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CLASSIC IAS ACADEMY

**TWO DIAGNOSTIC KITS DEVELOPED UNDER 'MAKE IN INDIA'**

1. Two diagnostic kits developed by Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) - Indian Veterinary Research Institute (IVRI) under the 'Make in India' initiative, namely the Bluetongue sandwich **ELISA** (sELISA) and the Japanese Encephalitis IgM ELISA kit for the control of Swine and Detection of Antigen.
2. The Japanese Encephalitis (JE) ELISA Kit (IgM) for Swine is a re-emerging viral zoonotic disease leading to death of children every year in the country.
3. The kit developed by the ICAR-Indian Veterinary Research Institute is really helpful for assessing the active infection of JE virus in the swine population which predicts the outbreak of JE in the humans.
4. As compared to the commercial kit available in the market at a price of Rs. 52,000; the ICAR-IVRI developed is available for the farmers at a minimal price of Rs. 5,000 only.
5. The Director General mentioned that each kit is meant for testing around 45 samples.

**XVIII NAM SUMMIT IN BAKU, AZERBAIJAN**

The Vice President, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu lead the Indian delegation at the XVIII Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) held at Baku, Azerbaijan on 25-26 October.

1. The theme for the XVIII NAM Summit is "Upholding the Bandung Principles to ensure concerted and adequate response to the challenges of contemporary world". The Ten Principles of Bandung, a political statement encapsulating the need to promote world peace and cooperation were formulated at the Asian-African Conference in 1955.
2. The theme is significant as it relates to the forthcoming 65th anniversary of Bandung Principles in 2020 and the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Movement in 2021.
3. India is one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which was established in 1961 with 29 members. It has since grown to 120 members to become one of the largest groupings of nation-states
4. The Summit will focus on a whole gamut of contemporary issues such as Terrorism, threats to peace and security, UN reform, climate change, sustainable development, economic governance and south-south cooperation

**NATIONAL PANCHAYAT AWARDS 2019**

Out of the 2.5 lakh panchayats in the country 240 panchayats were conferred the National Panchayat Awards 2019 by Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Union Minister for Panchayati Raj in New Delhi.

The Best performing Panchayats were selected based on various criteria and indicators. This incentivization encourages Panchayat representatives who make special efforts; creates models for other Panchayats and Gram Sabhas to follow and focuses public attention on Panchayats' performance, which encourages all Panchayats to improve their performance. Finally, this creates an eco-system for overall good governance at the local level.

The Awards were given under the following categories:

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*i. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar (DDUPSP):* given to best performing Panchayats (District, Intermediate and Gram) in recognition of the good work done for improving delivery of services and public goods. DDUPSPs are given for general and following nine thematic categories:

1. Sanitation
2. Civic Services (drinking water, street light, infrastructure)
3. Natural Resource Management
4. Serving Marginalized Section (women, SC/ST, disabled, senior citizen)
5. Social Sector Performance
6. Disaster Management
7. CBOs/ Individuals taking voluntary actions to support Gram Panchayats
8. Innovation in revenue generation
9. e-Governance

*ii. Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar (NDRGGSP):* Given to Gram Panchayats (GPs) for their outstanding contribution to the socio-economic development by involving Gram Sabhas.

*iii. Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) Award:* Introduced during the year 2018, this award is conferred to best performing Gram Panchayats (GPs) across the country which have developed their GPDPs according to the State/UT specific guidelines prepared in line with the model guidelines issued by Ministry of Panchayati Raj [or adopted as such].

*iv. Child-friendly Gram Panchayat Award:* This award has been instituted during the year 2018-19 for best performing GPs/Village Councils (VCs) (one in each State/UT) for adopting child-friendly practices.

*v. e-Panchayat Puraskar* is given to States/UTs or promoting e-enablement of PRIs for bringing in efficiency, transparency and accountability in their functioning. The main aim of this award is to encourage the Panchayats for the use of information and communication technology and to incentivize those States/UTs, which have made dedicated efforts in adopting and implementing the e-Panchayat Applications and enabling electronic delivery of services through Panchayats & equivalent rural bodies. The States/UTs are analyzed on the basis of the performance assessment parameters.

### **INDIA RANKS 63 IN WORLD BANK'S DOING BUSINESS REPORT**

The World Bank released its latest Doing Business Report (DBR, 2020) on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2019. India has recorded a jump of 14 positions against its rank of 77 in 2019 to be placed now at 63<sup>rd</sup> rank among 190 countries assessed by the World Bank.

1. India's leap of 14 ranks in the Ease of Doing Business ranking is significant considering that there has been continuous improvement since 2015 and for the third consecutive year India is amongst the top 10 improvers.
2. As a result of continued efforts by the Government, India has improved its rank by 79 positions in last five years [2014-19].

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3. The Doing Business assessment provides objective measures of business regulations and their enforcement across 190 economies on ten parameters affecting a business through its life cycle.
4. The DBR ranks countries on the basis of Distance to Frontier (DTF), a score that shows the gap of an economy to the global best practice. This year, India's DTF score improved to 71.0 from 67.23 in the previous year.
5. India has improved its rank in 7 out of 10 indicators and has moved closer to international best practices (Distance to Frontier score).
6. Significant improvements have been registered in 'Resolving Insolvency', 'Dealing with Construction Permits', 'Registering Property', 'Trading across Boards' and 'Paying Taxes' indicators.
7. The World Bank has recognized India as one of the top 10 improvers for the third consecutive year.
8. Recovery rate under resolving insolvency has improved significantly from 26.5% to 71.6%.
9. The time taken for resolving insolvency has also come down significantly from 4.3 years to 1.6 years.
10. India continues to maintain its first position among South Asian countries. It was 6th in 2014.

### INDO-FRENCH JOINT EXERCISE SHAKTI-2019

Series of 'Exercise SHAKTI' between India and France commenced in year 2011.

1. Exercise SHAKTI – 2019 a biennial exercise and is conducted alternately in India and France.
2. The bilateral training exercise was conducted at Foreign Training Node at Mahajan Field Firing Ranges, Rajasthan, from October 31 to November 13.
3. A contingent of the Sikh Regiment of Sapta Shakti Command will represent Indian Army in this exercise.
4. The French Army delegation will be represented by troops of 21<sup>st</sup> Marine Infantry Regiment of 6<sup>th</sup> Armoured Brigade.
5. The joint exercise will focus on **Counter Terrorism** operations in backdrop of semi-desert terrain under United Nations Mandate.
6. The training will focus primarily on high degree of physical fitness, sharing of drill at tactical level and learning of best practices from each other.
7. The exercise aims at enhancing understanding, cooperation and interoperability between the two Armies.

### UNESCO ON MUMBAI AND HYDERABAD

UNESCO has designated Mumbai as a member of UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) in the field of FILM and Hyderabad in the field of GASTRONOMY.

1. UCCN, created in 2004, is a network of cities which are thriving, active centres of cultural activities in their respective countries. The UNESCO Creative Cities Network now counts a total of 246 cities.

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2. The member cities that form part of the Network come from all continents and regions with different income levels and populations.
3. They work together towards a common mission: placing creativity and the creative economy at the core of their urban development plans to make cities safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable, in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
4. The 7 categories for recognition under UCCN are as follows-Crafts and Folk Arts, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Music, Media Arts, Literature
5. Previously, 3 Indian cities were recognized as members of UCCN, namely-
6. Jaipur-Crafts and Folk Arts(2015)
7. Varanasi-Creative city of Music (2015)
8. Chennai-Creative city of Music(2017)

### **PM ATTENDS 16TH INDIA - ASEAN SUMMIT IN BANGKOK**

In his opening remarks, Prime Minister expressed happiness in being part of the 16<sup>th</sup> India - ASEAN Summit. He thanked Thailand for the warm hospitality and extended best wishes to Vietnam for taking over as Chairman of next year's Summit.

1. Prime Minister said that India's Act East Policy is a significant cornerstone of the Indo-Pacific strategy; adding that ASEAN is at the core of Act East Policy.
2. A strong ASEAN will immensely benefit India. Prime Minister highlighted steps being taken to improve surface, maritime, air and digital connectivity.
3. One billion dollar Indian line of credit will prove beneficial for improving physical and digital connectivity, he said.
4. Prime Minister highlighted that last year's Commemorative Summit and Singapore Informal Summit's Decisions implementation has brought India and ASEAN closer.
5. India is willing to increase cooperation and partnership in areas mutually beneficial to India and ASEAN and expressed readiness to improve partnership and capacity building in the areas of agriculture, research, engineering, science and ICT.
6. Prime Minister said that India wants to strengthen cooperation in the areas of maritime security and blue economy. He also welcomed the recent decision to review India ASEAN FTA saying it will improve economic partnership between the two countries.

### **SCOJtEx- 2019**

1. The Union Minister for Home Affairs, Shri Amit Shah inaugurated the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Joint Exercise on Urban Earthquake Search & Rescue (SCOJtEx)-2019 in New Delhi.
2. The Exercise is being organized by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) from November 4-7, 2019.
3. The exercise is the outcome of 9th Meeting of the Heads of Government Departments of SCO countries dealing with the prevention and elimination of emergency situations in Kyrgyzstan during 2017, in which India offered to organize the next Annual Disaster Management Exercise for the region.

### ONLINE POLITICAL ADVERTISING

There is an urgent need to regulate the digital advertisement platform as politicians and political parties are increasingly embracing it.

