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CLASSICAL LANGUAGES

The Center of Excellence for Studies in Classical Telugu (CESCT) was set up under the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore after Telugu was recognized as a Classical Language in 2008. Telugu was declared as a classical language as it fulfilled the following criteria set by the Government:

1. High antiquity of its early texts/recorded history over a period of 1500-2000 years;
2. A body of ancient literature/texts, which is considered a valuable heritage by generations of speakers;
3. The literary tradition be original and not borrowed from another speech community;
4. The classical language and literature being distinct from modern, there may also be a discontinuity between the classical language and its later forms or its offshoots.

It may recall that Tamil was the first language in India to be accorded the classical language status in 2004. Sanskrit, Kannada, Malayalam and Odia are the other language that have been declared as classical languages in India by the government.

INTEGRATED CHECK POST AT JOGBANI-BIRATNAGAR

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, jointly inaugurate the second Integrated Check Post (ICP) at Jogbani-Biratnagar with Prime Minister of Nepal, Shri K.P. Oli. The second Integrated Check Post at Jogbani-Biratnagar is built with Indian assistance to facilitate trade and people's movement across India-Nepal border.

This is the second ICP on the Nepal border. The first was built at the Raxaul-Birgunj border in 2018.

SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE AAPDA PRABANDHAN PURASKAR 2020

In the aftermath of any disaster, many organisations and individuals work silently but effectively to alleviate suffering of the affected population. A good deal of work is done in research/ innovations in early warning, prevention, mitigation, preparedness, rescue, relief and rehabilitation. In order to recognise the excellent work done by individuals and institutions in India in the field of disaster management, Government of India has instituted an annual award known as Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar. The award is announced every year on 23rd January, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.

For the year 2020, *Disaster Mitigation & Management Centre, Uttarakhand* (in the institution category) and *Shri Kumar Munnar Singh* (Individual category) have been selected for the Subhash Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar for their commendable work in Disaster Management.

CENTRAL THEME OF BHARAT PARV 2020 IS 'EK BHARAT SHRESHTHA BHARAT'

The annual event Bharat Parv was celebrated from 26th to 31st January, 2020 in New Delhi.

Bharat Parv aims at encouraging Indians to visit different tourist places of India and to inculcate the spirit of 'Dekho Apna Desh'.

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Theme for the Year 2020: 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' and 'Celebrating 150 Years of Mahatma'.

It is organised by the Ministry of Tourism.

It includes highlights of the Republic Day Parade Tableaux, performances by the Armed Forces Bands, theme pavilions of different States and Central Ministries and cultural performances from different regions of the country.

10 MORE WETLANDS GET THE RAMSAR SITE TAG

In a major recognition towards Government of India's effort towards conservation, restoration and rejuvenation of its wetlands, Ramsar has declared 10 more wetland sites from India as sites of international importance.

1. The Ramsar Convention signed on February 2, 1971, is one of the oldest inter-governmental accord signed by members countries to preserve the ecological character of their wetlands of international importance.
2. The aim of the Ramsar list is to develop and maintain an international network of wetlands which are important for the conservation of global biological diversity and for sustaining human life through the maintenance of their ecosystem components, processes and benefits.
3. Wetlands declared as Ramsar sites are protected under strict guidelines of the convention.
4. With this, the numbers of Ramsar sites in India are now 37 and the surface area covered by these sites is now 1,067,939 hectares.
5. Maharashtra gets its first Ramsar site (Nandur Madhameshwar) , Punjab which already had 3 Ramsar sites adds 3 more (Keshopur-Miani, Beas Conservation Reserve, Nangal) and UP with 1 Ramsar site has added 6 more (Nawabganj, Parvati Agra, Saman, Samaspur, Sandi and SarsaiNawar).

INS AIRAVAT REACHES MADAGASCAR FOR FLOOD RELIEF

INS Airavat arrived at the port of Antsiranana (Madagascar) on 30 Jan 20 to undertake relief operations after floods from heavy rains have led to a crisis in the region.

The relief operations to be undertaken by INS Airavat will be the first by a foreign nation after heavy rains lashed Madagascar and inundated the low lying farmlands leading to massive loss of life and property.

INDIA JUMPS UP 79 POSITIONS IN WORLD BANK DOING BUSINESS RANKINGS

India has jumped up 79 positions in World Bank's Doing Business rankings, improving from 142 in 2014 to 63 in 2019. It has progressed on seven out of the 10 parameters.

The Goods and Service Tax (GST) and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) top the list of reforms that have propelled India's rise in rankings. However, it continues to trail in parameters such as Ease of Starting Business (rank 136), Registering Property (rank 154), Paying Taxes (rank 115), and Enforcing Contracts (rank 163).

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The number of procedures required to set up a business in India, for example, has reduced from 13 to 10 over the past ten years. Today, it takes an average of 18 days to set up a business in India, down from 30 days in 2009.

SKILL INDIA CAMPAIGN

Under Skill India Mission, about 20 Central Ministries/Departments including Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) are involved in the implementation of more than 40 schemes for various skill development programmes for youth across the country.

1. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)
2. Scheme of Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) for Skill Development
3. Scheme for Creation/Improvement of Training Infrastructure (ITIs)
4. National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS)
5. Rural Self Employment and Training Institutes (RSETI)
6. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY), etc.

39 MEGA FOOD PARKS AND 298 INTEGRATED COLD CHAIN PROJECTS

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) has sanctioned 39 Mega Food Parks and 298 Integrated Cold Chain Projects throughout the country to fill in the gaps across the value chain and establishing the Cold Chain Grid.

The MoFPI is focusing on building cold chain infrastructure across the country, for seamless transfer of perishables from production to consumption areas, through the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana (PMKSY)

- (i) Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure
- (ii) Mega Food Park
- (iii) Creation of Backward & Forward Linkages
- (iv) Creation/ Expansion of Food Processing and Preservation Capacities
- (v) Agro Processing Clusters
- (vi) Operation Greens.

NATIONAL POPULATION POLICY

The National Family Planning Programme of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare is guided by the tenets of the National Population Policy 2000 and oversees its implementation. Under this program the service delivery data is triangulated and further the program is regularly reviewed through annual review meetings, supportive supervision visits, common review missions etc.

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As a result of the Government's efforts, the successes achieved are enumerated below:

1. The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has declined from 2.9 in 2005 to 2.2 in 2017 (SRS).
2. 25 out of 37 States/UTs have already achieved replacement level fertility of 2.1 or less.
3. The Decadal growth rate has declined from 21.54% in 1999-2000 to 17.64 % during 2001-11.
4. The Crude Birth Rate (CBR) has declined from 23.8 to 20.2 from 2005 to 2017 (SRS).
5. The Teenage birth rate has halved from 16 % (NFHS III) to 8 % (NFHS IV).

FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND OCI CARDHOLDERS

Recently, the Union government has told the Delhi High Court that Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders do not enjoy fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution, including the right to freedom of speech and expression.

1. Prohibited overseas citizens under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 2010 (FCRA) to make donations to religious and charitable institutions.
2. The Central Government grants limited rights through the Citizenship Act (Conferment of rights on overseas citizens of India).
3. Therefore, it depends on the policies of the government what rights are granted to the OCIs.
4. Centre's response contradicts earlier Delhi High Court ruling in 2018, where it held that OCI cardholders have the right to enjoy the fundamental rights of equality and freedom of speech and expression like other Indian citizens.
5. In 2018, the Delhi High Court had said that an overseas citizen can exercise fundamental rights guaranteed to "natural persons" under the constitution.

BREXIT

Brexit is the word coined by merging the words Britain and exit. It is the shorthand way of saying that Britain is leaving the EU.

1. The UK faced a lot of challenges in materialising this move finally.
2. It is a notable change for the UK although nothing will change immediately because of the 11-month transition period negotiated as part of an EU-UK exit deal, 2019.
3. The UK will be able to work in and trade freely with EU nations and vice versa until December 31, 2020.
4. However, it will no longer be represented in the EU's institutions.
5. From 2021, the UK and EU will enter a new relationship possibly underpinned by a free trade deal.

What is the European Union?

The European Union (EU) is a political and economic union, consisting of 27 member states that are subject to the obligations and the privileges of the membership.

Every member state is part of the founding treaties of the union and is subjected to binding laws within the common legislative and judicial institutions. In order for the EU to adopt policies that concern defence and foreign affairs, all member states must agree unanimously.

PARADIP PORT

1. An inter-ministerial panel has approved a Ministry of Shipping proposal for Paradip Port expansion project.
2. Paradip Port is a natural, deep-water port on the East coast of India in Jagatsinghpur district of Odisha.
3. It is situated at confluence of the Mahanadi River and the Bay of Bengal.
4. The port is administered by the Paradip Port Trust (PPT), an autonomous corporation under the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963 functioning under Ministry of Shipping.

MERCHANTING TRADE TRANSACTIONS (MTT)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued the revised guidelines for Merchanting Trade Transactions (MTT) under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999.

1. In Indian Context, the trade is called Merchanting Trade when, The supplier of goods will be resident in one foreign country, The buyer of goods will be resident in another foreign country, The merchant or the intermediary will be resident in India
2. Merchanting transaction is one which involves shipment of goods from one foreign country to another foreign country involving an Indian Intermediary. Hence, It is also called Intermediary Trade.
3. According to revised guidelines, for a trade to be classified as merchanting trade, goods acquired shall not enter the Domestic Tariff Area. Also, the entire MTT shall be completed within an overall period of nine months.

