

Abhyaas Newsboard...

For the quintessential test prep student

1. Nari Shakti Puraskar



To acknowledge Women's achievements, the Government of India confers Nari Shakti Puraskars on eminent women and institutions in recognition of their service towards the cause of women empowerment.

More On This:

It is initiated in the year 1999. The awards are given away by the President of India every year on 8 March, International Women's Day. The Ministry of Women and Child Development announces these national level awards for eminent women, organisations and institutions. The Nari Shakti Puraskar carries a cash award of Rs.1 Lakh and a certificate for individuals and institutions.

Institutional categories:

Each of the six institutional categories is named after an eminent woman in Indian history.

- Rani Gaidinliu Zeliang Award for Best Civil Society organization (CSO) doing outstanding work for the welfare and well-being of women, named after Rani Gaidinliu, a 20th-century Naga spiritual and political leader
- Rani Lakshmi Bai Award for Best Institution for Research & Development in the field of women empowerment, named after Lakshmibai, one of the leading figures of the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and erstwhile queen of Jhansi.
- Rani Rudramma Devi Awards for two District Panchayats and two Gram Panchayats, named after Rudrama Devi, a 13th-century ruler of Deccan Plateau.

2. International Women's Day 2020



International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8 every year. It is a day when the world comes together to appreciate womanhood and their importance in society. The day also celebrates the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women.

More On This:

According to the United Nations Women, the theme for International Women's Day 2020 is "Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights".

Historical background:

Earlier, it was called National woman's day and was acknowledged by the U.S. on February 28, 1909. This was done because of the labour movement which was started in 1908 where 15000 female employees went on strike in New York City to protest against poor working conditions.

National Women's Day was recognised as International Women's Day only in 1910 after German women's rights activist Clara Zetkin suggested at an International Conference.

Why March 8?

It was on this day that women in Soviet Russia gained the right to vote in 1917, hence March 8 was declared a national holiday for them. The United Nations General Assembly invited member states to proclaim March 8 as the UN Day for women's rights and world peace in 1977.

3. Women Transforming India Awards



Context: NITI Aayog organizes the Fourth Edition of the Women Transforming India Awards.

WTI Awards are NITI Aayog's initiative to highlight the commendable and ground-breaking endeavours of India's women leaders and changemakers.

More On This:

Since 2018, the Awards have been hosted under the aegis of NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform with a special focus on entrepreneurship.

Women Entrepreneurship was launched in 8th March 2018, it is the first of its kind facilitation platform which is mandated to work in collaboration with public as well as private sector organizations and bring them on a single platform by listing their women focused entrepreneurship schemes, initiatives and programmes on WEP website.

It also enables sharing of best practices amongst women entrepreneurs and partner organizations and promote evidence based policy making.

4. Gender Social Norms Index



The first Gender Social Norms Index was recently released by the UN Development Programme (UNDP).

More On This:

This index measures how social beliefs obstruct gender equality in areas like politics, work, and education, and contains data from 75 countries, covering over 80 percent of the world's population.

- The index found new clues to the invisible barriers women face in achieving equality – potentially forging a path forward to breaking through the so-called "glass ceiling".
- Despite decades of progress closing the equality gap between men and women, close to 90 percent of men and women hold some sort of bias against women.
- Almost half of those polled feel that men are superior political leaders.
- More than 40 per cent believe they make better business executives and are more entitled to jobs when the economy is lagging.

- Moreover, 28 per cent think it is justified for a man to beat his wife. The analysis also highlighted a bias shift in some 30 countries, revealing that while some show improvements, attitudes in others appear to have worsened in recent years – signaling that progress cannot be taken for granted.

5. Quota within quota for SCs in Haryana



HARYANA'S QUOTA WITHIN QUOTA

The Haryana cabinet has recently approved the draft bill 'The Haryana Scheduled Castes (Reservation in Admission in Educational Institutions) bill, 2020.' This bill provides quota within quota for SCs in the state.

More On This:

- The bill provides reservation of 50% seats to the deprived scheduled castes, out of the total 20% reserved for SC in the graduation and postgraduation courses.
- This will cover all educational institutions maintained by the government or receiving aid out of the state funds. It also includes government and government-aided technical and professional institutions.
- Here, deprived SC includes all 36 castes which were part of Block A including Valmiki, Bazigar, Sansi, Deha, Dhanak, and Sapera.

