.

Highlights of the MoU

- Space objects orbital tracking, analysis and space weather studies are important aspects in Space Situational Awareness and Management to safeguard Indian space assets from critical conjunction threats from space debris
- Future endeavours in space exploration depend on R&D in Astrophysics, solar sciences and space environment
- This MoU will pave the way for future collaborations between ISRO and ARIES in establishing optical telescope observational facilities for space object tracking, R&D studies in space weather, astrophysics and Near Earth Object (NEO)
- India is focusing on debris tracking, collision avoidance, satellite anomaly detection, monitoring threats from space weather station, prediction of threats from asteroids and meteorites.

-

Connect to the past Mar 2020 (similar agreements signed by ISRO)

- A Memorandum of Understanding on “Scientific Collaborations in area of Space Situational Awareness (SSA)” was signed between ISRO and **University of Texas, Austin, USA**
- This MoU will pave the way for collaborations between the agencies in mutually beneficial projects related to R&D in SSA activities and observational facilities for SSA.

Connect to the past August 2019

- Chairman, ISRO laid foundation stone for **Space Situational Awareness Control Centre** at Peenya, Bengaluru on 2nd August
- **Space Situational Awareness & Management (SSAM)** has become an internationally significant area due to the ever growing manmade space debris population and the increased collision threat with operational spacecraft.
- ISRO is aiming at protecting high valued space assets from space debris close approaches and collisions.
- To carryout systematically all activities related to SSAM, a control centre is being established at Bengaluru.

Know! about ARIES

- Aryabhatta Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES) is a research institute in Nainital, Uttarakhand which specializes in Astronomy, Astrophysics and Atmospheric Sciences.
- It is an autonomous body under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India

Infrastructure Development – Energy Sector

Methodology Issued for Rationalization of Linkages/ Swapping of Coal

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the mechanism and benefits of liberalised framework) Mains (GS II Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation + Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance)

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Coal has further liberalised the framework under which **coal linkages can be swapped** in the country.

- A linkage is a coal supply assurance from Coal India Limited to a consumer.
- These commitments are binding and the coal cannot be transferred to other consumers.

Know! about the liberalised framework

- The coal linkages from coal companies have been rationalized in order to **reduce the distance in transportation of coal** from the coal mines to the consumer.
- The exercise shall help in reducing the load on the transportation infrastructure and easing the evacuation constraints.
- The past rationalization exercises were implemented only for Power Sector but the present methodology on linkage rationalization, covers the **Power as well as Non-Regulated Sector (NRS)**, for all types of consumers and coal swapping with imported coal has also been permitted.
- It was implemented to examine the swapping of imported coal to hinterland and domestic coal transported to coastal areas.
- The scheme envisages transfer of coal quantity in terms of gross Calorific Value (GCV) equivalence and is applicable for non-coking coal only.
- The Arrangement shall be allowed **only within the same sector** viz. NRS (non-regulated sector) with NRS and Power (regulated sector) with Power.
- Participation in the scheme shall be voluntary and arrangement between the parties rationalizing/swapping coal through rail and/or sea mode shall be bilateral.
- **Coal India Limited (CIL) shall be the nodal agency** for conducting the process of linkage rationalization/swapping of coal.

Science & Technology

Joint Science Communication Forum

Relevance IN – Prelims (about joint Science Communication Forum -its objective) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of science and technology)

What's the NEWS

- The Department of Science & Technology has constituted a joint Science Communication Forum with a view to **facilitate interaction, cooperation, and coordination** amongst various **public sector science communication institutions** and agencies.

Know! about the forum

- The Forum brings together science communication efforts spread across various institutions and can help adoption of a common policy and best practices at a wider scale, ultimately aiming towards a national science communication framework.
- It is represented by senior officials from **various central ministries and departments**, including Agriculture, Health, Culture, Defense, Space, Atomic Energy, and Information & Broadcasting, in addition to Science & Technology.
- The Forum would work upon strategies for effective planning and implementation of science communication programmes at macro and micro level in the country to spread scientific awareness
- The Forum would be served by a **Secretariat at the National Council for Science & Technology Communication (NCSTC)**, Department of Science & Technology

National Council for Science & Technology Communication (NCSTC)

- The National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC) is a scientific programme of the Government of India for the **popularisation of science, dissemination of scientific knowledge and inculcation of scientific temper**.
- Established under the Department of Science and Technology, it "is mandated to communicate Science and Technology to masses, stimulate scientific and technological temper and coordinate and orchestrate such efforts throughout the country.
- NCSTC was established in 1982.

Connect to the Past (May 2020)

Year of Awareness on Science & Health (YASH)

- National Council for Science & Technology Communication (NCSTC) and Department of Science & Technology (DST) has launched a programme on health and risk communication '**Year of Awareness on Science & Health (YASH)**' with focus on COVID-19.
- It is a comprehensive science and health communication initiative to promote grass-root level response on health.
- The aim of the initiative is to encourage the public engagement and enable communities to increase their sense of awareness against COVID-19.
- The YASH programme will help in improving risk understanding, indigenous knowledge, bring attitudinal changes, to cope with courage and confidence.

Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

Sahakar Mitra Scheme



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Sahakar Mitra: Scheme on Internship Programme + about NCDC +Main (GS III farmer's welfare)

What's the NEWS

- Sahakar Mitra: Scheme on Internship Programme (SIP) was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare

Know! about SIP and the role of NCDC

- NCDC has been proactive in delivering innovative solutions for the cooperative sector.
- Sahakar Mitra: Scheme on Internship Programme (SIP) will provide the **young professionals** an opportunity of **practical exposure and learning** from the working of NCDC and cooperatives as a paid intern.
- NCDC has also introduced a complementary scheme **to promote start-up cooperative ventures**.
- Sahakar Mitra would also provide an opportunity to professionals from academic institutions to develop leadership and entrepreneurial roles through cooperatives as Farmers Producers Organizations (FPO).
- Sahakar Mitra scheme is expected **to assist cooperative institutions** access new and innovative ideas of young professionals while the interns gain experience of working in the field giving confidence to be self-reliant.

Eligibility

- Under the scheme, professional graduates in disciplines such as Agriculture and allied areas, IT etc. will be eligible for internship.
- Professionals who are pursuing or have completed their MBA degrees in Agri-business, Cooperation, Finance, International Trade, Forestry, Rural Development, Project Management etc. will also be eligible.
- NCDC has earmarked funds for Sahakar Mitra paid internship program under which each intern will get financial support over a 4 months internship period.

National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)

- It is a statutory Corporation set up under an Act of Indian Parliament on 13 March 1963.

- The objectives of NCDC are planning and promoting programmes for production, processing, marketing, storage, export and import of agricultural produce, foodstuffs, industrial goods, livestock and certain other notified commodities and services on cooperative principles
- The unique cooperative sector development finance organization, National Cooperative Development Corporation, NCDC has embarked upon a **series of initiatives in the cooperative sector entrepreneurship** development ecosystem through capacity development, paid internship to youth and assured project loans on liberalized terms to young cooperators on start-up mode.

Science & Technology

BIN-19

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the functioning of BIN-19 and role of IoT) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of science and technology)

What's the NEWS

- VST Mobility Solutions, a Startup headquartered at Cochin, has launched an automated mask disposal machine as part of efforts to develop products helping to combat the Covid-19.

Know! about BIN-19

- The Chitra **UV based face mask disposal bin technology**, named BIN-19 has been developed by SCTIMST
- **The IoT-based BIN-19** (Internet of Things) is used for collecting and disinfecting Used Face-Mask.
- The device has been subjected to a series of successful microbiological tests by Sree Chitra Lab.
- Sree Chitra is one of the testing agency for UV based devices in the country as per the guidelines of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

Functioning of BIN-19

- The used masks dropped inside a container of the bin will be first disinfected by a process.
- The disinfected masks will be transferred to another container inside the Bin.
- The person dropping the mask can sanitize her hands with the help of the automatic sanitizer dispenser attached to the Bin-19.
- The IoT Features of BIN-19 are Auto Sanitizer Dispenser (remotely alerts if it's empty), Mobile Application to navigate/find Bin-19, Web Portal for Status Alerts, Power ON/OFF alerts, Box open alerts.