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The Adhoc Committee of the Rajya instituted by Chairman Venkaiah Naidu has made 40 recommendations to prevent sexual abuse of children and to contain access to and transmission of child pornography content on the social media.

1. A clause to be inserted in the POCSO Act, 2012 under which advocating or counselling sexual activities with a person under the age of 18 years is made an offence under the Act.

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2. National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal shall be designated as the national portal under reporting requirements in POCSO Act in case of electronic material.
3. A new section be included in the IT Act 2000, providing for punitive measures for those providing pornographic access to children and also those who access, produce or transmit Child Sexual Abuse Material(CSAM)
4. Apps that help in monitoring children's access to pornographic content shall be made mandatory on all devices sold in India.
5. On-streaming platforms like Netflix and social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook etc. should have separate adult section where under- aged children could be disallowed
6. National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) should be designated as the nodal agency to deal with the issue of child pornography.
7. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) shall mandatorily record and report annually cases of child pornography of all kinds.

The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is an Indian governmental commission, established by an Act of Parliament, the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act in December 2005, thus is a statutory body. The commission works under the aegis of Ministry of Women and Child development, GoI.

NAGARDHAN EXCAVATIONS

Recent archaeological excavations at Nagardhan, near Nagpur have provided concrete evidence on the life, religious affiliations and trade practices of the Vakataka dynasty that ruled parts of Central and South India between the third and fifth centuries.

1. Nagardhan is a large village in Nagpur district, about 6 km south of Ramtek taluka headquarters.
2. Nagardhan served as the capital of the Vakataka kingdom.
3. It is the first time clay sealings have been excavated from Nagardhan.
4. The oval-shaped sealing belongs to the period when Prabhavati Gupta was the queen of the Vakataka dynasty.
5. It bears her name in the Brahmi script, along with the depiction of a conch.
6. The presence of the conch, scholars say, is a sign of the Vaishnava affiliation that the Guptas held.
7. An intact idol of Lord Ganesha, which had no ornaments adorned, too was found from the site.
8. This confirmed that the elephant god was a commonly worshipped deity in those times.
9. Researchers found animal rearing to be one of the main occupations.
10. Remains of seven species of domestic animals — cattle, goat, sheep, pig, cat, horse and fowl — were traced in an earlier study by the team.

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GLOBAL TALENT COMPETITIVENESS INDEX

The 2020 Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) report compiled by INSEAD in collaboration with human resource firm Addeco and Google was released in Davos, Switzerland.

1. Launched for the first time in 2014, the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) is an annual benchmarking report that measures the ability of countries to compete for talent.
2. India has climbed eight places to 72nd rank in the 2020 Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI), which was topped by Switzerland, the US and Singapore.
3. In the BRICS grouping, China was ranked 42nd, Russia (48th), South Africa (70th) and Brazil at 80th position.
4. India's highest-ranked sub-pillar is employability, but the ability to match labour market demand and supply stands in contrast to the country's poor "mid-level skills", which result in a mediocre score in vocational and technical skills.

INSEAD is a graduate business school with locations in Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and North America. The name "INSEAD" originated as an acronym of Institut Européen d'Administration des Affaires.

3rd GLOBAL POTATO CONCLAVE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the 3rd Global Potato Conclave at Gandhinagar, Gujarat on 28th of January 2020.

1. The Potato Conference will be held for 3 days during 28-30 January, 2020.
2. The Conclave is being organized by Indian Potato Association (IPA) in collaboration with Indian Council of Agricultural Research, New Delhi, and ICAR-Central Potato Research Institute, Shimla and International Potato Center (CIP), Lima, Peru.
3. The present conclave is the third in the series. During last two decades two Global Potato Conferences were organized during 1999, and 2008.
4. The Conclave will provide an opportunity so that all the issues are discussed and future plans are made involving everyone related to the potato sector.
5. Gujarat is one of the leading producers of Potato in the country.
6. In the last eleven years alone, while the area under potato in India, has increased by 19%, it has increased by about 170% in Gujarat.
7. With a productivity of more than 30t/ha, Gujarat is holding the No. 1 position in India for last one decade.

PRESOLAR GRAINS

Scientists have discovered the oldest solid material ever found on the Earth, in the form of stardust trapped inside a meteorite that crashed into Australia 50 years ago and predates the formation of our solar system.

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1. This stardust provides evidence for a 'baby boom' of new stars that formed 7 billion years ago, contrary to the theory that star formation happens at a steady, constant rate.
2. The materials the researchers examined are called presolar grains.
3. Presolar grains are interstellar solid matter in the form of tiny solid grains that originated at a time before the Sun was formed.
4. Presolar stardust grains formed within outflowing and cooling gases from earlier presolar stars. These bits of stardust became trapped in meteorites where they remained unchanged for billions of years, making them capsules of the cosmic time before the solar system.
5. However, presolar grains are very tiny and rare, found only in about five per cent of meteorites that have fallen to the Earth.
6. Since presolar grains are formed when a star dies, they can tell us about the history of stars.

STCW CONVENTION

The Union Cabinet has approved the Model MoU with foreign countries for recognition of seafarers' competency certificates, pursuant to STCW Convention, 1978.

1. International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), 1978 sets minimum qualification standards for masters, officers and watch personnel on seagoing merchant ships and large yachts.
2. The Convention did not deal with manning levels: IMO provisions in this area are covered by the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), 1974.
3. STCW was adopted in 1978 by conference at the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in London, and entered into force in 1984.
4. The Convention was significantly amended in 1995.
5. One especially important feature of the Convention is that it applies to ships of non-party States when visiting ports of States which are Parties to the Convention.

RUKUNA RATHA YATRA

1. The famous Rukuna Ratha Yatra of Lord Lingaraja worshipped as both Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu in a sixth century built temple named 'Lingaraj Temple' at Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
2. Rukuna Rath Yatra of Lord Lingaraj in Bhubaneswar is one of the biggest festival of the city.
3. The Chariot Festival of Lord Lingaraja is celebrated at Bhubaneswar on the day of Ashokastami or Basanti Durga Puja.

UNION BUDGET 2020-21: HIGHLIGHTS

Union Budget of India is the country's comprehensive Annual Financial Statement. The Union Budget consists of a detailed account of the government's finances, its revenues from various sources and expenditures to be incurred on different activities that it will incur. As mentioned in **Article 112** of the Indian Constitution, the Union Government lays a statement of its estimated receipts and expenditure for that year, From April 1 to March 31, before both the Houses of Parliament. The term "budget" is not mentioned in the Constitution.

ECONOMY

1. Nominal growth of GDP - 10% (2020-21)
2. Fiscal deficit - 3.8% of GDP (2019-20), 3.5% of GDP (2020-21).
3. The estimation for the FY20 was at 3.3%, thereby deviating from the target set in the fiscal path. Fiscal deficit, by definition, is the difference between a government's revenue receipts plus non-debt capital receipts (NDCR) and its total expenditure.
4. Fiscal deficit occurs when a government collects lesser money - in terms of personal and corporate taxes, GST, market loans and NDCR (money received from sale of old assets) etc. - than it spends, on items such as central sector schemes, salaries of employees, subsidies, payments to states and so on.
5. According to the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act in India, the recommended fiscal deficit should be 3% of GDP.
6. Revenue deficit- 2.7% of GDP (2020-21). By definition, revenue deficit is the excess of revenue expenditure over revenue receipts.
7. India is now the fifth largest economy of the world in terms of GDP.
8. Growth and Inflation: 7.4% average growth clocked during 2014-19 with inflation averaging around 4.5%.
9. Poverty alleviation: 271 million people raised out of poverty during 2006-16.
10. India's Foreign Direct Investment elevated to US\$ 284 billion during 2014-19 from US\$ 190 billion during 2009-14.
11. Central Government debt reduced to 48.7% of GDP (March 2019) from 52.2% (March 2014).
12. Highest ever number of people in the productive age group (15-65 years) in India.
13. 15th Finance Commission has cut state share of central taxes to the states by one percentage point to 41%.
14. This is due to the newly formed Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, which will get funds from the Centre's share, which means devolution will be for 28 states compared to 29 earlier.
15. 42% was recommended by the 14th Finance Commission.
16. Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) removed.

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17. Instead of companies paying DDT on the dividend they give out, the dividend income will now be added to the taxable income of the recipient, and taxed at the applicable rate.
18. New tax slabs and lower income tax rates. Around 70 of the existing exemptions and deductions to be removed in the new simplified regime.
19. New tax regime to be optional - an individual may continue to pay tax as per the old regime and avail deductions and exemptions. □ Corporate Tax: Concessional corporate tax rate of 15% to new domestic companies in manufacturing and power sector.
20. 5% health cess to be imposed on imports of medical equipment given these are made significantly in India.
21. Issuance of Unique Registration Number to all charity institutions for easy tax compliance.
22. 'Vivad Se Vishwas' scheme, with a deadline of 30th June, 2020, to reduce litigations in direct taxes.
23. 100% tax exemption to the interest, dividend and capital gains income on investment made in infrastructure and priority sectors before 31st March, 2024 with a minimum lock-in period of 3 years by the Sovereign Wealth Fund of foreign governments.

