



**MONTHLY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
GK
DIGEST:
MAY 2019**

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AIR MARSHAL RAKESH KUMAR TO TAKE OVER AS VICE CHIEF OF IAF

On May the 1st 2019, Air Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria will take over as Vice Chief of Indian Air Force, after superannuation of incumbent Air Marshal Anil Khosla.

ABOUT AIR MARSHAL R.K.S BHADAURIA:

- R.K.S Bhadauria was commissioned into India Air Force fighter stream on 15th June 1980 with the Sword of Honour.
- He has held important designations like Commandant of National Defence Academy, Senior Air Staff Officer at Central Air Command and Deputy Chief of Air Staff from January 2016 to February 28, 2017.
- **As Deputy Chief, he was chairman of the Indian negotiating team for 36 Rafale combat aircraft deal with France.**

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- From March 2017 till August 2018, he served as Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C), Southern Air Command.
- He currently heads IAF's Bengaluru-based Training Command.

ABOUT THE VICE CHIEF OF THE AIR STAFF (VCAS):

- **The VCAS is second-highest ranking officer in Indian Air Force (IAF).**
- It is a three-star appointment and is held by an Air Officer of the rank of Air Marshal.
- **He serves as Principal Staff Officer (PSO) at the Air Headquarters, New Delhi.**
- His responsibilities include operations and flying related tasks.
- The VCAS assumes duties and responsibilities of Chief of Air Staff (CAS) in event of his absence or is unable to perform his duties.

GOLDMAN ENVIRONMENTAL PRIZE AWARDED TO ALFRED BROWNELL

Alfred Brownell, an environmental lawyer and activist was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize.

DETAILS:

- **He was awarded the prize for exposing alleged abuse by the palm oil company Golden Veroleum Liberia and helping to prevent it from converting about 50 square kms of forest that is home to elephants, pygmy hippopotamuses and chimpanzees.**
- The company had been given a green light in 2010 by the government to expand in the country and was poised to turn more than 2,000 square kms of the lush forest into palm oil plantations.
- He won the Goldman prize along with five others for grassroots environmental activism.

ABOUT THE GOLDMAN ENVIRONMENTAL PRIZE:

- **The prize was created in 1989 by philanthropists Richard and Rhoda Goldman.**
- Winners are selected from nominations made by environmental organisations and others.
- **The prize carries a \$200,000 award.**

AYUSHMAN BHARAT DIWAS: 30 APRIL

As part of the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, Ayushman Bharat Diwas was celebrated across the country on April 30th.

DETAILS:

- For the first time, the day was observed on 30th April 2018.
- During the event, information regarding Ayushman Bharat Scheme was provided to people during health camps organised in rural areas.
- On this day, Gram Sabhas were organized in different parts of the country to create awareness about the National Health Protection Mission and verify and update details in the Socio-Economic and Caste Census database.

ABOUT THE AYUSHMAN BHARAT SCHEME:

- **The Central Government on March 21st 2018, had approved the launch of a new Centrally Sponsored 'Ayushman Bharat -National Health Protection Mission (AB- NHPM)'**.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the scheme on April 14th 2018 at Bijapur, Chhattisgarh.
- **The scheme has the benefit cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year.**
- The target beneficiaries of the proposed scheme will be more than 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population.

PROCESS TO PROCURE MISSILES BY THE INDIAN ARMY IS UNDERWAY

The Indian Army is in the process of procuring Spike-LR Anti-Tank Missiles from Israel and Igla-S Very Short Range Air Defence Systems (VSHORAD) from Russia.

DETAILS:

- The Indian Army is doing this through a set of new financial powers for emergency procurements sanctioned by the Defence Ministry.
- The Request For Proposal (RFP) for the two deals have been issued and the negotiations are ongoing.
- **Under the latest emergency financial powers, armed forces have been given a free hand to procure equipment worth upto Rs.300 crore on a priority basis.**
- **Under the emergency route, the Army is looking to procure about 12 launchers and around 250 missiles for each system.**
- **Deliveries have to be completed in three months, but extendable to six months.**

CLAIRE POLOSAK BECOMES FIRST FEMALE UMPIRE IN A MEN'S ODI

Australia's Claire Polosak has become the first female umpire to officiate in a men's one-day international at the ICC World Cricket League Division 2

DETAILS:

- **Polosak stood in the final between tournament host Namibia and Oman.**
- **The 31-year-old became the first woman to umpire an Australian men's domestic fixture in October 2017.**
- Polosak has overseen 15 women's ODIs and stood in the semi-final of the Women's World Twenty20 in 2018.
- **She and Eloise Sheridan became the first female umpires to officiate on-field together in a professional match in Australia in last year's Women's Big Bash League.**

US TO WITHDRAW SIGNATURE FROM U.N. ARMS TRADE TREATY

US President Donald Trump stated that his administration is withdrawing the U.S. signature from the U.N. Arms Trade Treaty, in response to concerns from gun rights activists that it could impinge on Americans' right to bear arms.

DETAILS:

- **Former US President Barack Obama signed the treaty in 2013 and sent the treaty to the Senate for ratification.**
- The Trump administration has rejected or withdrawn from a number of international agreements signed by his predecessors, including the Iran nuclear deal.

ABOUT THE U.N. ARMS TRADE TREATY:

- **The ATT, which has been ratified by more than 100 countries, entered into force in December 2014.**
- It regulates the trade in conventional arms such as small arms, battle tanks, combat aircraft, and warships.
- **It also aims to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in conventional arms and prevent their diversion.**
- While the treaty was signed by Barack Obama, it is yet to be ratified by the US.

CBSE WILL CONDUCT TWO-LEVEL EXAMS FOR CLASS 10

CBSE to conduct two-level exams for Class 10th Mathematics and English in which 20 marks internal exam will be conducted by respective schools and 80 marks will be given to theory conducted by the board.

DETAILS:

- **The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will be conducting two-level exams for class 10th Mathematics and English papers from 2020 onwards.**
- The circular has been sent to schools with proper guidelines and will be implemented from the board in 2020.
- According to a notice accessed by the indianexpress.com, a total of 20 marks will be assigned for school-based assessment in each of the exams.
- **In order to be considered for the board exams, students will have to clear the school-based exams first.**
- CSBE called the move 'learner-centric' and said that the need for school-based 'internal assessments' is increasing.

INTERNATIONAL WORKER'S DAY: 1ST MAY

International Worker's Day also known as Labour Day and May Day, is observed on 1st May every year, to promote and encourage the international labour associations.

DETAILS:

- **The theme of Labour Day 2019 is 'Uniting Workers for Social and Economic Advancement'.**
- **Labour Day provides the Labours their right to work for only 8 hours a day.**

LET US HAVE A LOOK AT HISTORY:

- **1st May was chosen to be International Workers' Day to commemorate the 1886 Haymarket affair in Chicago.**

- **In that year beginning on 1st May, there was a general strike for the eight-hour workday.**
- On 4th May, the police acted to disperse a public assembly in support of the strike when an unidentified person threw a bomb.
- Due to which several people and police officers died and more than 100 people were injured.
- In 1889, a meeting took place in Paris where it was decided to celebrate May Day on an annual basis through a proposal given by Raymond Lavigne.

MAY DAY IN INDIA:

- **The first celebration of the day in India was organised in Madras (now Chennai) by the Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan on May 1st, 1923.**
- This was also the time when the Red Flag (the day's symbol used since its foundation) was first used in India.

GSI INSTALLS GEOLOGICAL DISPLAY BOARDS IN MEGHALAYA

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) North Eastern Region (NER) installed two geological display boards at two important geological sites in Meghalaya.

DETAILS:

- **The boards are unveiled at Meghalayas two important geological sites namely Mawmluh cave and Therriaghat, Sobhar in East Khasi Hill District.**
- **These geological display boards with geo-scientific information will help in creating awareness among visiting tourists, students and general public.**
- They will help preserve site and also help future generation to be aware of such geological developments.

ABOUT MAWMLUH CAVE:

- Its importance was highlighted recently when high resolution stable isotopic studies of stalagmites from the cave showed that there was a major climatic event about 4200 years ago.
- The stalagmite in Mawmluh cave has been tagged as Global Stratotype Section and Point (GSSP). It makes it the first formally ratified marker of a geological time period in India.
- The Meghalayan Age period that began about 4200 years ago experienced an abrupt mega-drought and cooling around the world.

ABOUT THERRIAGHAT:

- It marks the Cretaceous (K)-Palaeogene (Pg) mass extinction event.
- The Um-Sohryngkew (Wahrew) river section at Therriaghat is known for having the most complete records of Cretaceous-Palaeogene (K-Pg) boundary transition in India.
- There is also a high level of iridium metal from the boundary which marks a catastrophic event when a giant meteorite hit earth.

'CHANDRAYAAN-2' LUNAR MISSION TO BE LAUNCHED IN JULY 2019

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced that India's second lunar mission Chandrayaan-2 is scheduled to be launched between July 9th and 16th 2019.

- The Chandrayaan-2's lander will touch down near Moon's south pole on 6th September 2019.

ABOUT THE CHANDRAYAN-2 MISSION:

- It is India's second lunar mission.
- **It would be launched using India's most powerful rocket GSLV MK-III from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.**
- It has three modules (a detachable self-contained unit of a spacecraft) namely **Orbiter, Lander** named **Vikram** and Rover named **Pragyan**.
- The Orbiter and Lander modules will be put together as an integrated module and accommodated inside GSLV MK-III, a three stage launch vehicle equipped to lift the heaviest satellites into orbit. The Rover is enclosed inside the Lander.
- Once spacecraft is launched into earth bound orbit by GSLV MK-III, the integrated module will reach Moon orbit using Orbiter propulsion module.
- Then, the Vikram Lander would separate from the Orbiter and will make soft landing at a predetermined site close to lunar South Pole.
- **The wheeled Pragyan Rover will roll out for carrying out scientific experiments on the lunar surface.**
- Instruments are mounted on Lander and Orbiter for carrying out scientific experiments. The data collected by them would be relayed to earth.

MISSION OBJECTIVE:

- Its payloads will collect scientific information on lunar (Moon) topography, mineralogy, elemental abundance, lunar exosphere and signatures of hydroxyl and water-ice.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS MISSION:

- Chandrayan-2 mission would land on southern pole of the Moon, which is still unexplored by any of the countries.
- **Therefore landing of the spacecraft near lunar south pole would be historically significant as it would give ISRO the opportunity to name that site on the Moon.**
- **All the three modules namely Orbiter, Lander (Vikram) & Rover (Pragyan) are developed by India.**
- Unlike Chandrayan-1 (India's first lunar mission) launched using PSLV rocket and which involved only orbiting the Moon, Chandryaan 2 would attempt a soft landing close to lunar south pole.

TTFI DECIDES TO BID FOR WORLD TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS 2024

Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI) has decided to bid for the 2024 edition of the biennial World Team Championships.

- The last time India hosted a World Championships was way back in 1987.

DETAILS:

- In the 2024 edition, 32 teams will take part.
- **Team Championships take place on even years and Individual Championships on odd years.**
- The last big ITTF event that was staged in India was in 2012 when Hyderabad hosted the World Junior Championships.
- Recently, TTFI has recommended three names to the sports ministry for the Arjuna award and they are Harmeet Desai, Sanil Shetty, and Madhurika Patkar.

ABOUT THE TABLE TENNIS FEDERATION OF INDIA (TTFI):

- **TTFI is the governing body for table tennis in India.**
- It was founded in 1926.
- **It is headquartered in New Delhi.**
- **Its President is Dushyant Chautala.**

MAHARASHTRA DAY AND GUJARAT DAY CELEBRATED ON MAY 1

May 1st is celebrated as Maharashtra Day and Gujarat Day.

DETAILS:

- **In 1960, the Bombay Reorganization Act was passed by India's Parliament to divide the multilingual state of Bombay into Gujarat and Maharashtra.**
- **The legislation came into effect on May 1st, 1960.**
- The state of Bombay formerly comprised of speakers of different languages such as Marathi, Gujarati, Konkani, and Kutchi.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **During the mid-1950s, a movement known as the Sanyukta Maharashtra Samiti started demanding a separate Marathi-speaking state while MahaGujarat Movement aimed at the formation of a state for Gujarati-speaking people.**
- The movements ended with the creation of the Bombay Reorganization Act.
- **The States Reorganisation Act, 1956 defined boundaries for the states within India on the basis of languages.**
- This was at the forefront of the movement to divide the Bombay State into two states; one composed of areas where people primarily spoke Gujarati and Kutchhi and the other where people primarily spoke Marathi and Konkani.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **The state of Maharashtra and Gujarat were formed as a result of the Sanyukta Maharashtra Samiti movement according to the Bombay Reorganisation Act, 1960 enacted by the Parliament of India on 25th April 1960.**
- **The act came into effect on 1st May 1960, hence the reason of annual celebration.**

KUMAR SANGAKKARA NAMED FIRST NON-BRITISH PRESIDENT OF MCC

Former Sri Lankan cricket team captain Kumar Sangakkara appointed as the first non-British president of the Marylebone Cricket Club.

DETAILS:

- **Sangakkara will be the first overseas MCC president in the organization's 233-year history.**
- The wicketkeeper-batsman, whose nomination was announced by current president Anthony Wreford will begin his one-year tenure in October.
- He is an honorary life member of MCC.

ABOUT KUMAR SANGAKKARA:

- He is widely regarded as one of the world's most influential cricketers and one of the greatest batsmen of all-time.
- **A left-handed top-order batsman, he is also a record-breaking wicket-keeper, although he no longer kept wicket at the end of his Test career.**

APURVI CHANDELA ATTAINED WORLD NUMBER ONE SPOT IN 10M AIR RIFLE

Indian shooting ace Apurvi Chandela attained the world number one position in the women's 10 metres air rifle event.

- Apurvi Chandela won Gold Medal at the 2019 ISSF World Cup held in New Delhi and won Bronze medal securing third place in 2015 World Cup held in Changwon.

DETAILS ABOUT OTHER EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN IN THIS SPORT:

- **Anjum Moudgil attained number two after consistent performances in recent years.**
- **The rifle ace from Jaipur is among the five Indian shooters to have already secured 2020 Olympics quotas for the country.**
- Moudgil attained the world number two rank in 10 metres Air Rifle after her mixed team Gold at the ISSF World Cup in Beijing.
- **Manu Bhaker is the world number 10 in 25 metres pistol women category.**

LET US ALSO LOOK AT THE MEN'S CATEGORY:

- **Divyansh Singh Panwar's World Cup exploits in Beijing helped him reach world number four spot in 10 metres air rifle category.**
- Divyansh won two gold medals at Beijing - 10 metres air rifle and 10 metres air rifle mixed team - and also secured his quota at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.
- **Abhishek Verma won a gold in Beijing reached world number three in 10 metres Air Pistol category.**
- **India's teen sensation Saurabh Chaudhary was not far away at world number 6.**
- **Anish Bhanwala, another of India's talented young shooter, secured the 10th spot in 25 metres Rapid Fire Pistol category.**

UK PARLIAMENT PASS AN ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARATION

The UK Parliament becomes the first national government to pass an exemplary measure, that is, a national declaration of an Environment and Climate Emergency.

- This move marks a serious emergency in dealing with climate change.

ABOUT THE DECLARATION:

- **The declaration was preceded by a visit by teenage activist Greta Thunberg (to the Parliament), the feature of David Attenborough's documentary movie titled 'Climate Change: The Facts' and the 11-days of constant protest by an environmental group 'Extinction Rebellion'.**
- Britain's opposition Labour Party called for this serious action.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- The decision of emergency in Parliament caters to national reductions and investment in the reduction of carbon emissions and saving the planet.
- **Compared to its 1990 levels, UK (United Kingdom) was later legally committed to an 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050 and recently featured as 1 of 18 developed economies to decrease CO₂(carbon dioxide) emissions in the last 10 years.**
- Certain cities and local councils have laid down their climate emergency schemes to become 'carbon zero' by 2030.

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN SIGNS A "SOVEREIGN INTERNET" LAW

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed into law a "Sovereign Internet" bill that will allow Russian authorities to isolate the country's internet to expand the government's control over it.

- This move is being publicly denounced by all rights groups in Russia and will lead to censorship over large parts of the Internet.

DETAILS:

- **The new move requires Internet providers to install equipment for routing Russian web traffic through servers in Russia which will allow the Russian intelligence agencies of state authorities to control public information.**
- Roskomnadzor's chief (Roskomnadzor is Russia's chief media regulator), Aleksandr Zharov, notified that the measures would also target the Telegram app widely used by Russians.
- The text of the law was published on 1st May 2019 and will come into effect after November.
- Russian lawmakers support the new law to ensure the security of Russia's online networks.
- **The move includes measures to create technology to watch internet routing, to move Russian internet traffic away from foreign servers.**
- In March 2019, the Russian President signed a controversial law that permitted courts to fine and briefly imprison people who showed disrespect towards authorities. He also blocked the media for publishing "fake news".

- These laws are part of an ongoing Kremlin prevention on media and internet freedoms in which the public is imprisoned for sharing petty humorous memes.
- **Creation of an alternative Domain Name System (DNS) was asked for to protect the Russian-language section of the internet if it is disconnected from the World Wide Web.**

GOVERNMENT'S TAKE ON THIS LEGISLATION:

- **The government vehemently defended the legislation as a defensive step in case the United States cuts Russia out from the global Internet.**
- Russia took this step to ensure the security of its network after US (United States) President Donald Trump brought about a new American cyber-security strategy in 2018 that held Russia responsible for carrying out cyber-attacks.

SK GHOTIA TAKES CHARGE AS AIR OFFICER COMMANDING-IN-CHIEF

Air Marshal SK Ghotia VSM took charge as Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Training Command.

- He will succeed Air Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria, who has recently assumed charge as Vice Chief of the Air Staff.

ABOUT AIR MARSHALL SK GHOTIA:

- **He was commissioned in the fighter stream of Indian Air Force in Dec 1981 and is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy.**
- He is a Qualified Flying Instructor with more than 1000 hrs of instructional experience.
- **He has also served as a Directing Staff at the prestigious Defence Services Staff College, Wellington.**
- **He was awarded Vishist Seva Medal in 2007.**
- He was also commended by the Air Officer Commanding-In-Chief, Western Air Command in 1994.

M JAYSHREE VYAS FIRST INDEPENDENT WOMAN DIRECTOR OF BSE

Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) has appointed chartered accountant M Jayshree Vyas as its first independent woman director to the board.

- However, BSE has missed the deadline of April 1 which was given to all top 500 listed companies based on their market capitalisation to appoint an independent woman director on their board.

ABOUT M JAYSHREE VYAS:

- **Earlier, M Jayshree Vyas worked as the Managing Director of Shree Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank, Ahmedabad since 1986.**
- She had also helped in launching the first financial literacy program in Sewa bank in 2001.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **According to the Companies Act, 2013 a certain category of companies should have at least one woman director on board.**
- **Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI), in compliance with the provisions of Companies Act 2013, made it mandatory to have at least one woman director on board from October 2014.**

ARCHAEOLOGISTS UNEARTH INDIA'S BIGGEST STUCCO FIGURINE

Indian archaeologists recently unearthed a life-sized stucco sculpture from a Buddhist site at Phanigiri in Suryapet, Telangana.

DETAILS:

- The sculpture is about 1.73 metres in height and 35 cm in width.
- It is considered to have been built at the peak of Ikshavaku dynasty.
- **The preliminary excavation at Phanigiri was started by archaeological department official Khaja Muhammad Ahmad in 1941.**
- The present excavations are being conducted by assistant professor Srikanth Ganveer as co-excavation director and Pagadam Nagaraju as excavation director.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- As per heritage department officials, it represents one of Bhodhisattva in Jathaka Chakra.
- **Also, this is the largest stucco sculpture found from India till date.**

ABOUT THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA:

- **Alexander Cunningham was the founder of the Archaeological Survey of India.**
- **Archaeological Survey of India was founded in 1861.**
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.
- Its parent organisation is Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

'BHARAT FIBRE' TO START INTERNET SERVICE IN PULWAMA

State-owned telecom firm, BSNL (Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited) launched 'Bharat Fibre' to become the 1st operator to start optical fiber-based high-speed broadband service in Pulwama.

- The Bharat Fibre services with reliable and high-speed internet are provided on the optical fibre by FTTH (fibre-to-the-home) service up to the customer premises.

DETAILS:

- The service was launched by BSNL Chief General Manager of Jammu and Kashmir Circle, Rana Ashok Kumar Singh, in the presence of Srinagar General Manager Telecom District Zafar Iqbal and BSNL's channel partner, Mir Nazir.
- BSNL provides the FTTH service with a monthly charge of Rs 777-16,999 in around 160 telecom districts with a minimum speed of 2 megabit-per-second (Mbps).
- **The 'Bharat Fibre' service has been launched on a revenue sharing basis in a business collaborative model with the local channel partner of Pulwama area.**
- **The equipment of FTTH has been installed and commissioned by the channel partner whereas the customer billing services are being provided by BSNL.**

POSTAL STAMPS TO COMMEMORATE SRI VEDANTA DESIKAN

In order to commemorate the 750th birth anniversary of Sri Vedanta Desikan, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu unveiled a postage stamp in New Delhi.

- The stamp has been released by the Indian postal department.
- The releasing of the commemorative postage stamp is aimed towards inspiring the younger generation to practice humanism, peace and compassion propagated by the great saint and spiritual icon.