1. The Election Commission and web platforms, including Facebook, Google and Twitter, agreed to a “voluntary code of ethics”, for the general elections of 2019 and all subsequent elections post 2019.
2. Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) has agreed to coordinate with participants various steps mentioned in this code.
3. The ‘Code of Ethics’ has been developed to ensure free, fair & ethical usage of Social Media Platforms to maintain the integrity of the electoral process for the elections.
4. Social Media platforms will voluntarily undertake information, education and communication campaigns to build awareness including electoral laws and other related instructions among its users.
5. Social Media platforms have created a high priority dedicated grievance redressal channel or dedicated teams for taking expeditious action on the cases reported by the ECI.
6. Social Media Platforms and ECI have developed a notification mechanism by which ECI can notify the relevant platforms of potential violations of Section 126 of the R.P. Act, 1951 and other electoral laws.
7. The Platforms have committed to process any violations reported under Section 126 of RP Act, 1951 within three hours as per Sinha Committee recommendations.
8. Platforms will ensure that all political advertisements on their platforms are pre-certified from the Media Certification and Monitoring Committees as per the directions of the Supreme Court.
9. Participating platforms are committed to facilitating transparency in paid political advertisements, including utilizing their pre-existing labels/disclosure technology for such advertisements.
10. The Code of Ethics promises to facilitate transparency in paid political advertisements.

### DRAFT WAGE RULES

As part of the much needed labour law reform, the government introduced the Code on Wages, 2019 in Parliament and was subsequently passed.

1. The code, subsumes four laws regarding payment of wages, equal pay, payment of bonus and minimum wages.
2. The rules drafted under the code were published by the labour ministry and opened up for public comments for one month.
3. In the rules drafted for coming up with minimum wages, the criterion would be a standard working class family of one earning worker, a spouse and two children — equivalent to three adult consumption units that would have a net intake of 2,700 calories per unit per day.
4. Under the criterion, the family would be entitled to 66 metres of cloth per year; housing rent expenditure of 10% of the food and clothing expense; fuel, electricity and other

- miscellaneous items of 20% of the minimum wage; and 25% of the minimum wage for expenditure on children's education, medical needs, recreation and contingencies.
5. While the code will extend minimum wage protection to a large section of workers, including those in the unorganized sector, it will not provide for a single minimum wage.
  6. This might lead to unnecessary confusions and subjectivity in determining the local or regional minimum wages. Leading to multiple minimum wage structure at different geographical zones.
  7. Currently, there are around 2000 categories of minimum wages in India. For example, Tamil Nadu has 76 category of minimum wages, ranging from ₹132 to ₹419.
  8. The economic survey had mentioned that a national mandatory minimum wage is a requirement and, if the government wishes, it can create five wage zones and have five different national minimum wage. This recommendation was neglected.
  9. The worker's unions have lamented the fact that even after 70 years of independence, the reference for wages continues to be floor-level wages, instead of moving on to the more progressive ideas of minimum wage and living wages. This seems to be in divergence the Supreme Court's guidelines on need-based wages.
  10. The worker's unions claim that the floor-level wage mentioned in the rules is unscientific and inhuman.
  11. The national floor wage being recommended by the ministry is less than half of what was suggested by an internal committee set up to deliberate on an appropriate minimum wage.
  12. Labour ministry has indicated that states will not be allowed to pay less than the minimum national wage of ₹178 which was an increase by just two rupees from the previous ₹176. This seems like a huge devaluation of the idea of a national mandatory wage floor.
  13. A reference level of ₹178 will not serve the purpose, as the current minimum wage across India, barring five states, are over this threshold.

### **INDIA DECIDES TO OPT OUT OF RCEP**

1. India has decided to pull out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement as India's core issues remained unresolved during the negotiations.
2. RCEP is a proposed regional free trade agreement (FTA) comprising of ASEAN countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Laos and Vietnam) and their 6 FTA partners (India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand).
3. The aim of RCEP is to create an integrated market spanning all 16 countries making it easier for products and services of each of these countries to be available across this region.

### **Reasons behind pulling out of the agreement:**

1. India is worried that RCEP could force it to cut duties on about 90% of the goods that are currently imported to India over the next 15 years.
2. This has raised concerns that India will be flooded with cheaper imported goods, particularly from China and dairy products from Australia and New Zealand.
3. This may have an impact on India's domestic industry.



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4. India is opposed to the proposal that 2013 be treated as the base year for reducing tariffs effectively implying that member countries should slash import duties on products to the level that existed in 2013.
5. India is pushing for 2019 as the base year given that import duties on many products such as textiles and electronic products have gone up in the last six years.
6. India has massive trade deficits with almost all of the RCEP countries. Out of 15 RCEP countries, India has trade deficits with at least 11.
7. Further, India's trade deficit with these countries has also almost doubled in the last five-six years from \$54 billion in 2013-14 to \$105 billion in 2018-19.
8. Hence, given the export-import equation with the bloc, a free trade agreement with the grouping would have increased the trade deficit further.
9. India wants an auto-trigger mechanism to be institutionalised in the pact.
10. This would serve as a kind of protective mechanism that a member country can invoke to safeguard in case of an unexpected flow of imports after RCEP comes into effect.
11. A ratchet obligation implies that a member country cannot raise tariffs once the pact comes into effect.
12. An exemption would imply that a country will be able to erect restrictive measures later on grounds of protecting national interest.
13. India has demanded that the RCEP participating countries should open up their services sector so that Indian professionals and workers can have easier entry into their market.
14. However, the countries are very sensitive about protecting this sector and have not offered much liberalisation.

### **INDIA AND UZBEKISTAN RELATIONS**

India and Uzbekistan signed three memorandums of understanding (MoU) to enhance cooperation in military, medicine and military education during the visit of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

1. Uzbekistan and India have signed Agreements/MOUs/ Protocols/Joint Statements in areas such as trade, investment, education, civil aviation, tourism, science & technology, telecommunications, agriculture and IT.
2. Trade relations between India and Uzbekistan are governed by the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation signed in May 1993.
3. India and Uzbekistan have set a target of 1 billion USD bilateral trades by 2020.
4. India had offered a Line of credit of 200 million USD to develop low-cost homes and social infrastructure to Uzbekistan.
5. In 2019, India has also offered a concessional line of credit of \$40 million for procurement of goods and services by Uzbekistan from India.
6. Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture working under the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), was established in Tashkent in 1995.
7. Uzbekistan is a partner of India's ITEC Programme since 1993-1994.
8. Areas of training include information technology, English language, management, journalism, diplomacy, small business planning, remote sensing, banking and hotel management etc.

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9. Both countries are strategic partners and important for India's security, connectivity and counter-terrorism efforts.
10. Uzbekistan is one of the biggest uranium exporters and can help India to procure uranium fuel.
11. Uzbekistan is militarily very strong, that is very important from a security point of view.
12. First India-Uzbekistan Joint Exercise, "Dustlik 2019": The bilateral exercise will be conducted from November 4 to 13 at Chirchiq Training Area near Tashkent and will be focused on counter-terrorism.

### WORKFORCE PRODUCTIVITY

Annual Survey of Industries data on India's labour productivity growth shows that India's labour productivity between 2016 and 2018 grew by just 3.7 per cent.

The data on labour productivity growth in the organised manufacturing sector stipulates that India's labour productivity between 2016 and 2018 grew by just 3.7 per cent (far from the annual growth of 14 per cent between 2004 and 2008).

It was observed that, during the high economic growth phase between 2004 and 2008, India's labour productivity grew by over 14 per cent every year. But, this rate fell to just half of that (7.4 per cent) between the financial years of 2011 and 2015 and continued its deceleration to just 3.7 per cent (2016-2018).

#### About the Key-Highlights:

1. India Ratings and Research's analysis of data of Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) also shows that Labour productivity had been growing by 9.6 per cent in FY01-06 and had peaked at 14.2 per cent between FY04-FY08.
2. It grew by 10.3 per cent between FY06 and FY10. However, between FY11 and FY15, it slowed down to 7.4 per cent.
3. The data shows that the average monthly wage of a worker in the organised manufacturing sector rose to Rs.12, 405 during FY16-18 from Rs. 4,006 during FY01-FY05.
4. The average wage growth has been 6.5 per cent over FY16-FY18 as compared to 11.7 per cent and 8.1 per cent during FY11-FY15 and FY05-FY10, respectively.
5. The analysis also revealed that the capital intensity (that is, fixed capital used per worker) in India's organised manufacturing has been rising.
6. The output intensity (that is, the value of output per fixed capital) has actually declined over the same period.
7. Labour productivity is an important economic indicator that is closely linked to economic growth, competitiveness, and living standards within an economy.
8. Labour productivity represents the total volume of output (measured in terms of GDP) produced per unit of labour (measured in terms of the number of employed persons) during a given time reference period.
9. **Labour productivity** = GDP at constant prices/Number of employed persons.

10. In the case of India, India Ratings report points out that globally labour productivity growth alone accounted for about two-thirds of the gross domestic product (GDP) growth during FY01-FY10.

**FINANCE MINISTER LAUNCHES IT INITIATIVES ICEDASH AND ATITHI**

Finance minister has unveiled two new IT initiatives **ICEDASH** and **ATITHI**.