SOCIAL SECTOR AND INFRASTRUCTURE

1. A budget allocation of ₹2.83 lakh crore for 16 action points.
2. The action points include measures to provide farmers access to faraway markets by running trains (Kisan Rail) and flights (Krishi Udaan) and providing relief to farmers from water shortage.
3. It will also include 'One-Product One-District' for better marketing and export in the Horticulture sector.
4. The scheme is already functional in Uttar Pradesh.
5. The focus is also on Jaivik Kheti Portal (online national organic products market), ZeroBudget Natural Farming, PM-KUSUM.
6. Agri-credit availability set at ₹15 lakh crore for 2020-21.
7. An allocation of ₹69,000 crore for the health sector.
8. Proposal to set up hospitals in Tier-II and Tier-III cities with the private sector using PPP model.
9. Expansion of Jan Aushadhi Kendra Scheme to all districts by 2024.
10. A task force to be appointed to recommend regarding steps required to lower the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and improving nutrition.
11. ₹99,300 crore for the education sector in 2021 and about ₹3,000 crore for skill development.
12. Urban local bodies to provide internship to young engineers for a year.
13. Degree-level full fledged online education programmes by institutions ranked in the top 100 in NIRF rankings, especially to benefit underprivileged students.
14. A national police university and a national forensic science university is proposed to be setup.

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15. IND SAT exam for students of Asia and Africa to promote “study in India” programme.
16. Rs. 103 lakh crore for National Infrastructure Pipeline projects announced.
17. An international bullion exchange to be set up at GIFT City.
18. Proceeds from divestment will go only into capital expenditure and not revenue expenditure.
19. Budget proposes to provide ₹1.7 lakh crore for transport infrastructure in 2021.
20. National Logistics Policy to be released soon.
21. Chennai-Bengaluru Expressway to be started.
22. Government to monetise 12 lots of national highways by 2024. Railways
23. Aims to achieve electrification of 27,000 km of railway lines.
24. Plan to have a large solar power capacity for Indian Railways.
25. 100 more airports will be developed by 2024 to support UDAN.
26. 5 new smart cities in public-private partnership mode.
27. Proposal to establish Indian Institute of Heritage and Conservation.
28. 5 archaeological sites to be developed as iconic sites: Rakhigarhi (Haryana), Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh), Sivasagar (Assam), Dholavira (Gujarat), Adichanallur (Tamil Nadu)
29. Maritime museum to be set up at Lothal (Gujarat).
30. Tribal Museum in Ranchi
31. A museum on Numismatics and Trade to be established.

FINANCIAL SECTOR AND GOVERNANCE

1. Bank deposit insurance cover has been increased from ₹1 lakh to ₹5 lakh per depositor.
2. Government plans to amend the Companies Act to decriminalise civil offences.
3. Government to sell part of its stake in LIC via public offering.
4. Scheme to encourage manufacturing of mobile phones, electronic equipment and semiconductor packaging.
5. National Technical Textiles Mission for a period of 4 years.
6. NIRVIK Scheme for higher export credit disbursement launched.
7. Setting up of an Investment Clearance Cell to provide end to end facilitation.
8. Early life funding proposed, including a seed fund to support ideation and development of early stage Start-ups.
9. Audit threshold for MSMEs raised to ₹5 crore from ₹1 crore.

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10. Certain specified categories of Government securities to be opened fully for non resident investors also.
11. Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) limit in corporate bonds increased to 15% from 9% of its outstanding stock.
12. NBFCs eligibility limit for debt recovery reduced from: Rs. 500 crore to Rs 100 crore asset size Rs 1 crore to Rs 50 lakh loan size
13. Knowledge Translation Clusters for emerging technology sectors.
14. Policy to enable the private sector to build Data Centre parks throughout the country.
15. Rs.8000 crore proposed over five years for National Mission on Quantum Technologies and Applications.
16. Mapping of India's genetic landscape- Two new national level Science Schemes to be initiated to create a comprehensive database.
17. An independent, professional and specialist National Recruitment Agency (NRA) for conducting a computer-based online Common Eligibility Test for recruitment on all non gazetted posts.
18. A test-centre in every district, particularly in the Aspirational Districts will be set up.
19. New National Policy on Official Statistics to promote the use of the latest technologies including AI and lay down a road-map towards modernised data collection, integrated information portal and timely dissemination of information.
20. A sum of Rs. 100 crore allocated to begin the preparations for G20 presidency to be hosted in India in the year 2022.

RAKHIGARHI TO BE DEVELOPED AS AN ICONIC SITE

1. Union Budget (2020-21) has proposed to develop Rakhigarhi (Hisar district, Haryana) as an iconic site.
2. 4 other archaeological sites in Hastinapur (Uttar Pradesh), Shivsagar (Assam), Dholavira (Gujarat) and Adichanallur in (Tamil Nadu) will also be developed as iconic sites with onsite museums.
3. Rakhigarhi is the largest Harappan site in the Indian subcontinent.
4. Other large sites of Harappan civilization on Indian sub-continent are Harappa, Mohenjodaro and Ganveriwala in Pakistan and Dholavira (Gujarat) in India.
5. At Rakhigarhi, the excavations are being done to trace its beginnings and to study its gradual evolution from 6000 BCE (Pre-Harappan phase) to 2500 BCE.
6. The archaeological excavations revealed the mature Harappan phase represented by planned township having mud-brick as well as burnt-brick houses with a proper drainage system.
7. A cylindrical seal with 5 Harappan characters on one side and a symbol of an alligator on the other is an important find from this site.

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8. The ceramic industry represented by red ware, which included dish-onstand, vase, perforated jar among others. Blades; terracotta and shell bangles, beads of semi precious stones, and copper objects; animal figurines, toy cart frame and wheel of terracotta; bone points; inscribed steatite seals and sealings.
9. Animal sacrificial pit lined with mud-brick and triangular and circular fire altars on the mud floor have also been excavated that signifies the ritual system of Harappans. The excavations have yielded a few extended burials, which certainly belong to a very late stage, maybe the medieval times.
10. Recently, a study of DNA from skeletal remains excavated from the Harappan cemetery at Rakhigarhi found that the people in the Harappan Civilization have an independent origin. This study negates the theory of the Harappans having Steppe pastoral or ancient Iranian farmer ancestry.
11. It flourished around 2,500 BC, in the western part of South Asia, in contemporary Pakistan and Western India. The Indus Valley was home to the largest of the four ancient urban civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, and China.
12. In the 1920s, the Archaeological Department of India carried out excavations in the Indus valley wherein the ruins of the two old cities, viz. Mohenjodaro and Harappa were unearthed.

MISSING WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN INDIA

Recently, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has released a study on missing persons (especially on women and children) in India. The analysis was directed by the Supreme Court of India in 2019 to identify the areas prone to child and women trafficking.

1. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Global report 2018 on trafficking in persons indicates that the vast majority of the detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are females.
2. More than half of the victims of trafficking for forced labour are men and 35 % of them are females.
3. The reasons for missing include mental illness, miscommunication, misadventure, domestic violence, and being a victim of crime.
4. Whereas the common cause of trafficking is forced marriage, child labour, domestic help and sexual exploitation etc.
5. Maharashtra registered the maximum number of missing women followed by West Bengal.
6. Maharashtra, West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh are three most vulnerable states.
7. Mumbai and Pune (Maharashtra), Kolkata (West Bengal) and Indore (Madhya Pradesh) recorded the highest number of such incidents.
8. The number of missing children is maximum in the State of Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi and Bihar.
9. Indore reported the highest number of missing children.
10. Whereas West Bengal's Nadia district, bordering Bangladesh, showed a steep increase from 291 missing children reports in the year 2017 to 474 in 2018.

US NOD TO INTEGRATED AIR DEFENCE WEAPON SYSTEM

1. The US has approved the sale of an Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) to India at an estimated cost of \$1.9 billion.
2. IADWS will be used along with indigenous, Russian and Israeli systems to erect an ambitious multi-layered missile shield over the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi against aerial threats. It comes amidst the massive military modernisation by China which is also flexing its military muscles in the strategic Indo-Pacific region.
3. The Integrated Air Defence Weapon System (IADWS) is called the National Advanced Surface to Air Missile System (NASAMS-II). It includes launchers, targeting and guidance systems, advanced medium-range air-to-air missile (AMRAAM) and Stinger missiles, 3D Sentinel radars, fire-distribution centres and command-and-control units.

GODAVARI AND CAUVERY RIVER INTERLINKING PROJECT

The National Water Development Agency (NWDA) has circulated a draft Detailed Project Report (DPR) on Godavari-Cauvery link project to the concerned states to elicit their views.

1. The project envisages the diversion of 247 thousand million cubic feet (tmcft) of unutilised water in the Indravati sub-basin of the Godavari basin to meet the requirements between the Godavari and the Cauvery rivers.
2. Water will be diverted from Godavari river to Nagarjuna Sagar dam (through lifting) and further south to meet the demands of Krishna, Pennar and Cauvery basins.
3. The Godavari - Cauvery link comprises three components namely, the Godavari (Inchampalli/Janampet) - Krishna (Nagarjunasagar), the Krishna (Nagarjunasagar) – Pennar (Somasila) and the Pennar (Somasila)–Cauvery.
4. The project will provide irrigation facilities to 3.45 to 5.04 lakh hectares in Prakasam, Nellore, Krishna, Guntur, and Chittoor districts of Andhra Pradesh.
5. NWDA is a registered society under the Ministry of Jal Shakti.
6. It was set up in the year 1982 to carry out detailed studies, surveys and investigations in respect of the Peninsular Component of National Perspective for Water Resources Development, which envisages inter-basin water transfer.
7. Godavari river rises from Trimbakeshwar near Nasik in Maharashtra and discharges into Bay of Bengal. The Godavari basin extends over states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Odisha in addition to smaller parts in Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Union territory of Puducherry. Tributaries: Pravara, Purna, Manjra, Penganga, Wardha, Wainganga, Pranhita (combined flow of Wainganga, Penganga, Wardha), Indravati, Maner and the Sabri.
8. Krishna river originates near Mahabaleshwar (Satara) in Maharashtra. It runs from four states namely, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh before emptying into the Bay of Bengal. Tributaries: Tungabhadra, Mallaprabha, Koyna, Bhima, Ghataprabha, Yerla, Warna, Dindi, Musi and Dudhganga. Nagarjunasagar dam is on the river Krishna.

