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Success is born of action...

Topic 1: KIRAN

Importance for Prelims: Schemes



24×7 Toll-Free Mental Health Rehabilitation Helpline “KIRAN” (1800-500- 0019) was launched by Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment through virtual mode to provide relief and support to persons with Mental Illness.

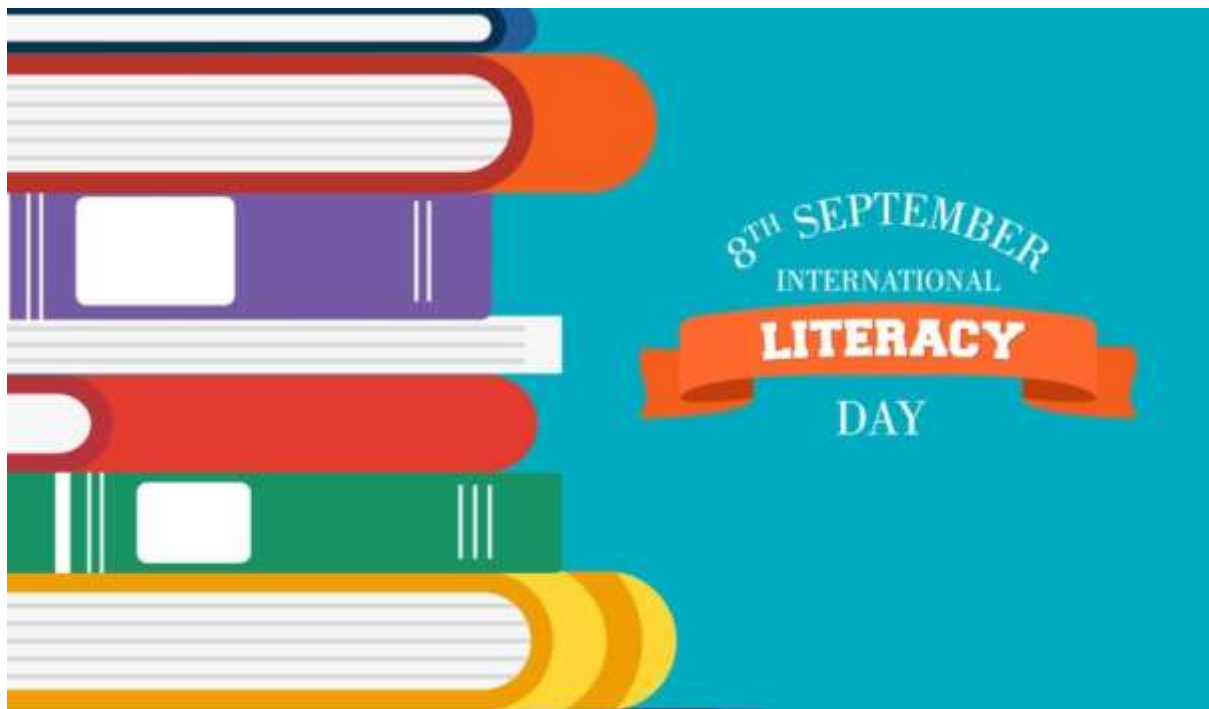
- Kiran Helpline will **offer mental health rehabilitation services** with the objective of early screening, first-aid, psychological support, distress management, mental wellbeing, promoting positive behaviours, psychological crisis management etc.
- It aims at **serving people experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, panic attacks, adjustment disorders, post-**

traumatic stress disorders, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, pandemic induced psychological issues & mental health emergencies.

- It will function as a lifeline to provide **1st stage advice, counseling and reference in 13 languages to individuals, families, NGOs, Parent Associations, Professional Associations, Rehabilitation Institutes, Hospitals** or anyone in need of support across the country.
- The Helpline is being **coordinated by the National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities (NIEPMD), Chennai** and **National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation (NIMHR), Sehore.**
- Professional support for the Helpline is being provided by the **Indian Association of Clinical Psychologists (IACP), Indian Psychiatrists Association (IPA) and Indian Psychiatric Social Workers Association (IPSWA).**

Topic 2: International Literacy Day

Importance for Prelims: IR



Union Home Minister greeted the nation on International Literacy Day celebrated on September 8.

- **Since 1967, International Literacy Day (ILD) celebrations have taken place annually** around the world to remind the **public of the importance of literacy** as a matter of dignity and human rights, and to advance the literacy agenda towards a more literate and sustainable society.
- Despite progress made, literacy challenges persist with at least 773 million adults worldwide lacking basic literacy skills today.
- **International Literacy Day (ILD) 2020** will focus on **“Literacy teaching and learning in the COVID-19 crisis and beyond”** with a focus on the role of educators and changing

pedagogies.

- The theme will highlight **literacy learning in a lifelong learning perspective and therefore mainly focus on youth and adults.**

Topic 3: World Solar Technology Summit

Importance for Prelims: IR



World Solar Technology Summit (WSTS) is going to be organized by the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

- The objective of the event is to **bring the spotlight on state-of-the-art technologies as well as next-generation technologies** which will provide impetus to the efforts towards **harnessing the solar energy** more efficiently.
- The event will hold four technical sessions that would be available to the participants in different languages namely English, Spanish, French & Arabic.
- **Leading companies and research organisations** from across the world will present their work during these sessions and will

deliberate on latest trends in solar technologies.

- **Vision 2030 & Beyond:** The overall context of Photo Voltaic technology development and its future, on its way towards becoming the first source of energy worldwide, with PV technologies supplying 70% of the world's electricity generation.
- **Towards a Decarbonised Grid:** The most recent advances (conversion efficiency improvements and declining costs) regarding key components such as PV modules and storage technologies.
- **Disruptive Solar Technologies:** On-grid applications, whether groundmounted, floating, or integrated in residential and commercial rooftops.
- **Solar Beyond the Power Sector:** Innovative applications where PV is used to move, heat, cool, and drive eco-friendly industrial processes and produce fuels as well as off-grid applications, to provide universal access to energy.

International Solar Alliance

- The ISA, an action-oriented organization, **aims at lowering the cost of technology and finance and thereby facilitate deployment of over 1,000 GW of solar energy** and mobilize more than USD 1,000 billion into solar power by 2030 in Member countries.
- The ISA envisions to enable the **full ecosystem for availability**

and development of technology, economic resources, and development of storage technology, mass manufacturing and innovation. The reduced cost of technology would enable the undertaking of more ambitious solar energy programmes.

- The ISA has 67 countries and has six programmes viz. Solar Applications for Agricultural Use, Affordable Finance at Scale, Mini Grids, and Solar Rooftops and Solar E-mobility & Storage and Large-Scale Solar Parks.

Topic 4: Food Safety and Standards (Safe food and balanced diets for children in school) Regulations, 2020

Importance for Prelims: Economy



Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has published the Food Safety and Standards (Safe food and balanced diets for children in school) Regulations, 2020 to ensure the availability of safe and balanced diets for school children.