As per employees data collected, the total number of the SC employees in the state is nearly 22% of the total strength. However, in respect of representation in various services, the erstwhile Block A scheduled castes representation in Group-A, Group-B and Group-C services is only 4.7 per cent, 4.14 per cent and 6.27 per cent respectively, though their population is about 11% of the total state population.

6. What is a floor test or trust vote



Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath has requested Governor Lalji Tandon to hold a **floor test** in the Assembly session starting from March 16, on a date fixed by the Speaker.

More On This:

A floor test is a constitutional mechanism. It is used to determine if the incumbent government enjoys the support of the legislature.

- This voting process happen in the state's Legislative Assembly or the Lok Sabha at the central level.
- Technically, the chief minister of a state is appointed by the Governor. The appointed chief minister usually belongs to the single largest party or the coalition which has the 'magic number'. **The magic number is the total number of seats required to form a government, or stay in power. It is the half-way mark, plus one. In case of a tie, the Speaker casts the deciding vote.**
- However, at times, a government's majority can be questioned. **The leader of the party claiming majority has to move a vote of confidence.**

- If some MLAs remain absent or abstain from voting, **the majority is counted on the basis of those present and voting.** This effectively reduces the strength of the House and in turn brings down the majority-mark. The voting process **can happen orally, with electronic gadgets or a ballot process.** The Governor can also ask the Chief Minister to prove his or her majority in the House if the stability of the government comes into question.

7. What is Article 142



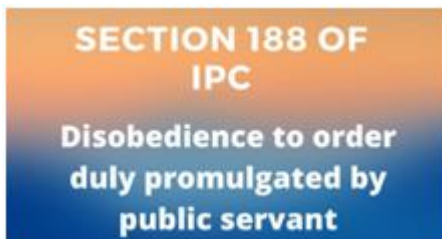
In an extraordinary display of its constitutional powers under **Article 142 of the Indian Constitution**, the Supreme Court has stripped Manipur Cabinet Minister T. Shyamkumar, who is facing disqualification proceedings for defection, of his office and banned him from entering the Assembly with immediate effect.

More On This:

Article 142 “provide(s) a unique power to the Supreme Court, **to do “complete justice” between the parties**, i.e., where at times law or statute may not provide a remedy, the Court can extend itself to put a quietus to a dispute in a manner which would befit the facts of the case.

Article 142(1) states that “The Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice in any cause or matter pending before it, and any decree so passed or order so made shall be enforceable throughout the territory of India in such manner as may be prescribed by or under any law made by Parliament and, until provision in that behalf is so made, in such manner as the President may by order prescribe”.

8. What is Section 188 IPC



The **Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897** lays down punishment as per **Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860**, for flouting orders issued by various state governments to contain the spread of COVID-19.

More On This:

In the past, the Act has been routinely enforced across the country for dealing with outbreaks of diseases such as swine flu, dengue, and cholera. Its penal provisions are currently being invoked by states to contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code

Section 188 relates to **Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant.**

It says violators can be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to one month or with fine which may extend to two hundred rupees, or with both; and if such disobedience causes or tends to cause danger to human life, health or safety, or causes or tends to cause a riot or affray, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to one thousand rupees, or with both.

Under Section 188, there two offences:

- Disobedience to an order lawfully promulgated by a public servant, If such disobedience causes obstruction, annoyance or injury to persons lawfully employed
- Punishment: Simple Imprisonment for 1 month or fine of Rs 200 or both
- If such disobedience causes danger to human life, health or safety, etc.

Punishment: Simple Imprisonment for 6 months or fine of Rs 1000 or both

According to the First Schedule of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 1973, both offences are cognizable, bailable, and can be tried by any magistrate.

9. Contempt of Court



The Supreme Court has held that **courts are empowered to order parties in a contempt case to surrender their passport in order to ensure their presence in the proceedings.** The court was hearing a contempt case in connection with a **civil suit** on partition of a disputed property in Delhi.

More On This:

Contempt of Courts (Amendment) Act, 2006:

The statute of 1971 has been amended by the Contempt of Courts (Amendment) Act, 2006 to include the defence of truth under Section 13 of the original legislation.

Section 13 that already served to restrict the powers of the court in that they were not to hold anyone in contempt unless it would substantially interfere with the due process of justice, the amendment further states that the court must permit 'justification by truth as a valid defence if it is satisfied that it is in public interest and the request for invoking the said defence is bona fide.'

