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September 2019 Current Affairs - Compilation★ **10 public sector banks to be merged into Four entities**

- Finance Minister announced a slew of banking reform measures, including the merger of 10 public sector banks into four entities.
- This would take the number of Public Sector Banks in the country from **27 in 2017 (21 after SBI and BMB Merger)** to 12.

Related Information

- The merger was proposed through a ministerial panel called Alternative Mechanism headed by Finance Minister.
- In 2nd Narsimhan Committee, 1998 recommended the government to merge banks into the three-tiered structure —
 - Three large banks with an international presence at top,
 - Eight to ten national banks and
 - A large number of regional and local banks.
- PJ Nayak Committee in 2014 had also suggested that the government either merge or privatize state-owned banks.
- Economic Survey points out that the constant failure of banks to provide credit to both emerging and existing industries has resulted in stagnation in the economic growth of the nation.

Recent History of Bank Mergers

- Last year, the government had approved the merger of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with Bank of Baroda (BoB) that become effective from April 1, 2019.
- In 2017, the State Bank of India absorbed five of its associates and the Bharatiya Mahila Bank

Procedure of Bank Merger

- An application for the merger is submitted by the concerned banks to

the Central Registrar of Cooperative Societies.

- A copy of the application is also sent to RBI along with valuation report and information relevant for consideration of the scheme of merger.
- The RBI then examines the scheme in respect to the interests of depositors and conveys its decision to the CRCS.

Reasons for Merger

- To protect weak PSBs from loss - thereby securing customers and financial system.
- Absence of international level bank - with only one bank in the list of top 50 largest banks in the world understates the global clout we share in present scenario.
- Bigger banks would also be able to adhere to BASEL III norms.
- Technological Synergy: All merged banks in a particular bucket share common Core Banking Solutions (CBS) platform synergizing them technologically.
- Self-Sufficiency: Larger banks have a better ability to raise resources from the market rather than relying on State exchequer.
- The problem of credit lending, based on the twin balance sheet crisis, can be checked by the formation of bigger banks.
- Bigger banks with diverse portfolios have lesser chances of failure since it is unlikely that different sector of an economy will face a crisis at a same time.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics**Source- The Hindu**★ **Tamil Nadu's Dindigul lock and Kandangi saree get GI tag**

- Dindigul lock and Kandangi saree — have been given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag by The Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai.

Dindigul locks

- These are known throughout the world for their superior quality and durability, so much so that even the city is called Lock City.
- Government institutions such as prisons, godowns, hospitals, and even temples use these locks instead of other machine-made ones.

Kandangi sarees

- These are manufactured in the entire Karaikudi taluk in Sivaganga district.
- They are characterised by large contrast borders and some are known to have borders covering as far as two-thirds of the saree which is usually around 5.10 m-5.60 m in length.

Related Information

GI Tag

- The GI tag in India is governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection Act), 1999.
- It is administered by the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- PIB

★ Nar-Par-Tapi River Linking Project

- Maharashtra Cabinet has approved Nar-Par-Tapi River linking project to ensure 52 tmc ft water for Marathwada and parts of north Maharashtra.
- The proposed Par-Tapi-Narmada river interlinking project is all set to become a major cause of conflict between Gujarat and Maharashtra.

Related Information

Nar-Par-Tapi linking project

- The Nar-Par-Tapi linking project, which is a combination of a lift irrigation scheme, tunnels and canals, will ensure 52 thousand million cubic feet (TMCft) water for Marathwada and parts of north Maharashtra.

- The State Cabinet in July 2019 had given its nod to complete the Nar-Par-Tapi and the Damanganga–Pinjal River linking projects to mitigate the water woes of Marathwada and areas of Mumbai city.
- The projects have been hanging fire for years owing to technical disputes over water sharing with Gujarat.
- The projects envisage a transfer of surplus water of rivers in Maharashtra and south Gujarat to feed the command area of the Miyagam branch of Narmada canal.
- It will save water in the Narmada dam, which will be taken to Saurashtra and Kutch.

Note:

- The river interlinking project work under the Ministry of Jal Shakti Department of Water Resources, River Development, and Ganga Rejuvenation.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- Live Mint

★ 69th session of the WHO Regional Committee for Africa

- The sixty-ninth session of the World Health Organisation's Regional Committee for Africa in Brazzaville helped turn a much-needed focus on healthcare needs of the continent.
- All of the 47 member states within the WHO's African Region are at risk of health security threats.
- Only 29 countries have developed and implemented the health-related National Adaptation Plan to mitigate climate change risks.
- The framework aims to provide essential health services to 80 Percent people in African countries by 2030.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Issues

Source- Down To Earth

★ Tech-Saksham

- Union Minister for Micro Small and Medium Enterprises has launched **Tech Saksham**.

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- It is a collaboration project between the Ministry of MSME and Confederation of Indian Industry.
- It will be a three-year-long comprehensive project.
- In its first phase, the project would focus on MSMEs in sectors that are labour-intensive and have the propensity to respond positively to tech-adoption.
- The project will bring together technology majors to address technological gaps faced by MSMEs in their growth.
- The aim of the project is to bridge the gap in technology adoption for MSMEs so as to provide an impetus for them to be competitive on a global scale, increase their contribution to country exports and leverage cost efficiencies.
- The platform would also help MSMEs to overcome challenges through multiple policy recommendations, knowledge sessions, mentoring initiatives among others.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ Ballistic missile Ghaznavi

- Pakistan has successfully test-fired surface-to-surface ballistic missile called Ghaznavi.

Relate Information

Ghaznavi Missile

- It is a hypersonic surface-to-surface short-range ballistic missile designed and developed by the National Development Complex.
- The missile has an operational range of between 290 - 320 km.
- Its first version has been in service with the Pakistan Army's strategic command since 2004.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- TOI

★ Hurricane Dorian cause severe flooding in Bahamas

OCTOBER 2019

- The most powerful storm to hit the Caribbean islands of the Bahamas has torn roofs from buildings and caused severe flooding.
- Hurricane Dorian, a category five storm sustained winds of up to 295 kilometres per hour.
- The "Saffir-Simpson Wind Scale" is used by meteorologists to measure the strength of a hurricane.
- It is a 1 to 5 rating scale based on a hurricane's sustained wind speed.
- Based on their potential for important loss of lives and harms, Category 3 and greater are regarded as major hurricanes.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- AIR

★ Union govt launches online national laboratory directory

- The Union Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution launched the National Lab Directory.

Related Information

National Lab Directory

- It is an online platform created by the National Standards Body of India, Bureau of Indian Standards.
- It is a one-stop-shop for all testing needs of the industries, academia, researchers and other stakeholders who need to get their Testing Facilities accredited/certified/recognised.
- This Directory will benefit for assessing conformity of relevant products or in testing for the purpose of research and development.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ Lifeline Express: world's first hospital train

- The Indian Railways, in partnership with Impact India Foundation, had launched the Lifeline Express - the world's first hospital on wheels -from Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus.

- It is the world's first seven-coach hospital train donated by the Indian Railways to bring medical and surgical healthcare to the doorstep of the rural population who cannot reach a hospital.

Source- The Hindu

★ SKOCH Governance Gold Award

- Deendayan Antyodaya Yojana- National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) has been conferred the prestigious SKOCH Governance Gold Award for its Portal for Affordable Credit and Interest Subvention Access (PAiSA).

Related Information

SKOCH Award

- It was instituted in 2003 and, the highest civilian honour in the country conferred by an independent organisation.
- It recognizes the best of efforts in the area of digital, financial and social inclusion

PAiSA portal

- It is a centralized IT platform launched in 2018.
- It will help to simplify and streamlines the release of interest subvention under the Mission.
- It offers end to end online solution for processing, payment, monitoring and tracking of interest subvention claims from banks on a monthly basis.

DAY-NULM Mission

- It is under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- It aims to reduce poverty and vulnerability of the urban poor households by enabling them to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important Award

Source- Indian Express

★ India's longest electrified train tunnel inaugurated in Andhra

- Vice President Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the longest electrified railway tunnel in the country, in Andhra Pradesh.
- The 112-km long railway line project between Krishnapatnam port and Obulavaripalli was constructed to ensure smooth transportation of minerals and industrial goods to and from the port.
- As part of the project, the longest electrified train tunnel is constructed which is 6.6 km long.

Source- AIR

★ Samudrayaan Project

- The 'Samudrayaan' is a part of the Ministry of Earth Sciences' pilot project for deep ocean mining for rare minerals.
- The Project is the part of 'Deep Ocean Mission' that has received in-principle approval but is awaiting a final nod from the Union Finance Ministry.
- The project proposes to send a submersible vehicle with three persons to a depth of about 6000 metres to carry out deep underwater studies.
- The project is being undertaken by the National Institute of Ocean Technology.

Related Information

Deep Ocean Mission

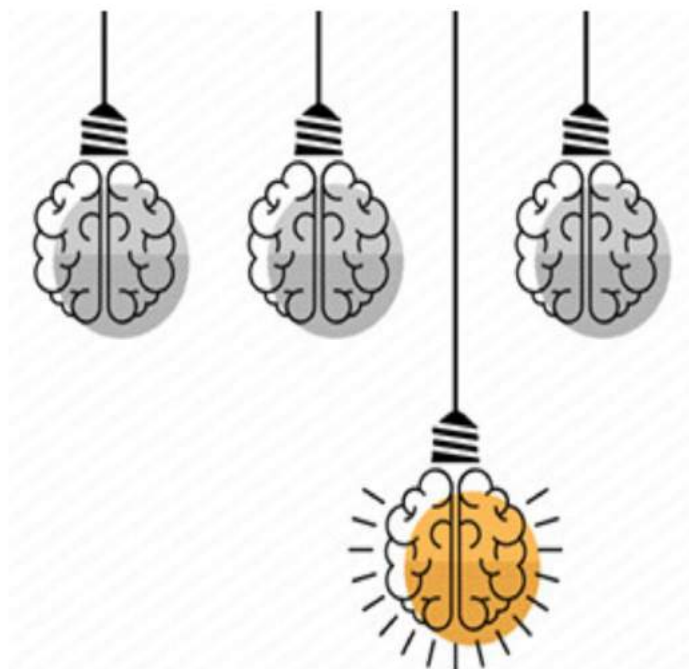
- This is a five-year mission under the Union Earth Sciences Ministry which is expected to commence from October 31, 2019.
- India has been allocated a site of 75,000 sq km in the Central Indian Ocean Basin by the International Sea Bed Authority for exploration of polymetallic nodules from seabed.
- Key areas of the mission are:
(a) Ocean climate change advisory services,

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Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Organisation

Source- Indian Express

★ Eight US-made Apache AH-64E attack helicopters inducted into IAF

- Eight United States-made Apache AH-64E attack helicopters were inducted into the Indian Air Force, at the Pathankot Air Force station.
- The addition of the Apache fleet will bring in lethal firepower with great accuracy and significantly enhance the IAF's combat capabilities.
- The AH-64E Apache is one of the world's most advanced multi-role combat helicopters.
- The IAF had signed a contract with the US Government and Boeing Ltd in September 2015 for purchase of 22 Apache helicopters.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- AIR

★ 4th General Assembly of Association of World Election Bodies

- Election Commission of India is scheduled to host the 4th General Assembly of Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) at Bengaluru.
- India will take over as A-WEB's Chair for the 2019- 2021 term.

Related Information

Association of World Election Bodies

- It is the largest association of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) worldwide which was established in 2013.
- The permanent secretariat of A-WEB is located in Seoul, South Korea.
- It was founded with a shared vision among its members of achieving sustainable democracy around the world.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- AIR

★ Bihar plans another tiger reserve in Kaimur

- Bihar government has recently identified forests in Kaimur as a possible site for the state's second tiger reserve after the Valmiki Tiger Reserve (VTR).
- According to the Bihar forest department's official website, the forests of Kaimur are in 1,134 square kilometres in area, including the 986 square kilometres of the Kaimur Wildlife Sanctuary.
- The Kaimur district has the highest green cover in Bihar which is about 34 per cent.
- The Kaimur forests are the biggest in the state in terms of area.
- The Kaimur forests are connected to forests in the neighbouring states of Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Topic- GS Paper 3–Environment

Source- Indian Express

★ PM Modi to receive the Global Goal Keeper Award

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will receive the prestigious ' Global Goalkeeper Award ' 2019 for his work in the ' Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. '
- The award will be presented by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, owned by the founder of Microsoft, Bill Gates, and his wife, Melinda Gates.
- The annual rewards are presented to leaders and individuals for their attempts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Related Information

- Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is one of the ambitious initiatives launched by PM Modi on the anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birth on 2 October 2014.
- The main aim of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan is to make India 'Open Defecation Free' by 2019.

Topic- GS Paper 2–Government Policies

Source- Indian Express

★ India's First Garbage Café

- India's first 'Garbage Café' will soon be opened in the city of Ambikapur in north Chhattisgarh which is also the second cleanest city in the country in Swachhata rankings.
- This initiative by the Ambikapur municipal corporation of Chhattisgarh.
- It aims to make the city plastic-free.
- In this unique Cafe' poor people and rag pickers will get free food in exchange for one kilogram of plastic, while breakfast will be provided if half a kilogram of plastic is brought to the cafe.

Topic- GS Paper 3–Environment and Ecology

Source- Indian Express

★ Male Declaration ignores Pakistan's concern on Kashmir'

- Recently the fourth South Asian Speakers' Summit kicked off in the Maldives capital Male' with the secretary-general of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and senior lawmakers from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- The annual summit was organised jointly by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Maldives parliament.
- The summit focuses on achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and how to make an impact to achieve these goals.
- Malé Declaration was adopted at the end of this summit which "unanimously" felt that Kashmir was an "internal matter" of India and overlooked all assertions made by Islamabad on the issue.
- The declaration was adopted a day after India thwarted an attempt by

Pakistan to raise the Kashmir issue during the Summit.

- The Indian delegation was represented by Lok Sabha Speaker and Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Hindu

★ J & K govt to provide piped water to every household by 2022

- Jammu and Kashmir government is planning to supply piped water to each and every household in the state by 2022.

Related Information

Nal se Jal scheme

- The scheme 'Nal se Jal' to provide piped drinking water to every household will be a component of the government's Jal Jivan Mission.
- The scheme aims to provide **piped drinking water to every rural home by 2024.**
- Jal Shakti Ministry is the implementing agency of this Nal se Jal Mission.
- According to a 2018 NITI Aayog report, "600 million Indians face high to extreme water stress and about two lakh people die every year due to inadequate access to safe water.
- By 2030, the country's water demand is projected to be twice the available supply, implying severe water scarcity for hundreds of millions of people and an eventual ~6% loss in the country's GDP.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- AIR

★ Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2019

- The military exercise between India and the US will begin from September 5, 2019, at the Joint Base Lewis Macard near Washington.
- It is the 15th edition of joint military training exercise between India and USA.
- The joint exercise hosted alternately between the two countries.

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- The exercise is an ideal platform to learn from each other's expertise and experiences of planning and execution of operations.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- TOI

★ Vaishno Devi Shrine tops the list of 'Swachh Iconic Places'

- Mata Vaishno Devi shrine atop the Trikuta hills in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir has been named country's 'Best Swachh Iconic Place'.

Related Information

'Swachh Iconic Places'

- The Swachh Iconic Places is an initiative under the Swachh Bharat Mission.
- It is a special clean-up initiative focused on select iconic heritage, spiritual & cultural places in the country.
- The Rankings of Swachh Iconic Places was released by Union ministry of Jal Shakti, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- India Today

★ AUMX: 1st ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise

- The first ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise (AUMX) between regional bloc-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United States kicked off at the Sattahip Naval Base in Thailand.
- It is a naval exercise which is co-led by the navies of the US and Thailand.
- It will see the participation of navies of all 10 members of ASEAN (Thailand, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam) and the US.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- Livmint

★ Nuakhai : The greatest harvesting festival of Odisha

OCTOBER 2019

- The festival of Nuakhai is a festival to celebrate newly harvested food by the farmers.
- Nuakhai festival traces its origin to the Vedic period where the sages or Rishis used to talk about Panchyajna.
- One among them was Pralambana yajna which means the cutting of new crops and offering them to mother goddess as followed in Nuakhai festival.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art & Culture

Source- Livemint

★ IIT Delhi to establish shared research infrastructure facility SATHI

- Department of Science and Technology (DST) has selected IIT Delhi for setting up a shared science and technology infrastructure facility named Sophisticated Analytical and Technical Help Institute (SATHI).
- The centre will be set up in the Sonapat campus (Haryana) of IIT Delhi.
- The centre will be accessible to academia, start-ups, manufacturing units, industries and research and development labs.
- The objective is to provide professionally managed services under one roof to meet the demands of industry, start-ups and academia.
- The facilities under SATHI will be available to the researchers on around the clock basis with minimum downtime.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Economics (Infrastructure)

Source- Down to Earth

★ Project REPLAN (REducing PLastic in Nature)

- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) launched Project REPLAN (REducing PLastic in Nature) which is a part of Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan.
- In this project, the waste plastic is collected, cleaned, chopped, beaten and treated for softness.

- After that, it is mixed with the paper raw material i.e cotton rags pulp in a ratio of 80 % (pulp) and 20% (plastic waste).
- Khadi and Village Industries Commission launched have also launched a 'Terracotta Grinder' at Sewapuri in Varanasi.
- This terracotta Grinder will grind the wasted and broken pottery items for re-using in pottery-making.

Related Information

KVIC

- It is a statutory body formed by the GOI under the Act of Parliament 'Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956.
- It is an apex organization under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, with regard to khadi and village industries within India.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

★ Lignin from agro-waste helps make useful nanocomposites

- Recently researchers at the Mohali-based Centre of Innovative and Applied Bioprocessing (CIAB) have developed a lignin-based nanocomposite which could potentially have commercial value.
- Microbial test results indicate that, in the long run, the lignin-based nanomaterial can act as an additive in coating and packaging materials.

Related Information

Lignin

- Lignin is a complex organic polymer rich in polyphenols with antimicrobial qualities.
- It is found in almost all dry plants including crop residues and the woody bark of trees.
- Lignins are particularly important in the formation of cell walls, especially in wood and bark, because they lend rigidity and do not rot easily.

- Abundant quantities of lignin are generated as post-harvest agro-biomass and in paper and pulp industries every year.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Hindu Business Line

★ India to contribute USD 22 million to Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFTAM)

- India has announced a USD 22 million contribution to the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFTAM) for the 6th replenishment cycle (2020-22).
- The Global Fund is a partnership to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.
- The Global Fund mobilizes and invests more than USD 4 billion annually to help programs run by local experts in more than 100 nations.
- India has obtained USD 2.0 billion from the Global Fund to meet objectives linked to HIV / AIDS, TB and malaria decrease.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Hindu Business Line

★ Land Degradation Neutrality Transformative Projects and Programmes

- During the 14th Conference of Parties, the Global Mechanism Group held a side event to Launch of Technical Guide on LDN.

Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN)

- The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification defines LDN as "a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security remain stable or increase within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems".