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9. Pennar river rises in Nandi Hills in Chikballapur District of Karnataka and runs north and east before emptying into the Bay of Bengal. It is 597 kilometres long, with a drainage basin covering 55,213 km² in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Tributaries: Jayamangali, Kunderu, Sagileru, Chitravathi, Papagni and Cheyyeru.
10. Cauvery river rises on Brahmagiri Hill of the Western Ghats in southwestern Karnataka. It flows in a southeasterly direction through the states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, and descends the Eastern Ghats in a series of great falls. Before emptying into the Bay of Bengal south of Cuddalore, Tamil Nadu, the river breaks into a large number of distributaries forming a wide delta called the “garden of southern India.” Tributaries: Arkavathi, Hemavathi, Lakshmana Theertha, Shimsa, Kabini and Harangi

SC UPHOLDS CHANGES TO SC/ST ATROCITIES LAW

The Supreme Court has upheld the constitutional validity of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act, 2018.

1. The Amendment Act nullified the Court’s 20th March, 2018 judgment which had diluted the stringent provisions of the original Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.
2. Petitions were filed challenging the 2018 Amendment Act on the grounds of violation of the fundamental right to equality (Article 14) and personal liberty (Article 21).
3. It added Section 18A to the original Act. It delineates specific crimes against Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as atrocities and describes strategies and prescribes punishments to counter these acts. It identifies what acts constitute “atrocities” and all offences listed in the Act are cognizable.
4. The police can arrest the offender without a warrant and start an investigation into the case without taking any orders from the court.
5. The Act calls upon all the states to convert an existing sessions court in each district into a Special Court to try cases registered under it and provides for the appointment of Public Prosecutors/Special Public Prosecutors for conducting cases in special courts. It creates provisions for states to declare areas with high levels of caste violence to be “atrocidity-prone” and to appoint qualified officers to monitor and maintain law and order.
6. It provides for the punishment for wilful neglect of duties by non-SC/ST public servants. It is implemented by the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations, which are provided due central assistance.

GURU RAVIDAS JAYANTI

1. Guru Ravidas Jayanti was celebrated on 9th February, 2020.
2. Guru Ravidas was a 14th century saint and reformer of the Bhakti movement in North India.

3. It is believed that he was born in Varanasi in a cobbler's family. He gained prominence due to his belief in one God and his unbiased religious poems. He dedicated his whole life to the abolition of the caste system and openly despised the notion of a Brahminical society.
4. His devotional songs made an instant impact on the Bhakti Movement and around 41 of his poems were included in 'Guru Granth Sahib', the religious text of the Sikhs.
5. The development of the Bhakti movement took place in Tamil Nadu between the seventh and ninth centuries. It was reflected in the emotional poems of the Nayanars (devotees of Shiva) and Alvars (devotees of Vishnu).
6. These saints looked upon religion not as a cold formal worship but as a loving bond based upon love between the worshipped and worshipper. In course of time, the ideas of the South moved up to the North but it was a very slow process.
7. A more effective method for spreading the Bhakti ideology was the use of local languages. The Bhakti saints composed their verses in local languages. They also translated Sanskrit works to make them understandable to a wider audience.
8. Examples include Jnanadeva writing in Marathi, Kabir, Surdas and Tulsidas in Hindi, Shankaradeva popularising Assamese, Chaitanya and Chandidas spreading their message in Bengali, Mirabai in Hindi and Rajasthani.

Mt. ACONCAGUA

1. Kaamya Karthikeyan, a twelve year old Indian student, has become the youngest girl in the world to summit Mt. Aconcagua, the highest peak in South America.
2. At 6962 metres, Mt. Aconcagua is the highest peak outside Asia.
3. It lies in the Southern Andes (the world's longest mountain range that is located along the entire western coast of South America).
4. At 8,850 metres, Mount Everest is the highest mountain in Asia and the world.
5. Aconcagua is of volcanic origin, but it is not itself an active volcano.

GRAND ETHIOPIAN RENAISSANCE DAM

1. Ethiopia is building one of the largest dams in the world, the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD), on the river Nile near the Sudan border.
2. It is Africa's biggest dam project and will have lasting impacts on its longest river- Nile. The hydroelectric dam is being built on the Nile (north-flowing river in Africa), in the lowlands of Ethiopia.
3. The Nile is under serious threat of severe pollution, climate change and Egypt's growing population. Egypt is one of the driest countries on earth, with 95% of its people living along the Nile (or its overflowing Delta). It relies almost totally on the Nile for its water supply and the construction of this dam will further cut down Egypt's water supply by 12-25%

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WELFARE SCHEMES FOR WOMEN WORKERS

Union Minister for Labour and Employment informed Lok Sabha about the Welfare Schemes for Women Workers.

1. National Crèche Scheme
2. Working Women Hostel
3. Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme providing collateral free loan under Mudra scheme
4. Ujjwala Scheme for curbing trafficking etc implemented for providing safe working condition to women
5. Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 which provides for same wages for same and similar nature of work and prevents discrimination
6. Maternity Benefit Act, 1961 which provides for paid maternity leave for 26 weeks and mandatory crèche facility in the establishments having 50 or more employees
7. Special training programmes for women workers are being conducted by Dattopant Thengadi National Board for Workers Education & Development (erstwhile Central Board of Workers Education) through which women workers are made aware about their rights, duties and various protective provisions under various labour legislations.

NATIONAL DEWORMING DAY (NDD)

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) conducted the tenth round of National Deworming Day (NDD). This will be followed by the mop-up day on February 17, 2020.

1. Children and adolescents aged 1-19 years are being administered Albendazole (400 mg) across government, government-aided schools, anganwadis, private schools and other educational institutions
2. objective to reduce the prevalence of Soil Transmitted Helminths (STH), commonly called the parasitic intestinal worms
3. Infections with the main STH – roundworm, whipworm and hookworms – contribute to 50.1 lakh disability adjusted life-years (DALYs) worldwide (WHO, 2010).
4. Launched in 2015, the NDD is the largest public health program implemented on a single day
5. Implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Human Resource Development, NDD is a key intervention of Anemia Mukht Bharat.

SUPERCAM

In its mission to Mars this summer, NASA is sending a new laser-toting robot as one of seven instruments aboard the Mars 2020 rover.

1. Called SuperCam, the robot is used for studying mineralogy and chemistry from up to about 7 metres away and help scientists find signs of fossilised microbial life on Mars

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2. From more than 7 m away, SuperCam can fire a laser to study rock targets smaller than a pencil point. That lets the rover study spots it can't reach with its arm
3. SuperCam looks at rock textures and chemicals to find those that formed or changed in water on Mars long ago
4. SuperCam includes a microphone so scientists can listen each time the laser hits a target. The popping sound created by the laser subtly changes depending on a rock's material properties
5. Mars 2020 rover marks the third time this particular microphone design will go to the Red Planet

GENDER GAP IN SCIENCE

February 11 was the International Day of Women and Girls in Science, established by the United Nations to promote equal access to and participation in science for women and girls.

1. According to a 2018, sheet prepared by UNESCO on women in science, just 28.8% of researchers are women.
2. In India, this drops to 13.9%.
3. Between 1901 and 2019, 334 Nobel Prizes awarded to 616 Laureates in Physics, Chemistry and Medicine, of which just 20 won by 19 women
4. UNESCO data from 2014-16 show that only around 30% of female students select STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) related fields in higher education
5. In India, a 2016-17 NITI Aayog report compared female enrolment in various disciplines over five years, until 2015-16.
6. In 2015-16, 9.3% of female students in undergraduate courses were enrolled in engineering, compared to 15.6% across genders.

EXEMPTION FROM CRR MAINTENANCE

1. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has said that the special lending window with Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) exemption will be open from 14th of February and incremental loans disbursed under this facility will have CRR exemption for the next five years.
2. This means that banks will not be needed to make additional cash reserve ratio against any incremental loans disbursed to the targeted segments
3. Window will open for six months ending 31st of July this year, but the Net Demand and Time Liabilities (NDTL) will be calculated as of 31st of January
4. It asked banks to report the CRR exemption availed at the end of a fortnight under exemptions/others in the Section 42 return, under the provisions of the master circular on CRR and SLR issued on 1st of July, 2015.