1. These initiatives aim at improving monitoring and pace of customs clearance of imported goods.
2. They will also facilitate arriving international passengers with e-filing of baggage and currency declarations.
3. ICEDASH is an ease of doing business (EoDB) monitoring dashboard of the Indian Customs helping public see the daily customs clearance times of import cargo at various ports and airports.
4. It will be an effective tool that can help businesses compare clearance times across ports and plan their logistics accordingly.
5. The dashboard has been developed by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) in collaboration with National Informatics Centre (NIC).
6. **ATITHI is a mobile app for international travellers to file the Customs declaration in advance.**
7. Passengers can use this app to file declaration of dutiable items and currency with the Indian Customs even before boarding the flight to India.
8. The app would in particular create a tech-savvy image of India's customs and would encourage tourism and business travel to India.

**'RED ATLAS MAP' UNVEILED FOR FLOOD MITIGATION IN CHENNAI**

The Atlas has been prepared by the Ministry of Earth Sciences to aid Tamil Nadu government in effective flood mitigation in Chennai.

1. It was prepared with the help of India Meteorological Department (IMD), National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR) and National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF) in association with TN State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) and Greater Chennai Corporation.
2. The atlas with probable scenarios for different rainfall periods is aimed at flood mitigation, preparedness, operations and management aspects. The manual provides information including on corporation wards that are likely to be affected due to flooding and the areas that may need evacuation in Chennai taking into account all historical datasets.
3. CFLOWS is a complete web GIS-based decision support system that can be used both for mitigation planning operations before flooding and in real time to for aspects like relief work.
4. It is an integrated system that involves coupling models of regional weather forecasts, storm surges and captures about 796 flood scenarios.
5. The app was launched by the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT).

6. The app can simulate the scenario and predict what will happen in a particular area.

### **SOUTH ASIA CO-OPERATIVE ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (SACEP)**

Recently, the Union Minister of Environment and Forest and Climate Change has attended the 15th meeting of the Governing Council of South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

1. South Asia Co-operative Environment Programme (SACEP) is an intergovernmental organization. It is headquartered in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
2. It was established in 1982.
3. It was by the governments of South Asia to promote and support protection, management and enhancement of the environment in the region.
4. The **members** of SACEP are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
5. SACEP also acts as the Secretariat for the **South Asian Seas Programme**.
6. It comes under the purview of UNEP's Regional Seas Programme.
7. Recognition of environmental degradation caused by factors like poverty, overpopulation, over consumption and wasteful production threatening economic development and human survival.
8. Integration of environment and development as essential prerequisites to Sustainable Development, and Importance of co-operative action in the South Asian region where many ecological and development problems transcend national and administrative boundaries.

### **GUJARAT ANTI-TERROR LAW GETS PRESIDENT ASSENT**

1. The President has given his assent to the Gujarat Control of Terrorism and Organised Crime (GCTOC) Bill, 2015.
2. The Act empowers law enforcing authorities to intercept phone calls, recording of which would be admissible in court as evidence.
3. Section 16 of the bill stipulates a confession made by a person before a police officer not below the rank of superintendent of police (SP) shall be admissible in court.
4. Section 25 provides immunity to the government and police officers for initiating action under the law.
5. The law puts the onus of proving the innocence of the accused on the accused and has provision for maximum punishment of death penalty and fine of Rs 10 lakh.
6. The bill extends period of probe from stipulated 90 days to 180 days before filing of charge sheet.
7. The bill also provides for the creation of a special court as well as the appointment of special public prosecutors.

### **INTERNET PENETRATION IN INDIA**

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1. According to Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI), report, titled 'India Internet 2019', Delhi NCR has the highest internet penetration (69%) followed by Kerala (54%).
2. The lowest penetration rate was in Odisha (25), Jharkhand (26) and Bihar (28).
3. The IAMAI report also notes that Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Delhi have the highest proportion of female Internet users.
4. Further, TRAI data as of June 2019 show that Kerala is well-placed in terms of Internet connections.
5. It stands fourth among all telecom service areas in terms of Internet subscriptions per 100 populations, behind Delhi, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.
6. Internet penetration rate (defined as number of individuals aged above 12 per 100 population who accessed the Internet in the last month; survey period January-March 2019)

### MAHARASHTRA TOPS IN JUSTICE DELIVERY : INDIA JUSTICE REPORT 2019

**India Justice Report** has been prepared by Tata Trusts in collaboration with Centre for social Justice, Common Cause, Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Daksh, TISS-Prayas and Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy.

1. It is India's first-ever ranking of states on justice delivery.
2. The report looks into the 'four pillars' – of **Judiciary, Legal Aid, Police and Prisons**, and analyses the budgets, human resources, personnel workload, diversity, infrastructure and trends against the government's declared standards and benchmarks.
3. Maharashtra has topped the list of states in delivering justice to people followed by Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Haryana.
4. Uttar Pradesh and Bihar ranked at the bottom.
5. Among the small states (where population is less than one crore each), Goa has topped the list followed by Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh.
6. Tripura ranked at the bottom.
7. In Policing, the best score was achieved by Tamil Nadu – 6.49. UP received the lowest score- 2.98.
8. UP fared poor in terms of budgeting, spending on police per person, vacancies and diversity.
9. For Prisons: Jharkhand performed the worst with a score of 3.46. It was followed by Uttarakhand (3.72), Punjab (4.35).
10. The best in this regard was Kerala with a score of 7.18.
11. Judiciary: Bihar, with a score of 2.41, fared the worst in this regard.
12. It was followed by UP (3.7), Karnataka, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand.
13. Tamil Nadu featured on the top in terms of judiciary with a score of 6.99.
14. It was followed by Punjab, Haryana and Maharashtra.
15. Legal Aid: The report has said that almost 80% of India's 1.25-billion population is eligible for free legal aid, but only 15 million people have availed it since 1995.

### SMUDRA SHAKTI

1. It is an annual naval exercise between **Indian and Indonesian Navy**.

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2. The first edition of the exercise took place in 2018 in the Java Sea.
3. The aim of the exercise is to strengthen bilateral relations, expand maritime cooperation, enhance interoperability and exchange best practices.
4. The exercise has two phases- Sea Phase and Harbour Phase.
5. The Harbour Phase includes professional interactions in the form of Subject Matter Expert Exchanges (SMEE), cross deck visits, simulator drills, planning conferences, sports fixtures and social interactions.
6. The Sea Phase includes manoeuvres, Surface Warfare exercises, Air Defence exercises, Weapon firing drills, Helicopter Operations and Boarding Operations.

**Garuda Shakti:** It is an annual military exercise between Indian and Indonesian Army. It is conducted on a reciprocal basis and its first edition was conducted in the year 2012 in India.

**IND-INDO CORPAT:** It is a bi-annual coordinated patrol exercise along the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL) naval exercise conducted by Indian and Indonesian Navy.

**Exercise KOMODO:** Ex- KOMODO is a multilateral Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise. The exercise participants include India, Indonesia, USA, China, Russia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Thailand, Vietnam, Philippines and Laos.

### ODISHA HIT BY OVER NINE LAKH LIGHTNING STRIKES THIS YEAR

With 9 lakh lightning strikes between April 1 and July 31 this year, Odisha recorded the highest number of lightning strikes in the country, while Jammu and Kashmir recorded the least with about 20,000 strikes, a report by a research body of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has found.

#### **How does lightning form?**

Lightning is an electric current.

When the ground is hot, it heats the air above it.

As the warm air rises, water vapour cools and forms a cloud.

When air continues to rise, the cloud gets bigger and bigger.

In the tops of the clouds, temperature is below freezing and the water vapour turns into ice.

Thus, the cloud becomes a thundercloud. Lots of small bits of ice bump into each other as they move around.

All these collisions cause a build up of electrical charge.

Eventually, the whole cloud fills up with electrical charges.

Lighter, positively charged particles form at the top of the cloud and Heavier, negatively charged particles sink to the bottom of the cloud causes a giant spark resulting in lightning.

1. The report has also revealed that the most number of deaths due to lightning strikes were reported from Uttar Pradesh.
2. Uttar Pradesh recorded double the number of deaths that Odisha between April and July, even though it was hit by only one-third of the total lightning strikes that hit Odisha.
3. This is the first time the weather monitoring body has released the data on total lightning strikes across the country. The data for the months of April till July was compiled by IMD's Climate Resilient Observing Systems Promotion Council (CROSPC).
4. According to the report, Mid-Monsoon 2019 Lightning, Odisha was followed by Maharashtra with 6.26 lakh strikes and Karnataka with 6.21 lakh.

5. During the study, it was found that the highest intensity lightning strikes were observed in Chhotanagpur plateau in East Singhbhum district of Jharkhand. The area also received the maximum number of strikes for a district.
6. With 224 deaths, Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest casualties, followed by 170 in Bihar and 129 in Odisha. Tamil Nadu saw the least number of deaths due to lightning strikes in the corresponding period.

### **TRAVELLERS QUOTED IN AYODHYA JUDGEMENT**

In the Ayodhya judgment, the Supreme Court has relied in part on centuries-old travelogues, gazetteers and books. It is to provide an account of the faith and belief that the Hindus placed in the Janmasthan.