- The decision on **LDN** was first taken in COP13, UNCCD 2015.
- The goal is maintaining or enhancing the land resource base – in other words, the stocks of natural capital associated with land resources and the ecosystem services that flow from them.
- The objectives of LDN are to:
 - (a) Maintain or improve the sustainable delivery of ecosystem services;
 - (b) Maintain or improve productivity, in order to enhance food security;
 - (c) Increase the resilience of the land & populations dependent on the land;
 - (d) Seek synergies with other social, economic and environmental objectives; and
 - (e) Reinforce responsible and inclusive governance of land.
- LDN is being pursued in the context of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development which seeks to protect the planet from degradation, including through sustainable consumption and production, sustainably managing its natural resources and taking urgent action on climate change.

Related Information

Global Mechanism (GM)

- It was established under Article 21 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.
- It helps to assist countries in the mobilization of financial resources to implement the Convention and address desertification, land degradation and drought.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source-PIB

★ Government to develop a master plan for Tigers at High altitude

- Union Environment Minister has recently released a report on Status of Tiger Habitats in high altitude ecosystems which help the government to develop a master plan for the tigers at high altitude.

- The report, prepared by the Global Tiger Forum (GTF), provides the action strategy for a high altitude tiger master plan with gainful portfolio for local communities and ensuring the centrality of tiger conservation in development.

Related Information

Global Tiger Forum

- It is an Inter-governmental international body working exclusively for the conservation of Tigers in the wild.
- It was set up to promote a worldwide campaign to save the tiger, its prey and its habitat.
- It has plans to promote a legal framework in the countries involved for biodiversity conservation and to increase the protected area network of habitats of the tiger and facilitate their inter passages in the range countries.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment and Biodiversity

Source- The Hindu

★ Gulmarg defence project

- The National Board for Wildlife has recently given its nod for an air defence and weaponry project in Jammu and Kashmir in which 1.18 hectares of Gulmarg Wildlife Sanctuary land will be used.
- The project will also cover 12.35 hectares of forest land outside Gulmarg Sanctuary.
- The proposed project in J&K includes installation of air defence and weaponry along with helipad construction and only radar system would be set up in the sanctuary area.

Related Information

Gulmarg Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is situated in the Pir Panjal Range in the western Himalayas.
- The area is one of the best world-renowned tourist destinations for its famous meadows, rocky cliffs, dense birch forests and a home for bird watchers."

- The sanctuary is the home of highly endangered Musk Deer (Moschus Crysogater),

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Indian Express

★ **Task-force recommends online loan sale platform**

- RBI has set up a task force under the head of T.N. Manoharan to submit a report on the development of a secondary market for corporate loans.
- The task force set up for the development of a secondary market for corporate loans has recommended an online loan sales platform to conduct auctions.

Other Recommendation

- The task force has recommended setting up of a self-regulatory body of participants who would work on creating a platform for the secondary sale of corporate loans.
- The task force has also called for amending regulations of SEBI, IRDA and PFRDA to enable participation of non-banking entities such as mutual funds, insurance companies and pension funds.
- The task force has suggested for setting up an online loan sales platform to conduct auctions/sale process of the secondary market loans.
- It has also recommended creating a Loan Contract Registry to remove information asymmetries between buyers and sellers.
- The secondary market is the market where investors buy and sell securities they already own which are also referred to as the stock market.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- Indian Express

★ **NASA, ESA Combine Efforts on Asteroid Impact Deflection Assessment Mission**

- NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA) teams are meeting in Rome next week to discuss progress on the

Asteroid Impact Deflection Assessment.

- It is a joint research mission to study the viability of diverting an asteroid by crashing a spacecraft into its surface.

Related Information

Asteroid Impact Deflection Assessment

- The project aims to deflect the orbit of one of the two Didymos asteroids between Earth and Mars, with an observer craft gauging the effect of the impact more effectively than ground-based observers could manage.
- Didymos is a near-Earth asteroid system which main body measures about 780 m across and the smaller body is a "moonlet" about 160 m in diameter.
- NASA will provide the collider, the Double Asteroid Impact Test (DART).
- It should launch in summer 2021 and will smack into the smaller of the two Didymos asteroids at about 14,764MPH.
- An Italian CubeSat, LICIACube, will study the moment of impact after that, the ESA will launch a Hera probe in October 2024 to study the target asteroid, including the impact crater, mass and a radar probe (the first-ever for an asteroid).
- Hera will take roughly two years to arrive.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology

Source- TOI

★ **Govt to crack down on single-use plastic from October 2**

- The central government is all set to announce a ban on a number of Single-Use Plastic items on October 2, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- The move is part of an ambitious drive against Single-Use Plastic (SUP), under the theme "Shramdaan", for which a detailed plan has been worked out for ministries and departments.

- Among the proposals are:
 - (a) A total ban on SUPs;
 - (b) All 4,378 urban local bodies to collect and segregate recyclable and non-recyclable plastic waste;
 - (c) Plastic waste along National Highways to be utilised for road construction;
 - (d) Cement manufacturers to use plastic as fuel;
 - (e) Textile Ministry to ramp up production of jute bags;
 - (f) All gram sabhas to be plastic waste-free by 2022.
- As part of the initiative, 5 lakh sarpanchs and swachhagrahis (cleanliness volunteers) will also receive personalised letters from the Prime Minister.

Related Information

Single-use plastic

- single-use plastics (SUPs) are those that are discarded after one-time use.
- Besides the ubiquitous plastic bags, SUPs include water and flavoured/aerated drinks bottles, takeaway food containers, disposable cutlery, straws, and stirrers, processed food packets and wrappers, cotton bud sticks, etc.
- Of these, foamed products such as cutlery, plates, and cups are considered the most lethal to the environment.

Topic- GS Paper 3 - Government Policies and Programs

Source- TOI

★ India gives \$1 billion line of credit to Russia Far East

- India announced an "unprecedented" \$1 billion line of credit for Russia's resource-rich the Far East.
- The climate in the Far East is extremely harsh. The winter lasts nearly nine months, snow covers the ground almost all year round.

- This announcement will prove to be a take-off point for India's 'Act Far East' policy.
- India concluded around 50 agreements worth \$5 billion at EEF (Eastern Economic Forum)-2019 which was held recently in Russia.

Related Information

Line of Credit

- It is not a grant but a 'soft loan' provided on concessional interest rates to developing countries, which has to be repaid by the borrowing government.
- The LOCs also helps to promote exports of Indian goods and services, as 75% of the value of the contract must be sourced from India.
- The projects under LOCs are spread over different sectors (Agriculture, Infrastructure, Telecom, Railway, Transmission/Power, Renewable Energy etc.).
- The actual implementation of LOC projects in various countries is dependent on local factors, such as prevailing political & social conditions, statutory clearances by the borrowing Governments, making available land and other infrastructural support.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- AIR

★ India ranked 34th on world travel, tourism competitiveness index

- World Economic Forum(WEF) has released the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index(TTCI) Report 2019.
- The index has ranked India at 34th place in 2019. In 2018 India was ranked 40th.
- Spain was ranked first followed by France, Germany and Japan with the United States replacing the UK in the top five.
- The index has said that China is the largest travel and tourism economy in the Asia-Pacific and 13th most competitive globally.

Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index

- The index is published biennially by World Economic Forum which ranks 140 economies.
- The countries are ranked in four sub-indexes namely
 - enabling environment
 - travel and tourism policy and enabling conditions
 - natural and cultural resources.
 - infrastructure

World Economic Forum

- It was established in 1971 as a not-for-profit foundation.
- Its headquarter situated in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The objective of WEF is to improve the state of the world by engaging business, political, academic and other leaders of society to shape global, regional and industry agendas.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Important Index

Source- TOI

★ Global Liveability Index 2019

- Economist Intelligence Unit has released its Global Liveability Index 2019.

Global Liveability Index

- The index assesses locations around the world provide the best or the worst living conditions.
- Each city is assessed on 30 qualitative and quantitative factors across five broad categories:
 - a) stability,
 - b) healthcare,
 - c) culture and environment,
 - d) education,
 - e) infrastructure
- For the first time, the index noted the effects of climate change on liveability.
- Scores are compiled on a scale of 1-100. Each factor in a city is rated as acceptable, tolerable, uncomfortable, undesirable or intolerable.

- Factor-wise scores are then compiled and weighted to provide a score of 1–100, where 1 is considered intolerable and 100 is considered ideal.

Highlights of the index

- Vienna topped the rankings followed by Melbourne, Sydney, Osaka and Calgary.
- New Delhi was ranked at 118th (a drop of six ranks) due to “poor air quality whereas the Mumbai was ranked 119th.
- The least liveable cities were Karachi, Tripoli, Dhaka, Lagos and, at the very bottom, Damascus (Syria).
- Among the BRIC countries, Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) ranked 89th, Moscow (Russia) ranked 68th, Beijing (China) ranked 76th.
- The world’s least liveable cities were Damascus (Syria), Lagos (Nigeria), and Dhaka (Bangladesh).

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important Index

Source- The Hindu

★ 28th Indo–Thai CORPAT

- The 28th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) between the Indian Navy (IN) and the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) is being conducted.
- The objectives of the INDO-THAI CORPAT are to ensure effective implementation of ‘United Nations Conventions on Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS 1982).

Related Information

United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

- It is an international treaty which was adopted and signed in 1982 at Montego Bay, Jamaica.
- It replaced the four Geneva Conventions of April 1958, which respectively concerned the territorial sea and the contiguous zone, the continental shelf, the high seas, fishing and conservation of living resources on the high seas.

Some of the key features of the Convention are the following:

- The coastal States exercise sovereignty over their territorial sea which they have the right to establish its breadth up to a limit not to exceed 12 nautical miles.
- Coastal States have sovereign rights in a 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) with respect to natural resources and certain economic activities, and exercise jurisdiction over marine science research and environmental protection;
- All other States have freedom of navigation and overflight in the EEZ, as well as the freedom to lay submarine cables and pipelines;
- The Coastal States have sovereign rights over the continental shelf (the national area of the seabed) for exploring and exploiting it and the shelf can extend at least 200 nautical miles from the shore, and more under specified circumstances;
- The Coastal States share with the international community part of the revenue derived from exploiting resources from any part of their shelf beyond 200 miles;
- The land-locked States have the right of access to and from the sea and enjoy the freedom of transit through the territory of transit States;

Note:

- Disputes can be submitted to the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea established under the Convention, to the International Court of Justice, or to arbitration.
- The Tribunal has exclusive jurisdiction over deep seabed mining disputes.
- The Convention has created three new institutions on the international scene:

- the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea,
- the International Seabed Authority,
- the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ India, Pakistan forces to be part of the military exercise in Russia

- Exercise TSENTR 2019 is part of the annual series of large scale exercises that form part of the Russian Armed Forces' annual training cycle.
- The exercise series rotates through the four main Russian operational strategic commands.
- This year's Exercise TSENTR 2019 will be conducted by the Central Military Commission of Russia.
- Apart from host Russia, military contingents from China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan will also take part in this mega event.
- The exercise aims at evolving drills of the participating armies and practising them in the fight against the scourge of international terrorism thereby ensuring military security in the strategic Central Asian region.
- The exercise TSENTR 2019 will comprise two modules.
(a) The first module will include counter-terror operations, repelling airstrikes, reconnaissance operations and defensive measures.
(b) The second will focus on offensive operations.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- PIB

★ India among top 10 nations in gold reserves

- According to the latest release by the World Gold Council, India has ranked 10th in the country list with total gold reserves of 618.2 tonnes.
- USA has been ranked 1st with total gold reserves of 8,133.5 tonnes followed by Germany, International

Monetary Fund (IMF), Italy, France, Russia and China.

Related Information

Domestic Council of Gold

- In last year Government sets up a Domestic Council for Gold to aid exports of jewellery.
- This will also help in creating an ecosystem to harness the true potential for jewellery-making in the country
- This council will represent all the jewellers of India who will be the Electoral College.
- They will form different interest groups and elect those who will sit in the council.

World Gold Council

- It is the market development organisation for the gold industry. It is an association of the world's leading gold producers.
- It was established in 1987 and is headquartered in the United Kingdom.
- WGC gold reserve data are based on the International Monetary Fund's International Financial Statistics (IFS) which tracks central banks' reported purchases and sales along with gold as a percentage of their international reserves.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- The Hindu

★ IT Excellence Award, 2019

- Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) has won the IT Excellence Award, 2019 for its 'SATARK' innovative conception by using information technology in the field of disaster management.
- The "SATARK" (System for Assessing, Tracking and Alerting Disaster Risk Information based on Dynamic Risk Knowledge) has been chosen for the award.

Related Information

SATARK

- The SATARK application has been developed in the state to provide real-

time watch, alert and warning information for different natural disasters and hazards such as heatwave, lightning, agriculture risk, flood, tsunami, earthquake, cyclone or storm, road accident and snakebite.

- It provides a warning signal in both Odia as well as English languages.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Disaster Management

Source- Indian Express

★ Prof Vispi Balaporia: First woman president of Asiatic Society.

- Prof Vispi Balaporia is recently elected as the first woman president of Asiatic Society of Mumbai in the 215 years of its existence.

Related Information

Asiatic Society

- Asiatic Society was established in 1804 as the Literary Society of Bombay which was founded by Sir James Mackintosh, a Scottish colonial administrator.
- It is a learned society whose activities include conducting historical research, awarding historians, and running an institute of postgraduate studies.
- The societies library is home to over 1 lakh books which consists of rare manuscripts contributed to it by the East India Company as well as generous donations.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –History (Important organization)

Source- Live mint

★ Dadabhai Naoroji: 194th birth anniversary

- September 4, 2019, was the 194th birth anniversary of Dadabhai Naoroji, the "Grand Old Man of India", who was among the first leaders who stirred national consciousness in the country.
- Born in 1825 at Navsari, in present-day Gujarat, Naoroji was a prolific scholar with varied interests.

IAS GOOGLE

- Naoroji's lasting intellectual contribution was to expound the 'Drain Theory'.
- He was closely involved with the Indian National Congress in its early phase and served as the first Indian member of the British parliament.

Early work in England

- His first agitation, in 1859, concerned recruitment to the Indian Civil Service (today's IAS).
- During this period, Naoroji worked closely with Irish leaders in England, who found common cause with the Indian nationalist movement.
- In 1865 and 1866, Naoroji helped found the London Indian Society and the East India Association respectively.
- As the secretary of the East India Association, Naoroji travelled in India to gather funds and raise national awareness.

Leader of the Indian National Congress

- In 1885, Naoroji became a vice-president of the Bombay Presidency Association, was nominated to the Bombay legislative council by Governor Lord Reay, and helped form the Indian National Congress.
- He was Congress president thrice, in 1886, 1893, and 1906.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Indian History

Source- Indian Express

★ Germany to phase out glyphosate by 2023

- Germany has decided to phase out glyphosate, a chemical and labelled carcinogen by the end of 2023.
- The move is to ensure that insect populations that play a pivotal role in ecosystems and pollination of food crops are not wiped out.
- In 2023, the European Union's approval for the chemical will expire.
- Austria recently became the first country to ban all use of the chemical.

Related Information

OCTOBER 2019

- Glyphosate is used widely in agriculture, forestry, urban and home applications.
- Its use has been surrounded by much debate due to safety concerns.
- The World Health Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) had declared glyphosate it "probably" carcinogenic to humans.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science & Technology

Source- Down To Earth

★ Digital Economy Report 2019

- The Digital Economy Report 2019 has recently released by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Highlights of the report

- The report outlines enormous potential gains from the increasingly interconnected global economy but calls for concerted global efforts to spread the wealth potential to the many people who currently reap little benefit from it.
- According to the report, the US and China "account for 75 percent of all patents related to blockchain technologies, 50 percent of global spending on the "Internet of Things" (IoT), and more than 75 percent of the world market for public cloud computing.
- India generated the ninth-highest e-commerce sales globally in 2017 with the contribution of this to GDP was 15%.
- The report has also said that the only way for developing countries to exercise effective economic ownership and control over the data generated in their territories was to push on mandatory data localisation.

Related Information

Data Localisation

- Data localisation laws point to regulations that dictate how data on a nation's citizens is collected, processed and stored inside the country.
- Localisation mandates that companies collecting critical data about consumers must store and process them within the borders of the country.

India's stand on Data localization

- Currently, the only mandatory rule on data localisation in India is by the Reserve Bank of India for payment systems.
- The second piece is the Draft Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018 itself which has specific requirements on cross-border data transfers.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

- It is a permanent intergovernmental body established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1964.
- It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland and part of the UN Secretariat.
- It was formed specifically to handle the problems of developing countries dealing with trade, investment and development issues.

Reports published by UNCTAD

- Information and Economy Report
- World Economic Situation and Prospects Report
- Trade and Development Report
- World Investment Report
- The Least Developed Countries Report
- Technology and Innovation Report
- Commodities and Development Report

Topic- GS Paper 3 -Economics (Important Report)

Source- Economics Times

★ Govt sets up a task force for drawing up National Infra Pipeline

- The government has constituted a task force for drawing up National Infrastructure Pipeline of 100 lakh

crore rupees from the fiscal year 2019-20 to 2024-25.

- It will be headed by Economic Affairs Secretary.

Mandates of the task force

- To identify technically feasible and economically viable infrastructure projects that can be initiated in the current fiscal.
- The Task Force will estimate annual infrastructure investment costs and guide the Ministries in identifying appropriate sources of financing.
- It will also suggest measures to monitor the projects so that cost and time overrun is minimized.
- To work on listing the projects that can be included in the pipeline for each of the remaining 5 years.

Related Information

National Infrastructure Pipeline

- It would include Greenfield and brownfield projects costing above 100 crore rupees.
- It also enables marketing of the pipeline of projects requiring private investment through the India Investment Grid and National Investment & Infrastructure Fund.

Topic- GS Paper 3 -Infrastructure

Source- The Hindu

★ WHO South-East Asia Region plans to banish measles, rubella by 2023

- Recently the Member-countries of the World Health Organisation (WHO) South-East Asia Region has resolved to eliminate highly infectious childhood killer diseases measles and rubella by 2023 which was earlier 2020.
- The resolution to eliminate the diseases was adopted at the 72nd session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia in Delhi.

Related Information

Measles and Rubella

- Both are the contagious viral disease that is spread by contact with an

infected person through coughing and sneezing.

- Measles is caused by Rubeola virus whereas Rubella is caused by Rubella virus.
- Both Measles and Rubeola can be entirely prevented with a two-dose of MMR (Measles, Mumps, and Rubella) vaccine.

Elimination Efforts

- India has initiated the world's largest Measles-Rubella (MR) Campaign in 2017.
- It targets vaccination of 410 million children and adolescents aged between 9 months and 15 years.
- These are also covered under Mission Indradhanaush which was launched in 2014.
- The mission aims to cover all those children by 2020 who are either unvaccinated or are partially vaccinated against vaccine-preventable diseases.

World Health Organisation (WHO) South-East Asia

- It has 11 member countries- Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan, DPR Korea, Myanmar, Maldives and Timor-Leste.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Health and Social Issues

Source- AIR

★ SLINEX 2019

- It is the bilateral maritime exercise between India and Sri Lanka.
- The bilateral maritime exercise will enable Indian Navy and Sri Lankan navies to rehearse and improve own capabilities and enhance operational effectiveness required to maintain maritime security in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

Note:

- Mitra Shakti is the India and Sri Lanka Joint military exercise.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- DD News

★ National Animal Disease Control Programme

- Prime Minister to launch National Animal Disease Control Programme for Foot and Mouth Disease and Brucellosis in Mathura.