ABOUT SRI VEDANTA DESIKAN:

- **Born in 1268 CE, he was a Sri Vaishnava philosopher and one of the most brilliant stalwarts of Sri Vaishnavism in the post-Ramanuja period.**
- He was an awardee of Vedanta Desika (supreme teacher of the conclusion of all knowledge).
- He also received titles such as 'Kavitarkika-Kesari' and 'Kavitarkika-Simham' (Lion amongst poets); and 'Ramanuja-Daya-Patram'.
- **The most essential feature of his philosophy is the 'aspect of inclusion' which means anyone, irrespective of any caste or creed could join Sri Vaishnava fold.**
- **The basis of his spiritual teachings was peace and humanity.**

GREEN NUMBER PLATES MANDATED ON ALL ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The Central Government has instructed all state transport departments to mandate green number plates on all types of electric vehicles, whether brand new or used.

REASON BEHIND THIS DECISION:

- **The reason behind this move is to distinguish green vehicles for preferential treatment in parking, free entry in congested zones, and concessional toll.**

GOVERNMENT'S VISION FOR ELECTRIC VEHICLES:

- **Allowing youngsters in the age group of 16-18 years to ride e-scooters, as they are gearless, and easy to use.**
- **To direct taxi aggregators to have an incremental share of electric vehicles from 2020, this could be 1 percent of the fleet every year.**
- **To set the rate of depreciation on EVs at 50% as against the 15% for conventionally powered vehicles.**

PSA AND IIT-DELHI SIGN TO SET UP 'CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR WASTE TO WEALTH

Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) to the Government of India and Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IIT-Delhi) have inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for setting up a 'Centre of Excellence for Waste to Wealth Technologies in India' to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 2nd October 2019.

DETAILS:

- The MoU has been signed by Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India, Prof K. Vijay Raghavan and Director, IIT Delhi, Prof V. Ramgopal Rao in New Delhi.
- **The Centre will work towards the implementation of sustainable, scientific and technological solutions for waste management by deploying available technologies for transformation of waste to wealth.**
- **The project has been approved under the recently constituted Prime Minister's Science Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).**
- Apart from this, a waste to wealth programme management centre will also be set up at IIT Delhi.

ABOUT PRINCIPAL SCIENTIFIC ADVISER (PSA):

- **Established in 1999, PSA is a "think-tank" and "action-tank" for science, technology and innovation activities.**
- **Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam was the first PSA from 1999-2001 and Dr. R. Chidambaram from 2001-2018.**
- Current PSA is Professor K. Vijay Raghavan.

NSE BANNED BY SEBI FROM SECURITIES MARKET FOR 6 MONTHS

Market regulator, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has banned NSE, National Stock Exchange from gaining access to the securities market for a period of 6 months.

DETAILS:

- **SEBI also fined NSE a sum of Rs. 1,000 crore, that is, Rs. 624.89 crore and an additional 12% interest, from 1st April 2014 for NSE's failure to exercise effective due diligence during co-location facility.**
- The amount is to be deposited in the Investor Protection and Education Fund (IPEF).

WHAT IS THE CO-LOCATION CASE?

- It is a system in trade execution, where a broker's server is kept in the exchange premises to decrease latency or delay in computational terms.
- **SEBI got complaints against NSE in 2015, which stated that the computational systems that NSE used to distribute information through co-location facilities were partial and it allowed the users to extract data before the others could, thus creating a pool of information-imbalance among the users.**

SEBI'S SAY IN THE CO-LOCATION CASE:

- **NSE was charged guilty of fraud and unfair trade practice under the SEBI 'Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices' (PFUTP) Regulations.**
- NSE also affected market fairness by not exercising requisite due diligence while fixing the TBT (tick-by-tick data feed) architecture.

- SEBI, having estimated that NSE had earned a profit of Rs 624.89 crore during 2010-11 to 2013-14 from its co-location operation, and ordered the former and the present top employees in the exchange-management to refrain from holding any position in the stock exchange for 2 to 3 years.

'KNIGHT OF THE LEGION OF HONOUR' CONFERRED UPON A.S. KIRAN KUMAR

Former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief A.S. Kiran Kumar has been conferred France's highest civilian award "Knight of the Legion of Honour".

DETAILS:

- This award is for A.S. Kiran Kumar's invaluable contribution to the development of the India-France space cooperation.
- **The award was presented by Ambassador of France to India, Alexandre Ziegler, on the behalf of President of the French Republic.**
- The Padma Shri awardee served as the ISRO chief from 2015 to 2018.

ABOUT THE INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANISATION (ISRO):

- ISRO is headquartered in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- **K. Sivan is the current director of ISRO.**

JAIPUR TO HOST THE ASIAN YOUTH WOMEN HANDBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

The 8th edition of Asian Youth Women Handball Championship 2019 will be held in Jaipur from August 21 to 30.

DETAILS:

- This is the first time Jaipur will host this prestigious tournament.
- **Earlier in 2015, Delhi hosted the event and India finished at seventh place.**
- This event will be organised by Asian Handball Federation (AHF).

ONE MUST KNOW:

- In this event, total 10 teams will participate including defending champion South Korea.
- **The 7th edition was held in Jakarta, Indonesia in 2017 and South Korea was the champion while Japan and China had finished second and third place respectively.**

ABOUT THE ASIAN HANDBALL FEDERATION (AHF):

- AHF is headquartered in Kuwait City, Kuwait.
- Its President is Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahad Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah.

LAUNCH OF 'RISAT 2BR1' PREPONED TO END OF MAY 2019

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) announced its plans to launch its latest radar imaging reconnaissance satellite 'RISAT 2BR1' towards the end of May 2019.

- Its launch was earlier scheduled in 2020 after RISAT-2A but is now preponed.

ABOUT THE LAUNCH:

- **The RISAT (radar imaging satellite), will be carried by PSLV-C46.**
- It is one of the reusable variants of ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) rocket, which have offered significant progress and technology sophistication in terms of advancement in space technologies.
- The designation 'C-46' is as per ISRO's numbering system.
- It would depart from first launch pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

ABOUT THE RISAT SERIES:

- **On 20 April 2009, RISAT-2 was deployed in orbit prior to RISAT- 1.**
- **This was because following 2008 Mumbai terror attacks Indian forces were in dire need of round the clock surveillance.**
- **As RISAT- 1's C-band SAR radar was not yet ready so RISAT -2 was launched carrying Israeli built X-band radar.**
- Therefore 'RISAT-2' was deployed before RISAT-1. Its main sensor is X-band synthetic aperture radars (SAR) which provided Indian defence forces all-weather surveillance for monitoring national borders to notice any potential threat or malicious activity and to carry out anti-infiltration and anti-terrorist operations.
- RISAT-1 was successfully launched on 26 April 2012 for a period of five years. It is the first indigenous microwave remote sensing satellite designed and developed by ISRO. It was launched by PSLV-C19 into Sun's synchronous orbit at an altitude of 536 km.
- The about to be deployed RISAT-2BR1 satellite uses same SAR band and will further improve India's imaging reconnaissance (surveillance) abilities.

IMPORTANCE OF THESE SATELLITES:

- The RISAT series by ISRO are first all-weather Earth observation satellites.
- **These Radar imaging satellites are designed to all-weather surveillance using synthetic aperture radars (SAR) i.e. they provide a continuous (24×7) view of Earth day or night and even during bad weather for defence forces to detect infiltration along border.**

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY: 3RD MAY 2019

The World Press Freedom Day 2019 was observed on 3rd May 2019.

DETAILS:

- It was being jointly organized by UNESCO, African Union Commission and Government of Ethiopia.
- The year 2019 marks 26th celebration of WPFDD.
- The main event was being held at the African Union Headquarters at Addis Ababa.

- **Theme for World Press Freedom Day 2019 was "Media for Democracy: Journalism and Elections in Times of Disinformation".**
- It examines the current challenges faced by media at the time of elections and media's potential in supporting peace and reconciliation processes.

ABOUT THE WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY:

- It is observed to raise awareness about importance of freedom of press and freedom of expression as fundamental human rights.
- **WPFDF reminds governments of their obligation to respect and uphold right to freedom of expression defined under Article 19 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.**

OBJECTIVE:

- It aims celebrating fundamental principles of press freedom, assessing state of press freedom worldwide, defending media against attacks on their independence and to pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives while doing their duty.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- In December 1993 UN General Assembly (UNGA) following the recommendation of UNESCO's General Conference, proclaimed 3rd May as World Press Freedom Day.
- **'May 3rd' was selected to commemorate adaptation of 'The Windhoek Declaration' (a draft by African journalists for development of a Free, Independent and African Pluralistic Press) on 3rd May 1991.**

'COALGATE 2.0', WINS ASIAN COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM'S AWARD

Article titled 'Coalgate 2.0', authored by Nileena M. S. and published in March 2018 issue of 'The Caravan' magazine has won the Asian College of Journalism's Award for Investigative Journalism, 2018.

ABOUT 'COALGATE 2.0':

- **The article investigates allotment of 'captive coal blocks' in Parba East and Kanta Basan regions of Chhattisgarh.**
- **It explores deforestation, re-locations of people, loss of livelihood and denial of forest rights to tribals.**
- It revealed how a joint venture between Rajasthan Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (power-corporation of Rajasthan Government) and Adani Enterprises Limited continues to function on the basis of agreements that date earlier to September 2014 landmark judgement of Supreme Court, which cancelled almost all existing permissions for captive mining of coal blocks.

ABOUT THE ACJ AWARD FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM:

- **It is instituted by the Asian College of Journalism, with support of the Media Development Foundation.**

- It recognises and encourage best works of investigative journalism produced for Indian readers, viewers and audiences in order to promote journalism in public interest.
- It is an award for Print and online/digital/multimedia (newspapers, magazines, websites and others) portals or platforms.
- **It comprises of a trophy, a citation and a cash prize of Rs.2,00,000 (rupees two lakhs).**

DR. KRISHNAMURTHY SUBRAMANIAN APPOINTED ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER FINANCE COMMISSION

The Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) to Union Government, Dr. Krishnamurthy Subramanian is appointed as the 12th member of the Advisory Council of the 15th Finance Commission (FC).

ABOUT THE ADVISORY COUNCIL:

- **It now has 12 members**, which include noted economists Surjit Bhalla, Arvind Virmani, Indira Rajaraman and M Govinda Rao among others.

ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE ADVISORY COUNCIL:

- To advise FC on any relevant matter or subject related to Terms of Reference (ToR) of Commission.
- To assist FC in preparing any research paper or study which would enhance the commission's understanding on issues contained in its ToR.
- To help expand FC's understanding in adopting the best national and international practices on matters of fiscal devolution.
- To help improve quality, reach and enforcement of FC recommendations.

ABOUT THE FINANCE COMMISSION:

- It is constituted under Article 280 of the Constitution by the President of India.
- It mainly gives its recommendations on tax devolution i.e. distribution of tax revenues between Union and States, and amongst states themselves.
- **It is appointed for a period of five years and comprise of five member including one chairman and four other members.**
- **First FC was constituted under the chairmanship of Shri K.C. Neogy on 6th April, 1952.**

ABOUT THE FIFTEENTH (15TH) FINANCE COMMISSION:

- **It was constituted in November 2017, to give recommendations for tax devolution and other fiscal matter for five fiscal years, 1 April 2020- 31 March 2025.**
- It is chaired by N. K. Singh, and members Ajay Narayan Jha, Ashok Lahiri and Anoop Singh.
- Ramesh Chand is a part-time member in FC.

INS RANJIT TO BE DECOMMISSIONED AFTER 36 YEARS

The Indian Navy's frontline missile destroyer INS Ranjit will be decommissioned after 36 years of service.

- The decommission ceremony will be held at Visakhapatnam's naval dockyard on 6th May 2019.

DETAILS ABOUT INS RANJIT:

- **It was commissioned on September 15th, 1983, with Captain Vishnu Bhagwat in command.**
- It was third of five Kashin-class destroyers (a series of anti-aircraft guided missile destroyers) built by former USSR.
- As of 2019, only one Kashin-class destroyers ship remains in service with the Russian Navy, and five with the Indian Navy as Rajput-class destroyers.
- **It is the first of five Rajput class destroyers to go out of service.**
- It was constructed with the serial number 'Yard 2203' in 61 Communards shipyard in Nikolev town, in Ukraine.
- She was launched formally on 16th June 1979 and was given its Russian name "Lovkly" meaning "Agile".
- **With a motto of 'Sada Rane Jayate' or 'Ever Victorious in Battle', INS Ranjit has been at forefront in keeping nation secure and was deployed in a number of operations including IPKF (Indian Peace Keeping Force) operations and Operation Talwar (1999) during Kargil conflict.**

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- The Rajput-class destroyers (also known as Kashin-II class or Project 61E) are modified versions of Soviet Kashin class destroyers.
- **It includes INS Rajput, INS Rana, INS Ranjit, INS Ranvir and INS Ranvijay.**
- **The Rajput class destroyers were first to be fitted with Brahmos supersonic cruise missiles.**

DR. DEVI PRASAD SHETTY AWARDED THE P.C. CHANDRA PURASKAAR 2019

India's most reputed cardiac surgeon and humanitarian, Dr. Devi Prasad Shetty was awarded the 27th P.C. Chandra Puraskaar, the annual national award from the P.C. Chandra Group at Biswa Bangla Convention Centre.

- General Secretary of Ramakrishna Mission, Belur Math, Swami Suviranandaji Maharaj graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and gave away the award.

ABOUT DR. DEVI PRASAD SHETTY:

- Dr. Shetty is also known as 'The Man with Divine Hands'.
- In 2003 he was awarded the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan in 2013 for medicine.

ABOUT P.C. CHANDRA PURASKAAR:

- **This award ceremony was introduced in 1993 as a tribute to late Shri Puran Chandra.**
- It carries an honorarium of Rs. 10 lakhs, which is tax exempt.
- The award has recognized people from various fields and paths of life achieving great success in their respective fields.

ABOUT THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION:

- **It was founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1897.**
- It is headquartered in Belur Math, West Bengal, India.
- Purpose of the mission is to work in the fields of Education, Philanthropy, Religious Studies and Spirituality.

\$5 BILLION HEALTHY OCEANS ACTION PLAN LAUNCHED BY ADB

Asian Development Bank (ADB) has launched a \$5 billion Action Plan for Healthy Oceans and Sustainable Blue Economies for the Asia and Pacific region.

DETAILS:

- This will support ADB's developing member countries' efforts for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), inclusive of the SDG 14: Life Below Water.
- Among the 10 rivers that transport 88% to 95% of plastics into the sea globally, 8 are in Asia and Pacific region.

MORE ABOUT THE ACTION PLAN:

- The Healthy Oceans Action Plan was launched at the 52nd Annual Meeting of ADB's Board of Governors, Fiji.
- Healthy Oceans Action Plan will expand financing and technical assistance for ocean health and marine economy projects to \$5 billion from year 2019 to 2024.

THE 4 AREAS THAT THE ACTION PLAN WILL FOCUS ON, ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Creating inclusive livelihoods and business opportunities in tourism and fisheries.
 2. Conserving marine ecosystems and major rivers.
 3. Decreasing land-based sources of oceanic pollution; including plastics, wastewater and agricultural runoff.
 4. Improving sustainability in port and coastal infrastructure development.
- Under this policy, ADB will also launch the Oceans Financing Initiative (will be done by credit risk guarantees and capital market 'blue bonds') which will help in creating opportunities for the private sector to invest in projects for bettering marine health.
 - The Oceans Financing Initiative will be handled in Southeast Asia in partnership with the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Infrastructure Fund and the Republic of Korea.

CSC AND IIT-KANPUR TO UPSCALE 'UNNAT BHARAT ABHIYAN'

A Special Purpose Vehicle under the Ministry of Electronics & IT, (Information Technology) called "CSC (Common Services Centre) e-Governance Services India Limited", has partnered with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur to upscale the 'Unnat Bharat Abhiyan'.

- Unnat Bharat Abhiyan project is being led by Dr. Reeta Singh, from IIT Kanpur.

DETAILS:

- 'Unnat Bharat Abhiyan' is a programme of the HRD (Human Resource Development) Ministry which is working towards achieving solutions for increasing sustainable growth in rural India.
- IIT-Kanpur has brought together 15 leading higher education institutions from UP (Uttar Pradesh) to work together with CSC, under this policy, for the villages' development.
- Through CSC, they will adopt gram panchayats and equip themselves with citizen-centric services.
- IIT Kanpur has adopted 5 villages for its holistic development.

- The villages are situated on the outskirts of Kanpur and are as follows: Hridayapur, Baikantapur, Ishwariganj, Pratappur Hari and Saxapurva.
- **The educational institutions will provide training to the village level entrepreneurs (VLEs) who run CSCs.**
- These entrepreneurs would be equipped with the usage of solar energy, cleanliness and usage of modern technologies.
- The collaboration of IIT-Kanpur with the leading institutions with CSCs would strengthen the Government's vision of Digital India.

KING MAHA VAJIRALONGKORN CROWNED KING OF THAILAND

King Maha Vajiralongkorn has been crowned as the Thai King.

DETAILS:

- **The three-day coronation, which started on 4th May, is the first since Vajiralongkorn's adored and revered father was crowned in 1950.**
- He was carried by soldiers on a gilded palanquin through the streets of Bangkok on 5th May, in front of crowds who craned to witness the historic event.

ABOUT KING VAJIRALONGKORN:

- Vajiralongkorn is the King of Thailand since 2016.
- He is the only son of King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit.
- In 1972, at the age of 20, he was made crown prince by his father.
- After his father's death on 13 October 2016, he was expected to accede to the throne of Thailand but asked for time to mourn before taking the throne.
- He accepted the throne on the night of 1 December 2016.
- His coronation took place from 4-6 May 2019.
- The Thai government retroactively declared his reign to have begun on 13 October 2016, upon his father's death.
- **As the tenth monarch of the Chakri dynasty, he is also styled as Rama X.**
- **Aged 64 at that time, Vajiralongkorn became the oldest Thai monarch to ascend to the throne.**

NASA PREDICTS "99942 APOPHIS" TO FLY CLOSE TO EARTH

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has predicted that asteroid "99942 Apophis" will fly towards the Earth in ten years.

DETAILS:

- **There is no need to worry since the asteroid will be about 31,000 kms away from the surface of the Earth.**
- Since it is relatively rare for such a large object like 99942 Apophis to pass so close to Earth, it will offer scientists around the world a great opportunity to conduct a close-up study of the Apophis' shape, composition and possibly even its interior.

- **NASA has stated that about 2 billion people should be able to see it pass by with their naked eyes as it flies above Earth from the east coast to the west coast of Australia, then across the Indian Ocean and the equator, before moving west above Africa and finally over the Atlantic Ocean.**
- Scientists predict that Apophis still has a small chance of impacting Earth, less than 1 in 100,000 many decades from now.

ABOUT 99942 APOPHIS:

- **Asteroid 99942 Apophis was discovered by US astronomers in 2004 and was named after the Egyptian God of chaos and destruction.**
- It is a 370-meter diameter near-Earth asteroid.

BUSINESSES CAN NOW REMAIN OPEN 24×7 IN GUJARAT

Gujarat Shops and Establishments (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 2019 passed by Gujarat Assembly which came into force from May 1, 2019 will allow the shops and other businesses in the state to operate 24×7.

- The Act was passed by Gujarat Assembly earlier in February 2019.
- The Act replaced the Gujarat Shops and Establishments Act, 1948 which prevented shops and other businesses from operating between 12 to 6 a.m.

DETAILS:

- **Now shops and other commercial entities which employ more than 10 workers will have to get registered one-time only with no need for renewal and if they employ less than 10 workers then there will be no need of registration.**
- Under this new act, workers will get twice the regular salary for working. Previously, it was one-and-a-half-times.
- **According to the provision of the new act, working hours for women employees can only be between 6am to 9pm, which could be relaxed only if a written request is made and authorities have considered the safety issues for women.**

SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR PRESENTED WITH ORDER OF ST. GEORGE AWARD

Indian spiritual leader, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, was presented with the 'Order of St. George' Award for the year 2019 as part of the Commemorative Feast at the Puthuppally St. George Orthodox Church (462-year-old) in Kottayam, Kerala.

- The award was presented by the head of Kandanad East diocese, Dr. Thomas Mar Athanasius Metropolitan at the cultural conference held at the church.

ABOUT SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR:

- He was born on 13 May 1956 in Papanasam, Tamil Nadu.
- In 1997, he established a Geneva-based charity, the International Association for Human Values.
- He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the St. Joseph's College of Bangalore University.
- **In 2016, he has won Padma Vibhushan, India's Second Highest Civilian Award.**

- **Sri Sri Ravi Shankar was named by Forbes magazine as the fifth most powerful leader in India in 2009.**
- In 1981, Sri Sri founded the Art of Living Foundation, a volunteer-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) providing social support to the people.

INDIA'S LAST CAPTIVE WHITE TIGER 'BAJIRAO' DIES

The last captive white tiger at the Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP) in Borivali, Mumbai named Bajirao died due to old age related problems at the age of 18.

ABOUT THE WHITE TIGER 'BAJIRAO':

- **He was born at the SGNP in 2001 to tigress Renuka and tiger Sidharth.**
- He suffered from chronic ankyloses (fusion of bones leads to abnormal stiffening and immobility of joint) on left shoulder and chronic senile generalised arthritis from past four years.

