drishti

Volume I

Current Affairs

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for UPSC Prelims 2020

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Polity & Governance
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CURRENT AFFAIRS

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CONTENTS

76th Anniversary of Azad Hind Government

- Recently, 76th anniversary of the formation of the Azad Hind Government was celebrated at the Red Fort, Delhi.
- On 21st October 1943, Subhash Chandra Bose announced the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind (Free India) in Singapore, with himself as the Head of State, Prime Minister and Minister of War.
- In 1942, the Indian Independence League was formed.
- On the invitation of Ras Bihari Bose, Subhash Chandra Bose went to East Asia on June 13, 1943. He was made president of the Indian Independence League and the leader of the INA popularly called 'Azad Hind Fauj'.

Chalukyan Rulers

- Recently, the graves of Chalukyan rulers were unearthed in Karnataka.
- Chalukya dynasty ruled parts of Southern and Central India between 6th to 12th century
- They ruled as three related yet individual dynasties:
  - **Badami Chalukyas:** They ruled from Vatapi (modern Badami) from the middle of the 6th century.
  - **Eastern Chalukyas:** After the death of Pulakeshin II, the Eastern Chalukyas became an independent kingdom in the eastern Deccan. They ruled from Vengi until about the 11th century.
  - **Western Chalukyas:** They ruled from Kalyani (modern Basavakalyan) from 10th century to the end of the 12th century.
- Temple architecture under the Chalukyas are a good example of the Vesara style of architecture, also called the Deccan style or Karnataka Dravida or Chalukyan style. It is a combination of Dravida and Nagara styles.

Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav

- Recently, Ministry of Culture organised the 10th edition of Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav under the Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat initiative.
- Idea to organise Mahotsav was conceived in the year 2015. It is focused to exhibit the rich cultural heritage of the country including Handicrafts, Cuisine, Painting, Sculpture and Performing Arts-Folk, Tribal, Classical and Contemporary – all at one place.
- **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat:** It was launched on 31st October, 2015 on the occasion of the 140th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The objective of the initiative is to celebrate, promote, showcase, establish, create and strengthen the fabric of traditionally existing emotional bonds between the people of India. Ministry of Human Resource Development is the designated nodal ministry for coordination of the programme.

Nizam of Hyderabad

- Recently, the High Court of England and Wales, ruled in favour of India and the last Nizam of Hyderabad-Osman Ali Khan's descendants granting them access to a £35 million fund.
- Hyderabad was established in 1591 by Qutb Shahi ruler Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah.
- In 1724 Mughal governor Nizam Asaf Jah I declared his sovereignty and founded the Asaf Jahi dynasty also known as the Nizams.
- Hyderabad in 1798 became the first Indian kingdom to enter into subsidiary alliance with the British government.
- In 1948 Hyderabad was integrated into Indian Union by a military operation called Operation Polo.

Rangdum Monastery

- Recently, Archaeological Survey of India invited objection or suggestions for declaration of Rangdum Monastery as a monument of national importance.

- Since then, the TDB (Travancore Devaswom Board) take it to Sabarimala in a ceremonial procession for adorning the Ayyappa idol with it for the auspicious Mandala Puja.

Sri Satguru Ram Singhji

- Recently, an International Seminar was organised in New Delhi to commemorate the 200th Birth Anniversary of Sikh philosopher, reformer and freedom fighter, Sri Satguru Ram Singhji.
- The birth of Satguru Ram Singhji took place in 1816 in village Raiyan in district of Ludhiana in Punjab. He spearheaded the Namdhari sect to free the country. He started the Kuka Movement to free the country in 1857. Satguru Ram Singhji advocated boycott of the British merchandise and services.
- The Satguru was a great social reformer; preached against female infanticide and the practice of Sati; and advocated widow remarriage. He supported simple wedding ceremonies, and mass marriages with minimal expenditure.

Maharaja Suheldev

- A commemorative postage stamp on Maharaja Suheldev has been released recently.
- Suhaldev was a Indian king from Shravasti, who have defeated and killed the Ghaznavid general Ghazi Saiyyad Salar Masud (a nephew of Mahmud of Ghazni) at Bahraich, in the early 11th century.
- The legend of Salar Masud and Suahldev is found in Mirat-i-Masudi, a 17th-century Persian-language historical romance and biography of Salar Masud, written by Abd-Ur-Rahman Chisti during the reign of Mughal emperor Jahangir.

Sri Brihadeshwara Temple

- Brihadeshwara Temple, also called Rajarajesvaram or Peruvudaiyar Koyil, is a Hindu temple dedicated to Shiva located in Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu, India.
- It is one of the largest South Indian temples and an exemplary example of a fully realized Dravidian architecture. It is called as Dhakshina Meru (Meru of south).
- Built by Raja Raja Chola I between 1003 and 1010 AD, the temple is a part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site known as the "Great Living Chola Temples", along with the Chola dynasty era Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple and Airavatesvara temple that are about 70 kilometres and 40 kilometres to its northeast respectively.