Related Information

National Animal Disease Control Programme

- National Animal Disease Control Programme for Foot and Mouth Disease and Brucellosis is a 100% centrally funded programme.
- It aims to control Foot and Mouth Disease and Brucellosis by 2025 with vaccination and eventual eradication by 2030.

Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD)

- It is a severe, highly contagious viral disease of livestock that has a significant economic impact.
- The disease affects cattle, swine, sheep, goats and other cloven-hoofed ruminants.
- It can spread when infected animals bring the virus into physical contact with susceptible animals.

Brucellosis

- It is a zoonotic infection caused by the bacterial genus Brucella
- The bacteria are transmitted from animals to humans by ingestion through infected food products, direct contact with an infected animal or inhalation of aerosols.
- The disease is also known as undulant fever, Malta fever, and Mediterranean fever.
- In the case of Brucellosis, the milk output reduces by 30% during the entire life cycle of animal and also causes infertility amongst the animals.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ India to raise a target of restoring degraded land

- Prime Minister has announced that India will raise its target of restoring

the degraded land from twenty-one million hectares to twenty-six million hectares by 2030.

Related Information

- India is hosting a global gathering for COP 14 in Greater Noida.

UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

- It is established in 1994 and is the sole legally binding international agreement that links environment and development to sustainable land management.
- It addresses specifically arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as drylands, home to some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples.
- Main agendas for COP14 are reversing land degradation and its outcomes while accelerating positive achievements for people and for ecosystems with a view to delivering on the United Nations-mandated Sustainable Development Goals.
- Land degradation working in tandem with climate change and biodiversity loss may force up to 700 million people to migrate by 2050.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- AIR

★ Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

- The Union Minister of Women and Child Development honoured districts and states which have improved Sex Ratio at Birth by successfully implementing the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme.
- Haryana, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh received honours for improving Sex Ratio at Birth.
- Nine districts were also awarded for better sex ratio at birth these East Kameng of Arunachal Pradesh, Mahendragarh and Bhiwani in Haryana, Udham Singh Nagar of

Uttarakhand, Tamil Nadu's Namakkal, and Jalgaon district of Maharashtra.

- Further Sex Ratio at Birth at the national level has also improved by 13 points from 918 in 2014-15 to 931 in 2018-19.

Related Information

Bachao Beti Padhao scheme

- It is 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme which was launched in 2015.
- It aims to address the issue of the declining child sex ratio (CSR) and is a national initiative jointly run by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- Child Sex Ratio is defined as a number of girls per 1000 of boys between 0-6 years of age.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Women Empowerment

Source- PIB

★ Lamp of Peace of Saint Francis

- Recently the Nobel Laureate from Bangladesh Professor Muhammad Yunus was conferred the 'Lamp of Peace of Saint Francis ' award by the Vatican for his contribution towards establishing peace and harmony.

Related Information

Lamp of Peace of Saint Francis award

- The award is recognition for distinguished work by an individual for promoting peace and dialogue among people.
- The Lamp of Peace award was first given to the Polish trade union leader Lech Walesa in 1981.
- Dalai Lama, Mikhail Gorbachev and Angela Merkel are a few other prominent persons who received this award earlier.

Note:

- Prof Muhammad Yunus was also awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (2008) for founding Grameen Bank and

pioneering concepts of microcredit and microfinance.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- AIR

★ **First 'Make in India' metro coach in Mumbai**

- The Prime Minister launched the first 'Make in India' Metro Coach in Mumbai.
- The coach was constructed by Bharat Earth Movers (BEML) at its Bengaluru plant.

Source- Hindustan Times

★ **Rohit Sharma launches a campaign "Rohit4Rhinos" to conserve rhinos**

- India vice-captain Rohit Sharma is going to help build awareness for the need to conserve the Greater One-Horned Rhinoceros or the Indian Rhino.
- Rohit Sharma launched **Rohit4Rhinos campaign**, in partnership with WWF India and Animal Planet, on World Rhino Day (on 22nd September), where Rohit pledges to do his bit to save the "vulnerable" species from extinction.
- Rohit Sharma joined WWF India as its Brand Ambassador for Rhino Conservation in 2018.

Topic- GS-3- Environment

Source- Hindustan Times

★ **Economic census to be held every three years**

- Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has said that the economic census will now be conducted every three years.

Related Information

Economic Census

- It is a complete count of all economic establishments located within the geographical boundary of the country.
- It provides disaggregated information on various operational and structural

variables of all establishments of the country.

- The Census also provides valuable insight into geographical spread and clusters of economic activities, ownership pattern, persons engaged in all economic establishments of the country.
- The subsequent Censuses were conducted in the years 1980, 1990, 1998, 2005.
- The 6th census was conducted in 2013.

7th Economic Census:

- The Seventh Economic Census is being conducted by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation in 2019.
- The MoSPI has partnered with Common Service Centres e-Governance Services India Limited, Special Purpose Vehicle under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology as the implementing agency for 7th Economic Census.
- The data will be collected through the door to door survey of each household and commercial establishment under the provisions of Collection of Statistics Act 2008.

Background

- The Government had appointed a Task Force on Improving Employment Data on May 2017, under the Chairpersonship of Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog to suggest ways and means of improving employment data.
- The Task Force made various recommendations in its report submitted in August 2017.
- The implementation may undertake the Economic Census every 3 years, beginning with the 7th Economic Census.

- It helps to provide more frequent information on the various economic characteristics of establishments are available and could be compared with the existing databases in the GSTN, EPFO, MCA etc

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- TOI

★ National Genomic grid

- The government announced to set up a National Genomic Grid to study genomic data of cancer patients from India.
- The grid to be formed will be in line with the National Cancer Tissue Biobank set up at the Indian Institute of Technology, Madras.
- The grid will have four parts, with the country divided into east, west, north and south.
- the objective of the grid to collect samples from cancer patients to study genomic factors influencing cancer and identifying the right treatment modalities for the Indian population.

Related Information

National Cancer Tissue Biobank

- It is a state-of-the-art non-profit community-based tissue biobank which is a joint initiative of Department of Science and Technology, Government of India and Indian Institute of Technology Madras, Chennai.
- It also functions in close association with the Indian Council for Medical Research

Note:

- The government was on a mission to achieve the target of one doctor for every 1,000 people, a standard ratio set by the WHO, by 2022, against the current ratio of 1/1,400.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ Motihari-Amlekhganj cross border petroleum pipeline

- Prime Minister Modi and Nepal's Prime Minister K.P.Sharma Oli will jointly

inaugurated Motihari-Amlekhganj cross border petroleum products pipeline.

Related Information

Motihari-Amlekhganj pipeline

- This is the first transnational petroleum pipeline from India and first South Asian oil pipeline corridor.
- The pipeline will ensure smooth, cost-effective and environment-friendly supply of petroleum products to Nepal.
- It is 69 km long pipeline from Motihari in Bihar to Amlekhganj in Nepal has been constructed by India.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Infrastructure

Source- AIR

★ 68th Plenary session of North Eastern Council

- The 68th Plenary session of the North Eastern Council (NEC) was held in Guwahati.

Related Information

North Eastern Council

- It is a statutory advisory body constituted under the North Eastern Council Act 1971.
- The North Eastern Council is the nodal agency for the economic and social development of the North Eastern Region.
- It consists of the eight States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.
- Sikkim was added to the council in the year 2002.
- The headquarters of the council is situated in Shillong and functions under the ministry of home affairs of the Government of India.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ India lost 31% of grasslands in a decade

- India lost 31 per cent, or 5.65 million hectares (mha), of grassland area in a decade, showed data the Union government presented to the United

Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) during the ongoing 14th Conference of Parties (COP).

- The total area under grasslands reduced to 12.3 mha from 18 mha between 2005 and 2015.
- Grasslands in the Aravalli range in Rajasthan underwent severe degradation. Other states where land has been severely destroyed include Maharashtra, Karnataka, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh.
- Loss of grazing land can be attributed to two kinds of drivers — direct and indirect.
- Overgrazing, poor management and deforestation are the direct drivers and conversion of pastures into croplands through encroachment, diversion and allotment driven by increasing population pressure are the indirect drivers.
- The country also lost around 19 per cent of its common lands during the same period, according to the report.
- The area under common lands decreased to 73.02 mha from around 90.5 mha between 2005 and 2015, it added.

Related Information

- Common lands include the grazing grounds, some forest land, ponds, rivers, and other areas that all members of a rural community can access and use.
- They provide food, water, fodder, firewood and livelihood to rural communities, while also helping recharge groundwater and maintain the land's ecological balance.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down to Earth

★ New Delhi to host 1st conference on Military Medicine for SCO member states

- The first conference on military medicine for Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member states was held recently in New Delhi.

- The conference will be the first military co-operation event hosted by India, under the SCO Defence Co-operation Plan 2019-2020, after it became an SCO member-state in 2017.
- The conference will be conducted by the Indian Armed Forces under the aegis of Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff (HQ IDS), with the aim to share best practices in the field of military medicine, build capacities and overcome common challenges.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- Business Standard

★ Biocatalyst cuts effluent discharge

- The researchers at the Central Leather Research Institute (CSIR-CLRI), Chennai developed amylase-based biocatalyst which helps in processing leather in an environment-friendly way.
- There is no chemicals are used in this process which helps the chemical oxygen demand drops by about 35% while the total solid effluent load reduces by over 50%.
- It will help to drastically cut the time taken to process the skin at the pre-tanning stage because the pre-tanning process generates 60-70% of total pollution during processing.
- Chromium is used in the process for increasing the stability of the collagen through cross-linking.
- It leads to the discharge of chromium into the environment.

Related Information

Chemical Oxygen Demand

- It is defined as the amount of oxygen required to oxidize all of the organic carbon completely into CO₂ and H₂.
- It is a method of determining the amount of oxygen that gets consumed by a body as a result of bacterial action in the water.

Note:

- Biocatalyst is the enzyme or a protein that increases or catalyzes the rate of a biochemical reaction.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

★ **Sanjay Mitra: Panel to oversee bifurcation of J&K into two Union Territories**

- Centre has set up a three-member panel under the former Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra to oversee the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories.

About the Committee

- The committee will look into the distribution of assets and liabilities of Jammu and Kashmir between two successor Union territories, which will come into existence on the 31st of October this year.
- Other member of the committee is retired IAS officer Arun Goyal and Retired Indian Civil Accounts Service officer Giriraj Prasad Gupta.

Related Information

- On 5th August 2019, the Centre had announced the abrogation of the special status given to J&K under Article 370 and bifurcation of the state into the two UTs.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Indian Polity

Source- AIR

★ **UNHRC asks India to end lockdown in J&K**

- In the 42nd session of the United Nation Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner urged India to end the lockdown in Kashmir and restore basic communications services.
- Michelle Bachelet UN High Commissioner also asked India to ensure that the National Register of Citizens verification in Assam does not leave the people Stateless.
- The UNHRC 42nd session was held at the European headquarters of the

United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

Related Information

United Nations Human Rights Council

- It is a United Nations body and was established in 2006.
- Its mission is to promote and protect human rights around the globe as well as investigate alleged human rights violations.
- It has 47 members elected on a regional group basis from 5 groups.
- The members are elected for a period of three years with a maximum of two consecutive terms.
- The members meet around three times a year to debate human rights issues and pass non-binding resolutions and recommendations by majority vote.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Organization

Source- AIR

★ **CHC Farm Machinery: A Multilingual Mobile App for farmers**

- Minister of State for Agriculture launched a multilingual Mobile App "CHC Farm Machinery" during a conference on Crop Residue Management in New Delhi.

About the app

- It will allow farmers to avail custom hiring services of CHCs located in a radius of 50 km.
- The App connects the farmers with Custom Hiring Service Centers in their area.

Related Information

Custom Hiring Centers

- Custom hiring centres (CHCs) for farm implements were established in 100 NICRA (National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture) villages which could successfully empower farmers to tide over the shortage of labour and improve the efficiency of agricultural operations.

- A committee of farmers' nominated by the gram sabha manages the custom hiring centre.
- More than 25 different types of farm machinery are stocked in 100 CHCs.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

★ International conference "ANGAN" on energy efficiency to Organize in New Delhi

- An international conference Augmenting Nature by Green Affordable New-habitat (ANGAN) focussed on energy efficiency in the buildings sector Organised in New Delhi.
- The Conference was organised by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the aegis of the power ministry in collaboration with GIZ under the Indo German Technical Cooperation.
- They discussed alternative options and technologies in the field of design and construction of energy-efficient buildings.
- The international conference provides a platform to deliberate on inter-dependence between organizations, sustainability and feedback loops for better resource efficiency.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Energy

Source- Economic Times

★ Tamil Nadu ranks lowest in coverage of iodised salt

- According to a national survey to measure the coverage of iodised salt, Tamil Nadu has the lowest consumption of iodised salt despite being the third biggest producer of salt in the country.
- The survey was conducted by Nutrition International in collaboration with the AIIMS, Delhi and the Indian Coalition for the Control of Iodine Deficiency Disorders.
- The survey tested the iodine content in samples of cooking salt from households to estimate the coverage of iodised salt in 29 States and 7 Union Territories in India.

Highlights of the survey

- The national average for household coverage is 76.3% i.e. 76.3% of Indian households consumed adequately iodised salt, which is salt with at least 15 parts per million of iodine.
- The five worst performers were Tamil Nadu (61.9%), Andhra Pradesh (63.9%), Rajasthan (65.5%), Odisha (65.8%) and Jharkhand (68.8%).
- Gujarat produces 71% of salt in the country, followed by Rajasthan at 17% and Tamil Nadu at 11%.
- The rest of the country accounts for a mere 1% of salt produced.
- 13 out of 36 States have already achieved Universal Salt Iodisation.

Related Information

Iodine

- Iodine is a vital micro-nutrient for the optimal mental and physical development of human beings.
- Deficiency of iodine can result in a range of disabilities and disorders such as goitre, hypothyroidism, cretinism, abortion, stillbirths, mental retardation and psychomotor defects.
- Children born in iodine-deficient areas may have up to 13.5 IQ points less than those born in iodine sufficient areas.
- India made fortification of salt with iodine mandatory for direct human consumption in 1992 which was relaxed in 2000 and then reimposed in 2005.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance (Important Report)

Source- The Hindu

★ World Energy Congress to commence in Abu Dhabi

- The 24th World Energy Congress will commence in Abu Dhabi under the patronage of Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates.
- The four-day World Energy Congress aims to bring together international

energy stakeholders, including governments, private and state corporations, academia and media.

- The theme of this World Energy Congress is **Energy for Prosperity** which also represents the ambitious and dynamic energy transition of the country.

Topic- GS Paper 3- Energy

Source- AIR

★ **Kerala to set up India's first trade centre for women**

- Kerala will set up India's first international women's trade centre (iWTC), in consonance with the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs), in Kozhikode.
- The first phase of iWTC, being executed under the gender park's "Vision 2020", is scheduled to be completed by 2021.
- iWTC will enable women entrepreneurs to come forward and participate in international trade, enjoy greater economic benefits and enhance their competitiveness to tap market opportunities.
- Its special emphasis will be on hand-holding and bringing economically backward women, marginalized groups, women with disabilities and transgenders to the forefront by helping to harness and nurture their entrepreneurial capabilities.

Topic- GS Paper 2- Government Policies

Source- ET

★ **Eradicating Malaria by 2050: Lancet Report**

- Recently in a report in the Lancet Commission on malaria eradication, concludes that it is possible to eradicate malaria as early as 2050.

Global Malaria Trend

- Since 2000, global malaria incidence and death rates declined by 36% and 60%, respectively.
- Today, more than half of the world's countries are malaria-free.

- However, Malaria cases are rising in 55 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.
- Nigeria and the Democratic Republic of Congo account for 36 % of global cases.
- Analyses indicate that socioeconomic and environmental trends, together with improved coverage of malaria interventions, will help to eradicate malaria as early as 2050.
- To achieve eradication by 2050, the report identifies 3 ways to accelerate the decline in malaria cases,
(a) The world must improve implementation of malaria control programmes.
(b) The world must develop and roll out innovative new tools to overcome the biological challenges to eradication.
(c) Malaria-endemic countries and donors must provide the financial investment needed.

Topic- GS Paper 2 -Health

Source- The Hindu

★ **PM Modi launches Kisan Mandhan Yojana in Ranchi**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Kisan Mandhan Yojana and Khudra Vyapari Dukandar Swarozgar Pension Yojana in Ranchi.

Related Information

Kisan Mandhan Yojana

- The scheme is voluntary and contributory for farmers in the entry age group of 18 to 40 years and a monthly pension of Rs. 3000/- will be provided to them on attaining the age of 60 years.
- The farmers will have to make a monthly contribution of Rs.55 to Rs.200, depending on their age of entry, in the Pension Fund till they

reach the retirement date i.e. the age of 60 years.

- The Central Government will also make an equal contribution of the same amount in the pension fund.
- The spouse is also eligible to get a separate pension of Rs.3000/- upon making separate contributions to the Fund.
- The LIC shall be the Pension Fund Manager and responsible for Pension payout.
- The beneficiaries may opt voluntarily to exit the Scheme after a minimum period of 5 years of regular contributions.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Government Schemes

Source- PIB

★ Drought Toolbox

- The UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) launched a 'drought toolbox' on the 10th day of COP14 in Greater Noida.
- It is a kind of knowledge bank that may be used by vulnerable countries, including India, to reduce drought risk, be better prepared and effectively respond to it.
- Drought toolbox is an online web platform that provides the stakeholders with easy access to case studies and other resources to support action on drought preparedness with the aim of boosting the resilience of people and ecosystems to drought.
- The tools are categorised in line with three pillars of drought preparedness:
 1. Monitoring, early warning and forecasting tools used by decision-makers.
 2. Vulnerability assessment tools for identifying hotspots.
 3. Risk mitigation tools with key "policy" and "technical" measures.
- The current procedure for declaring drought is very complex in most countries with the help of this tool the

countries can easily assess and evaluate drought vulnerability in their regions.

Related Information

Drought Declaration in India

- Drought is generally considered as a deficiency in rainfall /precipitation over an extended period, usually a season or more, resulting in a water shortage causing adverse impacts on vegetation, animals, and/or people.
- There is no single, legally accepted definition of drought in India.
- Government of India has published two important documents in respect of managing a drought.
- The first step is to look at two mandatory indicators — rainfall deviation and dry spell.
- Depending on the extent of the deviation, and whether or not there is a dry spell, the manual specifies various situations that may or may not be considered a drought trigger.
- The next step is to look at four impact indicators — agriculture, vegetation indices based on remote sensing, soil moisture, and hydrology.
- Each impact can be accessed on the basis of various indices.
- The intensity of drought: The States may consider any three of the four types of the Impact Indicators (one from each) for assessment of drought, the intensity of the calamity and make a judgement.
- If all three chosen indicators are in the 'severe' category, it amounts to severe drought; and if two of the three chosen impact indicators are in the 'moderate' or 'severe' class, it amounts to moderate drought.
- The third step comes in after both previous triggers have been set off. In that event, "States will conduct sample survey for ground in order to make a final determination of drought.

- The finding of field verification exercise will be the final basis for judging the intensity of drought as 'severe' or 'moderate'.
- Once a drought is determined, the state government needs to issue a notification specifying the geographical extent.
- The notification is valid for six months unless de-notified earlier.