ABOUT WHITE TIGERS:

- They are not a separate sub-species of tiger. They are basically a pigmentation variant of the Bengal Tiger.
- Their white colour is due to lack of red or yellow pheomelanin pigment, and presence of unique recessive genes.
- **They are also called Bleached Tiger.**
- They have white to almost cream colored fur, pink nose, black/grey/chocolate colored stripes.
- They were found in Madhya Pradesh, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and in Sunderbans region.
- **Now there are no white tigers in wild as their entire population in the world lives in captivity.**
- **The last white tiger reported in wild was captured in Rewa forest in Madhya Pradesh.**

ABOUT SANJAY GANDHI NATIONAL PARK:

- It is a protected area in Borivali suburb in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- It was earlier known as Borivali National Park.
- **It encloses two lakes namely Vihar Lake and Tulsi Lake and has a protected archaeological site, called 'Kanheri Caves' in its centre.**

PURPLE FROG TO BE STATE AMPHIBIAN OF KERALA

Purple frog could be soon designated as Kerala's state amphibian.

DETAILS:

- The proposal for this is being mooted by Kerala's leading Herpetologists (a specialist in study of reptiles and amphibians).
- The odd-looking species is endemic to the Western Ghats.
- **The title would help in protecting the specie's fragile habitat.**

ABOUT PURPLE FROG:

- Scientific Name: *Nasikabatrachus Sahyadrensis* (N. Sahyadrensis).
- **It is also known as Maveli Frog or Pignose Frog.**

FEATURES:

- Its body appears sturdy and swollen.
- It is relatively round in shape as compared to other flattened frogs.
- Compared to other frogs it has a small head and an unusual pointed snout (muzzle).
- **In most cases adults are dark purplish-grey in color.**

HABITAT:

- **For almost its entire life it lives in underground tunnels and comes out to surface for only a single day in a year to breed.**

DISTRIBUTION:

- They were thought to be limited to south of the Palghat Gap (a pass which is located between Nilgiri Hills to north and Anaimalai Hills to south) in Western Ghats, but are now known to be quite widely distributed in Western Ghats.
- **As per Herpetologists Purple Frog should rightly be called 'living fossil' as it is believed that they have co-existed with dinosaurs almost 70 million years ago.**

IUCN RED LIST:

- Their conservation status is endangered as per International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

LAURENTINO CORTIZO NEW PRESIDENT OF PANAMA

Panama's Electoral Court declared the centre-left candidate Laurentino Cortizo as winner of Panama's presidential election.

DETAILS:

- Cortizo is candidate for Panama's Democratic Revolutionary Party (PRD), which won 33% of 95% of votes counted.
- The PRD was founded in 1979 by military ruler Omar Torrijos and has been out of power since 2009.

ABOUT LAURENTINO "NITO" CORTIZO:

- He is a 66-year-old cattleman who was educated in US.
- He has earlier served as country's minister of agriculture and also held roles at regional Organisation of American States and worked in construction and livestock sectors.

- His presidential campaign focused on combating inequality and corruption, rising unemployment, Panama's education system, state of water utilities and rubbish collection in capital Panama City and slowing economic growth in this Central America trade and financial hub.

ABOUT PANAMA:

- **It is a Central America country located on the Isthmus of Panama (narrow bridge of land connecting North and South America).**
- **It is a tropical nation renowned as the site of Panama Canal (which cuts through its midsection and connects Atlantic and Pacific Oceans).**
- It lies between Caribbean Sea and Pacific Ocean.
- **Its national currency is the 'Balboa'. It is issued only in coins. The Balboa is at par with the U.S. dollar, and the U.S. paper currency is freely circulated.**

INDIA AND BANGLADESH TO PRODUCED FILM ON MUJIBUR RAHMAN

India and Bangladesh agreed to jointly produce a film based on the life and works of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and a documentary of Bangladesh Liberation War 1971.

DETAILS:

- The delegation from Bangladesh side led by Dr. Gowher Rizvi, Adviser to Prime Minister of Bangladesh met Amit Khare, Secretary of Information and Broadcasting Ministry.
- The co-production of film was earlier announced by the PM of both India and Bangladesh.
- **The movie will be directed by Shyam Benegal and the scriptwriter of the movie will be Atul Tiwari and the director of the documentary will be from Bangladesh who would be assisted by a co-director from India.**
- Additionally, Prasar Bharti decided to carry Bangladesh TV on DD Free Dish platform and also to waive carriage fees.

GOVERNMENT INTRODUCES FAME II SCHEME

Government of India introduced the FAME II scheme to boost the adoption of electric and hybrid vehicles.

ABOUT THE SCHEME AND ITS BENEFITS:

- **The scheme estimates that India as a country can save 64% of anticipated road-based mobility related energy demand and 37% of carbon emissions in 2030 by pursuing a shared, electric and connected mobility future.**
- This reduction in energy demand would result in the reduction of 156 million tonnes of oil equivalent (Mtoe) in diesel and petrol consumption for that year and net saving of approximately \$60 billion in 2030 at present oil prices.
- **Further, this would give impetus to India's vision of reducing oil imports by 10% by 2022.**

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **The transport sector in India continues to be the highest oil consuming sector and the use of diesel and petrol grew at 5.9% and 9.9% respectively in the last 10 years.**
- India's import dependency on oil has increased from 78.3% of total consumption in 2014-15 to settling at a new high of 83.7% in the 10-month period of FY19.

"INS VELA" LAUNCHED BY INDIAN NAVY

"INS Vela", Indian Navy's 4th Scorpene-class submarine was launched at Mazagon Dockyard in Mumbai.

DETAILS:

- **This is the fourth submarine in the series of six submarines under Project 75 built by Mazagon Dock Ltd., Mumbai.**
- **The Scorpene-class submarine has been termed as the Kalavari Class.**
- Project 75 is a \$3.75 billion contract inked between French Company DCNS (now Naval Group) and the Mazagon Dock Ltd. in 2005 for construction and transfer of technology for 6 Scorpene-class submarines.
- **Before Vela, Mazagon Dock Ltd. has launched Kalvari, Khanderi, Karanj submarines.**

VOLLEYBALL FEDERATION APPOINTS DRAGAN MIHAIOVIC AS COACH

The Volleyball Federation of India appointed Dragan Mihailovic as head coach of the men's national team in a move linked to the long term goal of Olympic Games qualification.

DETAILS:

- Mihailovic has more than 25 years of experience as a coach and has played for Serbia.
- The VFI also announced the appointment of Przemyslaw Soszynski and Vladimir Radosevic as the team's physio trainer and physiotherapist respectively.

RBI TO ENHANCE HOUSING LOAN LIMITS FOR RRBS AND SFBS

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to enhance the housing loan limits for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Small Finance Banks (SFBs) for eligibility under priority sector lending, in a bid to give them a level playing field with other Scheduled Commercial Banks.

DETAILS:

- **RBI said that the existing family income limit of Rs. 2 lakh per annum, prescribed in the master direction for RRBs and the compendium for SFBs, eligible for loans to housing projects exclusively for the purpose of construction of houses for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Low-Income Groups (LIG), has been revised to Rs. 3 lakh per annum for EWS and Rs.6 lakh per annum for LIG.**
- Housing loans to individuals up to Rs.35 lakh in metropolitan centres and Rs.25 lakh in other centres will be eligible for classification under Priority Sector Lending.
- **This is in alignment with the income criteria specified under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.**

ABOUT PRIORITY SECTOR LENDING:

- Priority Sector Lending is an important role given by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to the banks for providing a specified portion of the bank lending to few specific sectors like agriculture and allied activities, micro and small enterprises, poor people for housing, students for education and other low income groups and weaker sections.
- **This is essentially meant for all-round development of the economy as opposed to focusing only on the financial sector.**
- **Priority Sector includes the following categories:**
 - Agriculture
 - Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
 - Export Credit
 - Education
 - Housing
 - Social Infrastructure
 - Renewable Energy
 - Others

V K KRISHNA MENON AWARD 2019

Indian-origin journalist G D 'Robert' Govender has been conferred with the V K Krishna Menon Award 2019 in UK for his contribution as a pioneer of decolonised journalism.

- The award is given to mark the 123rd birth anniversary of V K Krishna Menon- an Indian diplomat and politician.

ABOUT G D 'ROBERT' GOVENDER:

- **G D 'Robert' Govender is the first person who has been awarded the V K Krishna Menon posthumously.**
- He died in the UK in 2016.
- **Govender had written many books in the field of journalism but his one of the outstanding work was "The Martyrdom of Patrice Lumumba" which had exposed the role of western intelligence agencies in the murder of the Congolese independence leader.**

TIGER WOODS AWARDED US PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM

The United States President Donald Trump awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, country's highest civilian honour to golfer Tiger Woods.

DETAILS:

- **The 43-year-old Tiger Woods became fourth and youngest professional golfer to receive the prestigious & highest civilian honor (after other golfers Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Charlie Sifford).**

ABOUT THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM:

- **It was first established by President Truman to honour extraordinary civilian accomplishments related to World War II.**
- **Later, in 1963 the medal was re-established by President Kennedy by an executive order.**
- It is awarded by the U.S. President to any person, living or dead (i.e. posthumously).
- **It is awarded every year to people who have made "especially meritorious contribution" (outstanding) contributions to security or national interests of U.S., and to world peace, or other significant cultural or public or private endeavours.**
- The President usually awards the medal of freedom in groups during public ceremonies.
- **Once given it cannot be revoked.**
- 2018 Recipients: Roger Staubach, Miriam Adelson, Babe Ruth, and Elvis Presley, among others.

ABOUT TIGER WOODS:

- **Eldrick Tont Woods is a professional golf player of USA.**
- **His nickname is "Tiger".**
- He ranks second in both major championships and PGA (Professional Golfers' Association of America) Tour wins.
- **He holds numerous records in golf and is considered one of the greatest golfers of all time.**

JAGJIT PAVADIA RE-ELECTED TO INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL BOARD

India's Jagjit Pavadia was re-elected to International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) for an another five-year term beginning 2nd March, 2020.

- This victory has added to India's successful record of winning crucial elections at United Nation (UN) and to UN's subsidiary bodies.

ABOUT JAGJIT PAVADIA:

- She has been a member of INCB since 2015 and her current term will expire in 2020.
- **She has held many senior positions in Indian Revenue Service (IRS) for 35 years in Government of India (GoI), which includes Narcotics Commissioner of India, Central Bureau of Narcotics (regulated by India's Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, Ministry of Finance).**

ABOUT INCB:

- **It is an independent and quasi-judicial monitoring body.**
- **Its function is to implement UN's international drug control conventions.**
- **It was established in 1968** in accordance with Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 by merging 'Permanent Central Narcotics Board' (created in 1931 by Convention for Limiting the Manufacture and Regulating Distribution of Narcotic Drugs).
- **It has 13 members (they may be re-elected). Each member is elected by Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for a period of five years.**
- **Its Secretariat is located at Vienna, Austria.** It is an administrative entity of UN Office on Drugs and Crime.

RE-POLLING ORDERED BY EC IN TRIPURA

The Election Commission has ordered re-polling in 168 booths of West Tripura parliamentary constituency.

DETAILS:

- The commission declared the voting held at these polling stations void based on reports submitted by the chief electoral officer, special observer and the returning officer.
- **The re-polling is scheduled for May 12th.**

ESHA SINGH AND AKULL KUMAR WON SILVER IN INTERNATIONAL SHOOTING

India's Esha Singh and Akull Kumar have won silver in Junior Mixed Air Pistol event in the International Shooting Competition at Hannover, Germany.

DETAILS:

- **They secured 5.4 points and were defeated by the German pair of Jan Luca Karstedt and Vanessa Seeger.**
- Esha shot 385 out of 400 in qualification, as compared to the 370 by Akull.
- **It was the second mixed medal for Esha, after the one she won recently with Anmol Jain in Plzen, Czech Republic.**
- Aditya Malra qualified in the third place in junior Men's Air Pistol with a score of 568, but shot below par in the final and placed eighth.

SCIENTISTS CARRY OUT GENETIC STUDY ON LAKSHADWEEP ISLANDS RESIDENTS

For the very first-time scientists carried out a genetic study on people of Lakshadweep Islands.

DETAILS:

- **It was conducted by a team of researchers at CSIR's (Council of Scientific & Industrial Research) Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB).**
- They studied the major islands of Kadmat, Andorth, Chetlat, Agatti, Kalpeni, Bitra, Kiltan, and Minicoy of Lakshadweep.

OBSERVATIONS BY THE SCIENTISTS FROM THE STUDY:

- They analyzed DNA samples of 557 individuals from eight major islands for mitochondrial DNA and 166 individuals for "Y" chromosome markers.
- **It was presumed that people of Lakshadweep Islands might have the presence of genetic signatures of ancient people, like Andamanese and Australian aboriginals and majority derived from South Asia with minor influences from East and West Eurasia.**

- **It found the close genetic link of Lakshadweep islanders with people from the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and India.**
- It did not find any evidence of early human migration through Lakshadweep islands.

INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUS MICROPROCESSOR "AJIT" DEVELOPED

Engineers from the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay) have developed a microprocessor called "AJIT" which could reduce the country's dependence on imports.

DETAILS:

- The microprocessor is the first to be conceptualised, designed, developed and manufactured in India.
- **The project was funded by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and IIT Bombay.**
- **Powai Labs, a Mumbai-based company, has invested in the venture.**
- It will own, market and support the product.

ABOUT AJIT:

- AJIT is a medium-sized processor.
- **It can be used inside a set top box, as a control panel for automation systems, in a traffic light controller or even robotic systems.**
- **The expected price of the processor in market will be Rs.100.**
- It can not be used in mobile phones yet and also not for trivial uses like washing machines either.
- **It can be used in WiFi routers, secure power metres or even electronic voting machines.**
- **In the first stage, AJIT has been manufactured in the government-owned Semiconductor Laboratory, Chandigarh.**
- MeitY has extended its funding to enhance the processor and deploy it in government-initiated projects.
- SAMEER (Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering & Research), an independent laboratory under MeitY, is planning to use AJIT in the receivers being developed for NAVIC or IRNSS (The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System), an indigenous navigation system for the Indian subcontinent.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **India's electronics market is expected to reach \$400 billion by 2020.**
- Most of the electronic devices that are used are imported and only a quarter of the devices are produced in the country.

HIGHEST-RESOLUTION IMAGE SENSOR FOR SMARTPHONES INTRODUCED

The South Korean Tech Giant, Samsung Electronics Co, unveiled world's highest-resolution image sensor, with 64 megapixels for smartphones.

- This is a step to meet increasing demand for mobile devices with better image quality.

DETAILS:

- Samsung expanded its 0.8-micrometer pixel image sensor (smallest pixel size currently available in global market) lineup by introducing two new 0.8-micrometer pixel image sensors:
- 64-megapixel ISOCELL Bright GW1 (for advanced handsets)
- 48-megapixel ISOCELL Bright GM2 (for flagship phones)
- **The two image sensors are currently being sampled and its mass production will soon start in second half of 2019.**
- The image sensor market is expected to grow exponentially by 2030 in line with advancements in about to be introduced 5G technologies and artificial intelligence (AI).

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **Apart from Smart Phones, Vehicle components are next market for image sensors, ranging from parking assistant system to autonomous driving (self-driving cars).**

PUBLICATION OF FAKE NEWS CRIMINALIZED IN SINGAPORE

Singapore has passed a law (The Protection from Online Falsehoods and Manipulation Bill) which criminalises publication of fake news in the country and allows government to block and order removal of such content.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE LAW:

- It bans falsehoods (fake news) that are detrimental to Singapore or may likely influence elections.
- **It requires service providers to immediately remove such content and allows government to block it.**
- **Offenders could face a jail term of up to 10 years and heavy fines.**

CRITICISM THAT THE LAW IS FACING:

- It gives government too much power to determine what could be false and broadly defined public interest.
- The order to remove or correct fake news is mostly directed at technology companies rather than on individuals who break a law without intent.
- As per many Human Rights Watch it is a "disaster for online expression by ordinary Singaporeans" and a powerful step against independence of online news portals.

IGOR STIMAC APPOINTED AS INDIA'S FOOTBALL COACH

Former Croatia international Igor Stimac has been appointed as the Indian men's football team coach.

DETAILS:

- His name was recommended by All India Football Federation's (AIFF, is governing body of association football in India) technical committee, headed by Shyam Thapa.

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- **His first assignment as the Indian men's football team coach will be upcoming 'King's Cup' 2019 in Thailand, where India in its first match will face Curacao, a Caribbean nation.**

ABOUT IGOR STIMAC:

- **Now 51 years old Stimac, was an integral part of "golden generation" of Croatia that finished third at the 1998 FIFA World Cup.**
- In his 14-year managerial career, he coached the Croatian national team between 2012 and 2013.
- **During his tenure Croatia shot up to fourth spot on world rankings, (its best ranking in over 15 years).**
- He has worked with Croatian clubs like Cibalia Vinkovci, Hajduk Split, FC Zagreb and Zadar, Qatari club Al-Shahania and Iranian club Sepahan.
- **He led his native club of Hajduk Split to Championship title in 2004-2005, this was his first and only taste of silverware.**

AMUL TO SPONSOR AFGHANISTAN TEAM IN CRICKET WORLD CUP 2019

Amul has announced to sponsor Afghanistan cricket team in the upcoming World Cup 2019 which will be held in England and Wales from May 30th, 2019.

DETAILS:

- Amul's logo will be visible on the jerseys of the Afghanistan players in international matches and also in the training kit throughout the world cup.
- **Earlier in only two instances, Amul has sponsored any cricket team in the World Cup tournament. These two countries are New Zealand and Holland.**

ABOUT AMUL:

- **Anand Milk Union Limited or Amul is an Indian dairy company, based at Anand in the state of Gujarat.**
- Formed in 1948, it is a cooperative brand managed by a cooperative body, the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd., which today is jointly owned by 3.6 million milk producers in Gujarat.
- **It is headquartered in Anand, Gujarat.**
- Its CEO is R. S. Sodhi.

MICROSOFT LAUNCHES "ELECTIONGUARD" FOR SECURE VOTING

Microsoft CEO, Satya Nadella has announced the launch of "ElectionGuard", a free open-source Software Development Kit (SDK) to help nations to carry out secure and verifiable voting.

DETAILS:

- Developed by Galois, "ElectionGuard" is a supplement to paper ballots.
- **It is verifiable as it allows the voters and third-party organizations to verify election results.**
- "ElectionGuard" provides a voter a unique code.

- During the process of voting, voters have an optional step which allows them to track their votes from the moment he/she casts it, after the voter has verified the selections are correct to the final step of counting the votes.
- It does not work with vote-by-mail systems and is not designed to work with internet voting schemes as it can be easily hacked.
- In terms of security, "ElectionGuard" uses Homomorphic encryption which enables mathematical procedures.

WMBD 2019 OBSERVED ON 11TH MAY

The World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) 2019 was observed on 11th May 2019.

- Every year people across the globe take action and organize public events like bird festivals, exhibitions, education programmes and bird-watching excursions to celebrate WMBD.

ABOUT WORLD MIGRATORY BIRD DAY:

- The first WMBD was celebrated in 2006.
- It is an annual awareness-raising campaign which highlights the need for protecting migratory birds and their habitats.
- It helps to raise global awareness about threats faced by migratory birds, their ecological importance, and need for international cooperation to conserve them.
- Starting from 2018, the WMBD is celebrated twice a year- second Saturday in May and in October.
- It is organized by the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA) together with Environment for the Americas (EFTA).
- The CMS and AEWA are two International Wildlife Treaties which are administered by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

ABOUT WMBD 2019:

- For the year 2019, it will be celebrated on 11th May and 12th October.
- The WMBD 2019 is observed with the theme: "Protect Birds: Be the Solution to Plastic Pollution!".
- It aims to put the spotlight on the negative impact of plastic pollution on migratory birds and their habitats.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- Study recorded that out of 265 bird species found entangled in plastic litter, at least 69 species were freshwater birds (10% of all freshwater species), 147 species were seabirds (36% of all seabird species) and 49 landbird species (0.5 per cent).

NEW SPECIES OF REDDISH-BROWN PIT VIPER IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

A team of herpetologists (specialized in study of reptiles and amphibians) have discovered a more advanced new species of Reddish-Brown Pit Viper in Arunachal Pradesh.

- Their discovery was published in Russian Journal of Herpetology.

ABOUT THE DISCOVERED ARUNACHAL PIT VIPER:

- Scientific Name- Trimeresurus Arunachalensis.
- **This discovery of new species makes Arunachal Pradesh the only Indian state to have a Pit Viper named after it.**
- **The research team from Pune-based Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, found the snake species while conducting biodiversity surveys in Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary in the West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh.**
- **The viper discovered is never described before therefore this single known specimen of this species makes it currently the rarest Pit Viper in the world.**
- It is a species of Reddish-Brown Pit Viper, a venomous snake which has a unique heat-sensing system.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **With this, India is now home to the fifth Brown Pit Viper.**
- The other four Brown Pit Vipers are Hump-Nosed, Horseshoe, Malabar, and Himalayan who were discovered about 70 years ago.
- **This new discovery makes Arunachal Pit Viper the second serpent to have been discovered in the state after Crying Keelback, a non-venomous snake that was found in Arunachal's Lepa-Rada district in 2018.**

DIA MIRZA AMONG 17 NEW SDG ADVOCATES APPOINTED BY UN

United Nations (UN) Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres appointed 17 global figures which includes Indian actress Dia Mirza as the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Advocates.

DETAILS:

- **New class of SDG Advocates are globally influential public figures who are committed to inspiring greater ambition, raising awareness and pushing for faster action on SDGs.**
- The new SDG Advocates are tasked to work together so as to drive action, build ambition, solidify global political will and leverage and build bridges between their audiences to drive progress on achieving ambitious SDGs.
- These new advocates which includes representatives from academia, business, sport, entertainment, governments and activist organizations around the world shows the universal character of SDGs.
- SDG Advocates will utilize their unique platforms and leadership skills to inspire and mobilize global community in order to build momentum for transformative, inclusive development by 2030.