Constitutional Background:

Article 129: Grants Supreme Court the power to punish for contempt of itself.

Article 142(2): Enables the Supreme Court to investigate and punish any person for its contempt.

Article 215: Grants every High Court the power to punish for contempt of itself.

10. Inner Line Permit (ILP)



Tribal organisations in Meghalaya have been demanding the ILP system for restricting the entry of outsiders into the State. These demands have turned into violent protests across the state in the past few days.

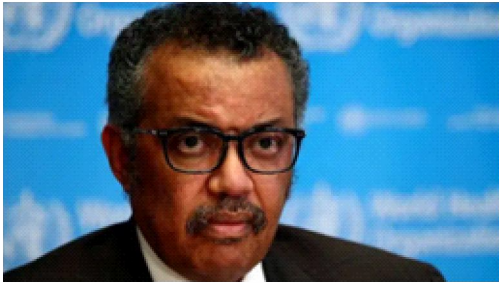
More On This:

It is a document required by non- natives to visit or stay in a state that is protected under the ILP system. At present, four Northeastern states are covered, namely, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland. Both the duration of stay and the areas allowed to be accessed for any non native are determined by the ILP. The ILP is issued by the concerned state government and can be availed both by applying online or in person.

HISTORY:

- The Inner Line Permit is an extension of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation Act 1873. The Britishers framed regulations restricting entry in certain designated areas. This was done to protect the Crown's interest in certain states by preventing "British subjects" (Indians) from trading within these regions.
- In 1950, the term 'British subjects' was replaced with 'Citizens of India'. Today, all non natives require the permit. This was done to protect the indigenous tribal communities of these states from exploitation.

11. WHO raises global risk of coronavirus to 'very high'



WHO characterises risk of spread and impact of a disease on a scale that ranges from "low risk" to "very high" level of risk.

More On This:

- Low Risk: "Managed according to standard response protocols, routine control programmes and regulation (e.g. monitoring through routine surveillance systems)".
- Moderate Risk: "Roles and responsibility for the response must be specified. Specific monitoring or control measures required (e.g. enhanced surveillance, additional vaccination campaigns)".
- High Risk: "Senior management attention needed: there may be a need to establish command and control structures; a range of additional control measures will be required some of which may have significant consequences".
- Very High Risk: "Immediate response required even if the event is reported out of normal working hours. Immediate senior management attention needed (e.g. the command and control structure should be established within hours); the implementation of control measures with serious consequences is highly likely".

12. UNESCO World Heritage List



Government of India has submitted two nomination dossiers namely 'Dholavira: A Harappan City' and 'Monuments and Forts of Deccan Sultanate' for inclusion in the World Heritage List for the year 2020.

More On This:

What is a World Heritage Site?

It is a location having an "Outstanding Universal Value". According to the World Heritage Convention's Operational Guidelines, an Outstanding Universal Value signifies "cultural and/or natural significance which is so exceptional as to transcend national boundaries and to be of common importance for present and future generations of all humanity."

- The Sites fall into three categories: cultural heritage, natural heritage, and mixed heritage (cultural as well as natural).

- The UNESCO World Heritage Committee meets at least once every year, generally in June/July, to deliberate the addition, removal, or modification of items on the list of World Heritage Sites.
- According to the Guidelines, the State Parties prepare a Tentative List, or the “inventory of those properties situated on its territory which each State Party considers suitable for nomination to the World Heritage List.”. A nomination document is then prepared in this regard based on which the application is considered by the Committee.

13. United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights



The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights “intends to file” an Intervention Application as amicus curiae (third party) in the Supreme Court of India, seeking to intervene in Writ Petition in ‘Deb Mukharji & Ors vs Union of India & Ors’ case which relates to a challenge to the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019.

More On This:

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN Human Rights) is the leading UN entity on human rights. It is mandated to, inter alia protect and promote all human rights and to conduct necessary advocacy in that regard, established pursuant to the United Nations General Assembly resolution 48/141. It also has to promote adherence to international human rights law and, with this purpose in mind, to support domestic courts, with their constitutional or judicial function, in ensuring the implementation of international legal obligations. This is the basis for seeking intervention.

What exactly does the intervention application say? What are the issues raised wrt to CAA?