Note:

- Drought is a major obstacle to achieving sustainable development goal-15.
- SDG-15 refers to Protecting, restoring and promoting sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- PIB

★ India's Tallest Air Traffic Control Tower

- India's tallest Air Traffic Control tower was inaugurated at the Indira Gandhi International Airport.
- It will ensure up-scaled services and systems for efficient, smooth and uninterrupted air traffic management.

Related Information

Digital initiatives are taken by the Aviation Ministry

DigiSky

- It is an online portal to regulate the entire gamut of activities relating to governance and operation of Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS)/Unmanned Aircraft Vehicles (UAVs)/drones has been made operational.
- While ensuring safety and security in drone operations, it will also help in the promotion of drone technologies.

DigiYatra

- DigiYatra initiative has been started as a trial basis at Bangalore and Hyderabad airports.

- The initiative envisages seamless and hassle-free passenger travel using biometric technologies to improve passenger experience, reduce queue waiting time as passengers can walk through e-gates by using advanced security solutions.
- It will remove redundancies at checkpoints and enhance resource utilization.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ Srivilliputtur 'palkova' set to get GI tag

- The famous Srivilliputtur palkova, a sweet made from cow milk and sugar, is set to get the Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the Geographical Indications Registry in Chennai.
- The palkova is manufactured in and around the municipality of Srivilliputtur in Virudhunagar district.

Related Information

Geographical Indication (GI)

- It is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place.
- India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15th September 2003.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art & Culture

Source- The Hindu

★ DRDO successfully test-fires Man-Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile

- DRDO has successfully flight-tested third series indigenously developed low weight, fire and forget Man Portable Antitank Guided Missile.
- The missile was launched from a man-portable Tripod launcher.

Related Information

Man-Portable Antitank Guided Missile

- It is an Indian 3rd-generation fire-and-forget anti-tank guided missile.
- The missile is derived from Nag ATGM of India.
- Currently, it is DRDO in partnership with Indian defence contractor VEM Technologies Private Limited.
- It has high-explosive anti-tank warhead and operational range- 2.5 km.
- The missile is incorporated with state-of-the-art Infrared Imaging Seeker along with advanced avionics.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- The Hindu

★ Ladakh may get autonomous tribal councils if NCST plan is accepted

- The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes recommended for inclusion of Union Territory of Ladakh under Fifth/Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India.
- It will help in meeting the cherished aspirations of the tribal people in Ladakh region.
- The total tribal population in Ladakh region is more than 97 percent.
- The region is inhabited by following Scheduled Tribes, namely: Balti, Beda, Bot, Boto, Brokpa, Drokpa, Dard, Shin, Changpa, Garra, Mon, Purigpa.

Related Information

Sixth Schedule

- The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution deals with the administration of the tribal areas in the four northeastern states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram as per Article 244.
- The Governor is empowered to increase or decrease the areas or change the names of the autonomous districts.
- While executive powers of the Union extend in Scheduled areas with respect to their administration in Vth schedule, the VIth schedule areas remain within executive authority of the state.

- The acts of Parliament or the state legislature do not apply to autonomous districts and autonomous regions or apply with specified modifications and exceptions.
- The Councils have also been endowed with wide civil and criminal judicial powers, for example establishing village courts etc.
- However, the jurisdiction of these councils is subject to the jurisdiction of the concerned High Court.
- The sixth schedule to the Constitution includes 10 autonomous district councils in 4 states.

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes

- It was established by amending Article 338 and inserting a new Article 338A in the Constitution through the Constitution (89th Amendment) Act, 2003.
- The Commission comprises a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and three full-time Members (including one lady Member).
- The term of all the Members of the Commission is three years from the date of assumption of charge.
- By this amendment, the erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was replaced by two separate Commissions namely-
 - (i) National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and
 - (ii) National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) w.e.f. 19 February 2004.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- AIR

★ Water discovered on a potentially habitable super-Earth!

- Water has been detected by scientists in the atmosphere of a potentially habitable super-Earth "K2-18b".

- The exoplanet, named K2-18b, is twice the size and eight times the mass of Earth.
- K2-18b, a distant super-Earth and for the first time discovered water vapour in its atmosphere and temperature that could potentially support life.

K2-18b

- The exoplanet is twice the size and eight times the mass of Earth and hence, known as a super-Earth.
- Super-Earths are exoplanets that are larger than Earth but smaller than Neptune.
- The exoplanet orbits a red dwarf star, K2-18 and is 110 light-years away from Earth in the Leo constellation.
- The study reveals that K2-18b receives about the same amount of radiation from its star as the Earth does from the sun.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source-The Hindu

★ Cryodrakon boreas, the largest flying animal was a plane-sized reptile

- Recently Paleontologists have identified a new species, named Cryodrakon boreas which could be one of the largest flying animals.

Related Information

Cryodrakon Boreas

- Cryodrakon also known as cold dragon lived over 77 million years ago during the Late Cretaceous period in what is now Canada.
- It contains a single species, Cryodrakon boreas, recovered from the Dinosaur Park Formation (in Alberta, Canada).
- It has a wingspan of over 10 metres; it is believed to have flown over the heads of dinosaurs.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- The Hindu

★ Global Antimicrobial Resistance Research and Development Hub

- Recently India has joined the Global Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Research and Development (R&D) Hub as a new member.

Related Information

Global AMR R&D Hub

- It was launched in May 2018 in the margins of the 71st session of the World Health Assembly, following a call from G20 Leaders in 2017.
- It is a global partnership of 16 countries, the European Commission, two philanthropic foundations and four international organisations (as observers).
- The Global AMR R&D Hub supports global priority setting and evidence-based decision-making on the allocation of resources for AMR R&D through the identification of gaps, overlaps and potential for cross-sectoral collaboration and leveraging in AMR R&D.
- The secretariat is established in Berlin.
- It has financed through grants from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) and the Federal Ministry of Health (BMG).

Note:

- Antimicrobial Resistance is the ability of a microbe to resist the effects of medication that once could successfully treat the microbe.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

★ India skips Eurasian Economic Forum in China

- India skipped a meeting of the 'Eurasian Economic Union' (EAEU), which was organised by SCO in China.

- India has been a member of the 'Shanghai Cooperation Organisation' (SCO) since 2017.

Reasons for Skip

- The entire event of Eurasian Economic Forum foreshadowed by China's 'Belt and Road Initiative'.
- Belt and Road Initiative is an infrastructure project unveiled by China which plans to connect Asia, Europe, and Africa.
- The 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor', an important part of the BRI, passes through Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- So, India strongly opposed the BRI, as no country can accept a project that ignores its core concerns on sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- This made India skip the SCO's Eurasian Economic Forum as the entire event is foreshadowed by BRI.

Related Information

Eurasian Economic Union

- It is an international organization for regional economic integration that came into existence on 1st January 2015.
- The member states of the Eurasian Economic Union are:
 1. The Republic of Armenia,
 2. The Republic of Belarus,
 3. The Republic of Kazakhstan
 4. The Kyrgyz Republic,
 5. The Russian Federation.

Topic- GS Paper 2 -International Organization

Source- Livemint

★ Maitree 2019: Indo-Thailand Joint Military Exercise

- India and Thailand will be conducted a joint Military Exercise MAITREE-2019 in Meghalaya.

Related Information

Exercise MAITREE

- It is an annual training event which is being conducted alternatively in Thailand and India since 2006.

- The exercise has a significant in terms of the security challenges faced by both the nations in the backdrop of changing facets of global terrorism.

Topic- GS Paper 3 -Defence

Source- PIB

★ Him Vijay Exercise

- Indian Army is scheduled to conduct a major Exercise called 'HimVijay' in Arunachal Pradesh and Assam with its newly created Integrated Battle Groups (IBG).
- The Indian army will join with the integrated battle groups for this exercise.
- The Indian Air force will also be part of the exercise for strategic airlift of personnel and equipment.
- The primary aim of carrying out such an exercise is to test if the Mountain Strike Corps which is under the Eastern command can carry out operations in different terrains.

Mountain strike Corps

- Mountain Strike Corps is India's first dedicated strike corps for mountain operations.
- It focuses on the eastern end of the contested border to bolster India's defence.
- They can also be used in any mountainous region which means all the northern borders.

Topic- GS Paper 3 -Defence

Source- PIB

★ National Intelligence Grid to roll out by end of the year?

- National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) project wants to link social media accounts to the huge database of records related to immigration entry and exit, banking and telephone details among others.
- Natgrid will not have a database of its own, rather it will have a collated database connected with software.

Related Information

National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)

- It is a central agency aims to have an integrated intelligence grid that will link databases of several departments and ministries of the Government of India.
- It will help to identify, capture and prosecute terrorists and help pre-empt terror plots.
- It will provide a platform to share and disseminate intelligence information among 22 government agencies like
 - Intelligence Bureau (IB), Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Enforcement Directorate (ED), Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) and the Directorate General of Central Excise Intelligence (DGCEI).

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- The Hindu

★ RBI panel suggests new intermediary under NHB

- RBI panel, which was tasked with reviewing the existing state of housing finance securitization, and suggest measures to make the market more attractive, has recommended that an intermediary be set up under the National Housing Bank (NHB), wherein the government will have a 51% ownership.
- The six-member committee, which was set up in the May 2019 under the chairmanship of Harsh Vardhan, has submitted its report to RBI.
- Mortgage securitization involves the pooling of loans and selling them to a special purpose vehicle (SPV), which then issues securities, called pass-through certificates (PTCs).
- The PTCs will be backed by the loan pool.

- Securitization is a mechanism to convert illiquid loans on the lenders' balance sheet into tradable securities.
- The committee also said that the RBI should develop standards for loan origination, loan servicing, loan documentation, and for the loans eligible for securitisation, including standardised formats for data collection and aggregation.
- It also suggested separation of regulatory guidelines for direct assignment transactions and transactions involving PTCs, as well as for mortgage-backed securities and asset-backed securities.

Topic- GS Paper 3- Indian Economy

Source-Livemint

★ Haryana CM launches insurance schemes for small traders

- Haryana chief minister, Manohar Lal launched two insurance schemes for registered small and medium traders in the State namely **Mukhyamantri Vyapari Samuhik Niji Durghatna Beema Yojana** and **Mukhyamantri Vyapari Kshatipurti Beema Yojana**.
- An insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh would be provided under the Mukhyamantri Vyapari Samuhik Niji Durghatna Beema Yojana and insurance cover ranging from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 25 lakh under the Mukhyamantri Vyapari Kshatipurti Beema Yojana.
- Traders registered under the Haryana Goods and Service Tax (HGST) Act, 2017 would be covered under these schemes.

Topic- GS Paper 2- Government Schemes

Source- Economic Times

★ Initiatives of MIC and AICTE to boost research and innovation in the country

- Union HRD Minister launches several initiatives of MIC and AICTE to boost research and innovation in the country

Details of initiatives launched by HRD Minister

Launch of IIC 2.0

- This innovation Cell has envisioned establishing a strong network of Institution's Innovation Council (IICs) in Higher Educational Institutes to promote innovation and start-up in academia.

Smart India Hackathon -2020:

- Smart India Hackathon or SIH is a flagship program and nationwide initiative by MHRD's Innovation Cell (MIC) and AICTE.
- It provide students a platform to solve some of the pressing problems we face in our daily lives, and thus to inculcate a culture of product innovation and to create a mindset to solve problems.
- Hackathon (SIH) is one of the most successful flagship event of MHRD's Innovation Cell.

ARIIA 2020

- Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) is an initiative of the HRD Ministry).
- It systematically ranks all major educational institutions and universities on indicators related to the promotion of "Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development" amongst their students and faculties.

Pratsahan Mudra Scheme

- Pratsahan Mudra is real-time rewards Engine to give rewards to Students and teachers daily or as close to the action that qualifies for the reward.

AICTE – VISHWAKARMA AWARDS' 2019

- AICTE has introduced Vishwakarma Awards from 2017 to encourage and motivate young students and institutions to raise their performance in their specific domains.
- The theme of Vishwakarma Award 2019 is "How to enhance the income of Village".

Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance

Source- PIB

★ **Justice P Lakshmana Reddy appointed as first Lokayukta of Andhra Pradesh**

- Justice P Lakshmana Reddy, a retired judge of the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh High Court sworn-in as the first Lokayukta of the state after its bifurcation in 2014.

Related Information

About Lokpal and Lokayukta

- The Lokpal and Lokayukta Act, 2013 provided for the establishment of Lokpal for the Union and Lokayukta for States.
- These institutions are statutory bodies without any constitutional status.
- They perform the function of an "ombudsman" and inquire into allegations of corruption against certain public functionaries and for related matters.
- Maharashtra was the first state to introduce the institution of Lokayukta through The Lokayukta and Upa-Lokayuktas Act in 1971.

Appointment

- The Lokayukta and Upa-Lokayukta are appointed by the governor of the state.
- While appointing, the governor in most of the states consults:
 1. The chief justice of the state high court.
 2. The leader of Opposition in the state legislative assembly.

Note :

- Pinaki Chandra Ghose is the first Lokpal of India, who was a retired judge of the Supreme Court of India.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ **Central Equipment Identity Register Portal**

- Telecom Minister recently unveiled a portal where an user can report a complaint of lost or stolen phones.

- The project has started on a pilot basis in Maharashtra and later it will be implemented across the country.
- The aim is to reduce the resale of lost/stolen phones by blocking the IMEI number.

About Central Equipment Identity Register

- It is a database of International Mobile Equipment Identities (IMEIs) **which is 15-digit numbers** that uniquely identify each mobile device.
- The concept of a central identity register is advocated by the GSM Association (GSMA).
- Department of Telecom identity register will be a database of IMEI numbers that will consist of three lists – white, grey and black.
- Mobile phones with IMEI numbers in the **white list** will be permitted for use.
- The **blacklist** will be the ones that are reported stolen or lost and will not be allowed to access the network.
- The **greylist** will be the ones that do not conform to standards but will be permitted to connect under supervision.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ COP14: Delhi Declaration adopted to combat land degradation

- Recently the Conference of Parties 14 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification concluded in Greater Noida, India.
- It ended with a commitment to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) by 2030 and Delhi Declaration.
- The Delhi Declaration is a statement of global action by each country on how to achieve Land Degradation Neutrality.
- The 12-point Delhi Declaration agreed to by the parties at the conclusion of Conference raises ambitious targets with a people's first approach to land restoration.

DELHI DECLARATION COP 14 (Important Points)

1. Promoting projects to prevent land degradation at local, national and regional levels.
2. Promote projects to prevent drought and erosion, and to make barren land cultivable.
3. Plan to prevent drought, so that land degradation can be prevented.
- 4- Creating green jobs by promoting technology and investment in collaboration with all stakeholders.
- 5- Need to work towards preventing land degradation taking forward Paris Agreement
- 6- Implementing UN Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030) program on behalf of all countries.
- 7- To further programs initiated by African countries to prevent land degradation.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Environment

Source- AIR

★ Bamboonomics: Biggest Tribal Movement to promote tribal enterprise

- Recently the TRIFED and Union Tribal Ministry launched TICD (TRIFED's Initiative to Combat Desertification) under "The 4P1000 Initiative: The Tribal Perspective through Bamboonomics."
- Bamboonomics is a movement to combat desertification and climate change which will involve the tribal community of India since they have the expertise in this field.

Related Information

About 4P1000 INITIATIVE

- According to TRIFED, the 4P1000 Initiative with the tribal perspective through Bamboonomics is the best answer for combating desertification and rehabilitation of degraded wastelands.
- The 4P1000 Initiative: The international initiative "4per1000", launched by France in 2015 at the COP 21,
- It consists of federating all voluntary stakeholders of the public and private

sectors under the framework of the Lima-Paris Action Plan (LPAP).

- The aim of the initiative is to demonstrate that an annual growth rate of 0.4% in the soil carbon stocks, in the first 30-40 cm of agricultural soil, would significantly reduce the CO₂ concentration in the atmosphere related to human activities.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Environment

Source- DD News

★ Centre removes 312 Sikh foreign nationals from Adverse List

- Government has reviewed the Adverse List containing 314 foreign nationals belonging to Sikh community and brought it down to just two.
- The Central "adverse list" is maintained by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The decision has been taken after a review carried out by different security agencies on the Adverse List or blacklist containing the names of Sikh foreign nationals.

Related Information

About Adverse list or Black List

- Blacklist is maintained by Indian Embassies in different countries and posts abroad.
- It contains a list of Indian-origin people who have taken asylum i.e. right to international protection in this other country abroad under plea of alleged persecution in India.
- Those who are in the list are denied visa services by Indian missions and posts in the respective country.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- AIR

★ Rajasthan launches an information portal

- The Rajasthan government launched a new web portal, named the Jan Soochna Portal-2019.
- It would ensure compliance with Section 4(2) of the RTI Act mandating

the public authorities to disclose information in the public domain.

- The portal promises to provide information about government authorities and departments suo motu to the public in the true spirit of the Right to Information Act.
- It will initially give information pertaining to 13 departments.

Note:

- Section 4 of the right to information (RTI) Act deals with proactive disclosure of information.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

★ Kerala to set up India's first trade centre for women

- Kerala will set up India's first international women's trade centre (IWTC), in consonance with the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs), in Kozhikode.
- It is a key project of the state's gender park under the department of social justice.
- The first phase of IWTC, being executed under the gender park's "Vision 2020", is scheduled to be completed by 2021.
- The trade centre will aim at accelerating women entrepreneurship and secure gender parity.
- The facility will also provide women with a safe place away from home to start new businesses, set up or expand and get their products marketed globally.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ Pangong Tso lake

- Recently Indian and Chinese soldiers had a heated exchange in Ladakh near the Pangong Tso lake.

Related Information

About Pangong Tso

- Pangong Tso is a long narrow, deep, endorheic (landlocked) lake situated at a height of more than 14,000 ft in the Ladakh Himalayas.

- The lake stretches out from India to China.
- One-third of water body, its 45 km stretch, is in Indian control while the rest of the 90 km is under Chinese control.
- It is a brackish water lake which was formed from Tethys geosyncline.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- Livemint

★ Samudra Lakshmana 2018

- It is a bilateral exercise between the Indian Navy and the Royal Malaysian Navy.

Related Information

About the Samudra Lakshmana Exercise

- The exercise would include a harbour phase wherein professional interactions, official calls, social engagements, visits by the local populace and various sports events would be conducted.
- The Sea Phase of the exercise would enable the two navies to further hone their skills in order to enhance interoperability between the navies to ensure peaceful and secure seas for all.

Other Exercise with Malaysia

Harimau Shakti

- It is a military exercise between Indian and Malaysian armies.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- Indian Express

★ MDH masalas in the US have tested positive for Salmonella

- Recently United States Food and Drug Administration has tested the MDH sambar masala which showed positive for salmonella.

Related Information

About Salmonella

- It is a group of bacteria that can cause food-borne illnesses known as salmonellosis.
- Humans become infected most frequently through contaminated water or food.
- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has identified Salmonella as one of four key global causes of diarrhoeal diseases.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology

Source- Indian Today

★ 1st Maiden IN-RSN-RTN Trilateral

Exercise

- 1st maiden trilateral exercise, involving Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN), Royal Thailand Navy (RTN) and Indian Navy (IN) has commenced at Port Blair.
- The exercise is aimed at bolstering the maritime inter-relationships amongst Singapore Thailand and India.
- It has contributed significantly to enhancing the overall maritime security in the region.
- The maiden IN-RSN-RTN Trilateral exercise would also provide an opportunity to participating navies to come together in a spirit of collaboration to nurture stronger ties.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- PIB

★ Karan Vandana: A new hybrid wheat variety

- Karan Vandana is a new hybrid wheat variety which gives a significantly higher yield than normal varieties, is likely to be soon launched across the country.

