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VALIDITY OF OATHS TAKEN BY MINISTERS

During the oath-taking ceremony of the new government, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra with other ministers has altered the oath by invoking the names other than mentioned in the Constitution.

1. Article 164 (3) states that before a Minister enters upon his office, the Governor shall administer to him the oaths of office and of secrecy according to the forms set out in the Third Schedule.
2. Article 164 makes it clear that the text of the oath is sacrosanct.
3. The person taking the oath has to read it out exactly as it is, in the given format.
4. Third Schedule requires the taker of the oath to either “swear in the name of God” or to “solemnly affirm” to “bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution”.
5. If a person wanders from the text of the oath, it is the responsibility of the person administering the oath — in this instance, the Governor — to interrupt and ask the person being sworn in to read it out correctly.
6. Once Governor takes it as read, and the Secretary to the Governor has attested that the oath has been administered, it cannot be legally challenged.

SCHEDULES IN INDIAN CONSTITUTION

1. First Schedule (Articles 1 and 4) – This lists the states and territories of India, lists any changes to their borders and the laws used to make that change.
2. Second Schedule – This lists the salaries of officials holding public office, judges, and Comptroller and Auditor General of India.
3. Third Schedule -Forms of Oaths – This lists the oaths of offices for elected officials and judges.
4. Fourth Schedule – This details the allocation of seats in the Rajya Sabha (the upper house of Parliament) per State or Union Territory.
5. Fifth Schedule – This provides for the administration and control of Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes (areas and tribes needing special protection due to disadvantageous conditions).
6. Sixth Schedule— Provisions made for the administration of tribal areas in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.
7. Seventh Schedule —The union (central government), state, and concurrent lists of responsibilities.
8. Eighth Schedule —The official languages.
9. Ninth Schedule – Validation of certain Acts and Regulations.
10. Tenth Schedule— "Anti-defection" provisions for Members of Parliament and Members of the State Legislatures.
11. Eleventh Schedule —Panchayat Raj (rural local government).
12. Twelfth Schedule — Municipalities (urban local government).

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KYOTO PROTOCOL

1. The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement linked to the UNFCCC, which commits its Parties by setting internationally binding emission reduction targets.
2. The Kyoto Protocol was adopted in Kyoto, Japan, in 1997 and entered into force in 2005.
3. It recognized that developed countries are principally responsible for the current high levels of GHG emissions in the atmosphere as a result of more than 150 years of industrial activity.
4. The detailed rules for the implementation of the Protocol were adopted at COP-7 in Marrakesh, in 2001, and are referred to as the Marrakesh Accords.
5. Kyoto Protocol Phase-1 (2005-12) gave the target of cutting down emissions by 5%.
6. Phase- 2 (2013-20) gave the target of reducing emissions by at least 18% by the industrialized countries.

DATA BANK OF INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS

Recently, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs launched the Independent Directors Databank in accordance with the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 and the rules made thereunder.

1. Apart from the launch of Independent Directors Bank, the government has also decided to conduct examinations
2. For appointments of independent directors in which a score of 60% marks will be mandatory

INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR

1. An Independent Director is a director on a board of directors representing minority shareholders and who does not have a pecuniary relationship with the company or related persons, except for sitting fees.
2. Their role is to take a stand unambiguously and independently to have a check and balance on the exuberance of majority shareholders that may expose the company to unwarranted risks.
3. The Companies Act, 2013 has mandated all listed public companies to have at least one-third of the total Directors to be independent.
4. Their role requires them to be clinical while businesses expect them to be practical, that's the tight rope they walk on.

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alification.

3. The government will also maintain a database of professionals qualifying in the test that can be used by companies looking to expand their board or making fresh appointments under the current regulations.
4. Independent directors must not assume a passive role, merely reacting to ideas foreseen by the controlling shareholder or their appointees.

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5. They should be willing to question the status quo in the interest of shareholders not play a risk-free mute spectator limiting to attending just number of board meetings.
6. Data Bank has been developed and maintained by the Indian Institute for Corporate Affairs (IICA) under Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
7. It is a first of its kind initiative which provides for a wide array of e-learning courses on various topics including the Companies Act, Securities laws, basic accountancy, board practices, board ethics and board effectiveness.
8. It provides an easy to access navigation platform for the registration of existing Independent Directors as well as individuals aspiring to become independent directors.
9. Companies can register themselves with the databank to search, select and connect with individuals aspiring to be Independent Directors.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOK SABHA MPs

The Lok Sabha Ethics Committee is all set to form a code of conduct for the Members of Parliament (MPs) in the Lok Sabha. The first step was the constitution of Parliamentary Standing Committees on Ethics in both the Houses. The Committee in Rajya Sabha was inaugurated in 1997 to oversee the moral and ethical conduct of the Members and to examine the cases referred to it with reference to ethical and other misconduct of Members. The first Ethics Committee in Lok Sabha was constituted in the year 2000.

Code of Conduct in Rajya Sabha: A 14-point Code of Conduct for members of the House has been in force since 2005. Important provisions are as following-

1. Private interests are subordinate to the duty of the public office.
2. Public interest is not jeopardised.
3. Members should never expect or accept any fee, remuneration or benefit for a vote given or not given by them on the floor of the House, for introducing a Bill, etc.
4. Members must not do anything that brings disrepute to the Parliament and affects their credibility.
5. Members must utilise their position as Members of Parliament to advance general well-being of the people.
6. Members should not be disrespectful to any religion and work for the promotion of secular values.
7. Members should keep uppermost in their minds the fundamental duties listed in part IVA of the Constitution.
8. Members are expected to maintain high standards of morality, dignity, decency and values in public life.

PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TRIBAL GROUPS

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has implemented the scheme of "Development of PVTGs" which covers 75 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) for their comprehensive socio-economic development. Under the scheme, State Governments submit Conservation-cum-Development (CCD) plans on the basis of their requirement. 100% grants-in-aid are made available to States as per the provisions of the scheme.

1. In India, tribal population makes up for 8.6% of the total population.
2. PVTGs are more vulnerable among the tribal groups.
3. Due to this factor, more developed and assertive tribal groups take a major chunk of the tribal development funds because of which PVTGs need more funds directed for their development.
4. In 1973, the Dhebar Commission created Primitive Tribal Groups (PTGs) as a separate category, who are less developed among the tribal groups.
5. In 2006, the Government of India renamed the PTGs as PVTGs.
6. In this context, in 1975, the Government of India initiated to identify the most vulnerable tribal groups as a separate category called PVTGs and declared 52 such groups, while in 1993 an additional 23 groups were added to the category, making it a total of 75 PVTGs out of 705 Scheduled Tribes.
7. PVTGs have some basic characteristics - they are mostly homogenous, with a small population, relatively physically isolated, absence of written language, relatively simple technology and a slower rate of change etc.
8. Among the 75 listed PVTG's the highest number are found in Odisha.

BHARAT BOND EXCHANGE TRADED FUND

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister of India, has approved the Government's plan to create and launch India's first corporate bond Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) — Bharat Bond ETF.