GI Tag

- The Geographical Indication (GI) Tag is granted by the Geographical Indication Registry.
- A GI is a name or sign used on products which correspond to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g., a town, region, or country). The use of a GI, as a type of indication of the source, may act as a certification that the product possesses certain qualities, is made according to traditional methods, or enjoys a certain reputation, due to its geographical origin.
- A GI tag connects the quality and authenticity of a given product to a particular geographical origin, thereby ensuring that no one other than the authorised producer can use the popular product's name.
- GIs have been defined under Article 22(1) of the WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) as, "Indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or a locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin".
- As a member of the WTO, India enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999, to govern the GI Tag. The Act came into force in 2003 and is administered by Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, who is also the Registrar of Geographical Indications. The first product to be included in the list was Darjeeling Tea.
- **GI Logo**
  - The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has recently launched a logo for Geographical Indication with the tagline, "Invaluable Treasure of Incredible India".
  - The move is aimed to create awareness about Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in the country.
  - GI as an element of IPR is covered under the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, and TRIPS Agreement.

Product Name	State or Region	Properties
Palani Panchamirtham	Dindigul District, Tamil Nadu	■ It is main religious offerings to Lord Dhandayuthapani Swamy, the presiding deity of Arulmigu Dhandayuthapani Swamy Temple. ■ It is a combination of five natural substances, namely, bananas, jaggery sugar, cow ghee, honey and cardamom in a definite proportion.
Tawlhlohpuan	Mizoram	■ It is a medium to heavy, compactly woven fabric. ■ It is known for warp yarns, warping, weaving and intricate designs that are made by hand.
Mizo Puanchei	Mizoram	■ It is an essential possession for every Mizo lady and an important marriage outfit in the state. ■ It is a colourful Mizo shawl/textile which is considered as the most colourful among the Mizo textiles.
Tirur Betel Vine	Tirur, Tanur, Tirurangadi, Kuttippuram, Malappuram and Vengara block panchayats of Malappuram District, Kerala	■ It is an agricultural product. ■ It is valued both for its mild stimulant action and medicinal properties.
Dindigul Lock	Dindigul city, Tamil Nadu	■ It is known for its superior quality and durability. ■ It is made of iron and brass and are entirely handmade. ■ It is unique as each lock is designed with different lever pattern.
Kandangi Sarees	Karaikudi Taluk, Sivaganga District, Tamil Nadu	■ They are handwoven cotton Sarees. ■ They are made up of high quality cotton from Coimbatore and are made by weavers of Devanga Chettiars for women of Chettiar community. ■ These sarees are bright in colours and also have large contrast borders covering as far as two-thirds of the Saree.
Kondapalli Toys	Andhra Pradesh	■ It is made from Tella Poniki woods. ■ The wood is malleable and can be easily chiselled.
Coorg Arabica Coffee	Kodagu, Karnataka	
Wayanad Robusta Coffee	Wayanad, Kerala	
Chikmagalur Arabica Coffee	Chikmagalur, Karnataka	
Araku Valley Arabica Coffee	Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh	
Bababudangiris Arabica Coffee	Chikmagalur, Karnataka	
Monsooned Malabar Robusta Coffee	Karnataka	

Guidelines for Evaluation of Nanopharmaceuticals in India

- GoI released "Guidelines for Evaluation of Nanopharmaceuticals in India".
- These guidelines have been developed in line with the provisions of Schedule Y of Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 and Second Schedule of the New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules, 2019 with specific requirements for nanopharmaceuticals.
- **Key Points**
  - The nano-size range should be declared in the product specification. The particles should be within the claimed nano-size range in all given testing conditions.
  - The detailed methods of the manufacturing process and the impact of nanomaterial waste disposal on the environment should also be declared.
  - The added advantage and possible disadvantage of nanopharmaceuticals in comparison to conventional or traditional drug or API should be clearly stated on the products.
  - The stability testing for nanoformulations should focus on functionality, integrity, size range of nanopharmaceuticals.
  - It will cover nanopharmaceuticals in the form of finished formulation as well as API of a new molecule or an already approved molecule with altered nanoscale dimensions, properties.
- **Nanopharmaceuticals:** It is defined as a pharmaceutical preparation containing nanomaterials intended for internal use or external application on a human for the purpose of therapeutics, diagnostics and health benefits. Nanomaterial is defined as material having a particle size in the range of 1 to 100 nm in at least one dimension. Nano-formulations are not entirely new drugs but medicines that have better quality because of the technology-led delivery mechanisms that are used to make its administration in the body more effective.

Postal Ballot Facilities for Absentee Voters

- GoI amended the Rule 27 C of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961.
- **Salient Features of the Amendments**
  - Concept of 'absentee voter' has been introduced and defined for the elections.
  - **Absentee Voter:** He/she is a person belonging to such class of persons as may be notified, under clause (c) of section 60 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and who is employed in essential services as mentioned in the said notification, and includes an elector belonging to the class of senior citizens or persons with disabilities [Rule 27 A (aa)].
  - **Person with Disability:** He/She is the person flagged as person with disability in the data base for the electoral roll.
  - **Senior Citizen:** He/She is an elector belonging to the class of absentee voters and is above 80 years of age.
  - In case of an absentee voter, the application shall be made in Form 12D, and shall contain such particulars as specified therein, and shall be duly verified by the Nodal Officer for the absentee voter, other than senior citizens or persons with disabilities, which shall reach the Returning Officer within five days following the date of notification of election.
  - In the case of absentee voters, postal ballot paper shall be returned to the centre provided for recording of vote under Sub-Rule(3) of Rule 27F, subject to any direction that may be issued by the Election Commission in this behalf.
  - The two categories of voters-senior citizens of more than 80 years of age and PwD electors