Related Information

Karan Vandana

- It has been developed by the Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research (IIWBR) under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
- It is also known as DBW-187 which are resistant to yellow rust and white blast diseases.

Yellow Rust

- Yellow rust is a fungal disease that manifests as powdery yellow stripes on leaves.
- These yellow stripes hinder photosynthesis and stunt the growth of the plant.

- All the wheat-growing states like Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and the Tarai region of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and the low lying areas of Jammu and Kashmir are susceptible to the disease.

Wheat Blast

- It is also a fungal disease.
- It prevents maturation of the actual grain which affects reproduction by causing the host to produce fewer seeds.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Agriculture

Source- Indian Express

★ No Uranium mining in Amrabad Tiger Reserve forest

- Telangana State Assembly passed a resolution against proposed Uranium mining in Amrabad Tiger Reserve, located in Nallamala forest area of the State.

Related Information

- On May 22, 2019, the Union Ministry of Environment had granted in-principle approval to the Department of Atomic Energy to survey and explore for uranium in 83 sq km of the Amrabad Tiger Reserve.
- Chenchu tribals, who live in the Amrabad forests spread over Telangana's Mahabubnagar and Nalgonda district, are also affected by this uranium exploration.

Amrabad Tiger Reserve

- It spreads over 2,800 sq.kms in the districts of Mahabubnagar and Nalgonda, is the largest tiger reserve in the country.
- Earlier, it was part of 'Nagarjunasagar-Srisailem Tiger reserve' but post bifurcation, the northern part of the reserve is vested with Telangana state and renamed as 'Amrabad Tiger Reserve'.

India status

- The state of Andhra Pradesh is the largest producer of uranium in India.
- Tummalapalle village located in the Kadapa district of Andhra Pradesh is

considered as one of the largest uranium reserves in the world.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment

Source- The Hindu

★ Prakash Javadekar flags off 'Jaldoot' water conservation initiative

- Union Minister for Information and Broadcasting Prakash Javadekar flagged off a vehicle christened 'Jaldoot' to spread the message of water conservation in Pune, Maharashtra.
- A travelling exhibition arranged by Pune-based Regional Outreach Bureau of I&B ministry will tour eight districts of Maharashtra in the next two months.
- It will take the message of water conservation to the masses.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Government Policies

Source- Business Standard

★ Government launches steel import monitoring system (SIMS)

- The government launched a steel import monitoring system (SIMS) to provide advance information about steel imports to various stakeholders including producers and importers to have effective policy interventions.
- The system developed in consultation with the Ministry of Steel on the pattern of US Steel Import Monitoring and Analysis (SIMA) system.
- Importers of specified steel products will register in advance on the web portal of SIMS providing the necessary information.
- The importer can apply for registration not earlier than 60th day and not later than 15th day before the expected date of arrival of import consignment.
- The automatic registration number granted will remain valid for 75 days.
- The information about the steel imports provided by importers on the SIMS will be monitored by the Steel Ministry.
- SIMS will require importers to submit advance information in an online

system for import of 284 steel tariff lines at 8-digit HS code in order to obtain an automatic registration number by paying a prescribed registration fee.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Government Policies **Source- Livemint**

★ **India's first central police university to come up in Greater Noida**

- The country's first central police university will be set up by the Union home ministry off the Yamuna Expressway in Greater Noida.
- The Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA) confirmed that the land had been allotted to the Centre at a cost of Rs 372 crore.
- The university will offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses on policing, internal security, cybercrime and forensic sciences.
- The country does not have a central university for police yet, though states like Rajasthan, Gujarat and Jharkhand have dedicated police varsities.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Government Policies **Source- Times of India**

★ **National centre for clean coal R&D opened**

- Minister of Science & Technology Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the National Centre for Clean Coal Research and Development at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru.
- The centre has been established as a national consortium on clean coal research and development with IISc leading it.
- The new centre is aimed at addressing several critical R&D challenges towards the development of clean coal technologies in tandem with developing supercritical power plant technologies, both at the material and system level.
- The minister also formally launched an Interdisciplinary Centre for Energy

Research (ICER) equipped with modern facilities to conduct a wide spectrum of energy research through the knowledge network of elite researchers.

- Development of clean coal technologies is necessary to achieve international targets on climate change by minimising anthropogenic emissions while simultaneously addressing energy demand.
- This could be achieved by shifting towards high-efficiency advanced ultra-supercritical steam power plants as well as supercritical carbon dioxide plants, along with exploration of new combustion and gasification technologies.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology **Source- Down To Earth**

★ **J&K Public Safety Act**

- National Conference leader and former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah of the Jammu and Kashmir have been detained under the Public Safety Act.

Related Information

J&K Public Safety Act

- The Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA), which received the assent of the J&K Governor on April 8, 1978.
- It is also referred to as a "draconian" law.
- This law allowed the government to detain any person above the age of 16 without trial for a period of two years "in the case of persons acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of the State."
- In August 2018, the Act was amended to allow individuals to be detained under the PSA outside the state as well.
- The detention orders under this act can be issued by Divisional Commissioners or District Magistrates.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ **Yank': A new term in biophysics**

- Biologists and biomedical engineers are proposing to define the term "yank" for changes in force overtime.
- The Proposed new term for changes in force over time, so that scientists can study muscle behaviour better.
- The objective is to quantify something that our muscles and nerves can feel and respond to.
- It could be useful in understanding spasticity, a common muscle impairment in multiple sclerosis, spinal cord injury, stroke and cerebral palsy.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology
Source- Indian Express

★ Nirvik Scheme: New Export Credit Insurance Scheme

- Ministry of Commerce & Industry through Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) has introduced a new Export Credit Insurance Scheme (ECIS) called NIRVIK.

NIRVIK

- The enhanced insurance cover will ensure that Foreign and Rupee export credit interest rates will be below 4% and 8% respectively for exporters.
- It will catalyze the banks to enhance the volume of export credit lending, especially to the MSME Sector with optimal pricing due to capital and risk optimization.
- The insurance cover will include both pre and post-shipment credit.
- The gems, jewellery and diamond (GJD) sector borrowers with a limit of more than Rs. 80 crore will have a higher premium rate as compared to non-GJD sector borrowers of this category due to the higher loss ratio.
- Under ECIS, insurance cover percentage has also been enhanced to

90% from the present average of 60% for both Principal and Interest.

- The insurance cover is expected to bring down the cost of credit due to capital relief, less provision requirement and liquidity due to the quick settlement of claims.
- It will ensure timely and adequate working capital to the export sector.

Export Credit Guarantee Corporation

- It is a fully government-owned company that was established in 1957 to promote exports by providing credit insurance services.
- It provides Export Credit Insurance to Banks to protect the banks from losses on account of export credit at the Pre and Post-Shipment stage given to exporters due to the risks of insolvency or protracted default of the exporter borrower.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Indian Economy

Source- PIB

★ Tylophora balakrishnanii and Tylophora neglecta : New plant species in the Western Ghats

- A team of researchers has reported the discovery of two new plant species belonging to the Asclepiadaceae or milkweed family from the shola forests of the Western Ghats.

Tylophora balakrishnanii

- It is a straggling vine, has been discovered from the Thollayiram shola in Wayanad.
- Flowers of the plant are reddish-pink and the species is similar to the coastal plant *Tylophora flexuosa*.

Tylophora neglecta

- It has also been discovered from the shola forest.
- The flowers of the species are white with a violet tinge.
- Its leaves are thick and bristly in nature.

Shola forests

- They are tropical montane forests found in the valleys separated by rolling grasslands only in the higher elevations.
- They are found only in the high altitude mountains of the states Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

★ Odisha government banned the Paraquat herbicide

- Odisha government has banned the **Paraquat herbicide** which kills around 170 people in the last two years.
- According to the doctors, there is no antidote to this herbicide, the consumers of which complain of kidney, liver and lung problems.

About Paraquat

- It has been banned in 32 countries including Switzerland, where herbicide producing company Sygenta is based.
- Paraquat also figures on the list of 99 pesticides and herbicides activist Kavitha Kuruganti is requesting the Supreme Court to ban in an ongoing case.
- **So far in India, only Kerala has banned the herbicide.**
- Paraquat is yet to be listed in the prior informed consent (PIC) of Rotterdam Convention, is an international treaty on import/export of hazardous chemicals signed in 1998.

Rotterdam Convention

- The Rotterdam Convention (formally, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade) is a multilateral treaty.
- It aims to promote shared responsibilities in relation to the importation of hazardous chemicals.
- The convention promotes the open exchange of information and calls on

exporters of hazardous chemicals to use proper labelling, include directions on safe handling, and inform purchasers of any known restrictions or bans.

- India is also a party to the convention, which has 161 parties.
- If a chemical figures in the PIC, the exporting country has to take the importing nation's prior consent before exporting it.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down to Earth

★ UN chief appoints Indian Army veteran Abhijit Guha as head of Hodeidah mission

- United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres recently appointed Lieutenant General (Retired) Abhijit Guha as the head of the UN mission in Hodeidah, Yemen.

Related Information

UN Hodeidah mission

- It is a special political mission to support the implementation of the ceasefire agreement reached in Stockholm on 13 December 2018 between the Government of Yemen and the Houthi militia.
- It will cover the city and port of Hodeidah, as well as the ports of Salif and Ras Issa.
- It will monitor compliance with the ceasefire, work with the parties to ensure that security is assured by local security forces, in line with Yemeni law.
- The mission will be headed by the Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Commission.
- Redeployment Coordination Commission is responsible for redeploying forces of Yemeni warring parties in accordance with their agreement.

Hodeidah Agreement

- The Houthis and the government forces had agreed to withdraw from

Hudaydah port to allow in vital humanitarian aid in December 2018.

- Hudaydah port is the principal lifeline for two-thirds of Yemen's population.
- Its closure had a devastating impact on Yemen.

Topic-GS Paper 2–International Relation Source- PIB

★ Tudor style of Architecture

- The Minister of Information and Broadcasting and Environment, Forest and Climate Change has recently inaugurated newly restored Jayakar Bungalow at National Film Archive of India.
- The bungalow is the fine example of Tudor style of Architecture

Related Information

Tudor Architecture style

- Tudor architecture is a style of architecture that developed in England between 1485 and 1558.
- It was a transitional style, mixing elements of Renaissance architecture with a Gothic style found mostly in England called Perpendicular Gothic because it emphasized vertical lines.
- Tudor architecture was found in England, Scotland, and other parts of the British Isles, including Ireland.
- The characteristics features of Tudor style was 'black and white' construction

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- Livemint

★ A new interstellar object "Oumuamua"

- In October 2017, the Haleakala Observatory in Hawaii spotted a strange, spaceship-shaped object passing through the Solar System.
- Later named 'Oumuamua, it became the subject of speculation whether it was really an alien spaceship but was eventually declared by scientists to be an interstellar object — the first such known visitor to the Solar System.

Related Information

- The MARGO observatory in Crimea spotted a comet which, astronomers believe, is likely to have originated from outside the Solar System, although the official confirmation has not been made yet.
- According to NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), the comet has been designated C/2019 Q4 (Borisov).
- After the initial detections of the comet, JPL's Scout system automatically flagged the object as possibly being interstellar.
- The comet's current velocity is high, about 150,000 kph, which is well above the typical velocities of objects orbiting the Sun at that distance.
- The high velocity indicates not only that the object likely originated from outside our Solar System, but also that it will leave and head back to interstellar space
- The comet was 420 million km from the Sun.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology Source- TOI

★ Trilateral Exercise "SITMEX" among Navies of Singapore, India and Thailand

- The Singapore, India and Thailand Navies carried out their first joint maritime exercise 'SITMEX-2019' in Port Blair.
- The aim of the exercise is to strengthen maritime relations and to make a significant contribution to improving overall maritime safety.

Topic- GS Paper 3- Defence

Source- The Hindu

★ IAF successfully flight tests air-to-air Astra missile from Sukhoi-30 MKI

- India has successfully tested Air-to-Air missile, ASTRA off the coast of Odisha.
- The missile was launched from Su-30 MKI as a part of User trials.
- The Sukhoi Su-30MKI is a twinjet multirole air superiority fighter developed by Russia's Sukhoi for the Indian Air Force (IAF).

Related Information

Astra

- It is an all-weather beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile developed by the DRDO.
- It is the first air-to-air missile developed by India.
- It features mid-course inertial guidance with terminal active radar homing.
- It is a single-stage solid-fuelled missile and has a payload capacity of 15 kg conventional explosives.
- The missile can be integrated with all fighter aircraft of IAF including Sukhoi-30 MKI, Mirage-2000, MiG-29, Jaguar and the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA)

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- AIR

★ MIS Portal: For Accessible India Campaign

- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities has developed a Management Information System (MIS) for stakeholders of Accessible India Campaign (AIC).
- The DEPwD works under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

Management Information System portal

- This portal will bring all the nodal ministries and States/UTs on a single platform for monitoring the progress being made against each target of Accessible India Campaign.
- It will also be useful in maintaining all the function on a digital platform and capture data on a real-time basis.
- The portal is made fully accessible for Divyangjans.

Related Information

Accessible India Campaign (Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan)

- It is a nation-wide flagship campaign for achieving universal accessibility

that will enable persons with disabilities to gain access for equal opportunity and live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life in an inclusive society.

- The campaign targets at enhancing the accessibility of built environment, transport system and Information & communication eco-System.

Components of Accessible India Campaign

It has the following three important components

- Built Environment Accessibility
- Transportation System Accessibility
- Information and Communication Eco-System Accessibility

Note:-

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)

- India is a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
- Article 9 casts of UNCRPD makes an obligation on all the signatory governments to take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access on an equal basis with others.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

★ Cabinet approves a ban on e-cigarettes

- The Union Cabinet approved a ban on e-cigarettes, citing the need to take early action to protect public health.
- These include all forms of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), Heat Not Burn Products, e-Hookah and the like devices.

Related Information

e-cigarettes

- It is also known as e-vaporizers, or electronic nicotine delivery systems.
- They are battery-operated devices that produce an aerosol by heating a

solution containing nicotine, which is the addictive substance in combustible cigarettes.

- According to a study conducted by ICMR the use of e-cigarettes could have adverse effects on humans.
- It includes DNA damage, carcinogenic, cellular, molecular and immunological toxicity, respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological disorders, and adverse impact on foetal development and pregnancy.

Note:

- An aerosol is a suspension of fine solid particles or liquid droplets, in the air or another gas.
- Aerosols can be natural or anthropogenic.
- Examples of natural aerosols are fog, dust, forest exudates and geyser steam.
- Examples of anthropogenic aerosols are haze, particulate air pollutants and smoke

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ World Bamboo Day (18th September)

- The day is observed every year on the 18th of September by the World Bamboo Organization to generate awareness about conserving and promoting the bamboo industry.
- Known as poor man's timber, bamboo is omnipresent in tribal cultures and community living.
- From artefacts to sustainable architecture, bamboo remains a favourite as it's fast to grow, low on maintenance and has versatile potential.
- Through an act, Government declassified bamboo as a tree on non-forest lands.
- India is the world's second-largest cultivator of bamboo after China with over 130 species.

Related Information

- Restructured National Bamboo Mission was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in 2018. It envisages promoting holistic growth of the bamboo sector by adopting an area-based, regionally differentiated strategy and to increase the area under bamboo cultivation and marketing. To address forward integration, the Mission is taking steps to strengthen the marketing of bamboo products, especially those of handicraft items.
- In the Budget this year, Government focused on reviving traditional industries such as bamboo, khadi and honey, through a cluster-based approach. It will be done under the Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI), which aims to organise such industries and artisans into clusters to make them competitive. It also aims to provide support for their long-term sustainability, sustained employment, and enhanced marketability of products.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- AIR

★ Kerala to be included in the national industrial corridor

- The Union Government has decided to extend the Chennai-Bengaluru industrial corridor to Coimbatore and then to Kochi.
- The setting up of the corridor would contribute to developing manufacturing industries in the region and transform the Kochi-Palakkad region into a major manufacturing hub of South India.
- Two integrated manufacturing clusters (IMCs) would be developed- at Palakkad and Salem in Tamil Nadu.
- According to the norms of the National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT), about 2,000 to 5,000 acres are needed to set up the IMCs.

- However, after the Kerala government informed about the difficulties in making land available, the Centre has accepted the state's plea to set it up in 1,800 acres.
- The state and Central government would jointly form a special purpose vehicle to manage the clusters.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Infrastructure

Source- Indian Express

★ **Mukhya Mantri Seva Sankalp helpline**

- Himachal Pradesh government has launched a helpline number '1100' (Mukhya Mantri Service Resolution Helpline) for the speedy and time-bound redressal of public grievances.
- The helpline number will make use of the latest technologies to help people register their complaints online, making the whole procedure paperless and lessen the footfall in government offices.
- Now, Himachal Pradesh has become the fourth state (after Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh) in the country to have such a helpline.
- Mukhya Mantri Service Resolution Helpline will function 6 days a week (Monday-Saturday) from 7am to 10pm
- Every complaint will be resolved within a period of 7-14 days.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Government Policies

Source- Daily Pioneer

★ **National Recruitment Agency**

- Finance Ministry has approved the proposal for the creation of a National Recruitment Agency (NRA).
- It will be set up to conduct the Common Eligibility Test (CET) for all these competitive examinations
- The objective of the NRA is to streamline recruitment of Group-B (non-gazetted), Group-C (non-technical) and clerical posts in the government along with various equivalent recruitment in public sector banks.

- It will conduct preliminary examinations for all these recruitment, which are at present conducted by the Staff Selection Commission (SSC) and the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS).
- It will then subsequently forward the list of qualifying candidates to the respective recruiting agencies to conduct the mains examinations.
- As per the proposal, the NRA will subsequently forward the list of qualifying candidates to the respective recruiting agencies to conduct the mains examinations.
- The basic idea behind this proposal is to shortlist qualifying candidates through a Common Eligibility Test before sending them for the mains examination.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ **Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Amendment Bill, 2019**

- The Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Amendment Bill, 2019 which was passed by the Parliament during the Budget Session has come into effect.

Related Information

Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Act 2019

- As per the Amendment Act, the Estate officer will issue short Show cause notice of three days before the eviction of the unauthorized occupant from Government accommodation.
- This will facilitate smooth and speedy eviction of unauthorized occupants from Government residential accommodations.
- The act was enacted to provide for eviction of unauthorized occupants from public premises and for certain incidental matters.
- The government provides residential accommodation on a license basis to

its employees, Members of Parliament and other dignitaries while they are in service or till the term of their office.

- It will also help to ensure the retrieval of these residential accommodations from unauthorized occupants.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ NGT seeks a report on steps for gharial conservation

- National Green Tribunal has directed the Madhya Pradesh government to submit the report on the steps taken according to an action plan to conserve gharial habitat along the Son River.

Related Information

- There are three species of crocodilians found in India –saltwater, Muger and Gharial.

