



UPSC

MONTHLY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
CAPSULES

NOVEMBER 2020



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NATIONAL NEWS

VAIBHAV Summit

- The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated the Vaishwik Bharatiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV) Summit.
- It is a global virtual summit of overseas and resident Indian researchers and Academicians on Gandhi Jayanti, 02nd October 2020 which concluded on 1 November, 2020.
- About 2600 overseas Indians registered for the summit online.
- About 3200 panellists and about 22,500 academicians and scientists from India and overseas participated in this month-long series of webinars.
- VAIBHAV has led the way in establishing research capability as an important avenue towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat. It has paved the way for aligning contemporary research in the country towards a shared purpose in each area.
- Resident and overseas Indians have given an integrated perspective of research and academic capabilities to seamlessly contribute to India's S&T capability for global good.
- VAIBHAV has created an interactive and facile mechanism in the Cyberspace and has promoted collaboration and the development of leadership.
- It is a grand initiative in the area of science and research not just for academic institutes but also for public-funded R&D organizations and Industry that utilizes the outcome of the research.

Translocation of Corals in Mumbai

- The translocation of 18 coral colonies from the coast of Mumbai for the Mumbai Coastal Road Project has been carried out by the National Institute of Oceanography.
- Corals have the characteristics of plants but are marine animals that are related to jellyfish and anemones.
- They are made up of genetically identical organisms called polyps, which are tiny, soft-bodied organisms.
- Calicle is at their base which is hard, protective limestone skeleton and forms the structure of coral reefs.

Merger of Schools in Odisha: SATH Project

- 8,000 schools in 15 districts have been identified by the Odisha government which will be merged with other schools due to low enrollment (less than 20 students).

- Under the NITI Aayog's Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E) project, the merger is carried out. It has been termed Consolidation and Rationalisation of schools.

About SATH-E Project:

- -Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital (SATH) focusses on two main sectors that is Education and Health and to build three 'Role Model' States.
- The project aspires to be a 'Saathi', to the educational system with the student and the teacher at its centre".
- In Odisha in 2017, it was among three states, along with Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, to be selected by NITI Aayog for the project.
- The purpose of the initiative is to transform elementary and secondary school education through goal-driven exercise and create role model states for education. The initiative culminates at the end of the 2020 academic year.

Star Campaigner

- The party revoked the status of Congress leader and former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath as a star campaigner.
- The status has been revoked by the Election Commission.
- It has been revoked for "repeated violation of Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and for completely disregarding the advisory issued to him".
- So now, the entire expenditure on any campaigning by Mr. Nath for the 3 November by-election would be borne by the candidate in whose constituency he campaigns.

About Star Campaigners

Star Campaigners can be described as persons who are nominated by parties to campaign in a given set of Constituencies. These persons are, in almost all cases, prominent and popular faces within the Party. However, there are no specific definitions according to law or the Election Commission of India.

General Insurance Business of Bharti AXA

- Under Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002, the Competition Commission of India (CCI) approves acquisition of General Insurance Business of Bharti AXA General Insurance Company Limited (Bharti AXA) by ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company Limited (ICICI Lombard).

About ICICI Lombard

- It is a general insurance company registered with the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- It is engaged in providing a comprehensive and well-diversified range of general insurance products, including motor, health, fire, personal accident, marine, engineering and liability insurance, through multiple distribution channels.

About Bharti AXA

It is a general insurance company registered with the IRDAI and is a joint venture held by Bharti General Ventures Private Limited (51%) and Societe Beaujon (49%). It is engaged in providing general insurance products, including motor, health, travel, crop and home insurance to its customers.

Pursuant to the proposed combination, the whole general insurance business of Bharti AXA would be transferred by way of a demerger to ICICI Lombard in consideration of issuance of shares by ICICI Lombard to Bharti AXA.

Special Cover of Department of Posts

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan and Shri Sanjay Dhotre release Special Cover of Department of Posts to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of Department of Science & Technology.
- Dr Harsh Vardhan highlights Prime Minister's call for "Scientific Social Responsibility".
- He further stated that "Our scientists have proved their mettle in altogether fields of science at an international level".
- Shri Sanjay Dhotre calls upon the S & T Department to "closely collaborate with the Department of Posts to make it more dynamic to deliver services in near real-time to benefit people". He also said that "Our scientists have contributed a Lion's share in India's development".

TEST SERIES

Bilingual



**UPSC 2021
PRELIMS
(Paper-I + Paper-II)**

30 TOTAL TESTS

MALABAR-20

- The 24th edition of the MALABAR naval exercise is scheduled in two phases in November 2020.
- Phase 1 of the Exercise MALABAR 20 involving participation by Indian Navy (IN), United States Navy (USN), Japan Maritime Self Defence Force (JMSDF), and Royal Australian Navy (RAN) is set to commence off Visakhapatnam in the Bay of Bengal from 03 to 06 November 2020.
- Phase-1 of MALABAR 20 will witness the participation of Indian Navy units with United States Ship (USS) John S McCain (Guided-missile destroyer), Her Majesty's Australian Ship (HMAS) Ballarat (long-range frigates) with integral MH-60 helicopter, and Japan Maritime Self Defence Ship (JMSDF) Onami (Destroyer) with integral SH-60 helicopter.
- The Indian Navy participation in Phase 1 are going to be led by Flag Officer Commanding Eastern Fleet Rear Admiral Sanjay Vatsayan.
- Phase 2 of MALABAR 20 is scheduled to be conducted within the Arabian Sea in mid-November 2020.

About MALABAR series

MALABAR series of maritime exercises commenced in 1992 as a bilateral IN-USN exercise. JMSDF joined MALABAR in 2015. The 2020 edition will now witness the participation of the RAN during this joint maritime exercise.

SAI Regional Centre

- Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Shri Kiren Rijiju virtually inaugurated Sports Authority of India's (SAI) new Regional Centre in Zirakpur, Punjab.
- It will now act as one of the main SAI centres for the northern belt of India.
- The Zirakpur Regional Centre's administrative block has been built by the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) and a number of other sporting facilities are going to be added soon.

NFAI and FFSI Conducts Online Film Appreciation Course in Marathi

- National Film Archive of India, Pune, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting is organising 15th edition of Film Appreciation Course in Marathi along with Federation of Film Society of India (FFSI).
- As per the current situation of COVID-19 pandemic, the course is to be held online for the first time from November 1 to November 7.

- Renowned film and theatre artist Dr Mohan Agashe inaugurated the Online Film Appreciation Course in Marathi “Chitrapat Rasaswad Shibir” at NFAI.
- This unique film course in Marathi focuses on the importance of knowledge of film language and grammar. It includes expert lectures on cinema in-depth, history, theories and discussion on cinema.
- The course features lectures by prolific film personalities like Samar Nakhate, Deepak Deodhar, Suhas Kirloskar, Abhijit Deshpande, Anupam Barve, Umesh Kulkarni, Shyamla Vanarse, Ganesh Matkari, Ujwal Nigudkar, Abhijit Randive, Rahul Ranade, Sudhir Nandgaonkar and Prakash Magdum.

Typhoon Goni

- Typhoon Rolly or Goni has hit the Philippines.
- Hurricanes occur in the North Atlantic Ocean and Northeast Pacific.
- If the same type of disturbance takes place in the Northwest Pacific Ocean then it is known as a typhoon.
- And if in the South Pacific and the Indian Ocean then it is known as a cyclone.

Tourist Facilitation Centre

- Union Minister of State (IC) for Tourism & Culture Shri Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurated the “Tourist Facilitation Centre” facility at Guruvayur, Kerala under PRASHAD Scheme.
- In 2014-15, the ‘National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive’ (PRASHAD) launched by the Ministry of Tourism.
- The objective of the scheme is to integrate the development of identified pilgrimage and heritage destinations.
- The project for “Development of Guruvayur” under the scheme was approved by the Ministry of Tourism with the cost of Rs. 45.36 crores in March 2017.

Prasar Bharati

- India’s public broadcaster Prasar Bharati signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Applications and Geo-Informatics, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

- Under the ambit of this MoU, 51 DTH education TV channels comprising of Swayamprabha (22 channels) (M/o Education), e-Vidya for classes 1 to 12 (12 channels) of NCERT, Vande Gujarat (Govt. of Gujarat) (16 channels) and DigiShala under M/o Electronics and IT (1 channel) shall be available as DD co-branded channels to all DD FreeDish viewers.
- It will bring quality educational programmes to every household, including rural and remote areas.
- The services will be available free of cost for all the viewers 24×7.

PINAKA Rocket System

- On 4 November, 2020, enhanced PINAKA rocket, developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has been successfully flight tested from Integrated Test Range, Chandipur off the coast of Odisha.
- A total of six rockets were launched in quick succession and the tests met complete mission objectives.
- Development of Enhanced Pinaka system was taken up to achieve longer range performance compared to an earlier design with a reduced length.
- It is designed and developed by Pune based DRDO laboratories, namely Armament Research and Development Establishment, ARDE and High Energy Materials Research Laboratory, HEMRL.

Guidelines on Television Rating Agencies in India

- Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has constituted a committee to review “Guidelines on Television Rating Agencies in India” notified by the Ministry in 2014.
- The present guidelines issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MIB) on Television Rating Agencies in India were notified after detailed deliberations by the Parliamentary Committee, Committee on Television Rating Points (TRP) constituted by the MIB and recommendations of Telecom Regulatory Authority etc.

The Terms of Reference for the Committee are:

- Study past recommendations made by various forums on the subject of television rating systems in India and matter incidental thereto.
- Study recent recommendations of Telecom Regulatory Authority on the subject.
- Suggest steps for enhancing competition in the sector.

- Review of the presently notified guidelines to see if the intended purpose(s) of issuing the guidelines have stood the test of time and has met needs of various stakeholders involve The lacunae, if any, shall be specially addressed by the Committee;
- Any issues related or incidental to the subject.
- To make recommendations on way forward for a robust, transparent and accountable rating system in India; and
- Any other related issues assigned by MIB from time to time.
- The Committee can invite any expert as a special invitee. The Committee will submit its report to the Minister for Information & Broadcasting within two months.

Project Lion

- Under Project Lion, 6 new sites apart from the Kuno-Palpur Wildlife Sanctuary were identified.
- It was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 15 August, 2020.

The six new sites are:

- Madhav National Park, Madhya Pradesh.
- Sitamata Wildlife Sanctuary, Rajasthan.
- Mukundra Hills Tiger Reserve, Rajasthan.
- Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary, Madhya Pradesh.
- Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Rajasthan.
- Jessore-Balaram Ambaji WLS and adjoining landscape, Gujarat.

Cold Wave

- There are cold wave conditions over Delhi, as per the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

About Cold Wave

- Within 24 hours, a rapid fall in temperature due to which protection is required to agriculture, industry, commerce and social activities.
- When the minimum temperature is 10 degrees Celsius or below then in plains, a cold wave is declared and is 4.5 degree Celsius (C) less than normal for two consecutive days.
- The threshold value of a minimum temperature of 10 degree Celsius is rarely reached for coastal stations.

Global Investor Roundtable

- The Virtual Global Investor Roundtable was chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- While addressing the roundtable, he said India bravely fought the worldwide pandemic, the world saw India's national character and India's true strengths.
- The Prime Minister remarked that India has shown remarkable resilience during this pandemic, by fighting the virus and also ensuring economic stability.
- He elaborated the holistic strategy for the development of the financial sector.
- Some of the major initiatives was listed by him for the development of the financial sector like comprehensive banking sector reforms, strengthening of financial markets, unified authority for the International Financial Services Centre, one among the foremost liberal FDI regimes, a benign tax regime for foreign capital, suitable policy regimes for investment vehicles like Infrastructure Investment Trust and Real Estate Investment Trust, Implementation of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, Financial empowerment through Direct Benefit Transfer and fin-tech based payment systems like Ru-Pay cards and BHIM-UPI.

C.V. Raman

- Prof. C.V. Raman's 132nd birth anniversary is celebrated on 7th November, 2020. He was Physicist, Nobel laureate and Bharat Ratna recipient who was instrumental in India's growth within the field of science and Physics.
- Films Division is paying tribute to him by streaming a biopic, C.V. Raman (18 Min./ English) on its Website and YouTube channel.
- The documentary on Prof Raman throws light into his life and works including the groundbreaking work he did within the field of light scattering known as 'Raman Effect'.

National Cancer Awareness Day

- National Cancer Awareness Day is observed on 7th November per annum.
- National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) told that price rationalisation initiated February 2019 and had the far-reaching impact of its decision resulting in huge price discount in anti-cancer drugs.
- NPPA had launched a Pilot on Trade Margin Rationalisation for 42 anti-cancer drugs as a step towards making the healthcare more affordable for the suffering patients.

- Based on the feedback received from the pharmaceutical companies after implementation of the NPPA notification, it had been observed that under this exercise 526 brands of 42 anti-cancer drugs showed price reduction up to 90%.
- According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), cancer is the second leading cause of death worldwide and in 2018 approximately 18 million cases at the global level were there, of which 1.5 million were in India alone. There were around 0.8 million cancer deaths in India in 2018 against 9.5 million globally. The numbers of latest cases are estimated to double in India by 2040.

Centre of Excellence for Indian Knowledge System

- Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank announced the Centre of Excellence for Indian Knowledge System to be set up at IIT Kharagpur.
- “Bharata Tirtha” organized by the Institute from November 6-8, 2020, Chief Guest Pokhriyal congratulated the Institute for the continued work in various branches of Indian Knowledge System.

MSME/Udyam Registration

- Ministry of MSME had revised the definition of MSMEs and process of registration w.e.f. 1st July, 2020.
- New online system of MSME/Udyam Registration launched by Union MSME Ministry, w.e.f. 1st July, 2020. It stood as the test of Time & Technology as more than 11 lakh MSMEs have successfully registered themselves by now.
- A new portal is also launched for MSME/Udyam registration.
- This portal is seamlessly integrated with CBDT and GST networks and also with the GeM.
- Through this integration, now MSME registration may be a totally paperless exercise.