1. An Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF) is a basket of securities that trade on an exchange, just like a stock.
2. ETF reflects the composition of an Index, like BSE Sensex. Its trading value is based on the Net Asset Value (NAV) of the underlying stocks (such as shares) that it represents.
3. The ETF will comprise a basket of bonds issued by the CPSEs, CPSUs, CPFIs, and other government organisations.
4. The unit size of the bond has been kept at just ₹1,000 so that even retail investors can invest.
5. Each ETF will have a fixed maturity date and initially they will be issued in two series, of 3 years and 10 years.
6. Each series will have a separate index of the same maturity series.

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7. Index will be constructed by an independent index provider – National Stock Exchange.
8. The Bharat Bond ETF will ensure broader investor base through the participation of retail and High Net worth Individuals (HNI).
9. This will lead to an increase in the demand for bonds, thus reducing the cost of borrowing for borrowers i.e. government organizations.
10. The Bond ETF will provide safety, liquidity and predictable tax efficient returns.
11. The launch of this ETF is expected to eventually increase the size of bond ETFs in India leading to achieving key objectives at a larger scale - deepening bond markets, enhancing retail participation and reducing borrowing costs.

WORLD MALARIA REPORT, 2019

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has released the World Malaria Report, 2019.

1. India along with 19 countries in sub-Saharan Africa carried almost 85% of the global malaria burden.
2. Though India has observed the largest absolute reductions among the countries that share 85% of the malaria burden.
3. It has declined globally between 2010 and 2018, from 71 to 57 cases per 1000 population.
4. India reported 2.6 million fewer cases in 2018 compared to 2017. Thus the overall incidence of malaria in the country has reduced.
5. However, 7 states (Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, Gujarat, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh) account for about 90% of the burden of malaria cases in India.
6. Overall number of deaths due to malaria in India has reduced.
7. Steps taken by India are National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination (NSPME) (2017-22)
8. The Strategic Plan gives year wise elimination targets in various parts of the country depending upon the endemicity of malaria in the next 5 years.
9. It is based on the National Framework for Malaria Elimination 2016 which is in line with WHO's Global Technical Strategy for Malaria, 2016-2030.
10. Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has established 'Malaria Elimination Research Alliance-India (MERA-India) which is a conglomeration of partners working on malaria control.

NAVY DAY

1. The Indian Navy Day is celebrated on December 4 every year to commemorate Operation Trident.
2. The Navy also organises a Beating Retreat ceremony at Gateway of India in Mumbai on the eve of the Navy Day.

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3. It was a counter-attack by Indian Navy on the Karachi harbour during the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971.
4. India used anti-ship missiles for the first time during this operation and destroyed the Pakistani destroyer ship PNS Khaibar.

REPO RATE UNCHANGED

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to keep the repo rate unchanged at 5.15% in the recent bimonthly policy review.

This is the first bi-monthly monetary meeting in the year 2019 in which the repo rate has been kept unchanged.

Since February 2019, the RBI has cumulatively cut rates by 135 basis points (bps).

Monetary Policy Committee

1. The Monetary Policy Committee is a statutory and institutionalized framework under the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, for maintaining price stability, while keeping in mind the objective of growth.
2. The Governor of RBI is ex-officio Chairman of the committee.
3. The MPC determines the policy interest rate (repo rate) required to achieve the inflation target (4%).
4. An RBI-appointed committee led by the then deputy governor Urjit Patel in 2014 recommended the establishment of the Monetary Policy Committee.

Repo Rate

1. It is the rate at which the central bank of a country (Reserve Bank of India in case of India) lends money to commercial banks in the event of any shortfall of funds.
2. It is used by monetary authorities to control inflation.
3. In the event of inflation, central banks increase repo rate as this acts as a disincentive for banks to borrow from the central bank. This ultimately reduces the money supply in the economy and thus helps in arresting inflation.
4. The central bank takes the contrary position in the event of a fall in inflationary pressures.
5. Ideally, a low repo rate should translate into low-cost loans for the general masses.
6. When the RBI slashes its repo rate, it expects the banks to lower their interest rates charged on loans

FOREX RESERVES

India's Foreign Exchange (Forex) reserves have crossed the \$450-billion mark for the first time ever on the back of strong investment inflows which enabled the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to buy

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dollars from the market. India's forex reserves were at \$451.7 billion on 3rd December 2019, an increase of \$38.8 billion over end-March 2019.

1. Foreign exchange reserves are assets held on reserve by a central bank in foreign currencies, which can include bonds, treasury bills and other government securities.
2. It needs to be noted that most foreign exchange reserves are held in U.S. dollars.
3. These assets serve many purposes but are most significantly held to ensure that the central bank has backup funds if the national currency rapidly devalues or becomes altogether insolvent.
4. India's Forex Reserve include: Foreign Currency Assets (such as dollar), Gold, Special Drawing Rights
5. Special drawing rights, or SDR, are an artificial currency instrument created by the International Monetary Fund, which uses them for internal accounting purposes.
6. The value of the SDR is calculated from a weighted basket of major currencies, including the U.S. dollar, the euro, Japanese yen, Chinese yuan, and British pound.
7. The SDR interest rate (SDRi) provides the basis for calculating the interest rate charged to member countries when they borrow from the IMF and paid to members for their remunerated creditor positions in the IMF.
8. Reserve Position in the International Monetary Fund, A reserve tranche position implies a portion of the required quota of currency each member country must provide to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that can be utilized for its own purposes.
9. The reserve tranche is basically an emergency account that IMF members can access at any time without agreeing to conditions or paying a service fee.

GUIDELINES FOR LICENCING OF SMALL FINANCE BANKS

Recently, the Reserve Bank of India has released final Guidelines for 'on tap' Licencing for Small Finance Banks (SFBs). An "on-tap" facility would mean the RBI will accept applications and grant licences for banks throughout the year.

1. The minimum paid-up voting equity capital / net worth requirement shall be ₹ 200 crores.
2. SFBs will be given scheduled bank status immediately upon commencement of operations.
3. SFBs will have general permission to open banking outlets from the date of commencement of operations.
4. The payment banks can apply for conversion into SFB after 5 years of operations if they are otherwise eligible as per these guidelines.
5. The small finance bank will primarily undertake basic banking activities of acceptance of deposits and lending to unserved and underserved sections including small business units, small and marginal farmers, micro and small industries and unorganised sector entities.

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6. It can also undertake other non-risk sharing simple financial services activities such as the distribution of mutual fund units, insurance products, pension products, etc. with the prior approval of the RBI
7. The bank will be required to extend 75% of its adjusted net bank credit to the Priority Sector Lending (PSL).
8. At least 50% of its loan portfolio should constitute loans and advances of up to ₹ 25 lakhs.
9. The small finance banks will be subject to Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) and Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR).

REMOVAL OF ANGLO-INDIANS RESERVATION IN LEGISLATIVE BODIES

Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the removal of reservation for Anglo-Indians in legislative bodies.

1. Article 366: It defines Anglo-Indian as a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only.
2. Article 331: It states that the President can nominate two members of the Anglo-Indian community to the Lok Sabha if the community is not adequately represented.
3. Article 333: It states that the Governor of a State may if he is of the opinion that the Anglo Indian community needs representation in the Legislative Assembly of the State and is not adequately represented therein, nominate one member of that community to the Assembly.
4. Article 334(b): The reservation of the Anglo Indian community in the Legislative bodies was extended for 40 years in 1949 through the insertion of this article.
5. National Commission for SCs (Article 338): It investigates all matters relating to the Constitutional and other legal safeguards for the Anglo-Indian community and report to the President upon their working.