The CAA, it says, raises “important human rights issues, including its compatibility in relation to the right to equality before the law and nondiscrimination on nationality grounds under India’s human rights obligations”.

14. National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)



National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) was constituted under Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013 for hearing appeals against the orders of National Company Law Tribunal(s) (NCLT), with effect from 1st June, 2016.

More On This:

It is also the appellate tribunal for hearing appeals against orders passed by NCLT(s) under Section 61 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC), the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

Composition:

Chief Justice of India or his nominee- Chairperson.

- A senior judge of the Supreme Court or a Chief Justice of High Court.
- Secretary in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- Secretary in the Ministry of Law and Justice.
- Secretary in the Department of Financial Services.

Appeal:

NCLAT decisions can be challenged in the Supreme Court on a point of law.

15. Central Sanskrit University Bill 2019



The Rajya Sabha passed the Central Sanskrit University Bill 2019 on March 16, 2020. It will provide Central University status to three universities in India.

Three Sanskrit Universities

More On This:

The bill will enable to upgrade three universities as Central Sanskrit Universities. These three universities are - Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth Tirupati, Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan and Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth.

- Lok Sabha passed the bill in December 2019 while it was introduced in the Rajya Sabha on March 02, 2020.
- It was introduced in Rajya Sabha by HRD Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'. Now, it will go back to the Lok Sabha for final stage. The government is in favor of strengthening Sanskrit as well as Tamil, Telugu, Bangla, Malayalam, Gujarati, Kannada etc. HRD Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal said that Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri Vidyapeeth and Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeeth Tirupati are the three important institutes that have been given the status of Central University.

The Central Sanskrit University Bill 2019 was passed by voice vote in the Lok Sabha.

16. SC frees trade in cryptocurrencies, annuls RBI curb



The Supreme Court has set aside an April 6, 2018, circular of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) that prohibited banks and entities regulated by it from providing services in relation to virtual currencies (VCs).

More On This:

RBI has not come out with a stand that any of the entities regulated by it namely, nationalised banks/scheduled commercial banks/cooperative banks/NBFCs, have suffered any loss or adverse effect directly or indirectly, on account of virtual currencies (VCs). Hence, the RBI circular is "disproportionate" with an otherwise consistent stand taken by the central bank that VCs were not prohibited in the country.

- The top court's order followed a plea by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IMAI) objecting to the RBI ban.
- Cryptocurrencies are digital currencies in which encryption techniques are used to regulate the generation of units of currency and verify the transfer of funds, operating independently of a central bank.
- Examples: Bitcoin, Ethereum etc

17. Nirbhaya: All four convicts hanged to death



All the four convicts of Nirbhaya have been hanged to death in the Tihar Jail at exactly 5.30 am on March 20, 2020. The four convicts - Vinay, Akshay, Mukesh and Pawan Gupta were hanged together. They tried to postpone the execution till the last moment.

More On This:

Earlier, Delhi's Patiala House Court on March 19, 2020 dismissed the pleas of Nirbhaya case convicts seeking a stay on their execution.

- The additional session judge of the Delhi Court, Dharmendra Rana had issued fresh death warrants for all four convicts on March 5, 2020 after the court was informed that they have exhausted all their legal remedies.
- Following this, the court had fixed March 20 as the new date of execution for the four convicts in the Nirbhaya gang rape and murder case.
- The lawyer who was representing the four convicts also told the court that there was no longer any legal obstruction before the court and it could proceed in fixing the date of hanging.

18. International Criminal Court (ICC)



Unanimous' ICC gives go-ahead to probe Afghanistan alleged war crimes. Prosecutors have been given the green light to investigate alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity in Afghanistan and beyond its borders – linked to Afghan, Taliban and US troops.

More On This:

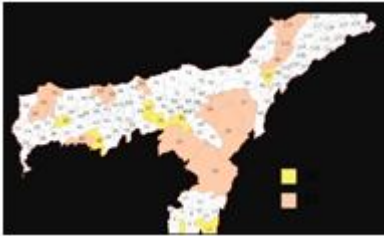
The prosecutors alleged in a 2017 report they have enough information to prove U.S. forces "committed acts of torture, cruel treatment, outrages upon personal dignity, rape and sexual violence against conflict-related detainees in Afghanistan and other locations, principally in the 2003-2004 period."

About ICC:

- The International Criminal Court (ICC), located in The Hague, is the court of last resort for prosecution of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.
- It is the first permanent, treaty based, international criminal court established to help end impunity for the perpetrators of the most serious crimes of concern to the international community.