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DASUOPU GLACIER

1. Human activity may have contaminated one of the highest peaks in the central Himalayas hundreds of years before a person ever set foot there.
2. Study published in the journal PNAS, indicates that the by products of burning coal in Europe in the late 18th century made their way to the Dasuopu glacier, about 10,300 kilometres from London, the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution
3. use of coal combustion started to cause emissions that were transported by winds up to the Himalayas
4. Dasuopu Glacier, at 7,200 metres above sea level, is the highest-altitude site in the world where scientists have obtained a climate record from an ice core
5. located on Shishapangma, one of the world's 14 tallest mountains all located in the Himalayas

SAFER INTERNET DAY

1. This year, February 11 is being observed as Safer Internet Day (SID).
2. Aims to increase awareness about emerging online issues, such as cyberbullying, and chooses a topic reflecting current concerns
3. Theme is "Together for a better internet"
4. First initiated in 2004, and is as part of the EU's 'Better Internet for Kids' policy.
5. Now recognised in around 150 countries worldwide
6. To expand the initiative's reach, Safer Internet Day Committees were introduced in 2009. In India, the New Delhi-based NGO DISC (Developing Internet Safe Community) Foundation is the SID Committee.

GRAM NYAYALAYAS

The Supreme Court has directed the states, which are yet to come out with notifications for establishing 'Gram Nyayalayas', to do so within four weeks, and asked the high courts to expedite the process of consultation with state governments on this issue.

1. So far only 11 states have taken steps to notify Gram Nyayalayas. Several states have issued notifications for establishing 'Gram Nyayalayas' but all of them were not functioning except in Kerala, Maharashtra and Rajasthan.
2. Only 208 'Gram Nyayalayas' are functioning in the country as against 2,500 estimated to be required by the 12th five-year plan.
3. Village courts are established under the Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008 for speedy and easy access to justice system in the rural areas of India.
4. Act came into force from 2 October 2009.

5. Court presided over by a Nyayadhikari by Sections 5 and 6 of the 2008 Act, who will have the same power, enjoy same salary and benefits of a Judicial Magistrate of First Class.
6. Such Nyayadhikari are to be appointed by the State Government in consultation with the respective High Court.
7. Gram Nyayalaya have jurisdiction over an area specified by a notification by the State Government in consultation with the respective High Court.
8. Can function as a mobile court at any place within the jurisdiction of such Gram Nyayalaya, after giving wide publicity to that regards.
9. Have both civil and criminal jurisdiction over the offences over the offences and nature of suits specified in the First, Second and Third schedule of the Act.
10. Gram Nyayalayas allow for conciliation of the dispute and settlement of the same in the first instance.
11. Appeal in criminal cases shall lie to the Court of Session, which shall be heard and disposed of within a period of six months from the date of filing of such appeal.
12. Appeal in civil cases shall lie to the District Court, which shall be heard and disposed of within a period of six months from the date of filing of the appeal.
13. Setting up of Gram Nyayalayas is considered as an important measure to reduce arrears and is a part of the judicial reforms. It is estimated that Gram Nyayalayas can reduce around 50% of the pendency of cases in subordinate courts and can take care of the new litigations which will be disposed within six months.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 15TH FINANCE COMMISSION

The report of the Fifteenth Finance Commission, along with an Action Taken Report, was recently tabled in Parliament.

1. FC has considered the 2011 population along with forest cover, tax effort, area of the state, and “demographic performance” to arrive at the states’ share in the divisible pool of taxes.
2. In order to reward population control efforts by states, the Commission developed a criterion for demographic effort — which is essentially the ratio of the state’s population in 1971 to its fertility rate in 2011 — with a weight of 12.5%, total area of states, area under forest cover, and “income distance” were also used by the FC to arrive at the tax-sharing formula.
3. The share of tax revenues that the Centre shares with the states — from 42% to 41%.
4. Shares of the southern states, except Tamil Nadu, have fallen — with Karnataka losing the most.
5. Shares of states like Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab, along with Tamil Nadu, all of which have fertility rates below the replacement level, have increased slightly.
6. On the other hand, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Karnataka, and West Bengal’s shares have fallen, even though their fertility rates are also low.

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7. Population parameter used by the Commission has been criticised by the governments of the southern states.
8. previous FC used both the 1971 and the 2011 populations to calculate the states' shares, giving greater weight to the 1971 population (17.5%) as compared to the 2011 population (10%).
9. Use of 2011 population figures has resulted in states with larger populations like UP and Bihar getting larger shares, while smaller states with lower fertility rates have lost out.
10. The combined population of the Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Jharkhand is 47.8 crore. This is over 39.48% of India's total population, and is spread over 32.4% of the country's area, as per the 2011 Census.
11. On the other hand, the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and undivided Andhra Pradesh are home to only 20.75% of the population living in 19.34% of the area, with a 13.89% share of the taxes.

GLOBAL GO TO THINK TANK INDEX

Index is released by University of Pennsylvania each year since 2008.

1. It evaluates public-policy research analysis and engagement organisations that generate policy-oriented research, analysis, and advice on domestic and international issues.
2. Claims to enable policy makers and the public to make informed decisions on public policy.
3. Definition of think- tanks: report defined "think tanks" as public-policy research analysis and engagement organisations that generate policy-oriented research, analysis, and advice on domestic and international issues, thereby enabling policymakers and the public to make informed decisions about public policy.
4. List was topped by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace of US, followed by Belgium's Bruegel and French Institute of International Relations (IFRI).
5. UK's Chatham House was ranked 6th on the list.
6. Performance of institutions in India: Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has been placed at No. 16. CSE climbed up two notches in the 14th version of the report. Organisation also moved up three places among 'best independent think tanks' to be at No.123 in the world and sixth among Indian think tanks. Globally, it was ranked 41 of 60
7. India's Observer Research Foundation (ORF) has jumped more than 90 places to 27th position among 176 global think tanks.
8. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation was the highest-ranked Indian think tank with a political party affiliation in the world, getting a rank of 31st, among 38 such institutions.
9. India Foundation and Vivekananda International Foundation were ranked 36th and 37th on that list.
10. India has the second-largest number of think tanks at 509. The US has the highest number at 1,871.

SOPHISTICATED ANALYTICAL & TECHNICAL HELP INSTITUTES(SATHI)

The Department of Science & Technology has launched a unique scheme called “Sophisticated Analytical & Technical Help Institutes (SATHI)”.

1. Aim is to address the need for building shared, professionally managed and strong S&T infrastructure in the country which is readily accessible to academia, start-ups, manufacturing, industry and R&D labs etc.
2. Centres are expected to house major analytical instruments to provide common services of high-end analytical testing, thus avoiding duplication and reduced dependency on foreign sources.
3. These would be operated with a transparent, open access policy. DST has already set up three such centres in the country, one each at IIT Kharagpur, IIT Delhi and BHU at a total cost of Rs 375 Cores.
4. To address the problems of accessibility, maintenance, redundancy and duplication of expensive equipment in the institutions.
5. This will also foster a strong culture of collaboration between institutions and across disciplines to take advantage of developments, innovations and expertise in diverse areas.
6. Planned to set up five SATHI Centres every year for the next four years
7. SATHI will address the problems of accessibility, maintenance, redundancy and duplication of expensive equipment in our Institutions while reaching out to the less endowed organizations in need, e.g., industry, MSMEs, startups and State Universities.

UJH MULTIPURPOSE (NATIONAL) PROJECT

1. The project is planned to be constructed in Kathua District of J&K on the River Ujh which is a major tributary of River Ravi.
2. Project, after completion, will enhance the utilization of waters of Eastern Rivers allotted to India as per the Indus Water Treaty.
3. Ujh river originates in Kailash mountains (near Bhaderwah hills, part of the Pir Panjal Range) at an altitude of 4,300 metres (14,100 ft).
4. Four streams, Bhini, Sutar, Dunarki and Talan join Ujh at Panjtirthi

INDIA DEVELOPS NEW VACCINE TO CONTROL CLASSICAL SWINE FEVER

1. The Indian Institute of Veterinary Research (IVRI) of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed a new vaccine to control classical swine fever.
2. Hog Cholera or Classical swine fever (CSF) is a contagious viral disease of domestic and wild swine.
3. It happens due to the viruses that bring viral diarrhea in pigs and ailments in sheep. The disease does not harm humans but all-important precautions are advised to follow.

4. One of the biggest pigs' diseases in India. It causes a loss of about 400 crores of rupees per year in India. This has led to a decrease in the population of pigs in 2019.

REVERSE OSMOSIS (RO)

The Union Environment Ministry has issued a notification to comply with the NGT order which prohibited the use of MWPS [Membrane-based Water Purification System] reverse osmosis (RO) purifiers in places where total dissolved solids (TDS) in the supplied water are below 500 mg per litre.

1. NGT had ordered a ban on RO filters on the grounds that they wasted water and that, in the process of removing salts, they often deprived drinking water of essential salts, which could affect the nutritional intake of the people.
2. Current BIS regulations consider 500 mg/litre-1,200 mg/litre of total dissolved solids, which consist of salts and some organic matter, as acceptable.
3. **Osmosis and RO:** Osmosis involves 'a solvent (such as water) naturally moving from an area of low solute concentration, through a membrane, to an area of high solute concentration.
4. A reverse osmosis system applies an external pressure to reverse the natural flow of solvent and so seawater or brackish water is pressurised against one surface of the membrane, causing salt-depleted water to move across the membrane, releasing clean water from

BLUE DOT NETWORK

1. The first meeting of the Blue Dot Network's steering committee was held recently in Washington, with Australia and Japan as partners.
2. U.S., Australia and Japan announced the network during the November 4, 2019, Indo-Pacific Business Forum in Bangkok.
3. The initiative aligns with the G20's Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment, particularly on governance, environmental standards and transparency.
4. "blue dot" will be awarded to projects the initiative endorses.
5. At present the project is led by the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, in partnership with the government-owned Japan Bank for International Cooperation and Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs.
6. Once fully up and running, the new network will bring together governments, the private sector and other organizations behind a set of high quality global infrastructure development standards.
7. Will act as a globally recognized seal of approval for major infrastructure projects, letting people know the projects are sustainable and not exploitative.