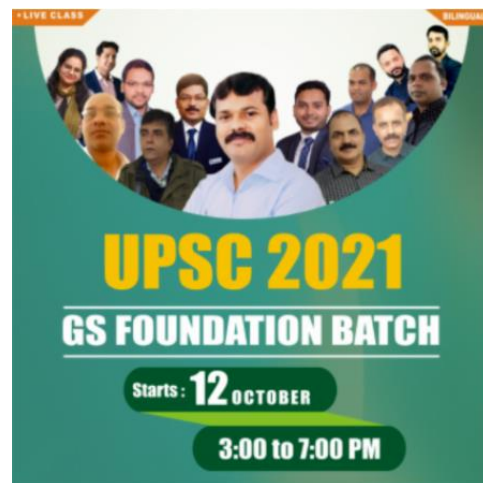
According to PIB, till October 31, 2020 (more than 10 Lakh), as per the analysis of the registrations the trend and broad picture are:

- 3.72 lakh enterprises have registered under the Manufacturing category whereas 6.31 lakh enterprises under the Service sector.
- The share of Micro Enterprises is 93.17% whereas Small and Medium Enterprises are 5.62% and 1.21% respectively.

- Male owns 7.98 lakh enterprises whereas Female entrepreneurs 1.73 lakh enterprises.
- 11,188 enterprises are owned by Divyangjan entrepreneurs.
- The Top 5 Industrial sectors of registrations are – Food Products, Textile, Apparel, Fabricated Metal Products and Machinery & Equipments.
- 1,01,03,512 persons have been given employment by these registered units.
- 5 leading States for Udyam registrations are Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat.
- Registration without PAN is permitted up to 31.03.2021 as a transitional arrangement.
- Similarly, Registration without GST number is also permitted up to 31.03.2021 as a transitional arrangement.

Jai Krishna Memorial Lecture

- Principal Secretary to Prime Minister PK Mishra addressed the first Jai Krishna memorial lecture organised by IIT Roorkee.
- The lecture was focused on COVID-19 and therefore the way forward for Disaster Risk Management in India.
- While addressing the event, Principal Secretary said that the scope of disaster risk management has increased. He further added that its scope has expanded and lots of subjects are mixed in it and are not any longer seen as just a narrow specific area.
- PK Mishra further stressed on the future steps that must be taken to tackle situations aroused in the pandemic.



Bio-decomposer technique

- According to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal the bio-decomposer technique of converting stubble into manure has shown success.
- This claim was supported on the initial results from a farm where the bio-decomposing solution, developed under the guidance of the PUSA Institute.
- Now, the government would now present this alternative in the Supreme Court owing to its effectiveness and cost.
- This solution also can be tried by farmers in Punjab and Haryana.

Smog in Delhi

- In October 2020, Delhi's air pollution was higher as compared to last year's air pollution.
- Smog is a harmful mixture of fog, dust and air pollutants like nitrogen oxides, volatile organic compounds, etc. which combine with sunlight to make a dense layer of ground-level ozone.
- Smog formation is also closely linked with temperature, sunshine, and calm winds.
- Smog can form more quickly than otherwise, on a warmer day.

Luhri hydropower project

- The funding has been approved by the Cabinet Committee of Rs 1810 cr for 210 Mega Watt Luhri Stage-I Hydro Power Project in Himachal Pradesh.
- It will be constructed on river Satluj which is situated in Shimla and Kullu districts of Himachal Pradesh.
- As per Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar, the project is going to be commissioned within 62 months and it'll lead reduction of 6.1 lakh tonne of CO₂ from the environment annually.
- Further, he said that the project is being implemented by Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited, SJVNL on Build-Own-Operate-Maintain basis with active support from the Centre and State Government.
- The project will provide employment to around 2000 persons and will contribute to the overall socio-economic development of the State.

Circular Dome

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan and Shri Prahlad Singh Patel inaugurate the circular dome with 3600 video-immersive experience at Gandhi Darshan, Rajghat.

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan said that Gandhiji's persona was such it continues to inspire the whole humanity even today. Stating that Gandhian philosophy touches all aspects of life, he said, "Mahatma Gandhi always stressed upon sustainable development.
- He highlighted the efforts of the Science & Technology Ministry for developing digital tools to spread the values of Gandhiji. He called upon the youth to imbibe Gandhiji's teachings to make a far better and just society".

Following Four films on the lifetime of Gandhi (both Hindi and English versions) were combined and an entire film was produced.

Mohan to Mahatma,
The Last Phase,
Freedom from Fear, and
Gandhi Forever

Content from Gandhi archives like photos, videos, audio interviews were processed into digital formats and used wherever possible. The 3600 dome project has been implemented by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi.

As per PIB themes on display are:

- (i) Mahatma Gandhi's Vision, his life & Transformation to becoming 'Mahatma';
- (ii) The Freedom Movement led by Gandhi, chronicles of his travels, Satyagraha and his thoughts;
- (iii) Associates of Gandhi, people who inspired Gandhi and those following his footsteps;
- (iv) Contemporary Relevance of Gandhi, his influence in the modern world;
- (v) The Final Journey, Tributes to Gandhi and
- (vi) Series of 'Vaishnav Jan' videos by Ministry of External Affairs celebrating 150 years of Mahatma.

Right to recall Panchayat Member

- Haryana clears Bill on right to recall panchayat member. That is the Haryana Panchayati Raj (Second Amendment) Bill, 2020 passed in the state Assembly.
- The purpose of the amendment is to increase their accountability to the voters.

Key Points:

- The Bill provides the right to recall members of Panchayati Raj institutions to those who elected them.
- It also gives women a 50% reservation in these rural bodies.
- The Bill provides reservation of 8% to the "more disadvantaged" among the Backward Classes.

- It also allows recalling village sarpanches and members of the block-level Panchayat Samitis and district-level Zila Parishad if they fail to perform.
- The procedure to recall a sarpanch and members of the two bodies: 50% members of a ward or gram sabha have to give in writing that they want to initiate proceedings.
- It's followed by a secret ballot, during which their recall would require two-third members voting against them.

Ro-Pax terminal at Hazira

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Ro-Pax terminal at Hazira and flagged off the Ro-Pax ferry service between Hazira and Ghogha in Gujarat.
- He renamed the Ministry of Shipping as the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.
- With this business will be boosted and connectivity will become faster.
- RO-PAX service between Hazira and Ghogha shortened the journey from 10-12 hours to 3 to 4 hours. It will save time and expenses will also be reduced.
- 80000 passenger trains and 30000 trucks will be able to take advantage of this new service in a year.
- Better connectivity between Saurashtra and Surat will be going to change the life of the people in these regions.

AIM-Sirius Innovation Programme 3.0

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Sirius, Russia launched 'AIM-Sirius Innovation Programme 3.0'.
- It is a 14-day virtual programme for Indian and Russian school children.
- The first Indo-Russian bilateral youth innovation initiative, the AIM-Sirius programme aims to develop technological solutions consisting both web- and mobile-based for the two countries.
- It is a 2-week programme that is from 7-21 November 2020.
- Within the programme 48 students and 16 educators and mentors will create 8 virtual products and mobile applications addressing global challenges across a variety of areas including culture, distance education, applied cognitive science, health and well-being, sports, fitness, and games training, chemistry, artificial intelligence, and digital financial assets within the wake of the covid-19 pandemic.

Kamala Harris

- Prime Minister, Narendra Modi congratulated Kamala Harris to be elected as US Vice President.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said "Heartiest congratulations Kamala Harris! Your success is pathbreaking, and a matter of immense pride not just for your chittis, but also for all Indian-Americans. I am confident that the vibrant India-US ties will get even stronger with your support and leadership".

Joe Biden

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Joe Biden on winning the U.S. presidential election.
- He said "Congratulations Joe Biden on your spectacular victory! As the VP, your contribution to strengthening Indo-US relations was critical and invaluable. I look forward to working closely together once again to take India-US relations to greater heights".

8th round of India-China Corps Commander Level Meeting

- On 6 November 2020, the 8th round of India-China Corps Commander Level Meeting was held in Chushul.
- The 2 sides had a candid, in-depth and constructive exchange of views on disengagement along the Line of Actual Control in the Western Sector of India-China border areas.
- Each side agreed to earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the 2 countries, ensure their frontline troops to exercise restraint and avoid misunderstanding and miscalculation.
- Each side agreed to maintain dialogue and communication through military and diplomatic channels, and, taking forward the discussions at this meeting, push for the settlement of other outstanding issues, so as to jointly maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

Various development projects in Varanasi

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate and lay the foundation stone of various development projects in Varanasi on 9th November at 10:30 AM through video conferencing.
- The entire cost for the implication of these projects is Rs. 614 crores.



- The projects to be inaugurated are Sarnath Light and Sound show, upgradation of Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital Ramnagar, sewerage related works, infrastructure facilities for protection and conservation of cows, multipurpose seed storehouse, agriculture produce warehouse of 100 MT, IPDS phase 2, a housing complex for players in Sampurnanand Stadium, Varanasi city smart lighting work, alongside 105 Anganwadi Kendras and 102 Gau Ashray Kendras.
- He will also lay the foundation stone for projects including the redevelopment of Dashashwamedh Ghat and Khidkiya Ghat, barracks for PAC police force, redevelopment of certain wards of Kashi, parking facility along with redevelopment of park in Beniya Bagh, up-gradation of the multi-purpose hall in Girija Devi Sanskritik Sankul, repair work of roads in the city and development of tourist places.

Office-cum-Residential Complex

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the state-of-the-art office-cum-residential complex of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) at Cuttack on 11th November, 2020.
- During the event, Union Law Minister, Union Petroleum Minister, Chief Minister of Odisha, Chief Justice and Judges of Orissa High Court, along with other dignitaries would also be present.
- On this occasion, an e-Coffee Table Book on ITAT will also be released.

About ITAT

- Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, also known as ITAT, is an important statutory body in the field of direct taxes and its orders are accepted as final, on findings of fact.
- It is presently headed by Mr. Justice (Retd) P.P. Bhatt, formerly Judge of the High Court of Jharkhand and High Court of Gujarat.
- ITAT was the first Tribunal to be created on 25th January, 1941 and is also known as 'Mother Tribunal'.
- It was started with three benches in 1941, at Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta and it has now grown to 63 Benches and two circuit benches spread across thirty cities of India.
- The Cuttack Bench of the ITAT was created and started functioning from 23rd May, 1970.

1st BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting

- Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs Nirmala Sitharaman participated in the 1st BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting under the BRICS Russian Chairmanship.
- The agenda of the meeting included discussions on the outcomes of G20 Saudi Presidency in 2020, a digital platform to encourage infrastructure investments and expansion of the membership of the New Development Bank.
- G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative ensured immediate support to address the liquidity needs of low-income countries.
- BRICS members have played an important role in ensuring that concerns of emerging economies are appropriately reflected in these initiatives.
- The BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors also discussed expansion of the membership of the New Development Bank (NDB).

Four Years of Demonetisation

- Four year anniversary of demonetisation was marked on 8 November, 2020. It was when Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes were withdrawn from the system in 2016.
- Demonetisation is the act of stripping a currency unit of its status as legal tender.

Petition for Declaring ESA Unconstitutional

- A Kerala-based NGO for farmers has moved the Supreme Court (SC) to declare the draft notification on the Western Ghats Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) unconstitutional.
- It was not to implement the Madhav Gadgil and Kasturirangan committees' reports on the conservation of the Western Ghats.
- In the draft notification, 123 agricultural villages in Kerala was declared as ESA converting the semi-urban villages in the region into forests with no facilities and roads. It will affect 22 lakh people and cripple the economy of Kerala.
- It also suggested that ESA in Kerala should be restricted to reserved forests and protected areas.

NIPER-Hyd

- National Institute of Pharmaceutical Education and Research, Hyderabad celebrated its 14th Foundation Day in a befitting manner on 10 November, 2020.



- On this occasion, Shri V. K. Saraswat, Padma Bhushan, Member, NITI Aayog, Chancellor, JNU & Former DG, DRDO attended as the chief guest.
- Dr. Renu Swarup, Secretary, DBT, Chairperson, BIRAC, was the guest of honour and delivered the message on this occasion.
- NIPER-Hyd has secured 5th position in 'Pharmacy' category under the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2020.
- The institute has cemented itself as a centre of excellence for advanced studies and learning in pharmaceutical sciences globally.
- The institute is introducing Medical Devices (M.Tech) as course and it contains topics related to biology, chemistry, mathematics, clinical science and engineering which are essential for developing Medical Devices.
- On this occasion, Institute's Annual Report 2019-20 was released by the chief guest.

National Education Day

- Union Minister of Education Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' virtually inaugurated the National Education Day (Rashtriya Shiksha Diwas) programme as the Chief Guest.
- The programme was organised by Indian Institute of Technology Bombay to commemorate the birth anniversary of India's First Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.
- The birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad on 11 November is celebrated as the National Education Day.
- Dr. K. Kasturirangan, Former Chairman, ISRO and Chairman of the committee for drafting the New Education Policy was the Guest of Honor for the occasion.
- Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' highlighted that IIT Bombay is a leading global technological institution that provides transformative education to create leaders and innovators, and generates new knowledge for society and industry.
- The Director Prof. Subhasis Chaudhuri gave away the IIT Bombay Research Excellence Awards 2019.

Office-Cum-Residential Complex of Cuttack Bench

- Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, will inaugurate a state-of-the-art office-cum-residential complex of Income Tax Appellate Tribunal at Cuttack on 11th November, 2020.

- Justice P. P. Bhatt said that the ITAT Cuttack has been functioning from rented premises since 1970 for almost 50 years and has jurisdiction for appeals arising from the State of Odisha.
- So, the inauguration of this Complex will help Cuttack Bench of ITAT in imparting justice to the needy.
- The Cuttack Bench of the ITAT was created and started functioning from 23rd May, 1970.
- The jurisdiction of Cuttack Bench extends to the whole of Odisha.
- The newly-built office-cum-residential complex of ITAT, Cuttack is spread over an area of 1.60 acres of land allotted by the State Government of Odisha free of cost in the year 2015.
- On this occasion, an e-Coffee Table Book on ITAT along with an e-Book on 'Reforms in Direct Taxes since 2014', will also be released.