1. Joseph Tieffenthaler (1710-1785)-Tieffenthaler was an 18th-century missionary. He travelled to India from Italy. He stayed in India for 27 years. In India, he was commissioned at the famous observatory of Sawai Jai Singh, the Raja of Jaipur. He was later attached at the Jesuit College in Agra which was built with the patronage of Akbar. Tieffenthaler had also lived in Awadh where Ayodhya is located for over five years.
2. William Finch (died 1613)-William Finch is known to have arrived in India in 1608. He arrived at Surat with Sir William Hawkins, a representative of the East India Company. He is said to be the earliest English language account of Kashmir as well as trade routes connecting Punjab and eastern Turkistan and western China. William Finch's account has been recorded in the 1921 book 'Early Travels in India (1583-1619)' by the historiographer Sir William Foster. According to the book, Finch had visited Ayodhya between 1608 and 1611. He did not find any building of importance of Islamic origin.
3. Robert Montgomery Martin (1801-1868)-Martin was from Dublin in Ireland. He was an Anglo-Irish author and civil servant. He practised medicine in Ceylon (present day Sri Lanka), East Africa and Australia. He then went on to work in Kolkata where helped in founding the paper 'Bengal Herald'. He later returned to England where he wrote about the British Empire. He had written about the worship of Lord Ram in the Ayodhya region. He also refers to the destruction of temples and the erection of mosques during that time.

### **SURANGA BAWADI ON WORLD MONUMENT WATCH LIST**

Suranga Bawadi has been included in the World Monument Watch list for 2020 along with 24 other monuments from across the world.

1. Suranga Bawadi is an integral part of the ancient Karez system of supplying water through subterranean tunnels built during the Adil Shahi era in Vijayapura, Karnataka.
2. The magnificent underground system was built to supply water to the city which had a population of nearly 12 lakh then.
3. Suranga Bawadi has been selected under the 'Ancient Water System of the Deccan Plateau' by World Monuments Fund.
4. Karez is a water-harnessing technology in which groundwater is brought to the surface by a tunnel.

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5. In this system, no mechanical pump or lift is used.
6. Gravity alone brings the water from the underground source.
7. The Karez is found in 38 countries worldwide and most of these are concentrated in the Middle East region.
8. Persia is known for the earliest known and documented Karez system.

### CENTRE FORMS COMMITTEE TO DRAFT NEW WATER POLICY

1. The Jal Shakti Ministry has finalised a committee to draft a new National Water Policy (NWP).
2. It will be chaired by Mihir Shah, who is a former Planning Commission member and a water expert.
3. The committee has 10 principal members, including Shashi Shekhar, a former secretary of Water Resources, and A.B. Pandya, former chairman of the Central Ground Water Board.
4. The committee is expected to produce a report within six months.

### INDIA WORST AFFECTED BY CLIMATE CHANGE AMONG G20 COUNTRIES: REPORT

A study titled 'Brown to Green' by Climate Transparency (CT) has said that India is worst affected by climate change among G20 countries.

1. India, Russia, France, Italy and Germany are the top 5 for average climate related annual deaths at 3,661.
2. India, China, EU, Indonesia, Russia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey will likely meet or surpass their NDCs targets (except for curbing emissions from land use change and forestry sector).
3. However, none of the G20 countries' NDCs were aligned to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5 degree C.
4. 82% of the G20's energy mix continued to be fossil fuels, which had to come down to at least 67% by 2030 and to 33% by 2050 to be compatible with the '1.5 degree C' target.
5. India had the most ambitious NDC and it could align it with the '1.5 degree C target' if it continued to abandon planned coal-fired power plants in favour of cheaper renewable energy technology.
6. India is currently investing the most in renewable energy while Brazil and Germany were the only G20 countries with long term renewable energy strategies.
7. Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, Turkey and the US needed a coal phase-out plan.

### DANAKIL DEPRESSION

1. A new study published in Nature Ecology & Evolution stated that active and naturally occurring life cannot be sustained at **Danakil**, Ethiopia.
2. It identifies two barriers which makes adaptation highly difficult due to Magnesium-dominated brines that cause cells to break down and Environment in Danakil having very low pH and high salt.



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3. The Danakil Depression is in northeastern Ethiopia.
4. It's one of the world's hottest places, as well as one of its lowest, at 100 metres below sea level.
5. At the northern end of the Great Rift Valley, and separated by live volcanoes from the Red Sea.

### PRAGATI

1. Recently, PM reviewed the progress of nine projects during his 31<sup>st</sup> interaction through PRAGATI.
2. **PRAGATI stands for Pro-active Governance and Timely Implementation.**
3. It is an ICT based Multi modal Platform that is aimed at addressing common man's grievances, and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.
4. It is a three-tier system (involving PMO, Union Government Secretaries and Chief Secretaries of the States).

### NIRVIK – A NEW EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE SCHEME (ECIS)

1. Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) has introduced a NIRVIK scheme to enhance loan availability and ease the lending process.
2. It will enhance accessibility/affordability of credit for exporters and also make Indian exports competitive.
3. **NIRVIK** scheme will ensure timely and adequate working capital to the export sector.
4. Under ECIS, insurance cover percentage has also been enhanced to 90% from the present average of 60% for both Principal and Interest.
5. **Export Credit Guarantee Corporation** is a fully government owned company that was established in 1957 to promote exports by providing credit insurance services.

### FENI RIVER

The Union Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval for the MoU between India and Bangladesh on withdrawal of 1.82 cusec of water from Feni River by India for drinking water supply scheme for Sabroom town Tripura, India.

1. Feni River is a river in southeastern Bangladesh.
2. It is a trans-boundary river with an ongoing dispute about water rights.
3. The Feni River originates in South Tripura district and flows through Sabroom town and then enters Bangladesh.

### FIRST BRAIN ATLAS

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1. A study by IIIT Hyderabad created the first brain atlas for Indians and found that Indians have some of the smallest brains in height, width, and volume in comparison with the western and other eastern populations.
2. This study will help in the early diagnosis of brain diseases like Alzheimer's.
3. To construct the India-specific brain atlas, the researchers recruited 100 young healthy adults (50 males and 50 females) aged 21-30 years.
4. All the 100 participants in the study, referred to as the IBA 100, underwent a medical examination.

### ALZHEIMER'S

1. Alzheimer's disease is a neurological disorder which causes brain cells to degenerate and die.
2. This leads to loss of memory, problems with thinking, poor judgment, changes in behaviour, confusion with time or place etc.
3. Alzheimer's disease is an irreversible, progressive and has no current cure, but treatments for symptoms are available and research continues.
4. Although current Alzheimer's treatments cannot stop Alzheimer's from progressing, they can temporarily slow the worsening of dementia symptoms and improve quality of life.

### DHANUSH

1. Dhanush is the first indigenous long-range artillery gun.
2. Dhanush is upgraded version of Swedish 155-mm Bofors howitzers.
3. It is also called desi Bofors.
4. The gun is capable of firing next generation ammunitions and can accommodate Bi-Modular Charges as well as bag charges.

### GLYPHOSATE

1. It's one of the active ingredients in the herbicide.
2. It is applied to the leaves of plants to kill weeds. It is widely used in India, too.
3. The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer published a study in 2015 that glyphosate is "probably carcinogenic to humans".
4. Other diseases associated with glyphosates include diabetes, obesity, asthma, Alzheimer's, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), and Parkinson's disease.

### KYASANUR FOREST DISEASE (KFD)

1. KFD is caused by Kyasanur Forest disease virus (KFDV), a member of the virus family Flaviviridae.
2. Hard ticks are the reservoir of KFD virus and once infected, remain so for life.

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3. Rodents, monkey s and shrews are common hosts for KFDV after being bitten by infected tick.
4. KFD is endemic to the state of Karnataka.

### DONGRIA KONDH TRIBE

1. The Dangaria Kandha or Dongria Kondh people are members of the Kondhs.
2. They are located in the Niyamgiri hills in the state of Odisha.
3. They sustain themselves from the resources of the Niyamgiri forests, practising horticulture and shifting cultivation.

### PETCOKE

1. It is one of the many industrial byproducts produced during oil refining.
2. It is a coal substitute and can be burned for fuel in the same manner as coal.
3. Petcoke is much more potent pollutant than coal (It emits 11% more greenhouse gases) and causes greater harm to the environment and health.
4. India is the world's largest consumer of the petcoke.
5. India banned the import of pet coke for use as fuel, but the import of Petcoke is allowed for only cement, lime kiln, calcium carbide and gasification industries, when used as the feedstock or in the manufacturing process on actual user condition.

### NATIONAL INTEGRATION COUNCIL

1. The National Integration Council (NIC) is a group of senior politicians and public figures in India that looks for ways to address the problems of communalism, casteism and regionalism.
2. NIC originated in a conference convened by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in September–October 1961.
3. It is an extra-constitutional body.
4. It is chaired by the Prime Minister of India.

### POLYPEDATES BENGALENSIS

1. Researchers have recorded a new species of tree frog in a residential area of West Bengal.
2. The new species has been named Brown Blotched Bengal Tree Frog (Polypedatesbengalensis).
3. The name is derived from a series of 6-9 dark brown blotches that extend laterally from behind the frog's eye to the vent.
4. The frog's body colour is yellowish-brown to greenish-brown.

### PM TO INAUGURATE FIFTH INDIA INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL

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1. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Fifth India International Science Festival. He addressed the gathering, being held in Kolkata, through video conference.
2. The prime objective of the festival is to instil scientific temper among people, showcase India's contribution in the field of S & T and encourage translation of its benefits to people. It aims to build a strategy for inclusive advancement of Science and Technology.
3. The Theme of the Festival this year is-RISEN India- Research, Innovation, and Science Empowering the Nation.