CENTRE STOPS ONLINE SALE OF MEDICINES

Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has directed all states and Union territories to prohibit the sale of medicines through unlicensed online platforms as per the Delhi High Court order.

1. In its Zaheer Ahmed case (2018), the Delhi High Court had said that online sale of medicines should be prohibited until draft rules to regulate e-pharmacies are finalized and put in place.
2. The government has prepared draft e-pharmacy rules that are under consideration of a group of ministers (GoM) headed by the defence minister.
3. The Delhi High Court had stated that the drugs were sold online in violation of the Drugs and Cosmetics (D&C) Act, 1940.
4. Under the D&C Act, 1940 and D&C Rules, 1945 sale of spurious drugs is a punishable offence and State Licensing Authorities are empowered to take action in this regard.

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5. However, e-pharmacies continued to sell online, after securing a stay from the Madras High Court in January 2019.
6. In December 2018, a single-judge Bench of the Madras High Court had told traders not to proceed with their online business in drugs till the rules are notified by the Central government.
7. E-pharmacies have claimed that their business model is well covered by the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000 under the concept of intermediaries, and the pharmacy retail operations are covered by the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

DR B.R. AMBEDKAR'S 63RD MAHAPARINIRVAN DIWAS

Mahaparinirvan Diwas is observed every year on December 6 to commemorate death anniversary of Dr. B R Ambedkar. He is known as the Father of the Indian Constitution and was independent India's first law minister. Dr. Ambedkar was a social reformer, jurist, economist, author, polyglot orator, a scholar and thinker of comparative religions.

1. He founded Bahishkrit Hitkarni Sabha (1923).
2. He led the Mahad Satyagraha in March 1927 to challenge the regressive customs of the Hindus.
3. He participated in all three round-table conferences.
4. In 1932 he signed Poona pact with Mahatma Gandhi, which abandoned the idea of separate electorates for the depressed classes (Communal Award). However, the seats reserved for the depressed classes were increased from 71 to 147 in provincial legislatures and to 18% of the total in the Central Legislature.
5. In 1936, he was elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly as a legislator (MLA).
6. In 1947, Dr. Ambedkar accepted PM Nehru's invitation to become Minister of Law in the first Cabinet of independent India.
7. On August 29, 1947, he was appointed Chairman of the Drafting Committee for the new Constitution.
8. He resigned from the cabinet in 1951, over differences on the Hindu Code Bill.
9. In 1956, he converted to Buddhism.
10. He passed away on 6th December 1956.
11. Chaitya Bhoomi is a memorial to B. R. Ambedkar located in Dadar, Mumbai.

TAXATION LAWS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019

The Rajya Sabha approved the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019, replacing an ordinance that was promulgated to cut corporate tax rates to boost growth rate in a slowing economy.

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1. The Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019 replaces an ordinance that reduced the tax rate for domestic companies from 30% and 25% (for those with an annual turnover of over ₹400 crores) to 22%.
2. These rates are applicable for companies if they don't claim certain exemptions under the Income Tax Act.
3. The rate for new domestic manufacturing companies set up after October 1 was lowered to 15%.
4. The new effective tax rate inclusive of surcharge and cess for domestic companies would be 25.17%.

CHANDRASEKHAR LIMIT

1. Chandrasekhar Limit is the maximum mass theoretically possible for a stable white dwarf star.
2. A limit which mandates that no white dwarf (a collapsed, degenerate star) can be more massive than about 1.4 times the mass of the Sun.
3. Any degenerate object more massive must inevitably collapse into a neutron star or black hole.
4. The limit is named after the Nobel laureate Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar, who first proposed the idea in 1931.
5. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1983 for his work on the physical processes involved in the structure and evolution of stars.

SATTRIYA DANCE

1. Sattriya originated in Sattri, monastery, as a part of neo-Vaishnavite movement started by Srimanta Sankardev in Assam, in the 15th Century.
2. Sattriya was given the status of a classical dance in the year 2000 by the Sangeet Natak Akademi.
3. Other classical dances of India are: Bharatnatyam (Tamil Nadu), Kathakali (Kerala), Kuchipudi (Andhra Pradesh), Kathak (North India), Mohiniyattam (Kerala), Manipuri (Manipur) and Odissi (Odisha).
4. Sattriya dances differ from other dance forms in its basic stance. For male it is known as Purush Pak while for female, Prakriti Pak.
5. The dance is based on mythological themes. They have special mnemonic bols, typical Assamese music known as Borgeet, musical instruments like large cymbals, drums, colourful costumes, besides complicated choreographic patterns using various talas for each stanza sung by the vocalist.
6. Corpus of Sattriya dances consists of ankiya bhaona and also Ojapali dances in which the main singer sings and enacts abhinaya, telling stories and a group of dancers dance as back up dancers playing small cymbals.

CITIZENSHIP (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2019

The Parliament has enacted the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019. The act seeks to grant Indian Citizenship to persons belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities who have migrated to India after facing persecution on grounds of religion in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

1. In India, citizenship is regulated by the Citizenship Act, 1955.
2. The Act specifies that citizenship may be acquired in India through five methods – by birth in India, by descent, through registration, by naturalisation (extended residence in India), and by incorporation of territory into India.
3. However, illegal migrants cannot become Indian citizens. Under the Act, an illegal migrant is a foreigner who enters the country without valid travel documents like a passport and visa, or enters with valid documents, but stays beyond the permitted time period.
4. Illegal migrants may be put in jail or deported under the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920.
5. the law for first time, will grant citizenship on the basis of religion to non-Muslim communities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, who entered India on or before December 31, 2014.
6. Non - Muslim Communities Included: Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi, and Christian.
7. This implies that migrants, who identify themselves with any group or community other than those mentioned here, from the above mentioned countries won't be eligible for citizenship.
8. Exceptions: The provisions on citizenship for illegal migrants will not apply to two categories - states protected by the 'Inner Line', and areas covered under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.
9. Inner Line Permit (ILP): This is a special permit that citizens from other parts of India require to enter a state protected by the ILP regime.
10. The amendment relaxes the second requirement from 11 years to 5 years as a specific condition for applicants of naturalisation, belonging to the specified six religions, and the above mentioned three countries.
11. Additional Ground for Cancelling Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) Registration i.e. violation of any law notified by the central government.

50TH PSLV LAUNCH

Recently, India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C48) marked its 50th launch by injecting India's advanced radar imaging earth observation satellite RISAT-2BR1.

1. PSLV-C48 also injected 9 other customer satellites from Japan, Italy, Israel and the U.S.A. into their intended orbits.
2. This was 75th launch vehicle mission from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota.
3. The 628 kg RISAT-2BR1, is placed into a 576-km orbit at an inclination of 37 degrees.

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4. It is the second satellite in the RISAT-2B series and along with the CARTOSAT-3, it is the part of 'spy' satellites.
5. These satellites will keep a check on infiltration by allowing round-the-clock surveillance across the border.
6. RISAT-2BR1 is expected to bolster the country's border monitoring measures besides aiding in disaster management, agriculture and tracking forest cover.
7. It is equipped with a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) that can take pictures of the earth both during the day and night, irrespective of the cloud conditions.