UV SPOT

- VSL Mobility Solutions has also launched, **UV SPOT, a UV light-based multipurpose disinfectant**
- It is a multipurpose disinfectant device with ultraviolet disinfection lamps.

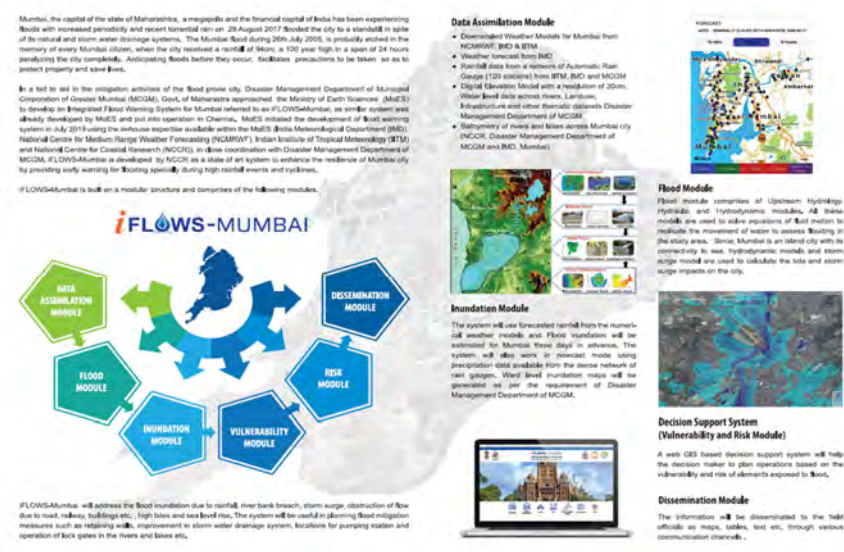
- With internal reflective surfaces and UVC Lamp, the device disinfects a board range of microorganisms.
- The device is mainly used for disposing of the contaminated or used face-mask and for reusing the UVC stable metallic products.

Know! about SCTIMST

- Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), Trivandrum an **institute of national importance** under Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India

Disaster Management

I-FLOWS



Relevance IN – Prelims (about iFLOW) + Mains (GS III Disaster management)

What's the NEWS

- State-of-the-art Flood Warning System for Mumbai has been launched

I FLOW (Highlights)

- Floods to be estimated 3 days in advance, at ward-level
- Decision Support System will enable smart decision-making and field action based on risk assessment
- State-of-the-art flood warning system developed by the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**

Know! about IFLOWS- Mumbai

- A state-of the-art **Integrated Flood Warning System** for Mumbai has been launched
- The system will help make the city become more resilient, by providing **early warning for flooding** especially during high rainfall events and cyclones.
- A similar system was already developed by MoES and is in **operation at Chennai**.
- Earlier the MoES scientists have developed the best **early warning system for tsunami** in the whole world and have never given a false alarm on this issue.
- This service has also been extended to the countries in **Indian Ocean Region** who are being benefitted.

Know! how the Prediction System Works

- The system **uses rain gauge data and local data** such as data on land use, land topography, drainage systems, water bodies in the city, tide levels, infrastructure and population, which has been **provided by BMC**.
- Using these as inputs, the prediction system models weather, rainfall, runoff and water movement, tide and storm surge impacts based on which early Flood Warnings for the city will be provided.
- It will address the flood inundation due to rainfall, river bank breach, storm surge, obstruction of flow due to roads, buildings, rail lines, high tides and sea level rise.

I-FLOWS is built on a modular structure and different modules.

- The Data Assimilation Module
- The Inundation Module
- The Flood Module
- The Vulnerability and Risk Modules
- The Dissemination Module

Environment

India continues to lose forest land to non-forestry projects

Relevance IN – Prelims (highlights of the diversion of land + about forest village) + Mains (GS III Environment conservation)

What's the NEWS

- The diversion of forest land for other purposes continued throughout India.

Know! more about it

- A total 11,467.83 hectares (114.68 square kilometre) forest lands were diverted in 22 states between January 1 and November 6, 2019
- This diversion was for 932 non-forestry projects under the **Forest (Conservation) Act (FCA), 1980**
- More than a third of the diversion (4,514 ha) was for 14 projects was **in Odisha**, followed by Telangana — 2,055 ha for 11 projects — and Jharkhand (869.99 ha for 11 projects).
- The most number of projects — 251 — **were in Haryana**, which led to the diversion of 519.53 ha. Madhya Pradesh diverted 795.36 ha for 220 projects.
- The largest area of forest land was diverted for irrigation and mining projects.

Forest villages

- There was no conversion of **forest villages to revenue villages** in 2019, as stipulated under the provisions of the **Forest Rights Act, 2006**.
- Forest villages were villages set up by the British Indian government to settle workers inside forests and procure resources like timber more efficiently.
- There are around 2,500 forest villages across the country.

Environment

First estimation exercise of Indian gaur in Nilgiris in recent years



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Indian gaur)

What's the NEWS

- The **first population estimation exercise** of the Indian gaur carried out in the Nilgiris Forest Division has revealed that more than an estimated 2,000 Indian gaurs inhabit the entire division.
- This is the first population estimation exercise which has been conducted in the division in recent years

- Worldwide Fund for Nature-India, assisted the Forest Department during the exercise

Know! about Indian gaur

- The gaur also called the Indian bison, is one of the largest extant bovines.
- It is native to South and Southeast Asia and it is the largest and the tallest in the family of wild cattle, even bigger than water buffalo and bison.
- Since 1986, the IUCN has listed the Indian Bison as **vulnerable** because of the declining population
- The global population has been estimated at maximum 21,000 mature individuals by 2016.
- It declined by more than 70% during the last three generations, and is extinct in Sri Lanka and probably also in Bangladesh.
- As per wildlife protection Act. 1972 Gaur is a **Schedule -I animal**
- It is kept well – protected in some of the famous national parks of India like **Nagarhole, Bandipur, Kabini, Masinagudi** and BR Hills.

Worldwide Fund for Nature-India

- Established as a **Charitable Trust** on 27 November, 1969, WWF India set out with the aim of reducing the degradation of Earth's natural environment and building a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.
- In 1987, the organization changed its name from the World Wildlife Fund to **World Wide Fund for Nature India**.
- WWF India is a **science-based organization** which addresses issues such as the conservation of species and its habitats, climate change, water and environmental education, among many others.

Economy

Reserve Bank proposes to shore up bank boards

Relevance IN – Prelims (highlights of the discussion paper on governance in commercial banks + about the role of bank boards) + Mains(GS III Economic development)

What's the NEWS

- In a discussion paper on governance in commercial banks in India, the banking regulator has suggested to **empower the bank board** by
 - ⇒ recognize and manage conflicts of interest
 - ⇒ setting the appetite for risk and manage risks within the appetite and
 - ⇒ improving the supervisory oversight of senior management.

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has proposed a stronger board for banks in the country for improving governance and proposed stringent norms for **chief executive officers(CEO) and whole time directors(WTD)**
- The norms are applicable for private banks, foreign banks and also public sector banks

Know! about the board

- The board members should not be a member of any other bank's board or the RBI and should not be either a Member of Parliament or State Legislature or Municipality or other local bodies.
- Board of directors of a bank should not be **less than six and not more than 15 directors**, with majority being independent directors. The Chairman of the Board should be an independent director.
- The board shall meet **at least six times a year** and **at least once every sixty days**.
- The appointment, re-appointment and termination of wholetime directors and chief executive officers should be **with the previous approval of RBI**.
- The upper age limit for CEO and WTDs of banks is **suggested at 70** years, which is a norm for private banks at present.
- The individual shall be eligible for re-appointment as WTD or CEO only **after the expiration of three years**
- The new norms will come into effect within a period of six months after being placed on website of the Reserve Bank or April 01, 2021, whichever is later.