It mentioned that on marketing foods to children in school premises or campus, the FBOs shall only offer premiums and incentives such as toys, trading cards, apparel, club memberships, contests, reduced-price specials, or coupons with foods, meals, which is **not high in saturated fat or trans-fat or added sugar or sodium**

- **Saturated fatty acids lack double bonds** between the

individual carbon atoms, while in **unsaturated fatty acids** there is at least one double bond in the fatty acid chain.

- Saturated fats tend to be solid at room temperature and **from animal sources**, while **unsaturated fats are usually liquid and from plant sources**.
- Saturated fats may increase levels of low-density lipoprotein or **LDL**, or “bad” cholesterol. Elevated LDL cholesterol in the blood may **increase a person’s risk of heart disease**.

Topic 5: Airsuvidha

Importance for Prelims: Initiative



Delhi Airport makes International Arriving process easy by developing a **contact-less solution in collaboration with Ministry of Civil Aviation** for all passengers coming to India.

- Air Suvidha is touted as a **contactless solution for international passengers** travelling to India.
- It comprises two forms a **self-declaration form** where passengers fill in basic details and information about recent travel history, and an **exemption form** that, if approved, will exempt the passenger from institutional quarantine.
- All international passengers need to fill in the self-declaration forms on the portal. Previously, it would be filled at the airport prior to departure. This step was taken to do away with the unnecessary physical contact.

Topic 6: Critical wildlife habitats

Importance for Prelims: Environment



The process of notifying critical wildlife habitats (CWH) in Maharashtra contained several violations of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, found a report released by the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE)

- CWH is a **provision under the Forest Rights Act, 2006 (FRA)**.
- The Act primarily focuses on **recognising the historically-denied rights of forest-dwellers** to use and manage forests.
- FRA defines CWHs as ‘ **areas of national parks and sanctuaries** where it has been specifically and clearly established, case by case, on the basis of scientific and objective criteria, that **such areas are required to be kept as inviolate for the purposes of wildlife conservation**
- The power to notify the **rules to designate a CWH rests with Ministry of Environment and Forests**. The **State Government** are needed to initiate the process for **notification** of a critical wildlife habitat by submitting an application on a case by case basis, to the Ministry of

Environment and Forests, which is the nodal agency under the said Act. Critical Wildlife Habitats are thus, declared by Central Government.

Topic 7: Typhoon Haishen

Importance for Prelims: Geography



Typhoon Haishen made landfall over southern Japan becoming the country's second landfalling typhoon within a week.

- The typhoon is **categorised as a Category 4 storm** which means well-built framed houses can suffer severe damage with loss of most of the roof structure and exterior walls.
- Multiple typhoons **hit Japan every year and typically, typhoon season is expected to last till November.**
- The **damage associated with strong typhoons include wind damage, water damage, high tide damage and wave damage.**
- Depending on where they occur, **hurricanes may be called typhoons or cyclones.** The scientific name for all these kinds of storms is tropical cyclones.
- The tropical cyclones that form over the **Atlantic Ocean or the**

eastern Pacific Ocean are called hurricanes and the ones that form in the Northwest Pacific are called typhoons. Tropical storms that form in the Bay of Bengal or the Arabian Sea are called cyclones.

Topic 8: IPO

Importance for Prelims: Economy



The government is likely to amend the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) Act, 1956 to facilitate the Initial Public Offering (IPO) of the country's largest life insurer LIC.

- The amendment in the LIC Act is required to achieve at least three objectives — **to list as a corporation and not as a company, expansion of paid up capital and continuation of sovereign guarantee to shareholders.**
- Once listed, an entity is required to have at least 25 per cent of public shareholding — shares owned by those other than promoters and include institutions and individuals after three years.
- The Budget documents show the government has set a disinvestment target of ₹1- lakh crore, of which ₹90,000 crore

would come from the sale of IDBI Bank and LIC stake.

IPO:

- An IPO stands for initial public offering.
- It is when a company initially offers shares of stocks to the public.
- It's also called "going public."
- An IPO is the first time the owners of the company give up part of their ownership to stockholders. Before that, the company is privately-owned.

Topic 9: PM Kisan

Importance for Prelims: Schemes



INTERIM BUDGET 2019-20

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)

Direct income support of ₹6,000 p.a for farmers, effective 01.12.2018

To benefit 12 cr small and marginal farmer families having cultivable land upto 2 ha

Direct transfer into the bank accounts in three equal instalments

First installment upto 31.03.2019, to be paid this year itself

₹75,000 cr in outlay for 2019-20 and ₹20,000 cr in RE 2018-19

An estimated ₹110 crore was fraudulently credited to the bank accounts of 5.5 lakh ineligible people in 13 districts of Tamil Nadu under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan SammanNidhi (PM-Kisan) Scheme

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a new **Central Sector Scheme** to provide **income support to all landholding farmers' families** in the country to supplement their financial needs for procuring various inputs related to agriculture and allied activities as well as domestic needs.
- Under the Scheme, the **entire financial liability** towards transfer of benefit to targeted beneficiaries will be **borne by Government of India**.

- In the beginning when the PM-Kisan Scheme was launched on February, 2019, its benefits were **admissible only to Small & Marginal Farmers' families**, with combined landholding **upto 2 hectare**.
- The Scheme was later on revised on 1 .6.2019 and **extended to all farmer families irrespective of the size of their landholdings**
- Under the PM-KISAN scheme, all landholding farmers' families shall be provided the **financial benefit of Rs.6000 per annum per family payable in three equal installments** of Rs.2000 each, every four months.
- **State Government and UT administration will identify the farmer families** which are eligible for support as per scheme guidelines
- There are various Exclusion Categories for the scheme like institutional land holders.

Topic 10: Phosphine gas

Importance for Prelims: Science and tech



WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT PHOSPHINE

In nature, it is formed mainly by biological processes. Geochemical processes like volcanic or meteorite activity are also known to produce phosphine. But scientists perceive that if the gas had been produced by these sources, its concentration in the atmosphere of Venus would have been millions of times less



#QUIXPLAINED

02

An announcement by an international team of astronomers about the **discovery of phosphine gas in the atmosphere of Venus** triggered global excitement.

- Phosphine is a **colourless but smelly gas**, known to be **made only by some species of bacteria that survive in the absence of oxygen.**

- Scientists have discovered this chemical which is known to be produced **only through biological process**, and not through any naturally occurring chemical process.
- There are some other ways in which this chemical might be produced, for example, in the underbelly of volcanoes or meteorite activity, but that would have shown in much lower concentrations. In any case, scientists have ruled out all those kinds of known possibilities which could be attributed for the presence of that gas.
- **This is the most credible evidence yet for the possibility of life away from Earth**
- **The finding can further ignite interest in space missions to Venus.**
- Missions to Venus are not new. Spacecraft have been going near the planet since the 1960s, and some of them have even made a landing. In fact, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is also planning a mission to Venus, **tentatively called Shukrayaan**, in the near future.

Topic 11: Svanidhi Scheme

Importance for Prelims: Schemes



Prime Minister held ‘Svanidhi Samvaad’ with street vendors from Madhya Pradesh.