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- It is presently headed by Mr. Justice (Retd) P.P. Bhatt, formerly Judge of the High Court of Jharkhand and High Court of Gujarat.
- ITAT was the first Tribunal to be created on 25th January, 1941. It is also known as 'Mother Tribunal'.
- Starting with three benches in the year 1941, at Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta it has grown to 63 Benches and two circuit benches spread across thirty cities of India.
- The motto of ITAT is "Nispaksh Sulabh Satvar Nyay", which means impartial, easy and speedy justice. In its glorious 79 years of existence, ITAT has rendered yeoman service in imparting justice to the litigants, in an inexpensive and expeditious manner free from all technicalities.

National Agricultural Education Policy

- The formulating process of the National Agricultural Education Policy was started about two months ago, after the release of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- The first National Agricultural Education Policy is set to bring academic credit banks and degree programmes with multiple entry and exit options to the 74 universities focussed on crop sciences, fisheries, veterinary and dairy training and research.



- Agricultural Education Policy to be Aligned with NEP 2020
- Academic Credit Banks may be a service provider available to a desirable student community. It may facilitate the integration of the campuses and distributed learning systems, by creating student mobility within the inter and intra university system

Doubling of Railway track

- An online press conference was conducted by the South Western Railway between Castlerock and Vasco Da Gama.
- As per Railway, proposed doubling of the track is in the interest of the public. No new area is being taken for laying Railway line.
- It will not have any additional impact on the environment.
- Maximum care will be taken during the construction of the line. Environment impact assessment study got done by the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru.
- Tree cutting requirement is very less and will be reduced further. Foot survey will be done for finalizing alignment.
- Ministry of Railways has sanctioned a project of doubling of Railway track between Hospet (Karnataka) and Vasco-da-Gama (Goa) (342 km) in the year 2010-11 at a cost of Rs.2127Cr.
- The project has since been nearly completed in the state of Karnataka except for 10 Km between Unkal and Hubballi, which is targeted for commissioning by Mar.2021.
- About 7 km track between Madgoan- Majorda in the state of Goa has also been doubled. The remaining stretch of about 90 Km is in the State of Goa, where works are awarded for doubling and are being taken up after ensuring necessary clearances.
- Double line rail connectivity be provided for improving mobility and all-weather rail links in the region. The following advantages have been elaborated.

More number of passenger trains,
Better intrastate connectivity
Boost to trade and commerce among adjoining states
Increased tourist inflow
Augmenting infrastructure at intermediate stations
Relaxing bottlenecks of ghat section operation
Improving passenger amenities at stations
Remodelling yards to deal 24 coaches

International Financial Services Centres Authority (Banking) Regulations, 2020

- IFSC Authority approves the International Financial Services Centres Authority (Banking) Regulations, 2020.
- The Authority approved the draft banking regulations which paves the way for putting in place the rules for the various aspects of banking operations that would be permissible at the IFSC.

As per mentioned in PIB, the salient aspects of the Banking Regulations are:

- Laying down the requirements for setting up IFSC Banking Units (IBUs)
- Permitting persons resident outside India (having net worth not less than USD 1 Million) to open foreign currency accounts in any freely convertible currency at IFSC Banking Units (IBUs)
- Permitting persons resident in India (having net worth not less than USD 1 Million) to open foreign currency accounts in any freely convertible currency at IFSC Banking Units (IBUs) to undertake any permissible current account or capital account transaction or any combination thereof under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) of the Reserve Bank of India.
- Laying down the permissible activities of IBUs including credit enhancement, credit insurance, and sale, purchase of portfolios, engage in factoring and undertake equipment leasing, including aircraft leasing
- Permitting the Authority to determine a business that a Banking Unit may be permitted to conduct in INR with persons resident in India and persons resident outside India, subject to settlement of the financial transaction in relation to such business in freely convertible foreign currency.

National Seminar on Ancient Indian Education system

- Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' inaugurated a two-day National Seminar on Ancient Indian Education system organised by NITTTTR, Kolkata.
- The programme was organised on the occasion of Maulana Azad's birth anniversary, celebrated as National Education Day.
- Vice-Chairman of UGC, Shri Bhushan Patwardhan, Director NITTTTR, Kolkata, Prof. Debi Prasad Mishra, Chairman BOG, NITTTTR, Kolkata, Shri Harshavardhan Neotia were also present on the occasion.



- Shri Patwardhan highlighted the importance of the seminar calling it the need of the hour. He also mentioned about the major initiatives being taken by the UGC to improve the quality of higher education in the country.

Army to begin recruitment rally

- Army recruitment rally under Unit Headquarters Quota will be held at AOC Centre, Secunderabad from 18 January 2021 to 28 February 2021 for enrolment of Soldier Tech (AE), Soldier General Duty, Soldier Tradesmen, Outstanding Sportsmen (Open Category).
- For sports trial, outstanding Sportsmen (Open Category) are required to report at Thapar Stadium, AOC Centre Secunderabad on 15 January 2021.
- Outstanding sportsmen who have represented in the field of Boxing, Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Handball, Hockey, Swimming, Wrestling, Athletics and Kabbadi can participate along with their certificates of National or International competitions either at a senior or junior level.
- The certificate should not be more than two years old on the date of screening.
- The qualifying age bracket for the Soldier GD category is 17 ½ to 21 Yrs. The qualifying age bracket for Soldier Tech (AT), Sol Clk/SKT & Sol Tdn categories is 17 ½ to 23 Yrs.

UMANG International

- An international version of the government's UMANG app has been launched by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, in coordination with the Ministry of External Affairs.
- The international version of UMANG app is known as 'UMANG International'. It was launched to mark three years of UMANG (UMANG App was launched in 2017).
- The international version is for selected countries namely USA, UK, Canada, Australia, UAE, Netherlands, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand.
- It will help Indian international students, NRIs and Indian tourists abroad, to avail Government of India services, anytime.
- It will also help in taking India to the world through 'Indian Culture services available on UMANG. It also creates interest amongst foreign tourists to visit India.

Centennial Foundation Day of University of Lucknow

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the celebration of Centennial Foundation Day of the University of Lucknow.
- The Prime Minister unveiled the University's Centennial Commemorative Coin on the occasion. He also released a special Commemorative Postal Stamp issued by India Post and its Special Cover during the event.
- The Union Defence Minister and Member of Parliament from Lucknow, Shri Rajnath Singh and Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Shri Yogi Adityanath were present on the occasion.
- Management, branding and strategy to make the products like Lucknow 'Chikankari', brass wares of Moradabad, locks of Aligarh, Bhadohi Carpets globally competitive should be the part of courses offered at the university.
- The Prime minister also called for continued engagement with subjects of arts, culture and spirituality to provide them a global reach.

71st Constitution Day

- To commemorate the 71st Constitution Day (26 November, 2020) Films Division is screening four documentary films on the adoption of Constitution of India by the Union of India on 26th November, 1949, it's salient features and on Dr BR Ambedkar, Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, on FD website and YouTube Channel.
- The films being streamed are

Our Constitution which depicts the various clauses of India's Constitution,
We The People of India that traces framing of the Constitution,
The Preamble, an animation on the Preamble to the Constitution of India, and
Babasaheb Ambedkar, a biographical film on Dr BR Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Constitution of India.

33rd PRAGATI interaction

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi chaired the PRAGATI meeting on 25 November, 2020.
- It marked Prime Minister's thirty-third interaction through PRAGATI – the ICT based multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation, involving Central and State governments.

- In PRAGATI meeting, multiple projects, grievances and programmes were reviewed. The projects taken up were of the Ministry of Railways, MORTH, DPIIT and Power Ministry.
- These projects, with a total cost of Rs 1.41 lakh crore, were related to ten states and union territories, including Odisha, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. - Prime Minister asked the concerned Secretaries of the Union Government and Chief Secretaries of the State Governments to ensure that they complete the work before time.
- During the meeting, grievances related to COVID-19 and to the PM Awas Yojana (Gramin) were taken up. PM SVANidhi, agriculture reforms and development of districts as export hubs were reviewed. Prime Minister also asked the States to develop a State Export Strategy.
- In the previous 32 such meetings, a total of 275 projects worth Rs 12.5 lakh crore have been reviewed, along with 47 programmes/schemes and grievances across 17 sectors have been taken up.

All Fixed to Mobile calls

- All Fixed to Mobile calls to be dialled with prefix '0' from 15th January, 2021. This is to free up sufficient numbering resources for future use.
- With the consideration of TRAI Recommendation on "Ensuring Adequate Numbering Resources for Fixed Line and Mobile Services" Department of Telecommunications has taken the decision of implementing the following:
- All Fixed to Mobile calls will be dialed with prefix '0' from 15th January, 2021.
- There will be no change in dialling plan from fixed to fixed, mobile to fixed and mobile to mobile calls.
- Suitable announcement will be made for the same. This announcement shall be played whenever a subscriber dials a fixed to mobile call without prefixing '0'.
- All fixed-line subscribers will be provided with '0' dialling facility.
- A total of approximately 2539 million numbering series is expected to be generated from the above. This will free up sufficient numbering resources for future use.
- With the freeing up of sufficient numbering resources, more number of connections can be added in future which will be beneficial to the mobile customers at large.

- The above changes have been done in order to have minimum inconvenience to the subscribers and freeing up essential numbering resources.

e-Event organized by the National Medicinal Plant Board

- Shripad Yesso Naik, Minister of State (IC), for AYUSH chaired an e-event organized by the National Medicinal Plant Board (NMPB) on 24th November, 2020 to celebrate its Establishment Day.
- On this occasion, a "Status Report of NMPB 2020" and "Ayur-veg" e-book were also released.
- The AYUSH Minister, Secretary (AYUSH) Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha and other members of the Board complemented NMPB for its progress, achievements and contribution made for growth and development of medicinal plants sector in the country.
- NMPB's main objective is the development of medicinal plants sector through developing strong coordination between the stakeholders i.e., farmers, traders, and manufacturers benefiting each of them. The endeavour would increase the income and livelihood of the farmers and tribes.
- It would facilitate backward integration with the industry/ manufacturers through post-harvest management. Introduction of new IT tools and market linking activities further help the farmers as well as the industry.
- It was 24th November 2000, that the then Department of AYUSH joined hands with the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, Department of Biotechnology and Department of Agricultural Research and Education to form the National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB).
- The Board, today, is an integral unit of the Ministry of AYUSH with the aforesaid Ministries and Departments offering consultations and support, and it exercises oversight on medicinal plants sector.

Aatma Nirbhar Bharat 3.0 Stimulus

- Union Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman has announced 12 key measures, as part of Government of India's stimulus to the economy, under Aatma Nirbhar Bharat 3.0.
- The net stimulus announced amounts to ₹ 2.65 Lakh crore.



- She told that the total stimulus announced by the Government and Reserve Bank of India till date, to help the nation tide over the COVID-19 pandemic, works out to ₹ 29.87 lakh crore, which is 15% of national GDP. Out of this, a stimulus worth 9% of GDP has been provided by the government.

Statue of Swami Vivekananda

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled a statue of Swami Vivekananda in JNU Campus, New Delhi through video conferencing.
- While addressing the JNU students and the youth of the country, PM expressed his views on the harms of prioritizing ideology over national interest.
- Prime Minister Modi stressed that in this solidarity, no one had to compromise on ideology. There was only one purpose – national interest.

Orix Wind SPVs

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) approves the acquisition of (i) Orix Wind SPVs by Greenko Energy Holdings (GEH) from Orix Corporation (Orix) and (ii) equity stake in GEH by Orix under Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002.
- GEH is the holding company of the Greenko group of companies. The principal business activity of Indian subsidiaries of GEH is owning, developing, constructing and maintaining power generation projects.

About Orix

- Orix is the holding company of the Orix group of companies.
- It offers a wide variety of services like corporate financial services (financing, leasing, and solutions for small and medium-size enterprises), maintenance leasing (automobile leasing, rental and car-sharing and IT-related equipment rentals and leasing), real estate, private equity investments, life insurance, banking and credit, asset management, environment and energy services (including power generation).

Competition Commission of India (CCI)

- CCI approves transfer of 100% shareholding of Sinochem Group Company Limited (Sinochem) and China National Chemical Corporation Limited (ChemChina) to a new company wholly owned by China State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration (Central SASAC) under Section 31(1) of the Competition Act, 2002.

- Sinochem is engaged in a wide variety of businesses globally and is headquartered in China.
- In India, Sinochem is directly or indirectly, primarily engaged in the following businesses:
 - 1 Sale of Crude Oil
 - Sale of Natural Rubber and Rubber antioxidants
 - Sale of a variety of chemicals including agrochemicals like sale of insecticides, herbicides, fungicide, etc.
 - Sale of pharma and health products.
- ChemChina is engaged in a wide variety of businesses globally and is headquartered in China.
- In India, ChemChina is mainly engaged in the following businesses:
 - Sale of chemical products (including methionine, carbon and silicon products)
 - Sale of passenger car tires, bus and truck tires
 - Sale of chemical equipment and
 - Sale of solar PV modules.

147th session of the WHO Executive Board

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare digitally chaired the 147th session of WHO Executive Board, through Video Conference.
- According to him “we must engender in our health workforces a desire to make a real difference in the post-COVID world.” Further, he stated that “we need to make difficult choices and drive some radical changes within.”

Nitish Kumar

- The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has congratulated Shri Nitish Kumar on taking oath as Chief Minister of Bihar.
- Prime Minister said, “Congratulations to Nitish Kumar Ji on taking oath as Bihar’s CM. I also congratulate all those who took oath as Ministers in the Bihar Government. The NDA family will work together for the progress of Bihar. I assure all possible support from the Centre for the welfare of Bihar.”

TRIFED expands

- TRIFED expands Tribes India product range.
- Tribes India has taken up a new initiative to include more new products, this time those produced by the inmates of Central Jail of Jagdalpur among others.

- Pravir Krishna, Managing Director, TRIFED said, “Tribes India is continuing in its mission to transform tribal lives and improve their livelihoods. Our association with the Central Jail in Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh is yet another initiative to provide the tribals a bigger market for their handicrafts and produce and help them become self-reliant and build an Atmanirbhar Bharat.”
- Among the products launched include beautifully crafted moorthis and some Ketki baskets from the tribal inmates of Jagdalpur Jail in Chhattisgarh. These attractive moorthis of Ganesha, Lakshmi, Durga will not only make for gifting items but will also help make the tribal jail inmates self-reliant.
- It has been decided that Trifed will now partner with the Central Jail of Jagdalpur so that the sourcing of the handicrafts from the jail inmates can become a regular process, and Tribes India can help take these attractive handiwork to the rest of the world.