- Its founding treaty, the Rome Statute, entered into force on July 1, 2002.
- Funding: Although the Court's expenses are funded primarily by States Parties, it also receives voluntary contributions from governments, international organisations, individuals, corporations and other entities.

19. Delimitation of Constituencies



The government has constituted a Delimitation Commission, to be headed by former Supreme Court judge Ranjana Prakash Desai, to redraw Lok Sabha and assembly constituencies of the Union Territory Jammu and Kashmir and the northeastern states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland.

More On This:

The Commission will delimit the constituencies of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, and of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland in accordance with the provisions of the Delimitation Act, 2002.

- Delimitation literally means the process of fixing limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies in a state that has a legislative body.
- Who carries out the exercise?
- Delimitation is undertaken by a highly powerful commission. They are formally known as Delimitation Commission or Boundary Commission.
- These bodies are so powerful that its orders have the force of law and they cannot be challenged before any court.

Such commissions have been constituted at least four times in India — in 1952 under the Delimitation Commission Act, 1952; in 1963 under Delimitation Commission Act, 1962; in 1973 under Delimitation Act, 1972 and last in 2002 under Delimitation Act, 2002.

20. The right of an accused to be defended



Recently, the Karnataka High Court observed that it is unethical and illegal for lawyers to pass resolutions against representing accused in court. This was after local bar associations had objected to four students arrested for sedition being defended in court.

More On This:

This is not the first time that bar associations have passed such resolutions, despite a Supreme Court ruling that these are "against all norms of the Constitution, the statute and professional ethics".

What does the Constitution say about the right of an accused to be defended?

Article 22(1) gives the fundamental right to every person not to be denied the right to be defended by a legal practitioner of his or her choice.

Article 14 provides for equality before the law and equal protection of the laws within the territory of India. Article 39A, part of the Directive Principles of state policy, states that equal opportunity to secure justice must not be denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities, and provides for free legal aid.

21. Indian Ocean Commission



India was recently accepted as an observer in the Indian Ocean Commission, getting a seat at the table of the organization that handles maritime governance in the western Indian Ocean.

India's entry is a consequence of its deepening strategic partnership with France as well as its expanding ties with the Vanilla Islands.

More On This:

Significance of this status for India:

- India will get an official foothold in a premier regional institution in the western Indian Ocean, boosting engagement with islands in this part of the Indian Ocean.
- These island nations are increasingly important for India's strategic outreach as part of its Indo-Pacific policy.
- This move would enhance ties with France which is the strong global power in the western Indian Ocean.
- It lends depth to India's SAGAR (security and growth for all in the region) policy unveiled by PM Modi in 2015.
- The move would lead to greater security cooperation with countries in East Africa.
- The move also strengthens western flank of the Indo-Pacific and is a stepping stone to security cooperation with East Africa.

About IOC:

It is an intergovernmental organization created in 1982. It was institutionalized in 1984 by the Victoria Agreement in Seychelles. The COI is composed of five African Indian Ocean nations: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Réunion (an overseas region of France), and Seychelles.

COI's principal mission is to strengthen the ties of friendship between the countries and to be a platform of solidarity for the entire population of the African Indian Ocean region.

22. Allahabad High Court orders removal of controversial 'name and shame' hoardings

MOVE JUST AHEAD OF SC HEARING	
March 5 Lucknow admin puts up hoardings with names, addresses & photos of anti-CAA protesters accused of vandalism, asking them to pay for damage to property	colourable exercise of powers by the executive" and a violation of the Constitution. and orders them pulled down immediately. UP govt later challenges order in SC
March 9 Allahabad HC tells UP govt the hoardings are an "unwarranted interference in privacy of people...a	March 12 SC says no law to back UP govt's action, refers case to 3-judge bench. Hearing scheduled for next wk

Allahabad High Court has directed the Lucknow administration to remove forthwith the controversial 'name and shame' hoardings of those arrested during protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

More On This:

- The police put up several hoardings across Lucknow identifying those accused of violence during the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act in December last, triggering those named to fear for their safety. Later, the Allahabad High Court had taken suo motu notice of this act.
- Petitions and safeguards: Understanding the delay convicts' hanging

- The mercy plea filed by one of the four convicts in 2012 Delhi gangrape case was recently rejected by the President. Now, they will be hanged on March 20.
- The fresh date is in line with the requirement of a gap of 14 days between the date of rejection of the mercy petition and the date of hanging.