- It is a special **micro-credit facility scheme** for providing **affordable loan to street vendors**.
- The scheme is aimed at enabling the street vendors to resume their livelihoods that have been adversely affected due to COVID-19 lockdown.
- Under the scheme, each of these streets vendors **will be given a credit loan of Rs 10,000, which they can return as monthly installments within a year**.

- Those who repay their loans on time will **get 7 percent annual interest as subsidy** which will be transferred in their bank accounts. There is no provision for penalty
- The scheme targets to benefit over **50 lakh street vendors**, who had been vending on or before 24th March this year, **in urban areas**. The duration of the scheme is till March 2022. The street vendors belonging to the **surrounding peri-urban or rural areas are being included as beneficiaries under the urban livelihoods programme for the first time**.
- The lending institutions under the Scheme include Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks, Small Finance Banks, Cooperative Banks, NBFCs, Micro Finance institutions and Self Help Group banks.

Topic 12: Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana

Importance for Prelims: Schemes

₹20,000 crores for Fishermen through Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

- Critical gaps in fisheries value chain
- Government will launch the PMMSY for integrated, sustainable, inclusive development of marine and inland fisheries.
- ₹11,000 Cr for activities in Marine, Inland fisheries and Aquaculture
- ₹9000 Cr for Infrastructure - Fishing Harbours, Cold chain, Markets etc.
- Cage Culture, Seaweed farming, Ornamental Fisheries as well as New Fishing Vessels, Traceability, Laboratory Network etc. will be key activities.
- Provisions of Ban Period Support to fishermen (during the period fishing is not permitted), Personal & Boat Insurance
- Will lead to Additional Fish Production of 70 lakh tonnes over 5 years.
- Employment to over 55 lakh persons; double exports to ₹1,00,000 Cr.
- Focus on Islands, Himalayan States, North-east and Aspirational Districts.

Source: Government of India

Prime Minister will digitally launch the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) on 10th September.

Prime Minister will also launch **e-Gopala App**, a **comprehensive breed improvement marketplace and information portal** for direct use of farmers.

- **Status:** fisheries and aquaculture are an important source of food, nutrition, employment and income in India. The sector provides **livelihood to more than 20 million fishers and fish farmers at the primary level and twice the number along the value chain.**

- The Gross Value Added (GVA) of fisheries sector in the national economy is **1.24% of the total National GVA and 7.28% share of Agricultural GVA.**
- Fisheries sector in India has shown **impressive growth with an average annual growth rate of 10.88% during the year from 2014-15 to 2018-19.**
- The fish production in India has registered an **average annual growth of 7.53% during last 5 years** and stood at an all-time high of 137.58 lakh metric tons during 2018-19.

Features:

- The PMMSY will be implemented as an umbrella scheme with **two separate Components namely Central Sector Scheme (CS) and Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS).**
- Under the Central Sector Scheme Component an amount of Rs. 1720 crores has been earmarked. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) Component, an investment of Rs. 18330 crores has been envisaged, which in turn is segregated into Non-beneficiary oriented and Beneficiary orientated subcomponents/activities under the following three broad heads:
 - ✓ Enhancement of **Production and Productivity**
 - ✓ Infrastructure and **Post-harvest Management**
 - ✓ Fisheries **Management and Regulatory Framework**
- Cluster or area-based approach would be followed with requisite forward and backward linkages and end to end solutions.

- Thrust will be given for infusing **new and emerging technologies like Recirculatory Aquaculture Systems, Biofloc, Aquaponics, Cage Cultivation** to enhance production and productivity, quality, productive utilization of waste lands and water for Aquaculture.
- Special focus on Coldwater fisheries development and expansion of Aquaculture in Brackish Water and Saline Areas.
- Activities like **Mariculture, Seaweed cultivation and Ornamental Fisheries** having potential to generate huge employment will be promoted. **Focused attention** would be given for fisheries development in **Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Islands, Northeast, and Aspirational Districts** through area specific development plans.
- PMMSY envisages promotion of high value species, establishing a national network of **Brood Banks** for all commercially important species, Genetic improvement and establishing Nucleus Breeding Center for self-reliance in Shrimp Brood stock, organic aquaculture promotion and certification, good aquaculture practices, end to end traceability from ‘catch to consumer’, **use of Block Chain Technology**, Global Standards and Certification, Accreditation of Brood banks, Hatcheries, Farms, residues issues and aquatic health management supported by a modern laboratory network.
- Collectivization of fishers and fish farmers through **Fish**

Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs) to increase bargaining power of fishers and fish farmers is a key feature of PMMSY.

- **Aquaparks as hub of fisheries and aquaculture activities** with assured, affordable, quality inputs under one roof, post-harvest infrastructure facilities, business enterprise zones, logistic support, business incubation centers, marketing facilities etc.
- Youth would be engaged in fisheries extension by creation of **3347 SagarMitras in coastal fisher villages.**
- Major investments in construction and modernization of Fishing Harbours and Landing centers for hygienic handling of fish, urban marketing infrastructure to deliver quality and affordable fish, **development of state of the art whole sale fish markets, retail markets, E-marketing and E-trading of Fish etc.**

Topic 13: Jigyasa programme

Importance for Prelims: Schemes



A webinar has been hosted by CSIR-CMERI Durgapur in association with Samagra Siksha, Department of School Education, Jammu & Kashmir on Scientific & Technological Interventions by CSIR-CMERI combating COVID-19 as a part of the 'Jigyasa' programme.

- “JIGYASA” is one of the **major initiatives taken up by CSIR** at national level for further widening and deepening its **Scientific Social Responsibility (SSR)**.
- Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), has launched a studentscientist connect programme ‘JIGYASA’ in **collaboration with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathans (KVS)**
- The objective is extending the classroom leaning and **focusing on a well planned research laboratory based learning.**
- ‘JIGYASA’ would inculcate the **culture of inquisitiveness on one hand and scientific temper on the other, amongst the school students and their teachers.**

Topic 14: Green blue policy

Importance for Prelims: Government policy



The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) is holding public consultations for the preparation of the Master Plan for Delhi 2041, which has the “Green-Blue policy”, promises to give the city a new shape.

- **‘Blue’ infrastructure refers to water bodies** like rivers, canals, ponds, wetlands, floodplains, and water treatment facilities; while **‘Green’ stands for trees**, lawns, hedgerows, parks, fields, and forests.
- The concept refers to urban planning where **water bodies and land are interdependent**, and grow with the help of each other while offering environmental and social benefits.

Topic 15: Pradhan Mantri GaribKalyan Package

Importance for Prelims: Schemes



The Centre claimed that over 42 crore poor people have received financial assistance of over ₹68,000 crore under the Pradhan Mantri GaribKalyan Package (PMGKY).

- It is announced in March, the **₹1.70-lakh crore package intends to benefit the masses affected during the pandemic** by providing free food grains and cash payment to women and poor senior citizens and farmers.

Following are the components of the Pradhan Mantri GaribKalyan Package

I. Insurance scheme for health workers fighting COVID-19 in Government Hospitals and Health Care Centres

- Safaikaramcharis, ward-boys, nurses, ASHA workers,

paramedics, technicians, doctors and specialists and other health workers would be covered by a Special insurance Scheme.