ABOUT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS):

- **The SDGs were born at United Nations (UN) Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012.**
- **The SDGs replaced Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which were active from 2000-2015.**
- They are also known as 'Global Goals' and were adopted by world leaders on September 25, 2015.
- **The adoption year 2015 coincides with other historic agreement like 'COP21 Paris Climate Agreement'**
- It is a set of 17 Universal Goals, that seeks to meet urgent environmental, political and economic challenges facing our world e.g. Poverty, Hunger, Education, Climate Change, Peace etc.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- The 38 year old Dia Mirza, is an actor, film producer and United Nation Environment Program (UNEP) Goodwill Ambassador for India.

CLIMATE EMERGENCY DECLARED REPUBLIC OF IRELAND

Republic of Ireland has become the second country in the world to declare a climate emergency.

- Earlier on 1st May 2019, Britain's parliament became the first in the world to declare a climate emergency.

DETAILS:

- **The climate emergency declaration was passed by both the government and opposition parties of Ireland unanimously.**
- Both agreed to an amendment to 'Oireachtas report on Climate Action' (a parliamentary report on climate action). The amendment was accepted without a vote.
- **Targets to be undertaken include becoming carbon-neutral by 2030, introduce electric car hubs or build sustainable homes to try to achieve that goal.**
- The Oireachtas Climate Action report that started the Irish declaration came from a Citizens' Assembly report.
- **The Citizens' Assembly will next be considering the issue of a biodiversity emergency.**

ABOUT THE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY:

- **Ireland's Citizens' assembly was established in 2016 for considering several political questions like referendums, abortion, population ageing, fixed term parliaments and climate change etc.**
- The report produced by it is to be considered by the Oireachtas (Ireland's Legislature).

WHAT'S NEXT?

- **Ireland will next vote on a Climate Emergency Measures Bill, which seeks to limit oil and gas exploration.**

FIRST WOMEN'S CRICKET MAGAZINE 'CRICZONE' RELEASED IN INDIA

The inaugural edition of world's first exclusive women's cricket magazine named as 'Criczone' was released in India.

ABOUT CRICZONE:

- **It is the world first magazine which features only women cricketers.**
- **In its first edition launched in India, the magazine features Indian Women's Cricket team vice-captain Smriti Mandhana as cover story.**
- It is a one stop solution, exclusively dedicated to providing updates, articles, news, interviews etc. from the world of women's cricket.
- **It was launched on the sidelines of the inauguration of upcoming women's T20 challenge.**

- The event was attended by top international cricketers such as Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana, Mithali Raj and also by overseas players like Sophie Devine and Danielle Wyatt.
- The publisher of the magazine is Yash Lahoti.
- **The Criczone stories will seek to empower young aspiring women cricketers to take the sport as a profession and able to make a sustainable living.**

BMC AJOY MEHTA APPOINTED AS CHIEF SECRETARY OF MAHARASHTRA

Ajoy Mehta (1984-batch I.A.S- Indian Administrative Officer), the Municipal Commissioner of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has been appointed as the new Chief Secretary of Maharashtra.

DETAILS:

- **Ajoy Mehta holds the distinction of being the longest-serving BMC commissioner.**
- Mehta's predecessor was UPS Madan (1983 batch IAS officer).
- UPS Madan had opted for voluntary retirement (under V.R.S.- voluntary retirement scheme) after serving in the top post of commissioner for just 44 days.
- This makes UPS Madan, the shortest serving CS of Maharashtra.
- 1985-batch I.A.S officer- Praveen Pardeshi (the Additional Chief Secretary to Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis) has also been appointed as the new Municipal Commissioner Chief of Mumbai, succeeding Ajoy Mehta.
- Ajoy Mehta will retire in September 2019.
- One of the notable works of Mehta as the principal secretary, department of energy under Maharashtra government include the transition of the state-owned Maharashtra State Electricity Board into 3 independent companies which were dedicated to generation, transmission, and distribution.

INTERNATIONAL NURSES DAY CELEBRATED ON MAY 12TH

The International Nurses Day is celebrated globally on 12th May to commemorate the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale also known as 'The Lady with the Lamp'.

- The theme for the International Nurses Day 2019 is- 'Nurses - A Voice to Lead - Health for All'.

DETAILS:

- Florence Nightingale was famous as manager and trainer of nurses during the Crimean War.
- **In 1860, Nightingale laid the foundation of professional nursing with the establishment of her nursing school at St Thomas' Hospital in London.**
- It was the first secular nursing school in the world and is now part of King's College London.
- **The Florence Nightingale Medal is the highest international distinction a nurse can achieve.**

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **International Council of Nurses (ICN) first observed this day after an officer with the US Department of Health, Education and Welfare- Dorothy Sutherland first suggested Nurses Day in 1953 and was first declared by President Dwight D Eisenhower.**

NATIONAL TECHNOLOGY DAY OBSERVED ON 11TH MAY

The National Technology Day is observed every year on the 11th of May in India.

- The aim of the celebration is to highlight the achievements of the scientists and engineers of India in the field of science and technology.
- It also helps to encourage students towards the field of science and technology.

ABOUT NUCLEAR TESTS CONDUCTED BY INDIA:

- **The first nuclear test at Pokhran with code name as 'Smiling Buddha' was carried out in May 1974.**
- **The second test conducted was Pokhran II which was a series of five tests of nuclear bomb explosions, administered by India at the Pokhran Test Range of Indian Army in May, 1998.**
- Pokhran II comprised of five detonations out of which the first one was a fusion bomb while the other four were fission bombs.
- **These nuclear tests evolved various sanctions against India by many major states, including the United States and Japan.**

WHY 11TH OF MAY IS CELEBRATED?

- **On 11th of May, 1998, India victoriously test fired the nuclear missile, Shakti-I at the Pokhran Test Range of Indian Army in Rajasthan in an operation administered by late President and aerospace engineer Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam.**

ONE MUST KNOW:

- After two days, the country victoriously tested two additional nuclear weapons.
- **Following this, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced India as a nuclear state, making it sixth country in the world that has joined the 'nuclear club' and the first country that was not party to the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Treaty (NPT).**
- NPT is a global treaty signed by the UK, Russia, China, France, and the US which has the objectives to prevent the increase of nuclear weapons and attain nuclear disarmament.

CONTRACT SIGNED BETWEEN KONKAN RAILWAYS AND NEPAL RAILWAYS

India and Nepal have inked a deal on procurement of two diesel operated trains.

- **The contract agreement was signed between India's Konkan Railways Corporation Ltd and Nepal's Department of Railways to supply two 1600 HP Diesel Electric Multiple Unit (DEMU) train sets.**

MORE ABOUT THE AGREEMENT:

- It was signed in Kathmandu in the presence of Manjeev Puri, Indian Ambassador to Nepal and Madhusudan Adhikari, Nepal's Secretary, Ministry of Physical Infrastructure and Transport.
- **According to agreement, Nepal will procure two diesel-operated trains, which will arrive in Nepal within five months.**
- **The trains will be manufactured by Integrated Coach Factory (owned and operated by Indian Railways) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.**

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- Each train set will comprise of three trailer cars with one air conditioned, one driving power car and one driving trailer car with standard accessories.
- **These trains will be used to operationalise the 34 km long railway corridor stretch which links Jayanagar in Bihar, India and Kurtha in Dhanusa district, Nepal.**
- The 34 kms Jayanagar-Kurtha Railway Link was built by IRCON (Ircon International Limited, a construction and engineering PSU in transport infrastructure) with a financial grant from Indian Government under the India-Nepal Development Partnership programme.

CHHAYA SHARMA CONFERRED WITH MCCAIN INSTITUTE AWARD 2019

IPS officer Chhaya Sharma, who headed the investigation team of the infamous Nirbhaya gang-rape and murder case, has been conferred with the 2019 McCain Institute Award for Courage and Leadership.

DETAILS:

- **Chhaya Sharma has guided teams in the detection and investigation of sensitive criminal cases and protection of human rights.**
- **In 2017, Chhaya Sharma has performed a crucial role in drafting Standard Operating Procedures and Guidelines to Combat Trafficking of Persons in India.**
- The award is granted to those who manifest courage on behalf of human rights, humanitarian compassion, justice, freedom and human dignity.
- Other famous awardees are-MalalaYousafzai (2015) and Dikembe Mutombo (2016).

ABOUT THE MCCAIN INSTITUTE:

- The McCain institute was founded in 2012
- Its leader is Kurt Volker.
- The institute located in Washington D.C.

UN TO HOLD OCEAN CONFERENCE 2020

United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has decided to hold the Ocean Conference 2020 in Lisbon, Portugal from June 2 to 6, 2020 with a theme of "Scaling up ocean action based on science and innovation for the implementation of Goal 14: stocktaking, partnerships and solutions".

DETAILS:

- **It will be co-hosted by the Governments of Portugal and Kenya.**
- The objective of this conference is to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) which aims to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

MI CLAIM THE IPL 2019 TITLE

Mumbai Indians (MI) have clinched the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2019 title.

DETAILS:

- **MI defeated Chennai Super Kings (CSK) by one run on the last ball.**
- With this, Mumbai Indians set the record for winning the most number of Indian Premier League titles.
- **Mumbai Indians became the first team to win the IPL title for 4 times.**
- Notably, Mumbai Indians defeated Chennai Super Kings in each of their four encounters in IPL 2019.

AWARDS OF THE 12TH EDITION OF THE IPL:

- Player of the Match in the Final: Jasprit Bumrah (MI), 2 for 14
- Most Valuable Player: Andre Russell (KKR), 510 runs, 11 wickets
- Fairplay: Sunrisers Hyderabad
- Purple Cap: ImranTahir (CSK), 26 wickets
- Orange Cap: David Warner (SRH), 692 runs
- Fastest Fifty of the Season: Hardik Pandya (MI)
- Perfect Catch of the Season: Kieron Pollard (MI)
- Super Striker of the Season: Andre Russell (KKR), strike rate of 204.81
- Stylish Player of the Season: KL Rahul (KXIP)
- Emerging Player Award: Shubhman Gill (KKR)
- Game Changer of the Season: Rahul Chahar (MI)

RBI TO LAUNCH MOBILE APP FOR VISUALLY IMPAIRED

The Reserve Bank of India has proposed to come out with a mobile application to aid visually impaired persons in identifying Indian currency notes.

DETAILS:

- At present, banknotes in the denominations of Rs.10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 2,000 are in circulation, besides Re 1 notes issued by the Government of India.
- **Intaglio printing based identification marks for helping the visually challenged in the identification of denomination of banknotes are present in notes of Rs.100 and above.**
- **The RBI has solicited bids from technology firms for developing the mobile application.**
- Around 80 lakh people are likely to benefit by this initiative of RBI.

FEATURES OF THE APP AS PER RBI GUIDELINES:

- **The application should be able to identify the denomination of legal tender banknotes of Mahatma Gandhi Series and Mahatma Gandhi (New) series by capturing the image of the notes placed in front of the mobile camera or scrolled across it.**
- **The mobile application should be searchable via voice option in all app stores.**
- The mobile application should be able to identify the banknote denomination in 2 seconds or less.
- **It shall provide multilingual support as well as audio notification.**

SANA MIR BECOMES HIGHEST WICKET-TAKING SPINNER IN WOMEN'S ODI

Pakistan off-spinner Sana Mir becomes the most successful women's ODI spinner in history after she took her 147th wicket, highest ever by any spinner in One-day International (ODI) cricket.

INDIAN PACER TOPS THE RANK:

- Currently, Mir is placed on the third position in the ICC's ODI bowling ranking, which is topped by Indian pacer Jhulan Goswami.

NOVAK DJOKOVIC WON MADRID OPEN 2019

Novak Djokovic, the World No. 1 tennis player has won the Madrid Open 2019 title.

DETAILS:

- He defeated Stefanos Tsitsipas, the Greek tennis player and secured 6-3, 6-4.
- **He equaled Rafael Nadal's record of 33 ATP Masters 1000 titles.**
- It is also Djokovic's 200th victory against a Top 10 opponent.

LEWIS HAMILTON WON FORMULA ONE SPANISH GP

Lewis Hamilton won the Formula One Spanish Grand Prix at Circuit de Catalunya in Barcelona and Mercedes sealed its fifth consecutive one-two finish.

DETAILS:

- **At this Spanish Grand Prix, Mercedes matched the record of five successive Formula One one-twos as Lewis Hamilton beat his teammate and pole-sitter Valtteri Bottas.**
- It is only the fifth time in Formula One (F1) history that a team has taken top two spaces for five straight races and only third instance of Mercedes achieving this feat since 2014.
- Lewis Hamilton overtook his teammate and pole-sitter, Valtteri Bottas at turn one and stayed in front, thus winning Spanish Grand Prix for a third consecutive year.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **This was the five-time and defending champion, L. Hamilton's 76th career victory.**
- With this win he moved back to the top of drivers' standings.
- **Ahead of him only Michael Schumacher has more with 91 career victory.**

ABOUT THE SPANISH GRAND PRIX:

- **The Formula One (or F1) is the highest class of single-seater auto racing in which the word "formula" refers to a set of rules which is to be met by all participants' cars.**
- **The Spanish Grand Prix is a Formula One (F1) race which is held at Circuit de Catalunya in Barcelona, Spain.**

- It has a Circuit length of 4.655 km and Race length of 307.104 km.

GENOME SEQUENCING OF ASIATIC LION DONE BY CSIR SCIENTISTS

For the first time, the entire genome of the Asiatic Lion, an endangered species, has been sequenced by scientists from CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad.

DETAILS:

- **As the population of the endangered Asiatic lion is very low, only 523 animals are present in the Gir forests.**
- The genome sequencing would enable scientists to develop specific markers to study population genetics and get newer insights into its population status and subsequent management.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY:

- Comparative analysis with other fields and mammalian genomes unraveled the evolutionary history of the Asiatic Lion and its position among other felids.
- The study noted that the evaluation of genetic diversity placed the Asiatic Lion in the lowest bracket of genomic diversity index highlighting the gravity of its conservation status.
- The genome is estimated to be 2.3 Gb (Gigabase) long and is found to have 20,543 protein-coding genes.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS EXERCISE:

- **The genome sequencing of Asiatic Lions would enable scientists to better understand their evolution.**
- **Until now only partial genomic information of the African Lion is available.**
- Therefore comparative genomics between both African Lions and Asiatic Lions can only be undertaken once a complete genome of the African Lion is sequenced.
- **Therefore, once a complete genome of African Cheetah, Royal Bengal Tiger and Jaguar will be available, the comparative studies of all these big cats would be possible.**
- This signifies that the final objective of scientists is to understand these species at the DNA level and study that if there are any specific problems with regard to the adaptability of Asiatic Lion to environment or behaviour.

SIMON ARMITAGE NAMED UNITED KINGDOM'S NEW POET LAUREATE

Simon Armitage has been named as United Kingdom's new Poet Laureate.

DETAILS:

- **He succeeds Carol Ann Duffy in the 10-year post.**
- **Queen Elizabeth II has approved the appointment which is Britain's highest literary honour.**
- It is up to the poet to decide whether or not to produce poetry for national and royal occasions.
- **Previous laureates have included John Dryden and William Wordsworth.**

ABOUT SIMON ARMITAGE:

- **Armitage, a professor of poetry at the University of Leeds, has published 28 collections of poetry and his work is studied by British schoolchildren as part of the national curriculum.**
- Culture Secretary Jeremy Wright praised Armitage for his witty and profound take on modern life.

ABOUT 'POET LAUREATE' OF THE UNITED KINGDOM:

- **The British Poet Laureate is an honorary position appointed by the monarch of the United Kingdom, currently on the advice of the Prime Minister.**
- It is expected that the role holder will write verse for significant national occasions.
- The origins of the laureateship date back to 1616 when a pension was provided to Ben Jonson. But the first official holder of the position was John Dryden.
- **John Dryden was appointed in 1668 by Charles II.**

ISROS YOUNG SCIENTIST PROGRAMME INAUGURATED

ISRO Chairman Dr. K. Sivan inaugurated Yuvika (YUva Vigyani Karyakram) 2019, ISRO's Young Scientist Programme, at Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.

DETAILS:

- As many as 110 teenagers are participating in the YUVIKA 2019.
- **It is a two-week summer vacation residential training program which will be conducted by ISRO from 13 May to 26 May 2019.**
- They are the first batch of young scientists of Yuvika (Yuva Vigyani Karyakram) that the Indian Space Research Organisation plans to hold every year.
- **The chosen Class 9 students will spend the time visiting four centers of ISRO.**

MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAM:

- It was launched by ISRO in tune with the Central Government's vision of Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan.
- This is the first time it is being held.
- **Yuvika focusses on one such important area and would inculcate a scientific temper in the students apart from contributing to national integration and nation building.**
- **During the program, participants will also visit Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC), Sriharikota which is the spaceport of India.**
- **During the programme, students will be provided course material which has already been pre-loaded on Tablets.**
- It includes science topics like Rocket Engineering, Environment Science, Astronomy, Space Applications, Renewable Energy and also soft skill improvement modules like leadership, teamwork, communication etc.
- **They will also visit ISRO laboratories and interact with and share the experience with eminent ISRO scientists.**

"MOSQUITO DISEASE PROTECTION POLICY" LAUNCHED BY HDFC ERGO

India's 3rd-largest non-life insurance provider in the private sector, HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company launched a scheme termed "Mosquito Disease Protection Policy".

- This scheme will cover a person against common mosquito-borne diseases namely- Dengue Fever, Malaria, Chikungunya, Japanese Encephalitis, Kala-azar, Lymphatic Filariasis and Zika Virus.

DETAILS:

- **The policy by HDFC ERGO will cover hospitalization expenses.**
- The policyholder may opt for a huge amount to be paid as a policy benefit on offering the proof of hospitalization.
- **The policy will also pay the beneficiary, the sum insured if in case, the policyholder dies due to the disease.**
- This policy also provides international cover to people and also covers all the vector-borne diseases listed in the policy document.
- **The policy cover will be available for people between the age of 91 days to 65 years.**
- Along with these benefits, the policyholders will have access to different wellness services namely- discounts and specialized programs like health tips, diet consultation and other programs offered on the health mobile application of HDFC (Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd.) ERGO.

INDIA'S SMALLEST ORCHIDS DISCOVERED IN ASSAM

Lecanorchis Taiwaniana (the parasitic bloom), a type of Orchid was accidentally discovered in Assam by Assam's forest officer named Jatindra Sarma.

- He is also the Member Secretary of State Medicinal Plants Board.

DETAILS:

- The orchid species is already known in Japan, Taiwan and Laos.
- **This is the first time it is discovered in India.**
- **Its discovery was published in the Japanese Journal of Botany with the title as "New record for the flora in India".**

ABOUT THE ORCHID:

- **Lecanorchis Taiwaniana is a mycoheterotroph, which means it is one of the two known types of parasitic plants which have abandoned photosynthesis and derives nutrients and its energy from fungus.**
- It is a variant of a Japanese orchid.
- It is India's one of smallest botanically recorded Orchids in terms of size and duration of bloom.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- The discovery of Lecanorchis Taiwaniana adds to the Orchid wealth of North East India (NEI).
- **India has about 1,300 species of orchids out of which 800 are found in NEI, about 300 species are found in the Western Ghats and 200 in North Western Himalayas.**

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT TO MANDATE QR CODE BASED PAYMENT

The Central Government is planning to mandate a Quick Response (QR) code based payment method option using Unified Payments Interface (UPI) at all shops.

DETAILS:

- **The prime idea behind the proposal of mandatory QR code-based payment is to make digital payment more popular and bring a behavioral change in the ecosystem.**
- The GST council approved the proposal.
- **The move will also provide a GST benefit to both shops and consumers.**
- **The government has for the project roped in National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to work on a necessary mechanism to launch it nationally.**
- The QR code payment is reported to have witnessed exponential growth in consumer adoption in ASEAN countries.

ADVANTAGES OF QR CODE PAYMENT:

- Consumers can buy goods and services without the need to swipe plastic cards.
- Records necessary information related to the transactions
- Data loss and security breach are minimized.
- It can also be introduced on invoices.
- It is cost effective compared to the POS machine.
- As per an estimate, it costs about \$1 to put up a laminated QR code sign at a shop.

ABOUT QR CODE:

- **It was first designed in 1994 for the automotive industry in Japan.**
- QR code is said to store over 4000 alphanumeric characters.
- A QR code uses four standardized encoding modes (numeric, alphanumeric, byte/binary, and kanji) to store data efficiently, extensions may also be used.
- **It consists of black squares arranged in a square grid on a white background, which can be read by an imaging device and processed using Reed-Solomon error correction until the image can be appropriately interpreted.**
- The required data is then extracted from patterns that are present in both horizontal and vertical components of the image.
- QR codes often contain data for a locator, identifier or tracker that points to a website or application.

CO-BRANDED MULTI-CURRENCY CARD LAUNCHED BY ICICI BANK

Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India(ICICI) Bank along with online travel booking portal Goibibo launched a co-branded multi-currency card- "Goibibo ICICI Bank Travel Card".

DETAILS:

- **Customers can use one card for multiple currencies and enjoy discounts on flights and hotel bookings.**
- It can be used by anyone who is travelling abroad.
- **The card is accepted across 200 countries and 4.6 merchants globally and can be dealt in 15 currencies.**

- **The joining fee is Rs. 499+ GST and customers can buy the card by logging into the iMobile App.**
- The card will be activated within one working day.
- **The card provides travel insurance of Rs. 2 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh.**
- The card offers the benefits up to Rs. 20,000 gift vouchers of Rs. 15,000 from Goibibo, a complementary card protection from theft and loss up to Rs. 5 lakh.
- In terms of currency conversion rate, 40 paise discount is offered for a minimum of \$1,000.