SELECT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS ON SURROGACY (REGULATION) BILL

15 major changes have been suggested in a report presented by the Select Committee on Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill. Bill prohibits commercial surrogacy and allows only altruistic surrogacy.

1. Keep an option for compensating the surrogate mother beyond medical expenses and insurance coverage that includes taking care of her nutritional food requirements, maternity wear, etc. that is vital for the wellbeing and upkeep of the surrogate mother.
2. The controversial clause of “close relative” has been done away with and instead the committee has recommended the term to be replaced with a “willing woman”.
3. Single women, including a widow and divorcee, between the ages of 35 and 45 years, should be able to opt for surrogacy.
4. Increase insurance cover for the surrogate mother from the 16 months proposed in the Bill to 36 months.
5. In order to protect the interests of the child born through surrogacy, the order regarding the parentage and custody of the child, issued by a Magistrate, shall be the birth affidavit for the surrogate child.

SUPREME COURT PANEL RECOMMENDS SEVERAL PRISON REFORMS

Supreme Court panel recommends several prison reforms. Key recommendations: Every new prisoner should be allowed a free phone call a day to his family members to see him through his first week in jail.

1. Modern cooking facilities, canteens to buy essential items and trial through video-conferencing should be made available.
2. Speedy trial remains one of the best ways to remedy the unwarranted phenomenon of over-crowding.
3. There should be at least one lawyer for every 30 prisoners, which is not the case at present.
4. Special fast-track courts should be set up to deal exclusively with petty offences which have been pending for more than five years.
5. NHRC figures show that prisoners cut off from family and friends had a 50% more chance of committing suicide than those outside. The average suicide rate in prisons is over 50% more than in normal conditions.
6. Indian prisons face three long-standing structural constraints: overcrowding, understaffing and underfunding. The inevitable outcome is sub-human living conditions, poor hygiene, and violent clashes between the inmates and jail authorities.
7. In the absence of adequate prison staff, overcrowding of prisons leads to rampant violence and other criminal activities inside the jails.
8. Indian jails have often been dubbed as a university for grooming criminals due to pathetic and inhumane conditions.

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9. In the absence of a robust Whistleblower Protection Act and structural changes to address the issues of overcrowding and understaffing, India's prisons will continue to be heaven for politically connected criminals and hell for socio-economically disadvantaged undertrials, some regular media uproars notwithstanding.
10. Fundamental rights of prisoners cannot be placed in the back-burner and the Centre and the states need to be more pro-active in sensitising staff about the need to treat prisoners as humanely as possible.
11. 'Prisons/persons detained therein' is a State subject under Entry 4 of List II of the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India.

SOIL HEALTH CARDS (SHC) SCHEME

In the second phase of the scheme's implementation, 11.69 crore Soil Health Cards were distributed to farmers in two years.

1. The scheme has led to a decline of 8-10% in the use of chemical fertilizers and also raised productivity by 5-6%.
2. Launched in 2015, under the scheme, the government plans to issue soil cards to farmers which will carry crop-wise recommendations of nutrients and fertilisers required for the individual farms.
3. This will help farmers to improve productivity through judicious use of inputs.
4. A Soil Health Card is used to assess the current status of soil health and, when used over time, to determine changes in soil health that are affected by land management.
5. It displays soil health indicators and associated descriptive terms. The indicators are typically based on farmers' practical experience and knowledge of local natural resources.
6. The card lists soil health indicators that can be assessed without the aid of technical or laboratory equipment.
7. It will contain the status of his soil with respect to 12 parameters, namely N,P,K (Macro-nutrients); S (Secondary- nutrient); Zn, Fe, Cu, Mn, Bo (Micro – nutrients); and pH, EC, OC (Physical parameters).
8. Based on this, the SHC will also indicate fertilizer recommendations and soil amendment required for the farm.

INTERNATIONAL IP INDEX 2020

The International IP Index 2020 has been released by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC).

1. GIPC evaluates the IP infrastructure in each economy based on 45 unique indicators, which are critical to the growth of effective IP systems.

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2. The indicators encompass 8 categories of IP protection: patents, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, commercialization of IP assets, enforcement, systemic efficiency, and membership and ratification of international treaties.
3. Performance of India: Ranked 40 out of 53 global economies.
4. Last year India was ranked at 36th position out of 50 countries.
5. Since the release of the 2016 National IPR Policy, the Government of India has made a focused effort to support investments in innovation and creativity through increasingly robust IP protection and enforcement.
6. Implementation of the policy has improved the speed of processing for patent and trademark applications, increased awareness of IP rights among Indian innovators and creators.

VADHAVAN PORT AND LANDLORD MODEL

1. The Union Cabinet has approved a proposal to set up a major port at VadHAVAN near Dahanu in Maharashtra with a total cost of ₹65,545 crore.
2. This will be 14th major port in India.
3. Currently, India has 13 major ports at Deendayal (erstwhile Kandla), Mumbai, JNPT, Mormugao, New Mangalore, Cochin, Chennai, Kamarajar (earlier Ennore), VO Chidambaranar, Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata (including Haldia).
4. In the landlord port model, the publicly governed port authority acts as a regulatory body and as landlord while private companies carry out port operations—mainly cargo-handling activities.

KUMBHABHISHEKAM

1. The 'kumbhabhishekam' (consecration) of the 1,010-year-old Brihadeeswarar Temple or the Big Temple is being held at Thanjavur.
2. This enormously significant event was held after 23 years — and after the Madras High Court had settled an old argument over the ritual purification process only five days previously.
3. Located on the banks of Kaveri river, it is an exemplary example of a fully realised Dravidian architecture. It is called as Dhakshina Meru (Meru of south).
4. The temple is a part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the "Great Living Chola Temples", along with the Chola dynasty era Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple and Airavatesvara temple.
5. There are several shrines added to the temple by most of the following rulers such as the Pandyas, the Vijayanagara rulers and the Marathas, too.
6. Brihadeshwara Temple is also the first all-granite temple in the world.

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BHUTAN'S NEW TOURISM FEE

1. Bhutan will now impose a “sustainable development fee” (SDF) on Indian, Bangladeshi and Maldivian tourists.
2. Ending decades of free entry to Indian tourists visiting Bhutan, the Bhutanese Government has decided to levy a daily ₹1,200 (\$17) fee for “regional tourists” from India, the Maldives and Bangladesh, beginning July 2020. New levy, however, will not be applicable across Bhutan.
3. To promote tourism in the less popular Eastern Bhutan, the SDF will not be levied on tourists travelling to 11 districts in the region.

LONGEST SPACEFLIGHT BY A WOMAN: CHRISTINA KOCH

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) astronaut Christina Koch landed on the Earth on 6th February, 2020 after a record stay of 328 days on the International Space Station. The previous longest single spaceflight by any woman was 289 days by Peggy Whitson, also an American, who set that record in 2017. Valery Polyakov of Russia holds the combine (i.e. for both men and women) record for the longest single spaceflight in history (438 days).

LUCKNOW DECLARATION

1. It is a joint declaration adopted as an outcome of the first India-Africa Defence Ministers' Conclave which was held along the side-lines of the DefExpo 2020.
2. Conclave was conducted with the aim of exporting India-made equipment to the African continent in keeping with long-standing defence partnerships since the 1950s.
3. The Declaration calls for deeper cooperation in the domain of defence industry including through investment, joint ventures in defence equipment software, digital defence, research & development, provisioning of defence equipment, spares and their maintenance on sustainable and mutually beneficial terms.
4. Besides traditional partners in Eastern and Southern Africa, Western African states have also sought to deepen defence ties with India
5. India has also made available defence equipment and supply to African countries through its robust India-Africa development partnership, including through grant assistance and Lines of Credit.

GENOME INDIA PROJECT

The government has cleared an ambitious gene-mapping project, called Genome India Project. Overview of Genome India Project: Rs 238-crore Genome India Project will involve 20 leading institutions including the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru and a few IITs.

First stage of the project will look at samples of “10,000 persons from all over the country” to form a “grid” that will enable the development of a “reference genome”.

IISc's Centre for Brain Research, an autonomous institute, will serve as the nodal point of the project.

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Initiative will pave the way for identifying genes and genetic variations for common diseases, treating Mendelian disorders, enabling the transformation of the Precision Medicine landscape in India, and thus improving the healthcare of the general population in our country.

Mapping the diversity of India's genetic pool will lay the bedrock of personalised medicine and put it on the global map. Considering the diversity of population in our country, and the disease burden of complex disorders, including diabetes, mental health, etc., once we have a genetic basis, it may be possible to take action before the onset of a disease.

ADDU TOURISM ZONE

India and Maldives signed five MoUs for establishing the Addu Tourism zone in five islands of Addu atoll at a cost of 2.49 million dollars. A 6th MoU to set up a bottled water plant in Hoarafushi was also signed. Addu Atoll, also known as Seenu Atoll, is the southernmost atoll of the Maldives

SANTUSHT

Santusht' - Implementation Monitoring Cell (IMC) constituted in the Office of Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Labour and Employment, in January 2020, objective to promote transparency, effective delivery of public services and implementation of policies, schemes of Ministry of Labour at grassroot level through constant monitoring.