- Any health professional, who while treating Covid-19 patients, meet with some accident, then he/she would be compensated with an amount of Rs 50 lakh under the scheme.
- All government health centres, wellness centres and hospitals of Centre as well as States would be covered under this scheme approximately 22 lakh health workers would be provided insurance cover to fight this pandemic.

II. PMGaribKalyanAnnaYojana

- Government of India would not allow anybody, especially any poor family, to suffer on account of non-availability of foodgrains due to disruption in the next three months.
- 80 crore individuals, i.e, roughly two-thirds of India's population would be covered under this scheme.
- Each one of them would be provided double of their current entitlement over next three months. This additionality would be free of cost.

III. Benefit to farmers:

- The first instalment of Rs 2,000 due in 2020-21 will be front-loaded and paid in April 2020 itself under the PM KISAN Yojana.
- It would cover 8.7 crore farmers

IV. Cash transfers to Help to Poor:

- A total of 20.40 crores PMJDY women account-holders would be given an exgratia of Rs 500 per month for next three months.
- Gas cylinders: Under PM GaribKalyanYojana, gas cylinders, free of cost, would be provided to 8 crore poor families for the next three months.

Topic 16: FDI in Defence

Importance for Prelims: Economy

Easier Terms

Current FDI policy for defence

- ▶ Up to **49% FDI** Automatic route
- ▶ Over **49%** Case by case

Under consideration

- ▶ **Higher FDI** limit, even up to **74%**
- ▶ **Discussions** between DPIIT & defence min begin
- ▶ **Easier** export policy

How will it help

- ▶ **India** is one of the biggest arms imports
- ▶ **It has been trying** to step up domestic production
- ▶ **Higher FDI** limit will encourage investments
- ▶ **It will help** cut down on imports

The Union Cabinet approved the **new FDI policy in the Defence sector** which allows the foreign direct investment through automatic approval to **be increased from 49% to 74%**. However, the new policy has a ‘National Security’ clause as a condition

- Foreign Investment in the Defence Sector **shall be subject to scrutiny on the ground of National Security** and the **Government reserves the right to review any foreign investment** in the Defence Sector that may affect national security
- The policy has been introduced in view of **reducing dependency on imports** in the Defence sector and **boosting**

Make in India, in turn giving more employment and business opportunities to the Indian businesses and boosting self-dependency.

- Through the policy reforms, the government is seeking to attract foreign players to set up manufacturing units in India.
- The Government has been focussing on strengthening the Defence sector by boosting indigenous manufacturing and also **aiming to increase exports from the sector.**

Topic 17: Poll campaign expenditure cap

Importance for Prelims: Polity



Election Commission of India has proposed a **10 per cent increase in the campaign expenditure limit for all future elections** given the constraints posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

- The Election Commission (EC) imposes **limits on campaign expenditure incurred by a candidate, not political parties.**
- Rule 90 of the Conduct of Election Rules 1961 deals with election expenditure.
- Expenditure by a **Lok Sabha candidate is capped between Rs 50 lakh and Rs 70 lakh**, depending on the state she is fighting from.
- In Assembly elections, the **ceiling is between Rs 20 lakh and Rs 28 lakh.**

- This includes money spent by a political party or a supporter towards the candidate's campaign.
- However, expenses incurred either by a party or the leader of a party for propagating the party's programme are not covered.
- Candidates must **mandatorily file a true account of election expenses with the EC.**
- An incorrect account, or expenditure beyond the ceiling can **attract disqualification for up to three years under Section 10A of The Representation of the People Act, 1951.**

Topic 18: Door Step banking and EASE reform

Importance for Prelims: Economy



Finance Minister has launched doorstep banking services for public sector banks in order to facilitate hassle-free and convenient banking. As **part of the EASE Reforms, Doorstep Banking Services is envisaged to provide convenience of banking services to the customers at their door step** through the universal touch points of Call Centre, Web Portal or Mobile App. Customers can also track their service request through these channels.

- At present only **non-financial services** vis-a-vis pick up of negotiable instruments (cheque / demand draft / pay order, etc.), pick up new cheque book requisition slip, request for account statement, delivery of non personalised cheque book, delivery of pre-paid instrument / gift card and others are **available to customers**.
- Initially, the doorstep banking facility were **decided to be**

available to senior citizens and the disabled, who found it difficult to visit branches.

EASE reform

- PSB Reforms EASE Agenda is a **common reform agenda for PSBs aimed at institutionalizing clean and smart banking.**
- It was launched in January 2018, and the subsequent edition of the program- EASE 2.0 built on the foundation laid in EASE 1.0 and furthered the progress on reforms.
- **EASE 3.0 sets the agenda and roadmap for FY21 for their transformation into digital and data-driven NextGen Banking of the Future for an aspiring India**
- **With EASE 1.0 and 2.0 laying a firm foundation of robust banking and institutionalised systems, PSBs are set to transform into digital- and data-driven NextGen banks.**
- EASE 3.0 emphasizes on the use of digital, analytics & AI, FinTech partnerships across customer service, convenient banking, end-to-end digitalised processes for loan sourcing and processing, analytics-driven risk management as well as decision support systems for HR.

Topic 19: Swadesh Darshan and PRASAD

Importance for Prelims: Arts and culture/ Schemes



Ministry of Tourism presents
Dekho Apna Desh
a webinar on

**In the Footsteps
of the Buddha**

12th September 2020 • Saturday • 10:00-12:00 hrs IST

Sevenside India | Ministry of Tourism | UPSC

Ministry of Tourism has undertaken **development of tourism related infrastructure and facilities at various Buddhist Sites** in the country under its flagships schemes of Swadesh Darshan & PRASHAD. Ministry of Tourism presents its latest **webinar on “In the Footsteps of the Buddha”** under DekhoApnaDesh Webinar Series **Swadesh Darsha Scheme**

- The Ministry of Tourism, under the Swadesh Darshan scheme is **developing thematic circuits in the country in planned and prioritized manner.**
- Under the scheme **fifteen thematic circuits have been identified for development** namely; North-East Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Heritage Circuit, Sufi Circuit, and Tirthankara Circuit.
- Submission of **proposals by the State Governments** under the scheme is a continuous process.

- The projects under the scheme are **identified for development in consultation with the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations** and are sanctioned subject to availability of funds, submission of suitable Detailed Project Reports, adherence to scheme guidelines and utilization of funds released earlier.