DIPAM signs an agreement

- Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) has signed an agreement with World Bank on 16 Nov 2020.
- Under the agreement, the World Bank is to provide advisory services to DIPAM for asset monetization.
- DIPAM is mandated with facilitating monetization of non-core assets of government CPSEs under strategic disinvestment or closure and enemy property of the value of INR 100 crores and above.
- DIPAM has a framework for monetizing non-core assets.
- The World Bank advisory project, approved by the Finance Minister, is aimed at analyzing public asset monetization in India and benchmarking its institutional and business models against international best practices as well as supporting the development of operational guidelines and capacity building for their implementation.



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Master Bhanwarlal Meghwal

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed deep grief over the demise of Rajasthan Cabinet Minister Master Bhanwarlal Meghwal.
- In a tweet, Narendra Modi said “Saddened by the demise of Rajasthan Cabinet Minister, Master Bhanwarlal Meghwal Ji. He was a veteran leader who was passionate about serving Rajasthan. In this hour of sadness, my condolences to his family and supporters”.

Statue of Peace

- The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, unveiled ‘Statue of Peace’ to mark the 151st Birth Anniversary celebrations of Jainacharya Shree Vijay Vallabh Surishwer Ji Maharaj.
- The Statue unveiled in the honour of the Jain acharya, has been named as ‘Statue of Peace’.
- The 151-inch tall statue has been made from Ashtadhatu i.e. 8 metals, with Copper being the major constituent, and is installed at Vijay Vallabh Sadhana Kendra, Jetpura, in Pali, Rajasthan.

RCEP Agreement

- The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) has come into existence recently on the sidelines of the 37th ASEAN Summit.
- The discussions laid down the path for restarting the discussion that had failed to admit India earlier and said “new” developments would be taken into consideration if India re-applies.

About RCEP

- It consists of 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members, as well as South Korea, China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.
- It excludes the USA, which withdrew from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in 2017.
- In 2012, negotiations over the RCEP deal began. India was also part of the negotiations but it opted out in 2019. The main concern was that the lower tariffs could hurt local producers.

Bengaluru Tech Summit, 2020

- On 19th November, Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will inaugurate Bengaluru Tech Summit, 2020. This Summit is scheduled from 19th to 21st November, 2020.

- The summit is organised by the Government of Karnataka along with Karnataka Innovation and Technology Society (KITS), Karnataka government's Vision Group on Information Technology, Biotechnology & Startup, Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) and MM ActivSci-Tech Communications.
- The Summit will see the participation of Mr. Scott Morrison, Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. Guy Parmelin, Vice President of the Swiss Confederation and many other prominent international figures.
- This year, the theme of the summit is "Next is Now".

The 3rd Annual Bloomberg New Economy Forum

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi delivered an address at the 3rd Annual Bloomberg New Economy Forum that took place in New Delhi on 17th November 2020.
- The Forum was established in 2018 by Mr. Michael Bloomberg with the aims to build a community of leaders to engage in real conversations leading to actionable solutions about the critical challenges facing a world economy in the throes of a historic transition.
- The inaugural Forum was held in Singapore, and the second annual Forum was hosted in Beijing. These covered a range of topics, including global economic management, trade and investment, technology, urbanization, capital markets, climate change, and inclusion.

Lilavati Award-2020

- Union Minister of Education Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank virtually launched Lilavati Award-2020. It is AICTE's Innovative education program to empower women.
- With women empowerment as the theme, the objective of the award is to create awareness about issues like sanitation, hygiene, health, nutrition, literacy, employment, technology, credit, marketing, innovation, skill development, natural resources and rights among women.
- These initiatives will inspire the girl students and women to participate and excel.
- The Minister informed that the award covers multidisciplinary areas such as women's health, self-defense, sanitation, literacy, entrepreneurship and legal awareness. He said that the program will ensure the participation of women and enable them to hold higher positions in educational institutions.

Option-1 to meet the GST implementation shortfall

- Telangana decides to go for Option-1 to meet the GST implementation shortfall. The State has now joined 22 other States and 3 Union Territories (Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir and Puducherry) who have opted for Option-1.
- The States who choose Option-1 is getting the amount of shortfall arising out of GST implementation through a special borrowing window put in place by the Government of India.
- The window has been operationalised now and the Government of India already borrowed an amount of Rs.18,000 crore on behalf of the States in three instalments and has passed it on to 22 States and 3 Union Territories on 23rd October, 2020, 2nd November, 2020 and 9th November, 2020.
- Now the Government of Telangana will receive funds raised through this window. The next instalment of borrowings is likely to be released on 23rd November, 2020.
- Under the terms of Option-1, besides getting the facility of a special window for borrowings to meet the shortfall arising out of GST implementation, States are also entitled to get unconditional permission to borrow the final instalment of 0.50% of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) out of the 2% additional borrowings permitted by the Government of India, under Atmnirbhar Abhiyaan on 17th May, 2020. This is over and above the Special Window of Rs.1.1 lakh crores
- On receipt of the choice of Option-1 from the Government of Telangana, the Government of India has today granted the State Government of Telangana additional borrowing permission of Rs.5,017 crore (0.5% of Telangana's GSDP).
- States who have opted for Option-1 are - Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, along with the three Union Territories of Delhi, Jammu & Kashmir and Puducherry.
- The amount of additional borrowing permission granted to these States and the amount of funds raised through a special window and released to the 22 States and 3 UTs so far is annexed.

Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP)

- Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel Shri Dharmendra Pradhan today said that Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP) is a market-friendly policy which is driving self-reliance in the energy sector. He was speaking at the signing of contracts for 11 oil and gas blocks offered under the OALP Bid Round-V.
- OALP Bid Rounds, has led to increasing in exploration acreages in India. The exploration acreage which stood at about 80,000 sq. km. from earlier regimes now stands at approx. 2,37,000 sq. km., post the award of blocks under OALP Round-V.
- Calling it a transformative policy, the Minister said that the OALP has removed red-tapism and brought in a quantum jump in Exploration & Production sector. He called for moving away from business-as-usual approach and strives for exponential growth and speed, asking the winners to bring in new technology and new business models, so as to expedite the production of oil and natural gas from these areas.
- A total of 11 blocks in 8 sedimentary basins covering a total acreage of 19,789.04 sq km has been awarded under OALP Bid Round 5, with Rs. 465 crore of immediate exploration work commitment. ONGC has been awarded 7 blocks where 4 blocks went to Oil India Limited (OIL).

EESL Signs MoU with DNRE Goa

- Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture of PSUs under the Ministry of Power and Department of New & Renewable Energy (DNRE), Goa, have signed a memorandum of understanding today to discuss rolling out of India's first Convergence Project in the State.
- Under the MoU, EESL and DNRE will carry-out the feasibility studies and subsequent implementation of decentralized solar energy projects.
- EESL shall implement the solar energy projects, the establishment of 100 MW of decentralized ground-mounted Solar Power projects on government lands to be used for agricultural pumping, replace approximately 6,300 agricultural pumps with BEE star rated energy efficient pumps and distribute approximately 16 Lakh LED bulbs for rural domestic households.

240th Corps of Engineers Day

- Indian Army celebrated the 240th Corps of Engineers Day on 18 Nov 2020.
- In a solemn ceremony organized at 'National War Memorial', Lt Gen SK Shrivastava, Engineer-in-Chief along with other serving officers, JCOs and other ranks laid wreaths and paid homage to the brave soldiers who sacrificed their lives for the country.
- The Corps of Engineers provides combat engineering support, develops infrastructure for armed forces and other defence organisations and maintains connectivity along our vast borders besides providing succour to the populace during natural disasters.
- These tasks are executed through four pillars of the Corps – Combat Engineers, Military Engineer Service, Border Road Organisation and Military Survey.
- The Corps of Engineers has three groups, i.e. Madras Sappers, Bengal Sappers and Bombay Sappers which were amalgamated into the Corps on 18 Nov 1932. Since its inception, history is replete with colossal exemplary contributions of the Corps of Engineers both in war and peace.

Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises scheme (PM-FME Scheme)

- Shri Narendra Singh inaugurates capacity building component of the PM-FME Scheme and also launched the GIS One District One Product (ODOP) digital map of India.
- Under the capacity building component of the PM-FME scheme, training of the Master Trainers would be delivered through online mode, classroom lecture and demonstration, and self-paced online learning material.

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- NIFTEM and IIFPT are playing a key role by providing training and research support to selected enterprises/groups/clusters in partnership with State Level Technical Institutions.
- The Master Trainers will train the District Level Trainers, who will train the beneficiaries. The current training is based on Fruits and Vegetable processing & EDP.

About the PM-FME Scheme

- It was launched under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.
- The Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro food processing Enterprises (PM-FME) Scheme is a centrally sponsored scheme aims to enhance the competitiveness of existing individual micro-enterprises in the unorganized segment of the food processing industry and promote formalization of the sector and provide support to Farmer Producer Organizations, Self Help Groups, and Producers Cooperatives along their entire value chain.
- With an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore over a period of five years from 2020-21 to 2024-25, the scheme envisions to directly assist the 2,00,000 micro food processing units for providing financial, technical, and business support for up-gradation of existing micro food processing enterprises.

UNESCO Global Geoparks

- The efforts are made by the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) to get recognition of a geopark for Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh). It consists of Erra Matti Dibbalu (red sand dunes), natural rock formations, Borra Caves and volcanic ash deposits.
- There are 161 UNESCO Global geoparks spread across 44 countries, India is yet to have one of its own.
- Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.

India's first convergence project

- To generate green energy for rural and agriculture consumption, India's first convergence project is set to come up in Goa.
- Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL), a joint venture of PSUs under the Ministry of Power, and the Goa government signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the same.

- The Convergence Project of EESL focuses on energy solutions that lie at the confluence of renewable energy, electric mobility and climate change.
- Its objective is to connect seemingly independent sectors including Solar Energy, Energy Storage and LED lights to provide solutions, which can enable in decarbonisation and affordable energy access.

The Republican Ethic

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh released the third volume of the Selected Speeches of President Shri Ram Nath Kovind titled - 'लोकतन्त्र के स्वर' and 'The Republican Ethic' in New Delhi.
- It was held in the presence of the Union Minister for Environment, Forest & Climate Change, Information and Broadcasting and Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, Shri Prakash Javadekar and other dignitaries.
- Speaking on the occasion, Shri Rajnath Singh said that this compilation of speeches of President Shri Ram Nath Kovind presents a comprehensive picture of his work, personality and values.
- The 'लोकतन्त्र के स्वर' and 'The Republican Ethic', published by the Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, are series of books of collection of selected speeches of the President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind in Hindi and English respectively.
- The third volume contains 57 selected speeches of the President delivered during the third year of his presidency.

Land Management System (LMS)

- As part of efforts to improve the overall management of defence land, for the first time, a Land Management System (LMS) has been developed by Department of Defence in conjunction with DGDE and Armed forces.
- The portal was formally launched by Shri Rajnath Singh, Hon'ble Raksha Mantri in presence of officials from Indian Army, DGDE and Department of Defence.
- The Intranet portal shall digitize all requests of defence land management received by the Department in future.
- All data for cases since 2016 have already been captured and are available in the portal. Progressively, data of prior period will also be entered in the portal which is meant only for departmental use and it is not open for the public.

- The portal is expected to bring in greater speed, transparency and efficiency into the Land Management System (LMS) of the Department.
- With the integration of GIS-based tool, it will improve the decision-making process by removing duplication/unnecessary communication between various stakeholder groups involved in the decision-making process.
- The technical support for this GIS-based system has been provided by BISAG, India's premier organization in GIS-based informatics.

Protest Against Bru Resettlement

- Parts of north Tripura have witnessed violent protests recently over the proposed resettlement of Bru tribals.
- About Bru or Reang
- It is a community indigenous to Northeast India. They live mostly in Tripura, Mizoram and Assam. They are recognised in Tripura as a Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group.
- They have been targeted by groups in Mizoram as they do not consider them indigenous to the state.
- Due to ethnic clashes in 1997, about 37,000 Brus fled Mamit, Kolasib and Lunglei districts of Mizoram and were accommodated in relief camps in Tripura.
- Since then, 5,000 have returned to Mizoram in eight phases of repatriation.
- Also, 32,000 still live in six relief camps in North Tripura.
- A quadrilateral agreement was signed by the Centre, the two-state governments and Bru representatives in January 2020 in which they allowed the remaining 32,000 to permanently settle in Tripura.

Speaker of the Lok Sabha

- Vijay Kumar Sinha is Bihar Assembly Speaker.
- Speaker is the chairman or the Presiding Officer of Lok Sabha. Elected from all other members by a simple majority.
- In the Order of Precedence of Government of India, the Speaker of Lok Sabha comes at sixth position.
- Speaker of Lok Sabha is basically the head of the house and presides over the sittings of Parliament and controls its working.
- It is the Speaker who decides the agenda of various discussions.

Essential Services Maintenance Act

- The Essential Services Maintenance Act has been extended by the Uttar Pradesh government in the State further banning strikes in all the departments and corporations under it for a period of another six months.
- The Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) is an act of Parliament of India.
- Its objective was to establish and to ensure the delivery of certain services. If it obstructed would affect the normal life of the people.
- These include services like public transport (bus services), health services (doctors and hospitals).
- ESMA gives police right to arrest without a warrant anybody violating the Act's provisions.

Mega Food Park

- In Punjab, a Megha Food Park is inaugurated.
- About Mega Food Parks scheme
- Mega Food Park Scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries in the country since 2008.
- The aim of the scheme is to provide a mechanism to link agricultural production to the market by bringing together farmers, processors and retailers.
- These food parks will provide a boost to the food processing sector add value and reduce the wastage of food at each stage of the supply chain with a particular focus on perishables.

3rd Naturopathy Day

- 3rd Naturopathy Day is observed on 18 November, 2020 with a theme of "Nurturing Vitality Through Naturopathy".
- It was organized at the Nisargopchar ashram in Urli Kanchan in collaboration with National Institute of Naturopathy in Pune.