International Organisations/Science and Technology

Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI)



Relevance IN – Prelims (about GPAI – objective + Mains GS III awareness in the field of science and technology)

What's the NEWS

- India joined the league of leading economies including USA, UK, EU, Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, New Zealand,

Republic of Korea, Singapore to launch the **Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI or Gee-Pay)**.

Know! all about GPAI

- GPAI will be supported by a Secretariat, to be hosted by **Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in Paris**, as well as by two Centres of Expertise- one each in Montreal and Paris.
- GPAI is an international and multi-stakeholder **initiative to guide the responsible development and use of AI**, grounded in human rights, inclusion, diversity, innovation, and economic growth.
- This is also a first initiative of its type for evolving better understanding of the challenges and opportunities around AI using the experience and diversity of participating countries.
- The initiative will look to bridge the gap between theory and practice on AI by supporting cutting-edge research and applied activities on AI-related priorities.
- GPAI will bring together leading experts from industry, civil society, governments, and academia to collaborate to promote responsible evolution of AI

Know! the benefits India will get and steps taken by India in the field of AI

- India has recently launched **National AI Strategy and National AI Portal** and have also started leveraging AI across various sectors such as education, agriculture, healthcare, e-commerce, finance, telecommunications
- By joining GPAI as a founding member, India will actively participate in the global development of Artificial Intelligence, leveraging upon its experience around use of digital technologies for inclusive growth.

Infrastructure Development

Indian Gas Exchange



Relevance IN – Prelims (about IGX – role and objective) + Mains (GS III Infrastructure development – Energy Sector + 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 Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas launched the **Indian Gas Exchange (IGX)**, first nationwide online delivery-based gas trading platform

Know! All about IGX

- IGX will be a delivery-based trading platform for **delivery of natural Gas**.
- The trade on the platform commenced in his auspicious presence. Incorporated as a wholly owned subsidiary of the **IEX - India's energy market platform**, IGX will enable market participants to trade in standardised gas contracts.
- The platform is fully automated with web-based interface to provide seamless trading experience to the customers.
- The new electronic trading platform for natural gas will help the nation move towards **free market pricing of natural gas**.
- India Gas Exchange (IGX) will play a bigger role towards realizing a free market for gas
- Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) is working on rationalization of tariff to make natural gas affordable in every part of the country.

Initiatives taken to make India a gas-based economy

- India has long-term gas contracts with many countries like **Qatar, Australia, Russia and the US**, and has made investments abroad in **strategic assets in Mozambique, Russia** and other countries.
- Several ongoing projects to strengthen the gas infrastructure in the country like Urja Ganga, Eastern India grid, Indradhanush project in the North-east, Dhamra-Dahej pipeline, coal gasification
- India will have more than 30,000km of pipeline in next few years

Space Awareness

Lunar Polar Exploration Mission

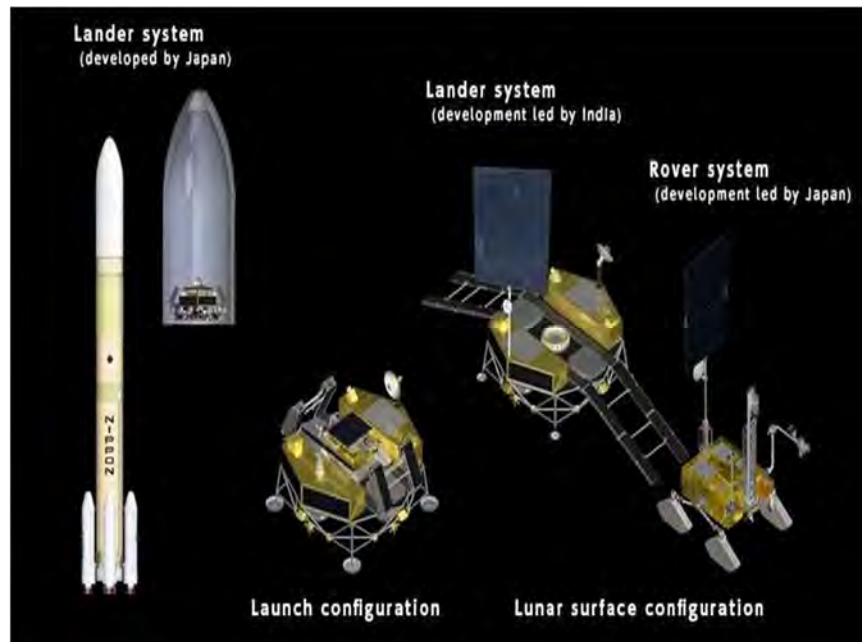
Relevance IN – Prelims (about the joint lunar mission) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of space)

What's the NEWS

- Japanese space agency JAXA will be launching a joint lunar mission with India — Lunar Polar Exploration (LPE) — that hopes to put **a lander and rover on Moon's surface**

Know! about the mission

- The mission will be **launched after 2023** — ISRO currently has its human spaceflight programme (Gaganyaan)scheduled for 2022 — and will involve a lander and a rover.



- The Japanese would be building the overall landing module and the rover, while ISRO would develop the lander system.
- The mission will be launched from Japan, and the designated launch vehicle is the H3 rocket, manufactured by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries.

Know! the objective of the mission

Project Details:

Launch Year	After 2023
Launch Vehicle	H3 Rocket
Launch Mass	6 tonne+
Payload Mass	350kg+ (including rover)
Operating Period	More than 3 months
Landing Point	Southpole region of Moon
Major Mission Equipment	Water Detector, Science Instrument & Environment measuring instrument

Source: JAXA

- Analysis of observational data suggests the existence of water in the polar regions of Moon.
- JAXA is working with ISRO to plan an international collaborative mission to obtain data on the quantity and **forms of water resources**

present, in order to determine the feasibility of utilizing such resources for sustainable space exploration activities in the future

- The mission's aim is to obtain actual data regarding the **quantity of water from in-situ observations of areas** where water is anticipated to exist, based on the available past observational data.
- It also seeks to understand the distribution, conditions, form and other parameters of the lunar water resources in the polar regions.
- The lander will land at a location near the investigation area that has long sunlit hours, and deploy the rover.
- During operation, the rover will observe up to 2m underground, allowing the detection of possible water resources in the area. The rover will simultaneously observe the Moon surface.