PRASAD

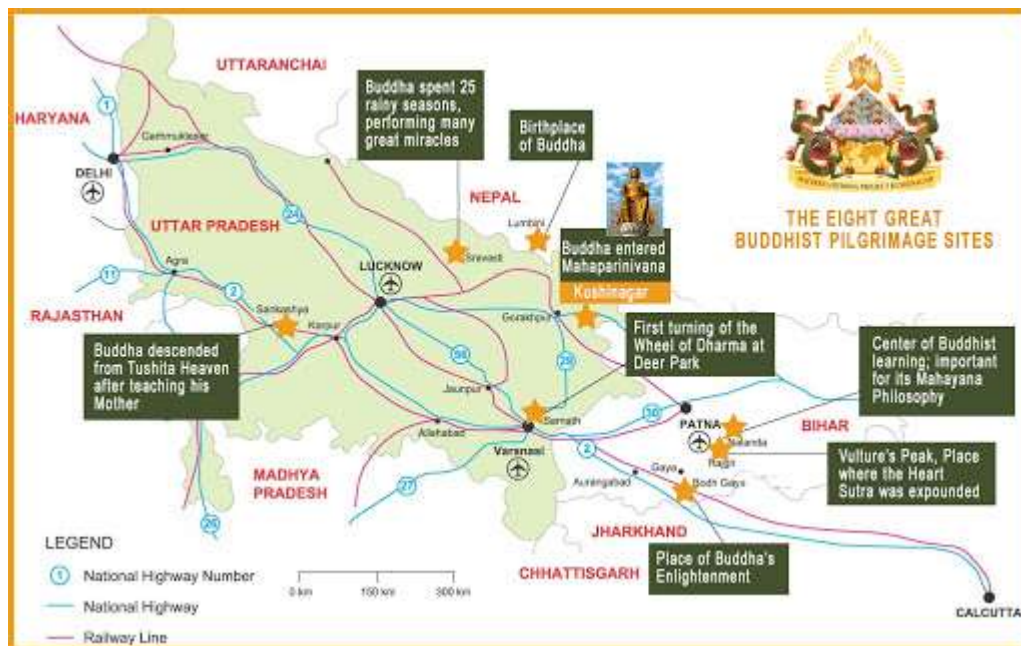
- Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) is a government scheme that focuses on **identifying and developing the pilgrim sites across the country to enrich the religious tourism experience introduced in 2015**
- It was launched by Union Ministry of Tourism.
- It aims at integrated development of pilgrimage destinations in planned, prioritised and sustainable manner to provide complete religious tourism experience.

Buddhist sites

- Webinar on a virtual journey across the plains of **the river Ganges to Bodh Gaya**, where the Buddha attained enlightenment, **meditation places such as Vulture peak in Rajgir, the Jeta Grove at Sravasti (where he spent 24 rainy season retreats), the site at Kapilavastu where he spent his childhood, the Deer Park at Sarnath, where he gave his first teachings and Kushinagar, where he passed away.**
- No written records about Gautama were found from his lifetime

or from the one or two centuries thereafter. But from the middle of the 3rd century BCE, several Edicts of Ashoka (reigned c. 269–232 BCE) mention the Buddha, and particularly **Ashoka's Lumbini pillar inscription commemorates the Emperor's pilgrimage** to Lumbini as the Buddha's birthplace, calling him the Buddha Shakyamuni.

- The earliest accounts of the **Buddha's spiritual quest are found in texts such as the Pali Ariyapariyesana-sutta**. This text shows that what led to Gautama's renunciation was the thought that his life was subject to old age, disease and death and that there might be something better (i.e. liberation, nirvana).



The presenter highlighted some important Buddhist sites:-

- **Sarnath**– The Deer Park adjoining the Archaeological Complex at Sarnath that the Buddha is believed to have delivered his first

sermon after he attained enlightenment under a Bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya and preached his first teachings known as **Dharmachakrapravartana Sutra**.

- **Rajgir**– It was the capital of Magadh Kingdom. It was here that Gautama Buddha spent several months meditating, and preaching at Gridhra-kuta, (Vulture peak). He also delivered some of his famous sermons and initiated king Bimbisara of Magadha and countless others to Buddhism. It was here that **Budhha delivered his famous Atanatiya Sutra**.
- **Sravasti**– It was the capital of ancient Kosala kingdom and is sacred to the Buddhists because it is here that Lord Buddha performed the greatest of his miracles to confound the Tirthika heretics. These miracles include Buddha creating multiple images of himself, which has been a favourite theme of Buddhist art. **Buddha showed his divine prowess to impress upon the non-believers. The Buddha passed the greater part of his monastic life in Sravasti.**
- **Vulture peak**– One of the several sites frequented by the Buddha and his community of disciples for both training and retreat.
- **Kesariya** – Kesariya Stupa is a Buddhist stupa in Kesariya. The first construction of the Stupa is dated to the 3rd century BCE. Kesariya Stupa has a circumference of almost 400 feet (120 m) and raises to a height of about 104 feet.

- **Vaishali**– It is said that the Buddha visited this place thrice and spent quite a long time here. The Buddha also **delivered his last sermon at Vaishali and announced his Nirvana here.**
- **Kushinagar**- It is one of the four sacred places of Lord Buddha. Buddha delivered his last sermon, **attained Mahaparinirvana (salvation)** in 483 BC and was **cremated at Rambhar Stupa.**

Topic 20: Indo-Pacific trilateral dialogue

Importance for Prelims: IR



With a focus on enhancing cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, **India, Australia and France held the first trilateral dialogue** where they discussed “economic and geostrategic challenges and cooperation” in the region, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and domestic responses to it.

- France and Australia are India’s key partners in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The meeting provided a unique opportunity to build upon the progress that the three countries have achieved bilaterally in recent years, sources said.
- The three sides discussed the **emerging challenges in the context of Covid- 19, including the financial impact of the pandemic on the Indian Ocean region countries.** “ They also talked about the **possibility of “enhancing maritime security cooperation” between the three countries, including in the areas of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime domain awareness, mutual logistics support,**

capacity-building of friendly countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

- Sources said cooperation on marine global commons — blue economy, marine biodiversity and environmental challenges such as marine pollution — was on the agenda of the meeting.
- The Indian side underlined its interest in collaborating on sustainable fisheries in the Indian Ocean, technologies for harvesting of Deep Ocean Resources, Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion, sources said.

Topic 21: Fundamental right to freedom of speech -Article 19

Importance for Prelims: Polity



Different courts recently gave conflicting rulings involving the broadcast of two shows. In each case, one court restricted the broadcast and another refused to interfere.

These raise questions on the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression, and whether these can be restrained prior to broadcast or publishing.

- Section 5 of Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act, 1995 prescribes that no person shall transmit or re-transmit through a cable service any programme unless such programme is in conformity with the prescribed programme code.
- Section 19 gives the power to **prohibit a broadcast in the public interest if the programme is likely to promote, on grounds of religion, race, language, caste or community or any other ground whatsoever, disharmony or feelings of**

enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, linguistic or regional groups or castes or communities or which is likely to disturb the public tranquility.

- **Prior restraint is prohibiting the exercise of free speech before it can take place.**
- **Imposition of pre-censorship or prior restraint on speech is a violation** of the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression enshrined in Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution.
- Any restrictions imposed on this right have to be found under Article 19(2) of the Constitution, which lists out “**reasonable restrictions**” that include interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, security of the state, public order, and incitement to an offence.
- Any legislation that imposes a prior restraint on speech usually has the **burden to show that the reason for such restraint can be found under Article 19(2).**
- It is generally allowed only in exceptional circumstances.
- The idea is that speech can be restricted only when judged on its actual content and not pre-emptively based on perceptions of what it could be.
- The court has adopted the “**proximity**” test to determine if **public order would be affected to allow prior restraint** — the state is required to demonstrate a proximate link between public order and the speech.