Economic Scenario

3

Global Competitiveness Index 4.0: WEF

- World Economic Forum (WEF) released the 2019 edition of the Global Competitiveness Report. The report featured the Global Competitiveness Index 4.0 (GCI 4.0).
- **Pillars of the Report:** Institutions; Infrastructure; ICT adoption; Macroeconomic stability; Health; Skills; Product market; Labour market; Financial system; Market size; Business dynamism; and Innovation capability.
- **Key Findings**
  - India has been ranked 68th compared to the 58th rank of 2018. It is primarily because of faster improvements of several countries previously ranked lower.
  - India ranks high on macroeconomic stability (90, 43rd) and market size (93.7, 3rd). India performed well innovation (50.9, 35th). Financial sector (69.5, 40th) is relatively deep and stable.
  - Singapore has become the world's most competitive economy in 2019.
  - China (28th) is the best performer among the BRICS countries.
- **Global Competitiveness Index 4.0:** It was introduced by WEF in 2018. It provides a detailed map of the factors and attributes that drive productivity, growth and human development in the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. GCI 4.0 covers 141 economies, which account for 99% of the world's GDP.

Strategic Disinvestment

- Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) under the Ministry of Finance has been made the nodal department for the strategic stake sale in the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs).

- Earlier PSUs for strategic sale were identified by NITI Aayog but now DIPAM along with NITI Aayog will jointly identify PSUs for strategic disinvestment.
- **Disinvestment:** It means the dilution of stake of the Government in a public enterprise. While in strategic disinvestment there is sale upto 50%, or such higher percentage of the Government shareholding of a central public sector enterprises (CPSE) along with transfer of management control.

Donimalai: Iron Mining

- National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) is set to restart mining at Donimalai in Bellari district of Karnataka.
- **National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC):** It is India's single largest iron ore producer, incorporated in 1958. It is under administrative control of the Ministry of Steel. Donimalai mine is owned by NMDC since 1968.

India Economic Summit

- World Economic Forum's 33rd India Economic Summit took place in New Delhi.
- It was hosted in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- The summit was chaired by Bangladesh's PM Sheikh Hasina and co-chaired by Singapore's Deputy PM Heng Swee Keat.
- **Theme of the Summit:** Innovating for India: Strengthening South Asia, Impacting the World
- **Aspects Related to India**
  - The Indian Social Entrepreneurs of the Year 2019 are Shanti Raghavan and Dipesh Sutariya of EnAble India. Enable India is an NGO that works towards economic independence and dignity of people with disability.

■ **Difference between NIMZ and SEZ (Special Economic Zone)**

	NIMZ	SEZ
Origin	Under National Manufacturing Policy, 2011	Under SEZ Act, 2005
Minimum Area	5000 hectares	10-1000 hectare (depending on sector)
Maximum Area	Not specific	5000 hectares
Environmental Impact Assessment	Provided by state government	By the project developer

Complaint Management System (CMS)

■ RBI launched the Complaint Management System (CMS) a software application to facilitate RBI's grievance redressal process.

■ Customers can lodge complaints against any regulated entity with a public interface, such as commercial banks, urban cooperative banks, Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs). The complaint would be directed to the appropriate office of the Ombudsman/Regional Office of the RBI.

G20 Ministerial Meeting

■ The G20 trade ministerial summit on Trade and the Digital Economy was held in Japan. The meeting focused on the ways to promote trade and cooperation among the G20 countries in order to harness the potential of the digital economy.

■ In the meeting, India has urged for the adoption of "significant economic presence" concept for taxing global digital companies and has asked for close cooperation among the G20 member nations to deal with fugitive economic offenders who flee their countries to escape the consequences of the law

■ It also pitched for development of a common defensive toolkit of measures to deal with non-compliant tax jurisdictions that refuse to share tax-related information. The G20/Global Forum should further expand the network of automatic exchange of financial account information (AEOI), by identifying jurisdictions, including developing countries and financial centres that are relevant but have not yet committed to any timeline.

■ **G20**
   ● The G20 started in 1999 in the aftermath of the Asian financial crisis. It is an international forum for the governments and central bank governors from 19 countries and the European Union. It comprises a mix of the world's largest advanced and emerging economies, representing about two-thirds of the world's population, 85% of global gross GDP and over 75% of global trade.
   ● The members of the G20 are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union.

RBI's Debt Resolution Norms

■ The RBI has issued a new set of norms for dealing with stressed or Non Performing Assets (NPA's) in the banking sector.

■ Resolution Plans like corporate debt restructuring scheme, strategic debt restructuring scheme, change in ownership outside SDR, sustainable structuring of stressed assets, joint lenders forum and flexible structuring of existing long-term project loans are withdrawn.

■ Apart from banks, new norms are also applicable for Non Banking Financial Companies, Small Finance Banks and other Financial Institutions.

■ **Revised Norms**
   ● Lenders will get a 30 day review period to frame a resolution strategy, unlike previous norms that compelled lenders to start a resolution strategy even if there was a one day default. Lenders should initiate the process of implementing a resolution plan (RP) even before a default. Lenders shall recognise incipient stress in loan accounts, immediately on default, by classifying such assets as special mention accounts (SMA).
   ● SMA-0 categories will be treated as default case fit for insolvency resolution if they fail to pay the principal or interest due on them within 0-30 days.
   ● SMA-1 defaulters will be taken for Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) if they don't pay between 31-60 days.

Nation & States

SARAS Aajeevika Mela

- It is an initiative under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), Ministry of Rural Development, GoI.
- Its objective was to bring the rural women Self Help Groups (SHGs) formed with the support of DAY-NRLM, under one platform to show-case their skills, sell their products and help them build linkages with bulk buyers.
- It was organised by the marketing arm of the MoRD, Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART).