RUBIGULA

The flame-throated bulbul, also called the Rubigula, was chosen as the mascot of the 36th National Games to be held in Goa because it is the State bird of Goa. Found in the Western Ghats from southern Maharashtra and Goa southwards

RANI RAMPAL

The Indian women's Hockey team captain Rani Rampal is the World Games Athlete of the Year 2019, thus becoming the first-ever hockey player to win the prestigious World Games Athlete of the Year Award.

UDYANOTSAV

The President of India opened the annual "Udyanotsav" of Rashtrapati Bhavan. The Mughal Gardens will remain open for the general public from February 5, 2020 to March 08, 2020. Rashtrapati Bhavan, the official residence of the President of India, is flanked by the iconic Mughal gardens — spread over 15 acres

EUTHERMIA

A new study, published in the journal eLife, that concluded the average human body temperature has never been constant in the first place. Normal human body temperature, also known as normothermia or

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euthermia, is the typical temperature range found in humans, thermometer reading of 98.6°F has been a gold standard for a century and a half, ever since a German doctor laid it down as the “normal” human body temperature.

1. In 1851, Carl Reinhold August Wunderlich pioneered the use of the clinical thermometer
2. He took over a million measurements of 25,000 patients, and published his findings in a book in 1868, in which he concluded that the average human body temperature is 98.6°F
3. Most modern scientists feel Wunderlich’s experiments were flawed
4. Different studies have found the human body temperature averaging out differently, including at 97.7°, 97.9° and 98.2°F
5. Recent study, new research found that body temperatures have, in fact, been declining over the last two centuries as a result of changes in the environment over the past 200 years
6. Strong influences of age, time of day, and genders on body temperature preclude definition of average body temperature.

INTERNATIONAL GANDHI AWARDS FOR LEPROSY

The President of India presented the International Gandhi Awards for Leprosy to Dr N.S. Dharmashaktu under the Indian nomination (individual) category and the Leprosy Mission Trust under the institutional category. Gandhi Memorial Leprosy Foundation, Wardha, a pioneering organisation established in 1951 in the field of leprosy in India, has instituted the award titled “International Gandhi Award” in 1986.

RESERVATION IN PROMOTION IN PUBLIC POSTS

The Supreme Court has reiterated in a judgment that Reservation in promotion in public posts cannot be claimed as a fundamental right. Court observed that State governments are not bound to provide reservation for appointment in public posts

1. Even the courts could not issue a mandamus directing the States to provide reservation
2. court said Articles 16 (4) and 16 (4-A) did not confer individuals with a fundamental right to claim reservation in promotion
3. Articles empower the State to make reservation in matters of appointment and promotion in favour of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes only “if in the opinion of the State they are not adequately represented in the services of the State.

MEDICAL EQUIPMENT NOTIFIED AS ‘DRUGS’

1. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has notified that medical equipment would qualify as ‘drugs’ under Section 3 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act (D & CA), 1940 from 1st April, 2020.
2. The Medical Devices Amendment Rules, 2020 were also released. The rules will also come into force from 1st April, 2020.

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3. The Rules state that the medical devices shall be registered with the Central Licensing Authority through an identified online portal established by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO).
4. Such registration is voluntary for a period of 18 months, after which it will be mandatory.

SCHEDULED TRIBES IN KARNATAKA

1. Recently, the Lok Sabha passed the Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019.
2. It seeks to include the Parivara and the Taliwara communities in the Scheduled Tribes (ST) category to ensure they get a reservation and other benefits provided by the government.
3. The Siddi tribes of Belagavi and Dharwad would also be included in the category apart from those living in the Uttar Kannada districts of Karnataka.

CAUVERY DELTA DECLARED AS A PROTECTED SPECIAL AGRICULTURE ZONE

1. The Tamil Nadu government has declared the Cauvery delta region as a Protected Special Agriculture Zone.
2. The protected zone includes eight districts namely Thanjavur (Rice Bowl of Tamil Nadu), Tiruvarur, Nagapattinam, Pudukottai, Cuddalore, Ariyalur, Karur and Tiruchirapalli.
3. Such a declaration will prevent non-agrarian projects in the region.
4. The Government has emphasised that central projects on hydrocarbon exploration in the delta region cannot be implemented without No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the State government.
5. The Cauvery delta region is an important agricultural region in Tamil Nadu.
6. It has been seen that in the last four decades, Tamil Nadu's food dependence on the delta has fallen from 65% to 40%. Hydrocarbon wells are one of the major reasons behind the same.

EXERCISE AJEYA WARRIOR – 2020

1. The fifth edition of India-UK joint military exercise 'Ajeya Warrior' will be conducted at Salisbury Plains, United Kingdom from 13th-26th February, 2020.
2. The aim of this exercise is to conduct army level joint training with emphasis on counter terrorism operations. The exercise is conducted alternatively in the United Kingdom and India.
3. Other joint exercises between India and UK: Navy: Konkan; Air Force: Indradhanush

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USTR TAKES INDIA OFF DEVELOPING COUNTRY LIST

1. The office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) has taken off India from the list of developing and least-developed countries that are eligible claim benefits for preferential treatment with respect to countervailing duties (CVDs) investigations.
2. The preferential treatment with respect to CVDs investigations falls under the US' Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) scheme.
3. Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is an umbrella that comprises the bulk of preferential schemes granted by industrialized nations to developing countries.

CONSERVATION PLAN FOR KONARK TEMPLE

The Union Government has decided to restore and preserve the nearly 800-year-old Konark Sun Temple, Odisha. Earlier, the monument had entered into controversy over allegations that the stone carvings on the outer surface were being replaced with plain blocks of stones causing irreplaceable loss to the uniqueness of the temple.

1. Konark was built by King Narasimhadeva I (1238-1264AD) in the 13th century and is located in Eastern Odisha near the sacred city of Puri.
2. King Narasimhadeva I was a famous ruler of the Ganga Dynasty and with his accession to the throne, the Ganga Dynasty reached its zenith.
3. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (1984).
4. Dedicated to the Sun God, Konark is the culmination of Odisha temple architecture, and one of the most outstanding monuments of religious architecture in the world.
5. Its scale, refinement and conception represent the strength and stability of the Ganga Dynasty as well as the value systems of the historic milieu.
6. The entire temple was designed in the shape of a colossal chariot with 7 horses and 24 wheels, carrying the sun god, Surya, across the heavens.
7. 'Konarka', the place bears a name composed of two world elements : KONA meaning corner and ARKA meaning the Sun.
8. The Sun god worshipped in Ark Kshetra is also called Konark.
9. In 'Brahma Purana' the Sun God in Ark-kshetra has been described as Konaditya.
10. Surya has been a popular deity in India since the Vedic period.

ARTH GANGA PROJECT

1. During the first meeting of the National Ganga Council in Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh) in 2019, the Prime Minister urged for a holistic thinking process where 'Namami Gange' evolves to 'Arth Ganga'.
2. In simple terms, 'Arth Ganga' implies a sustainable development model with a focus on economic activities related to Ganga.

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3. As part of this process, farmers will be encouraged to engage in sustainable agriculture practices, including zero budget farming, planting of fruit trees and building plant nurseries on the banks of Ganga.
4. Above practices, along with creation of infrastructure for water sports and development of campsites, cycling and walking tracks etc., would help to tap the 'hybrid'
5. tourism potential of the river basin area- for purposes of religious as well as adventure tourism. Almost half of the Indian population lives around the Ganges River belt.
6. Moreover, of India's total freight, about 1/5th originates and 1/3rd terminates in the states around Ganges Belt. Thus, inland waterway is one of the most important pillars of "Arth Ganga" project.

WOMEN ELIGIBLE FOR PERMANENT COMMISSION

The Supreme Court has ruled that the Short Service Commission (SSC) women officers are eligible for the permanent commission and command posts in the Army irrespective of their years of service.

1. The verdict came on a nearly 10-year-old appeal filed by the government against the 2010 decision of the Delhi High Court to grant SSC women officer's permanent commission.
2. The court ordered the government to implement its judgment in three months.
3. The court dismissed the government's stand that only women officers with less than 14 years of service.
4. This ought to be considered for permanent commission and those with over 20 years' service should be pensioned immediately.
5. The court has done away with all discrimination on the basis of years of service for grant of PC in 10 streams of combat support arms and services, bringing them on a par with male officers.
6. The court held that women officers will also be eligible for command posts in non-combat areas since "an absolute bar on women seeking criteria or command appointments would not go with the guarantee of equality under Article 14".
7. The court held that since command appointments were not automatic for men officers, so would it be for women. It was left to the Army to take a call on a case to case basis.
8. SC's stand on Combat Role: The exclusion of women from combat operations was not examined by the court as it was not the contested in the appeal.

WILDFIRES IN THE MUKURTHI NATIONAL PARK

1. Ahead of summer and peak fire season, 'fire lines' or 'fire breaks', in the Mukurthi National Park (MNP) are being constructed by the Tamil Nadu government.
2. Fire line is an artificially formed break in foliage or forest cover to control the spread of wildfires by limiting the amount of combustible vegetation available. □ Other Measures Being Taken to

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3. Cool burning is done in a controlled manner by artificially creating small, localised fires to limit the amount of vegetation available in any given area.
4. It means that any fires will not have any build-up of “vegetative fuel” to use to become a large, uncontrollable fire.
5. Removal of invasive trees such as wattle is also being done in the Park in order to reduce the fuel for wildfires.
6. Wildfire is a general term which includes any uncontrolled, unplanned forest fires, grassland fires, bushfires, brush fires and any other vegetation fire in countryside areas.
7. Mukurthi National Park (MNP) is a part of Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO World Heritage Site) along with Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Bandipur National Park, Nagarhole National Park, Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary and Silent Valley.
8. The park was created to protect its keystone species, the Nilgiri Tahr.