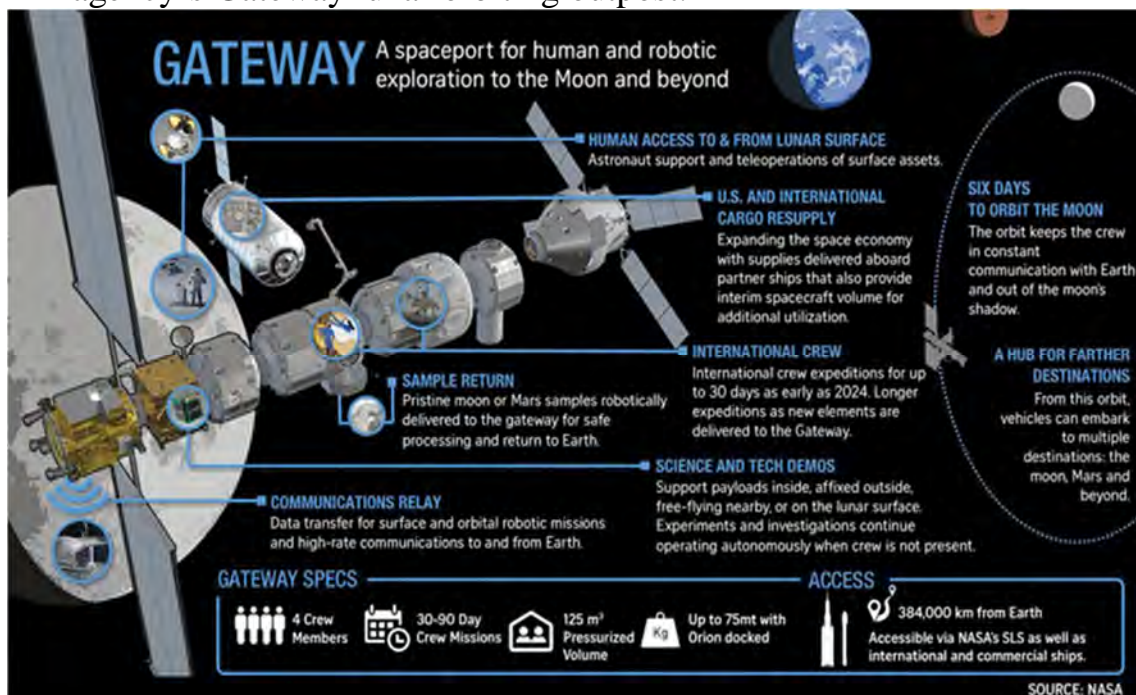
Space Awareness

NASA's Gateway lunar orbiting outpost

Relevance IN – Prelims (about NASA's Gateway Lunar Orbit outpost + about Artemis program) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of space)

What's the NEWS

- NASA recently finalised the contract for the initial crew module of the agency's Gateway lunar orbiting outpost.



Know! about NASA's Gateway Lunar Orbit outpost

- The Gateway is a **small spaceship** that will orbit the Moon, meant for astronaut missions to the Moon and later, for expeditions to Mars.
- It will act as a temporary office and living quarters for astronauts, distanced at about 250,000 miles from Earth.

- The spaceship will have living quarters, laboratories for science and research and docking ports for visiting spacecraft.
- The **Gateway will act as an airport**, where spacecraft bound for the lunar surface of Mars can refuel or replace parts and resupply things like food and oxygen, allowing astronauts to take multiple trips to the Lunar surface and exploration of new locations across the Moon.

Know! the features of gateway

- One of the most unique features of the Gateway is that it can be moved to other orbits around the Moon to conduct more research.
- The Gateway is being built by both international and commercial partners and will support exploration on and near the Moon and later to Mars as well.

Habitation and logistics (HALO)

- NASA has issued this contract to design the habitation and logistics (HALO) support for the Gateway, which is a part of NASA's **Artemis program**
- The HALO refers to the pressurised living quarters where astronauts will spend their time while visiting the Gateway.
- These quarters will be about the size of a small apartment and will provide augmented life support in tandem with NASA's Orion spacecraft.

Know! all about the Artemis program of NASA

- NASA is committed to landing American astronauts, **including the first woman and the next man, on the Moon by 2024**. Through the agency's Artemis lunar exploration program
- NASA's powerful new rocket, the **Space Launch System (SLS)**, will send astronauts aboard the **Orion spacecraft** to lunar orbit.
- Astronauts will **dock Orion at the Gateway** and transfer to a human landing system for expeditions to the surface of the Moon.
- They will return to the orbital outpost to board Orion again before returning safely to Earth.
- Ahead of the human return, NASA will send a suite of science instruments and technology demonstrations to the lunar surface through commercial Moon deliveries beginning in 2021.
- NASA will fly two missions around the Moon to test its deep space exploration systems.
- NASA is working toward launching Artemis I, an uncrewed flight to test the SLS and Orion spacecraft together, followed by the Artemis II mission, the first SLS and Orion test flight with crew.
- NASA will land astronauts on the Moon by 2024 on the Artemis III mission and about once a year thereafter.

Desertification and Drought Day



Relevance IN – Prelims (about The World Day to Combat Desertification And Drought + about UNCCD) + Mains (GS III Environment conservation)’

What’s the NEWS

- The World Day to Combat Desertification And Drought was declared in the United Nations General Assembly resolution on January 30, 1995, after the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.
- This year the theme for World Day to Combat Desertification And Drought is "**Food. Feed. Fibre**".

World Day to Combat Desertification And Drought 2020

- The day is held to educate one and all aware about desertification, land degradation and drought issues, and how to tackle it.
- The day is a unique moment to remind everyone that land degradation neutrality is achievable through problem-solving, strong community involvement and co-operation at all levels.
- *2020 Desertification and Drought Day will focus on links between consumption and land*
- This year's global observance event, hosted by Korea Forest Service, will take place online
- Desertification and Drought Day, running under the slogan “Food. Feed. Fibre.” seeks to educate individuals on how to reduce their personal impact.
- Food, feed and fibre must also compete with expanding cities and the fuel industry.

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

- Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is **the sole legally binding international agreement** linking environment and development to sustainable land management.

- The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.
- The new UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework is the most comprehensive global commitment to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) in order to restore the productivity of vast expanses of degraded land

Desertification

- Desertification is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas.
- It is caused primarily by human activities and climatic variations.
- Desertification does not refer to the expansion of existing deserts.
- It occurs because dryland ecosystems, which cover over one third of the world's land area, are extremely vulnerable to overexploitation and inappropriate land use.
- Poverty, political instability, deforestation, overgrazing and bad irrigation practices can all undermine the productivity of the land.

Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)

- *A state whereby the amount and quality of land resources, necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security, remains stable or increases within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems.*
- It is a unique approach that counterbalances the expected loss of productive land with the recovery of degraded areas.
- It strategically places the measures to conserve, sustainably manage and restore land in the context of land use planning.

Know! some facts about land degradation

- Globally, 23 per cent of the land is no longer productive. 75 per cent has been transformed from its natural state, mostly for agriculture.
- This transformation in land use is happening at a faster rate than at any other time in human history, and has accelerated over the last 50 years.

Science & Technology

I-Lab (Infectious disease diagnostic lab)



Relevance IN – Prelims (about I-Lab + BIRAC + about DBT-AMTZ COMManD +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

What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Science & Technology inaugurated and flagged off India's first **I-Lab (Infectious disease diagnostic lab)** for Covid testing in rural and inaccessible areas of India,

Know! about I-Lab

- The I-Lab, infectious disease diagnostic laboratory is a mobile testing facility to provide Covid testing access to rural India.
- This mobile testing facility will be deployed through the DBT testing hubs to remote regions of the country for Covid testing.
- This I-Lab has been created in a record time of 8 days by the Andhra Pradesh Med-tech Zone (AMTZ) team with the support of DBT under the National Biopharma Mission being implemented by the Public Sector BIRAC.
- I-Lab has biosafety facility and is capable of performing RT-PCR as well as ELISA tests.

Know! more about DBT-AMTZ COMManD

- The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science & Technology along with Andhra Pradesh Med-tech Zone (AMTZ) has initiated the **DBT-AMTZ COMManD** [COVID Medtech Manufacturing Development] Consortia to address the shortage of critical healthcare technologies in India and move progressively towards a stage of self-sufficiency.
- Under this Consortia, India's first I- lab (infectious disease diagnostic lab) has been built at AMTZ
- This is a mobile diagnostic unit with biosafety facility. The I- lab is a BSL-2 facility with **on-site ELISA, RT-PCR**, Bio chemistry analysers.
- It can run 50 RT-PCR reactions and about 200 ELISA in a day.