'BHARTI AIRTEL' AND 'HDFC LIFE' TO OFFER INSURANCE FOR PREPAID CUSTOMERS

'Bharti Airtel' and the 'Housing Development Finance Cooperation (HDFC) Life' had tied up to offer life cover for customers at a prepaid recharge of Rs 249.

DETAILS:

- **This new Rs 249 prepaid recharge will include 2 GB data, unlimited calls across all the networks and 100 SMS per day with an insurance cover of worth of Rs 4 lakh from HDFC Life.**
- **The recharge validity is for only 28 days.**
- **The insurance cover of Rs 4 lakh will be there with the customers till the recharge will be active and once validity gets over, customers have to recharge it again to avail the insurance cover.**
- To avail this insurance cover, the customers need to enroll after the first recharge through either by SMS, My Airtel App or the retailer.
- **This insurance cover will be available to persons of 18 to 54 years of age.**

PAYTM LAUNCHES FIRST CREDIT CARD "PAYTM FIRST CARD"

Digital payments company Paytm, in association with Citibank has launched its first credit card called "Paytm First Card".

ABOUT THE CARD:

- **Paytm First Card comes with unlimited cash back and will be accepted in India as well globally.**
- The card is issued by Citibank and doesn't involve any hidden fees or charges.

NAINITAL BANK FINED BY RBI FOR RS. 1 CRORE

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a monetary penalty of 1 crore on Nainital Bank for its failure to fully automate the non-performing asset (NPA) identification process, despite specific directions issued in this regard.

DETAILS:

- **The penalty was imposed under the provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.**
- This action is based on the deficiencies in regulatory compliance and is not intended to pronounce upon the validity of any transaction or agreement entered into by the bank with its customers.

ABOUT THE BANKING REGULATION ACT, 1949:

- **It is a legislation in India that regulates all banking firms in India.**

- The Act gives the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) the power to:
- License banks
- Have regulation over shareholding and voting rights of shareholders supervise the appointment of the boards and management
- Regulate the operations of banks
- Lay down instructions for audits
- Control moratorium, mergers and liquidation
- Issue directives in the interests of public good and on banking policy
- Impose penalties

ABOUT NAINITAL BANK:

- **It was founded in 1922 and is headquartered in Nainital, Uttarakhand, India.**
- **Its MD & CEO is Dinesh Pant and its parent bank is Bank of Baroda.**
- **It is a scheduled commercial bank.**
- The bank has over 139 branches in Rajasthan, Delhi and Haryana.
- It has expanded to Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

R.GANDHI APPOINTED AS THE ADD. DIRECTOR OF YES BANK

The Reserve Bank of India has appointed its former Deputy Governor R. Gandhi as an additional director on the board of private sector lender Yes Bank with immediate effect.

DETAILS:

- **The appointment is for two years, that is till May 13, 2021.**
- **R. Gandhi's appointment comes against the backdrop of Yes Bank reported a loss of 1,507 cr for the March quarter.**
- This appointment will significantly strengthen Yes Bank's Board Composition and the Bank will immensely benefit from R. Gandhi's experience and wisdom.

ABOUT MR.R.GANDHI:

- Gandhi was the RBI Deputy Governor during April 2014 and April 2017.
- Gandhi was the driving force for the design and implementation of the real-time gross settlement system or RTGS.

JUSTICE A. K. SIKRI APPOINTED AS THE CHAIRPERSON OF NBSA

Former Supreme Court Judge, Justice A. K. Sikri is appointed as the chairperson of News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA) by the News Broadcasters Association (NBA).

DETAILS:

- He will succeed current Chairperson Justice(Retd.) R.V. Raveendran (also a former Judge of Supreme Court) who completes his term on 25th May 2019.
- He will assume office of Chairperson of NBSA from 26th May 2019.

ABOUT JUSTICE A.K. SIKRI:

- In 1977, he enrolled as an Advocate and commenced his practice in Delhi.
- In 1999 he was elevated as Judge to Delhi High Court (HC).
- In 2011 for a very short time, he was appointed as acting Chief Justice of the Delhi HC.
- Later in 2012 he was appointed as Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court.
- In April 2013, he was elevated as judge to Supreme Court of India.
- He served as SC judge for about six years and retired in March 2019.

ABOUT THE NEWS BROADCASTING STANDARDS AUTHORITY (NBSA):

- **It is an independent body (free from any interference from NBA) for self-regulation of 24×7 news channels, who are members of NBA.**
- **It is basically a self-regulatory mechanism which was set up by News Broadcasters Association (NBA).**
- The aim behind setting NBSA was to improve broadcasting standards and adhere to Code of Ethics (to regulate television content) that were adopted by NBA in November 2007.
- NBSA act as an in-house regulator that discharges function as a watchdog.
- **It decides about complaints made against any member broadcasters who might have allegedly violated (or offended) Code of Ethics, Guidelines and Advisories that are issued from time to time.**
- **NBSA is empowered to censure, warn, express disapproval, admonish and penalize the broadcaster with a fine of sum upto Rs. 1 lakh for violation of Code.**
- The Broadcast Editors' Association is another such organization.
- The Advertising Standards Council of India has also drawn certain guidelines on the content of advertisements.
- These groups do not have any statutory powers and are governed through agreements.

AAROHI PANDIT FIRST WOMAN TO CROSS ATLANTIC OCEAN

India's Captain Aarohi Pandit became world's first woman to cross Atlantic Ocean solo in a Light Sports Aircraft (LSA) named 'Mahi'.

DETAILS:

- **Aarohi Pandit is a 23 year old commercial pilot and LSA licence holder from Mumbai, Maharashtra.**
- **This achievement is part of her ongoing Women Empower (WE) Expedition in the tiny aircraft called 'Mahi'.**
- This one year-long global circumnavigation flight was launched with her friend Captain Keithair Misquitta on July 30th 2018 and both began their trip in August According to which she continued solo from UK to Canada, and will return to India with her friend by July 30th this year.
- The expedition is organised and sponsored by 'Social Access', a not-for-profit communications firm.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PILOTS:

- **Both Pandit and Misquitta flew over Rajasthan, Gujarat, Punjab, and then to Pakistan, where they landed as well.**
- **This makes it first civilian LSA flight to land in neighbouring country since 1947.**
- Then they went onto to Iran, Turkey, Serbia, Slovenia, Germany, France and UK.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **En route her solo journey, she has set another world record as first woman pilot to fly solo in a LSA above the treacherous Greenland ice-cap.**
- She is also due for several other records by the time she will reach India.
- **She took-off from Wick, Scotland (United Kingdom), with brief stopovers in Greenland and Iceland and continued journey under adverse and extreme weather conditions.**
- After an exhausting 3,000 km long flight she landed her tiny aircraft at Iqaluit Airport in Canada.
- After a brief stop in Canada, Women Empower (WE) Expedition will continue with Aarohi flying westwards towards Russia.
- **After clocking a flight of about 37,000 km she is scheduled to return home by July 30th 2019.**

ABOUT 'MAHI':

- **It is a tiny Sinus 912, a single-engine, ultralight motor glider.**
- Sinus 912 weighs around 400 kg (nearly equivalent to a Bullet motorcycle).
- It is manufactured by Pipistrel of Slovenia.
- **It is also the first Light Sports Aircraft (LSA) registered by Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) India.**

G.S. LAKSHMI OF INDIA FIRST WOMAN ICC MATCH REFEREE

G.S. Lakshmi of India has become the first woman to be appointed to the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) International Panel of Match Referee.

DETAILS:

- She will be eligible to take charge in international games with immediate effect.
- **Lakshmi, (now aged 51) was first appointed as a match referee in domestic women's cricket in 2008-09.**
- As a referee she has overseen three women's ODI matches and three women's T20I matches.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL CRICKET COUNCIL (ICC):

- **It is the global governing body of cricket and was earlier named as 'Imperial Cricket Conference'.**
- **It was founded in 1909 by representatives from South Africa, Australia and England.**
- **It is headquartered in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).**

SIDBI LAUNCHES SCHEME TO EXTEND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) launched a pilot scheme to extend financial assistance of up to Rs 10 crore to new-age fintech non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) engaged in financing small businesses and other income-generating activities.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **SIDBI set the exposure cap for lending to a single new-age fintech NBFC at 30% of NOF of the new-age fintech NBFC, subject to a maximum cap of Rs 10 crore.**

ABOUT FINTECH NBFCs:

- **Fintech NBFCs are digital loan companies.**
- **They leverage information technology to provide fast and convenient access to funding.**
- Reserve Bank of India-registered new-age fintech NBFCs have to meet prescribed parameters, including:
- Minimum capital risk-weighted assets ratio of 15%
- Non-performing assets less than or equal to 4%
- Minimum net-owned fund (NOF) of Rs 20 crore and Minimum asset size of Rs 50 crore
- At least two audited annual reports, positive net worth and leverage ratio within 5:1

HDFC TIES UP WITH IMGC FOR HOME LOAN

HDFC collaborated with IMGC (India Mortgage Guarantee Corporation) for a mortgage guarantee-backed home loan.

WHAT IS A MORTGAGE GUARANTEE?

- **Mortgage guarantee is a financial product which compensates lending institutions for the losses that may occur when a home owner defaults on a mortgage loan.**
- In a 'Mortgage Guarantee', the risk of the home loan gets transmuted from the bank/FIs (financial institution) to the mortgage guarantee company.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS COLLABORATION:

- **This collaboration will help HDFC provide more loan to a home loan customer on an improved eligibility.**
- The main objective of the collaboration is to address middle age-salaried customers, self employed customers and young salaried customers.

NMCG, HCL FOUNDATION AND INTACH SIGNED MOU

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), HCL Foundation and Indian National Trust for Art and Culture Heritage (INTACH) signed a tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the plantation of Rudraksha trees in Uttarakhand under the 'Namami Gange' Programme.

DETAILS OF THE PROJECT:

- The objective is to create a greener ecosystem in the Ganga Basin along the stretch of 97 towns and 4,465 villages.
- **Under the project, the aim is to plant 10,000 Rudraksha trees in the catchment area of the Ganga River in Uttarakhand.**

ABOUT RUDRAKSH TREE:

- Scientific Name: *Elaeocarpus Ganitrus*
- **The term is derived from words Rudra which is one of hindu Lord Shiva's Vedic names and Akṣha means 'teardrops'. Thus, Rudraksh actually means Lord Shiva's teardrops.**
- **It is a large evergreen tree, with a height of 60-80 feet and has broad-leaves. It is the seeds of the tree which are known as Rudraksh.**

- Its seed is traditionally used for prayer beads in Hinduism and Buddhism and primarily used in India and Nepal.

NEW VINE SNAKE SPECIES DISCOVERED IN ODISHA

A new Vine Snake species is discovered from the eastern state of Odisha after a gap of 113 years.

DETAILS:

- **Zoologists from different institutes have participated in the discovery and the research was published in the Journal of Natural History.**
- **Vine snakes, called so because they closely resemble vines, are rear-fanged, venomous snakes that belong to the family Colubridae.**
- The new species, Ahaetulla Laudankia, is an arboreal, chestnut brown snake with black speckles.
- **It resembles the dried stem of a bottle gourd plant, which gives it the name 'laudankia', in Odia it translates to the same (lau-bottle gourd; danka-dry stem).**
- This snake is subtle white under its head and has a bright orange-brick red belly with whitish lines running down the length of its abdomen.
- While the keyhole-shaped iris is black coloured, the outer sclera is usually bicoloured and matches the colour of the snake's head.
- **The new species of vine snake is endemic to India, living in the hilly forests and plains at an altitude of 80-400 meters.**
- The three specimens that the researchers collected in Odisha were from fringe forests near woodlands, full of deciduous trees.

ICGS VIGRAHA DECOMMISSIONED AT VISAKHAPATNAM

The Indian Coast Guard ship (ICGS) Vigraha was decommissioned at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

- The decommissioning ceremony was attended by eight former Commanding Officers who had been at the helm of the ship, along with former and the present crew.

ABOUT ICGS VIGRAHA:

- **It is a frontline offshore patrol vessel (OPV).**
- **It was commissioned into service on April 12, 1990.**
- **It has played an instrumental role in protecting east coast of India for 29 years of service from 1990 to 2019.**
- It was the seventh OPV built by Mazagaon Dock Ltd, Mumbai.
- It was first of its class among other OPVs of third series.
- **It was later based at Visakhapatnam and since then it had been instrumental in protecting east coast in general and Andhra Pradesh coast in particular.**
- **It was also leased to Sri Lankan Navy on a dry lease from August 2008 to January 2011.**
- It played an important role in execution of assigned missions in seafronts of Coast Guard Regions where ever it was based like of Mumbai in West, Porbandar in North West and Visakhapatnam in East.
- **It participated in major coast guard operations involving humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, pollution response, anti-poaching, repatriation, joint exercises and search and rescue, among others.**
- Vigraha has been instrumental in saving many lives at sea and also helped in apprehending many poachers and smugglers.

- It most prominent laurel was 275 Kg Silver haul.

MONET'S 'MEULES' PAINTING SOLD FOR A RECORD \$110.7 MILLION

A painting by Oscar-Claude Monet titled 'Meules' sold for a record-breaking price of \$110.7 million at Sotheby's auction in New York.

ABOUT THE PAINTING:

- The French painter Claude Monet's painting titled 'Meules' was made in 1890.
- The painting auctioned is among one of 25 'Meules' (which means "Grainstacks") and it was created by painter in year 1890 and 1891.
- The significance of this painting is that it was the first instance when painter went back to same subject while differing on atmospheric conditions.

ABOUT THE RECORD:

- By fetching \$110.7 million, the painting created a world auction record for the artist (Monet) as well as became first work of an Impressionist Art to cross over \$100 million threshold at an auction.
- It now becomes the 9th most expensive painting to have ever been sold at an international auction house.
- There were six bidders who participated in process but the painting was eventually sold to an unidentified buyer.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- It is also one of the total eight artworks by Claude Monet that was not available in museums and was acquired by private hands.
- The rest of his paintings are in Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York in US, Musée d'Orsay, Paris in France and Art Institute of Chicago.

RETD. JUSTICE MADAN B. LOKUR APPOINTED JUDGE OF FIJI'S

Retired judge of Indian Supreme Court Justice Madan B. Lokur has been appointed to the Supreme Court of Fiji's Non-Resident Panel.

DETAILS:

- Justice Lokur is appointed as a judge of Supreme Court of Fiji's non-resident panel.
- He will assume charge of his new role on 15 August 2019.
- He has been appointed in the new role for a period of three years.
- On December 31 2018, Justice Lokur demitted the office as a Supreme Court justice after his superannuation.
- It is likely that Justice Lokur received the offer from Chief Justice of the Fiji Supreme Court on the day of his retirement itself.

ABOUT THE THE SUPREME COURT OF FIJI:

- In one year it has three sessions in total.

- **Justice Lokur will attend August session which starts from August 15 to August 30, 2019.**
- Other countries that have been invited by Fiji over the years are South Africa, Sri Lanka, Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand.

ABOUT JUSTICE MADAN B. LOKUR:

- **In July 1977, he enrolled as an advocate and practised in High Court of Delhi and the Supreme Court.**
- In 1981, he became an Advocate-on-Record in Supreme Court.
- In 1998 he was appointed as Additional Solicitor General and continued in that post till February 1999 when he was appointed an Additional Judge of Delhi High Court (HC).
- In July 1999, he was made a permanent judge. Later he served as Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court and then Andhra Pradesh High Court before being elevated to SC.
- **He was appointed as judge of Supreme Court of India on 4 June 2012.**
- **He retired as Supreme Court judge on 31 December 2018, after a term of more than 6 years.**

MS. PADMAJA APPOINTED HIGH COMMISSIONER TO REPUBLIC OF NAURU

Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, announced the appointment of Ms. Padmaja as the next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Nauru with residence in Suva.

DETAILS:

- **She is currently serving as the High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Fiji.**
- She is set to take up her responsibility soon.

ABOUT NAURU:

- **There is no official capital of Nauru, but the Government offices are located at the Yaren District.**
- **Its currency is the Australian Dollar.**
- **Its President is Baron Waqa.**

ANIL KAPOOR TO BE HONOURED BY CEUCC

Council of European Chambers of Commerce(CEUCC) in India and European Union(EU) delegation will felicitate Indian actor Anil Kapoor for promoting Children's Rights and his efforts to protect the rights of girls in collaboration with Plan India and the European Union.

DETAILS:

- **Mr. Kapoor will be the Chief Guest for the celebrations.**
- He will be accompanied by the EU Ambassador to India Tomasz Kozlowski, EU Member states Consuls and senior representatives from the European and Indian corporate world.
- **The event will also demonstrate the emergence of Europe as the most favored destination for Indian filmmakers.**

ABOUT THE EUROPEAN UNION:

- **Brussels is the De Facto Capital of the European Union.**
- Its currency is Euro.

CROS MANDATED BY RBI FOR ALL NBFCs

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has mandated all the Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) with a size of over Rs.5,000 crore to appoint Chief Risk Officers (CROs) with clearly specified roles and responsibilities.

DETAILS:

- RBI said that with the increasing role of NBFCs in direct credit intermediation, there is a need for NBFCs to augment risk management practices.
- **RBI's move comes in the wake of ongoing rating downgrades of non-banks which has raised fears of another liquidity crisis.**

CRO GUIDELINES BY RBI:

- **The CRO shall be a senior official in the hierarchy of an NBFC (non-banking finance company).**
- **They will possess adequate professional qualification/experience in the area of risk management.**
- The CRO will be appointed for a fixed tenure with the approval of the board.
- Removal or transfer will need the board's approval and has to be reported to the regulator.
- **The CRO shall have direct reporting lines to the MD & CEO/ Risk Management Committee (RMC) of the Board.**
- **In case the CRO reports to the MD & CEO, the RMC/ Board shall meet the CRO without the presence of the MD & CEO, at least on a quarterly basis.**

ABOUT A NON-BANKING FINANCIAL COMPANY (NBFC):

- NBFC is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956 of India.
- It is engaged in the business of loans and advances, acquisition of shares, stock, bonds, hire-purchase insurance business or chit-fund business.
- It does not include any institution whose principal business includes agriculture, industrial activity or the sale, purchase or construction of immovable property.

ASIAN CUP 2023 TO BE HOSTED BY CHINA

China has become the sole contender to host the Asian Cup Football tournament in 2023.

DETAILS:

- The announcement came after South Korea has announced to withdraw its bid to host the game.
- **The Korea Football Association (KFA) announced that it had pulled out to strategically focus on a joint bid with North Korea to host the Women's World Cup in the same year.**

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **In February 2013, China suggested interest in hosting the 2019 AFC Asian Cup.**
- **However, in September 2013, the Chinese Football Association (CFA) withdrew its bid.**
- In late 2015, the CFA confirmed their intention to bid for the 2023 AFC Asian Cup.
- In March 2019 China had officially proposed to bid for the 2023 Asian Cup.
- **China has previously hosted the 2004 Asian Cup.**

ABOUT 2023 AFC ASIAN CUP:

- **The 2023 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup will be the 18th edition of the AFC Asian Cup.**
- It is organised by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).
- **The tournament will involve 24 national teams.**

ARUNACHAL PRADESH HOLDS 35 % OF COUNTRY'S GRAPHITE RESERVES

The Geological Survey of India (GSI) in its report said that about 35% of India's total Graphite reserves are found in Arunachal Pradesh.

DETAILS:

- **This is the highest level of Graphite reserves found in the country.**
- The GSI presented the said data during its annual interactive meeting with the Department of Geology and Mining & Industries, Government of Arunachal Pradesh in Itanagar.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE RESERVES:

- **With 35% of India's Graphite deposits being found in Arunachal Pradesh, the state could now be developed as the leading producer of graphite in the country thus helping in meeting its future needs.**
- At present India imports majority of Graphite from other countries.

ABOUT THE GEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA (GSI):

- **The Geological Survey of India (GSI) was set up in 1851 primarily to find coal deposits for the Railways.**
- **It is headquartered at Kolkata.**
- Geological Survey of India (GSI) is one of the oldest of such organisations in the world.
- It is the second oldest survey in India after the Survey of India.
- It conducts geological surveys and studies of India.
- **The objectives of GSI are achieved through various surveys like the marine, airborne, ground and also by mineral prospecting and investigations.**
- It also undertakes multi-disciplinary studies like geo-environmental, geoscientific, geotechnical and natural hazards studies, glaciology, seismotectonic study, and carrying out fundamental research.
- **Functioning and annual programmes of GSI assume significance in the national perspective.**

SAME SEX MARRIAGE LEGAL IN TAIWAN

Taiwan becomes the first of any Asian country to legalise same-sex marriage with the passage of a legislation giving gay couples the right to marry.

DETAILS:

- On 17th May, the Lawmakers of Taiwan passed part of a bill that would allow gay couples to enter into exclusive permanent unions and apply for marriage registration with government agencies.
- The 66-to-27 vote recognizes same-sex marriages and gives couples many of the tax, insurance and child-custody benefits available to male-female married couples.
- Taiwan's high court ruled on May 24, 2017, that barring same-sex couples from marrying violates the Taiwanese constitution and gave the legislature two years to pass a corresponding law or see same-sex marriage become legalized automatically.
- The process was frequently stalled amid conservative opposition.
- In November 2018, Taiwan voted in a public referendum to deny same-sex couples full marriage rights.
- Taiwan's ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) responded by submitting a legislation designed to comply with the court ruling and the referendum result.