Gharial

- They are the fish-eating crocodile is native to the Indian subcontinent.
- It is listed as a Critically Endangered by IUCN.
- It is found in the rivers of the National Chambal Sanctuary, Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary (Uttar Pradesh), Son River Sanctuary (Madhya Pradesh) and the rainforest biome of Mahanadi in Satkosia Gorge Sanctuary, Orissa.

Mugger

- The mugger crocodile, also called the Indian crocodile is found throughout the Indian subcontinent.
- It is listed as vulnerable by IUCN.
- The mugger is mainly a freshwater species and found in lakes, rivers and marshes.

Saltwater Crocodile

- It is the largest of all living reptiles and found throughout the east coast of India.
- It listed as least concern by IUCN.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

★ Sri Lanka unveils South Asia's tallest tower

- Sri Lanka unveiled South Asia's tallest tower, costing over \$100 million, 80% of which has been funded by China under the controversial Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- The 350-metre-tall 17-storey Lotus Tower, located in the heart of Colombo city.
- Sri Lanka and China signed the Lotus Tower agreement in 2012 under the Chinese government's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to build the highest TV tower in South Asia.

Source- The Hindu

★ India is the top source of immigrants across the globe: International Migrant Stock 2019

- India has emerged as the leading country of origin for immigrants across the world, with 17.5 million international migrants in 2019 coming from India, up from 15.9 million in 2015, according to a dataset released by the UN DESA's in New York.
- The International Migrant Stock 2019, released by the UN DESA's Population Division, said the number of international migrants in the world had reached an estimated 272 million 2019 – 51 million more than in 2010.
- The percentage of international migrants of the total global population has increased to 3.5% from 2.8% in 2000.
- While India remained as the top source of international migrants, the number of migrants living in India saw a slight decline from 5.24 million in 2015 to an estimated 5.15 million in 2019 – both 0.4% of the total population of the country.
- Bangladesh was the leading country of origin for migrants in India, the report stated.

- UN DESA Population Division said that one-third of all international migrants originated from 10 countries — after India, Mexico ranked second as the country of origin for 12 million migrants, followed by China (11 million), Russia (10 million) and Syria (8 million).
- The European region hosted the highest number of immigrants at 82 million in 2019, followed by North America (59 million) and Northern Africa and Western Asia (49 million). Among countries, the U.S. hosts the highest number of international migrants (51 million), about 19% of the global population.

Related Information

Union Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA's)

- It is a part of the United Nations Secretariat and is responsible for the follow-up to major United Nations Summits and Conferences, as well as services to the United Nations Economic and Social Council and the Second and Third Committees of the United Nations General Assembly.
- UN DESA assists countries around the world in agenda-setting and decision-making with the goal of meeting their economic, social and environmental challenges.
- It supports international cooperation to promote sustainable development for all, having as a foundation the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 September 2015.
- It is also a member of the United Nations Development Group.

Topic- GS-- Indian Economy

Source- PIB

★ Govt Constitutes Company Law Committee For Examining And Making Recommendations Implementing Companies Act 2013

- Ministry of Corporate Affairs decided to constitute a Company Law Committee for examining and making recommendations to the Government on various provisions and issues pertaining to the implementation of the Companies Act, 2013 and the Limited Liability Partnership Act, 2008.
- The terms of reference of the Committee include analyzing the nature of the offences (compoundable and non- compoundable) and submit its recommendation as to whether any of the offences could be re-categorized as 'civil wrongs' along with measures to optimize the compliance requirements under the Companies Act, 2013 and concomitant measures to provide further Ease of Doing Business.
- The committee is supposed to propose measures to further de-clog and improve the functioning of the NCLT and also for removing any bottlenecks in the overall functioning of the statutory bodies like SFIO, IEPFA, NFRA, etc.
- The chairman of the committee will be the Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

Topic- GS-3- Indian Economy

Source- PIB

★ Corporate tax rate slashed for domestic companies

- In a major boost to employment and economic activity, the government slashed the corporate tax rate for domestic companies to 22 per cent inclusive of all cess and surcharges for domestic companies from 30 per cent.
- Tax concessions will bring investments in Make in India, boost employment and economic activity, leading to more revenue.
- Announcing a new provision in the income tax act with effect from the fiscal year 2019-20, "new domestic manufacturing companies

incorporated after October 1 can pay income tax at 15 per cent rate without any incentives.”

- The Minimum Alternate Tax (MAT) rate has been reduced to 15 per cent from the existing 18.5 per cent for those companies which continue to avail incentive or exemptions.
- The new effective tax rate inclusive of surcharge and cess for domestic companies would be 25.17% and for new domestic manufacturing companies would be 17.01%.
- These rates would be applicable to those companies who forego the current exemptions and incentives.
- The reduction in the corporate tax rate for domestic companies would be effective from April 1 this year, while the change for new domestic companies would apply for those which get incorporated on or after October 1 and start producing on or before March 31, 2023.

Topic- GS-3- Indian Economy

Source- Indian Express

★ Poshan Abhiyaan targets are aspirational

- According to a new study published in The Lancet, India is unlikely to meet targets set under the ambitious Poshan Abhiyaan or National Nutrition Mission (NNM) for the reduction in the prevalence of stunting, underweight, low birth weight and anaemia in women and children by 2022.
- The study points out that India will miss its target for stunting levels of 25% by 9.6%; underweight target of 22.7% by 4.8%; desired low birth level of 11.4% by 8.9%; anaemia level among women of 39.4% by 13.8%; and anaemia level among children of 44.7% by 11.7%, according to the Global Burden of Disease Study 1990-2017.
- The report is a joint initiative of Indian Council of Medical Research, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) and

the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

- The report suggests that the malnutrition indicator targets set by NNM for 2022 are aspirational, and the rate of improvement needed to achieve these targets is much higher than the rate observed in this study, which might be difficult to reach in a short period.

Related Information

- Poshan Abhiyaan, the world's largest nutrition programme, expected to benefit 10 crore people and launched in 2018 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, aims to reduce
 - (a) stunting, underweight, and low birth weight, each by 2% per year; and
 - (b) anaemia among young children, adolescents and women each by 3% per year until 2022.
 - (c) A special target for stunting is set at 25% by 2022.
- According to the National Family Health Survey-4 (2015-2016), 38.4% of children under the age of five are stunted; 35.7% are underweight; 18% of children were born underweight (less than 2.5 kg); and 58% of children between the age of 6-59 months and 53% of women in the age of 14-49 years have anaemia.

Topic- GS-2- Health Issues

Source- The Hindu

★ Atlantic meridional overturning circulation

- According to a new study, weakening of Atlantic meridional overturning circulation can have dramatic consequences for Europe and other parts of the Atlantic rim.
- The greenhouse warming caused by human activity is heating up the Indian oceans; it is likely to boost a key system of currents in the Atlantic Ocean that plays a key role in determining the weather across the world.

Related Information

Atlantic meridional overturning circulation (AMOC)

- It is sometimes referred to as the "Atlantic conveyor belt."
- It is one of the Earth's largest water circulation systems where ocean currents move warm, salty water from the tropics to regions further north, such as Western Europe and sends colder water south.
- It aids in distributing heat and energy around the earth, as the warm water it carries releases heat into the atmosphere, and in absorbing and storing atmospheric carbon.
- The higher level of precipitation in the Indian Ocean will reduce precipitation in the Atlantic and increase salinity in the waters.
- AMOC last witnessed a slow down 15,000 to 17,000 years ago.
- It caused "harsh winters in Europe, with more storms or a drier Sahel in Africa due to the downward shift of the tropical rain belt."

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography (Ocean Current)

Source- Down to Earth

★ Access to internet fundamental right: Kerala High Court

- The Kerala High Court held that the right to have access to the Internet is part of the fundamental right to education as well as the right to privacy under Article 21 of the Constitution.
- The verdict came on a petition filed by a Kozhikode college student challenging her expulsion for not adhering to restrictions on the use of the mobile phone.

Related Information

Related Judgment

- The Supreme Court in S.Rengarajan and others v. P. Jagjivan Ram (1989) case said "the fundamental freedom under Article 19(1)(a) can be

reasonably restricted only for the purposes mentioned in Article 19(2) and the restriction must be justified on the anvil of necessity and not the quagmire of convenience or expediency."

- The court also observed that the Human Rights Council of the United Nations has found that the right of access to the Internet is a fundamental freedom and a tool to ensure right to education.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ Delhi Police launches Tatpar: A Mobile application

- Delhi police have recently released Tatpar mobile application which helps to file an online FIR (e-FIR) or pay traffic challans easily from their mobile phones.
- The app is a one-stop destination for access to over 50 citizen-centric services.
- The app also helps you to locate your nearest police station and call helpline various numbers.
- It includes an SOS button for urgent police assistance.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

★ Waste Management Accelerator for Aspiring Women Entrepreneurs Summit 2019

- Union Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched Waste Management Accelerator for Aspiring Women Entrepreneurs (WAVE Summit 2019) in New Delhi.
- It will be jointly organized by All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Institute of Waste Management at Jaipur.
- It will be the largest gathering of young women students to promote entrepreneurship in waste management and providing

alternatives to single-use plastic carry bags.

- The theme of the summit is: **Make your own bag – empowering women to take up income generation activity and entrepreneurship in waste management through making a business out of this record creating the concept.**

Topic-GS Paper 2–Women Empowerment

Source- PIB

★ **India's eastern-most village: Vijaynagar**

- Indian Air Force inaugurated a resurfaced runway in Vijaynagar, in Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh, the eastern-most inhabited locality of the country.
- Vijaynagar is surrounded by Myanmar on three sides and the fourth side comprises stretches of Namdapha National Park.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- TOI

★ **National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT) Scheme**

- It has been recently announced by the Ministry of Human Resource Development which is based on the Public-Private Partnership model.
- The objective is to use Artificial Intelligence to make learning more personalised and customised as per the requirements of the learner.
- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) would be the implementing agency for the NEAT program and it is administered under the guidance of an Apex Committee constituted by MHRD.
- MHRD would act as a facilitator to ensure that the solutions are freely available to a large number of economically backward students.
- EdTech companies would be responsible for developing solutions and manage the registration of learners through the NEAT portal.

- They would be free to charge fees as per their policy.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ **Mosaic Mission: Largest polar expedition in history' to probe Arctic climate**

- A team of scientists from 19 countries is about to start the year-long MOSAIC mission in the RV Polarstern ship to a large piece of Arctic sea ice to study climate change.

Related Information

Mosaic mission

- The mission stands for Multidisciplinary drifting Observatory for the Study of Arctic Climate.
- The objective of the mission is to study the impact of climate change on the Arctic and how it could affect the rest of the world.
- The mission has received funding from U.S. institutions such as the National Science Foundation, the Department of Energy, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and NASA.
- Under the mission, scientists plan to sail the RV Polarstern ship into the Arctic Ocean, anchor it to a large piece of sea ice and allow the water to freeze around them effectively trapping themselves in the vast sheet of ice that forms over the North Pole each winter

India's arctic observatory on climate change

Himadri Station

- Himadri Station is India's first Arctic research station located at Spitsbergen, Svalbard, Norway.
- It was inaugurated in 2008 by the Minister of Earth Sciences.

IndARC

- It was established in August 2014 which has been deployed in the

Kongsfjorden fjord of the Arctic, roughly halfway between Norway and the North Pole.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Indian Express

★ **SC to get permanent Constitution bench**

- The Supreme Court has decided to create a **permanent five-judge Constitution Bench** in its nearly 70-year-long history to hear and decide cases involving Constitutional questions.

Related Information

Constitution bench

- It is the name given to the benches of the Supreme Court of India which consist of at least five judges of the court.
- These judges sit to decide on a case involving a substantial question of law as to the interpretation of the Constitution of India or for the purpose of hearing any reference made by the President of India under Article 143.
- The provision of constitution bench has been mandated under Article 145 (3) of the Constitution of India.
- The Chief Justice of India has the power to constitute a Constitution Bench and refer cases to it.
- The Constitution benches have decided most important Supreme Court cases such as Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala (basic structure doctrine), K. Gopalan v. State of Madras, and Ashoka Kumar Thakur v. Union of India (OBC reservations) among others.

Note:

- Starting with the strength of eight judges in 1950, including the Chief Justice of India, the judges' strength is now 34, with a recent amendment by Parliament.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ **Mochi Swabhimaan Initiative**

- Union Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship announced the

launch of Mochi Swabhimaan Initiative.

- It is a nationwide effort in which the Leather Sector Skill Council (LSSC) will support the cobbler community who provide leather-based services, with CSR funds.
- This will ensure that they work in a dignified manner by bringing respect to their skills by giving them a better working environment in the form of kiosks/umbrellas.

Related Information

Leather Sector Skill Council

- It is an NSDC approved non-profit organization dedicated to meet the demand for skilled workforce in the leather industry in India which has been set up in 2012.
- It works with a host of members from the industry, government organizations, the academia, the training partners and the assessment partners.
- It is a nationwide effort in which LSSC will support the cobbler community who provide leather-based services, with CSR funds ensuring they work in a dignified manner.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ **All India Survey on Higher Education**

- Union Minister for HRD released the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2018-19.
- Under this survey, the MHRD collects online information on Universities, Colleges and other Higher Educational Institutions.

Highlights of the survey

- The top eight states in terms of the highest number of colleges in India are Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.
- Total enrolment in higher education has been estimated to be 37.4 million. Female constitute 48.6% of the total enrolment.

- GER for the male population is 26.3% and for females, it is 26.4%. For Scheduled Castes, it is 23% and for Scheduled Tribes, it is 17.2% as compared to the national GER of 26.3%.
- GER is a statistical measure for determining the number of students enrolled in undergraduate, postgraduate and research-level studies within the country.
- The GER is expressed as a percentage of the population in the 18-23 years age group.
- Uttar Pradesh comes at number one with the highest student enrolment followed by Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.
- The Gender Parity Index (GPI) has increased over the last five years, from 0.92 in 2014-15 to 1 in 2018-19.
- Gender Parity Index is the female and male ratio in higher education which measures progress towards gender equity.
- The highest share of foreign students come from the neighbouring countries of which Nepal is 26.88% of the total, followed by, Afghanistan (9.8%), Bangladesh (4.38%), Sudan (4.02%), Bhutan constitutes (3.82%) and Nigeria (3.4%).
- Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) in Universities and Colleges is 29 if regular mode enrolment is considered.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ PACEsetter Fund programme

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy awarded Grants to four projects in the second round of PACEsetter Fund programme.

Related Information

- The fund was constituted by India and the USA in 2015.
- It is a joint fund to provide early-stage grant funding to accelerate the commercialisation of innovative off-

grid clean energy products, systems, and business models.

- The main purpose of the fund is to improve the viability of off-grid renewable energy businesses that sell small scale (under 1 megawatt) clean energy systems to individuals and communities without access to grid-connected power or with limited/intermittent access (less than 8 hours per day).

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics

Source- TOI

★ Ladakhi Shondol dance

- Ladakhi Shondol dance has created history yet again by breaking into the Guinness book of world records as the largest Ladakhi dance.
- There are 408 women artists in traditional dresses performed gracefully the Shondol dance on the occasion of the Annual Naropa Festival, the ongoing Buddhist carnival near the 11th-century world-famous Hemis Monastery in Ladakh.

Related Information

- Shondol is a famous dance, which used to be performed by artists for King of Ladakh on a special occasion.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- AIR

★ NTPC to build 5GW solar park in Gujarat

- India's biggest power company, NTPC Ltd., is planning to set up a 5 gigawatt (GW) solar park in Kutch, Gujarat.
- A location has been recognized for the project, which is anticipated to cost as much as Rs. 25,000 crores and will start activities by 2024.
- It's going to be the largest solar park in the nation.
- The project is part of the NTPC goal to construct 32 gigawatts (GW) of renewable capability by 2032 to decrease the share of fossil fuels in its energy mix to 70 per cent from about 96 per cent now.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Energy

Source- AIR

★ **Exercise of rehabilitating deer population begins in Kodiakkarai Wild Life sanctuary**

- A unique exercise of rehabilitating deer population has been started in the Kodiakkarai Wild Life sanctuary in Tamilnadu.
- The deers are being brought up from the protected environment in Sivagangai Park.

Related Information

Kodiakkarai Wild Life sanctuary

- It is also known as Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary.
- It is a protected area in Tamil Nadu, along the Palk Strait where it meets the Bay of Bengal at Point Calimere (Kodiakkarai) at the tip of Nagapattinam District.
- The sanctuary was created in 1967 for the conservation of the near-threatened blackbuck antelope, an endemic mammal species of India.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

★ **Pusa Yashasvi**

- The Indian Agricultural Research Institute has released Pusa Yashasvi a potential blockbuster variety for planting in the upcoming Rabi crop season.
- It is also called HD-3226.
- It has higher genetic yield potential as compared to other varieties of wheat.
- This variety of seed is highly resistant against all major rust fungi viz. yellow/stripe, brown/leaf, and black/stem.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Agriculture

Source- Down to Earth

★ **Fisheries Statistics – 2018**

- The Union Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying released the 13th edition of Handbook on Fisheries Statistics – 2018.

Highlights of the Handbook

- India is currently the world's second-largest producers of fish.
- It is also world number two in aquaculture production as well as in inland capture fisheries.
- The average growth in fish production during 2017-18 stands at 10.14% when compared to 2016-17 (11.43 million metric tonnes).
- The percentage contribution of inland fish production in the total fish production of 29% during the year 1950-51 has increased to 71% in the year 2017-18.
- Andhra Pradesh has recorded the highest production of inland fish whereas Gujarat is the leading state in Marine fish in the country.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- PIB

★ **Ganga Data Collector: an app to map Ganga water, aquatic life**

- Dehradun based Wildlife Institute of India (WII) has launched a mobile application "Ganga Data Collector" under the "Biodiversity and Ganga Conservation".
- The Biodiversity and Ganga Conservation project has been initiated by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) of Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Related Information

Ganga Data Collector

- The application aims to provide field researchers with a complete data entry solution to monitor the aquatic population in the Ganga River.
- The application will be used by scientists of Wildlife Institute of India, Ganga Praharis and staff of the forest department in the 11 states of the Ganga Basin for faster collection of more authentic and accurate data related to water quality and aquatic life in Ganga.

- The Ganga basin covers 11 states including Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, West Bengal and Delhi.

Wildlife Institute of India

- It is an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change, Government of India.
- It was established in 1982 which is based in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
- It is an internationally acclaimed Institution which offers training programs, academic courses and advisory in wildlife research and management.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- PIB

★ India's new non-fossil fuel target to 450 GW by 2022

- Prime Minister has recently announced that India's renewable energy target will be increased to 450 at the United Nations Climate Action Summit which was earlier 175 GW renewable energy capacities by 2022 under the Paris Climate Agreement.

Highlights of Prime Minister Speech

- India would spend approximately \$50 billion "in the next few years" on the Jal Jeevan Mission to conserve water, harvest rainwater and develop water resources.
- The Prime Minister highlighted his call from banning single-use plastics, the International Solar Alliance, an Indian-led initiative, and that India had provided 160 million families with cooking gas connections.
- He also announced two international initiatives.
- First, a platform with Sweden and other countries, for governments and the private sector to work together to develop low carbon pathways for the industry.

- Second, a Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure which is approved by the Union Cabinet last month and ₹480 crores has been allocated for technical assistance and projects.
- The U.K., Australia and island nations such as Fiji and the Maldives will be part of this coalition.