As per PIB, the highlights of the programme are as follows:

- Awareness session on Covid -19 and related safety precautions in day to day life.
- Live demonstration of the right techniques of hand washing, wearing masks, steam inhalation, jala neti and preparation of herbal decoctions.
- Practical yoga session on asanas, pranayamas and meditation.
- Session on naturopathy for vitality
- Session on a naturopathic diet to improve immunity and health
- Session on various naturopathy treatments during COVID-19 pandemic
- Distribution of kadha and naturopathic lunch for all the participants.



Ananda- Atmanirbhar Agents

- LIC of India has launched a digital application – ANANDA in the hands of Honourable Chairman Mr. M R Kumar, which will prove to be a game-changer.
- In view of today's difficult and challenging times, LIC has come up with a unique and timely initiative to facilitate the process of proposal completion which is totally paperless and completely digital.
- The process of new business completion has been re-engineered by converting physical formats into digital ones.
- ANANDA will enable an agent to complete a policy even without physically meeting the customer. Important is that the mobile number of the customer should be mapped with his Aadhar.

Meghalaya Integrated Transport Project (MITP)

- The Government of India, the Government of Meghalaya and the World Bank signed a \$120 million project to improve and modernise the transport sector of the state of Meghalaya.
- This will help Meghalaya to harness its vast growth potential for high-value agriculture and tourism.
- The project will improve about 300 km of strategic road segments and stand-alone bridges by using innovative, climate-resilient, and nature-based solutions.
- It will also support innovative solutions such as precast bridges to reduce both time and cost of construction.
- The loan agreement was signed by Dr. C S Mohapatra on behalf of the Government of India and MrHideki Mori, Operations Manager (India), World Bank on behalf of the World Bank.
- This operation will also support the state government's "Restart Meghalaya Mission" to revive and boost development activities affected due to COVID-19 pandemic. It will help restore transport services and generate direct employment of about 8 million person-days.
- The \$120 million loans from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) has a maturity of 14 years including a grace period of 6 years.

Lauch of RuPay card Phase-II

- A Virtual Ceremony for the joint launch of RuPay card Phase-II by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Bhutan Lyonchhen Dr. Lotay Tshering will be held on 20 November 2020.
- The Prime Ministers of India and Bhutan had jointly launched Phase-I of the project during the State Visit of Prime Minister to Bhutan in August 2019.
- The implementation of Phase-I of RuPay cards in Bhutan has enabled visitors from India to access ATMs and Point of Sale (PoS) terminals across Bhutan.
- Phase-II will now allow Bhutanese cardholders to access RuPay network in India.

Virtual court and e-challan project

- The Virtual Court (traffic) and e-Challan project have been recently (12th November, 2020) inaugurated in Assam by Shri SarbanandaSonowal, the chief minister of Assam.
- The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Committee of Gauhati High Court in association with Government of Assam and Assam Police, under the aegis of e-Committee of Supreme Court of India, are spearheading the project in the State.
- Maharashtra's 2nd virtual court called "NyayKaushal" was recently inaugurated on 31st October by Shri Arvind Bobde, the Chief Justice of India and Justice D.Y. Chandrachud of the Supreme Court at Judicial Officers Training Institute in Nagpur.

About E-challan

- E-challan solution is an initiative of the Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) whereas the software has been developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- It will replace the present concept of manual challan with an electronically generated digital challan.

About Virtual court

- It is an initiative of E-Committee of Supreme Court along with the Department of Justice, Ministry of Law & Justice, Government of India. Virtual Court is an online court being managed by Virtual Judge (which is not a person but an algorithm) whose jurisdiction can be extended to the entire state and working hours may be 24X7. There is no brick & mortar building of the court.

- A Virtual Court was inaugurated in Delhi on 26th July 2019 and in Haryana on 17th August 2019 to initially try Traffic Challan cases. Currently, there are 9 Virtual courts functioning in India- Delhi (2 Courts), Haryana (Faridabad), Maharashtra (Pune), Madras, Karnataka (Bengaluru), Maharashtra (Nagpur), Kerala (Kochi) and Assam (Gauhati).
- They are all dealing with Traffic Challan cases only.

Lakshmi Vilas Bank Crisis

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently has decided to impose a 30-day moratorium on Chennai-based Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd (LVB).
- In September 2019, LVB was placed under the prompt corrective action (PCA) framework and considering the breach of PCA thresholds as on 31st March, 2019.
- Certain regulatory trigger points have been specified by the RBI as a part of prompt corrective action (PCA) Framework, in terms of three parameters, i.e. capital to risk-weighted assets ratio (CRAR), net non-performing assets (NPA) and Return on Assets (RoA).
- It is done for the initiation of certain structured and discretionary actions in respect of banks hitting such trigger points.

Supercomputer Param Siddhi

- Param Siddhi, India's Artificial Intelligence (AI) supercomputer ranked 63rd among top 500 most powerful non-distributed computer systems in the world.
- Distributed computing is a field of computer science that studies distributed systems.

About Distributed System

- It is a system whose components are located on different networked computers, which communicate and coordinate their actions by passing messages to one another. In order to achieve a common goal, the components interact with one another.

About Non-Distributed or Co-Located system

In this, all the parts of the system are in the same physical location. In a distributed system, parts of the system exist in separate locations.

About Param Siddhi

- It is a High-Performance Computing-Artificial Intelligence (HPC-AI) supercomputer.
- It is developed by the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) under National Supercomputing Mission (NSM) at Centre for Development of Advanced Computing.
- The supercomputer has Rpeak of 5.267 Petaflops and 4.6 Petaflops Rmax.

Rajasthan government launches maternity benefit scheme for the second child

- A maternity benefit scheme has been launched by the Rajasthan Government for four districts under which mothers will get ₹6,000 for the second child. This Scheme will be called Indira Gandhi Matritva Poshan Yojana. This will supplement the Centre's Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) under which mothers get ₹5,000 for their first child.
- The four districts where the scheme is being implemented are; Udaipur, Pratapgarh, Banswara and Dungarpur on a pilot basis for five years.
- Reason behind choosing these four districts are nutrition indicators among children and anaemia levels among mothers are worse than the average for the State.

COVID-19 RT-PCR Lab

- The Union Home Minister, Amit Shah today inaugurated a mobile COVID-19 RT-PCR Lab at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in New Delhi, jointly launched by SpiceHealth and the ICMR.
- The Union Health and Family Welfare Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan also participated in the inauguration function.
- The Secretary DHR and Director General of the ICMR, Dr. Balram Bhargava, the Chairman and Managing Director of SpiceJet, Shri Ajay Singh and the CEO of SpiceHealth, Ms. Avani Singh also took part in the inauguration ceremony.
- This testing lab and more such labs which are planned to be set up, shall help in adding more capacity to COVID-19 testing. The lab is accredited by NABL and approved by the ICMR.
- RT-PCR tests are the most decisive and crucial for COVID-19 testing. These tests will cost Rs. 499/- and the cost of testing will be borne by the ICMR.



- The people of Delhi will not have to bear any cost. This initiative is a step in making COVID-19 testing affordable and more accessible to the common person.
- The test report would be available within 6 to 8 hours from the time of sample collection compared to the average 24 to 48 hours taken by similar test reports.
- SpiceHealth has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the ICMR for setting up testing facilities (laboratories) and collection centres across the country. To begin with, the first testing facility has been set up in Delhi.

'Martyrdom Day' of Guru Teg Bahadur

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind in his message on the eve of 'Martyrdom Day' of Guru Teg Bahadur on 23 November, 2020 has said:-
- "On the sacred occasion of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji's Martyrdom Day, I pay him my humble tribute."
- The ninth Guru of the Sikh community, Shri Teg Bahadur Ji, made supreme sacrifice to protect the faith, belief and rights of the people. Therefore, the fellow citizens call him 'Hind di Chaadar' with love and respect.
- Guru Teg Bahadur's teachings and his work will continue to spread the spirit of love and patriotism among all of us.
- Aviation Safety Awareness Week 2020
- Airports Authority of India (AAI) commenced Aviation Safety Awareness Week 2020 from 23rd November to 27th November 2020.
- The week-long celebration is being observed at all airports and ANS locations managed by AAI across India.
- Shri Arvind Singh, Chairman, AAI, requested all Regional Executive Directors & Airport Directors to be proactive and to devote time personally for monitoring the safety performance of their respective region/station.
- To raise awareness on Aviation Safety, AAI will undertake various employee engagement programs at the airports and ANS stations like reviewing documents and facilities, Mock exercises, preventive maintenance etc.

- Various social campaigns too will be rolled out to raise awareness on the issue. Banners and posters are being displayed across AAI offices and operational centres to educate both external and internal stakeholders on the significance of the Safety Awareness Week.
- Shri Maneesh Kumar DDG, DGCA has emphasized to achieve long term objective of Zero fatality by the year 2030 as envisaged by ICAO in its Global Aviation Safety Plan (GASP-2020-22) through better managed safety systems of stakeholders.

Aviation Safety Awareness Week 2020

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National Crisis Management Committee Meeting

- Union Cabinet Secretary, Shri Rajiv Gauba chaired a meeting of the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC) to review the status of impending Cyclone through video conferencing with the Chief Secretaries of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

- The Chief Secretaries of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry briefed the NCMC about their preparedness and mentioned that the authorities are fully prepared to meet any eventuality.
- They also informed about the coordination with the NDRF and other agencies to meet this challenge.
- DG, India Meteorological Department made a presentation on the present situation and mentioned that the status is being shared with the concerned State Governments. He mentioned that the impending Cyclone is going to affect coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry between 24th to 26th November, 2020.

ATAL Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs)

- Union Education Minister, Shri Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' inaugurated 46 online AICTE Training and Learning (ATAL) Academy Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs) to train teachers of higher education institutions associated with All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) in thrust and emerging areas in technology.
- The FDPs will be conducted in 22 Indian states.
- On the occasion, the Shri Pokhriyal said that it is a matter of pride for the ATAL Academy to be included in the Book of World Records. He informed that the London-based organization has recognized the FDPs as a world record, under which 1,000 online FDPs in over 100 emerging areas will benefit one lakh faculty members across premier institutions like IITs, NITs, and IIITs.

National Commission for Minorities (NCM)

- It has been highlighted, recently that the seven-member National Commission for Minorities (NCM) has only one member left after the retirement of its vice-chairperson while the other 5 posts have been vacant since May 2020.
- Due to Covid-19 pandemic, the Ministry for Minority Affairs clarified that the process is underway and there has been a delay in filling the vacancies.
- However, it is not the first time that vacancies have not been filled in the NCM. All seven posts remained empty for over two months in 2017.
- In 2004, the standing committee on social justice and empowerment was headed by Sumitra Mahajan. The committee made specific recommendations to strengthen the NCM, highlighting its insufficient investigative powers.

- However, these recommendations were never implemented by the then government. The reports tabled by the NCM are hardly taken up or debated irrespective of the government in power.
- The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) Act, 1992 Section 13 mandates that the annual report, together with the memorandum of action taken on the recommendations contained therein, as well as the reasons for non-acceptance of the recommendations, if any, be tabled before Parliament annually. Since 2010, these reports have not been tabled in Parliament.

Innovative Technology infusion for better implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission

- A multi-disciplinary Technical Committee in the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Ministry of Jal Shakti has recommended five technologies specifically three technologies for drinking water and two technologies for sanitation as innovative technologies out of the ten technologies considered by it and these technologies would now be listed in the innovation portal of the Department.
- The Five technologies that have been recommended are:
 - i) Grundfos AQPure, a solar energy-based water treatment plant based on ultrafiltration
 - ii) Janajal Water on Wheel, an IoT based electric vehicle based on GPS location to enable the delivery of safe water to the doorstep of households
 - iii) Presto Online Chlorinator, a non-electricity dependent online chlorinator for disinfection of water for removal of bacterial contamination
 - iv) Johkasou technology – an inbuilt packaged black (sewage) and greywater (Kitchen and bath water) treatment system having an advanced anaerobic-aerobic configuration that can be installed underground
 - v) FBTEc, a site assembled decentralised sewage treatment system using fixed filter media. The Committee has requested the other five applicants to carry out accreditation process/ pilots/ share field data before they can be reconsidered.

Khadi Exhibition in Varanasi

- KVIC Inaugurates Khadi Exhibition in Varanasi.
- A range of exquisite Khadi products including the premium High Altitude Honey from Jammu & Kashmir, handcrafted silk, cotton and woollen clothes and herbal medicines have been put to display at the state level Khadi Exhibition in Varanasi organized by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC).
- The exhibition was inaugurated today by KVIC Chairman Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena.
- Hundreds of empowered Khadi artisans from 8 States namely Uttar Pradesh, J&K, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Punjab have set up 90 stalls in the exhibition. It is the second such event which is organized by KVIC since the Covid-19 lockdown.
- The exhibition will continue for 15 days, i.e. from November 22 to December 7. In October this year, the first Khadi exhibition after the lockdown was organized in Lucknow.

Rural drinking water supply projects

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, laid the foundation stone of rural drinking water supply projects in Mirzapur and Sonbhadra districts of Vindhyachal region of Uttar Pradesh.
- It will provide household tap water connections in all rural households of 2,995 villages and will benefit about 42 lakh population of these districts.
- Village Water and Sanitation Committees/ Paani Samiti have been constituted in all these villages, who will shoulder the responsibility of operation and maintenance.
- The total estimated cost of the projects is Rs 5,555.38 Crore. The projects are planned to be completed in 24 months.

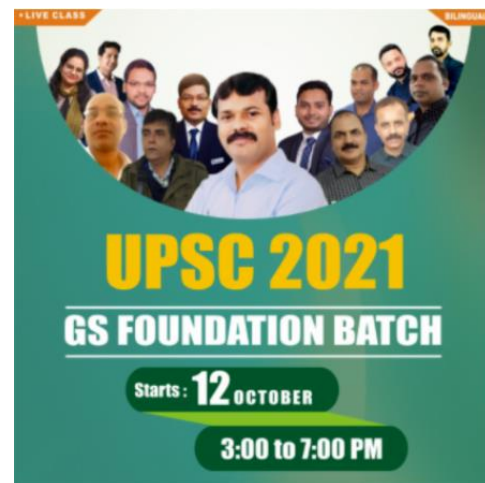
Joint Trade Committee Meeting between India and Myanmar

- The 7th Joint Trade Committee Meeting between India and Myanmar was held through virtual mode on 24th November 2020.
- The Meeting was co-chaired by Dr. Than Myint, Union Minister for Ministry of Commerce, Myanmar and Shri Piyush Goyal, Commerce and Industry Minister of India.