Topic 22: Breach of legislature's privilege

Importance for Prelims: Polity

A motion for breach of privilege was moved in the Maharashtra Assembly against Republic TV's Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami. A similar motion was moved in the Maharashtra Legislative Council against actor Kangana Ranaut.

- Parliamentary privilege refers to **rights and immunities enjoyed by Parliament as an institution and MPs in their individual capacity**, without which they cannot discharge their functions as entrusted upon them by the Constitution
- According to the Constitution, the powers, privileges and immunities of Parliament and MP's are **to be defined by Parliament (Article 105)**. No law has so far been enacted in this respect.
- **Article 194** deals with the powers, privileges and immunities of the State Legislatures, their Members and their committees.
- In the absence of any such law, it **continues to be governed by British Parliamentary conventions**.

Breach of privilege

- While the Constitution has accorded special privileges and powers to parliamentarians and legislators to maintain the dignity and authority of the Houses, these **powers and privileges are not codified**. Thus, there are no clear, notified rules to decide what constitutes a breach of privilege, and the

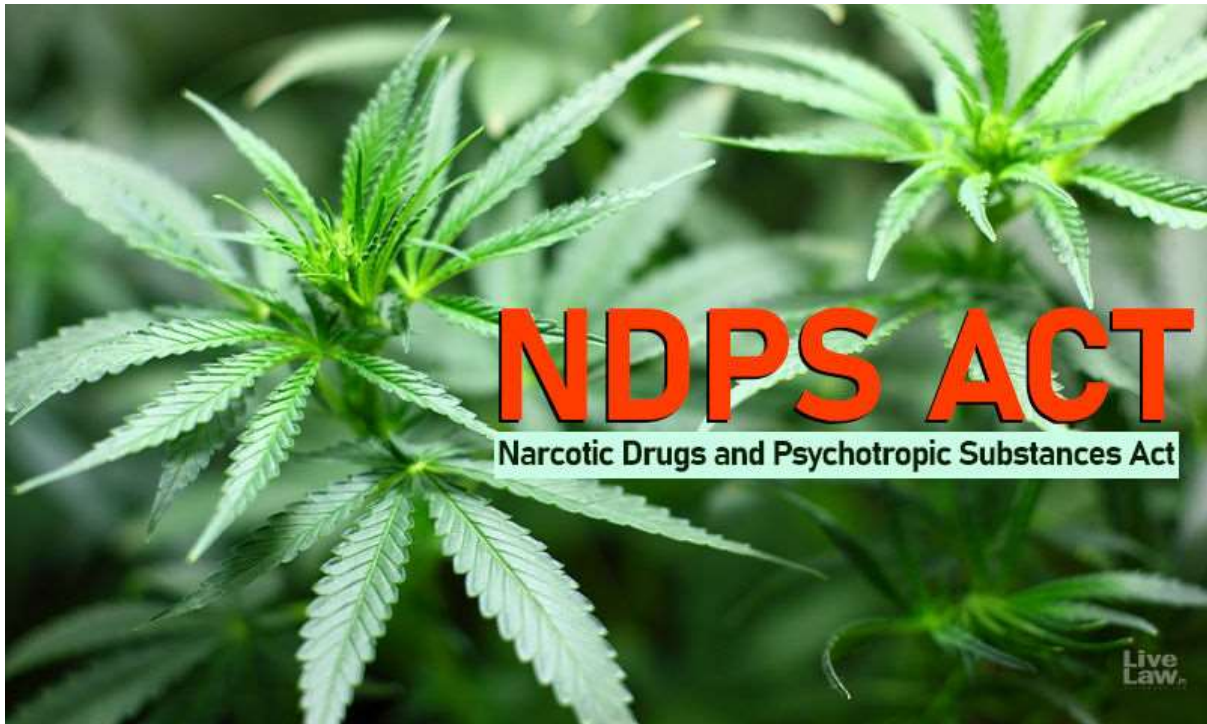
punishment it attracts.

- Any act that **obstructs or impedes either House of the state legislature** in performing its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any Member or officer of such House in the discharge of his duty, or has a tendency, directly or indirectly, to produce such results is treated as breach of privilege.
- It is a breach of privilege and contempt of the House to make speeches or to print or publish libel reflecting on the character or proceedings of the House, or its Committees, or on any member of the House for or relating to his character or conduct as a legislator.
- A notice is moved in **the form of a motion by any member of either House against those being held guilty of breach of privilege**
- The Speaker/Chairperson can decide on the privilege motion himself or herself or refer it to the privileges committee of Parliament.
- If the Speaker/Chair gives consent under Rule 222, the member concerned is given an opportunity to make a short statement.

Topic 23: Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS)

Act

Importance for Prelims: Acts



Sushant Singh Rajput death case has brought focus on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act

- The NDPS Act enacted in 1985 is the **primary legislation for dealing with drugs and their trafficking.**
- It was passed as India had to fulfil obligations as a signatory of various international conventions on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances **to prevent its use and illicit trafficking.**
- It has various provisions to punish manufacturing, sale, possession, consumption, use, transport of banned drugs.

- Punishment under the Act can vary based upon the sections the accused is charged.
- The central government can add or omit from the list of psychotropic substances.
- India is a **signatory to The UN Single Convention on Narcotics Drugs 1961, The Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971 and The Convention on Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, 1988** which prescribe various forms of control aimed to achieve the dual objective of limiting the use of narcotics drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes as well as preventing the abuse of the same.
- **Narcotics Control Bureau** was constituted by the Government of India in 1986 under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985.
- The aspect of drug supply reduction is looked after by various enforcement agencies under the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Home Affairs and State Governments.
- **The aspect of drug demand reduction is handled by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment and that of treatment of drug addicts and their rehabilitation falls under the domain of the Ministry of Health.**

Topic 24: SAROD-Ports

Importance for Prelims: Government initiative



Union Minister of State for Shipping has launched ‘SAROD-Ports’ (Society for Affordable Redressal of Disputes – Ports) through virtual ceremony in New Delhi.

- SAROD-Ports as a game changer and added that it will become the **pivotal mechanism of ummed (hope), vishwas(trust) and nyaya (justice) in the Port sector of India.**
- SAROD-Ports will **resolve disputes in fair and just manner** while saving huge amount of legal expenditure and time.
- SAROD-Ports is established **under Societies Registration Act, 1860** with the following objectives:
 - ✓ Affordable and timely resolution of disputes in fair manner

- ✓ Enrichment of Dispute Resolution Mechanism with the panel of technical experts as arbitrators.
- SAROD-Ports consists **members from Indian Ports Association (IPA) and Indian Private Ports and Terminals Association (IPTTA).**
- SAROD-Ports will advise and assist in settlement of disputes through arbitrations in the maritime sector, including ports and shipping sector in Major Port Trusts, Non-major Ports, including private ports, jetties, terminals and harbours.
- It will also cover disputes between granting authority and Licensee/Concessionaire /Contractor and also disputes between Licensee/Concessionaire and their contractors arising out of and during the course of execution of various contracts.
- All major Ports are **shifting towards ‘Landlord Model’ in the days to come.**
- Many concessioners will be working with the Major Ports. SAROD-Ports will **inspire confidence in the private players and will ensure right kind of environment for our partners.**
- It will promote ease of doing business in the maritime sector because of the fast, timely, cost effective and robust dispute resolution mechanism.
- ‘SAROD-Ports’ is similar to provision available in Highway Sector in the form of SAROD-Roads constituted by NHAI.