### KALAPANI TERRITORY

1. Nepal government has alleged India for the inclusion of 'Kalapani' under the Indian Territory.
2. Kalapani is a territory disputed between India and Nepal.
3. In the latest map, India included Kalapani into the Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand.
4. It's located at an altitude of 3600m on the Kailash Mansarovar route.
5. It borders Uttarakhand in India and Sudurpaschim Pradesh in Nepal.
6. Since the Indo-China war of 1962, Kalapani is controlled by India's Indo-Tibetan Border Police.

### TIRUKKURAL

The Tirukkural or Kural, is a classic Tamil language text consisting of 1,330 couplets or Kurals. The text is divided into three books. Tirukkural talks about three aspects of life- virtue (aram, dharma), wealth (porul, artha) and love (inbam, kama).

### eCAPA 2019

1. India's first-ever Arts Exposition for Artists blessed with Down Syndrome, Autism, Mental Retardation, Seizure Disorder and Dyslexia will start in New Delhi.
2. The aim of this exposition is to create an exclusive platform to showcase the visual and performing art talents of young adults with intellectual challenges.

### TIGER TRIUMPH

1. The first-ever India-US tri services named 'Tiger Triumph', is being held from 13th-21st November, 2019.
2. This exercise will be conducted off Visakhapatnam and Kakinada coasts in Andhra Pradesh.
3. It's being organised under the aegis of the headquarters of the Integrated Defence Staff.
4. This exercise will include events and field training that simulate moving humanitarian assistance and disaster relief force from ship to shore.

### ERYTHROPOIETIN

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1. It is also known as haemopoietin, is a peptide hormone secreted by the kidney in response to cellular hypoxia.
2. It stimulates red blood cell production in the bone marrow.
3. Blood doping refers to any attempt to improve athletic performance by artificially increasing your red blood cell count.
4. Red blood cells are responsible for carrying oxygen molecules throughout the body.
5. Athletes have been found to use erythropoietin, synthetic oxygen carriers and blood transfusions for blood doping.
6. As a performance enhancing drug it is banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA).

### GEOCHEMICAL BASELINE ATLAS OF INDIA

It was released for the first time in 2019 by the CSIR-National Geophysical Research Institute (NGRI). The new geochemical baseline atlas will help the country to assess the presence of toxic chemicals in soil and how it varies from place to place.

1. Earlier, there was no way to prove if polluters denied causing damage to the environment.
2. The baseline map of India will help to plan the land use in different parts of the country.
3. The globe was divided into 5,000 cells of 160 km by 160 km each to develop the maps.
4. Out of 5000 cells, India has 122 cells.
5. CSIR-NGRI started this work in 2007 from cell number 1 which is in Kanyakumari. The last cell is in Arunachal Pradesh.

### LIVING ROOT BRIDGES

1. Living root bridges are found in the southern part of the Northeast Indian state of Meghalaya.
2. Living root bridges are the aerial bridges that are built by weaving and manipulating the roots of the Indian rubber tree.
3. They are community-driven innovation by forest dwellers especially Khasi and Jaintia peoples.
4. They are extraordinarily strong—strong enough that some of them can support the weight of 50 or more people at a time.

### TAPAN RAY COMMITTEE

The Reserve Bank of India had constituted a Working Group to Review Regulatory and Supervisory Framework for Core Investment Companies in July 2019 with Tapan Ray. CICs are non-banking financial companies with asset size of ₹100 crore and above. CICs, which are allowed to accept public funds, hold not less than 90% of their net assets in the form of investment in equity shares.

**The key recommendations are:**

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1. The Capital contribution by a CIC in a step-down CIC, can be over and above 10% of its owned funds.
2. It should be deducted from its Adjusted Networth, as applicable to other NBFCs. Further, step-down CICs may not be permitted to invest in any other CIC.
3. The number of layers of CICs in a group should be restricted to two only.
4. Every Group have a Group Risk Management Committee (GRMC).
5. Core investment companies (CICs) will have to form board level committees (like Audit Committee, Remuneration Committee etc.) appoint independent directors and conduct internal audits.

### AVIAN BOTULISM

The avian botulism that caused the mass death at Sambhar was caused by the climate, according to the IVRI report.

1. Botulinum is a natural toxin produced by a bacteria known as Clostridium botulin.
2. The bacteria are commonly found in the soil, river, and sea water.
3. The bacteria affect the nervous system of birds, leading to paralysis in their legs and wings.
4. Botulinum affects both humans and animals but the type of the toxin varies — botulinum C in birds and A, B and E in humans.

### GUNTUR CHILLIES

Guntur chillies is a group of chilli cultivars from Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh. They are renowned globally and exported to Asia, Canada, and Europe. Guntur district is the main producer and exporter of most varieties of Chillies and chilli powder. The main trading place for Guntur chilli is called Guntur Mirchi Yard which is Asia's largest dried red chilli market. Tejachili is a fine variety of Guntur chili. Andhra Pradesh accounts for more than 65 % of the production of Chilli in the country.

### WILLINGDON ISLAND

It's the largest man-made/artificial island in India, which forms part of the city of Kochi, in the state of Kerala. This man-made island, named after a former Viceroy Lord Willingdon. It was carved out of Vembanad Lake and the said island is connected to the mainland by the Venduruthy Bridge.

### BHAONA

Recently, the Bhaona performers made a foreign debut in Abu Dhabi to connect with a global audience not conversant with Assamese.

1. It's a mythology-based traditional form of entertainment, with religious messages, prevalent in Assam. It's a creation of Sankardeva, written in the early sixteenth century.
2. He created the form to convey religious messages to villagers through entertainment. The plays of bhaona are popularly known as AnkiyaNats and their staging is known as bhaona.

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3. Bhaona is generally staged at satras and namghars in Assam. It involves dialogues, songs and dances by performers in costumes and ornaments, usually involves 40-50 people, including those playing heavy drums and cymbals.
4. The bhaonas are written in the Assamese and Brajavali languages. Types- BaresahariyaBhaona, MukhaBhaona, BokaBhaona

### **INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR DEVELOPMENT**

Recently, Government of India has approved the development of five industrial corridor projects to be implemented through National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT).

1. Approved Industrial Corridor-
2. Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC)
3. Amritsar Kolkata Industrial Corridor (AKIC)
4. Chennai Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (CBIC)
5. East Coast Economic Corridor (ECEC)
6. Bengaluru Mumbai Industrial Corridor (BMIC)

NICDIT is an apex body under the administrative control of the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) i.e. Ministry of Commerce & Industry for coordinated and unified development of industrial corridors.

### **KIMBERLEY PROCESS**

1. The Kimberley Process is an international certification scheme that regulates trade in rough diamonds. It aims to prevent the flow of conflict diamonds while helping to protect legitimate trade in rough diamonds.
2. It's a binding agreement that imposes extensive requirements on each and every participant to remove conflict diamonds from the global supply chain.
3. India is a founding member of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.
4. Conflict/blood diamonds/war diamonds - The UN defines conflict diamonds as "diamonds that originate from areas controlled by forces or factions opposed to legitimate and internationally recognized governments, and are used to fund military action in opposition to those governments, or in contravention of the decisions of the Security Council".

### **ANTI TANK MISSILE SPIKE**

The Indian Army has inducted Israel made Anti Tank Guided Missiles Spike along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir.

1. Spike is an Israeli fire-and-forget anti-tank guided missile and anti-personnel missile.
2. The missiles have been manufactured by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Ltd.
3. The missile is known for their precision targeting with an ability to pierce even bunkers.
4. The Spike missile can hit targets at a range of 4 kilometers.

5. It can be deployed in both mountains and plains.
6. The missiles have automatic self-guidance system.
7. It also possess imaging infrared system.

### **RESERVE BANK FLAGS RISING BAD ASSETS FROM MUDRA LOANS**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has expressed concern over rising bad loans from Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY).

1. However, there have been concerns at the growing level of non-performing assets (NPAs) among these MUDRA borrowers.
2. The data has shown that non-performing assets ratio or bad loans as a percentage of MUDRA loans were at 2.68% in 2018-19 from 2.52% in the 2017-18.
3. Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) is a scheme launched by the Prime Minister in 2015.
4. It aims for providing loans up to 10 lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises.
5. These loans are given by Commercial Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks, MFIs and NBFCs.
6. The loans under Mudra are given under different categories viz. 'Shishu', 'Kishor' and 'Tarun'.
7. These categories are based on the stage of growth or development and funding needs of the beneficiary.
8. Sishu covers loans up to Rs. 50,000, Kishore covers loans above Rs. 50,000- and up to 5 lakh and Tarun covers loans above Rs. 5 lakh and up to Rs.10 lakh.
9. A non performing asset (NPA) is a loan or advance for which the principal or interest payment remains overdue for a period of 90 days.
10. The banks are required to classify NPAs further into Substandard, Doubtful and Loss assets.

### **RULE 12**

Recently, the central government had invoked Rule 12 of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules to revoke the President's Rule in Maharashtra.

1. Rule 12 of the Government of India (Transaction of Business) Rules, 1961 allows the Prime Minister to depart from laid down norms at his discretion.
2. The rule says that the Prime Minister may in cases or classes of cases permit or condone a departure from these rules to the extent he deems necessary.
3. The Cabinet can subsequently give post-facto approval for any decision taken under Rule 12.
4. The rule also stipulates that to invoke it, the proposal should be accompanied by a detailed justification clearly bringing out the urgency involved in the matter and the exceptional circumstances that require it to be processed.
5. Rule 12 is usually not used to arrive at major decisions by the government.
6. However, it has been used in matters such as withdrawal of an office memorandum or signing of MoUs in the past.