Performance Smart-Board

- Recently, the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) launched an automated real time Performance Smart-Board.
- It seeks to ensure effective monitoring of the key programmes of the Ministry. The smart board will act as a single window access for Centre, State or District specific projects implemented by MeitY.

The Gandhian Challenge

- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog's Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) and UNICEF India including Generation Unlimited launched 'The Gandhian Challenge'. It was launched on the occasion of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- This innovation challenge is aimed to provide a platform for every child across India to ideate innovative solutions for a sustainable India of their dreams, using Gandhi's principles.
- **Categories of Ideas for Challenge:** Art and Innovation (Letters, poems, painting, videos, and photos, among others) and Science, Technology and Innovation (Robotics, IoT, sensors and 3D printers, among others).

- **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM):** AIM is the NITI Ayog's initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.
- **UNICEF:** It is an integral part of the UN, which works with governments, communities, civil society organizations, the private sector, and other partners worldwide to advance children's rights, and is guided by the Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- **Generation Unlimited:** It is a new UNICEF-led global partnership that aims to ensure that every young person age 10-24 is in some form of school, learning, training, self-employment, or age-appropriate employment by 2030.

Swachh Bharat Diwas 2019

- To commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, PM released a postage stamp and silver coin, and launched Swachh Bharat Diwas 2019.
- **Einstein Challenge:** The challenge aimed to invite thinkers, entrepreneurs, and tech leaders to be at the forefront of spreading Gandhi's ideas through innovation to make it reach future generations.
- On the occasion of Swachh Bharat Divas 2019, the Ministry of Railways also released Station Cleanliness Survey 2019.
  - Rajasthan's Jaipur station topped the list of cleanest railway stations in India, in the non-suburban group of stations.
  - In the suburban group of stations, Maharashtra's Andheri station has topped the list.
  - The cleanest railway zone award for 2019 has been given to the North Western Railway Zone.

School Education Quality Index: NITI Aayog

- NITI Aayog released the first edition of the School Education Quality Index (SEQI).

Coal Gasification Plant for Urea Project

- Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has signed a contract for the coal gasification plant for the urea project at Talchar, Odisha.
- **Objective of Project:** To improve India's self-sufficiency in Urea, promote agricultural growth in India and promote the use of domestic coal in an environmentally-friendly manner.
- Talcher fertilizers limited (TFL) is implementing this project under the GoI's flagship programme of revival of closed fertilizer units of Fertilizer Corporation of India Limited (FCIL).
- **FCIL:** It was incorporated in 1961. FCI was re-organised into FCIL as a group of operating fertilizer plants at Sindhri (Jaharkhand), Gorakhpur (UP), Talcher (Odisha) and Ramagundam (Telangana).
- **Coal Gasification:** The process of Coal Gasification chemically transforms the fossil fuel into Synthetic Natural Gas (SNG), instead of burning fossil fuel.
- **Synthetic Natural Gas:** The process of Coal Gasification chemically transforms the fossil fuel into Synthetic Natural Gas (SNG), instead of burning fossil fuel. It produces Syngas which is a mixture consisting primarily of Methane (CH_4), Carbon monoxide (CO), Hydrogen (H_2), Carbon dioxide (CO_2) and Water vapour (H_2O). Syngas can be used to produce a wide range of fertilizers, fuels, solvent and synthetic materials. It is primarily used for electricity generation, for the production of chemical feedstocks.

Jaldoot

- Jaldoot is a travelling exhibition that is designed to take the message of water conservation to masses focusing on 1592 stressed blocks in 256 districts across the country.
- Regional Outreach Bureau (ROB), Pune under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, in association with Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) launched the Jaldoot campaign.
- The ROB has designed a bus to create the Jaldoot: A Travelling Exhibition on Jalshakti Abhiyan.
- The bus visited 8 districts of Maharashtra. The field units at these locations conducted different activities like competitions, rallies and cultural programmes.

Jan Soochna Portal

- Government of Rajasthan has launched the first-ever public information portal named "Jan Soochna Portal – 2019".
- The Department of Information Technology, Rajasthan will serve as the nodal department for the development, operationalization, and maintenance of the JSP.
- The portal is aimed to provide information to the public about government authorities and departments empowering them with access to useful information.
- Information kiosks in village panchayats and self-service e-Mitra centres in the towns will be established to enable the people to access the information.

International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) Notices

- INTERPOL issued notice against fugitive offender in connecting with PNB scam.
- INTERPOL Notices are international requests for cooperation or alerts allowing police in member countries to share critical crime-related information.
- **International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL):** It is an intergovernmental organization that helps coordinate the police force of 194 member countries. It is headquartered in Lyon, France. Each of the member countries hosts and INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB). CBI is designated as NCB of India.