Know! about the initiatives of Department of Biotechnology (DBT)

- *The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), under the Ministry of Science & Technology, promotes and accelerates the development of biotechnology in India, including growth and application of biotechnology in the areas of agriculture, healthcare, animal sciences, environment and industry.*
- *AMTZ is Asia's first medical equipment manufacturing ecosystem, uniquely dedicated for Medtech and supported by various Ministries.*

Know! more about INFECTIOUS DISEASE DIAGNOSTIC LABORATORY (I-LAB)

- To promote last mile access of testing to rural India, DBT under the Covid-Command strategy has supported building of **mobile testing labs through AMTZ**.
- The unique feature of these mobile testing labs is their utility in diagnosing **other infectious diseases (like for TB, HIV etc)** beyond the Covid period
- The first I- lab was launched in New Delhi on 18th Jun, 2020
- The labs will be provided to the regional/City hubs and they will deploy it further in the interior, inaccessible parts of the region.

Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)

- It is a **not-for-profit** Public Sector Enterprise, set up by Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India as an Interface Agency to strengthen and empower the emerging Biotech enterprise to undertake strategic research and innovation
- BIRAC is a industry-academia interface and implements its mandate through a wide range of **impact initiatives**

National Biopharma Mission (NBM)

- The National Biopharma Mission has been approved by the Cabinet for implementation in May 2017 with a total cost US\$ 250 million which is **co-funded World Bank 50%**.
- It is an **Academia-Industry Collaborative Mission** for Accelerating Discovery Research to Early Development for Biopharmaceuticals.
- The objective of the Mission is to enable and nurture an ecosystem for preparing India's technological and product development capabilities in biopharmaceuticals
- Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) under the aegis of Department of Biotechnology is the **Implementing Agency** for the Mission.
- Under the National Biopharma Mission, **skill development training** programmes shall be facilitated for young professionals
- The National Biopharma Mission has engaged **Biotech Consortium India Limited (BCIL)** to organize a series of hands-on and lecture-based workshops in different areas of the biopharmaceuticals across the country.

Additional info

Innovate in India (i3)

- Towards strengthening the emerging biotechnology enterprise in India, Department of Biotechnology (DBT) Ministry of Science & Technology has initiated the Mission Program entitled "Industry-Academia Collaborative Mission for Accelerating Discovery Research to Early Development for Biopharmaceuticals - **Innovate in India (i3)**

Empowering biotech entrepreneurs & accelerating inclusive innovation”

- Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) setup by DBT is the implementing Agency of i3 Program through a dedicated Program Management Unit (PMU).

International Organisations

The US sanctions against International Criminal Court

Relevance IN – Prelims (about ICC and ICJ) + Mains (GS III international organisations)

What's the NEWS

- President Donald Trump authorised sanctions against ICC officials involved in investigations into possible war crimes by US troops or those of its allies.

The International Criminal Court (ICC)

- The ICC, a **permanent judicial body** based at The Hague in the Netherlands
- It was created by the **1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal** and began functioning on 1 July 2002 when the Statute came into force.

The forum was established as a court of last resort to prosecute offences that would otherwise go unpunished, and has jurisdiction over four main crimes:

1. genocide
 2. crimes against humanity
 3. war crimes, and
 4. the crime of aggression.
- 123 nations are States Parties to the Rome Statute and recognise the ICC's authority; the notable exceptions being the **US, China, Russia, and India.**

Know! the difference between ICC and ICJ

- Unlike the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the **ICC is not part of the United Nations system**
- The UN-ICC relationship being governed by **a separate agreement.**
- The **ICJ, which is among the UN's 6 principal organs**, mainly hears disputes between nations.
- The ICC, on the other hand, prosecutes individuals– its authority extending to offences committed in a member state or by a national of such a state.

ICJ vs. ICC

	International Court of Justice (ICJ) La Cour Internationale de Justice (CIJ)	International Criminal Court (ICC) La Cour pénale internationale (CPI)
Year Court Established	1946	2002
UN-Relationship	Official court of the U.N., commonly referred to as the "World Court."	Independent. May receive case referrals from the UN Security Council.
Location	The Hague, The Netherlands	The Hague, The Netherlands
Types of Cases	Contentious between parties & Advisory opinions	Criminal prosecution of individuals
Subject Matter	Sovereignty, boundary, & maritime disputes, trade, natural resources, human rights, treaty violations, treaty interpretation, and more.	Genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, crimes of aggression
Funding	UN-funded.	Assessed contribution from state parties to the Rome Statute; voluntary contributions from the U.N.; voluntary contributions from governments, international organizations, individuals, corporations and other entities.

- The ICC has been criticised for not pursuing investigations in Western countries (all 4 of its guilty verdicts pronounced so far are in trials from Africa), as well as for working inefficiently.

Science and Technology

Bose-Einstein Quantum "Fifth State Of Matter" Seen For 1st Time In Space

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Bose-Einstein condensates the fifth state of matter) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of science and technology)

What's the NEWS

- Scientists have observed the fifth state of matter (Gases, liquids, solids and plasmas are the other four matters) **in space for the first time**, offering unprecedented insight that could help solve some of the quantum universe's most intractable conundrums, research

Know! about Bose-Einstein condensates (BECs) - the fifth state of matter

- Its existence was predicted by Albert Einstein and Indian mathematician Satyendra Nath Bose almost a century ago (1920s)
- They are formed when atoms of certain elements **are cooled to near absolute zero** (0 Kelvin, minus 273.15 Celsius).
- At this point, the atoms become a single entity with quantum properties, wherein each particle also functions as a wave of matter.
- NASA scientists unveiled the first results from BEC experiments aboard the International Space Station, where particles can be manipulated free from Earthly constraints.

Know! about BECs

- BECs **contain vital clues** to mysterious phenomena such as dark energy - the unknown energy thought to be behind the Universe's accelerating expansion.
- BECs are **extremely fragile**. The slightest interaction with the external world is enough to warm them past their condensation threshold.
- This makes them nearly impossible for scientists to study on Earth, where gravity interferes with the magnetic fields required to hold them in place for observation.

Economy

RBI to replace NHB rules with its own set as the new HFC regulator

ON THE TABLE

- | | |
|--|---|
| ■ RBI, now the regulator of HFCs, proposes to change NHB rules | ₹500 crore and all deposit-taking HFCs to be considered systemically important |
| ■ New definition of housing finance, principal business and qualifying assets for HFCs | ■ RBI's other rules for NBFCs on liquidity, securitisation, etc, to be made applicable for HFCs |
| ■ HFCs with asset size above | |

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the new draft guidelines + about HFCs) + Mains (GS III Economic development)

What's the NEWS

- As the new regulator of housing finance companies (HFCs), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) proposed to modify the rules governing these firms.
- The **RBI took over the powers** to regulate HFCs from the National Housing Bank (NHB) in August 2019.

Know! the draft guidelines

- Housing finance would now mean “financing, for purchase/ construction/ reconstruction/ renovation/ repairs of residential dwelling unit ...” for a whole host of functions that would include giving loans to companies and government agencies for employee housing finance projects.
- All other loans, including those given for furnishing dwelling units, loans given against mortgage of property for any purpose other than buying/ construction of a new dwelling unit or renovation of the existing dwelling unit, **will be treated as non housing loans**
- To qualify as a housing finance company, 50% of net assets should be to real estate lending of which at least 75% should be towards individual housing loans.

- Those HFCs that do not fulfil the qualification will be treated as **NBFC–investment and credit companies (NBFC-ICCs)** and will be required to approach RBI for conversion of their certificate of registration from HFCs to NBFC-ICC.

RBI also classified HFCs as systemically important and non-systemically important.

- Non-deposit taking HFCs with asset size of **Rs 500 crore and above**; and all deposit taking HFCs, irrespective of asset size, will be treated as **systemically important HFCs**.
- HFCs with asset size **below Rs 500 crore** will be treated as **non-systemically important HFCs**
- RBI has proposed to double the minimum net owned funds for HFCs to **₹20 crore** and align the capital requirements of all HFCs with NBFCs over a period of two years.
- HFCs can **either lend to the group company in real estate business or lend to retail individual homebuyers** in the projects of group entities but not to both.
- For HFCs, minimum capital risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR) is currently at **12%**, which will be increased to **14%** by 31 March 2021 and **15%** by 31 March 2022.