HEAVY METALS CONTAMINATING INDIA'S RIVERS

Recently, the Central Water Commission (CWC) has reported that the samples from two-thirds of the water quality stations spanning India's major rivers are contaminated by one or more heavy metals, exceeding safe limits set by the Bureau of Indian Standards.

1. The samples from only one-third of water quality stations were safe whereas 65% were polluted by heavy metals.
2. Heavy metals are naturally occurring elements that have a high atomic weight and a density of at least 5 times greater than that of water.
3. The presence of metals in drinking water to some extent is unavoidable and certain metals, in trace amounts, are required for good health.
4. However, when present above safe limits, they are associated with a range of disorders.
5. Long-term exposure to the heavy metals may result in physical, muscular, and neurological degenerative processes that mimic Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis.
6. Iron emerged as the most common contaminant with above safe limits across the country.
7. Arsenic contamination is a major environmental issue that affects groundwater.
8. The other major contaminants found in the samples were lead, nickel, chromium, cadmium and copper.
9. The main sources of heavy metal pollution are mining, milling, plating and surface finishing industries that discharge a variety of toxic metals into the environment.

NavIC TO JOIN ALLIED SYSTEM OF USA

1. Recently, the US Congress has consented to designate India's *Navigation in Indian Constellation (NavIC)* as its "allied" navigational satellite system along with the Galileo of the European Union and QZSS of Japan.
2. At the same time, it has designated Russia' GLONASS and Chinese Beidou as a "nonallied system".
3. The tag of the "allied" navigational satellite system allows US satellite navigation system to co-operate or to exchange data with these satellite navigation systems.

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4. This tag is designated as part of the conference report of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) 2020.
5. The designation of India's NavIC as an “allied system” is part of the American effort to develop a prototype program for multi-global navigation satellite system.

SAMAGRA SHIKSHA

The Ministry of Human Resource Development is implementing the Scheme of Vocationalisation of School Education. The scheme is being implemented under the umbrella of ‘Samagra Shiksha – an integrated scheme for school education’.

1. Under the scheme, a vocational subject is offered for Classes IX to XII along with the general education to provide necessary employability and vocational skills for a variety of occupations.
2. Samagra Shiksha is an integrated scheme for school education extending from preschool to class XII to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education.
3. It subsumes the three Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).
4. The scheme treats school education holistically as a continuum from Pre-school to Class 12.
5. The main emphasis of the Scheme is on improving the quality of school education by focussing on the two T’s – Teacher and Technology.
6. **SDG-4.1:** Aims to ensure that all boys and girls complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.
7. **SDG 4.5:** Aims to eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education.
8. The Scheme is being implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
9. The fund sharing pattern for the scheme between Centre and States is at present in the ratio of 90:10 for the North-Eastern States and the Himalayan States and 60:40 for all other States and Union Territories with Legislature.

MULLAPERIYAR DAM

The Ministry of Jal Shakti has constituted a three-member Supervisory Committee to settle the issue of Mullaperiyar dam between Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

1. The tension between the two states over the issue has persisted since the 1960s, with Kerala citing concerns regarding the dam’s safety and arguing for the reduction of the dam’s water levels.
2. But with the water from the dam being diverted to five districts in Tamil Nadu and its importance in the state’s irrigation and power

PERIYAR RIVER

1. The Periyar River is the longest river in the state of Kerala with a length of 244 km.
2. It is also known as ‘Lifeline of Kerala’ as it is one of the few perennial rivers in the state.
3. Periyar River originates from Sivagiri hills of Western Ghats and flows through the Periyar National Park.
4. The main tributaries of Periyar are Muthirapuzha, Mullayar, Cheruthoni, Perinjankutti.

production practices, Tamil Nadu has consistently opposed this.

3. The Mullaperiyar dam is located on the confluence of the Mullayar and Periyar rivers in Kerala's Idukki district.
4. It is operated and maintained by the Tamil Nadu for meeting the drinking water and irrigation requirements of five of its southern districts.
5. According to a 999-year lease agreement made during the British rule the operational rights were handed over to Tamil Nadu.
6. The dam intends to divert the waters of the west-flowing river Periyar eastward to the arid rain shadow regions of the Tamil Nadu.

NATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING AUTHORITY

The National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) was constituted on 1st October, 2018 by the Government of India under section 132 (1) of the Companies Act, 2013. In the wake of accounting scams, a need was felt to establish an independent regulator for enforcement of auditing standards and ensuring the quality of audits so as to enhance investor and public confidence in financial disclosures of companies.

1. The Companies Act requires the NFRA to have a chairperson who will be appointed by the Central Government and a maximum of 15 members.
2. The authority shall recommend accounting and auditing policies and standards to be adopted by companies for approval by the Central Government; Monitor and enforce compliance with accounting standards and auditing standards; Oversee the quality of service of the professions associated with ensuring compliance with such standards and suggest measures for improvement in the quality of service; Perform such other functions and duties as may be necessary or incidental to the aforesaid functions and duties.
3. It can probe listed companies and those unlisted public companies having paid-up capital of no less than Rs 500 crore or annual turnover of no less than Rs 1,000 crore.
4. It can investigate professional misconduct committed by members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) for prescribed class of body corporate or persons.

ATAL BHUJAL YOJANA

The Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY) is a centrally sponsored scheme worth Rs.6,000 crore for sustainable management of groundwater with community participation. It envisages people's participation through the formation of 'Water User Associations', water budgeting, preparation & implementation of Gram-panchayat-wise water security plans, etc.

1. The scheme is being funded by the Government of India and the **World Bank** on 50:50 basis.
2. The identified over-exploited and water-stressed areas for the implementation of the scheme are Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.
3. The States have been selected according to the degree of groundwater exploitation and degradation, established legal and regulatory instruments, institutional readiness, and experience in implementing initiatives related to groundwater management.

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COP25: AIM AND OUTCOMES

Aim was to finalise the “rulebook” of the Paris Agreement – the operating manual needed when it takes effect in 2020 – by settling on rules for carbon markets and other forms of international cooperation under “Article 6” of the deal.

1. Article 6 of the Paris Agreement created both market and non-market mechanisms through which Parties could cooperate to achieve their mitigation goals.
2. Ultimately, however, the talks were unable to reach consensus in many areas, pushing decisions into next year under “Rule 16” of the UN climate process.
3. The UN Environment Programme’s (UNEP) released **Emissions Gap Report**, just prior to the COP, showed the stretch 1.5C goal of the Paris Agreement is “slipping out of reach”.
4. Led by Chile, the ‘Climate Ambition Alliance’ aims to accelerate the transformation needed to meet the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change and stabilize the global average temperature rise at 1.5°C above preindustrial levels and encourages the members to submit their enhanced **Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)** by 2020.
5. The Alliance brings together nations, regions, cities, businesses and investors – all working towards achieving net zero carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 2050.
6. Despite resistance from Poland, which has until next summer to come onboard, the European Commission revealed a “**European Green Deal**”, which, if it becomes law, will commit at least 25% of the EU’s long-term budget to climate action.
7. The deal also includes a proposed timetable for boosting the EU’s NDC target for 2030, from its current aim of cutting emissions to at least 40% below 1990 levels, to a higher target of “at least 50% and towards 55%”.
8. Another brief moment of optimism at the COP came when the Danish parliament adopted a new climate law, setting a legally binding target to cut emissions to 70% below 1990 levels by 2030.
9. In the end, delegates from almost 200 nations endorsed a declaration to help poor countries that are suffering the effects of climate change, although they didn’t allocate any new funds to do so.
10. The final declaration called on the “urgent need” to cut planet-heating greenhouse gases in line with the goals of the landmark 2015 Paris climate change accord.
11. That fell far short of promising to enhance countries’ pledges to cut planet-heating greenhouse gases next year, which developing countries and environmentalists had lobbied the delegates to achieve.