KAMI RITA SCALE MOUNT EVEREST FOR 23RD TIME

A Nepalese Sherpa climber Kami Rita has scaled Mount Everest for a 23rd time, breaking his own record for the most successful ascents of the world's highest peak.

DETAILS:

- Rita reached the 8,850-metre (29,035-feet) summit with other climbers via the Southeast Ridge route.
- His latest ascent took him two summits clear of two fellow Sherpas, who have successfully climbed the peak 21 times.

ABOUT KAMI RITA SHERPA:

- Rita belongs to Thame village of Solukhumbu district in Nepal.
- Rita first scaled Everest in 1994 and has been making the trip nearly every year since.
- In 2017, Kami became the third person to climb Mount Everest for the 21st time.
- With this, he matched the achievement of Phurba Tashi Sherpa and Apa Sherpa, both of them, have retired since then.
- In 2018 he summited the Mt. Everest 22nd time in 2018 and set a record of most summits on Mount Everest.

WHO ARE SHERPA CLIMBERS?

- Sherpa is one of the ethnic groups native to the most mountainous regions of Nepal and the Himalayas.
- The term sherpa or sherwa derives from the Sherpa language words Shar-east and Wa-people, which refer to their geographical origin in Kham Salmogang of eastern Nepal.
- Most Sherpa people live in the eastern regions of Nepal.

- Many Sherpa are highly regarded as elite mountaineers and experts in their local area.
- They were immeasurably valuable to early explorers of the Himalayan region, serving as guides at the extreme altitudes of the peaks and passes in the region, particularly for expeditions to climb Mount Everest.

INDIA JOINS 'CHRISTCHURCH CALL TO ACTION' INITIATIVE

India has recently joined a major global initiative called 'Christchurch Call to Action' to combat extremism and terrorism online and make internet a safe and secure place.

- It was signed by a group of governments and major tech companies at a summit in Paris.

ABOUT THE INITIATIVE:

- **New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and French President Emmanuel Macron recently launched an ambitious new initiative called "Christchurch Call", which is aimed at curbing extremism online.**
- The initiative was pushed by Ms Ardern in the backdrop of extremist attacks on two mosques in New Zealand city on 15 March 2019, in which a white supremacist gunned down 51 people and broadcasted live footage on Facebook.
- This gave rise to growing realisation that current abuse of social media by extremists must be countered.

PARTICIPANTS OF THE INITIATIVE:

- **A total of 18 countries including European Union (EU) supported the initiative along with representatives of online giants like Facebook, Google, YouTube, Microsoft, Amazon and Twitter.**

OBJECTIVES OF THE INITIATIVE:

- **To curb online extremism by stopping abuse of Internet by extremists.**
- It also calls for an open, free and secure internet to foster economic growth, enhance social inclusiveness and promote connectivity.

ABOUT THE CHRISTCHURCH CALL AGREEMENT:

- **It is a non-binding set of agreements to combat spread of hate and violent content online.**
- **It was signed by a group of governments and major tech companies at a summit in Paris.**
- It is believed to be first document of its type like one which is signed by both major governments and private companies.

MANDATE OF THE AGREEMENT:

- **All signatories pledge to eliminate violent, terrorist and extremist content on social media as well as other online platforms.**
- **But pledge does not contain any regulatory or enforcement measures, and it would be completely up to each individual country and company to decide on how it would honour its voluntary commitments.**
- **The pledge also does not include the definition of 'violent extremist content', and it is up to individual companies to decide on what constituted objectionable material.**

- It asks member nations to adopt and enforce laws which ban objectionable material, and set guidelines on how each countries traditional media can report acts of terrorism without amplifying them.
- It asks tech companies to comply with their terms of service, and re-evaluate their algorithms which direct online users towards extremist content and at the same time commit to redirecting people looking for extremist material online.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- **The United States declined to join the 'Christchurch Call to Action' initiative.**

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT TO CREATE DNA DATABASE

Union Ministry of Environment announced a project to create DNA Database for Indian Rhinos.

DETAILS:

- **This is done in order to curb poaching and collect evidence for wildlife crimes upon Rhinos.**
- **The deadline to meet this project is 2021.**
- **The database will be kept in the Wildlife Institute of India(WII) headquartered in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.**
- The proponents of this project include the World Wide Fund for Nature-India(WWF-India) and the Centre-funded Wildlife Institute of India.

ABOUT THE WILDLIFE INSTITUTE OF INDIA(WII):

- **It was established in 1982.**
- Dr. Vinod B. Mathur is the Director of Wildlife Institute of India.

SASAKAWA AWARD 2019 CONFERRED PRAMOD KUMAR MISHRA

United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) has awarded the Sasakawa Award 2019 for Disaster Risk Reduction to Pramod Kumar Mishra.

- The theme of the 2019 Sasakawa award was "Building Inclusive and Resilient Societies".

DETAILS:

- **The award recognized his dedication to improving the resilience of communities most exposed to disasters.**
- **He is currently serving as Additional Principal Secretary to Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi.**
- He was conferred the award during ongoing 6th Session of Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR) 2019 at Geneva, Switzerland.

WHAT IS GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (GPDRR)?

- GPDRR is biennial multi-stakeholder forum established by UN General Assembly (UNGA) to review progress, share knowledge and discuss the latest developments and trends in reducing disaster risk.

ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS SASAKAWA AWARD:

- **The award was instituted in 1986 by the Nippon Foundation.**
- **It is jointly given by the UNDRR and the Nippon Foundation.**
- It is the most prestigious international award in the area of Disaster Risk Management.
- **It is awarded either to organizations or individuals in recognition of their contributions for ensuring inclusive participation in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities for all sections of society, especially the poor.**

U.K. GOVERNMENT ALLOWS SIKHS TO CARRY KIRPANS

The U.K. Government has passed an amendment- the 'Offensive Weapons Bill', by which Sikhs in the country will be allowed to carry Kirpans and use it during religious and cultural functions.

DETAILS:

- **The Offensive Weapons Bill received the royal assent.**
- **The Bill had been amended in 2018 to ensure that it would not impact the right of the British-Sikh community to possess and supply kirpans, or religious swords.**
- The All Party Parliamentary Group for British Sikhs had led a delegation to the U.K. Home Office to ensure that the Kirpan remains exempt when the new Bill becomes law.
- The new law would, therefore, maintain the status quo in continuing to legally safeguard the sale, possession and use of large Kirpans.
- Large Kirpans, with blades over 50 cm, are used by the community during ceremonies in Gurdwaras as well as for events involving the traditional Sikh Gatka martial art.

ABOUT THE OFFENSIVE WEAPONS ACT:

- **The Offensive Weapons Act covers new offences around possession of certain offensive weapons in public and enforces new restrictions on the online sale of bladed articles and corrosive products.**
- The act is aimed at strengthening existing legislative measures on offensive weapons, focusing on corrosive substances, knives and certain types of firearm.
- It brings in new laws to ban the sale of corrosive substances to anyone under the age of 18, to target people carrying acid, to make it more difficult for anyone under the age of 18 to buy knives online and to ban certain types of firearms.

WHAT IS KIRPAN?

- **The Kirpan is a sword or small dagger, originating from the Indian subcontinent, carried by Sikhs.**
- **It is also part of a religious commandment given by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699, in which he demanded that Sikhs must wear the five articles of faith (the five Ks) at all times, the Kirpan being one of five Ks.**
- **The Punjabi word Kirpan has two roots: kirpa-mercy and aanaa-honor.**
- **Sikhs are expected to embody the qualities of a Sant Sipahi or saint-soldier with the courage to defend the rights of all who are wrongfully oppressed or persecuted irrespective of their colour, caste or creed.**
- Kirpans are curved and have a single cutting edge that may be either blunt or sharp.
- It must be made of steel or iron.

RAFAEL NADAL WON THE ITALIAN OPEN 2019

Rafael Nadal has won a record 34th ATP Masters 1000 title by defeating Novak Djokovic in the Italian Open final 2019.

DETAILS:

- **This is Nadal's 9th Rome title.**
- **Nadal dominated in a 6-0, 4-6, 6-1 win broke a tie with his longtime rival Djokovic.**
- For his victory, Nadal received 1,000 ATP Ranking points and earned ₹7.5 crore.
- Djokovic produced an error-strewn performance in his 54th meeting with Nadal.
- After three semi-final defeats in Monte Carlo, Barcelona and Madrid, Nadal has returned to his best form ahead of Roland Garros and clinched his first title of the season.

RESULT OF ITALIAN OPEN 2019:

- **Men's Singles:**
 - Spain- Rafael Nadal
- **Women's Singles:**
 - Czech Republic- Karolína Plíšková
- **Men's Doubles:**
 - Colombia- Juan Sebastián Cabal / Colombia- Robert Farah
- **Women's Doubles:**
 - Belarus- Victoria Azarenka / Australia- Ashleigh Barty

BSNL PARTNERS WITH GOOGLE ON WORLD TELECOM DAY

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) partnered with Google on the occasion of World Telecom Day.

DETAILS:

- **The main objective is to expand BSNL Wifi footprint in the country.**
- **Currently, there are around 38,000 BSNL Wifi hotspot locations working across the country and one can use these after buying the Wi-Fi vouchers worth of Rs 19 and more.**

ABOUT BHARAT SANCHAR NIGAM LIMITED (BSNL):

- **BSNL has its headquarter in New Delhi.**
- **The CEO of BSNL is Anupam Shrivastava.**

ABOUT GOOGLE:

- **Google has its headquarter in California, US.**
- **The CEO of Google is Sundar Pichai.**

KERALA BECOMES THE FIRST STATE INTO THE MASALA BOND MARKET

Kerala became the first state to tap into the Masala Bond market by listing the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board's (KIIFB's) Masala Bond worth USD 312 million (Rs 2,150 crore) in London Stock Exchange's (LSE's) International Securities Market (ISM).

DETAILS:

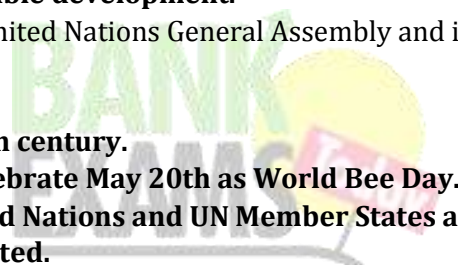
- **The Masala Bond has a tenor of 5-year and a 9.723% coupon.**
- Kerala's state finance minister Thomas Issac executed this move.
- **The main objective of this initiative was to tap the masala bond market and to rebuild the infrastructure in Kerala from the proceeds of the masala bond.**

"WORLD BEE DAY" CELEBRATED ON MAY 20TH

World Bee Day is celebrated on May 20th annually.

- The theme of this year is "Save the Bees".

DETAILS:

- **It is celebrated to raise the awareness of the importance of pollinators, the threats they face and their contribution to sustainable development.**
- This day was declared by the United Nations General Assembly and it was celebrated for the first time on May 20th, 2018 in Slovenia.
- his native Slovenia in the 18th century.
- **Slovenia had proposed to celebrate May 20th as World Bee Day.**
- **In December 2017, The United Nations and UN Member States approved Slovenia's proposal and since 2018 this day is celebrated.**

"LIBRA NETWORKS LLC" REGISTERED IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Facebook Global Holdings registered a new cryptocurrency firm named 'Libra Networks LLC' in Geneva, Switzerland.

- It will provide financial and technology services by developing related hardware and software components.
- Facebook has been very secretive about its new cryptocurrency project.

DETAILS:

- **Facebook had registered the trademark "Libra" with the United States Patent and Trademark Office.**
- Facebook has hired 2 cryptocurrency compliance experts who formerly worked at the major crypto exchange Coinbase to assist in their work.
- Facebook is looking to raise \$1 billion to build this new project.

ANTI-TERRORISM DAY OBSERVED MAY 21ST

Every year May 21st is observed as Anti-Terrorism Day in India.

DETAILS:

- **The day is observed in the memory of former Indian Prime Minister Mr. Rajiv Gandhi who passed away on this day.**
- **Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated at an election rally near Chennai by a suicide bomber from the LTTE on 21st May 1991.**
- On this day the Government intends to spread awareness among the people about the danger of terrorism and violence and its effect on the people, society and the country as a whole.

PURPOSE OF OBSERVING ANTI-TERRORISM DAY:

- To spread the message of global peace and non-violence.
- Deter vulnerable youth from following cult practices and being misguided.
- Commemorate and honor the sacrifices made by thousands of soldiers who battled against terrorism.
- Pay homage to the victims who lost their lives in terrorist attacks.
- Device ways and hold awareness programs to protect future generations from radical influence.

GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS:

- **The Ministry of Home Affairs requested all Varsities and affiliated colleges to observe the day.**
- The objective behind the observance of Anti-Terrorism Day is to wean away the people from terrorism and violence.
- Its motive is to promote unity, peace and harmony across the nation.
- **On this day Anti- terrorism pledge is taken in all government offices, PSU and in other public organisations.**
- Events like debates, discussions, symposiums, seminars lectures will be held in schools, colleges and in universities on dangers of terrorism.

JOKO WIDODO RE-ELECTED PRESIDENT OF INDONESIA

Indonesia's Joko Widodo has been re-elected as the President of the country for a second term.

DETAILS:

- **Joko Widodo has beaten his rival Prabowo Subianto, a retired general.**
- Widodo and his vice-presidential running mate Ma'ruf Amin won the election by a 55.5% to 44.5% margin over Prabowo Subianto and Sandiaga Uno.
- Widodo's PDI-P finished first in the People's Representative Council (DPR) election with 19.33%, followed by Prabowo's Gerindra with 12.57%.
- The next top parties by the number of votes are Golkar, the National Awakening Party (PKB), the Nasdem Party, and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS).

ABOUT JOKO WIDODO:

- **Joko Widodo is an Indonesian politician who is the seventh and current President of Indonesia.**

- Elected in July 2014 as the first Indonesian President to not come from an elite political or military background, he was previously the Mayor of Surakarta from 2005 to 2012, and the Governor of Jakarta from 2012 to 2014.
- He belongs to the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle.

SARAY KHUMALO FIRST BLACK AFRICAN WOMAN TO SCALE MT. EVEREST

Saray Khumalo aged 47 became the first black African woman to conquer Mt. Everest in her fourth attempt.

DETAILS:

- She climbed the 8,848 metre mountain after three previous attempts as they were affected by bad weather, injury and tragedy.
- She was born in Zambia and now is a Johannesburg resident, South Africa.
- She has also conquered Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa, Aconcagua in Argentina and Mount Elbrus in Russia.
- She is on a hunt to conquer the highest peaks on each continent.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- In 2003, South African park ranger Sibusiso Vilane became the first black person to reach the top of Mount Everest.
- Sir Edmund Hillary and Nepalese Sherpa mountaineer Tenzing Norgay were the first people to scale Mt. Everest on May 29, 1953.

MCA PLANS INTRODUCING AI SYSTEM IN MCA 21 PORTAL

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has laid out its plans to introduce Artificial Intelligence (AI) system in its MCA 21 portal.

- It will be introduced when the Ministry will roll out the Version 3 of the MCA 21.

DETAILS:

- In early 2019, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs sought applications from various service providers so as to develop as well as operate upgraded version of MCA 21 system.
- The objective is to make compliance process easier and to ensure that routine enforcement activities are done regularly on autopilot basis.
- **The main focus of the Ministry in introducing AI system is to rationalise all forms filled and to follow principle of a single source of truth.**
- This means that one would not be required to fill in the known details again, as it will get filled automatically.
- **The MCA also seeks to interlink databases so that routine enforcements are done 24×7 on autopilot basis.**

ABOUT MCA 21:

- **The MCA 21 is one of 31 Mission Mode Projects (MMP) of National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) of Government of India.**
- This is the first Mission Mode Project to be launched under NeGP and is an e-governance initiative from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to meet stakeholder needs in the 21st century.

BACKGROUND OF MCA 21:

- The MCA 21 system was first started in 2006.
- **The first phase (Phase I: from 2006- December 2012) of e-governance initiative of ministry was implemented by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and the ongoing second phase (Phase II: from January 2013-July 2021) is being implemented by Infosys.**

SIGNIFICANCE OF MCA 21:

- **The portal is electronic backbone of MCA for distribution of information to all its concerned stakeholders, including the investors, regulators and corporates.**
- It protects investors and also offers many important services to stakeholders.

FUNCTIONS OF MCA 21:

- It regulates corporate affairs in India through Companies Act, 1956, 2013 and other allied Acts, Rules and Bills.
- **It also allows electronic filings of various documents under Companies Act, 2013.**
- **It has also fully automated all processes related to compliance and enforcement monitoring under the Act.**
- The portal act as a gateway to all guidance, services, and other corporate affairs related information.

JOKHA ALHARTHI WON "MAN BOOKER INTERNATIONAL PRIZE"

Oman author Jokha Alharthi won the prestigious Man Booker International Prize for "Celestial Bodies".

DETAILS:

- "Celestial Bodies" is the story of three sisters of a desert country confronting its slave-owning past and a complex modern world.
- **Jokha Alharthi, the first Arabic-language writer to take the prize, will split the 50,000 pounds or 64,000 US dollar purse with her UK-based translator, Marilyn Booth.**

ABOUT THE MAN BOOKER INTERNATIONAL PRIZE:

- It is a prize that is presented by the Man Group of United Kingdom.
- **It is awarded for the "Best book in English translation".**
- It carries a reward of £50,000.
- **The first Man Booker International Prize was awarded in 2005.**

EARTH OBSERVATION SATELLITE "RISAT 2B" SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED

ISRO launched Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C46) from the first launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota on its 48th mission, carrying earth observation satellite RISAT-2B on 22nd May.

DETAILS:

- The earth observation satellite RISAT-2B is capable of observing Earth during the day, night and even under rainy and cloudy conditions.
- The launch of the PSLV marks the third launch in 2019.
- It was the 72nd launch vehicle mission from Sriharikota and also marked the 36th launch from the first launch pad.

RISAT-2B:

- **The RISAT-2B (Radar Imaging Satellite-2B), meant for application in fields such as surveillance, agriculture, forestry and disaster management support, was released into the orbit successfully.**
- It would replace the RISAT-2, which was successfully launched in 2009.
- RISAT-2B is an excellent satellite with hi-fi earth observation capabilities.
- **The RISAT-2B is equipped with a synthetic aperture radar that can take pictures of the earth during day and night, and also under cloudy conditions.**
- With a mission life of five years, the satellite would also be used for military surveillance.
- **The RISAT-2 has been actively used by India to monitor activities in camps across the border in Pakistan to thwart infiltration bids by terrorists.**

'ALIPAY' AND 'WECHAT' BANNED IN NEPAL

Nepal banned popular Chinese digital wallets 'Alipay' and 'WeChat' to prevent the loss of foreign currency earnings from tens of thousands of Chinese tourists.

DETAILS:

- **The reason cited by Nepal is that, it was losing out since the actual transactions took place in China.**
- Over 1,50,000 Chinese holidaymakers visited Nepal in 2018, many using digital wallets to pay in hotels, restaurants, and shops in tourist areas, especially in Chinese-run businesses.

U.A.E. LAUNCHES 'GOLDEN CARD' PERMANENT RESIDENCY SCHEME

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) launched 'Golden Card' Permanent Residency Scheme in an attempt to woo wealthy individuals and exceptional talents from all over the world.

DETAILS:

- **The "Golden Card" programme was unveiled by UAE Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (who is also Dubai's ruler).**

- The UAE has always opened its door to millions of people looking for pursuing their dreams and betterment of lives.
- The Golden Card is UAE's way to welcome all those seeking to be a part of the UAE's success story and making it a second home.
- It is introduced keeping in mind that Residents are an indispensable part of country and thus will be permanent partners in UAE's journey.
- **Expatriates in the UAE are usually given limited duration residence permits under a sponsorship system.**

ABOUT THE 'GOLDEN CARD' PROGRAMME:

- **It is open to investors and 'exceptional talents' like scientists, engineers, doctors, students and artists.**
- The Golden Card offers permanent residency and unprecedented benefits to cardholders as well as to their families while creating an attractive environment for growth and business.
- **The benefits of PR also includes spouse and children of cardholder so as to ensure cohesive social ties.**
- As part of initiative, the first group of 6800 investors from more than 70 countries with investments of about 100 Billion Dirhams (USD 27 billion), were being given permanent residency.

BENEFITS OF THIS INITIATIVE:

- **This new initiative will attract greater foreign investment (FI) and activate local economy, making it more efficient and attractive for investors.**
- It will also increase UAE's competitiveness on a global scale and will reaffirm the country's position as a global incubator.

SHYAM SARAN SELECTED FOR JAPAN'S SECOND HIGHEST NATIONAL AWARD

Former Indian Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran is selected for Japan's Second Highest National Award called 'The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star'.

DETAILS:

- The Government of Japan recently announced in its 2019 Spring Imperial Decorations, that it will confer 'The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Star' upon 72-year-old former Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran.
- **He will be conferred for his contributions in strengthening strategic ties and enhancing mutual understanding between India and Japan.**

ABOUT SHYAM SARAN:

- **He served as India's Foreign Secretary from year 2004 to 2006 during which he played an important role in elevating India-Japan relationship to a strategic partnership.**
- During his tenure Junichiro Koizumi, (then Japanese Prime Minister) visited India for first time in 5 years.

ABOUT 'THE ORDER OF THE RISING SUN':

- It is the Japanese Government's Second Highest National Honour.
- **It was established by Japanese Emperor Meiji in 1875.**
- It is awarded for an exceptional civil or military merit.