7. The last big decision taken through the invocation of Rule 12 was re-organisation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir into the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

### SANGAI FESTIVAL

Recently, the 'Manipur Sangai Festival', the biggest tourism festival of the state has started.

1. Since 2010, the Tourism Festival has been renamed as the Sangai Festival as Sangai deer is the state animal of Manipur.
2. The festival showcases tourism potential of Manipur in field of arts & culture, handloom, handicrafts, indigenous sports, cuisine, music and adventure sports of the state among others.
3. The State's classical dance form, 'Ras Leela' forms an important part of the dance performances during the festival.
4. Other folkdance performances like the Kabui Naga dance, Bamboo dance, Maibi dance, Lai Haraoba dance, KhambaThoibi dance are showcased at the festival.
5. The festival brings to light an array of Manipur's best indigenous handlooms and handicrafts products which are otherwise not widely available in the market.
6. Further, Manipur's famous martial arts namely (a)Thang Ta (a combination Spear & Sword skills) (b)Yubi-Lakpi (a game played with greased coconut like rugby) (c)MuknaKangjei (a game that combines hockey and wrestling) and (d)SagolKangjei- Modern Polo (believed to have evolved in Manipur) all formed part of the festival.
7. The sangai is an endemic subspecies of brow-antlered deer **found only in Manipur**, India.
8. The species is listed as Endangered (EN) in IUCN Red list.
9. The species is found only at KeibulLamjao National Park over the floating biomass locally called phumdi in the south eastern part of Loktak Lake.
10. Keibul Lamjao National Park is the only floating National Park in the world.
11. It is located on the Loktak Lake.
12. The park is located on phumdis.
13. Phumdis are the floating mass of entangled vegetation formed by the accumulation of organic debris and biomass with soil

### PREMATURE DEATHS IN INDIA

An analysis on premature deaths in India was published in **The Lancet Global Health**. The study was funded by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and looked at about 9.7 million deaths in India in 2017.

1. Every condition that was common in one part of India was uncommon elsewhere. For example, the North-eastern states, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Haryana, Gujarat, Kerala, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh account for 44% of India's cancer burden.
2. Premature deaths due to various causes, expressed as Years of Life Lost (YLLs), too were unevenly distributed in terms of the burden on the states.
3. For example, liver and alcohol-related YLL rates were high in the north-eastern states, Bihar, Karnataka, and Maharashtra, accounting for 18% of national YLLs.

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4. Suicide YLL rates were highest in the southern states, accounting for 15% of national totals.
5. Road traffic injuries were high in the northern states of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, accounting for 33% of national totals.
6. Drowning YLL rates, meanwhile, were highest in the central states of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, and in Assam in the Northeast, accounting for 11% of national totals.
7. In 2017, India had 486 million DALYs (disability-adjusted life years, a measure of the number of years lost due to ill health or disability).
8. The ratio of DALYs to the 9.7 million deaths was about 50 to 1. More than three quarters of deaths and DALYs occurred in rural areas.

### DEPOSIT INSURANCE

Recently, the failure of the Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank reignited the debate on the low level of insurance against the deposits held by customers in Indian banks.

1. Currently, in case of a bank collapse, a depositor can claim an amount **up to a maximum of ₹ 1 lakh per account** as the insurance cover (even if the deposit in their account is greater than ₹ 1 lakh).
2. This amount is termed 'deposit insurance' - the insurance cover against the deposits of an individual in banks.
3. The insurance cover is provided by the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC). Recently, the issue of depositor protection was also in the news when the Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance (FRDI) Bill was introduced in Parliament in 2017.
4. The FRDI bill became controversial because of its suggested that bank depositors be asked to share part of the cost of resolution of a failed bank.
5. DICGC came into existence in 1978 after the merger of Deposit Insurance Corporation (DIC) and Credit Guarantee Corporation of India Ltd.
6. It serves as a deposit insurance and credit guarantee for banks in India.
7. It is a fully owned subsidiary of and is governed by the Reserve Bank of India.
8. DICGC charges 10 paise per ₹ 100 of deposits held by a bank.
9. The Damodaran Committee on 'Customer Services in Banks' (2011) had recommended a five-time increase in the cap to ₹5 lakh due to rising income levels and increasing size of individual bank deposits.
10. Banks, including regional rural banks, local area banks, foreign banks with branches in India, and cooperative banks, are mandated to take deposit insurance cover with the DICGC

### ASEAN DEFENCE MINISTER'S MEETING-PLUS

The 6th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) was held in Bangkok on 20th November 2019. The **ADMM-Plus** is a platform for ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and its eight Dialogue Partners to strengthen security and defence cooperation for peace, stability, and development in the region.

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1. The ADMM-Plus countries include ten ASEAN Member State and eight Plus countries, namely Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, ROK, Russian Federation, and the United States.
2. It aims to promote mutual trust and confidence between defence establishments through greater dialogue and transparency.
3. The first ADMM-Plus was convened at Hanoi, Vietnam in 2010.
4. 2nd ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) in 2007 at Singapore adopted a resolution to establish the ADMM-Plus.
5. It has five areas of practical cooperation, namely maritime security, counter-terrorism, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, peacekeeping operations and military medicine.

### PM MODI AT BRICS SUMMIT

Indian Prime Minister has attended the 11th BRICS summit in Brasilia, Brazil.

1. The BRICS 2019 summit was held under the theme BRICS: Economic Growth for an Innovative Future. During the summit, the BRICS countries have adopted the Brasilia Declaration.
2. The declaration has urged for concerted efforts to fight against terrorism under United Nations (UN) in accordance with international law.
3. They have also called for an expeditious conclusion and adoption of the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) within the UN framework.
4. They also called on the States to prevent financing of terrorist networks and terrorist actions including those from their territories.
5. They have said that the trade war between China and the U.S. and rising protectionism is hurting the global economy.
6. Hence, multilateralism is crucial for emerging countries to protect their own interests.
7. There is an urgent need to reform the United Nations including the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to address the significant challenges being faced by the developing countries.

### CCIT

1. The Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) was proposed by India at United Nations in 1996.
2. The convention provides a legal framework which makes it binding on all signatories to deny funds and safe havens to terrorist groups.
3. To have a universal definition of terrorism that all 193-members of the UNGA will adopt into their own criminal law.
4. To ban all terror groups and shut down terror camps.
5. To prosecute all terrorists under special laws.
6. To make cross-border terrorism an extraditable offence worldwide.
7. The CCIT has remained deadlocked mainly due to opposition from three main blocks the US, the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and the Latin American countries.

8. The three blocks have raised objections over the definition of terrorism and seek exclusions to safeguard their strategic interests.

### **INDIA GETS USD 43 MILLION FROM GREEN CLIMATE FUND**

India has started a USD 43 million project to boost climate resilience in three coastal states in partnership with the UNDP's Green Climate Fund.

1. It will be a six years project which will help to build climate resilient livelihoods of 1.7 million people in three coastal states which are Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.
2. The project will work with communities in restoring ecosystems and promoting climate resilient livelihood options, such as the sustainable farming of mud crabs.
3. The project has also planned to sequester minimum of 3.5 million tons of carbon dioxide in the next 30 years.
4. The project will be funded by the Green Climate Fund.
5. The Green Climate Fund (GCF) was set up in 2010 as a financial mechanism under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
6. The GCF mechanism allows funding from developed countries to developing countries to allow them to mitigate climate change and also adapt to disruptions arising from a changing climate.
7. The **GCF** is based in Incheon, South Korea.
8. It is governed by a Board of 24 members and supported by a Secretariat.
9. The Fund also targets societies that are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, in particular Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Small Island Developing States (SIDS), and African States.
10. The fund is intended to be the centrepiece of efforts to raise Climate Finance of \$100 billion a year by 2020.

### **ROADSIDE AIR PURIFIERS FAILED TO CURB POLLUTION IN CAPITAL**

Union Environment ministry has said that roadside air purifiers such as **WAYU** and **HEPA** filters has failed to curb air pollution in Delhi.

1. **WAYU** stands for Wind Augmentation Purifying Unit.
2. The device has the capacity to purify air in an area of 500 meters square.
3. It has been developed by the CSIR–National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI) as a part of Technology Development Project being funded by the Department of Science and Technology.
4. The device works on two principles mainly wind generation for dilution of air pollutants and Active Pollutants removal.
5. It has filters for particulate matter (PM) removal and activated carbon (charcoal) and UV lamps for poisonous gases removal such as Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and Carbon Monoxide.
6. The device also has one fan and filter for sucking and removing PM.

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7. There are two UV lamps and half kg of activated carbon charcoal coated with special chemical Titanium Dioxide.
8. HEPA stands for High-Efficiency Particulate Air filter (HEPA) filter.
9. The HEPA filter sucks airborne contaminants and pushes out clean, fresh air.
10. The filters can trap nearly 99.97% of particles that are 0.3 microns.

### **INDIA RANKS 59 ON IMD WORLD TALENT RANKING REPORT**

The IMD World Talent Ranking- 2019 has been released. The World Talent Ranking is released by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD) based in Switzerland.