- Both sides reviewed various bilateral issues ranging from trade, investment, banking, connectivity, capacity building and up-gradation of border infrastructure.
- They also reviewed their preparedness to meet the COVID-19 challenges and expanding cooperation in pharma and health sector including traditional medicines.

Sahakar Pragma

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Rural Development, Panchayat Raj and Food Processing Industries, Narendra Singh Tomar unveiled Sahakar Pragma.
- The 45 new training modules of Sahakar Pragma of the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) will impart training to primary cooperative societies in rural areas of the country along with Lakshmanrao Inamdar National Cooperative Research and Development Academy (Linac).
- Sahakar Pragma embodies enhancing NCDC's training capacity by 18 fold through an elaborate network of 18 Regional Training Centres across the country by the dedicated, Laxmanrao Inamdar National Academy for Cooperative Research and Development (LINAC) set up and fully funded by NCDC.
- Sahakar Pragma is the latest in the series of farmer-focused steps by NCDC.
- These 45 training modules of Sahakar Pragma to be delivered at LINAC and its countrywide network of Regional Training Centres will address the need for training of Primary cooperatives, FPO-Cooperatives and Self Help Groups federating.



INTERNATIONAL NEWS

China gears up for 'strategic period'

- Communist Party of China (CPC) which is China's ruling party-sets long-term targets for boosting the economy and military power.

Key targets announced are as follows:

Three goals are announced that is to be achieved by 2025, 2027 and 2035 namely;

- Boosting domestic consumption and innovation.
- A national security and defence modernisation plan ahead of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) centennial in 2027.
- A 'Vision 2035' longer-term economic blueprint that calls for "big leaps" in economic strength and technological prowess.
- The significance is that the new economic blueprint would broadly push for China to double its GDP and current per capita GDP of \$10,000 by 2035.

President of Tanzania

- H.E. John Pombe Magufuli sworn-in as President of Tanzania.
- PM Narendra Modi also congratulate H.E. John Pombe Magufuli for being sworn-in as President of Tanzania. He also said that "I look forward to working with him to further strengthen the long-standing friendship between our countries."

5th Joint Working Group on Coal

- The 5th Joint Working Group (JWG) was successfully hosted by India on Coal. It took place between India and Indonesia.
- From the Indian side, the JWG was co-chaired by Shri Vinod Kumar Tiwari, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Coal, Government of India and by Mr Jonson Pakpahan, Director for Mineral and Coal, Non-Tax State Revenue of Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources, Republic of Indonesia, from the Indonesian side.
- Discussion was held on Coal Policy reforms, Coking Coal Exploration, Commercial Mining and Current Coal Business updates etc.

India-China on the Brahmaputra

- Several dams have been constructed along the Brahmaputra River (known as Yarlung in China) on the Chinese side. This has become a repeated cause of concern for India.
- India and China continue to grow demographically as well as economically. Both amid at increasing consumption among its citizens. And also both nations face water constraints and in a race to develop new projects in order to overcome them.

India-Italy Virtual Summit

- A Virtual Bilateral Summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Italy Prof. Giuseppe Conte was persisted on 6th November, 2020.
- The Summit provided a chance to the 2 leaders to comprehensively review the broad framework of the bilateral relationship. The 2 leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen cooperation against common global challenges, including the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The discussion was focused on the problems including political, economic, scientific & technological, space and defence cooperation.
- On regional and international issues, both sides agreed to coordinate closely at multilateral fora especially G-20.
- Italy will assume the Presidency of G-20 in December 2021 followed by India in 2022.
- Together, India and Italy are going to be a part of the G20 Troika from December, 2020.

RE-Invest 2020

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the virtual 3rd Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo (RE-Invest 2020), on 26 November 2020 at 5:30 PM.
- The summit is organised by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and will be held from 26 - 28 November 2020.

About RE-Invest 2020

- -The theme for RE-Invest 2020 is 'Innovations for Sustainable Energy Transition'.
- It will feature a 3-day conference on renewables and future energy choices, and an exhibition of manufacturers, developers, investors and innovators.

- It is expected to be attended by over 75 international Ministerial delegations, over 1000 global industry leaders, and 50,000 delegates.
- It aims to accelerate the worldwide effort to scale up development and deployment of renewable energy and connect the global investment community with Indian energy stakeholders.

New Chinese Village in Bhutan

- Chinese media has recently claimed that a new border village built by China near Bhutan was on Chinese territory.
- The village that has been newly built is Pangda and Yadong county authorities of Southwest China's Tibet Autonomous Region have confirmed that 27 households with 124 people voluntarily moved from Shangdui village to Pangda village in September 2020.
- Since 2017, it is for the first time that a Chinese residential area has been noticed near the Doklam region. It is strategically important for India.
- Pangda is east of the India-Bhutan-China trijunction on the Doklam plateau.
- It was the site of a 72-day stand-off in 2017 triggered by China's road-building up to where it sees its border.
- However, Bhutan officially denied the presence of any Chinese village in its territory.

15th G20 Leaders' Summit

- Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, participated in the 15th G20 Summit convened by Saudi Arabia in virtual format.
- The agenda of the second day of the G 20 summit focused a session on building an inclusive, sustainable and resilient future and a side event on safeguarding the planet.
- The Prime Minister in his speech underscored that for an inclusive, resilient and sustainable recovery in a Post COVID world, effective global governance is required and reformed multilateralism through improvement in character, governance and processes of multilateral institutions is the need of the hour.
- The Prime Minister further underscored the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals aimed at 'leaving no one behind'.

- He further said that India is following the same principle in the 'Reform-Perform-Transform' strategy to move forward and inclusive development efforts that are participative.
- It was decided that the G20 Presidency will be held by Indonesia in 2022, India in 2023 and Brazil in 2024.

Agreements Between India-Bahrain

- India and Bahrain have recently agreed to further strengthen their historic ties like in areas of defence and maritime security.
- Bahrain signed the Abraham Accord with Israel and is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the UAE, which was mediated by the USA.
- The bilateral issues, as well as regional and global matters of mutual interest, included areas of defence and maritime security, space technology, trade and investment, infrastructure, IT, FinTech, health, hydrocarbon and renewable energy.
- Discussed to strengthen their COVID-19 related cooperation.
- India provided help to Bahrain during the pandemic via supplying medicines, medical equipment and medical professionals.
- Also expressed satisfaction regarding the operationalisation of the Air Bubble arrangement between the two countries.
- An invitation is renewed to Bahrain by India for the 3rd India-Bahrain High Joint Commission meeting that will be held in the upcoming months in India.
- India also conveyed condolences on the demise of late Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, who significantly contributed to the strengthening of India-Bahrain relations and to the welfare of the Indian community in Bahrain.

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AUSINDEX

- AUSINDEX is a bilateral India-Australia naval exercise and France is keen to join it.
- AUSINDEX is Australia India Exercise that is it is a bilateral maritime exercise between the Indian Navy and Royal Australian Navy.

India-Italy Bilateral Summit

- A virtual Bilateral Summit between India and Italy has been held recently to review the broad framework of the bilateral relationship and also strengthen cooperation against common global challenges like COVID-19 pandemic.
- Both nations decided to adopt the Action Plan for an enhanced Partnership between India and Italy (2020-2024).
- The aim is to set up priorities, strategic goals and mechanisms of a bilateral partnership.
- Agreed to coordinate closely at multilateral fora especially G-20.
- In December 2021 Italy will assume the Presidency of G-20 followed by India in 2022.
- The current presidency of G20 is holding Saudi Arabia.
- To promote innovative financial schemes which will support bilateral investments, an MoU between Cassa Deposit Prestiti (CDP) which is an Italian investment bank and National Infrastructure Investment Fund (NIIF).
- In the European Union (EU), Italy is India's fifth-largest trading partner.

Step Up for TB 2020" report

- The "Step Up for TB 2020" is a report by the Stop TB Partnership and Medecins Sans Frontieres/Doctors without Borders (MSF).
- It has highlighted India's conservative approach regarding the new medicines for Drug Resistant TB, putting lives of patients including children in danger.
- The current Pandemic has further aggravated the sufferings of TB patients in the country in terms of disease diagnosis, surveillance and treatment.
- In the report, the data is presented on 37 high-burden countries, including India and assessing the extent to which national policies align with international best practices based on World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines and the latest scientific research.

- This is the 4th edition of this report. It focuses on countries' policies and practices related to 4 key areas of national TB programmes (NTPs) namely; Diagnosis, Treatment (including models of care), Prevention, and Medicines procurement policies.

Armed clashes in Ethiopia's Tigray

- A domestic conflict is going on in the country's northern Tigray region. Ethiopia is on the brink of a civil war.
- Ethiopia's federal system structure allows the country's ten regions significant autonomy. These regions also have their own parliaments, their own security forces, and the right to a referendum for independent rule.
- What is the impact on the Horn of Africa?
- Due to its proximity to Tigray. Eritrea may be hardest hit.
- If the violence and conflict spill outside Ethiopia's borders, it may potentially destabilize the Horn of Africa region.
- In this region, the US and China have various strategic military bases and the closest being Djibouti. If these military bases were impacted then the disturbances may cause foreign powers to get militarily involved in the region and the conflict.

12th BRICS Summit

- In the 12th BRICS Summit, PM Narendra Modi touched issues including terrorism, COVID-19 pandemic and the need for reforms in global bodies.
- This year 12th BRICS Summit was hosted and chaired by Russia.

Summit of SCO Council of Heads of State

- 20th Summit of SCO Council of Heads of State was held on 10 November, 2020.
- The Meeting was chaired by the President of the Russian Federation Mr. Vladimir Putin. Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the Indian delegation.
- This was the first SCO Summit held in Virtual Format and third meeting that India participated after becoming a full member in 2017.
- Prime Minister, in his address, highlighted the imperative of a reformed multilateralism to meet the expectation of a world suffering from the social and financial after-effects of the pandemic.



- India, as a non-permanent member of the UNSC, beginning from 1 January 2021, will focus on the theme of 'reformed multilateralism' to bring about desirable changes in global governance.
- Prime Minister reiterated India's firm belief in regional peace, security and prosperity and raising voice against terrorism, smuggling of illegal weapons, drugs and money-laundering.
- He also extended full support to observing the 20th anniversary of SCO in 2021 as the "SCO Year of Culture" and spoke of India's own initiatives to hold the first SCO exhibition on Shared Buddhist Heritage to be organized by National Museum of India, SCO Food Festival in India next year and the translation of Ten regional language literary works into Russian and Chinese.

Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed condolences on the passing away of His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain.
- He said "My heartfelt condolences on the sad demise of His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain. In this moment of grief, our thoughts and prayers are with HM the King of Bahrain, the royal family and the people of Bahrain".

Global Prevention Coalition (GPC)

- Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare digitally addressed the Ministerial meeting of the Global Prevention Coalition (GPC) for HIV Prevention.
- Hosted by UNAIDS and UNFPA on behalf of the Global HIV Prevention Coalition (GPC), the conference this year holds significance in achieving the 2016 UNGA commitment to end AIDS by 2030.
- Member States of GPC had agreed to reduce new adult HIV infections by 75% at the end of 2020 from 2010 levels.

World Toilet Day

- Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti is celebrating 'World Toilet Day' on November 19, 2020 under 'Swachh Bharat Mission - Grameen (SBMG)' for promoting awareness on access to Safe Sanitation and felicitating districts/states for making a significant contribution towards Swachhata.

- Phase 2 of SBMG has been launched early this year for sustaining the gains made under Phase 1 (2014-19) with focus on ODF Sustainability and Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM).
- Various campaigns focusing on construction and beautification of Community Sanitary Complexes (CSCs) have been undertaken countrywide over past one year like Swachh Sunder Samudayik Sauchalay (SSSS) and Samudayik Sauchalay Abhiyan (SSA).

15th G20 Leaders' Summit

- At the invitation of His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi will be attending the 15th G20 Summit.
- It will be chaired by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the theme "Realising the Opportunities of 21st Century for All" on 21-22 November 2020. The meeting will be held in a virtual format.
- The focus of the upcoming G20 Summit will be on an inclusive, resilient, and sustainable recovery from the COVID-19.
- During the G 20 Summit, the leaders will discuss pandemic preparedness and the ways and means to restore jobs. The leaders will also share their vision for building an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future.
- India will enter the G20 Troika, along with Saudi Arabia when Italy will take over the Presidency of the G-20 on 1st December, 2020.

India-Luxembourg Virtual Summit

- The Prime Minister of India, H.E. Shri Narendra Modi, and the Prime Minister of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, H.E. Mr. Xavier Bettel, held the first-ever India-Luxembourg Virtual Summit on 19 November 2020.
- The two Prime Ministers underlined the excellent relations between India and Luxembourg based on shared principles and values of democracy, freedom, rule of law, and respect for human rights.
- The two leaders acknowledged the growing convergences between India and Luxembourg on global issues of mutual interest.
- Both Prime Ministers welcomed the signing of a cooperation agreement between Invest India and Luxinnovation to support and develop mutual business cooperation between Indian and Luxembourg companies.

- They also noted that Luxembourg companies were taking a growing interest in India's various initiatives related to the environment, clean energy and sustainable technologies, including the Clean Ganga Mission.
- The leaders looked forward to the 17th Joint Economic Commission between India and the Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union to review the economic and trade relations.
- They also further look at finance. Space and Digital Cooperation, Higher education and research, Culture and people-to-people ties, EU-India relations, COVID-19 pandemic, Multilateral cooperation, etc.

Centre stage of international Energy Affairs

- Executive Director of International Energy Agency (IEA), Mr. Fatih Birol said that India has moved to the Centre stage of international Energy Affairs and is a role model for other major emerging economies.
- Speaking at a virtual launch of the Energy Technology Perspectives 2020, a new study of IEA. It focusses on the technology needs and opportunities for reaching international climate and sustainable energy goals.
- Mr. Birol praised the Indian government for its efforts in providing clean energy to millions by way of schemes like Ujjawala and Ujala.
- India's actions on renewable energy the Environment Minister said that India's renewable energy now stands at 89 GW. It has increased by 170 % in the last 6 years which is a significant increase.
- "Our Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi has declared 175 GW of renewable power by 2022 and our aspirational goal stands at 450 GW of renewable energy.", said Shri Javadekar.