AUSTRIAN F1 WORLD CHAMPION 'NIKI LAUDA' DIES

Three-time Formula One (F1) World champion Niki Lauda dies in Vienna at the age of 70.

- He underwent a lung transplant in August 2018.

ABOUT NIKI LAUDA:

- The Austrian national was one of the best known figures in motor racing.
- **He was born in Vienna in February 1949 and became a motor racing legend.**
- He won three Formula One (F1) world titles between 1975 and 1984.
- **He won the title for Ferrari in 1975 and 1977 and McLaren in 1984.**
- **He suffered horrific injuries at German Grand Prix (GP) in 1976 and will always be remembered for his remarkable recovery and return to racing after being badly burned in the crash.**
- He has overall competed in 171 races and won 25 of them.
- **After his retirement he actively pursued business interests including his own airline and later served in senior roles at F1 management as non-executive chairman in the hugely successful Mercedes team since 2012, where he also helped bring British world champion Lewis Hamilton on board.**

TECH MAHINDRA AND INDIAN NAVY SIGN RS.300 CR. DEFENCE CONTRACT

IT major, Tech Mahindra has signed a defence contract worth Rs.300 crore with Indian Navy.

DETAILS:

- This contract is Tech Mahindra's biggest agreement to date.
- **The IT major will implement RFID-based access control system across all naval bases and ships as part of 'Armed Forces Secure Access Card (AFSAC)' Project.**
- **AFSAC will replace the existing paper-based identity card for all Navy personnel, including dependents and ex-servicemen.**
- **As part of the AFSAC Project, Tech Mahindra will implement RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) based access control system across all naval bases and ships.**

ABOUT THE AFSAC PROJECT:

- **The Mumbai-based company will develop a secure application to manage the access control devices, network devices, and the AFSAC card through a data centre.**
- **The security of Indian Naval establishments against unauthorized access is a thrust area and the AFSAC Project will be an important step towards achieving this aim.**
- Scheduled to be implemented over the next two years, the project will ensure smooth issuance, handling, administration, management and life-cycle support of AFSAC Cards on turnkey basis.

- This project further cements the company's role as one of the leading system integrators globally.
- Tech Mahindra is already working with entities like Coal India, India Ports Association, Kanpur Smart City and others.

IAF SUCCESSFULLY TEST FIRES BRAHMOS AIR FROM A SU-30 MKI

The Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully fired an aerial version of supersonic BrahMos cruise missile from a Su-30 MKI fighter aircraft.

DETAILS:

- **The IAF successfully fired BrahMos Air Launched Missile from its frontline Su-30 MKI fighter aircraft.**
- **Earlier on 22nd November 2017, the IAF became world's first Air Force to successfully fire an air launched 2.8 Mach surface attack missile of this category on a sea target.**
- Since then this was the second such live launch of weapon.
- The launch from Su-30 MKI aircraft was smooth and the missile followed desired calculated trajectory before directly hitting land target.
- The firing was successfully undertaken with dedicated support from Indian Navy which ensured that large number of monitoring ships are available for ensuring range safety clearance.
- The capability of BrahMos missile coupled with superlative performance of Su-30MKI aircraft, gives IAF its desired strategic reach.

ABOUT BRAHMOS AIR LAUNCHED MISSILE:

- **It is a 2.5 ton supersonic air to surface cruise missile.**
- **Its range is close to 300 km and is designed & developed by BrahMos Aerospace Pvt. Ltd. (BAPL).**
- The BrahMos missile provides IAF a much desired capability of striking on any target at sea or on land from large stand-off ranges with pinpoint accuracy by day or night and that too in all weather conditions.

BHAWANA KANTH FIRST WOMAN PILOT TO QUALIFY FOR COMBAT MISSIONS

Flight Lieutenant Bhawana Kanth scripted history by becoming first woman pilot of Indian Air Force (IAF) to qualify to undertake combat missions on a fighter jet.

ABOUT BHAWANA KANTH:

- **She is from the first batch of women fighter pilots of the IAF and joined the fighter squadron in November 2017.**
- In order to be declared 'Operational by Day', a pilot has to complete their syllabus which announces them as fit to fly and undertake day operations.
- **She has now completed 'Operational by Day' syllabus for carrying out combat missions on Mig-21 Bison aircraft during day time and thus became the first qualified woman IAF fighter pilot to undertake missions by day on a fighter aircraft.**
- She will soon be allowed to carry out night operations once her training for night missions completes.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **Within a year of Government decision to open fighter stream for women on an experimental basis, three women namely Avani Chaturvedi, Mohana Singh and Bhawana Kanth were commissioned as flying officers in July 2016.**
- The IAF has already selected next batch of its three women trainee pilots for fighter stream.

HDFC GROUP OVERTAKES TATA GROUP

HDFC group has overtaken the 151-year-old Tata group to emerge as India's most valuable by way of market capitalization (m-cap).

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **The combined market value of the five listed companies of the HDFC group - HDFC, HDFC Bank, HDFC Life, HDFC Asset Management and Gruh Finance stood at Rs 11.66 lakh crore while the combined m-cap of 29 Tata group companies stood at Rs 11.64 lakh crore, about Rs 2,000 crore less than that of the HDFC group.**

ABOUT THE HDFC GROUP:

- CEO of HDFC group is Mr. Aditya Puri.
- The group has its headquarters in Mumbai, India.
- HDFC group was founded in August 1994, India.
- It has subsidiaries called HDFC securities and HDB Financial Services.

SBI TIES UP WITH 'SRI SRI TATTVA'

State Bank of India (SBI) has tied up with the FMCG arm of The Art of Living, 'Sri Sri Tattva'.

DETAILS:

- **Under this tie up, SBI's YONO users can avail a discount of 15% on the entire range of products offered by Sri Tattva such as food, personal care, healthcare, homecare, BYOGI apparels and Shankara skincare products.**
- YONO is an integrated digital banking platform of SBI.

INDRA NOOYI PRESENTED WITH AN HONORARY DEGREE BY YALE UNIVERSITY

Former PepsiCo chairman and CEO Indra Nooyi was presented with an honorary degree by the prestigious Yale University, her alma mater.

DETAILS:

- **The degree is to recognize her achievements in business and for being a global role model who encouraged women and girls to see themselves as top corporate executives.**
- **She is celebrated for her leadership and her commitment to helping women achieve success.**
- She received a degree in Master of Public and Private Management from the university's Yale School of Management in 1980 and was presented with the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters.
- Nooyi was among 11 individuals to be presented with the honorary degrees for achieving distinction in their fields.

ABOUT INDRA NOOYI:

- **In 2006, Nooyi became the first woman to helm the global food and beverage giant PepsiCo.**
- She stepped down in October 2 last year as PepsiCo's CEO, after 24 years with the company, the last 12 as CEO of the global beverage giant.
- **Nooyi was recently elected to the board of Amazon, on whose audit compensation committee she sits.**
- **She is a member of the World Economic Forum board of trustees and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.**
- **She is also an independent director of the International Cricket Council and chair of the compensation committee at Schlumberger, an oilfield services company, on whose board she serves.**
- One of 25 women to have led a Fortune 500 company, Nooyi has appeared frequently on the Forbes and Fortune rankings of the world's most powerful women.

ICICI BANK AGREES TO BUY 9.9% STAKE IN BSE SUBSIDIARY INX

ICICI Bank said it has entered into an agreement with the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) to buy a stake in its subsidiary INX, located at GIFT City Gujarat.

DETAILS:

- **ICICI Bank will buy a 9.9% stake in India International Exchange (INX), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) for nearly Rs 31 crore.**
- The exchange posted a loss of Rs 31 crore in 2018-19 while its total revenue stood at Rs 2.25 crore.
- **INX is located at GIFT City in Gujarat.**
- **The investment is subject to regulatory approvals** and comes at a cash consideration of up to Rs 305 million in tranches to acquire up to 9.9% shareholding in INX.

MICROSOFT STOPS SELLING HUAWEI LAPTOPS ON ITS ONLINE STORE

Microsoft has removed Huawei laptops from its online store complying with the US President's executive order to crack down on Chinese tech companies.

DETAILS:

- Microsoft has declined to comment on the issue and also on reports of a potential Windows ban on Huawei.

- However, some offline Microsoft stores are reportedly still selling stocked Huawei laptops.
- Microsoft's potential Windows ban could also affect Huawei's server solutions.
- Microsoft and Huawei both operate a hybrid cloud solution for Microsoft's Azure stack, using Microsoft-certified Huawei servers.

ONE MUST ALSO KNOW:

- Google cut off Huawei's Android license but Microsoft stayed silent on whether it will prevent the Chinese company from obtaining Windows licenses.
- For now, Huawei has been granted a 90-day extension to provide software updates to Android-powered handsets and maintain continued operation of existing networks and equipment.
- However, this narrow extension does not seem to apply to Windows licenses for laptops.

DOCTOR HEMA DIVAKAR RECIEVES 'GLOBAL ASIAN OF THE YEAR' AWARD

Bengaluru based doctor Hema Divakar received the 'Global Asian of the Year 2018-19' Award for women services and contribution towards Women's Healthcare Ecosystem.

DETAILS:

- Dr. Hema was conferred the award at the Asian Business & Social Forum 2019.
- She got the award under the 'In Service of the Society and the Nation' category from UAE's Trade Promotion Director Mohammed Naser Hamdan Al Zaabi.

JAGAN MOHAN REDDY TO BE SWORN IN AS CM OF ANDHRA PRADESH

YSR Congress chief Jagan Mohan Reddy to be sworn in as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh on 30th of May 2019 at Vijayawada.

DETAILS:

- Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy made this announcement after his party achieved a landslide victory in the legislative elections for Andhra Pradesh Legislative assembly.
- He will replace Mr. N. Chandrababu Naidu who as of now is the CM of Andhra Pradesh.

ABOUT YSR CONGRESS PARTY:

- The President of YSR Congress Party is Mr. Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddy.
- The party was founded on 12 March 2011
- The party has its headquarters in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh.

DR. ANKUR PATWARDHAN CONFERRED WITH 'GERMAN CHEMISTRY PRIZE'

Dr. Ankur Patwardhan, a scientist from Pune won second place in 'German Chemistry Prize' in an international competition named 'Elsevier Foundation-ISC3 Green and Sustainable Chemistry Challenge' during in the 4th Green and Sustainable Chemistry Conference held in Dresden ,Germany.

DETAILS:

- **for pollination and ecosystem health'**
- The first prize was won by Dr. Ramia Al Bakain with €50,000 for his project "New green technique to remove toxic metal from wastewater".
- **At present, Dr. Ankur is working as head of the 'Annasaheb Kulkarni Biodiversity Department' at Abasa Garware College, Pune.**

ADB GIVES \$750 MN LOAN FOR RAILWAYS TRACK ELECTRIFICATION PROJECT

Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed an agreement with Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC), an entity owned by Government of India (GOI) to provide USD 750 million long-term financing for the Railways Track Electrification Project.

DETAILS:

- This project is part of a broad modernization program to reduce the dependence of India's railway sector on fossil fuels.
- **It is the largest single non-sovereign loan ever.**
- **IRFC will use the proceeds from the loan to install electric traction equipment along about 3,378 kilometres of existing railway lines.**

ABOUT IRFC:

- IRFC was established in 1986.
- **It is the financing arm of Indian Railways for mobilizing funds from domestic and international capital markets.**
- It is registered as a non banking finance company (NBFC).

ISRO'S INAUGURATES ITS NEW COMMERCIAL ARM- NSIL

The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO's) new commercial arm called "NewSpace India Limited (NSIL)" was officially inaugurated in Bengaluru.

DETAILS:

- **NSIL is provided an authorised share capital worth Rs.100 crore and initial paid up capital of Rs.10 crore.**
- NSIL's main objective is to scale up industry participation in Indian space programmes.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF NSIL:

- It will act as an aggregator for all space related activities in industry.
- **It will also develop private entrepreneurship in space related technologies.**

- **It will be responsible for production and manufacturing of commercially successful Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) and Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) spacecraft launchers via technology transfer mechanisms.**
- It will cater to emerging global market demand of commercial SSLV and will also provide satellite building and satellite-based services which includes outsource assembly of small satellites and upcoming SSLV, supply of sub-systems for various domestic and international application needs.
- It will enable space technology spin-offs via Indian industry interface.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- On 6 March 2019, the Department of Space (DoS) registered its second commercial entity called NSIL in ISRO.
- **The first commercial venture of DoS was Antrix Corporation Limited, which was set up in September 1992 to market products and services of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).**
- The NSIL was incorporated for commercially utilising research and development (R&D) activities carried out by ISRO in the area of space.

DRDO SUCCESSFULLY FLIGHT TESTS AN "INERTIAL GUIDED BOMB"

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), under Ministry of Defence has successfully flight tested a 500 kg class "Inertial Guided Bomb" from a Su-30 MKI Aircraft in the Pokhran test range in Rajasthan.

DETAILS:

- **The test firing of the guided bomb is conducted just two days after Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully test an fired aerial version of supersonic BrahMos cruise missile from a Sukhoi jet at Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**
- The weapon system is capable of carrying different warheads.
- The guided bomb achieved desired range and hit the target with high precision, thus meeting all the mission objectives.

ABOUT INERTIAL GUIDED WEAPONS:

- **It is a type of Precision guided munition (smart bomb) which is intended to precisely hit a specific desired target so as to minimize collateral damage and increase fatality against intended targets.**
- It is basically an air-dropped guided bomb which contains metal penetrator rods of various sizes.
- It was designed to attack targets where an explosive effect may be undesirable and may result in unwanted casualties, like fuel storage tanks or chemical weapon stockpiles in civilian areas.

CHINA CONTINUES TO USE BANNED OZONE-DEPLETING CFC

According to a recent research published in famous science journal 'Nature', China continues to use the banned ozone depleting chemical called CFC-11 in violation of the Montreal Protocol.

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

- Despite being a signatory to Montreal Protocol, and agreeing to phase out the production of harmful CFC-11 in 2010, China continues to emit ozone depleting CFC-11 in violation of Montreal Protocol.
- An initial study about a year ago reported new global emissions of CFC-11 gas, which many scientists, environmental groups and policymakers had suspected but were only able to locate source generally as East Asia.
- **New findings by international team of researchers confirmed about suspected region and claimed that emissions of ozone layer harming gas are coming eastern China, primarily from its two heavily industrialised provinces namely Shandong province and Hebei province.**
- These two provinces originate between 40% and 60 % of total global CFC-11 emissions from Eastern China.

REASONS FOR THESE EMISSIONS:

- China has world's largest polyurethane foam market which accounts for about 40 % of world's total consumption.
- The Chinese foam manufacturers have been using CFC-11 illegally to save on higher cost of alternatives like hydrochloro-fluorocarbons named HCFC-141b, which is supposed to be phased out in China by 2026.
- The research also found evidence that factories in Shandong province were still making and using gas to manufacture foam insulation.

ABOUT CFC-11:

- It is also called as freon-11, Trichlorofluoromethane or R-11.
- **It is one of a class of compounds called chlorofluorocarbons that is responsible for destroying atmospheric ozone.**
- **It is also a potent greenhouse gas (GHG) that contributes to atmospheric warming.**
- Before being included in production moratorium agreed in the Montreal Protocol of 1987 it was widely being used as a refrigerant.

ABOUT THE MONTREAL PROTOCOL:

- **It is a legally binding international pact signed in 1987 to preserve degradation of atmospheric ozone layer that blocks harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiations from the Sun.**
- Excessive amounts of some types of UV radiation can cause eye damage and skin cancer in people and are also harmful to crops and vegetation.
- The protocol prescribe that consumption and production of compounds that deplete ozone (O₃) such as halons, carbon tetrachloride, stratosphere-chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), and methyl chloroform-are to be phased out by 2000 (2005 for methyl chloroform).
- According to World Meteorological Organization (WMO), hole in ozone layer is on path of recovery and reduction in atmospheric concentration of CFC-11 has made second-largest contribution to its decline since 1990s.

DBT AND DAE SIGN MOU FOR CANCER RESEARCH

Department of Biotechnology (DBT) under Ministry of Science and Technology and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE), under Prime Minister of India have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for supporting joint collaborative research programmes in the area of Cancer.

ABOUT THE MOU:

- The MoU for Joint Collaboration on Cancer Research was signed between DBT and DAE.
- The DAE was represented by its Tata Memorial Centre, which also functions as coordinating centre on behalf of The National Cancer Grid of India.
- **Their objective is to work towards the common goal of tackling cancer and also to bring a quantum change in the present scenario of Cancer research.**
- **The Clinicians shall work in coherence with Researchers to identify and develop collaborative research programmes as well as public health initiatives.**
- Activities such as intensive workshops on clinical research methodologies, joint clinical fellowships and protocol development shall help towards creating a trained manpower community and will provide a platform to utilize their acquired skills in the best possible manner.

WHAT MAKES THIS MOU SIGNIFICANT?

- The MoU shall help strengthen various initiatives mandatorily for Cancer by:
- Strategizing and prioritizing cancer research.
- Developing new and affordable technologies.
- Jointly designing and funding clinical trials.
- Coordinating and collaborating for translational research, interventions, training of manpower and infrastructure development.

UK PM THERESA MAY RESIGNS OVER BREXIT

Theresa May announced that she will resign on June 7, 2019, making her the second prime minister to quit in three years over the deeply polarising issue of Brexit in contemporary British history.

DETAILS:

- **May took over in July 2016 after the Leave vote in the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union prompted then Prime Minister David Cameron to resign.**
- **May has since seen 36 ministers resign over her approach and the House of Commons voting down her deal three times.**
- May's announcement soon shifted focus on the new party leader and prime minister.
- **Boris Johnson, former foreign secretary, is the leading contender, while others in the race include home secretary Sajid Javid and foreign secretary Jeremy Hunt.**
- May, who will continue in office until the new leader is elected, was close to tears as she concluded her statement.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- May will be in office during the forthcoming state visit of US President Donald Trump from June 3.
- The leadership contest will be triggered after her resignation on June 7.
- **The new leader will be expected to steer the Brexit process until October 31, the new deadline for the UK to leave the EU.**

VICE PRESIDENT CALLS FOR PROTECTING THE "ONGOLE" CATTLE BREED

Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu has called for protecting the "Ongole" cattle breed.

DETAILS:

- **Vice President Venkaiah Naidu released a compendium on the Ongole breed of cattle at Vijayawada recently.**
- He also stressed that cattle wealth was national wealth.
- **Mr.Naidu highlighted that Brazil has imported these cattle breeds and produced hybrid Ongoles to earn huge revenue through export whereas in India, this cattle is neglected.**

ABOUT THE ONGOLE CATTLE:

- **Ongole cattle is an indigenous cattle breed that originates from Prakasam District in the state of Andhra Pradesh.**
- The breed derives its name from the place the breed originates from, Ongole.
- **The Ongole breed of cattle, Bos Indicus, has a great demand as it is said to possess resistance to both foot and mouth disease and mad cow disease.**
- **The Ongole is one of the heaviest breeds.**
- **They weigh approximately half a ton, are 1.7 meters in height and have a body length of 1.6 meters and girth measuring 2 meters.**
- These cattle are commonly used in bull fights in Mexico and some parts of East Africa due to their strength and aggressiveness.
- **They also participate in traditional bull fights in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.**

SONY TO STOP SELLING ITS SMARTPHONES IN INDIA

Sony has revealed that it will stop selling its smartphones in several countries including India.

DETAILS:

- **Sony added it presently considers Japan, Europe, Taiwan and Hong Kong as the "focus regions" - to drive profit for the smartphone business.**
- Sony reported an operating loss of 97.1 billion yen (\$879.45 million) in the year ended March.
- Samsung with shipment of 71.9 million units, Huawei with 59.1 million, Apple with 36.4 million, Xiaomi with 25 million, Vivo with 23.2 million and Oppo with 23.1 million are the top smartphone brands in the first quarter of 2019.

HUAWEI SMARTPHONES BANNED BY GOOGLE

New Huawei smartphones are set to lose access to some Google apps like YouTube and Maps and the next version of Android to be launched later this year.

DETAILS:

- This comes after the US government sought to blacklist Chinese company Huawei around the world.
- **Google's suspension follows a report calling for Huawei to be prevented from supplying 5G mobile networks in the UK, because its operations are "subject to influence by the Chinese state".**
- **Australia, which also shares intelligence with the UK, has already moved to ban Huawei as a supplier for its future 5G network.**
- Huawei has always insisted it is a privately held company, independent of the Chinese state, owned largely by its employees, and has worked supplying phone technology in the UK for 15 years without problems.

NAVEEN PATNAIK TO BECOME THE CM OF ODISHA FOR 5TH TIME

Biju Janata Dal (BJD) won 112 seats out of 146 in 2019 Odisha Assembly polls, with party President Naveen Patnaik set for a fifth consecutive term as CM.

DETAILS:

- **Naveen Patnaik becomes only the third CM after Sikkim's Pawan Chamling and West Bengal's Jyoti Basu to achieve the feat.**
- The Polling was held in 146 of the state's 147 assembly seats as election in Patkura was postponed twice, first after the death of a candidate and then due to Cyclone Fani.

ADANI GROUP TO DEVELOP A CONTAINER TERMINAL IN MYANMAR

Adani Ports & Special Economic Zone signed an agreement to develop and operate a container terminal at Yangon Port in Myanmar.