ARAKU VALLEY

Araku Valley, in Andhra Pradesh, the highlands of the Eastern Ghats mountain range overlooking the Bay of Bengal, is brewing one of the best coffees in the world and its aroma just got headier with the Geographical Indication (GI) tag it was recently awarded. Earlier, its claims were dismissed by the Coffee Board of India, an organisation managed by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Other GI tagged coffees in India: (Coorg Arabica coffee from Karnataka, Wayanad Robusta coffee from Kerala, Chikmagalur Arabica from Karnataka and Bababudangiris Arabica coffee also from Karnataka).

STRANDHOGG

The Union Home Ministry has sent an alert to all States warning them about the vulnerability of the Android operating system to a bug called 'StrandHogg' that allows real-time malware applications to pose as genuine applications and access user data of all kind.

1. While all versions of Android, including Android 10, are vulnerable to this bug, it may not be apparent to the affected users that malware applications are already on board their device.
2. These malwares can then potentially listen to their conversations, access photo album, read/send messages, make calls, record conversations and get login credentials to various accounts.
3. This apart, things that such malware can access include private images, files, contact details, call logs, and location information.
4. The information was shared by the Threat Analytical Unit, Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre, the Ministry of Home Affairs.

ENDANGERED LANGUAGES OF INDIA

The Ministry of Human Resource Development has initiated a Scheme known as "Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages of India" (SPPEL).

1. It is being implemented by Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore.
2. This scheme aims at protection, preservation and documentation of all the mother tongues/languages of India which are spoken by less than 10,000 people.
3. Dialects being part of a language are covered under this programme.
4. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has also a Scheme for "Establishment of Centres for Endangered Languages" under which centres were approved in respect of nine Central Universities. Endangered Languages

UNESCO provides a classification system to show just how 'in trouble' the language is:

1. Vulnerable - most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home)
2. Definitely endangered - children no longer learn the language as a 'mother tongue' in the home
3. Severely endangered - language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves
4. Critically endangered - the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently
5. Extinct - there are no speakers left
6. A UNESCO Report has identified 42 languages as 'Critically Endangered Languages' in India.

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DYANGANGA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

1. The Dnyanganga Wildlife Sanctuary is situated 28 km from Buldhana and 20 km from Khamgaon town of Maharashtra.
2. It is a part of the Melghat Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra.
3. Dyanganga Wildlife Sanctuary is in Buldhana District, near the Dnyanganga River.
4. Dnyanganga River is a tributary of the Tapti River.

OPERATION CLEAN ART

1. Operation Clean Art was the first pan India operation to crackdown on illegal trade of mongoose hair in the country.
2. The Mongoose hair is in high demand among artists worldwide because of the quality of brushes they help create which define lines clearly and hold colour better.
3. There are six species of mongoose found in India.
4. The mongoose is listed in Schedule II Part 2 of the Wildlife Protection Act and any smuggling or possession of its body part is a non-bailable offence.

HOG & EOG TECHNOLOGY

Recently, The Railway Ministry has announced that they are upgrading all existing Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coaches with the Head on Generation (HOG) technology.

HOG technology: In the new technology called Head on Generation technology (HOG), the power will be drawn from the Overhead Electric supply. The power generator cars which used to make huge noise and emit fumes will no more be there. In place of two such generator cars there will be one standby silent generator car to be used for emergency. It will replace generator based old EOG technology for feeding power to air-conditioning and lighting load in the passenger coaches.

MONSOON DECIDED HISTORY OF INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

A recent study by researchers at Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur (IIT-KGP) has revealed that abrupt changes in the Indian monsoon in the last 900 years decided the course of human history in the subcontinent.

1. Deficient rainfall led to the collapse of the Mansabdari system, started by Mughal emperor Akbar, in the late 17th century.
2. Several dynasties, such as the Sena in Bengal, Solanki in Gujarat in the mid-13th century and Paramara and Yadav in the early to mid-14th century – all of which flourished during abundant rainfall – declined during the dry phases of Indian summer monsoon (ISM), suggesting role of the climate in the socio-political crisis, the study revealed.
3. For the study, a group of researchers, looked at palaeoclimatic records using oxygen isotope proxy record from speleothems (a structure formed in a cave by deposition of minerals from water) at the Wah Shikar cave in Meghalaya.

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MANUAL SCAVENGING

As many as 282 people have died while cleaning sewers and septic tanks in the country between 2016 and November 2019, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment said in a response to a question by Rajya Sabha MP.

1. Sanitation being a State subject, the people for cleaning of sewers and septic tanks are employed by local bodies.
2. The deaths have been higher in states like Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh where there has been rapid and unplanned urbanization.
3. Human intervention in cleaning septic tanks and sewers is important to bring these numbers down.
4. There are technologies available not only to detect the presence of poisonous gas in sewers and septic tanks but also for mechanized cleaning of it.

THE EMPLOYMENT OF MANUAL SCAVENGERS AND CONSTRUCTION OF DRY LATRINES (PROHIBITION) ACT, 1993

The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993, drafted by the Ministry of Urban Development under the Narasimha Rao government, was passed by Parliament in 1993.

The Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act, 1993 punishes the employment of scavengers or the construction of dry (non-flush) latrines with imprisonment for up to one year and/or a fine of Rs 2,000. No convictions were obtained under the law during the 20 years it was in force.

THE PROHIBITION OF EMPLOYMENT AS MANUAL SCAVENGERS AND THEIR REHABILITATION ACT 2013 OR M.S. ACT 2013

Government has passed the new legislation in September 2013 and issued Government notification for the same. In December, 2013 Government has also formulated Rules-2013 called as "The Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Rules 2013" or "M.S. Rules 2013".

NORD STREAM 2 PIPELINE

U.S. put sanctions against companies building a Russian natural gas pipeline to Germany that U.S. fears will give the Kremlin dangerous leverage over European allies.

The sanctions are opposed by the European Union (EU).

They target companies building the nearly \$11 billion Nord Stream 2 pipeline under the Baltic Sea with the aim of doubling deliveries of Russian natural gas to Germany. Baltic Sea

BALTIC SEA

Baltic Sea is an arm of the North Atlantic Ocean, and separates the Scandinavian Peninsula from the rest of continental Europe.

The largest expanse of brackish water in the world, the semi-enclosed and relatively shallow Baltic Sea is of great interest to scientists.

The countries bounding the Baltic are Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Germany.

The Vistula and the Oder are among the major rivers which drain their water into the Baltic Sea.