Science and Technology

SATYABHAMA

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Satyabhama Portal + NGO Darpan Portal) + Mains (GS III Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life + GS II development processes and the development industry- the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups)



What's the NEWS

- The Ministry of Mines has launched **SATYABHAMA (Science and Technology Yojana for Aatmanirbhar Bharat in Mining Advancement) Portal** for Science and Technology Programme Scheme of Ministry of Mines

Know! all about the Portal

- The portal has been designed, developed and implemented by National Informatics Centre (NIC), Mines Informatics Division.
- In contrast to present system where research proposals are submitted physically by the Scientists / Researchers, **SATYABHAMA Portal allows online submission of project proposals** along with monitoring of the projects and utilization of funds / grants.
- The researchers can also submit progress reports and Final Technical Reports of the projects in the electronic format in the portal.
- The Portal is integrated with **NGO Darpan Portal of NITI Aayog**.
- Ministry of Mines, Govt. of India provides funds to various academic institutions, for implementing R&D projects under **Science and Technology Programme Scheme of Ministry of Mines** with the vision to promote research in applied geosciences, mineral exploration, mining and allied areas
- The Portal will increase efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation of the Scheme.
- The SATYABHAMA Portal can be accessed at research.mines.gov.in.

NGO Darpan Portal

- The NGO-Partnership System (NGO-PS) Portal (NGO-DARPAN) was earlier maintained by erstwhile Planning Commission, which has been replaced by the NITI Aayog w.e.f. 1st January, 2015.
- The Portal, therefore, is being maintained at present under the aegis of NITI Aayog.
- NITI Aayog invites all **Voluntary Organizations (VOs)/ Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)** to Sign Up on the Portal.
- VOs/NGOs play a major role in the development of the nation by supplementing the efforts of the Government.
- This portal enables VOs/NGOs to enrol centrally and thus facilitates creation of a repository of information about VOs/NGOs, Sector/State wise.

Launch of Decarbonising Transport in India



Relevance IN – Prelims (about Decarbonising Transport in India project + about ITF + about DTEE) + Mains (GS III Environment conservation + GS II international organisations + government policies and interventions)

What's the NEWS

- NITI Aayog in collaboration with International Transport Forum (ITF) will launch the “**Decarbonising Transport in India**” project on 24 June, with the intention to develop a pathway towards a **low-carbon transport system for India**.

Know! about the Project

- The “Decarbonising Transport in India” project will design a tailor-made transport emissions assessment framework for India.
- It will provide the government with a detailed understanding of current and future transport activity and the related CO₂ emissions as a basis for their decision-making.
- The India project is carried out in the wider context of the International Transport Forum’s “**Decarbonising Transport**” initiative.
- It is part of the “**Decarbonising Transport in Emerging Economies**” (DTEE) family of projects, which supports transport decarbonisation across different world regions.
- **India, Argentina, Azerbaijan, and Morocco** are current participants.
- The DTEE is a collaboration between the ITF and the **Wuppertal Institute**, supported by the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the

German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

Know! about Decarbonising Transport in Emerging Economies

- The ITF's Decarbonising Transport in Emerging Economies (DTEE) project **helps governments of emerging nations** to identify ways to reduce their transport CO₂ emissions and meet their climate goals.
- The DTEE project supports transport decarbonisation in Argentina, Azerbaijan, India and Morocco.
- It is designing a common assessment framework for transport emissions that will cover several transport sub-sectors and transport modes.
- **Country-specific modelling tools** and policy scenarios will help the participating governments to implement ambitious CO₂-reduction initiatives for their transport sectors.
- The Decarbonising Transport initiative promotes carbon-neutral mobility to help stop climate change.
- It provides decision makers with tools to select CO₂ mitigation measures that deliver on their climate commitment.
- The Decarbonising Transport initiative helps governments and industry to translate climate ambitions into actions.
- The Decarbonising Transport initiative does not advocate specific measures or policies.
- The Decarbonising Transport initiative was launched in 2016 with core funding from the ITF's Corporate Partnership Board (CPB).

Know! about International Transport Forum (ITF)

- India has been a member of ITF, an **intergovernmental organisation** for transport policy, since 2008.
- The International Transport Forum at the OECD is an intergovernmental organisation with 60 member countries.
- It acts as a think tank for transport policy and organises the Annual Summit of transport ministers.
- ITF is the only global body that covers all transport modes. The ITF is administratively integrated with the OECD, yet politically autonomous.
- The ITF maintains the International Road Traffic and Accident Database (IRTAD), a comprehensive database of statistics related to road safety. IRTAD also acts as a permanent working group of the ITF.
- The International Transport Forum was created on 18 May 2006 by ministers from 43 countries.

Additional Info.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an **intergovernmental economic organisation** with 37 member

countries, founded in 1961 to stimulate economic progress and world trade. (HQ Paris ,France)

- It is a forum of countries describing themselves as committed to **democracy and the market economy** and to **shape policies** that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity and well-being for all.
- It was founded in **1961** by 18 European nations, and the United States and Canada to stimulate economic progress and world trade.
- **India is not a member** but key partner and it is invited for annual ministerial conference.
- Generally, OECD members are high-income economies with a very high Human Development Index (HDI) and are regarded as developed countries.

NITI Aayog

NITI Aayog, ITF Launch Decarbonizing Transport Project in India (Part – II)



Connect to the past (current capsules 23rd June)

Relevance IN – Prelims (about Decarbonising Transport in India project + about ITF + about DTEE) + Mains (GS III Environment conservation + GS II international organisations + government policies and interventions)

What's the NEWS

- NITI Aayog and the International Transport Forum (ITF) of OECD jointly launched the '**Decarbonizing Transport in Emerging Economies**' (DTEE) project in India on 24 June.

Know! all about the Project

- The ambitious five-year project will help India develop a pathway towards a low-carbon transport system through the development of modelling tools and policy scenarios.
- Decarbonization of the transport sector would create a cleaner, healthier and more affordable future for everyone.

- The DTEE project would help India translate its climate ambitions into actions.
- Building on this evidence-based assessment of mitigation impacts, bringing DTEE and NDC-TIA together under this collaboration would support policymaking by identifying various scenarios to achieve Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) targets submitted by India under the Paris Agreement.
- The India project is carried out in the wider context of the International Transport Forum's Decarbonizing Transport initiative.
- It is part of the Decarbonizing Transport in Emerging Economies family of projects, which supports transport decarbonization across different world regions. India, Argentina, Azerbaijan and Morocco are current participants.
- DTEE is a collaboration between the ITF and the Wuppertal Institute, supported by the International Climate Initiative of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety.

Know! the status of transport sector

- The transport sector of India is the third most greenhouse gas (GHG) emitting sector, where the major contribution comes from the road transport sector.
- Out of the total carbon dioxide emissions in India, **13% come from the transport sector**. These emissions have more than tripled since 1990.
- In India, CO₂ emitted per inhabitant was just about a twentieth of that of an average OECD country, yet, India's transport CO₂ emissions are likely to increase by almost 6% annually to 2030.

Agriculture

Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund

Relevance IN – Prelims (about AHIDF + about DIDF) + Mains (GS III Inclusive growth and issues arising from it + economics of animal-rearing).