Notice	Purpose
Red	Wanted Person
Yellow	Missing Person
Green	Warnings and Intelligence
Purple	Modus Operandi
Orange	Imminent Threat
Black	Unidentified Bodies
Blue	Additional information
UN-Security Council Special Notice	Groups and Individuals subject to UNSC Sanctions

Girls Drop Out of Higher Education

- A recent study titled 'Educating the Girl Child: Role of Incentivisation and other enablers and disablers' was done by CRY (Child Rights and You – a Non-

5 International Scenario

World Habitat Day

- The World Habitat Day of 2019 was hosted by the Government of Mexico in Mexico City.
- **Theme for World Habitat Day 2019:** Frontier Technologies as an Innovative Tool to Transform Waste to Wealth
- This year the focus was on promoting the contribution of innovative technologies to sustainable waste management to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 11. SDG 11 aims to make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- United Nations has designated the first Monday of October every year as World Habitat Day. It was first celebrated in 1986 in Nairobi with the theme, "Shelter is My Right".
- **Frontier Technologies:** It refer to automation, robotics, electric vehicles, renewable energy technologies, biotechnologies, and artificial intelligence which can transform social, economic and environmental spheres.

Global Urbanization Shift

- Asian Development Bank released the Asian Development Outlook Report-2019. According to the report, the number of urban inhabitants in developing Asia has increased almost five times since 1970.
- The report is based on the data from the World Urbanization Prospects report that is released by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the UN.
- **Key Findings**
  - Between 1970 to 2017, the urban population in Developing Asia group of countries grew from 375 million to 1.84 billion.
  - The global increase in urban population led by this region accounted for approximately 53%.

Two-thirds of the nearly 1.5 billion additional city dwellers in Developing Asia belong to India and China.
- The Developing Asia group urbanized faster than the rest of the world not only in terms of absolute growth, but also in terms of the growth rate.
- The urban population in this region increased at an average 3.4% per annum from 1970 to 2017. This was much faster than the 2.6% in the rest of the developing world (mainly Africa and Latin America) and 1.0% in the developed world.
- **World Urbanization Prospects Report-2018**
  - Urban growth is closely related to the three dimensions of sustainable development; social, economic, and environmental.
  - Globally, more people live in urban areas than in rural areas, with 55% of the world's population residing in urban areas in 2018.
  - India, China, and Nigeria are expected to account for 35% of the growth in the world's urban population between 2018 and 2050.
  - Tokyo is the world's largest city with an agglomeration of 37 million inhabitants, followed by Delhi with 29 million, Shanghai with 26 million.
- **Asian Development Bank (ADB):** It is a regional development bank that aims to promote social and economic development in Asia and is headquartered in Manila, Philippines. Developing Asia refers to a group of 45 countries that are members of the ADB. India became a member of the Bank as a founding member in 1966.

Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar

- Recently, four indigenously built ships of the Indian Navy First Training Squadron, Indian Naval Ships

Golden Visa Scheme: UK

- Golden Visa Scheme provides a faster route for wealthy investors coming from outside the European Union and Switzerland to settle in Britain. The program was introduced in 2008 to attract wealthy foreign nationals willing to invest large amounts of capital in Britain.

- To qualify, foreign nationals must put down a minimum of 2 million pounds (around USD 2.5 million) as an investment in Britain. Such an investment in United Kingdom bonds, share capital or companies allow investors to apply for permanent residency within five years.

Qatar Quits OPEC

- Qatar has withdrawn membership of Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to focus on Liquefied Natural Gas.

- Gas production is not part of OPEC's mandate.

- Qatar is a small oil producer which accounts for less than 2% of total oil output.

- **Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries**
  - OPEC is a permanent, intergovernmental organization, created at the Baghdad Conference in 1960, by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.
  - OPEC is a cartel that aims to manage the supply of oil in an effort to set the price of oil on the world market, in order to avoid fluctuations that might affect the economies of both producing and purchasing countries.
  - According to its statutes, OPEC membership is open to any country that is a substantial exporter of oil and that shares the ideals of the organisation.
  - OPEC is headquartered in Vienna, Austria.

Paris Call

- At UNESCO Internet Governance Forum (IGF) meeting convened in Paris, "The Paris Call for Trust and Security in Cyberspace" was commenced.

- It aimed at developing common principles for securing cyberspace.

- Other major players who did not sign the document were China, North Korea, Russia, Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Australia despite the fact that most of them have an active cyberwarfare programme in place.

Nobel Prize 2019

- **Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences:** In 1968, Sveriges Riksbank (Sweden's central bank) established the Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel. It is awarded by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Stockholm, Sweden, according to the same principles as for the Nobel Prizes that have been awarded since 1901.

- **Lithium Ion Battery:** Lithium is the lightest of all metals, has the greatest electrochemical potential and provides the largest energy density for weight. Although slightly lower in energy density than lithium metal, lithium-ion is safe, provided certain precautions are met when charging and discharging.

- **Randomised Control Trials:** The new tool employed by the laureates is the use of Randomised Control Trials (or RCTs). It is a method to estimate the impact of a certain intervention or policy.

Category	Winners & Contribution	Achievement
Physics	■ **James Peebles:** For theoretical discoveries in physical cosmology. ■ **Michel Mayor and Didier Queloz:** For the discovery of an exoplanet orbiting a solar-type star. (Exoplanet 51 Pegasi b, orbiting its star 51 Pegasi)	For contributions to our understanding of the evolution of the universe and Earth's place in the cosmos.
Chemistry	John B. Goodenough, M. Stanley Whittingham, and Akira Yoshino	For the development of lithium-ion batteries.
Physiology or Medicine	William G. Kaelin, Jr., Sir Peter J. Ratcliffe and Gregg L. Semenza.	For discoveries of how cells sense and adapt to oxygen availability.