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ICC TO PROBE ‘WAR CRIMES’ IN PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES SINCE 2014

The International Criminal Court (ICC)'s chief prosecutor Fatou Bensouda said that she wanted to open a full investigation into alleged war crimes in the Palestinian territories, sparking a furious reaction from Israel and condemnation from the U.S. Analysis

1. The ICC's preliminary investigation has looked at the 2014 war which left 2,251 dead on the Palestinian side, the majority civilians, and 74 on the Israeli side, most of them soldiers. The International Criminal Court
2. The ICC is the world's first and only permanent international criminal tribunal and is considered a court of last resort. It is headquartered in *The Hague*, Netherlands, and is charged with investigating and prosecuting crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, aggression, and war crimes.
3. The ICC prosecutes individuals, not organizations or governments.
4. The ICC is not part of the United Nations.
5. The Rome Statute is the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court.
6. The UN Security Council is empowered, under the Rome Statute, to refer complaints against nonmember nations to the International Criminal Court.
7. Cases are referred to the court by national governments or the United Nations Security Council.
8. Some notable countries like United States, Russia, India, China, Israel, Qatar, Iraq, and Libya – aren't part of the ICC. India and ICC
9. India abstained from voting on a UN Human Rights Council draft resolution, in March 2019, on the "situation of human rights in Myanmar."

NATIONAL COMPANY LAW APPELLATE TRIBUNAL (NCLAT)

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) was constituted with effect from June 1, 2016, for hearing appeals against the orders of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

1. Constituted under the Companies Act, 2013, the appellate tribunal was conceived as the dedicated appeals forum for resolving corporate law disputes and speeding up the resolution by taking over the role hitherto played by overburdened High Courts in adjudicating such appeals.
2. Besides deciding on prayers against the NCLT's rulings, including in matters relating to the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), the NCLAT also serves as the appellate body for those aggrieved by decisions made by the Competition Commission of India or orders passed by the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India under Sections 202 and 211 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
3. Established in New Delhi, the NCLAT initially comprised five members: two members each on the judicial and technical sides and a Chairperson.
4. The government has also decided to set up a bench of the appellate tribunal at Chennai.
5. While a member (Judicial) of the NCLAT has to have been a judge of a High Court or a judicial member of the NCLT for five years, a technical member ought to possess proven ability and standing with domain knowledge and experience of not less than 25 years in areas such as

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law, industrial finance, industrial management, investment, accountancy, labour matters or corporate restructuring.

6. The chairperson must have been a judge of the Supreme Court of India or a Chief Justice of a High Court.
7. A party aggrieved by a ruling by any of the NCLT's numerous benches can file an appeal against it within 45 days of receipt of a copy of the order.
8. The NCLAT's verdicts can in turn be challenged on a question of law in the Supreme Court, within a 60day window.

NATIONAL POPULATION REGISTER (NPR)

The next round of recording biometric and family-tree details of Indian citizens under the National Population Register (NPR) will be conducted in September 2020, a government notification said.

1. The exercise under NPR is different from the decennial Census and is not linked to the National Register of Citizens (NRC).
2. The objective of the NPR is to create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country.
3. The database would contain demographic as well as biometric particulars.
4. The exercise was conducted earlier in two phases in 2010 and 2015.
5. For the purpose of NPR, a usual resident is defined as a person who has resided in a local area for six months or more or a person who intends to reside in that area for the next six months or more.
6. It is mandatory for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR.
7. It is being prepared at the local (Village level), sub District (Tehsil/Taluk level), 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.
8. While the census is legally backed by the Census Act, 1948, the NPR is a mechanism outlined in a set of rules framed under the Citizenship Act, 1955.
9. Section 14A was inserted in the Citizenship Act, 1955, in 2004, providing for the compulsory registration of every citizen of India and the issue of a "national identity card" to him or her. It also said the Central government may maintain a "National Register of Indian Citizens".
10. The Registrar General India shall act as the "National Registration Authority" (and will function as the Registrar General of Citizen Registration). o Incidentally, the Registrar General is also the country's Census Commissioner.
11. The data collected in NPR will be sent to UIDAI for de-duplication and issue of Aadhaar Number.
12. Thus, the register will contain three elements of data – (i) demographic data, (ii) biometric data and (iii) the Aadhaar (UID Number).

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DRAFT FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS (LABELLING AND DISPLAY) REGULATIONS, 2019

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) recently introduced draft Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2019.

1. Current Food Safety and Standards (Packaging and Labelling) Regulations, 2011
2. The new draft replaced sodium chloride with salt, total fat with saturated fat and total sugar with added sugar.
3. The new draft also exempts beverages less than 80kcal.
4. The draft further proposes that labels must comprise information on serving size and per serve percentage contribution of a particular nutrient to the recommended dietary allowance (RDA).
5. The recommended dietary allowance (RDA), a daily ceiling on the amount of salt, fat, carbohydrate and trans-fat, beyond which the daily diet is considered unhealthy, is based on scientific consensus and has been agreed upon by expert bodies such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad (in India).
6. If salt, added sugar and fats in a packaged food exceeds a certain threshold level, the red warning symbol will appear on the package.
7. Junk food served at fast food outlets is also under the purview of this draft and that advertisement of junk food products will not be allowed to target children.
8. The proposed law allows companies three years to adjust to the new laws.
9. The proposed draft does not mention labelling of genetically modified (GM) food.
10. Though the draft regulations have been out in the public domain since July, it is yet to become law.
11. Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 which consolidates various acts and orders that have hitherto handled food related issues in various Ministries and Departments.

SCIENTISTS FIND IRON 'SNOW' IN EARTH'S CORE

The snow is made of tiny particles of iron -- much heavier than any snowflake on Earth's surface -- that fall from the molten outer core and pile on top of the inner core, creating piles up to 200 miles thick that cover the inner core.

1. The Earth's core can't be sampled, so scientists study it by recording and analyzing signals from seismic waves (a type of energy wave) as they pass through the Earth.
2. The researchers point to the accumulated snow pack as the cause of the seismic aberrations.
3. The slurry-like composition slows the seismic waves.
4. And given the core's influence over phenomena that affects the entire planet, from generating its magnetic field to radiating the heat that drives the movement of tectonic plates.

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CARBON DOTS HELP DETECT HERBICIDE POLLUTION

Carbon dots manufactured from commonly found invasive plant water hyacinth can be used for detecting a commonly used herbicide — pretilachlor.

1. When a nanoparticle is less than 10 nanometre we call it a dot or nanodot.
2. A nanoparticle is a microscopic particle with at least one dimension less than 100 nm.
3. The nanometre is a unit of length equal to one billionth of a metre (0.000000001 m).

NGANDONG

An international team of researchers has determined the age of the last known settlement of the species Homo erectus, one of modern humans' direct ancestors.

1. The site is called Ngandong, on the Indonesian island Java.
2. The team determined the last existence of Homo erectus at Ngandong between 108,000 and 117,000 years ago.
3. Homo erectus, one of modern humans' direct ancestors, was a wandering bunch.
4. After the species dispersed from Africa about two million years ago, it colonized the ancient world, which included Asia and possibly Europe.
5. But about 400,000 years ago, Homo erectus essentially vanished. The lone exception was a spot called Ngandong, on the Indonesian island of Java.

FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE DEVELOPMENT FUND (FIDF)

The first tripartite Memorandum of Agreement has been signed between the department of Fisheries Government of India, NABARD and the Government of Tamil Nadu for the implementation of Fisheries and Aquaculture Development Fund (FIDF).

1. The Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF) has been formed in 2018.
2. The fund provides concessional finance to the eligible entities, cooperatives, individuals and entrepreneurs for development of identified fisheries infrastructure.
3. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) and all scheduled banks are Nodal Lending entities (NLEs) to provide concessional finance under the FIDF.
4. To augment fish production to achieve its target of 15 million tonne by 2020 set under the Blue Revolution; and to achieve a sustainable growth of 8% -9% thereafter to reach the fish production to the level of about 20 MMT by 2022-23.

QUICK REACTION SURFACE TO AIR MISSILE

Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) system has been successfully flight-tested from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the Odisha coast.

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1. Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) system has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
2. The missile is equipped with indigenously developed phased array radar, inertial navigation system, data link and radio frequency seeker.
3. The missile uses solid-fuel propellant and has a range of around 25-30 km.
4. The missile is an all weather weapon that is capable of tracking firing with precision.
5. It is also capable of engaging in multiple targets.

ECOWAS

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established in 1975 by the Treaty of Lagos.

It is considered as one of the pillars of the African Economic Community.

It is a 15-member regional group

The member countries are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Togo.

COMMON CURRENCY ECO

Recently, eight West African nations have agreed to change the name of their common currency from 'CFA franc' to 'Eco'.

1. The eight West African namely Ivory Coast, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Guinea-Bissau have agreed to change the name of their common currency from 'CFA franc' to 'Eco'.
2. All these countries except Guinea-Bissau are the former French colonies.
3. This decision was taken after Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had urged members to push on with efforts to establish a common currency to be launched in 2020.
4. Further, the countries have also decided that Eco will remain pegged to the euro but the African countries in the bloc won't have to keep 50% of their reserves in the French Treasury and there will no longer be a French representative on the currency union's board.

HIGH PREVALENCE OF MENTAL DISORDERS IN SOUTH INDIA

Recently, a study by the India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative was published in the Lancet Psychiatry.

1. This is the first comprehensive estimate of disease burden due to mental disorders and their trends in every state of India from 1990.
2. The study divided States into three categories on the basis of their Socio-Demographic Index (SDI), i.e low, medium and high SDI States. The SDI is a composite measure of per-capita income, mean education and fertility rate in women younger than 25 years and is calculated on a scale of one.
3. Depression and anxiety disorders are the commonest mental disorders in India.
4. Their prevalence is increasing and is relatively higher in the southern states (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Telangana, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh) and in females.

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5. Depression accounted for 33.8% of all mental disorder DALYs in India in 2017, followed by anxiety disorders (19%), idiopathic developmental intellectual disability (10.8%) and schizophrenia (9.8%).
6. The contribution of mental disorders to the total disease burden in India in terms of disability adjusted life years (DALYs) increased from 2.5% in 1990 to 4.7% in 2017.
7. DALY is the sum of total years of life lost and years lived with disability. One DALY is at least one lost year of 'healthy' life.

SWACHH BHARAT MISSION – URBAN

Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U) has achieved its target of creating Urban India Open Defecation Free (ODF).

1. Urban areas of 35 states / UTs have become ODF and certified through third-party verification.
2. ODF: No visible faeces shall found in the environment and every household, as well as public/community institutions, should be using safe technology option for disposal of faeces.
3. Norms under ODF+: Not a single person should be defecating and/or urinating in open. ▪ All community and public toilets should be properly maintained and cleaned.
4. Norms under ODF++: Proper treatment and management of faecal sludge/septage and sewage is safely managed and treated. There should be no discharge or dumping of untreated faecal sludge/septage and sewage in drains, water bodies or open areas.
5. Water + Protocol: It is designed to ensure that no untreated wastewater is discharged into the open environment or water bodies.

CABINET COMMITTEE ON INVESTMENT AND GROWTH

The newly-formed Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth (CCIG) held its first meeting to discuss issues related to the slowdown in the economy.

1. Alongside CCIG, a Cabinet Committee on Employment & Skill Development was also constituted in response to rising unemployment in the country.
2. Cabinet Committees are extra-constitutional in emergence.
3. However, the Rules of Business provide for their establishment. These Rules emerge out of Article 77(3) of the Constitution, which empowers the President to make rules for the more convenient transaction of the business of the Government, and for the allocation among Ministers.
4. The Prime Minister constitutes Standing Committees of the Cabinet and sets out the specific functions assigned to them.
5. He can add or reduce the number of committees.
6. All Cabinet Committees except Cabinet Committee on Accommodation and Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs are headed by Prime Minister.

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SPACE FORCE BY USA

Recently, the US President signed the National Defense Authorization Act, 2020 directing the establishment of the U.S. Space Force (USSF) as the sixth branch of the armed forces.

1. The establishment of USSF comes after the launch of a new Pentagon Command named Spacecom earlier in September, 2019.
2. The USSF will be the sixth formal force of the U.S. military, after the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marines, and Coast Guard and will be headquartered at the Pentagon.
3. It will comprise of about 16,000 air force and civilian personnel.
4. Maintaining and enhancing the competitive edge of the Department of Defense (DOD) in space.
5. Developing military space professionals, acquiring military space systems, maturing the military doctrine for space power and organizing space forces, etc.
6. Effectively organizing the defence for US interests in space, especially related to satellites used for navigation and communication.
7. China and Russia have apprehensions regarding this development.
8. It is being perceived as increasing weaponization of outer space and turning cosmos into a battlefield.

IPOs, FPOs, OFSs and QIPs

1. When a company that has never issued shares to the public, does it for the first time it is called an Initial Public Offer. Normally, an IPO is a mechanism for an unlisted company to raise fresh funds from the primary market and also list the stock in the stock exchange. An IPO necessarily leads to expansion of the capital of the company.
2. Unlike the IPO which helps the company to list on the stock exchange, a company that is already listed can raise additional capital through a follow-on public offer.
3. An FPO also results in expansion of the capital base of the company and dilution of Earnings per share (EPS). The only difference from an IPO is that an FPO is brought out by a company which is already listed.
4. An offer-for-sale is different from an IPO and an FPO in the sense that an OFS does not result in fresh raising of funds. In an OFS, an existing shareholder dilutes their stake through the primary market. An OFS only results in a transfer of ownership from one shareholder to another and does not increase the share capital of the company.
5. The QIP- qualified institutional placements allows an Indian-listed company to raise capital from domestic markets without the need to submit any pre-issue filings to market regulators. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) limits companies to only raising money through issuing securities. It is common in India and other southeast Asian countries.
6. The primary reason for developing QIPs was the growing concern from Indian regulators that its domestic companies were accessing international funding too readily via American depository receipts (ADRs), Foreign Currency Convertible Bonds (FCCBs) and Global Depository Receipts (GDR), rather than Indian-based capital sources.

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7. Their use saves time as the issuance of QIPs and the access to capital is far quicker than through an FPO. Additionally, no single allottee is allowed to own more than 50% of the total debt issue. Furthermore, allottees must not be related in any way to promoters of the issue.
8. The only parties eligible to purchase QIPs are qualified institutional buyers (QIBs), which is an accredited investor, as defined by whatever securities and exchange governing body preside over it.
- 9.