DETAILS:

- **It will act as a network point to feed into our upcoming trans-shipment hub at Vizhinjam.**
- The proposed container terminal will be integrated with our Ports/Terminals along the east and south coast of India, unlocking synergies by offering multiple entry/exit points for the shipping lines which wish to call on this region.
- **The project site is located at city cluster & inner harbor of Yangon Port.**
- **The site is ideally placed to serve the traffic from industries surrounding the city with adequate storage and good evacuation channel for the port.**
- The estimated cost for implementing phase I of 0.5 Mn TEUs is between the US \$ 220- 230 Mn and phase II expansion to 0.8 Mn TEUs is expected to cost between the US \$55-60 Mn
- **The terminal will have a quay length of 635 meters with the capability to handle three vessels at a time.**

PM NARENDRA MODI TO TAKE OATH OF OFFICE ON 30TH MAY

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will take the oath of office on May 30th (Thursday), 2019 at 7 pm at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

DETAILS:

- **The President will administer the oath of office and secrecy to the Prime Minister and other members of Union Council of Ministers.**
- The names of ministers who will constitute NDA's new cabinet are yet to be announced.
- **The BJP on May 23 got an overwhelming majority in the Lok Sabha, crossing on its own the 300 marks while storming back to power for the second consecutive term.**
- Modi was appointed as Prime Minister for the second term by President Ram Nath Kovind after he was unanimously elected as the leader of the NDA at a meeting in which he asked its members to work without discrimination, stressing on the need to win over the trust of minorities.

ODISHA'S FIRST WOMAN MOUNTAINEER 'KALPANA DASH' PASSED AWAY

Kalpana Dash, Odisha's first woman mountaineer passed away at the age of 50 near the Balcony area of world's highest peak- Mount Everest.

DETAILS:

- **She hailed from Dhenkanal district in Odisha.**
- She was accompanied with Kanchimaya Tamang of the Himalayan Kingdom and Liamu Mank of China to scale Mount Everest.
- The team was lead by the veteran mountaineer Pemba Dheeraj Sherpa.
- **Earlier, she claimed Mount Everest in the year 2008 and scripted history.**
- She was climbing mountains for the past 15 years during which she claimed mountains in Europe, America, Australia, and India.

SHAILESH TINAIKAR OF INDIA APPOINTED AS HEAD OF UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATION

The Commandant of the Indian Army Infantry School, Lieutenant General Shailesh Tinaikar, aged 57 is appointed as the new force commander of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) by the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

DETAILS:

- Lieutenant General Shailesh Tinaikar will succeed Lieutenant General Frank Kamanzi of Rwanda.
- **He will command over 16,000 peacekeepers which include nearly 2,400 from India.**
- Lieutenant General Shailesh Tinaikar has an experience with the Indian Armed Forces for more than 34 years.
- In 1983, he graduated from the Indian Military Academy.
- He obtained a Master of Philosophy degree in Defence and Strategic Studies from the University of Madras.

- He served the UN Angola Verification Mission III from 1996 to 1997 and UN Mission in Sudan from 2008 to 2009.

SWEDEN TO HOST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM

Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven announced that Sweden will host an International Conference against Anti-Semitism in memory of the Holocaust in October 2020.

DETAILS:

- **It will be held in Malmo, Southern Sweden, on October 27th and 28th**, 20 years after the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust and 75 years after the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp.
- **The decision to fight against anti-Semitism is taken by Sweden after relations with Israel have been in trouble since the Nordic state's recognition of a Palestinian state by Lofven's Government in 2014.**
- After the attacks in Paris and Copenhagen in 2015, the Simon Wiesenthal Centre had called for a European conference against anti-Semitism.

ABOUT ANTI-SEMITISM:

- **Anti-Semitism is a hostility to, prejudice, or discrimination against Jews.**
- A person who holds such positions is called an antisemite.
- It is generally considered to be a form of racism.

'WIRECARD' TO WORK WITH INDIA TO ISSUE PAN CARDS

Wirecard, a German payments company announced that it would work with India to simplify the process of issuing tax identity cards (PAN Cards) which are required for opening bank accounts, transfer money and complete business transactions.

DETAILS:

- The deal between Wirecard and state company UTI Infrastructure Technology and Financial Services seeks to widen the distribution of Permanent Account Number (PAN) card.
- **Currently, Wirecard has a network of 15,000 retail agents in 350 cities of India which would help in collecting and scanning of documents that people need to apply for a PAN card.**

MAHESH MANGAONKAR WON SEKISUI OPEN FOR THE SECOND TIME

India's Mahesh Mangaonkar has won the Sekisui Open for the second time in Kriens, Switzerland.

DETAILS:

- Three years back Mahesh Mangaonkar had won it for the first time.

- **Sekisui Open is a Challenger tour event of the Professional Squash Association (PSA), the world body which governs the sport.**
- Top-seeded Mahesh beat third seed Bernat Jaume of Spain in four games 11-9, 3-11, 11-5, 11-5 yesterday to win his 8th PSA title.

RUSSIA LAUNCHED LARGEST NUCLEAR-POWERED ICEBREAKER 'URAL'

Russia launched the world's largest nuclear-powered icebreaker 'Ural' at the Baltic Shipyard in St. Petersburg in order to improve its ability to tap the Arctic's commercial potential.

DETAILS:

- Russia is preparing for shipping via the Northern Sea Route (NSR).
- **The Ural will be given to Russia's state-owned nuclear energy corporation Rosatom in 2022 after the other 2 ice-breakers Arktika (Arctic) and Sibir (Siberia) enter into service.**
- The Arktika was floated in 2016.

SAURABH CHAUDHARY GOLD IN ISSF GOLD CUP

India's 17-year-old shooter Saurabh Chaudhary broke his own junior and senior world record to win his second Gold medal in 10m Air Pistol event in ISSF Gold Cup 2019.

DETAILS:

- Saurabh won 10m Air Pistol event with 246.3 points, breaking his own senior record of 245 points and junior record of 245.5 points.
- **This is Saurabh's second Gold in the same event.**
- **Saurabh had booked a quota for 2020 Olympics during his maiden World Cup in February.**
- **Earlier, in February 2019 he had bagged gold during the ISSF World Cup in Delhi.**
- The youngster shot 246.3 in the finals fetching Gold while Russia's Chernousov Artem won Silver with 243.8 and China's Pang Wei had to settle with Bronze with a score of 220.7.
- **Saurabh is the only Indian shooter to win the Gold medal in ISSF World Championship, ISSF World Cup, Youth Olympic Games, Asian Games, and Asian Air Gun Championship.**

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **Earlier, on 26th May India's Apurva Chandela had clinched gold in the women's 10m air rifle event.**

PREM SINGH TAMANG TAKES OATH AS THE CM OF SIKKIM

Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (SKM) president Prem Singh Tamang, who is famously known as P.S. Golay, took oath as the Chief Minister of Sikkim.

DETAILS:

- 51 year-old Tamang was administered the oath by Governor Ganga Prasad at Paljor Stadium in Gangtok, Sikkim.
- He took the oath in Nepali.
- **SKM won 17 seats in the 32-member assembly, ousting former CM Pawan Kumar Chamling-led Sikkim Democratic Front after over 24 years.**
- Mr. Golay assured the people that his government would work to ensure peace in Sikkim, and for the welfare of all sections.
- **He also announced that Saturdays would be a holiday for government employees.**

OTHER DETAILS:

- In the 2014 Assembly election, the SKM bagged 10 seats.
- Mr. Golay was later convicted and served a prison term till his release in August 2018.

MONACO GRAND PRIX WON BY LEWIS HAMILTON

Lewis Hamilton won the Monaco Grand Prix to extend his championship.

DETAILS:

- **He defeated Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas.**
- Hamilton struggled with grip and was under constant pressure from Red Bull's Max Verstappen.
- But earlier he picked up a five-second time penalty.

GUY GUNARATNE WINS INTERNATIONAL DYLAN THOMAS PRIZE 2019

Sri Lankan writer Guy Gunaratne was announced as the winner of 2019 Swansea University International Dylan Thomas Prize.

DETAILS:

- **He has won the award for his debut novel 'In Our Mad and Furious City'.**
- **Guy Gunaratne is a 35 years old British-Sri-Lankan human rights documentary filmmaker, turned debut novelist.**
- He won over 5 other shortlisted authors.

OTHER TITLES SHORTLISTED FOR THE SWANSEA PRIZE:

- House of Stone by Novuyo Rosa Tshuma
- Friday Black by Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah
- Trinity by Louisa Hall
- FOLK by Zoe Gilbert
- Melmoth by Sarah Perry

ABOUT THE SWANSEA UNIVERSITY INTERNATIONAL DYLAN THOMAS PRIZE:

- It is awarded every year for the best published literary work in the English language, written by an author aged 39 or under.
- The prize includes a prize sum of £30,000 and celebrates the international world of fiction in all its forms including novels, poetry, drama, and short stories.
- The year 2019 marks the 11th year of world's largest English language literary prize for young authors.

ACHARYA BALKRISHNA AMONG "UNSDG TEN MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN HEALTHCARE"

Acharya Balkrishna, the Managing Director of Patanjali Ayurved won "United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) 10 Most Influential People in Healthcare Award" in Geneva, Switzerland.

DETAILS:

- He received the award on behalf of Patanjali Group of Institutions.
- He was a representative from India at LINSDDG.
- The award was conferred to him for the contributions made by Patanjali in curing lifestyle diseases with Yoga, Ayurveda and traditional Indian methods.
- He dedicated the award to all those who contributed to mainstream Yoga and Ayurveda at the Global Level.

ABOUT PATANJALI AYURVED:

- Patanjali Ayurved was founded in January 2006.
- It has its headquarters in Haridwar, Uttarakhand.
- Its founders are Baba Ramdev & Acharya Balkrishna.
- It produces Ayurvedic medicinal and personal care products and other consumer items.

ABOUT SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS(SDGs) OF UN:

- These are adopted by the UN Member states for peace and prosperity of the people and planet.
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted in 2015.
- There are 17 SDGs with 2030 as its target year for the accomplishment of the goals.

ORCHHA TOWN INCLUDED IN TENTATIVE LIST OF UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE SITES

The Archaeological Survey of India included the heritage town of Orchha in Madhya Pradesh in a tentative list of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites.

DETAILS:

- Orchha town in Madhya Pradesh is a historical site with the Bundela dynasty architectural style.
- It was included in the proposal sent by the ASI to the UN body in April 2019.

- **UNESCO's rules state that to be a part of the World Heritage sites, the heritage or historical site must first be on the tentative list.**
- After making it to that list, yet another proposal is sent to the UNESCO.

RBI EXTENDS TIME-WINDOW FOR USING RTGS SERVICE

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that the time-window for using the Real Time Gross Settlement System (RTGS) for customer transactions will be extended from 4:30 pm to 6 pm on all working days.

DETAILS:

- **It will be effective from June 1, 2019.**
- The current RTGS service window for customer transactions is available to banks from 8 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. on a working day.

Transactions will now take place under three windows:

- 8 am to 11 am
- 11 am to 1 pm
- 1 pm to 6pm

CHARGES FOR THE TRANSACTIONS:

- There shall be no charge for transactions between 8 am and 11 am.
- A charge of Rs.2 will be levied on every transaction conducted between 11 am and 1 pm.
- Rs.5 shall be charged for every transaction between 1pm and 6pm.

REASON FOR THIS DECISION:

- **The decision is after a robust year-on-year increase in the number of transactions by 8% to Rs.1,335 crore in March 2019.**
- The aggregate amount of transactions rose 12% year-on-year to ₹1,255.51 crore.
- In the month of April, banks and customers combined used RTGS for 1.14 crore transactions worth Rs.112 lakh crore.

REAL TIME GROSS SETTLEMENT SYSTEM (RTGS):

- Real-Time means the processing of instructions at the time they are received.
- Gross Settlement means that the settlement of funds transfer instructions occurs individually.
- **RTGS is an electronic form of funds transfer where the transmission takes place on a real-time basis.**
- RTGS is considered to be fasted payment method mandated for high-value interbank transactions by the central bank.
- The RTGS system is primarily meant for large value transactions.
- **The minimum amount to be remitted through RTGS is Rs.2 lakh with no upper or maximum ceiling.**
- **The beneficiary account receives the funds transferred, on a real-time basis.**
- Customers with Internet banking accounts can do RTGS transactions on their own.

MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT TO SEND BACK TONNES OF PLASTIC WASTE

The Malaysian Government said that hundreds of tonnes of imported plastic waste will be shipped back to where it came from insisting that the country did not want to be a global dumping ground.

DETAILS:

- The announcement was made by the Malaysian Minister for Energy, Science, Technology, Environment and Climate Change Yeo Bee Yin.
- **The Ministry said 450 tonnes of contaminated plastic waste in 10 containers from Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and the United States will be shipped back.**
- Plastic imports to Malaysia have tripled since 2016, to 8,70,000 tonnes in 2018.
- The Malaysian government also urged the developed countries to review their management of plastic waste and stop shipping garbage to developing countries.
- Processing such materials produce toxic fumes.
- Villagers near the recycle plant are suffering from asthma and itchiness.

STEPS TAKEN BY THE MALAYSIAN GOVERNMENT:

- **Malaysia sent back five containers filled with plastic waste to Spain in April.**
- **150 illegal waste recycling plants had been shut down.**
- As little as nine per cent of plastic produced between 1950 and 2015 has been recycled.
- Pictures of coral reefs smothered in plastic bags and river systems choked with PET bottles are produced to create awareness of the need to deal with the problem.

ABOUT BASEL CONVENTION:

- **The country is able to do this through the Basel Convention, an international waste treaty meant to prevent developed countries from dumping their rubbish in the Global South.**
- World leaders came together last year to add plastic, but the U.S. didn't sign off on that.

MOTILAL OSWAL AMC LAUNCHED WHATSAPP TRANSACTION PLATFORM

Motilal Oswal Asset Management Company (AMC) becomes the first Indian fund house to launch WhatsApp transaction platform for mutual fund transactions for new as well as existing investors.

DETAILS:

- This enables investors to use WhatsApp to invest in any scheme from Motilal Oswal AMC.
- **Investors can either invest lump sum or through SIPs.**

HOW DOES THE PLATFORM WORKS?

- An investor should add Motilal Oswal AMC number (+91 9372205812) to his/her contact list.
- Then on WhatsApp, type 'Hi' on the above number.
- After sharing the PAN details, the investor should share his/her mode of investment, fund, amount.
- Finally, authorize payment for the transaction through the payment link sent.

TELANGANA TO SET UP COUNTRY'S FIRST 'BLOCKCHAIN DISTRICT'

Telangana released a draft blockchain policy to set up country's first 'Blockchain District' in Hyderabad.

DETAILS:

- **It is aimed to create an ecosystem for major blockchain companies, start-ups for promoting research, innovation and industry collaboration.**
- **Earlier, the Telangana Government signed an agreement with Tech Mahindra to set up the Blockchain district in 2018.**
- The draft was released by Information Technology, Electronics and Communications (IT E&C) Department.
- **The main focus will be given to the sectors such as banking, financial services and insurance, pharmaceuticals and healthcare, government institutions and departments, logistics and supply chains.**
- **The incentives like access to investments, subsidies, tax credits will be rolled out to attract large enterprises, Small and Medium Enterprises and startups.**
- Other incentives include 25% subsidy on lease rentals up to Rs. 5 lakh per annum for the first three years of operations.
- 100% reimbursement of State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) for the first three years for startups with revenue less than Rs. 5 crore and along with one-time grant of Rs. 10 lakh, 75% subsidy in travel fare when the founders attend global conferences and 25% reimbursement on Internet charges would be provided.

'LIFETIME RECOGNITION AWARD' CONFERRED ON PROFESSOR N. KUMAR

Lifetime Recognition Award by the Confederation of Horticulture Association of India was given to Professor N. Kumar, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.

DETAILS:

- The award has been conferred for his outstanding contribution in the field of horticulture and academic leadership focused on human resource development in agriculture at the International Conference on Innovative horticulture at Pantnagar, Uttarakhand, according to a varsity release.

ABOUT PROFESSOR N. KUMAR:

- He began his career as an Assistant Professor in Horticulture during 1979 at TNAU and by consistent and meritorious performance.
- He managed to occupy the position of Dean of Horticultural College and Research Institute, TNAU in 2009-2013 before becoming the 13th Vice-Chancellor of the renowned Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore.
- He has secured spearheaded 20 externally funded projects including 5 International Projects.

UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE 2019 CUP WON BY CHELSEA

Chelsea clinched the UEFA Europa League 2019 Cup.

DETAILS:

- **It scored four goals in a devastating second-half display to beat Arsenal 4-1 on 29 May at the Baku Olympic Stadium in Azerbaijan.**
- It gave Italian manager Maurizio Sarri a major trophy in his first season in charge and Chelsea a first European title since the 2013 Europa League.
- **The triumph in Baku means Chelsea have won three European titles in seven years, with the Champions League triumph in 2012 followed by their first Europa League victory in 2013.**
- By contrast, Arsenal have lost five of their six major European finals, with their only victory coming in the 1994 Cup Winners' Cup against Parma.

ABOUT UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE CUP:

- **It is an annual football club competition organised by UEFA since 1971 for eligible European football clubs.**
- It is the second-tier competition of European club football, ranking below the UEFA Champions League.

MI-17 V5 MEDIUM LIFT HELICOPTER INDIA'S FIRST ALL WOMAN

Three women officers of Indian Air Force were part of India's first all-women crew to fly a medium-lift helicopter Mi-17 V5.

DETAILS:

- **Flight Lieutenant Parul Bhardwaj (Captain), Flying Officer Aman Nidhi (co-pilot) and Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal (Flight Engineer) were the three women IAF officers who flew the chopper, which took off from a forward air base in South Western air command.**
- All three women officers flew a Mi-17 V5 helicopter for Battle Inoculation Training mission.
- Under this mission, the helicopter had taken off and landed from restricted areas at a forward airbase in South Western air command.
- **Flight Lieutenant Parul Bhardwaj became the first woman pilot to fly the Mi-17 V5.**
- **Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal became the first woman flight engineer of the IAF.**
- **Flying officer Aman Nidhi from Jharkhand also became the first woman IAF pilot from the state.**

WRITER ANNIE ZAIDI WON \$100,000 NINE DOTS PRIZE

Mumbai-based Writer Annie Zaidi was announced as the 2019 winner of the \$100,000 Nine Dots Prize, an award for creative thinking that tackles contemporary societal issues.

DETAILS:

- **She won the prize for her entry titled 'Bread, Cement, Cactus, a piece that combined memoir and reportage to explore concepts of home and belonging.**
- Her proposed book, based on the prize-winning essay, will be published in May 2020 and will examine how a citizen's sense of home might collapse, or recover.
- The varied themes it will address include the politics and economics of death in India, the crossing of caste and religious lines in a marriage, and the Partition of India as a great cultural and emotional sundering.

ABOUT ANNIE ZAIDI:

- She is a freelance writer whose work includes reportage, essays, short stories, poetry, and plays.
- **She has published both fiction and non-fiction, including a collection of essays Known Turf: Bantering with Bandits and Other True Tales and Love Stories # 1 to 14, a collection of short fiction published in 2012.**

NINE DOTS PRIZE:

- **The Nine Dots Prize is sponsored by the Kadas Prize Foundation, a U.K.-registered charity, with support from the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH) at the University of Cambridge and Cambridge University Press.**
- It aims to promote, engage and encourage innovative thinking so as to address problems facing the modern world.
- The prestigious book prize is awarded for creative thinking that tackles contemporary societal issues.
- **The winner receives US\$100,000 to write a short book expanding on their ideas.**
- **Entrants are asked to answer the given question in 3,000 words.**
- **All entrants with a minimum of 18 years of age can write.**
- Responses and the resulting book will be in English.

SAUDI ARABIA HAS LIFTED EXPORT BAN ON FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Saudi Arabia has lifted export ban on fruits and vegetables from Kerala.

DETAILS:

- **In June 2018, the ban was imposed due to the outbreak of Nipah virus.**
- **Saudi Arabian authorities had communicated this information to the state in the second week of May and it has led to the commencement of direct exports from the 3 airports.**
- Kozhikode airport exports 20 tonnes of fruits and vegetables per day worth \$50,000 to various destinations in Saudi Arabia.
- Other 2 airports of Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram export the items to Dammam, Riyadh and Jeddah airports.
- **The major items of export at present are mangoes such as Alphonso, Banganapalle, followed by banana and pineapple.**

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **Kerala exports around 150 tonnes of perishable commodities to gulf countries.**
- **It alone exports 30-40 tonnes to Saudi Arabia.**

COMMITTEE FOR HOUSING FINANCE CONSTITUTED BY RBI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) constituted a committee to review the existing state of mortgage securitisation in India and suggest measures to deepen it.

- **The six-member committee on Development of Housing Finance Securitisation Market is headed by Harsh Vardhan, Senior Advisor, Bain & Co.**

ROLE OF THE PANEL:

- **The panel will review the regulations relating to mortgage-backed securitisation (MBS) currently in place, and make specific recommendations on suitably aligning the same with international norms.**
- It will assess the role of various counterparties, including servicers, trustees, rating agencies, in the securitisation process and suggest the steps required.

MORTGAGE-BACKED SECURITY (MBS):

- **Mortgage-Backed security (MBS) is a type of asset-backed security that is secured by a mortgage or collection of mortgages.**

MORTGAGE-BACKED SECURITISATION (MBS) IN INDIA:

- Data from rating company ICRA showed that the securitisation volume in FY19 more than doubled as against FY18 to Rs.2 lakh crore, of which major chunk of loans sold was by housing finance companies (HFCs) to banks in order to raise funds owing to tough liquidity conditions.
- The mortgage securitisation market in India is primarily dominated by direct assignments among a limited set of market participants on account of various structural factors impacting both the demand and the supply side, as well as certain prudential, legal and tax and accounting issues.