Economy	Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, and Michael Kremer.	For experimental approach to alleviating global poverty by using RCT method.
Peace	Abiy Ahmed Ali (Prime Minister of Ethiopia)	For an initiative to resolve the border conflict with neighboring Eritrea.
Literature	Peter Handke – 2019	For an influential work that with linguistic ingenuity has explored the periphery and the specificity of human experience.
Literature	Olga Tokarczuk – 2018	For a narrative imagination that with encyclopedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life.

Military Exercises

Army		
Exercise	**Participant**	**Venue**
Exercise SHAKTI	India-France	Rajasthan
14th Edition NOMADIC Elephant	India-Mongolia	Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh
10th Edition EKUVERIN	India-Maldives	Pune, Maharashtra
ExerciseDharma Guardian-2019	India and Japan	Vairengte, Mizoram
MAITREE-2019	India and Thailand	Umroi, Meghalaya
Operation Sunrise 2	India and Myanmar	Indo-Myanmar border
Ex Tsentr	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Nations	Orenburg, Russia
4th Edition KAZIND-2019	Kazakhstan and India	Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand
VINBAX-2019	India and Vietnam	Thach That district, Hanoi, Vietnam
Bold Kurukshetra	India and Singapore	Babina Military Station, Jhansi
6th Edition Mitra Shakti-2019	India and Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
AFINDEX-2019	India and 17 African nations namely Benin, Botswana, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe	Aundh Military Station, Pune
3rd Edition AL NAGAH – 2019	India and Oman	Jabel AI Akhdar training camp, Oman
8th Edition Sampriti – 2019	India and Bangladesh	Tangail, Bangladesh
12th Edition Bold Kurukshetra 2019	India and Singapore	Jhansi, India
Maitree Exercise	India and Bangladesh	Umroi, Meghalaya
Him Vijay	Integrated Battle Group, India	Arunachal Pradesh
TROPEX, 2019	Indian Army, Air Force, Navy, Coast Guard	
Mitra Shakti VI	India and Sri Lanka	Sri Lanka
Al Nagah III	India and Oman	Oman
IAFTX	India and Africa	Pune, India
IMBEX	India and Myanmar	Haryana, India

SAFAR

- The System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR) is a national initiative introduced by the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) to measure the air quality of a metropolitan city by measuring the overall pollution level and the location-specific air quality of the city.
- **SAFAR Monitors**
  - **Weather Parameters:** Temperature, rainfall, humidity, wind speed, and wind direction, UV and solar radiation.
  - **Pollutants:** PM2.5, PM10, Ozone, Carbon Monoxide (CO), Nitrogen Oxides (NOx), Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2), Benzene, Toluene, Xylene, and Mercury.
- The World Meteorological Organization has recognized SAFAR as a prototype activity on the basis of the high-quality control and standards maintained in its implementation.
- The system is indigenously developed by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune and is operationalised by the India Meteorological Department (IMD).
- It gives real-time air quality index on a 24x7 basis with colour-coding (along with 72 hours advance forecast).

Mt Paektu

- Mount Paektu or Changbai (in Chinese), an active stratovolcano that last erupted over 1,000 years ago, has been in the news recently for its mythical importance for Koreans.
- It is situated at the border between Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and China.

Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary

- Recently, death of Asiatic Water Buffaloes is reported from the Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, Assam due to the anthrax.

- The Asiatic Wild Water Buffalo or Asiatic Wild Buffalo is known to be found in the Central Indian forests; and is mostly restricted to the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
- Recently, the Maharashtra Government has declared the forest area of Kolamarka forest, as a conservation reserve for the Asiatic Wild Buffalo.
- Asiatic Wild Buffalo has been listed as an endangered species by IUCN. It is listed under Schedule-1 of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and included in CITES Appendix-III.
- **Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary:** It is situated in the flood plains of River Brahmaputra and has the highest density of one-horned rhinos in the world.
- **Anthrax:** It is an infectious disease caused by a bacteria known as *Bacillus anthracis*. It is rare in humans, but sometimes become fatal if they get infected with anthrax when they come in contact with infected animals or contaminated animal products.

First Snow Leopard Survey

- India launched the first National Protocol on Snow Leopard Population Assessment to estimate the population and geographical range of the snow leopard.
- It has been developed by scientific experts in association with the Snow Leopard States/UTs namely, Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh.
- The occasion also marked the inaugural session of the 4th steering committee meeting of the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Program.
- **Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection (GSLEP) Program:** It is a high-level intergovernmental alliance of all the 12 snow

central intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical co-operation in the nuclear field. Its headquarter is located in Vienna, Austria.

Uranium Mining in Nallamala Forest

- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change granted in-principle approval to the Department of Atomic Energy to survey and explore for uranium in the Nallamala Forest Reserve.
- **Uranium Deposit:** In India, Uranium deposit occurs in the Dharwar rocks. It occurs along the Singhbhum Copper belt (Jharkhand); Udaipur, Alwar and Jhunjhunu districts of Rajasthan, Durg district of Chhattisgarh, Bhandara district of Maharashtra and Kullu district of Himachal Pradesh. Some reserves were discovered in parts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana between Seshachalam forest and Sresailam (Southern edge of Andhra to Southern edge of Telangana).
- **Nallamala Forest Reserve:** It is located in Nallamala Ranges of the Eastern Ghats. A part of the forest reserve belongs to the Nagarjunsagar-Srisailam Tiger Reserve, which is the largest Tiger Reserve in India. Amrabad Tiger Reserve also lies in the Nallamala hills.
- **Mineral Mining:** In India, mining policy and legislation for major minerals are managed by the Ministry of Mines.
- The central government has the power to notify "minor minerals" under Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 whereas State Governments have complete powers for making Rules for grant of concessions in respect of extraction of minor minerals and levy and collection of royalty on minor minerals.
- **Department of Atomic Energy:** It is directly under the PM of India with headquarters in Mumbai, Maharashtra. It was established in 1954 by a Presidential Order. It is engaged in the development of nuclear power technology, applications of radiation technologies in the fields of agriculture, medicine, industry and basic research. Uranium being an atomic mineral is managed by the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).