23. Opec+



Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, plans to raise its crude oil production significantly above 10 million barrels per day (bpd) in April, after the collapse of the OPEC+ supply cut agreement with Russia.

More On This:

A three-year pact between OPEC and Russia ended in acrimony recently after Moscow refused to support deeper oil cuts to cope with the outbreak of the coronavirus and OPEC responded by removing all limits on its own production. Oil prices plunged 10% as the development revived fears of a 2014 price crash, when Saudi Arabia and Russia fought for market share with U.S. shale oil producers, which have never participated in output-limiting pacts.

What is the Opec+?

Opec+ refers to the alliance of crude producers, who have been undertaking corrections in supply in the oil markets since 2017.

OPEC plus countries include Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, Oman, Russia, South Sudan and Sudan.

The Opec and non-Opec producers first formed the alliance at a historic meeting in Algiers in 2016.

The aim was to undertake production restrictions to help resuscitate a flailing market.

24. Preservation of Eastern, Western Ghats



A public interest litigation petition has been filed in the Madras High Court seeking a direction to the Centre and State government to constitute a permanent body for taking serious steps to safeguard the flora, fauna and other natural resources in the Eastern and Western Ghat areas in Tamil Nadu.

More On This:

The petition is on the basis of the recommendations made by the Madhav Gadgil and Kasturi Rangan committees.

- Petitioner contended that the natural resources abundantly available in this area are being properly utilised by other regions, except Tamil Nadu. They are being misutilised and mismanaged not only by the administrators but also by the public at large.

- Besides, large-scale plantations of coffee, tea and orchards have been raised in the hills of Western Ghats. Aromatic and valuable trees like sandal are removed illegally. Despite the Wildlife Protection Act, hunting takes place in some pockets. The forests are getting degraded because of illicit collection of firewood, illicit grazing and illicit felling of trees.
- Gadgil Committee says it defined the boundaries of the Western Ghats for the purposes of ecological management. It proposed that this entire area be designated as ecologically sensitive area (ESA). Within this area, smaller regions were to be identified as ecologically sensitive zones (ESZ)

25. The Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC)



Sunil Joshi in News: The Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) appointed Sunil Joshi as the new Chief Selector of team India on March 04, 2020.

More On This:

BCCI has also appointed Harvinder Singh as a selector apart from Sunil Joshi. Venkatesh Prasad and Laxman Sivaramakrishnan were also in the race to become the chief selectors. The name of Sunil Joshi was finalized by the Cricket Advisory Committee of BCCI.

- The advisory committee consists of former cricketers RP Singh, Sulakshana Naik and Madan Lal. Member of the Advisory Committee, Madan Lal said that BCCI President Sourav Ganguly had given him a free hand to elect new selectors. Madan Lal said that Ganguly had not spoken to the Advisory Committee about this.
- New Chief Selector of Men's Team
- The term of the current chief selector MSK Prasad is ending this month. After that Harvinder Singh, Devang Gandhi, Sarandeep Singh and Jatin Paranjpe, headed by Sunil Joshi, will take over the responsibility of selecting the Indian cricket team. The tenures of Devang Gandhi, Sarandeep Singh, and Jatin Paranjpe will end next year.

26. National Sports Development Fund



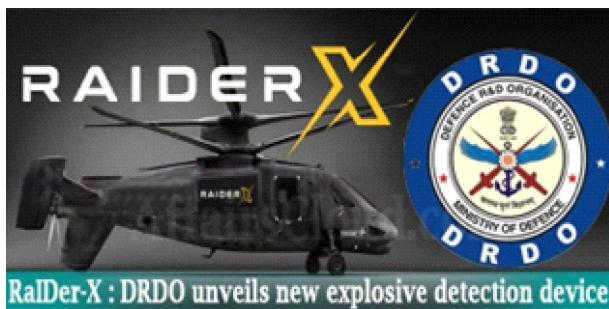
Under CSR initiative, Security Printing & Minting Corporation of India (SPMCIL) contributes Rs 1 crore towards the National Sports Development Fund.

More On This:

NSDF established in 1998 under the Charitable Endowments Act 1890 and notified by Government of India in November, 1998.

