



## Important Facts For Prelims (18th May 2019)

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### Taiwan Legalises Gay Marriages

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- Recently, Taiwan became the first Asian country to legalise same-sex marriages.
- The Bill passed by the Taiwanese Parliament recognises same-sex marriages and gives couples many of the tax, insurance and child custody benefits available to male-female married couples.
- In India, Homosexuality was decriminalised by the Supreme Court in 2018 when the apex court struck down some of the provisions of Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code.

### UK's Law on Carrying Kirpans

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- Recently, the United Kingdom government has passed the '**Offensive Weapons Bill**' with an

amendment by which **Sikhs in the country will be allowed to own a longer 'Kirpan (dagger)' and use it during religious and cultural functions.** The Bill received the royal assent and is now an Act.

- The purpose of the law is to reduce violent crimes in the UK following a spike in fatal knife attacks and acid attacks by strengthening the law surrounding the possession, supply and sale of dangerous knives, corrosive substances and firearms.
- However, the initial draft of the Bill had included clauses directly impacting Sikhs, including extending existing offences of possessing a bladed article or offensive weapon on school premises and banning the sale and possession of curved swords over 50 cm, both in public and private.
- However, with the new amendment added as "**religious reasons**", Sikhs can keep longer (3 feet) kirpans and use it during religious and cultural functions.

#### NOTE:

- Small *Kirpans* (around 3 inches or 7.6 cm) were not affected by the new legislation and are already protected under UK law.
- The *Kirpan* is a ceremonial knife/dagger which symbolises the spiritual struggle over evil. It is one of the five articles of faith (5 *Ks*) of Sikhs, which the baptised Sikhs are expected to wear at all times.
- The others *Ks* are - *Kesh* (unshorn hair), *Kara* (steel bracelet), *Kanga* (wooden comb) and *Kachha* (undershorts/underwear).

## Military Nursing Service to Get Ex-Servicemen Status

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The Defence Ministry and the Indian Army have agreed in principle to grant ex-servicemen (ESM) status to the Military Nursing Service (MNS) cadre.

- The ESM status will allow retired MNS officers to get identity cards, seek re-employment in government organizations/PSUs and apply for different resettlement schemes of the armed forces.
- The serving officers of MNS will be allowed to use star plates on their official vehicles. An officer from MNS will be entitled to have a single star on the car in case of a brigadier, and two stars if she is a major general.
- The Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT) in 2010 had directed the government to treat military nurses at par with regular commissioned officers in terms of ranks and entitlements.
- The MNS was set up as an auxiliary force in 1943 and has only women officers with permanent commission, who serve as nursing staff in all three forces.
- It is the only all-women officers' corps in the armed forces.

## Graphite Reserves in India

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- The **Arunachal Pradesh State government** has asked the **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** to explore the possibility of surveying and drilling for minerals along the India-China border, considering that China is reportedly undertaking huge mining activities in Tibet.
- **According to the GSI, about 35% of India's total Graphite reserves are found in Arunachal**

**Pradesh.** This is the highest found in the country.

- The GSI's 2013 report, showed Arunachal Pradesh sits on 43% of the country's graphite resources followed by Jammu & Kashmir (37%), Jharkhand (6%), Tamil Nadu (5%), and Odisha (3%).
- But in terms of resources, Tamil Nadu led with 37% followed by Jharkhand with 30% and Odisha with 29%.

## Graphite

- Graphite is a naturally-occurring form of **crystalline carbon**.
- It is a native element mineral found in **metamorphic** and **igneous rocks**.
- It has a **layered structure that consists of rings of six carbon atoms** arranged in widely spaced horizontal sheets.
- It is dark gray to black in colour, opaque, and very soft.
- It is the **only non-metal element that is a good conductor of electricity**.
- It is known as a **dry lubricant** for its greasy nature.
- It has many industrial uses, particularly for products that need very high heat.

## Geological Survey of India (GSI)

- The Geological Survey of India (GSI) was **set up in 1851** primarily to find coal deposits for the Railways.
- Over the years, it has not only grown into a repository of geo-science information required in various fields in the country, but has also attained the status of a geo-scientific organisation of international repute.
- The main functions of the GSI relate to creation and updation of national geo-scientific information and mineral resource assessment.
- It is **headquartered in Kolkata**, and has six regional offices located at Lucknow, Jaipur, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Shillong and Kolkata and State Unit offices in almost all States of the country.
- Presently, GSI is an **attached office to the Ministry of Mines**.

## Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK)

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The Rajasthan government has decided to revamp the **Ujala Clinics (Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics)**, a part of Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram, in its districts.

## Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (National Adolescent Health Programme)

- In order to ensure holistic development of adolescent population, the **Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) launched Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) in 2014**.
- The RKSK programme **defines an adolescent as a person within 10-19 years of age**, in urban and rural areas, includes both girls and boys, married and unmarried, poor and affluent, whether they are in school or out of school.
- To guide the implementation of this programme, MoHFW in collaboration with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) has developed a **National Adolescent Health Strategy**.
- The **six thematic areas** of RKSK as well as that of the strategy are **nutrition, sexual**

**reproductive health, substance misuse, non - communicable diseases, mental health, injuries and violence.**

- Its strength is its health promotion approach. The program envisages a paradigm **shift from the clinic-based services to the promotion and prevention and reaching adolescents in their own environment**, such as in schools, families and communities.
- **Key drivers** of the program are community based interventions like, **outreach by counsellors**, facility based counselling, **social and behavior change communication and strengthening of Adolescent Friendly Health Clinics (AFHC) across levels of care.**

## Mt. Makalu

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- It is the **fifth highest** mountain in the world, located in the Himalayas on the Nepalese-Tibetan (Chinese) border.
- It is **four-sided, pyramid-shaped** mountain, lies around 20 Km southeast of **Mount Everest**, the highest mountain in the world, in the Mahalangur Himalaya.
- The name Makalu is derived from the **Sanskrit word 'Maha Kala'**, a name for the Hindu god Shiva that translates "Big Black." The Chinese name for the peak is Makaru.

### **Makalu-Barun National Park**

Makalu lies within Nepal's **Makalu-Barun National Park** and Conservation Area, a 580-square-mile parkland that protects pristine ecosystems from tropical rainforests to alpine tundra above 13,000 feet.

- The remote **Barun Valley** below Makalu is particularly important and managed as a Strict Nature Reserve to preserve its unique qualities and ecosystems.
- Botanists have identified 3,128 species of flowering plants, including **25 species of rhododendron.**
- Many animals also live here, with over 440 bird species and 88 mammal species, which includes a **red panda, snow leopard, and the rare Asian golden cat.**