Vulture Conservation

- Presently, India has nine Vulture Conservation and Breeding Centres (VCBC). The objective is to look after the vultures and breed them in captivity and release them into the wild.
- Conservation efforts are focussed on the three species of vultures, White-backed Vulture, Slender-billed Vulture, and Long-billed Vulture.
- **Species of Vulture Found in India**

Species	IUCN Status
Oriental White Backed Vulture	Critically Endangered
Slender-Billed Vulture	Critically Endangered
Long-Billed Vulture	Critically Endangered
Egyptian Vulture	Endangered
Red Headed Vulture	Critically Endangered
Indian Griffon Vulture	Least Concerned
Himalayan Griffon	Near Threatened
Cinereous Vulture	Near Threatened
Bearded Vulture or Lammergeier	Near Threatened

UN Convention to Combat Desertification: CoP 14

- The 14th edition of the Conference of Parties (CoP-14) to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was held in Greater Noida, UP, India. This was the first time that India hosted an edition of the UNCCD CoP.
- The theme of the Conference was 'Restore land, Sustain future'. India is among the select few countries to have hosted the CoP of all three Rio conventions on climate change, biodiversity and land.
- India took over the Presidency of CoP from China for next 2 years till 2021. Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change was elected as the President.
- **Key Takeaways**
  - **Delhi Declaration:** Commitment for a range of issues, including gender and health, ecosystem restoration, taking action on climate change, private sector engagement, Peace Forest Initiative and recovery of five million hectares of degraded land in India.
  - The party countries have agreed to make the Sustainable Development Goal target of

- 40% of India's power capacity to be based on non-fossil fuel source.
- Creating an additional 'Carbon sink' of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of CO_2 equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.

Cyclones

- A tropical cyclone is the generic term for a low pressure system over tropical or subtropical waters, with organised convection (i.e. thunderstorm activity) and winds at low levels circulating either anti-clockwise (in the northern hemisphere) or clockwise (in the southern hemisphere).

- Tropical Cyclone is known by different names in different parts of the world. It is known as Hurricane in the Atlantic and the eastern North Pacific or as Typhoon in the western North Pacific. Whereas in other parts of the world, such as the Indian Ocean and the South Pacific, the term 'Cyclone' or 'Tropical Cyclone' is used.

- WMO maintains the database of cyclone/hurricane/typhoon names. There are six lists of names used in rotation and they are recycled every six years.

Name	Region	Named By
Trevor	Gulf of Carpentaria, Australia	Australia
Veronica	Pilbara Coast, Australia	USA
Pabuk	Gulf of Thailand	Laos
Phethai	Odisha	Thailand
Titli	Odisha	Pakistan
Gaja	Odisha	Sri Lanka
Kenneth	Mozambique	France
Idai	Mozambique	France
Maha	Comorin Sea, Southern most end of India	Oman
Fani	Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Odisha	Bangladesh
Kyarr	Arabian Sea	Myanmar
Hikaa	Gujarat Coast, Karachi (Pakistan), Masirah (Oman)	Maldives
Dorian (Hurrican)	Bahamas	USA

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Elastocaloric Effect

- According to a research published in the Journal Science, the elastocaloric effect, if harnessed, may be able to do away with the need of fluid refrigerants used in fridges and air-conditioners.
- Alternative approach involves using "caloric" materials, which release heat when subjected to an external stimulus such as an applied magnetic or electric field or a compressive force. When the stimulus is removed, the material will absorb heat, thus cooling its surroundings.
- **Elastocaloric Effect:** It can be regarded as the entropy change under isothermal condition or temperature change under adiabatic condition when a mechanical stress is used or released in a given material. Elastocaloric materials are solids capable of stress-induced reversible phase transformations during which latent heat is released or absorbed.
- In the elastocaloric effect, the transfer of heat works in the same way as when fluid refrigerants are compressed and expanded. When a rubber band is stretched, it absorbs heat from its environment, and when it is released, it gradually cools down.

Central Council of Health and Family Welfare Conference

- 13th Conference of the Central Council of Health and Family Welfare (CCHFW) was held in New Delhi.
- It focused on two priority areas for the public health sector:
  - Increasing health budgets by the Centre and the States/UTs.
  - Strengthening of medical infrastructure.
- **Initiatives Launched**
  - **Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan (SUMAN):** This initiative aims to achieve zero preventable Maternal and Newborn Deaths. On the occasion, its website and the grievance redressal portal was also launched.
- **Central Council of Health and Family Welfare (CCHFW):** It is an apex advisory body set up to provide support and advice to the Department of Health, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on policy formulation and to consider and recommend broad lines of policy in regard to matters concerning health.