Topic 25: Five Star Villages Scheme

Importance for Prelims: Schemes



The Department of Posts has launched a scheme called Five Star Villages

- The scheme is to **ensure universal coverage of flagship postal schemes** in rural areas of the country.
- The scheme seeks to **bridge the gaps in public awareness and reach of postal products** and services, especially in interior villages.
- All postal products and services will be made available and marketed and publicized at village level, under the Five Star Villages scheme. Branch offices will function as one-stop shop to cater all post office – related needs of villagers.
- The schemes covered under the Five Star scheme include If a

village attains universal coverage for four schemes from the above list, then that village gets four-star status; if a village completes three schemes, then that village get three-star status and so on.

- The Postal Department has been playing a major role in the implementation of Government schemes, leveraging the immense strength of its vast network. Postal schemes are known for providing highly secured deposits, they provide higher return of interest with low risk.

Topic 26: Living Planet Report of WWF

Importance for Prelims: Environment



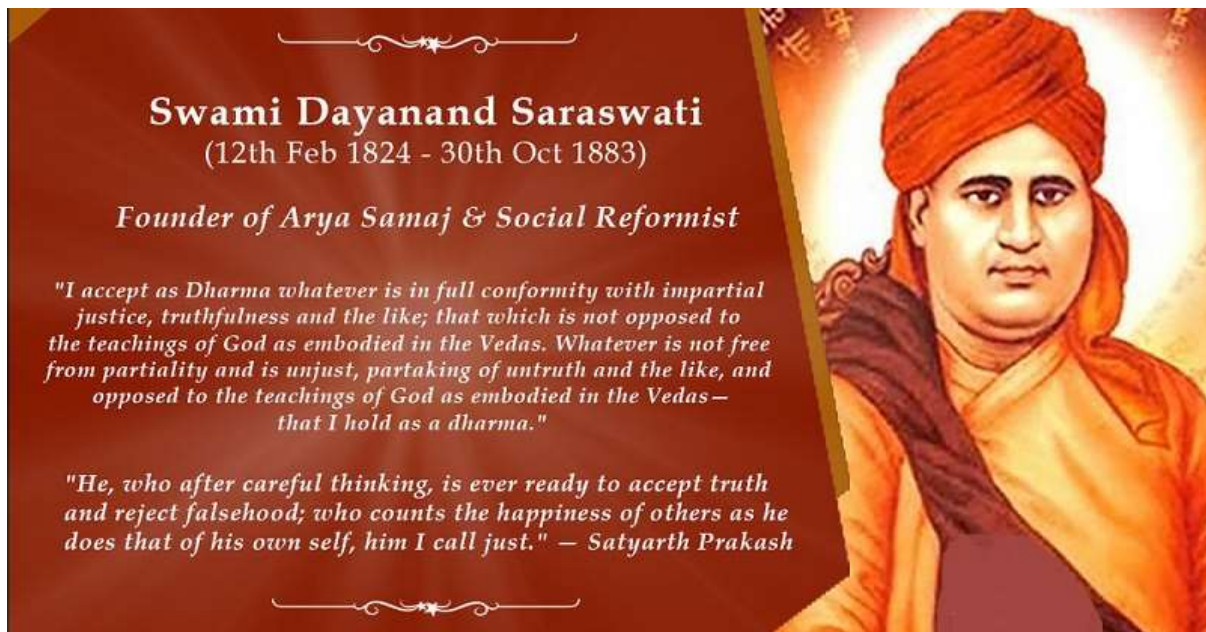
According to World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) Living Planet Report 2020 **Wildlife populations have fallen by more than two-thirds in less than 50 years** According to the report the losses have been driven primarily by habitat loss, it says, along with pollution, invasive species, overhunting and overfishing and, increasingly, climate change.

Result of this loss:

- The result is dysfunctional ecosystems. It means ecosystem bereft of important pollinators, predators and scavengers which is less able to support human or animal health
- According to report, the decrease of wildlife and increasing human interference is leading to rise in Zoonosis.

Topic 27: Arya Samaj

Importance for Prelims: History



Social activist and AryaSamaj leader Swami Agnivesh passed away at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences in New Delhi.

- The AryaSamaj Movement, **revivalist in form** though not in content, was the result of a reaction to Western influences.
- Its founder, **Dayananda Saraswati or Mulshankar** (1824-83) was born in old Morvi state in Gujarat in a brahmin family.
- The first **AryaSamaj unit** was formally set up by him at **Bombay in 1875** and later the **headquarters of the Samaj** were established at **Lahore**.
- Dayananda's views were published in his famous work, **SatyarthPrakash (The True Exposition)**. His vision of India included a classless and casteless society, a united India (religiously, socially and nationally), and an India free from

foreign rule, with Aryan religion being common religion of all.

- He took inspiration from the Vedas and considered them to be ‘**India’s Rock of Ages**’, the infallible and the true original seed of Hinduism. He gave the slogan “**Back to the Vedas**”.
- Dayananda launched a frontal attack on Hindu orthodoxy, caste rigidities, untouchability, idolatry, polytheism, belief in magic, charms and animal sacrifices, taboo on sea voyages, feeding the dead through shraddhas, etc.
- Dayananda **subscribed to the Vedic notion of chaturvarna system** in which a person was not born in any caste but was identified as a brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya or shudra according to the occupation the person followed.
- The AryaSamaj fixed the **minimum marriageable age at twenty-five years for boys and sixteen years for girls.**
- **Intercaste marriages and widow remarriages were also encouraged.**
- Equal status for women was the demand of the Samaj, both in letter and in spirit.
- The Samaj also helped the people in crises like floods, famines and earthquakes. It attempted to give a new direction to education. The nucleus for this movement was provided by the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic (D.A.V.) schools, established first at Lahore in 1886, which sought to **emphasise the importance of Western education.**

- It should be clearly understood that Dayananda's slogan of 'Back to the Vedas' was a call for a revival of Vedic learning and Vedic purity of religion and not a revival of Vedic times. He accepted modernity and displayed a patriotic attitude to national problems.

Topic 28: Bonded Labour

Importance for Prelims: Polity



Swami Agnivesh was widely known for his campaign against bonded labour through his foundation Bandhua Mukti Morcha (Bonded Labor Liberation Front).