Related Information

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

- At the Hamburg G20 meet in 2017, Prime Minister has proposed Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).
- CDRI will act as a convening body that will pool best practices and resources from around the world for reshaping construction, transportation, energy, telecommunication and water, so that building in these core infrastructure sectors factors in natural catastrophes.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- AIR

★ MSMEs launched Knowledge Management Portal "SIDHIEE"

- Union Minister for Micro Small and Medium Enterprises launched **Knowledge Management Portal "SIDHIEE"** at National Conclave on Enhancing Energy Efficiency.
- This Conclave was organized by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency.

SIDHIEE Portal

- The portal is launched under the Bureau of Energy Efficiency and for Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (BEE's MSME) Programme.
- This portal will host useful information including fifty videos of multimedia tutorials for MSMEs for early adoption of energy-efficient technologies.

Bureau of Energy Efficiency

- It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Power, Government of India.

- It is assisted in developing policies and strategies with the primary objective of reducing the energy intensity of the Indian economy.
- It coordinates with designated consumers, designated agencies, and other organization to identify and utilize the existing resources and infrastructure, in performing the functions assigned to it under the energy conservation act.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ Emissions Trading Scheme: First in pollution control

- Gujarat government has recently launched the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS), the world's first market for trading in particulate matter emissions in Surat.
- Particulate matter (also called particle pollution) is a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air.
- Some particles, such as dust, dirt, soot, or smoke, are large or dark enough to be seen with the naked eye.
- Particle pollution includes:
PM10: inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometres and smaller;
PM2.5: fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometres and smaller.

Emissions Trading Scheme

- It is a regulatory tool that is aimed at reducing the pollution load in an area and at the same time minimising the cost of compliance for the industry.
- ETS is a market in which the traded commodity is particulate matter emissions.
- The trading or auction facilities have been provided on the ETS-PM trading platform hosted by the National Commodities and Derivatives Exchange e-Markets Limited (NeML)

Note:

- This scheme is unique because trading mechanisms for pollution control do exist in many parts of the world; none of them is for particulate matter emissions.

For example

- The CDM (carbon development mechanism) under the Kyoto Protocol allows trade-in 'carbon credits'.
- The European Union's Emission Trading System is for greenhouse gas emission.
- India has a scheme run by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency that enables trading in energy units.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Indian Express

★ 'E-Beat Book' System and 'E-Saathi' App

- Union Minister for Home Affairs has launched citizen-centric services such as 'E-Beat Book' System and the 'E-Saathi App' for Chandigarh Police.

'E-Beat Book'

- It is a web and mobile-based application which will ease the collection, updation and analysis of the information related to crime and criminals in a real-time.
- The E-Beat Book would be linked with Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS), which would help in a real-time updation of crime/criminal data.

'E-Saathi' App

- It would help the general public, including senior citizens, to remain in touch with the police and also give suggestions to facilitate participative community policing ('Your Police at Your Doorstep' initiative).
- The beat officer would be able to provide services like passport verification, tenant verification, servant verification, character certification etc. at a click of a button through the app, without the people needing to visit the police station.

Note:
CCTNS

- It is a project initiated in June 2009 which comes under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The project is aimed at creating a comprehensive and integrated system for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of policing at the Police Station level.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- TOI

★ **Unique Methods of Management and treatment of Inherited Disorders (UMMID)**

- The Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare has launched UMMID (Unique Methods of Management and treatment of Inherited Disorders) initiative.
- The new initiative aims at creating awareness about genetic disorders amongst clinicians and establishes molecular diagnostics in hospitals so that the benefits of developments in medical genetics could reach patients.
- It is being supported by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), M/o Science and Technology.
- The UMMID initiative aims (i) to establish NIDAN Kendras to provide counselling, prenatal testing and diagnosis, management, and multidisciplinary care in Government Hospitals wherein the influx of patients is more (ii) to produce skilled clinicians in Human Genetics, and (iii) to undertake to screen of pregnant women and newborn babies for inherited genetic diseases in hospitals at aspirational districts.

Note:

- National Inherited Diseases Administration (NIDAN) Kendras are established to provide comprehensive clinical care.

- It is also being supported by Department of Biotechnology (DBT), M/o Science and Technology.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- PIB

★ **Census 2021**

- Union Home Minister recently announced that the 2021 census exercise would be carried out digitally by the Registrar General of India.
- The government would be spent ₹12,000 crores on the preparation of the National Population Register (NPR) and census.

Related Information

National Population Register

- It is a Register of usual residents of the country.
- It is being prepared at the local (Village/sub-Town), sub-District, District, State and National level under provisions of the Citizenship Act 1955 and the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.
- It is mandatory for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR.
- It is not linked to the National Register of Citizens.
- A usual resident is defined for the purposes of NPR as a person who has resided in a local area for the past 6 months or more or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next 6 months or more.
- The objective of the NPR is to create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country.
- The database would contain demographic as well as biometric particulars.

Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India (RGCC)

- The post of the RGCC of India is usually held by a civil servant holding the rank of Joint Secretary to Government of India.

- It is responsible for conducting the decennial Census. He heads the Census organisation (mentioned in entry 69 of the seventh schedule of Constitution) which functions under the aegis of Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Note :

- The Centre has appointed Vivek Joshi, a 1989 batch IAS officer from Haryana cadre, as the new Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ India-US Tri-Services "Exercise Tiger Triumph"

- India and the United States are set to hold their first tri-services exercise code-named "Tiger Triumph" at Visakhapatnam and Kakinada in November this year.
- India-US tri-services "Exercise Tiger Triumph" is being organised under the aegis of the headquarters of the Integrated Defence Staff.
- Final Planning Conference (FPC) for India-US Tri-Services Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief (HADR) concluded at Headquarters Eastern Naval Command on September 20.
- For the first time, the US and India will be holding the tri-service military exercise. India earlier conducted such tri-service exercise with Russia.

Topic- GS-3- Defence

Source- NDTV

★ Gandhi Solar Park

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with other world leaders inaugurated the Gandhi Solar Park at the United Nations (UN) headquarters on the occasion of Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.
- It is 50 kWh roof-top solar park has 193 solar panels—each representing a member of the multilateral body.

Related Information

- Recently Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred the "Global Goalkeeper" award by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation for the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- AIR

★ Krishi Kisan App

- Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has launched Krishi Kisan App for Geo Tagging' in New Delhi.

About App

- It will provide farmers with the information of the best demonstration of high-yielding crops and seeds in their nearby area.
- This application helps to demonstrate best practices of cultivation to other farmers so that this will help other farmers also to adopt these methods.
- The App will also help in geo-tagging and geo-fencing of crop and give weather forecast message to farmers.

Related Information

Custom Hiring Centers Farm Machinery Application

- With the help of this application, farmers can select and order the required machinery at the rates feasible for them from the Custom Hiring Centers located in the radius of 50 Kms.
- The Multi-lingual Mobile App CHC Farm Machinery is already available to custom service providers for registration and uploading with geo-reference photographs of agricultural machinery custom service centres and photographs of machinery available in it.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ Post Disaster Needs Assessment

- The National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) organized one-day National workshop on Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA).

Related Information

Post Disaster Needs Assessment

- The PDNA tool was developed by the UN Development Group, the World Bank and the European Union as one of the key commitments of their 2008 agreement to develop and use common assessment and recovery planning approaches in post-crisis settings
- It helps to assess damage and loss in the wake of disaster and to recommend the recovery needs and strategies.
- Recently Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) conducted by the UN under the leadership of the Government of Kerala estimates the total Recovery needs to be at USD 4.4 billion.

National Institute of Disaster Management

- National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is the apex statutory body for disaster management in India.
- It was formally constituted on 27th September 2006, in accordance with the Disaster Management Act, 2005 with Prime Minister as its Chairperson
- Its primary purpose is to coordinate the response to natural or man-made disasters and for capacity-building in disaster resiliency and crisis response.
- It is also the apex body to lay down policies, plans and guidelines for Disaster Management to ensure a timely and effective response to disasters.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Disaster Mangement Source- PIB

★ World's first camel hospital at Dubai set to expand its facilities

- World's first camel hospital in Dubai is set to expand its facilities by an additional 50 per cent in response to the increase in demand for its services.

- It is a unique hospital catering specifically to the needs of the burgeoning camel industry that has been flourishing and growing by leaps and bounds over the past few years.
- Camels are an integral part of the United Arab Emirate's heritage.
- The camel hospital, built at an estimated cost of 40 million Dirhams, opened its doors in 2017 to meet the demand in the UAE for an advanced medical facility dedicated to treating camels.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- PIB

★ Cyclone Hikaa Turns Into "Very Severe Storm"

- Cyclone Hikaa has turned into a "very severe storm" while moving westward in the Arabian Sea and is likely to cross the Oman coast.

Related Information

Tropical Cyclone Hikaa

- The cyclone name Hikka has been given by the Maldives.
- Hikka is moving at a speed of 10 kmph packing wind speed of 90 kmph.
- India Meteorological Department has predicted 'Light to Moderate rainfall in many places' and 'Heavy Rainfall in isolated places' in coastal districts of Saurashtra and Kutch due to the possible formation of a deep depression over east-central and North-East the Arabian Sea off Gujarat coast.

Tropical Cyclone

- The tropical cyclone is a system of low pressure occurring in tropical latitudes characterized by very strong winds.
- They originate and intensify over warm tropical oceans.
- These are ferocious storms that originate over oceans in tropical areas and move over to the coastal areas causing violent winds, very heavy rainfall, and storm outpourings.

Names of cyclone in different regions

- They are known as:

- (i) Cyclones in the Indian Ocean
- (ii) Hurricanes in the Atlantic
- (iii) Typhoons in the Western Pacific and the South China Sea
- (iv) Willy-willies in Western Australia

Conditions for the formation of Tropical Cyclone

- The conditions which favour the formation and intensification of tropical cyclone storms are:
 - (i) Large sea surface with a temperature higher than 27° C.
 - (ii) Presence of the Coriolis force
 - (iii) Small differences in the vertical wind speed
 - (iv) A pre-existing weak- low-pressure area or low-level-cyclonic circulation
 - (v) Upper divergence above the sea level system

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- TOI

★ ECI appoints Two Special Expenditure Observers for Maharashtra

- The Election Commission of India has recently appointed two Special Expenditure Observers for the forthcoming elections to the Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra.

Related Information

Special Expenditure Observers

- The Special Expenditure Observers are appointed in the exercise of the powers conferred on ECI under Article 324 of the Constitution and the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Functions

- The special observers will supervise and monitor the work being done by the electoral machinery.
- They also ensure that stringent and effective enforcement action is undertaken against all persons and entities trying to induce voters by distributing cash, liquor and freebies.
- To watch the conduct of Elections with special emphasis on controlling the

abuse of money power, in consultation with the Chief Electoral Officer at respective constituencies.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ National Adaptation Fund

- Experts said India's climate adaptation fund of only Rs 100 crore and about one pilot project in each state, are highly inadequate.

Relate Information

About Fund

- The National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC) is a Central Sector Scheme which was set up in the year 2015-16.
- The overall aim of NAFCC is to support concrete adaptation activities which mitigate the adverse effects of climate change.
- The activities under this scheme are implemented in a project mode.
- The projects related to adaptation in sectors such as agriculture, animal husbandry, water, forestry, tourism etc. are eligible for funding under NAFCC.
- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is the National Implementing Entity (NIE).

Note:

- The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change defines adaptation to adjustments in ecological, social and economic systems in response to current climate change impacts and projected impacts.
- "It refers to changes in processes, practices, and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change."

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Indian Express

★ Dadasaheb Phalke award

- Amitabh Bachchan has recently awarded with the country's highest film honour, the Dadasaheb Phalke award.

Related Information**Dadasaheb Phalke award**

- It is India's highest award in cinema which was first presented in 1969.
- It is presented annually at the National Film Awards ceremony by the Directorate of Film Festivals (an organisation set up by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting).
- The award prize consists of a golden lotus, a cash prize of ₹10 lakh and a shawl.
- The first recipient of the award was actress Devika Rani, "the first lady of Indian cinema."

Note:

- Dadasaheb Phalke was an Indian filmmaker who directed India's first full-length feature film, Raja Harishchandra (1913).
- He is regarded as "the father of Indian cinema."

Topic- Important for PCS Exams**Source- The Hindu**★ **Microhyla eos: a new frog species**

- Scientists have discovered a newly discovered species of frog named Microhyla eos in Namdapha Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh.

Related Information**Microhyla eos**

- They belong to a group of narrow-mouthed frogs that is primarily and widely distributed in Asia.
- They are commonly known as 'Rice Frogs' or 'Chorus Frogs.'

Namdapha National Park:

- Namdapha National Park is a large protected area in Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is the fourth largest national park in India.
- The Namdapha flying squirrel is endemic to this park and listed as critically endangered.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment and Biodiversity**Source- The Hindu**★ **Kashmir's saffron gets GI tag**

- Kashmir's famed saffron has been granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.
- It grows in a specific type of soil found in Kashmir valley known as Karewas soil.

Related Information**Geographical Indication**

- It is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- In order to function as a GI, a sign must identify a product as originating in a given place.

GI tags – a requirement of the TRIPS agreement

- India, as a member of the WTO, enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration & Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15th September 2003.
- Darjeeling Tea was the first Indian product to get the geographical indication tag. In 2004, the famous beverage got recognition.

Recently Granted GI Tag

- 'Odisha Rasagola'
- Marayur Jaggery- Kerala
- Erode Turmeric- Tamilnadu
- Panchamirtham' of Palani temple-Tamilnadu
- Tawhlohpuan- Mizoram
- Mizo Puancheifrom- Mizoram
- Tirur Betel leaf- Kerala

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance**Source- The Hindu**★ **Radioactive caesium technology: New method developed to measure soil erosion**

- Researchers at the ICAR-Indian Institute of Soil and Water Conservation, Dehradun have developed radioactive **caesium technology**.

Related Information**Radioactive caesium technology**

- Radioactive caesium technology is a more rapid and less expensive method for soil erosion studies in the severely intensive croplands.
- It gives more accurate results for all types of erosion studies including historical, comparative and long-term soil and soil organic carbon erosion.
- It helps to monitor soil erosion and decrease in carbon content in soil by correlating it with levels of radioactive caesium in soil.

Caesium

- It is a chemical element with the symbol Cs and atomic number 55.
- It is a soft, silvery-golden alkali metal with a melting point of 28.5 °C, which makes it one of only five elemental metals that are liquid at or near room temperature.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Down to Earth

★ Prakhar Van

- Union Ministry for Home Affairs launched the PRAKHAR Van street crime patrol van in Delhi.

PRAKHAR

- It is a street crime patrol van, for patrolling at crime hot spot locations.
- Prakhar vans are different from PCRs as these vans carry more firepower and are equipped with modern technology.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- AIR

★ Exercise MALABAR 2019

- The 23rd edition of the Trilateral Maritime Exercise MALABAR is scheduled between the navies of India, Japan and USA off the coast of Japan.

Related Information

About the Exercise

- It would endeavour to further strengthen India - Japan - US Naval cooperation.
- The Malabar exercise began in 1992 as a bilateral naval exercise between

India and the U.S. With the inclusion of Japan in 2015, it was expanded into a trilateral format.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- PIB

★ Coal gasification can help India reduce its energy import

- Odisha's Talcher fertiliser plant was awarded a contract for starting a coal gasification unit for the production of urea and Ammonia.
- It was part of the government's initiative to revive closed fertiliser plants belonging to the Fertiliser Corporation of India Limited (FCIL) and the Hindustan Fertilisers Corporation Ltd (HFCL).

Related Information

Coal gasification

- It is a process of converting coal into synthesis gas (also called syngas), which is a mixture of hydrogen (H₂), carbon monoxide (CO) and carbon dioxide (CO₂).
- The syngas can be used in a variety of applications such as in the production of electricity and making chemical products, such as fertilisers.
- The hydrogen obtained from coal gasification can be used for various purposes such as making ammonia, powering a hydrogen economy, or upgrading fossil fuels.
- **In 2015 Union Cabinet Approved the Underground coal gasification process.**
- Underground coal gasification (UCG) is an industrial process which converts coal into product gas (predominant product gases are methane, hydrogen, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide)

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Geography

Source- Indian Express

★ Sardar Patel National Unity Award

- Government of India has instituted 'Sardar Patel National Unity Award' which is being the highest Civilian

Award for contribution to Unity and Integrity of India.

About Award

- It seeks to recognize contributions to promote the cause of national unity and integrity.
- It is awarded annually on the occasion of the National Unity Day, i.e. the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel on 31st October.
- The Award shall be conferred by the President in a presentation ceremony along with the Padma award presentation ceremony held in Rashtrapati Bhawan.

Award Committee

- An Award Committee would be constituted by the Prime Minister, which would include the Cabinet Secretary, Principal Secretary to the PM, Secretary to the President, Home Secretary as Members and three-four eminent persons selected by the PM.

Eligibility

- All citizens, without distinction of religion, race caste, gender, place of birth, age or occupation, and any institution/organization would be eligible for the Award.
- Not more than three Awards would be given in a year.
- It would not be conferred posthumously except in very rare and highly deserving cases.

Topic- Important for UPSC & State PCS Prelims

Source- TOI

★ Head on Generation (HOG) technology

- The Railway Ministry recently announced that it would be upgrading all existing Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coaches with the Head on Generation (HOG) technology.

About HOG technology

- In this technology, the power will be drawn from the overhead electric supply.

- The power supply from the overhead cable is 750 volts at single-phase, and a transformer with a winding of 945 kVA converts it to a 750 Volts 50 Hz output at 3-phase.
- This energy is then provided to the compartments.
- The HOG system is free of air and noise pollution which bring down yearly CO₂ and NO_x emissions to nearly zero.

Related Information

About LHB Coaches

- Linke Hofmann Busch coaches are the passenger coaches of Indian Railways that have been developed by Linke-Hofmann-Busch of Germany.
- These coaches are produced in the Rail Coach Factory in Kapurthala, Punjab.

Topic- GS Paper 3 -Science and Technology

Source- TOI

★ Right Livelihood Award

- Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg was among four people named as the winners of a Right Livelihood Award, also known as the 'Alternative Nobel'.
- Thunberg is being recognised "for inspiring and amplifying political demands for urgent climate action reflecting scientific facts.

Related Information

Right Livelihood Award

- It is an international award to honour and support those offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges being faced by the world today.
- The prize was established in 1980 by German-Swedish philanthropist Jakob von Uexkull, and is presented annually.
- It was created after the Nobel Foundation refused to create awards honouring efforts in the fields of the

environment and international development.

Topic- Important for UPSC & State PCS Prelims

Source- The Hindu

★ **Government reconstitutes Economic Advisory Council to Prime Minister**

- Government of India has reconstituted the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister for a period of two years with effect from 26th September 2019.
- Bibek Debroy and Ratan P. Watal will continue to be the Chairman and Member Secretary respectively of the reconstituted EAC-PM.

Related Information

Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister

- It is an independent body to give advice on economic and related issues to the Government of India, specifically to the PM.

Function

- To analyse any issue, economic or otherwise, referred to it by the PM.
- To address issues of macroeconomic importance. This could be either suo-motu or on reference from the PM or anyone else;
- To attend to any other task as may be desired by PM from time to time.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- The Hindu

★ **PM announces \$14 million grant for developmental projects in the Caribbean**

- Prime Minister Modi chaired a meeting with the member states of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.
- During the meet, PM Modi announced a USD 14 million grant for community development projects in the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) and another USD 150 million Line of Credit for solar,

renewable energy and climate change-related projects.