What's the NEWS

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, has approved setting up of Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) worth Rs. 15000 crore with an interest subsidy scheme to promote investment by private players and MSMEs in dairy, meat processing and animal feed plants, a move which is expected to create 35 lakh jobs.
- The fund is part of the Rs 20 lakh crore stimulus package announced in May to help people affected by the lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Know! about AHIDF

- AHIDF would facilitate much needed incentivisation of investments in establishment of such infrastructure for dairy and meat processing and value addition infrastructure and establishment of animal feed plant in the private sector.
- The eligible beneficiaries under the Scheme would be Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), MSMEs, Section 8 Companies, Private Companies and individual entrepreneur with minimum 10% margin money contribution by them.
- The balance 90% would be the loan component to be made available by scheduled banks.
- Government of India will provide 3% interest subvention to eligible beneficiaries.
- There will be 2 years moratorium period for principal loan amount and 6 years repayment period thereafter.
- Government of India would also set up Credit Guarantee Fund of Rs. 750 crore to be managed by NABARD. Credit guarantee would be provided to those sanctioned projects which are covered under MSME defined ceilings. Guarantee Coverage would be upto 25% of Credit facility of borrower.
- The government had earlier approved the Dairy Infrastructure Development Fund (DIDF) worth Rs 10,000 crore for incentivizing investment by the cooperative sector for development of dairy infrastructure.

Know! about DIDF



- Dairy Processing and Infrastructure Development Fund under NABARD over a period of 3 years (i.e. 2017-18 to 2019-20), was announced in the Union Budget of 2017-18.
- Funding will be in the form of interest bearing loan, which will flow from National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) to National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) / National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) and in turn to eligible End Borrowers such as Milk Unions, State Dairy Federations, Multi-state Milk Cooperatives, Milk Producer Companies etc
- The scheme will be implemented across the country.

Objectives of the scheme

- To modernize the milk processing plants and machinery and to create additional infrastructure for processing more milk.
- To create additional milk processing capacity for increased value addition by producing more dairy products.
- To bring efficiency in dairy processing plants/producer owned and controlled dairy institutions, thereby enabling optimum value of milk to milk producer farmers and supply of quality milk to consumers.
- To help the producer owned and controlled institutions to increase their share of milk, thereby providing greater opportunities of ownership, management and market access to rural milk producers in the organized milk market.
- To help the producer owned and controlled institutions to consolidate their position as dominant player in the organised liquid milk market and to make increased price realisation to milk producers.

Economy/Government Schemes

Credit Guarantee Scheme for Sub-ordinate Debt (CGSSD) or Distressed Assets Fund–Sub-ordinate Debt for MSMEs

Relevance IN – Prelims (about CGSSD + CGTMSE) + Mains (GS III Indian Economy + Inclusive growth and issues arising from it.

What's the NEWS

- Minister of MSME, Nitin Gadkari launched the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Sub-ordinate Debt (CGSSD) which is also called “Distressed Assets Fund–Sub-ordinate Debt for MSMEs”.

- As per the Scheme, the **guarantee cover worth Rs. 20,000 crores will be provided to the promoters who can take debt from the banks to further invest in their stressed MSMEs as equity.**
- As part of Atmanirbhar Bharat package, this scheme of sub-ordinate Debt to the promoters of operational but stressed MSMEs was announced

DISTRESSED ASSETS FUND - SUBORDINATE DEBT SCHEME FOR MSMEs

Credit Guarantee Scheme for Subordinate Debt (CGSSD)

DESCRIPTION

- This Scheme seeks to extend support to the promoter(s) of the operational MSMEs which are stressed and have become NPA as on 30th April, 2020;
- Promoter(s) in turn will infuse this amount in the MSME unit as equity and thereby enhance the liquidity and maintain debt-equity ratio.

NATURE OF ASSISTANCE

- Guarantee for the sub-debt: 90% guarantee coverage would come from the scheme / trust and remaining 10% from the concerned promoter(s);
- The maximum tenor for repayment will be 10 years. There will be a moratorium of 7 years on payment of principal.

SALIENT FEATURES

1

In a situation, where an outright loan is difficult, sub-debt with guarantee will provide the requisite financing to the MSME Units,

2

Subordinate debt will be of substantial help in sustaining and reviving the MSMEs which have either become NPA or are on the brink of becoming NPA.

3

Promoter(s) of the MSMEs will be given credit equal to 15% of their stake (equity plus debt) or Rs. 75 lakh whichever is lower.

EXPECTED IMPACT

- Provision for sub debt will be of Rs. 20000 crores which is likely to benefit two lakh MSMEs;
- A bigger number of MSME promoter(s) can do business without worry and avail present opportunities;
- With this help, the MSMEs will continue to function, provide jobs and contribute in National Economy.

WHO CAN APPLY

- Operational MSMEs which are NPA or are stressed will be eligible
- Promoter(s) of such units can apply

HOW TO APPLY

Promoter(s) of MSMEs meeting the eligibility criteria may approach scheduled commercial banks to avail benefit under the scheme

The highlights of the scheme are:

- This Scheme seeks to extend support to the promoter(s) of the operational MSMEs which are stressed and have become NPA as on 30th April, 2020;
- Promoter(s) of the MSMEs will be given credit equal to 15% of their stake (equity plus debt) or Rs. 75 lakh whichever is lower;
- Promoter(s) in turn will infuse this amount in the MSME unit as equity and thereby enhance the liquidity and maintain debt-equity ratio;
- 90% guarantee coverage for this sub-debt will be given under the Scheme and 10% would come from the concerned promoters;

- There will be a moratorium of 7 years on payment of principal whereas maximum tenor for repayment will be 10 years.

The scheme will be operationalised through Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for MSEs (CGTMSE).

Know! about CGTMSE

- Government of India and SIDBI set up the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE).
- Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME), Government of India launched Credit Guarantee Scheme (CGS) so as to strengthen credit delivery system and facilitate flow of credit to the MSE sector.
- To operationalise the scheme, Government of India and SIDBI set up the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) to make collateral-free credit to the micro and small enterprise sector.
- Both the existing and the new enterprises are eligible to be covered under the scheme.
- The corpus of CGTMSE is being contributed by the GoI and SIDBI in the ratio of 4:1 respectively.
- The Ministry of MSMEs, GoI and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) established a trust named Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) to implement the CGS.

Space Awareness

Indian National Space promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACE)

CABINET DECISIONS: 24 JUNE, 2020

MAKING INDIA SELF-RELIANT IN SPACE SECTOR
Private Sector Participation in Space Activities Approved



-  Reforms to help India leapfrog to next stages of space activities; to become a **Global technology powerhouse**
-  To enhance socio-economic use of space assets & activities; **Large-scale employment opportunity in technology sector**
-  **IN-SPACE*** to provide level playing field for private companies to use Indian space infrastructure
*Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre
-  **NSIL**** to reorient space activity models from 'supply driven' to a 'demand driven'
**New Space India Limited
-  **Allow ISRO to focus more on R&D activities, exploration missions & human spaceflight programme**

Relevance IN – Prelims (about IN-SPACE + about NSIL + about ANTRIX) + Mains (GS III awareness in the field of space)

What's the NEWS

- The Union cabinet approved the creation of Indian National Space promotion and Authorization Centre (IN-SPACE) to provide level playing field for private companies to use space infrastructure

Know! the benefits

- The decision taken is in line with the long-term vision of transforming India and making the country self-reliant and technologically advanced.
- ISRO will guide the private industries in space activities through encouraging policies in a friendly regulatory environment
- The move will “unlock India’s potential in space sector”.
- It will also hand-hold, promote and guide the private industries in space activities.
- These programmes will allow ISRO to focus more on research and development activities, new technologies, exploration missions and human spaceflight programme.