MADHAV NATIONAL PARK

The Park was the hunting ground of Mughal emperors and Maharaja of Gwalior. It got the status of a National Park in 1959. It has a diverse ecosystem consisting of lakes, dry deciduous & dry thorn forests. The forest is home to tigers, leopards, Nilgai, and Chinkara (*Gazella bennettii*) and Chousingha (*Tetracerus quadricornis*) and Deers (Chital, Sambar and Barking Deer) among others.

CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNAL

1. The annual All India Conference of the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) was held in New Delhi on 16th February, 2020.
2. **Article 323 - A:** The Central Administrative Tribunal had been established under Article 323 - A of the Constitution for adjudication of disputes and complaints with respect to recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to public services and posts in connection with the affairs of the Union or other authorities under the control of the Government.
3. In pursuance of Article 323-A, the Parliament has passed the Administrative Tribunals Act in 1985.
4. The act authorises the Central government to establish one Central Administrative Tribunal and the state administrative tribunals.
5. This act opened a new chapter in the sphere of providing speedy and inexpensive justice to the aggrieved public servants. There are 17 Benches and 21 Circuit Benches in the Central Administrative Tribunal all over India.
6. The CAT is a specialist body consisting of Administrative Members and Judicial Members who by virtue of their specialized knowledge are better equipped to dispense speedy and effective justice. It was established in 1985.
7. A Chairman who has been a sitting or retired Judge of a High Court heads the Central Administrative Tribunal. It exercises jurisdiction only in relation to the service matters of the parties covered by the Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985.

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8. The Tribunal is guided by the principles of natural justice in deciding cases and is not bound by the procedure, prescribed by the Civil Procedure Code.
9. Under Section 17 of the Administrative Tribunal Act, 1985, the Tribunal has been conferred with the power to exercise the same jurisdiction and authority in respect of contempt of itself as a High Court. The conditions of service of the Chairman and Members are the same as applicable to a Judge of High Court as per the Administrative Tribunals (Amendment) Act, 2006.
10. The orders of Central Administrative Tribunal are challenged by way of Writ Petition under Article 226/227 of the Constitution before respective High Court in whose territorial jurisdiction the Bench of the Tribunal is situated.

SPICe+

1. The Corporate Affairs Ministry (MCA) has come out with the format of the new web form — SPICe+ ,for incorporation of companies with effect from February 15.
2. Web form has replaced the existing electronic form SPICe (Simplified Proforma for Incorporating Company Electronically).
3. 22-page integrated web form will, among other things, offer 10 services by three Central Government Ministries and Departments (Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Department of Revenue in the Finance Ministry) and one State Government (Maharashtra)
4. The incorporation of companies are made through the Corporate Affairs Ministry's portal MCA21+new form would be available on this portal
5. The web form will help save many procedures, time and cost for starting a business in India
6. Ministry has also come up with an AGILE PRO form, part of SPICe, for GSTIN/ EPFO/ ESIC/ Profession Tax/ Bank Account.

DARKNET

1. The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has arrested the country's first 'darknet' narcotics operative, who allegedly shipped hundreds of psychotropic drug parcels abroad in the garb of sex stimulation medicines.
2. Dark Net (or Darknet), also known as the dark web, refers to the deep hidden internet platform that is used for narcotics sale, exchange of pornographic content and other illegal activities by using the secret alleys of the onion router (ToR) to stay away from the surveillance of law enforcement agencies.
3. Darknet is the part of the Internet below the private deep web that uses custom software and hidden networks superimposed on the architecture of the Internet.
4. Owing to its end-to-end encryption, darknet is considered very tough to crack when it comes to investigating criminal activities being rendered over it
5. Dark Net vs. Deep Web, dark net is part of the greater deep web. The deep web encompasses all unindexed sites that don't pop up when you do an Internet search.

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MEDARAM JATARA

1. Recently, the festival of Medaram Jatara concluded. Also known as Sammakka Saralamma Jatara
2. It is a Tribal festival honouring the fight of a mother and daughter, Sammakka and Saralamma, with the reigning rulers against an unjust law
3. It is celebrated in Telangana

KAMBALA

1. Srinivas Gowda – a kambala jockey from Karnataka – competing in a kambala event covered 142.5 m in 13.62 seconds, this into 100m sprint, sports buffs said the kambala runner had clocked 9.55 seconds, ahead of Jamaican Usain Bolt's world record of 9.58 seconds!
2. Kambala, annual Buffalo Race held in Tulu region of Karnataka (districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi).
3. Contest generally takes place between two pairs of buffaloes, each pair race in wet rice fields, controlled by a whip-lashing
4. starts in November and lasts till March during which races are held under the banner of Kambala Samithi (Kambala Association)
5. Some farmers also run their buffalo in non-competitive ritualistic manner for thanksgiving for protecting their animals from diseases
6. Kambala vs jallikattu: both are traditional animal sports, involving bulls, they are different by principle. Kambala is "Buffalo RACING". Jallikattu is "Bull TAMING" where a group of people try to hold on to the bull and win)

NEW UMBRELLA ENTITY (NUE)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has released a 'draft framework for authorisation of a pan-India New Umbrella Entity (NUE) for Retail Payment Systems'.

1. RBI proposed to set up a new pan-India NUE or entities focussing on retail payment systems with a minimum paid-up capital of Rs 500 crore, proposed entity will set up, manage and operate new payment systems especially in the retail space comprising of ATMs, white label PoS, Aadhaar-based payments and remittance services, develop payment methods, standards and technologies, monitor related issues etc
2. No single promoter or promoter group should have more than 40 per cent investment in the capital of the entity.
3. Promoters should upfront demonstrate capital contribution of not less than 10 per cent — Rs 50 crore — at the time of making an application for setting up of the entity
4. Promoter or the promoter group shareholding should be diluted to a minimum of 25 per cent after 5 years of the commencement of business. A minimum networth of Rs 300 crore should be maintained

5. Entity eligible to apply as promoter or the promoter group for the NUE should be 'owned and controlled by residents' with 3 years' experience in the payments ecosystem as Payment System Operator (PSO) or Payment Service Provider (PSP) or Technology Service Provider (TSP)

Classic IAS ACADEMY

Classic IAS Academy Quiz February 2020

Questions:

Q.1) India's ranking in the 'Global Talent Competitive Index' is sometimes seen in the news. Which of the following has declared that ranking?

- a) Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
- b) World Economic Forum
- c) INSEAD Business School
- d) World Trade Organization

Q.2) The term 'Blue Dot network,' sometimes seen in the news, refers to

- a) A mechanism of genetic mutations taking place in cells.
- b) An initiative to counter China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- c) A political and economic union of a group of countries having a common border.
- d) An agreement on the sharing of public health data and information across borders.

Q.3) Consider the following statements:

- 1. The Chairman of the Finance Commission and other members hold office for such period of five years.
- 2. As per the Constitution, the Chairman of the Finance Commission should be a person having experience in public affairs.
- 3. The Chairman of the Finance Commission and other members are eligible for reappointment.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 3 only
- b) 1 and 2 only
- c) 2 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Q.4) Regarding the Gram Nyayalayas, consider the following statements:

- 1. As per the Gram Nyayalayas Act, 2008, each village to have a Gram Nyayalaya.
- 2. They exercise the powers of both Criminal and Civil Courts.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.5) Which of the following wetlands are Ramsar sites?

- 1. Beas Conservation Reserve in Punjab
- 2. Parvati Agra in Uttar Pradesh
- 3. Old Fort lake in Delhi
- 4. Nandur Madhameshwar in Maharashtra

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- b) 1, 3, and 4 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 2 and 4 only

Q.6) 'International Co-operation Review Group (ICRG)' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of

- a) The European Union
- b) The Financial Action Task Force
- c) The Gulf Cooperation Council
- d) The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership

Q.7) China shares a border with

- 1. Kazakhstan
- 2. Laos
- 3. North Korea
- 4. Turkmenistan
- 5. Vietnam

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 2, 3, 4 and 5 only
- b) 1, 2, 3 and 4 only
- c) 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only

Q.8) Which one of the following countries has introduced a sustainable development fee on foreign tourists, recently?

- a) India
- b) Bhutan
- c) Sri Lanka
- d) Bangladesh

Q.9) Which one of the following protected areas is not located within the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve?

- a) Bandipur National Park
- b) Nagarhole National Park
- c) Sri Venkateshwara National Park
- d) Mukurthi National Park

Q.10) Which one of the following releases the Global IP Index sometimes mentioned in the news?

- a) The World Economic Forum
- b) The World Trade Organization
- c) The World Intellectual Property Organization
- d) The US Chamber of Commerce

Answer Keys:

Q.1) Ans) C	Q.2) Ans) B	Q.3) Ans) A	Q.4) Ans) B	Q.5) Ans) A
Q.6) Ans) B	Q.7) Ans) D	Q.8) Ans) B	Q.9) Ans) C	Q.10) Ans) D