



Important Facts For Prelims (18th May 2019)

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Taiwan Legalises Gay Marriages

- 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

- 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

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

- 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)

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

- 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.**