Know! about IN-SPACE

- IN-SPACE (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre), a new board that provide private players a level playing field
- The body will also perform the role of a regulator and will have on its board members from the private industry
- IN-SPACE will be a separate vertical within the Department of Space (DoS) that will make independent decisions for permitting and regulating activities of the private sector
- It will have its own legal, technological, activity promotion and monitoring directorates and its Board will comprise members from the private industry, academia and government of India

Know! about New Space India Limited (NSIL)

- The Public Sector Enterprise ‘New Space India Limited (NSIL)’ will endeavour to re-orient space activities from a ‘supply driven’ model to a ‘demand driven’ model, thereby ensuring optimum utilisation of space assets.
- NSIL is a Central Public Sector Enterprise of Government of India.
- It was established on 6 March 2019 under the administrative control of Department of Space (DOS), India.
- The main objective of NSIL is to scale up industry participation in Indian space programmes.
- It is also responsible for promotion and commercial exploitation of the products and services emanating from the Indian space programme.
- Antrix Ltd is another PSU under the Department of Space that acts as a commercial arm of ISRO

Battery Swapping Facility Quick Interchange Service inaugurated in Chandigarh



Relevance IN – Prelim (about Battery Swapping Facility Quick Interchange Service (QIS) + Mains GS III(infrastructure development – energy sector)

What's the NEWS

- The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas inaugurated Battery Swapping Facility Quick Interchange Service (QIS) at Chandigarh
- India's top oil firm Indian Oil Corporation has launched a battery swapping facility for Electric Vehicles at its petrol pumps, offering to replace discharged batteries with fully charged ones in just couple of minutes.

Know! about Battery swapping technology

- Battery swapping technology offers the best alternative to slow charging and helps the drivers to make optimum use of the operational hours.
- The battery swapping model is initially targeted at the commercial segment, i.e., electric autos, rickshaws and electric 2W also and the electric vehicle which is either factory fitted or retrofitted.

SMPLs (Smart Mobility Proprietary Solutions)

- QIS will play a pivotal role in providing an alternative energy solution to the 3-wheeler segment and boosting India's economic growth.
- IOC, the country's top fuel retailer is now making a foray into EV charging. It has partnered with Sun Mobility for setting up battery swapping facility, called Quick Interchange Station (QIS).

- IOC has signed a non-binding strategic cooperation document with Sun Mobility to explore setting up energy infrastructure for EVs through a battery swapping model across its petrol pumps in select cities.
- Three more QIS - one each in Chandigarh, Amritsar, and Bengaluru- will be set up under the pilot project.

Economic Development

President Promulgates Banking Regulation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020

Green Signal

BANKING LAWS AMENDED

- Reserve Bank to have control over cooperative banks
- Move to ensure better professionalism, corporate governance
- RBI can supersede management if cooperative bank fails
- Will protect interest of depositors
- Coop banks to be audited as per RBI rules
- Prior nod from RBI required for CEO appointment

New Port at Vadhavan

- In-principle approval given by Cabinet
- Port to be developed in Maharashtra on 'landlord' model
- Project cost: ₹65,544 cr

BCCL

Relevance IN – Prelims (about the amendments done through the ordinance + about cooperative banks + Mains (GS III Economic development))

What's the NEWS

- An ordinance has been promulgated to bring 1,482 urban cooperative banks and 58 multi-state cooperative banks under the direct supervision of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- The ordinance will give RBI the same powers of supervision over cooperative banks as it does over scheduled cooperative banks and also a say in key appointments.

Know! all about the amendments done through the ordinance

- The Ordinance amends the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 as applicable to Cooperative Banks.
- The Ordinance seeks to protect the interests of depositors and strengthen cooperative banks by improving governance and oversight by extending powers already available with RBI in respect of other banks to Co-

operative Banks as well for sound banking regulation, and by ensuring professionalism and enabling their access to capital.

- The amendments do not affect existing powers of the State Registrars of Co-operative Societies under state co-operative laws.
- The amendments do not apply to Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) or co-operative societies whose primary object and principal business is long-term finance for agricultural development, and which do not use the word “bank” or “banker” or “banking” and do not act as drawees of cheques.
- The Ordinance also amends Section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act, to enable making of a scheme of reconstruction or amalgamation of a banking company for protecting the interest of the public, depositors and the banking system and for securing its proper management, even without making an order of moratorium, so as to avoid disruption of the financial system.

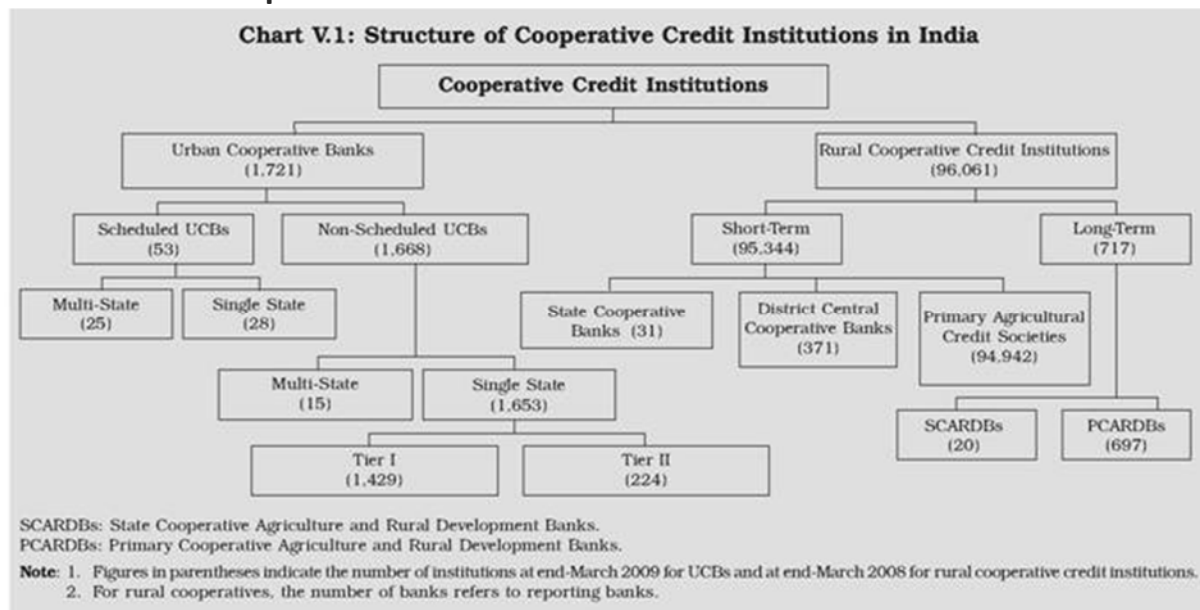
Know! all about Cooperative Banking

- Co-operative banks are financial entities established on a co-operative basis and belonging to their members.
- This means that the customers of a co-operative bank are also its owners. These banks provide a wide range of regular banking and financial services. However, there are some points where they differ from other banks.
- In India, co-operative banks are registered under the States Cooperative Societies Act.
- They also come under the regulatory ambit of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under two laws, namely, the Banking Regulations Act, 1949, and the Banking Laws (Co-operative Societies) Act, 1955.
- They were brought under the RBI's watch in 1966, a move which brought the problem of dual regulation along with it.

Dual Regulation of Urban Cooperative Bank

- Urban Co-operative Banks are regulated and supervised by State Registrars of Co-operative Societies (RCS) in case of single-State co-operative banks and Central Registrar of Co-operative Societies (CRCS) in case of multi-State co-operative banks and by the RBI.

Structure of co-operative banks in India



- Broadly, co-operative banks in India are divided into two categories - **urban and rural**.
- Rural cooperative credit institutions could either be short-term or long-term in nature.
- Further, short-term cooperative credit institutions are further sub-divided into State Co-operative Banks, District Central Co-operative Banks, Primary Agricultural Credit Societies.
- Meanwhile, the long-term institutions are either State Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (SCARDBs) or Primary Cooperative Agriculture and Rural Development Banks (PCARDBs).
- On the other hand, Urban Co-operative Banks (UBBs) are either scheduled or non-scheduled. Scheduled and non-scheduled UCBs are again of two kinds- multi-state and those operating in single state.

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