APEC Virtual Meet

- A virtual meeting of the 21-member Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum was held.
- The meeting was hosted by Malaysia. Due to the pandemic, New Zealand will also host next year's APEC meetings virtually.
- In the Asia-Pacific region, the growth is expected to decline by 2.7% this year, from a 3.6% growth in 2019. The focus of APEC's was on accelerating economic recovery and developing an affordable vaccine.
- The main focus areas are Trade and investment, Digital Economy and Technology, Structural Reform, Economic and Technical Cooperation and Thematic and institutional matters.
- The Putrajaya Vision 2040 was adopted by the APEC leaders. It is a new 20-year growth vision to replace the Bogor Goals named after the Indonesian town where leaders agreed in 1994 to free and open trade and investment.
- The Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP) agenda and the APEC Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap (AIDER) were discussed.

TEST SERIES

Bilingual



**UPSC 2021
PRELIMS**

(Paper-I + Paper-II)

30 TOTAL TESTS

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

EOS-01, India's latest earth observation satellite

- ISRO's first mission, EOS-01 launched. It is the ISRO's first mission since the launch of RISAT-2BR1, on December 11 last year.
- ISRO had also sent communication satellite GSAT-30 in space in January this year, but that was done using an Ariane rocket launched from French Guiana.

About EOS-01

- It is an earth observation satellite.
- It is another Radar Imaging Satellite (RISAT) that will work together with RISAT-2B and RISAT-2BR1 launched last year.
- Henceforth all the earth observation satellites would be called EOS-series.
- Land and forest mapping and monitoring, mapping of resources like water or minerals or fishes, weather and climate observations, soil assessment, geospatial contour mapping are all done through earth-observation satellites.

A-Sat Missile Model

- A model of Anti Satellite (A-SAT) Missile installed inside the DRDO Bhawan premises was unveiled by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh
- 'Mission Shakti' was country's first-ever Anti-Satellite (ASAT) Missile Test successfully conducted on 27th March 2019 from Dr AP J Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha, where a fast-moving Indian orbiting target satellite in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) was neutralised with pinpoint accuracy.
- The successful conduct of Mission Shakti made India the fourth nation in the world with the capability to defend its assets in outer space.

New interface between science and society

- A webinar was organised on the occasion of World Science Day in which Secretary, Department of Science and Technology (DST), Professor Ashutosh Sharma highlighted that a policy on Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR) would be in place in the next few months to create new interfaces between science and society.

- Professor Sharma told about the importance of equity and diversity in science and technology. He also mentioned about the ten different programmes that are run by the DST including CURIE (Consolidation of University Research for Innovation & Excellence in Women Universities) and Vigyan Jyoti to create a level-playing field for women to encourage and help them make inroads into the field of science, technology and innovation.
- On 10 November, World Science Day is celebrated and the theme of this year is "Science for and with Society".

Second Successful Flight Test of QRSAM System

- Second successful flight test of the Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM) System was conducted from the Integrated Test Range, Chandipur, off the coast of Odisha.
- The test was carried out once again, against the high-performance Jet Unmanned Aerial Target called Banshee, which simulates an aircraft.
- The flight test was conducted in the deployment configuration of the weapon system comprising of Launcher, fully Automated Command and Control System, Surveillance System and Multi-Function Radars.
- The first in the series test of QRSAM took place on 13th Nov 2020 achieving the milestone of a direct hit. The second test proved the performance parameters of a warhead.

Operationalisation of Revamped Website of MoSPI

- The National Statistical Office (NSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) has upgraded its website with improved functionality and content accessibility from 18th November 2020.
- It can be accessed using the URL: mospi.gov.in.
- The new website has been designed using the latest portal development technology with the purpose of providing an integrated digital experience to Users.
- The revamped website has been developed as per GIGW guidelines of DARPG and NIC.
- Website design is kept clutter-free and minimalist ensuring the clear identity of elements and providing visual appeal with viewer friendliness. Website is mobile device compatible and disables friendly.



- Visitors can provide information on User experience, adding the desired element of “public participation” and boost the potential of e-Governance Visitor can share the content link on social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc) through share button available across the website.
- To facilitate the process of a smooth transition, link to the old website will be available on the new website for a period of 6 months. The old website can also be accessed using URL: mospi.nic.in.

SIMBEX-20 in the Andaman Sea

- Indian Navy (IN) is scheduled to host the 27th edition of India – Singapore Bilateral Maritime Exercise SIMBEX-20 from 23 to 25 November 2020 in the Andaman Sea.
- The SIMBEX series of exercises between IN and Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN), being conducted annually since 1994.
- It aimed at enhancing mutual inter-operability and imbibing best practices from each other. The scope and complexity of these exercises have increased steadily over the past two decades to include advanced naval drills covering a wide spectrum of maritime operations.
- The 2020 edition of SIMBEX will witness participation by Indian Navy ships including destroyer Rana with integral Chetak helicopter and indigenously built corvettes Kamorta and Karmuk.
- In addition, IN submarine Sindhuraj and P8I maritime reconnaissance aircraft will also participate in the exercise.
- RSN will be represented by the ‘Formidable’ Class frigates ‘Intrepid’ and ‘Steadfast’ with integral S70B helicopter and ‘Endurance’ Class Landing Ship Tank ‘Endeavour’ in the exercise.
- The exercise, being conducted as a ‘non-contact, at sea only’ exercise in view of COVID-19 pandemic.

Copernicus Sentinel-6 Michael Freilich satellite

- Recently, Copernicus Sentinel-6 Michael Freilich satellite was launched from the Vandenberg Air Force base in California aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.
- Sentinel-6-Satellite is a part of the mission dedicated to measuring changes in the global sea level. The mission is known as the Jason Continuity of Service (Jason-CS) mission.

- The objective of the mission is to measure the height of the ocean, which is a key component in understanding how the Earth’s climate is changing.
- The objective of the mission is to To measure the height of the ocean, which is a key component in understanding how the Earth’s climate is changing.
- It consists of two satellites, Sentinel-6 and the other, called Sentinel-6B, to be launched in 2025.
- The mission is a Joint Collaboration of the European Space Agency (ESA), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (Eumetsat), the USA’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the European Union (EU), with contributions from France’s National Centre for Space Studies (CNES).

MQ-9B Sea Guardian unarmed drones

- Two MQ-9B Sea Guardian unarmed drones have been inducted by the Indian Army procured from the U.S on lease.
- The drone has a maximum endurance of 40 hours and a maximum flying altitude of 40,000 feet.
- It has a 3600 maritime surveillance radar and an optional multimode maritime surface search radar.

India’s IRNSS

- The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) has been accepted as a component of the World Wide Radio Navigation System (WWRNS) for operation in the Indian Ocean Region by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).
- This will enable merchant vessels to use IRNSS for obtaining position information similar to GPS and GLONASS to assist in the navigation of ships in ocean waters within the area covered by 50°N latitude, 55°E longitude, 5°S latitude and 110°E longitude
- The Maritime Safety Committee (MSC) of IMO during its recent meeting (102nd session) held from 4 to 11 November 2020 has approved the recognition of the IRNSS as a component of the World-Wide Radio Navigation System.
- This is a significant achievement of Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW), Directorate General of Shipping (DGS) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) towards “Atmanirbhar Bharat”.

IMPORTANT PLACES IN NEWS**Shahtoot Dam**

- India set to build Shahtoot Dam in Afghanistan, provide drinking water for 2 million residents of Kabul.
- The dam would come upon the Maidan river tributary of Kabul river.

Pangda village

- It is a new border village built by China.
- The village is located on territory disputed by China and Bhutan.
- The area is east of the India-Bhutan-China trijunction on the Doklam plateau, the site of a 72-day stand-off in 2017.

Survey of forest dwellers in J&K on

- The Jammu and Kashmir administration is in the process of implementing the Forest Rights Act of 2006 "to grant the rights to forest dwellers.
- The Forest Rights Act of 2006 provides for granting of rights to forest dwellers across the country. It was not applicable or implemented in J&K till 31st October, 2019.

M.P. sets up 'cow protection Cabinet'

- Madhya Pradesh government has decided to set up a 'Gau Cabinet' for the protection and promotion of cattle.
- The Animal Husbandry, Forest, Panchayat and Rural Development, Revenue, Home and Farmers' Welfare Departments would be part of the Cabinet.

Puerto Rico:

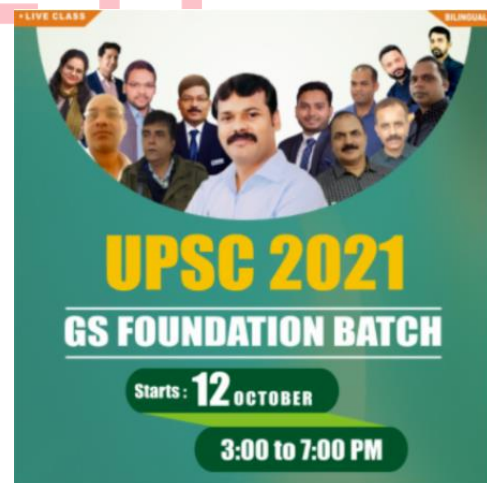
- For the third time in ten years, the United States territory of Puerto Rico has voted in favour of statehood.

Key Points

- Puerto Rico is a Spanish-speaking island located in the Caribbean Sea.
- Since its discovery by the explorer Christopher Columbus in 1493, Puerto Rico was a part of the Spanish Empire for over 4 centuries until 1898, when it was annexed by the United States.
- In 1917, Puerto Ricans were granted US citizenship, but the island itself was never made a full state, and continues to remain a "US territory", along with Guam, North Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and the US Virgin Islands.

Saffron

- The saffron bowl, which was so far confined to Kashmir, may soon expand to the North East of India.
- Plants from seeds transported from Kashmir to Sikkim and acclimatized there are now flowering in Yangyang in the Southern part of the North-East state.
- The North East Centre For Technology Application and Reach (NECTAR) has undertaken a pilot project to explore the feasibility of growing saffron in North East region of the country.
- Pampore region, in India, commonly known as Saffron bowl of Kashmir, is the main contributor to saffron production, followed by Budgam, Srinagar, and Kishtiwari districts.



Success Stories of IAS aspirants

UPSC CSE Rank Holders 2017 to 2020: 5 Success and Inspiring Stories of IAS



Every year, the final result of Civil Services Exam which is conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has thrown up various motivational and inspirational stories. Sometimes it has been seen that candidates from diverse background made it to India's elite administrative service.

We can't ignore that the journey becomes special when the hard work results into fruitful outcomes. The hard work and perseverance that you have, already begun for UPSC preparation can give spark and be fueled with these mentioned below 5 success stories of IAS aspirants.

1. Pratyush Pandey (21 Rank, 2019)

- Pratyush Pandey a 24-year old has secured 21st rank in his first attempt in UPSC Civil Services Examination in 2019. He is an alumnus of IIT-Kanpur and IIM Ahmedabad. Do you know that despite from the Engineering background he chooses sociology as an optional? He said in one of his interviews that no matter what optional subject you choose, important and the matter is how thoroughly you follow through with your preparation.
- Further, he told that the yearly analysis will show that no one optional has an upper hand in UPSC. Proper dedication, strategy, continuity matters and make you up in the field. Important is how well you study and how well you present your answers to score well. This comes only with practice and revision. Besides, optional is not the end of the road. Understand your strengths and weaknesses and conquer this journey. It is you only who knows better about yourself, your weaknesses and how it can be improved.

- Regarding Current Affairs, he says that relate the examples of positive or negative aspects of the topic. As far as if it is concerned with sociology any news that you read can be used as an example in Sociology. It will be better to follow a functional approach when trying to discuss any issue.
- He also told regarding writing answers. During his preparation, he developed a common structure for his answers so that he could think quicker and write faster. He would begin with a simple introduction which would be a definition related to a question. Also, you can follow this up with the concept that you talk directly about the thinker's philosophy about the topic at hand. Unless there is a mention of a thinker in the question, mention 3 or 4 of them at least. Understand the demand of the question's keywords such as 'Discuss', 'Analyze', 'Criticize', etc. before answering. End with one of the few different pre-prepared conclusions.

2. Himanshu Jain (4 Rank, 2019)

- Himanshu Jain has secured 4th Rank in UPSC Civil Services Examination, 2019. He is a native of Haryana and has done his schooling from his hometown till 8th standard. After that, he moved to Delhi for his 9th to 12 grades. He did his graduation in Economics (Hons.) from Hansraj College in Delhi. Immediately after completing his graduation, he started pursuing his passion for UPSC. In 2018, he gave his first attempt of UPSC but unfortunately, he could not clear prelims. He started again, corrected his mistakes with dedication and hard work he managed the astounding rank in his 2019 attempt.
- In one of his interview, he gave a message to the IAS aspirants that Eat well, sleep well, stress less. This is the main message from him to the IAS aspirants. He also said that don't listen to a million voices, listen to teachers or to people who have already taken his journey and use their advice in a manner that fits your personality. It will be better to keep your personal matters aside for now. He said that all these types of matters will resolve themselves once your target has been achieved.
- He is an example that after not clearing Prelims in the first attempt you should not be disheartened. You should believe yourself and your passion to achieve or fulfil your dreams. Nothing is impossible.

- He told about his study time also. He believes that 6 to 8 hours of the study was good enough for him. He also told that it will be better to mould your strategy as per your ability and comfort. For Himanshu, studying 4 to 6 hours in the morning-noon time and perhaps another additional 2 hours in the evenings proved to be good enough.
- For General Studies Preparation he gave tip that pick up each topic/phrase mentioned in the syllabus and note down all static and current information you find each day under the given topic. General Studies Paper-II (Polity) answer writing of Himanshu was based around debates on Rajya Sabha TV and the static information around it. Note terms in the news and write down short notes on each.
- He heavily relied on texts and reports published on government websites like PIB to get hold of his facts and actual figures. He preferred newspapers for current affairs and websites over monthly magazines. He told that one must read newspapers consistently to develop analytical reasoning prowess.
- He recommends that everyone should read NCERT books from standard 6 to 12 for developing a basic structure for his preparation. He further said that the UPSC Mains exam is very crucial and most effort of the UPSC preparation goes into preparing for UPSC Mains exam as it will decide your rank. Preparation for every subject and topic should be mains oriented as that would automatically cover all things prelims. He started his prelim specific preparation cum revision 50 days before the Preliminary Examination.
- The mantra of Himanshu's preparation was limited resources and indefinite revisions.