WHO India Country Cooperation Strategy 2019-2023

- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched WHO India Country Cooperation Strategy 2019–2023: A Time of Transition'.
- The four areas for strategic cooperation of WHO with India include;
  - Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
  - Health and wellness by addressing the determinants of health.
  - Protection against health emergencies.
  - India's global leadership in health.
- The India CCS fully aligns itself with WHO 'triple billion' targets, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and WHO South-East Asia Region's eight Flagship Priorities.
- The India CCS connects with India's National Health Policy 2017, and other initiatives like Ayushman Bharat, National Viral Hepatitis programme, Eat Right India movement, the Fit India movement and Poshan Abhiyaan that have collectively engaged with the people and enhanced the awareness about crucial health areas.
- The Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) is a medium-term vision for WHO's cooperation with a given Member State.

Social Issues

World Mental Health Day

- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment observed the 'World Mental Health Day'.
- **Theme for 2019:** Mental Health Promotion and Suicide Prevention
- World Mental Health Day is organized by the World Federation for Mental Health.
- **World Federation for Mental Health:** It is an international membership based organization. It was founded in 1948 with the aim to promote the advancement of mental health awareness and prevention of mental disorders.

Universal Periodic Review

- GoI decided to form a task force to prepare a National Action Plan on Human Rights as mandated under the UN Human Rights Council's (UNHRC) Universal Periodic Review (UPR).
- The task force will involve the Union Home Ministry and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and have representatives from ministries such as social justice and health.
- **Universal Periodic Review:** It is a unique process, involving a peer review of the human rights records of all 193 UN member states.
- **UN Human Rights Council:** It is an inter-governmental body within the UN framework responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them. It was created by the UNGA in 2006.

Meghalayan Minor Tribes: Sixth Schedule

- The Government of Meghalaya decided to exclude 'unrepresented tribes' from the provisions of the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.
- Sub-committee of the Meghalaya government had decided to recommend to the Standing Committee of Parliament for the removal of the word 'unrepresented tribes' from the Sixth Schedule.
- The proposed amendment will deprive some of these Scheduled Tribes of their constitutional rights to be represented in the autonomous district councils and it will not be possible for them to get elected on the basis of adult suffrage.
- **Five Minor Tribes:** Bodo-Kachari, Hajong, Koch, Mann, and Rabha.
- These tribes have been clubbed together as 'unrepresented tribes' for nomination in Meghalaya's autonomous tribal councils. These minor tribes are indigenous to Meghalaya.
- **Autonomous District Councils:** Garo, Jaintia, and Khasi district councils
- **Sixth Schedule:** It makes special provisions for the welfare and advancement of the Scheduled Tribes and the tribal areas residing in the parts or the whole of the four northeastern states namely, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Tripura.

National Nutrition Survey

- The first-ever comprehensive National Nutrition Survey has been conducted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and UNICEF to measure the level of malnutrition in India.
- It is the largest micronutrient survey implemented globally to assess nutrient deficiency among children.

flu") is a type of influenza virus that causes a highly infectious, severe respiratory disease in birds.

- **HORIZON 2020:** The Indian government and the European Union (EU) have collaborated on a programme to develop a "Next Generation Influenza Vaccine" to protect citizens worldwide. The EU and the Indian government's Department of Biotechnology (DBT), have committed €15 million each to fund this project under the EU's Research and Innovation Framework Programme called HORIZON 2020.

Poshan Pakhwada

- To Spread Nutrition Message, Poshan Pakhwada was celebrated from March 8-22, 2019 across many districts of the country to mark the first anniversary of Poshan Abhiyaan which the government has launched to reduce low birthweight, stunting, under-nutrition among children and anaemia among children, adolescent girls and women.
- India is home to the largest number of malnourished children in the world.
- The Women and Child Development Ministry, the nodal ministry for Poshan Abhiyaan, played a central role in organizing the pakhwada, which was launched on International Women's Day.
- The Poshan Pakhwada was celebrated on lines of 'Poshan Maah' held in the month of September, 2018.

Google Bolo: Reader-Tutor App

- Google has recently launched a new app called Bolo. It will help students in India read in Hindi and English and work as a tutor of sorts.
- The Bolo app comes after a pilot project that Google ran in Uttar Pradesh with ASER centre.

ICDS

- A report published by WHO noted that the benefits of Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) provided by anganwadis to children, pregnant women and lactating mothers have a poor reach. Further the report mentions that the benefits are yet to reach the key beneficiaries – the poorest of poor and uneducated mothers.

- Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme was launched in 1975 and is the world's largest community based programme. The scheme is targeted at children upto the age of 6 years, pregnant and lactating mothers and women 16-44 years of age. The scheme is aimed to improve the health, nutrition and education to the target community.

Services and Target Group Under ICDS	
Services	**Target Group**
1. Supplementary Nutrition 2. Immunization 3. Health Checkup 4. Referral Services	Children upto 6 years, Pregnant and lactating mothers
5. Pre-school Education	Children 3 to 6 years
6. Nutrition and Health Education	Women 15 to 45 years

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)

- Launched in 2015, it is a flagship program of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE). National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) implements it with the help of training partners.
- It aims to mobilize youth to take up skill training with the aim of increasing productivity and aligning the training and certification to the needs of the country.
- Owing to the success of PMKVY 1.0 wherein more than 19 lakh students were trained as against the target of 24 lakh, the scheme was relaunched as PMKVY 2.0 (2016-2020) with an allocated budget of ₹12000 Crores that aims to train 10 million youth by the year 2020.
- **Key Components**
  - **Short Term Training:** Training as per National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) is provided to those who are either school/college dropouts or unemployed.
  - **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL):** An individual with a certain set of skills or with prior learning experience is assessed and