Related Information

- CARICOM is a group of twenty developing countries in the Caribbean that have come together to form an economic and political community that works together to shape policies for the region and encourage economic growth and trade.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –India & World

Source- India Today

★ **India TB Report 2019**

- The Centre released the India TB Report 2019, which showed a 16% increase in the number of cases in 2018 as compared to the previous year.
- The report said 21.5 lakh TB cases were notified to the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP) in 2018; India accounted for a quarter of the Global TB burden with an estimated 27 lakh new cases in the year.
- The majority of the affected individuals (89%) were in the age group 15-69.
- Uttar Pradesh, with 17% of the population of the country, reported 4.2 lakh cases, accounting for 20% of all notifications.
- Odisha witnessed a decline in the number of notified cases from over 67,000 in 2017 to 50,244 in 2018, or about 25%. Odisha was the only such state; the Union Territories of Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands too witnessed a drop.
- The two UTs of Delhi and Chandigarh had the highest number of notified patients per lakh population, at 417 and 468, respectively.

Related Information

- India is the third highest HIV-burden country in the world, with an adult

prevalence of 0.22%. The report said people living with HIV are at 21 times higher risk of developing TB. Nearly 25% of all deaths among people living with HIV are estimated to be due to TB.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Health Issues

Source- Indian Express

★ **First Indigenous Fuel Cell System**

- The President of India has unveiled the first Indigenous High-Temperature Fuel Cell System developed by CSIR in partnership with Indian industries.
- It has been developed under India's flagship program named "New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative" (NMITLI).
- It is a 5.0 kW fuel cell system generates power in a green manner using methanol / bio-methane, with heat and water as bi-products for further use; amounting to greater than 70% efficiency, which otherwise may not be possible by other energy sources.
- The Fuel Cells developed are based on High-Temperature Proton Exchange Membrane (HTPEM) Technology.
- This development would replace Diesel Generating (DG) sets and help reduce India's dependence on crude oil.
- The development of fuel cell technology is indigenous and carries immense national importance in terms of non-grid energy security.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Indian Express

★ **Line of credit to a group of Pacific island nations**

- Prime Minister of India has recently announced a USD 150 million line of credit to the group of Pacific island nations for undertaking solar, renewable energy and climate-related projects.
- He also invited Leaders of India-Pacific Islands Developing States to

join the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

Related Information

Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS)

- The PSIDS comprises of the 14 Pacific Island countries viz. The Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

India and PSIDS Relations

- India's relationship with Pacific Island nations has deepened with the evolution of Act East Policy, resulting in the setting up of the action-oriented Forum for India-Pacific Island Cooperation (FIPIC).
- Forum for India-Pacific Island Cooperation is a multinational grouping developed in 2014 for cooperation between India and 14 Pacific Islands nations.

Line of Credit

- It is a credit facility extended by a bank or any other financial institution to a government, business or an individual customer, which enables the customer to draw the maximum loan amount.
- The borrower can access funds from the line of credit at any time as long as they do not exceed the maximum amount (or credit limit) set in the agreement and meet any other requirements such as making timely minimum payments.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ **Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT) to be an independent body**

- Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism established by will now become an independent organization led by an Executive Director.
- It has established by Facebook, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube.

- The main aim of the forum is to prevent terrorists and violent extremists from exploiting digital platforms disrupting terrorist abuse on their respective platforms and supported by dedicated technology, counterterrorism and operations teams.
- It was founded in 2017 to work closely with a range of governments, particularly under the auspices of the European Union Internet Forum.

Topic- GS Paper 3-Science and Technology

Source- TOI

★ Pollinator Sanctuary: A new sustainable solution model from Canada

- Recently, an applied research organisation named Farming Smarter from the Canadian province has come up with a concept called 'pollinator sanctuary'.
- A pollinator sanctuary can prove to be a powerful technology in the field of pollinator insect conservation, with special emphasis on honey bees and native bees.
- The Pollinator Sanctuary project is funded by the well-respected provincial funding programme titled 'Canadian Agricultural Partnership' to investigate a new sustainable and innovative technology platform for bee conservation.

Related Information

Pollinator insects

- Pollinator insects play a huge role in achieving cross-pollination in a wide diversity of crops and plants that are important to both, human ecology and economy.
- Three distinct global industries namely agriculture, forestry and apiculture are directly and indirectly dependent upon pollination services provided by biological agents or vectors such as different species of insects, molluscs (such as snails and slugs), birds (like hummingbird

species) and mammals (such as bats).

- Insects such as bees, moths and butterflies, certain species of flies, beetles, wasps and ants play a significant role in cross-pollination in various important crops and plant species.
- Among insects, bees play the most important role in providing pollination services to a wide diversity of plants

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- Down to Earth

★ Elephant endotheliotropic herpesvirus (EEHV)

- Recently the Nandankanan Zoological Park (Odisha) has lost four elephant due to Elephant endotheliotropic herpesvirus.

Related Information

Elephant endotheliotropic herpesviruses

- It is also known as Elephantid betaherpesvirus 1 (EIHV-1).
- It is a type of herpesvirus, which can cause a highly fatal hemorrhagic disease when transmitted to young Asian elephants.
- There is no drug has been developed to deal with EEHV.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and technology

Source- The Hindu

★ 112, India's new all-purpose emergency number

- Delhi became the fifth Union Territory after Puducherry, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to implement the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) since it was inaugurated in February 2019.
- In November 2018, Himachal Pradesh became the first state to roll out the ERSS, under which there is a single emergency response number across the country – 112.
- Existing emergency numbers such as 100 for police, 101 for fire, 108 for health services, the women's

helplines 1091 and 181, the child helpline 1098, etc., will be gradually integrated under 112.

- A "112 India" app has been launched as well, through which users, after registering, can reach out to police, health, fire, and other services.
- 112 is the common emergency number in several other countries as well, including most countries in Europe.

Related Information

- Home Ministry accepted the recommendations of the Justice Verma Committee in the backdrop of unfortunate incident of Nirbhaya in December 2012 and has approved a national project by name of 'Emergency Response Support System', earlier referred as Nationwide Emergency Response System with a view to introduce a Pan-India Single Emergency Response Number '112' to address all kinds of distress calls such as police, fire and ambulance, etc."

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

★ 2I/BORISOV: Second interstellar object

- According to the International Astronomical Union (IAU), the second interstellar object has been officially detected in our solar system.

Related Information

2I/Borisov

- In 2I/Borisov, I stands for "interstellar", and 2 for being the second interstellar object ever discovered, after 'Oumuamua, which was detected in October 2017.
- It is the first observed interstellar comet and second observed interstellar Object, after - 'Oumuamua.
- It's between 2 and 16 kilometres in diameter whose chemical composition is similar to the Solar System's long-

period comets that originate in the distant Oort cloud.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology

Source- Hindustan Times

★ Participatory Guarantee Scheme

- The head of India's food safety regulator has said that she expects the Union Agriculture Ministry's Participatory Guarantee Scheme (PGS) to incentivise more farmers to grow organic food.

Related Information

About Scheme

- It is a process of certifying organic products, which ensures that their production takes place in accordance with laid-down quality standards.
- The certification is in the form of a documented logo or a statement.
- The scheme is implemented by the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India.
- It is also an internationally applicable organic quality assurance system.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ Researchers discover lost 8th continent "Greater Adria" under Europe

- Geologists have discovered a new continent hidden in the Mediterranean region after analysing all the mountain ranges from Spain to Iran in detail for 10 years.
- The research, published in the journal Gondwana Research, revealed how a piece of continental crust the size of Greenland that once separated from North Africa plunged into the Earth's mantle under Southern Europe.
- Billed the eighth continent on Earth, this piece of continental crust is called 'Greater Adria.'
- Most mountain chains that we investigated originated from a single continent that separated from North

Africa more than 200 million years ago.

- The only remaining part of this continent is a strip that runs from Turin via the Adriatic Sea to the heel of the boot that forms Italy.

Topic- GS Paper 1- Physiography

Source- PIB

★ Exercise KAZIND - 2019

- It is the fourth edition of joint Military between India and Kazakhstan will be conducted at Pithoragarh.
- It is also an annual event which is conducted alternatively in Kazakhstan and India.
- The aim of this exercise is to conduct company level joint training with an emphasis on counter-terrorism operations in mountainous terrain.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- PIB

3. National Launch of 10 Year Rural Sanitation Strategy (2019-2029)

- The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti, GoI launched the 10 Year Rural Sanitation Strategy (2019-2029).

Related Information

About the Rural Sanitation Strategy

- This strategy has been prepared by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation Ministry of Jal Shakti, in consultation with State Governments and other stakeholders.
- It will be focusing on sustaining the sanitation behaviour change that has been achieved under the Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G) through capacity strengthening, Information, education and communication, organic waste management, plastic waste management, greywater management and black water management.
- It lays down a framework to guide local governments, policymakers, implementers and other relevant

stakeholders in their planning for Open Defecation Free (ODF) Plus.

Swachh Bharat Mission

- The Swachh Bharat Mission, launched in October 2014, consists of two sub-missions –
 1. the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) (SBM-G), which will be implemented in rural areas
 2. the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), which will be implemented in urban areas.
- SBM-G seeks to eliminate open defecation in rural areas by 2019 through improving access to sanitation.
- It also seeks to generate awareness to motivate communities to adopt sustainable sanitation practices and encourage the use of appropriate technologies for sanitation.

Key objectives of SBM-G include:

- (i) improving the quality of life in rural areas through promoting cleanliness and eliminating open defecation by 2019,
- (ii) motivating communities and Panchayati raj institutions to adopt sustainable sanitation practices,

About Open Defecation

- It refers to the practice whereby people go out in fields, bushes, forests, open bodies of water, or other open spaces rather than using the toilet to defecate.
- A city or ward can be notified as Open defecation free if, at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating in the open.
- The ODF+ strategy focuses on sustaining community/ public toilet usage by ensuring their functionality, cleanliness and maintenance.
- Also, ODF++ protocols include sustainability aspects including improved access to individual toilets, community and public toilet maintenance, functionality and liquid

waste / fecal sludge and septage management.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ **Navy's first new stealth frigate: INS 'Nilgiri'**

- Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh launched Navy's first new stealth frigate, INS 'Nilgiri', at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited in Mumbai.

Related Information

INS 'Nilgiri'

- It is the first of the Navy's seven new stealth frigates under Project 17A.
- A project 17A frigate is a design derivative of the Shivalik class stealth frigates with much more advanced stealth features and indigenous weapons and sensors.
- These frigates are being built using integrated construction methodology.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence

Source- AIR

★ **Student Discovered Strange New Mineral "goldschmidtite" Inside a Diamond**

- A new and curious mineral has been discovered by University of Alberta PhD student Nicole Meyer. The mineral—named goldschmidtite in honour of the founder of modern geochemistry Victor Moritz Goldschmidt—has an unusual chemical signature for a mineral from Earth's mantle.
- Goldschmidtite has high concentrations of niobium, potassium, and the rare earth elements lanthanum and cerium, whereas the rest of the mantle is dominated by other elements, such as magnesium and iron.
- Because it is so difficult to access the mantle, scientists rely on tiny mineral inclusions within diamonds to learn more about Earth's chemistry deep beneath the surface.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science & Technology

Source- scitechdaily.com

★ **Minor planet named after Pandit Jasraj**

- The International Astronomical Union has named recently a minor planet between Mars and Jupiter after 'Pandit Jasraj', the doyen of Indian classical vocal music.
- He became the first Indian musician to receive this honour.
- The number given to Pandit Jasraj planet was 300128 which is a reverse order of his date of birth 28/01/30.

Related Information

About Planet

- The planet was discovered on November 11, 2006.
- The asteroid, formally known as minor planet was discovered by the Catalina sky survey from the telescopes based in Arizona.

International Astronomical Union

- It was founded in 1919 with the objective of the organization was to promote and safeguard astronomical science in every aspect.
- The organization recognizes the authorities assigning names and designations to celestial bodies.
- The IAU general assembly meets once in 3 years.
- The last IAU assembly was held a Vienna, Austria in 2018.
- The next IAU assembly is to be held at Busan, South Korea in 2021.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture

Source- PIB

★ **Odisha unveils 'Tikki Mausi' to combat malnutrition among children, women**

- Government of Odisha in collaboration with United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund has unveiled a mascot named 'Tikki Mausi'.

About mascot

- The mascot aims to change the behaviour of common people and make them aware of child and

women's nutrition and development in every household.

- The mascot has been named as 'Tikki Mausi' in reference to the second mother of a child. It is projected to spread awareness for better health care of children and their development.
- It will also take care of providing the right information about government projects for women and children to every household for better future of the children in the state.

Related Information

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

- The fund was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946.
- It is a special program of the United Nations (UN) devoted to aiding national efforts to improve the health, nutrition, education, and general welfare of children.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- PIB

★ YSR Rythu Bharosa scheme

- Andhra Pradesh Government is set to launch a scheme for farmers called as YSR Rythu Bharosa scheme.

Related Information

About scheme

- It is one of the nine Navratna welfare schemes of the government of the state of Andhra Pradesh.
- The scheme aims to provide monetary support to farmers which will also include landless and tenant farmers which were excluded from the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme.
- Under the scheme, each farmer holding up to five acres will be given financial assistance of Rs 12,500.
- The amount also includes Rs 6,000 per annum to each family being provided by the Centre under its PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme.
- The scheme is modelled on Telangana's Rythu Bandhu scheme

under which landowners get Rs 10,000 per acre, but Andhra Pradesh government has also decided to include tenant farmers.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- News18

★ A pilot project at Rae Bareli coach factory to usher 'Industry 4.0'

- Recently a pilot project for ushering in Industry 4.0 in the country has been launched at the Modern Coach Factory in Uttar Pradesh's Raebareli district by the railways.
- The project would be undertaken under the aegis of "Technology Mission for Indian Railways".
- It would be implemented by a consortium of Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Human Resource Development and Ministry of Science & Technology.

Related Information

Industry 4.0

- It is commonly referred to as the fourth industrial revolution, is a name given to the current trend of automation, interconnectivity and data exchange in manufacturing technologies to increase productivity.
- Industry 4.0 is a complex cyber-physical system which synergies production with digital technologies, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Analytics, Machine Learning and Cloud Computing.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Infrastructure

Source- Hindustan Times

★ World Digital Competitiveness Ranking 2019

- The World Digital Competitiveness Ranking 2019 report has been released by the International Institute for Management Development World Competitiveness Center.
- It measures the capacity and readiness of 63 nations to adopt and explore digital technologies as a key driver for economic transformation in

business, government and wider society.

- The countries are ranked based on three factors which are:
 - Knowledge – the capacity to understand and learn the new technologies,
 - Technology – the competence to develop new digital innovations
 - Future Readiness- the preparedness for the coming developments.

Highlights of the report

- India rose from 48th place in 2018 to 44th rank in 2019 as the country has improved overall in all factors -- knowledge, technology and future-readiness -- as compared to the previous year's ranking.
- The biggest improvement is in the technology sub-factor level holding the first position in telecommunications investment.
- The US was ranked as the world's most digitally competitive economy, followed by Singapore in second place.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important ranking

Source- TOI

★ IPCC Report On Oceans And Cryosphere

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change presented the special report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate Context.
- It is last in a series of three that the IPCC had been asked to produce to assess the impacts of climate change on specific themes.
- The first of these, examining the feasibility of restricting the global rise in temperatures to within 1.5°C from pre-industrial times, was submitted in October last year.

Finding of the Report.

- The global mean sea level had risen by 16 cm between 1902 and 2015, and that the rate of increase had doubled in the last decade.
- The sea levels were rising because of thermal expansion of ocean waters due to rising temperatures as well as due to melting of glaciers and polar ice.
- Between 2006 and 2015, the Greenland ice sheet lost ice-mass at an average rate of 278 billion tonnes every year, while the Antarctic ice sheet lost a mass of 155 billion tonnes on an average every year.
- Snow over areas outside of these two regions, like the glaciers in the Himalayas, together with lost an average of 220 billion tonnes of ice every year.

Other reports

- World Meteorological Organization produced a report on September 2019 said that the period 2015-19 was the warmest five-year period on record and that July this year was the hottest month on record globally.
- On May 11 this year, the global concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was measured to have crossed the 415 parts per million (ppm) marks for the first time ever.

Related Information

Cryosphere

- It is an all-encompassing term for those portions of Earth's surface where water is in solid form, including sea ice, lake ice, river ice, snow cover, glaciers, ice caps, ice sheets, and frozen ground (which includes permafrost).

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment

Source- The Hindu

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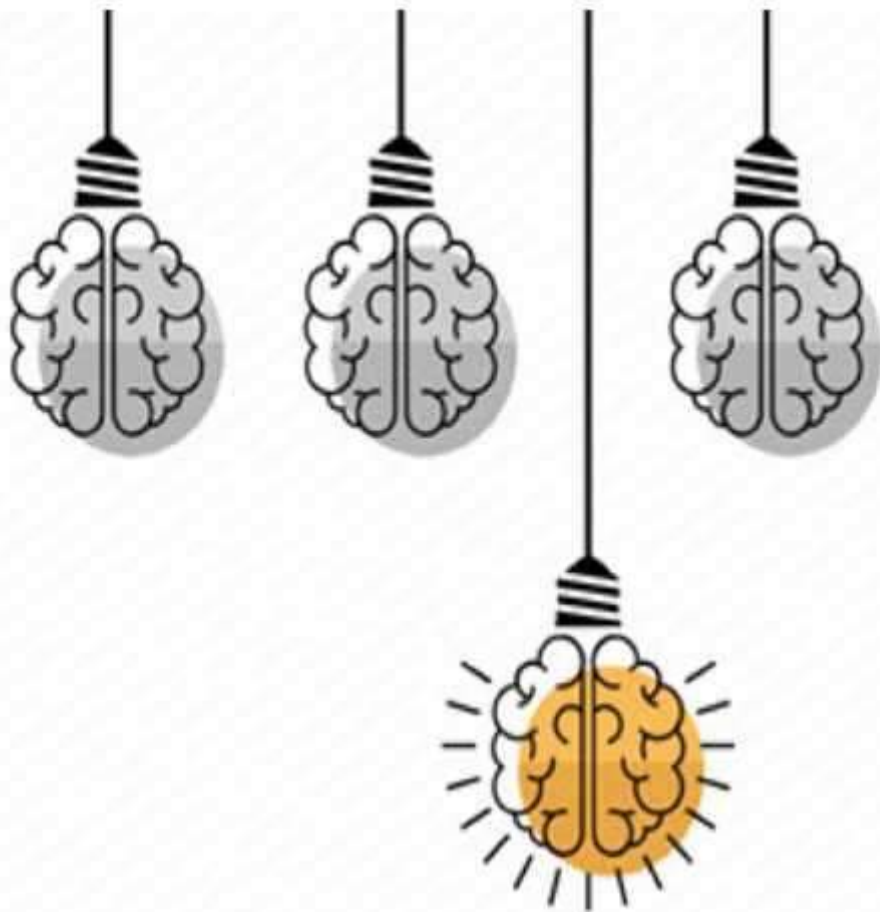
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