RESTRUCTURING OF RAILWAY BOARD

The Union Cabinet has approved restructuring of the Railway Board.

1. The number of Railway Board members will be reduced to five from existing eight.
2. The eight railway services will be integrated into a central service called the Indian Railway Management Service (IRMS).
3. All employees at the management level will come into the Railways through one service — the IRMS.
4. This is in line with the recommendations of numerous committees, notably Rakesh Mohan (2001) and the Bibek Debroy panel (2015).
5. The Board will now consist of five members – Chairman, who will act as a CEO, along with four members responsible for infrastructure, operations and business development, rolling stock and finance.
6. There will also be a Directorate General - Human Resources (DG - HR) under the Chairman.

EARLIEST SANSKRIT INSCRIPTIONS IN SOUTH INDIA FOUND IN A.P.

1. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has discovered the earliest Sanskrit inscription in South India which is also an earliest epigraphic evidence (Epigraphy is the study of ancient inscriptions) for the Saptamatrika cult.
2. Saptamatrikas are a group of seven female deities worshipped in Hinduism as personifying the energy of their respective consorts.
3. Another inscription in Prakrit language and of Brahmi characters belonging to the 1st century A.D. was also found.
4. Issued by Satavahana king Vijaya in 207 A.D.
5. So far the Nagarjunakonda inscription of Ikshavaku king Ehavala Chantamula issued in the 4th century A.D. was considered the earliest Sanskrit inscription in South India.

SATAVAHANAS

In the Deccan, the Satavahanas established their independent rule after the decline of the Mauryas. Their rule lasted for about 450 years. They were also known as the Andhras. The Puranas and the Nasik and Nanaghad inscriptions remain important sources for the history of Satavahanas.

The founder of the Satavahana dynasty was Simuka. The greatest ruler of the Satavahana dynasty was Gautamiputra Satakarni. There was remarkable progress in the fields of trade and industry during the Satavahana rule. The greatest port of the Satavahanas was Kalyani on the western Deccan and Gandakasela, Ganjam on the east coast were the other important seaports.

The Satavahanas patronized Buddhism and Brahmanism. Brahmanism was revived by the Satavahanas along with the performance of asvamedha and rajasuya sacrifices. They also patronized the Prakrit language and literature.

FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT : RBI

The Reserve Bank of India has released the 20th issue of the Financial Stability Report (FSR).

1. About expected increase in GNPA Ratio: SCB's Gross Non-Performing Asset (GNPA) ratio of banks may increase to 9.9% by September 2020 from 9.3% in September 2019.
2. All banks' Capital to Risk-weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) improved to 15.1% in September 2019 from 14.3% in March 2019, following the recapitalisation of PSBs by the government.
3. CRAR is a measurement of a bank's available capital expressed as a percentage of a bank's risk-weighted credit exposures. It is also known as the Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR).
4. $CAR = (Tier\ 1\ Capital + Tier\ 2\ Capital) / Risk\ weighted\ Assets$.
5. Tier-1 capital, or core capital, consists of equity capital, ordinary share capital, intangible assets and audited revenue reserves. Tier-1 capital is the capital that is permanently and easily available to cushion losses suffered by a bank without it being required to stop operating.
6. Tier-2 capital comprises unaudited retained earnings, unaudited reserves and general loss reserves.
7. Provision Coverage Ratio (PCR) of all SCBs rose to 61.5% in September 2019 from 60.5% in March 2019 implying increased resilience of the banking sector.

ANNUAL FLAMINGO FESTIVAL AT PULICAT LAKE

The annual Flamingo Festival is to be held in January at Pulicat lake.

1. The Pulicat lake supports rich biodiversity and high biomass of fishes and planktons which is utilised as food resources by visiting birds.
2. Thus about 75 aquatic and terrestrial bird species visit the sanctuary every year.
3. The number of birds is much higher than usual due to abundant rains in 2019.

About Pulicat Lake:

1. It is the second-largest brackish water ecosystem in the country after the Chilika Lake (Odisha).
2. It is located on the border of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu with over 96% of it in Andhra Pradesh and 4% in Tamil Nadu.
3. The large varieties of birds like grey pelicans, painted storks, visit the site annually.
4. Grey Pelican and Painted Stork both are near-threatened species under IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.

KALARIPAYATTU

1. Kalaripayattu is a martial art based on the ancient knowledge of the human body.
2. It originated in Kerala during 3rd century BC to the 2nd century AD.
3. It is now practised in Kerala and in some parts of Tamil Nadu.
4. The place where this martial art is practised is called a 'Kalari'.
5. It is a Malayalam word that signifies a kind of gymnasium.
6. Kalari literally means 'threshing floor' or 'battlefield'.
7. The word Kalari first appears in the Tamil Sangam literature to describe both a battlefield and combat arena.
8. It is considered to be one of the oldest fighting systems in existence.
9. It is also considered as the father of modern Kung - Fu.

Classic IAS Quiz

Take One Step Forward...

Q.1) What is Operation 'Clean Art', recently in the news?

- a) A sensors-based low-cost water conservation technology.
- b) A pan India initiative to crackdown on the smuggling of mongoose hair.
- c) A national photography award attached to the Swachh Bharat mission.
- d) A method of internet connectivity based the Blockchain technology.

Q.2) The place 'Ngandong' is sometimes mentioned in media in reference to

- a) The fossils of an ancestor of human beings
- b) The world's largest known high-quality thorium deposits.
- c) The world's largest topography formed due to the dissolution of soluble rocks.
- d) The world's largest collection of crop diversity

Q.3) The term 'Provision Coverage Ratio' is sometimes seen in the news in the context of

- a) 5G internet connectivity
- b) Carbon footprint
- c) Non-performing asset
- d) Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System

Q.4) What is StrandHogg, recently in the news?

- a) A predator UAV armed with Hellfire missiles.
- b) A software that steals confidential information.
- c) World's first carbon monitoring satellite.
- d) A super-strong adhesive produced by some species of snail.

Q.5) Very recently, which one of the following lakes witnessed mass-death migratory birds?

- a) Pulicat Lake
- b) Chilika Lake
- c) Kolleru Lake
- d) Sambhar Lake

Q.6) In which one of the following dance forms of India, the theme of the creation of the world is re-enacted?

- a) Odissi Dance
- b) Sattriya Dance
- c) Mohiniyattam Dance
- d) Manipuri Dance

Q.7) Which of the following is/are ritual performing arts of Kerala?

1. Koodiyattam
2. Kalaripayattu
3. Chakiarkoothu
4. Krishnattam

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Q.8) With reference to 'FASTag, consider the following statements:

1. It uses a stereo camera and LiDAR technology.
2. It can notify the user about a potential collision on the route.

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Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Q.9) Which one of the following releases the 'Emissions Gap Report' periodically?

- a) The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
- b) The International Union for Conservation of Nature
- c) The United Nations Environment Programme
- d) The Global Green Growth Institute

Q.10) In which one of the following states is Dnyanganga Wildlife Sanctuary located?

- a) Uttarakhand
- b) Maharashtra
- c) Madhya Pradesh
- d) Uttar Pradesh

Answers	
1. B	6. D
2. A	7. A
3. C	8. D
4. B	9. C
5. D	10. B