1. Purpose of creation is to impart momentum and flexibility to assisting the cause of sports. Role of the Fund is supplementary to the overall policy and activities of the Department of Sports in achieving excellence in sports.
2. To administer and apply the moneys of the Fund for promotion of sports in general and specific sports disciplines and individual sports persons in particular for achieving excellence at the National and of International level;
3. To impart special training and coaching in relevant sports disciplines to sports persons, coaches and sports specialists;
4. To construct and maintain infrastructure for promotion of sports and games;
5. To supply sports equipments to organizations and individuals for promotion of sports and games;

27. RaIDer-X



The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore have developed a new bomb detection device called Raider-X.

More On This:

It is an explosives detection device. It can detect up to 20 explosives from a stand-off distance of two meters.

- Developed by the High Energy Material Research Laboratory (HEMRL) — an arm of the DRDO — in Pune and the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore. It can also discern bulk explosives even if they have been concealed.
- The device has various applications including narcotics, for local police, for customs and other detection agencies who need to detect various elements which may be explosive or non-explosive in nature.
- Most of the recent terrorist attacks had explosives that were made from easily available ingredients like petrol and gelatin sticks rather than high-end materials. And devices like RaIDer-X are incremental to thwarting the threat from homemade explosives.

28. National Chambal Sanctuary as Eco-Sensitive Zone



National Chambal Sanctuary in News: The Government of India on March 2, 2020, declared the National Chambal Sanctuary an eco-sensitive zone. This sanctuary is famous for Ganga dolphins and critically endangered crocodiles.

More On This:

According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Environment, the union government has declared an area to an extent of zero to two kilometers around the National Chambal Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh as the Eco-Sensitive Zone.

- Ministry of Environment asked the state government to make a zonal master plan to upgrade and restore denuded areas. Ministry also directed the MP Government for the conservation of existing water bodies and groundwater management.

- Now, Madhya Pradesh Government will prepare a proper plan for soil and moisture conservation, management of catchment areas, watershed management and other aspects of the environment and ecology that require proper attention. Apart from that, agricultural areas, horticulture zones and other open spaces in the eco-sensitive zone will not be converted into the areas of residential or commercial purposes.

What is Eco-Sensitive Zone?

An eco-sensitive zone is a protected area that acts as a “shock absorber”. Eco-sensitive zones also act as transition zones. They are controlled by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. There are no enactments for regulating zones. However, these areas are regulated according to the guidelines set by the Ministry.

29. The Republic of North Macedonia



The Republic of North Macedonia has inducted officially as the 30th and newest member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

More On This:

This membership comes after North Macedonia's 2017 deal with Greece under which the former changed its name from Macedonia (a name same as Greek province).

After the name change, Greece agreed to drop objections to its NATO and European Union (EU) membership. North Macedonia was granted a protocol on accession to NATO membership in February 2019.

About NATO:

NATO's purpose is to guarantee the freedom and security of its members through political and military means.

Headquarter of NATO – Brussels, Belgium

Members– 30 Secretary General– Jens Stoltenberg North Macedonia: Capital– Skopje

Currency– Macedonian denar President– Stevo Pendarovski

30. Historic peace agreement in Doha



The US (United States) and Taliban militants have signed historic peace agreement in Doha, Qatar to restore peace in Afghanistan. The agreement, signed by the US special envoy for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad and Taliban leader Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar in the presence of Michael Richard Pompeo, United States Secretary of State, would end the 18 years-long American war in Afghanistan.

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Representatives of 30 countries around the world were also invited to witness this event, including India, Pakistan, Qatar, Turkey, Indonesia, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) member countries, as well as members of the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC).

- India's Ambassador to Qatar, P. Kumaran attend the USA-Taliban peace deal in Doha on behalf of India. This is the first time India has officially joined any Taliban related case.
 - After the agreement, the US will withdraw all forces from Afghanistan within 14 months, in which it will draw forces down to 8,600 from 13,000 in the next 3-4 months.
 - After spending more than \$750 billion and the martyrdom of American soldiers, the US considered it better to deal with the Taliban & hopeful that with the help of the Taliban, US will be able to clamp down on Iran.
- After the 9/11 attacks, the US President George W. Bush ordered the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 to wage war against the Taliban. The US has lost more than 2,400 soldiers in Afghanistan since late 2001. Hence The US now wants the withdrawal of its troops from Afghanistan.

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