1. The ranking is based on the performance in three main categories namely investment and development, appeal and readiness.
2. The three categories assess how countries perform in a wide range of areas.
3. These include education, apprenticeships, workplace training, language skills, cost of living, quality of life, remuneration and tax rates.
4. Switzerland retained its title as the world's top talent hub and topped the ranking followed by Denmark and Sweden.
5. The countries at the top of the rankings share strong levels of investment in education and a high quality of life.
6. India has slipped 6 places from 53rd in 2018 to 59th rank this year on a global annual list of 63 countries.
7. India also lagged behind BRICS countries with China ranked 42nd on the list, Russia (47th) and South Africa (50th).
8. However, Brazil was ranked at 61st place behind India.
9. India witnessed one of the sharpest declines among the Asian economies due to
  - (a) low quality of life
  - (b) negative impact of brain drain
  - (c) low priority of its economy on attracting and retaining talents.

### **GLOBAL TERRORISM INDEX 2019**

1. The Global Terrorism Index (GTI) is published by the Institute for Economics & Peace.
2. The index provides a comprehensive summary of the key global trends and patterns in terrorism.
3. The report ranks 163 countries according to how impacted they are by terrorism.
4. The indicators include the number of terrorist incidents, fatalities, injuries and property damage.
5. The deaths from terrorism have decreased by 15.2% in 2018 to 15,952 globally.
6. This is the fourth consecutive year of improvement.
7. Afghanistan was the country most impacted by terrorism in 2018, replacing Iraq which had held that position since 2004.
8. The Taliban has overtaken ISIL to become the deadliest terrorist group in the world recording a 71% increase in terrorism deaths.

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9. The group was responsible for 38% of all terrorist deaths globally in 2018.
10. The deaths in Europe have fallen by 70% with Western Europe recording its lowest number of incidents since 2012.
11. But there has been an increase in far-right terrorism for the third year running, in Western Europe, North America and Oceania with deaths up by 52% in 2018.
12. Further, the fall in terrorism has also been accompanied by a reduction in the global economic impact of terrorism decreasing by 38% to US\$33 billion in 2018.
13. India has been ranked 7th in the countries suffering the most deaths from terrorism in 2018.
14. India is ranked third in the countries with the greatest number of terrorist attacks with nearly 748 recorded terror incidents in 2018.
15. However, India has also recorded a slight improvement in the number of terrorist attacks in the country while also recording a slight decrease in the number of deaths.

### **SRISAILAM DAM IN NEED OF URGENT MAINTENANCE**

Waterman of India Rajendra Singh has said that the Srisaillam Dam in Andhra Pradesh needs repair, protection and maintenance works under the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project.

1. The Srisaillam dam is constructed across the Krishna River in Andhra Pradesh.
2. It is located in the Nallamala hills.
3. Several floods in the region have created a need for repair and maintenance of the Srisaillam dam.
4. The Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement project was launched in 2012 under Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation (now Ministry of Jal Shakti).
5. It is a World Bank assisted project.
6. The Central Dam Safety Organisation of Central Water Commission is coordinating and supervising the Project implementation.
7. To improve the safety and operational performance of selected existing dams and associated appurtenances in a sustainable manner.
8. To improve institutional capacities for dam safety evaluation and implementation at the Central and State levels.
9. The DRIP is an externally-aided project.
10. 80% of the total project is provided by the World Bank as loan/credit and remaining 20% is borne by the States / Central Government (for CWC).

### **HIMAYAT MISSION**

The Jammu and Kashmir administration is working on effective implementation of Himayat Mission. Under this, 42 projects have been sanctioned for training.

1. Himayat is a placement linked skill training programme for unemployed youth of Jammu and Kashmir. The programme has been under implementation in the state since 2011.
2. The programme has been developed and initiated by the Union Ministry of Rural Development and is being implemented by Himayat Mission Management Unit, J&K State Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKSRLM).

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3. The Programme was recommended by Dr. C. Rangarajan Committee report which was submitted to the Prime Minister in 2011.
4. Under the programme, the youth are provided free skill training training for a duration of 3 to 12 months, in a range of skills for which there is good market demand.
5. At the end of the training, the youth are assured of a job and there is one year postplacement tracking to see how they are faring.
6. The Programme is 100% funded by the Government of India.

### GLOBAL MIGRATION REPORT 2020

Global Migration Report is International Organisation for Migration's (IOM) flagship publication.

1. The number of international migrants globally in 2019 were around 272 million which is 3.5% of the world's population.
2. India had the largest number of migrants living abroad (17.5 million), followed by Mexico and China (11.8 million and 10.7 million respectively)
3. The top destination country remained the United States with 50.7 million international migrants
4. The top 3 remittance recipients were India (USD 78.6 billion), China (USD 67.4 billion) and Mexico (USD 35.7 billion)
5. The United States remained the top remittance-sending country (USD 68.0 billion) followed by the United Arab Emirates (USD 44.4 billion) and Saudi Arabia (USD 36.1 billion)
6. Between 2013 and 2017, high-income countries experienced a slight drop in migrant workers
7. But upper middle-income countries observed the biggest increase
8. The number of internally displaced persons due to violence and conflict has reached 41.3 million
9. Syria had the highest number of people displaced, followed by Colombia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo
10. Bangladesh had the largest number of stateless persons followed by Côte d'Ivoire and Myanmar.

### INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

1. Established in 1951
2. headquartered at Geneva, Switzerland
3. It provides services and advice concerning migration to governments and migrants including internally displaced persons, refugees, and migrant workers
4. In September 2016, IOM became a related organization of the United Nations.

### RASHTRIYA MAHILA KOSH

1. RashtriyaMahilaKosh (RMK) is a society registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
2. It was established in 1993 as an autonomous body under the aegis of the Ministry of Women and Child Development for socio-economic empowerment of Women.

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3. The vision of the programme is to be a financial service and capacity enhancement institution for social and economic empowerment of poor and marginalized women.
4. The Kosh seeks to enable women to achieve economic independence.
5. It also strive to go beyond credit delivery and provide services for integrated development centred around the needs of poor women.
6. Under the programme, RMK acts a facilitating agency wherein it provides loans to Intermediary Micro-financing Organizations (IMO) which on-lend to Self Help Groups (SHGs) and /or individual women.

### **NEW SNAKE SPECIES FOUND IN ARUNACHAL**

Recently, researchers from Arunachal Pradesh have discovered a new species of nonvenomous burrowing snake named *Trachischiumapteii*.

The species *Trachischiumapteii* was found under fallen logs inside a thickly forested area of the Talley Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh.

### **LOK SABHA TAKES UP ALL 20 STARRED QUESTIONS**

The 17th Lok Sabha session has taken up all the 20 starred questions in the Question Hour for the first time since 1972.

#### **ABOUT QUESTION HOUR**

1. Question Hour is the first hour of a sitting session of India's Lok Sabha devoted to questions that Members of Parliament raise about any aspect of administrative activity.
2. The Question Hour are mentioned in the Rules of Procedure of the House.
3. The concerned Minister is obliged to answer to the Parliament, either orally or in writing, depending on the type of question raised.
4. Questions are one of the ways Parliament can hold the Executive accountable.

#### **STARRED QUESTIONS**

1. Starred Question is one to which a member desires an oral answer from the Minister in the House and is required to be distinguished by him/her with an asterisk.
2. The answer to such a question may be followed by supplementary questions by members.
3. An Unstarred Question is one to which written answer is desired by the member and is deemed to be laid on the Table of the House by Minister.
4. Thus it is not called for oral answer in the House and no supplementary question can be asked thereon.

#### **SHORT NOTICE QUESTIONS**

1. Members may give a notice of question on a matter of public importance and of urgent character.
2. It demands for oral answer at a notice less than 10 days prescribed as the minimum period of notice for asking a question in the ordinary course.



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3. Such a question is known as 'Short Notice Question'.

### PRIVATE MEMBERS QUESTIONS

1. A Question may also be addressed to a Private Member provided that the subject matter of the question relates to some Bill, Resolution or other matters connected with the business of the House for which that Member is responsible
2. The procedure in regard to such questions is same as that followed in the case of questions addressed to a Minister with such variations as the Speaker may consider necessary.

### ZERO HOUR

1. The time immediately following the Question Hour has come to be known as Zero Hour
2. It starts at around 12 noon (hence the name)
3. Members can with prior notice to the Speaker raise issues of importance during this time
4. However, unlike the question hour, the zero hour is not mentioned in the Rules of Procedure.

### DOUBLE TAXATION AVOIDANCE AGREEMENT (DTAA)

Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) and Protocol between India and the Republic of Chile.

1. The objective of DTAA is that tax-payers in these countries can avoid being taxed twice for the same income.
2. A DTAA applies in cases where a taxpayer resides in one country and earns income in another.
3. DTAAs can either be comprehensive to cover all sources of income or be limited to certain areas such as taxing of income from shipping, air transport, and inheritance among others.

### SIACHEN GLACIER

1. The Siachen Glacier is located in the extreme north central part of Jammu and Kashmir near the Indo - Tibet border.
2. It is the largest glacier in the world outside the Polar Regions and forms parts of the '**Third Pole**'.
3. It lies in the eastern Karakoram range (a mountain system originating from the Pamirs, this area is the most glaciated area outside the polar region comprising 22 glaciers) at the altitude of 5,400 meters above the sea level.
4. The glacier's melting water is the main source of water for the Nubra river, which further falls into the Shyok river.
5. A ceasefire has been holding since November 2003, with Indian troops stationed on the upper part of the glacier and Pakistani troops the lower part.
6. The vast majority of the estimated 2,700 Indian and Pakistani troop deaths have not been due to combat but avalanches, exposure and altitude sickness caused by the thin, oxygen-depleted air.