3. Kanishak Kataria (1st Rank, 2018)

- Kanishak Kataria an IIT-alumnus who bagged the first rank in UPSC in his very first attempt in 2018. He left the job abroad where he was earning almost one crore as salary to become an IAS officer. He achieved this feat by sheer hard work without worrying about the results much. He is an example that if a person decides something or set some goal in life then nothing is impossible.
- In an interview, he shared his several tidbits from his UPSC preparation to his personal life. After completing his B. Tech in Computer Science from IIT Bombay, he took a job in a company in South Korea. He always wanted to live outside India and explore

the world beyond. While working in South Korea he felt that he was earning well but was not able to help and connect people in his own country. So after working in the company in South Korea for one year he quit his job and returned to India.

- He also revealed that in South Korea he was earning close to One Crore and after returning to India his salary was drastically reduced by almost one-third.
- He also talked about the preparation strategy that he had started reading newspapers 2 years prior to appearing for the exam to stay updated about current affairs. He also read online news and magazines for current affairs topics.
- In the initial phase, he also took coaching classes. For Prelims examination, he analyzed and looked question papers of the last few years and also appeared for test series. His optional subject was mathematics. He also told that Math's was his favourite subject so he never gets bored with it while preparing. As the syllabus of mathematics is vast and longer than other subjects so he devoted more time to preparing for mathematics.
- For Civil Services Main Examination, he devoted about 13 to 14 hours each day. His preparation style was a mix of self-studies and coaching assisted. Saying about social media, he told that two months prior to the exam he completely cut himself off of social media.

4. Anu Kumari (2nd Rank, 2017)

- She was dedicated towards her goal when she decided to be an IAS Officer and her life took a turn. When she cleared the paper she was a mother of 4-year-old and has been through a lot of highs and lows in her life. In Haryana Sonipat, she left her job and started living life any other homemaker despite being an MBA and Finance and securing a good job.
- Being a homemaker at the age of 31, she decided to do something meaningful and worthwhile for society. And no doubt the day result came out she did not disappoint anybody. In her second attempt given her age, she was worried about the kind of support and resources that she would be able to gather.
- But with the support of family, few friends and obviously hard work and dedication she finally cracked the exam. She proved that firm determination makes you achieve whatever you want to achieve in your life. It is never late or early. Only need to be focused, the right strategy and

proper mindset. She came from the place where English newspapers and coaching centres were not available. She has to manage and balance life in a village where regressive mindset towards women is the norm. She was focused, put a smile and moved forward to realize her dream and goals.

5. Saumya Sharma (9 Rank, 2017)

- The success story of Saumya Sharma is one of inspiration. She secured 9th Rank in UPSC Civil Services Examination, 2017 in her first attempt. With sincerity and hard work, she proved that dreams can be fulfilled. With four months of preparation, this lawyer has achieved 9th rank at her first attempt in 2017. Isn't amazing!
- When she decided to appear for UPSC Exam, she was in the fifth year of her graduation in National Law School. She also proved that no disability could stop her!
- Hearing-impaired Saumya Sharma's journey of cracking the UPSC Civil Services exam without coaching in her first attempt is truly motivating. She lost his hearing ability when she was only 16 years old and since then she had to depend on hearing aid machine to listen. Despite this, her focus, determination and motivation help her to crack UPSC. She cleared the exam at a young age of 23 without any coaching. She told in an interview that cracking this type of exam needs proper planning and well-built strategy.
- Due to loss of hearing power, she was included in the Disabled Person's category. But she refused to fill UPSC Civil Services form under handicapped quota and opted for general category.

- She was a bright student since his school days and catching up with UPSC Civil Services preparation as not that tough for her. As per her, a strong base is important for the aspirants to crack the exam easily. Do you know that she appeared for UPSC Civil Services exam while suffering from 102 viral fever? Saumya's parents were a doctor and were with her at the examination centre to keep a check on her health.
- In one of her interview, she advised IAS aspirants to read newspapers daily, practice model question papers and having a grip on your optional subject is the key to success. She also told that with this it is important to prepare yourself not only for prelims but also for mains at the same time.
- So these are some success and inspirational stories of UPSC aspirants. Hope you like it and just remember nothing is difficult to achieve required is firm determination and continuity. No doubt proper strategy also plays an important role. Best of Luck!



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**KNOWLEDGE BOOSTER OR POINTS TO REMEMBER**

- Sahakar Pragma embodies enhancing NCDC's training capacity by 18 fold through an elaborate network of 18 Regional Training Centres across the country by the dedicated, Laxmanrao Inamdar National Academy for Cooperative Research and Development (LINAC) set up and fully funded by NCDC.
- The theme for RE-Invest 2020 is 'Innovations for Sustainable Energy Transition'.
- Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, also known as ITAT, is an important statutory body in the field of direct taxes and its orders are accepted as final, on findings of fact.
- ITAT was the first Tribunal to be created on 25th January, 1941. It is also known as 'Mother Tribunal'.
- 3rd Naturopathy Day is observed on 18 November, 2020 with a theme of 'Nurturing Vitality Through Naturopathy'.
- The Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) is an act of Parliament of India. Its objective was to establish and to ensure the delivery of certain services. If it obstructed would affect the normal life of the people.
- In Punjab, a Megha Food Park is inaugurated. Mega Food Park Scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries in the country since 2008.
- AUSINDEX is a bilateral India-Australia naval exercise and France is keen to join it.
- The 5th Joint Working Group (JWG) was successfully hosted by India on Coal. It took place between India and Indonesia.
- The funding has been approved by the Cabinet Committee of Rs 1810 cr for 210 Mega Watt Luhri Stage-I Hydro Power Project in Himachal Pradesh. It will be constructed on river Satluj which is situated in Shimla and Kullu districts of Himachal Pradesh.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PRACTICE

- Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct about Fast Radio Burst (FRB)?**
 - Fast Radio Burst (FRB) are bright bursts of radio waves (whose durations lie in the millisecond-scale).
 - It was first discovered in 2005.
 - The source of the FRB detected recently in the Milky Way is a very powerful magnetic neutron star referred to as a magnetar, called SGR 1935+2154 or SGR 1935, which is located in the constellation Vulpecula.

Choose the correct answer

(a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans.(c)
- Which of the following became the first in India to provide insurance cover against COVID-19 for "green soldiers"?**

(a) Namdapha Tiger Reserve
(b) Pakke Tiger Reserve
(c) Kamlang Tiger Reserve
(d) Orang Tiger Reserve

Ans.(b)
- Consider the following statements regarding Software Technology Parks of India (STPI).**
 - It was established in 1990.
 - It is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
 - The STPI's Governing Council's Chairperson is the Union Minister for Electronics & Information Technology.

Which of the following statement(s) given above is/are correct?

(a) 1, 2 and 3 (b) 1 and 3
(c) 1 and 2 (d) 2 and 3

Ans.(d)
- Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct about Tarballs?**
 - They are small light-absorbing, carbonaceous particles.
 - They hasten glacial melt.
 - They are formed from brown carbon, emitted during the burning of fossil fuels.

Choose the correct answer

(a) 1, 2 and 3 (b) Only 1
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1 and 2

Ans.(a)

- 5. The image of Buddha sometimes shown with the hand gesture known as 'Bhumisparsha Mudra'. What does it symbolises?**
(a) It is the reminder of Buddha to his followers that all arise from the Earth and finally dissolve into the Earth, and thus this life is transitory.
(b) Buddha's calling of the Earth to watch over Mara and to prevent Mara from disturbing his meditation.
(c) Buddha's calling of the Earth to witness his purity and chastity despite the temptations of Mara.
(d) Both (a) and (c) are correct
Ans.(c)
- 6. Consider the following statements regarding Avadhanam.**
1. It is an exciting literary performance that involves solving tricky literary posers, improvising poems and tests a person's capability of performing such multiple tasks simultaneously.
2. It originated as a Sanskrit literary process and is revived by poets in Telugu and Kannada in modern times.
Which of the following statement(s) given above is/are correct?
(a) Only 1 (b) Only 2
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
Ans. (c)
- 7. When was the National Moon Mission launched by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)?**
(a) 2000 (b) 2008
(c) 2010 (d) 2012
Ans.(d)
- 8. Consider the following statements regarding Sattriya dance.**
1. It is a centuries-old living tradition of Vaishnavites of Assam.
2. It is a combination of music, dance and drama.
3. It is based on classical Ragas and Talas of devotional songs composed by Tulsidas, Kabir and Mirabai.
Which of the following statement(s) given above is/are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 (b) Only 2
(c) 2 and 3 (d) 1,2 and 3
Ans.(d)
- 9. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct about the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)?**
1. It was established by an agreement concluded in 1980.
2. The agreement was among Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and UAE only.
3. The structure of GCC consists of the Supreme Council (the highest authority), the Ministerial Council and the Secretariat General.
Choose the correct answer
(a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) Only 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3
Ans.(c)
- 10. Which of the following is/are correct about the Recombinant DNA Technology or Genetic Engineering which allows genes to be transferred from:**
1. Across different species of plants.
2. From animals to plants.
3. From microorganisms to higher organisms.
Choose the correct answer
(a) Only 1 (b) 1 and 2
(c) Only 3 (d) 1 and 3
Ans.(a)
- 11. Which of the following statements is/are correct about Gilgit-Baltistan?**
1. It is located on the northwestern corner of the Union Territory of Ladakh.
2. The region was a part of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir but has been under Pakistan's control since 4th November, 1947.
3. It borders Pakistan, Afghanistan and China.
Choose the correct answer
(a) 1 and 2 (b) Only 1
(c) 1, 2 and 3 (d) 2 and 3
Ans.(c)
- 12. Consider the following statements regarding Goods and Service Tax (GST).**
1. The Goods and Service Tax Act was passed in the Parliament on 29th March 2017 and came into effect on 1st June 2017.
2. Under the GST Council and 101st constitutional amendment 2017, the tax is levied at every point of sale.
3. It is levied on every value addition.
Which of the following statements given above are correct?
(a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 and 3
(c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3
Ans.(b)



13. Which of the following statement(s) is/are correct about Corals?

- 1. Corals exhibit characteristics of plants but are marine animals.
- 2. They are made up of genetically identical organisms called polyps.
- 3. The coral provides the zooxanthellae with the compounds necessary for photosynthesis

Choose the correct answer

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

Ans.(d)

14. Consider the following statements regarding SATH-E Project.

- 1. SATH stands for Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital.
- 2. It focuses on two main sectors namely Education and Health and to build three 'Role Model' States.

Which of the following statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- (a) Only 1
- (b) Only 2
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (c) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans.(c)

15. The National Unity Day or Rashtriya Ekta Diwas is observed on:

- (a) 2 November
- (b) 27 October
- (c) 29 October
- (d) 31 October

Ans.(d)

16. Which of the following is/are the features of Rajaji National Park?

- 1. This area is the North-Western Limit of the habitat of Asian elephants.
- 2. Forest types include sal forests, riverine forests, broad-leaved mixed forests, scrubland and grassy.
- 3. In 2015, it was declared as Tiger Reserve.

Choose the correct answer

- (a) Only 1
- (b) 1 and 3
- (c) 1 and 2
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans.(d)

17. Which of the following protected areas lies in Uttarakhand?

- 1. Govind Pashu Vihar National Park and Sanctuary.
- 2. Valley of Flowers National Park
- 3. Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary

Choose the correct answer

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

Ans.(a)

18. Consider the following statements regarding Malabar Exercise.

- 1. In 1992, Malabar began as a bilateral naval exercise between India and the U.S.
- 2. It was expanded into a trilateral format with the inclusion of Japan in 2015.

Which of the following statement(s) given above is/are correct?

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

Ans.(c)

19. Consider the following statements regarding the Budapest Convention.

- 1. The Budapest Convention is supplemented by a Protocol on Xenophobia and Racism committed through computer systems.
- 2. It was open for signature in 2001 and came into force in 2004.

Which of the following statement(s) given above is/are correct?

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

Ans.(c)

20. Which of the following is/are the provisions of Code on Social Security, 2020?

- 1. This will replace nine social security laws, including the Maternity Benefit Act, Employees' Provident Fund Act, Employees' Pension Scheme, Employees' Compensation Act, among others.
- 2. The code universalizes social security coverage to those working in the unorganised sector, such as migrant workers, gig workers and platform workers.

Choose the correct answer

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

Ans.(c)

21. Consider the following statements

- 1. Quad is Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and is the informal strategic dialogue between India, USA, Japan and Australia.
- 2. The idea of Quad was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007.
- 3. In December 2013, Shinzo Abe again floated the concept of Asia's "Democratic Security Diamond" involving Australia, India, Japan and the US to safeguard the maritime commons from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific.

Which of the following statements given above are correct?

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

Ans.(a)

22. With reference to the Severe fever with thrombocytopenia syndrome virus (SFTSV), often seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. It is a newly discovered Phlebovirus causing an emerging hemorrhagic fever in East Asia, with reported case fatality rates up to 30%.
2. SFTSV is believed to be transmitted by pigs.

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

Ans.(a)

23. Consider the following statements:

1. The Tsunami Ready Programme of IOC-UNESCO is a community performance-based programme that facilitates tsunami preparedness.
2. Recently two coastal villages of Tamil Nadu have been recognised as being “Tsunami Ready”.

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

Ans.(a)

24. Consider the following statements regarding the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas yojana, sometimes seen in the news:

1. It was initiated in 2007 as an umbrella scheme for ensuring holistic development of agriculture and allied sectors, by allowing states to choose their own agriculture and allied sector development activities.
2. The scheme is implemented as an Additional Central Assistance to State Plan Scheme, with 100% central assistance.

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

Ans.(d)

25. Consider the following statements regarding the Swadesh Darshan Scheme of India:

1. It is a Central Sector Scheme for integrated development of theme based tourist circuits in the country.
 2. One of its objectives is to create employment, through active involvement of local communities.
- 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

Ans.(c)

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