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7. Operation Meghadoot was launched in April 1984, India urgently dispatched troops to Siachen.
8. Oropolitics means mountaineering with a political goal.

### MEGHA-TROPIQUES

The Indo-French joint satellite mission called MEGHATROPIQUES was launched in 2011 for the study of the tropical atmosphere and climate related to aspects such as monsoons, cyclones, water cycle and energy exchanges in the tropics etc. The data products from this satellite are made available to the international scientific community.

### TYPES OF COAL FOUND IN INDIA

#### ANTHRACITE

1. It is the best quality of coal which carries 80 to 95 per cent carbon content.
2. It ignites slowly with a blue flame.
3. It has the highest calorific value.
4. It is found in small quantity in Jammu and Kashmir.

#### BITUMINOUS

1. It carries 60 to 80 per cent of carbon content and a low level of moisture content.
2. It is widely used and has high calorific value.
3. It is the most commonly used type of coal for electricity generation in India.
4. It is found in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.

#### LIGNITE

1. It is often brown in colour.
2. It carries 40 to 55 per cent carbon content.
3. It is an intermediate stage which happens during the alteration of woody matter into coal.
4. It has high moisture content so it gives smoke when burnt.
5. It is found in Rajasthan, Lakhimpur (Assam), and Neyveli (Tamil Nadu).

#### PEAT

1. It has less than 40 per cent carbon content.
2. It is in the first stage of transformation from wood to coal.
3. It has low calorific value and burns like wood.

#### GONDWANA COAL

1. Around 98 per cent of India's total coal reserves are from Gondwana times. This coal was formed about 250 million years ago.
2. Tertiary coal is of younger age. It was formed from 15 to 60 million years ago.

**TRANSGENDER PERSONS (PROTECTION OF RIGHTS) BILL, 2019**

1. The Bill defines a transgender person as one whose gender does not match the gender assigned at birth.
2. It includes trans-men and trans-women, persons with intersex variations, gender-queers, and persons with socio-cultural identities, such as kinnar and hijra.
3. Intersex variations is defined to mean a person who at birth shows variation in his or her primary sexual characteristics, external genitalia, chromosomes, or hormones from the normative standard of male or female body. Prohibition against discrimination
4. The Bill prohibits the discrimination against a transgender person, including denial of service or unfair treatment in relation to: (i) education; (ii) employment; (iii) healthcare; (iv) access to, or enjoyment of goods, facilities, opportunities available to the public; (v) right to movement; (vi) right to reside, rent, or otherwise occupy property; o (vii) opportunity to hold public or private office; and (viii) access to a government or private establishment in whose care or custody a transgender person is. Certificate of identity for a transgender person
5. A transgender person may make an application to the District Magistrate for a certificate of identity, indicating the gender as 'transgender', based on procedure notified through rules.
6. A revised certificate may be obtained only if the individual undergoes surgery to change their gender either as a male or a female.
7. Note that, if a transgender person is denied a Certificate of Identity, the Bill does not provide a mechanism for appeal or review of such decision of the District Magistrate.
8. The Bill recognizes the following offences against transgender persons: (i) forced or bonded labour (excluding compulsory government service for public purposes), (ii) denial of use of public places, (iii) removal from household, and village, (iv) physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic abuse.
9. Penalties for these offences vary between six months and two years, and a fine.
10. **National Council for Transgender persons (NCT)**-The NCT will consist of (i) Union Minister for Social Justice (Chairperson); (ii) Minister of State for Social Justice (Vice- Chairperson); (iii) Secretary of the Ministry of Social Justice; (iv) one representative from ministries including Health, Home Affairs, and Human Resources Development. Other members include representatives of the NITI Aayog, and the National Human Rights Commission. State governments will also be represented. The Council will also consist of five members from the transgender community and five experts from nongovernmental.

**NALSA V. UNION OF INDIA (2014)**

It was held that transgender persons have the right to decide their "self-identified gender" as male, female or the third gender. It also directed the Centre and State to grant legal recognition for the third gender, ensure there is no discrimination against them, and construct specific social welfare programmes.

**COMBINATION THERAPY USING MALARIA DRUG QUICKLY CLEARS TB**

Researchers from IISc, Bengaluru have made an important discovery of the mechanism used by TB bacteria to tolerate TB drugs, which necessitates longer treatment of six-nine months.

1. They have also demonstrated that a drug combination that prevents the bacteria from inducing this mechanism leads to almost complete clearance of the bacteria from the mice lungs in just two months of therapy.
2. The common notion is that only the non-replicating or slowly metabolising TB bacteria become tolerant to anti-TB drugs.
3. But the team found a fraction of the bacteria inside the macrophages was able to tolerate anti-TB drugs even when actively multiplying.
4. The researchers found that using an already approved anti-malaria drug chloroquine in combination with a TB drug isoniazid can almost clear all the bacteria from the lungs of mice and guinea pigs in just eight weeks.
5. In addition, the drug combination also reduces the chances of TB relapse.

**RASHTRIYA KAMDHENU AAYOG**

1. It has been established by the government in 2019.
2. It seeks for conservation protection and development of cows and their progeny.
3. It is a high powered permanent body.
4. At present, it functions as a part of Rashtriya Gokul Mission under the Department of Animal Husbandry and dairying, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.
5. The objective is to provide the policy framework and direction to the cow conservation and development programs and ensure proper implementation of laws with respect to the welfare of cows.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT ELECTRONIC – BOX (She-BOX)**

Ministry of Women and Child Development informed Lok Sabha about Sexual Harassment electronic–Box (SHe-Box).

1. In 2017, the Ministry of Women and Child Development launched the ‘Sexual Harassment electronic Box or SHe-Box.
2. It has been developed to ensure the effective implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (the SH Act), 2013.
3. SHe-Box is an online complaint management system for registering complaints related to sexual harassment of women at the workplace.
4. Every woman, irrespective of her work status, whether working in organised or unorganized, private or public sectors can register sexual harassment complaints through this portal.
5. Once a complaint is submitted to the ‘SHe-Box’, it is directly sent to the concerned authority having jurisdiction to take action into the matter.

**UNDP LAUNCHES ACCELERATOR LAB IN INDIA TO WORK ON TACKLING POLLUTION**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has launched its Accelerator Lab in India.

1. The Accelerator Lab is an innovative initiative by the UNDP, Qatar Government and the Federal Republic of Germany to find 21st century solutions to today's complex new challenges.
2. These labs seek to identify grassroots solutions together with local actors and validate their potential to accelerate development.
3. The lab has been launched by UNDP in collaboration with Atal Innovation Mission and will look to solve issues through innovative solutions.
4. It will seek to address some of the most pressing issues facing India, such as air pollution, sustainable water management and client-resilient livelihoods through innovation.
5. The vision is also to make faster progress in meeting the ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations (UN) by 2030.
6. India's Accelerator Lab will be part of a network of 60 global labs covering 78 nations that will test and scale new solutions to global challenges like climate change and inequality.

**EXERCISE "SURYA KIRAN"**

1. Joint military exercise 'SURYA KIRAN – XIV' between India and Nepal will be conducted in Nepal from 03 to 16 December 2019.
2. Exercise SURYA KIRAN – XIV is an annual event that is conducted alternatively in Nepal and India.

**EXERCISE "MITRA SHAKTI"**

The 7th edition of Joint military exercise "Mitra Shakti" between India and Sri Lanka will be conducted in Pune from 01 - 14 December 2019.

**ATAPAKA BIRD SANCTUARY**

1. Recently, Atapaka Bird Sanctuary has become a safe breeding ground for two migratory species namely, Grey Pelicans and Painted Storks.
2. IUCN Status of Grey Pelican & Painted Stork - Both are near threatened species.
3. Atapaka Bird Sanctuary is located in Kolleru Lake in Andhra Pradesh.
4. It has been identified as the largest spot-billed pelican home in the world too.
5. Kolleru lake is located between the deltas of the Krishna and Godavari rivers in Andhra Pradesh.

**SAAKSHAR BHARAT MISSION (SBM)**

Recently, Female literacy rate in Telangana's Sangareddy district has increased drastically.

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1. Saakshar Bharat is a centrally-sponsored scheme formulated in 2009 with the objective of achieving 80% literacy level at the national level, by focusing on adult women literacy.
2. The Scheme aims to promote and strengthen adult education, especially of women.
3. The principal target of this SBM programme is to impart functional literacy to 70 million non-literate adults in the age group of 15 years and beyond.

### **OBJECTIVES OF SBM PROGRAMME:**

1. Imparting functional literacy and numeracy to non-literates.
2. Acquiring equivalency to formal educational system.
3. Imparting relevant skill development programme.
4. Promote a learning society by providing opportunities for continuing education.

### **CURRENCY SWAP ARRANGEMENT FOR SAARC**

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revised the framework on currency swap arrangement for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries for 2019-2022.

1. The SAARC currency swap facility came into operation in 2012 with an intention to provide a backstop line of funding for short-term foreign exchange liquidity requirements or balance of payment crises till longer-term arrangements are made.
2. Under the revised framework for 2019-22, the RBI will continue to offer a swap arrangement within the overall corpus of \$2 billion.
3. A currency swap between the two countries is an agreement or contract to exchange currencies with predetermined terms and conditions.
4. SAARC member countries are - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.