- Bonded labour in India is defined as a **system of forced labour caused by a debt or by social custom or obligation**, under which a debtor **loses freedom of movement, and/or freedom to look for alternative employment**, and /or is subjected to a reduction in wages and/or to product prices less than the minimum or market rates
- Article 23 deals with bonded labour **Traffic in human beings and begar and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited** and any contravention of this provision shall be an **offence punishable** in accordance with law.
- Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from imposing compulsory service for public purposes, and in imposing such service the State shall not make any discrimination on grounds only of religion, race, caste or class or any of them

Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976

- **Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976** is implemented by the concerned State Govts./UTs. It provides for an institutional mechanism at the district level in the form of Vigilance Committees.
- For the purpose of implementing the provisions of this Act, the State Governments/UTs may confer, on an Executive Magistrate, the powers of a Judicial Magistrate of the first class or second class for trial of offences under this Act.
- Government of India has introduced a revamped **Central Sector Scheme for Rehabilitation of Bonded Labourers- 2016**, under which financial assistance are provided to released bonded labourers based on their category and level of exploitation along with other non-cash assistance for their livelihood.

Topic 29: India slips on global economic freedom index

Importance for Prelims: IR



India slips 26 places to 105 in global economic freedom index

- According to the **Economic Freedom of the World: 2020 report released by the Fraser Institute in Canada**, India slipped 26 places to 105 among 162 countries and territories on the index of global economic freedom.
- The country **ranked 79th in the previous edition of this report**, which measures the ‘economic freedom’, or the ability of individuals to make their own economic decisions in a country, by analysing policies and institutions of these countries.
- It does so by looking at indicators like **regulation, the freedom to trade internationally, size of government, property rights, government spending and taxation.**
- India performed **worse in terms of size of government, regulations and the freedom to trade internationally.**

Topic 30: Eat Right movement

Importance for Prelims: Government initiatives



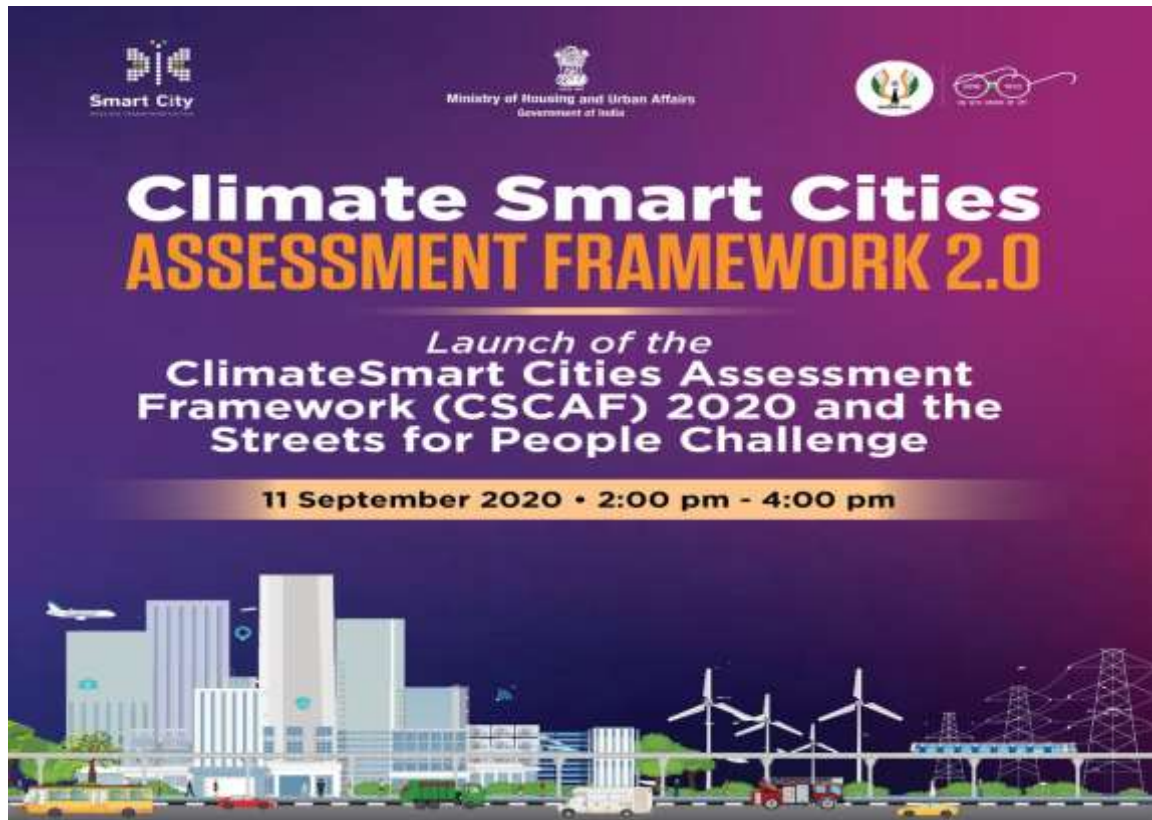
Two Indian initiatives have **found places amongst the ten best global initiatives** selected by the Rockefeller Foundation for its Food Systems Vision Prize 2050: Naandi Foundation's work with tribal communities in Araku in South India and other is '**Eat Right India**'.

- FSSAI has embarked on a **large-scale effort to transform the country's food system** in order to **ensure safe, healthy and sustainable food for all Indians** through the 'Eat Right India' movement.
- The tagline '**BehtarJeevan**', thus, forms the foundation of this movement.
- Eat Right India adopts a **judicious mix of regulatory, capacity building, collaborative and empowerment approaches** to ensure that our food is good both for the people and the planet.

- Further, it builds on the **collective action of all stakeholders** – the government, food businesses, civil society organizations, experts and professionals, development agencies and citizens at large.
- Eat Right India adopts an **integrative or ‘whole of the government’ approach** since the movement brings together food-related mandates of the agriculture, health, environment and other ministries.
- Furthermore, since foodborne illnesses and various diet-related diseases cut across all age groups and all sections of the society it also adopts a **‘whole of society’ approach**, bringing all stakeholders together on a common platform.
- Eat Right India is aligned to the National Health Policy 2017 with its focus on preventive and promotive healthcare and flagship programmes like Ayushman Bharat, POSHAN Abhiyaan, Anemia Mukta Bharat and Swachh Bharat Mission.

Topic 31: Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework

Importance for Prelims: Environment



Government has launched Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework (CSCAF 2.0) and Streets for People Challenge

Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework

- The objective of CSCAF is to **provide a clear roadmap for cities towards combating Climate Change** while planning and implementing their actions, including investments.
- In the last decade, an **increasing frequency of cyclones, floods, heat waves, water scarcity** and drought-like conditions have had adverse impacts on many of our cities.
- Such extreme events and risks cause loss of life as well as

impact the economic growth.

- In this context, **CSCAF initiative intends to inculcate a climate-sensitive approach to urban planning and development in India.**
- The framework has 28 indicators across five categories namely;
(i) **Energy and Green Buildings,**
(ii) **Urban Planning, Green Cover & Biodiversity,**
(iii) **Mobility and Air Quality,**
(iv) **Water Management and**
(v) **Waste Management.**

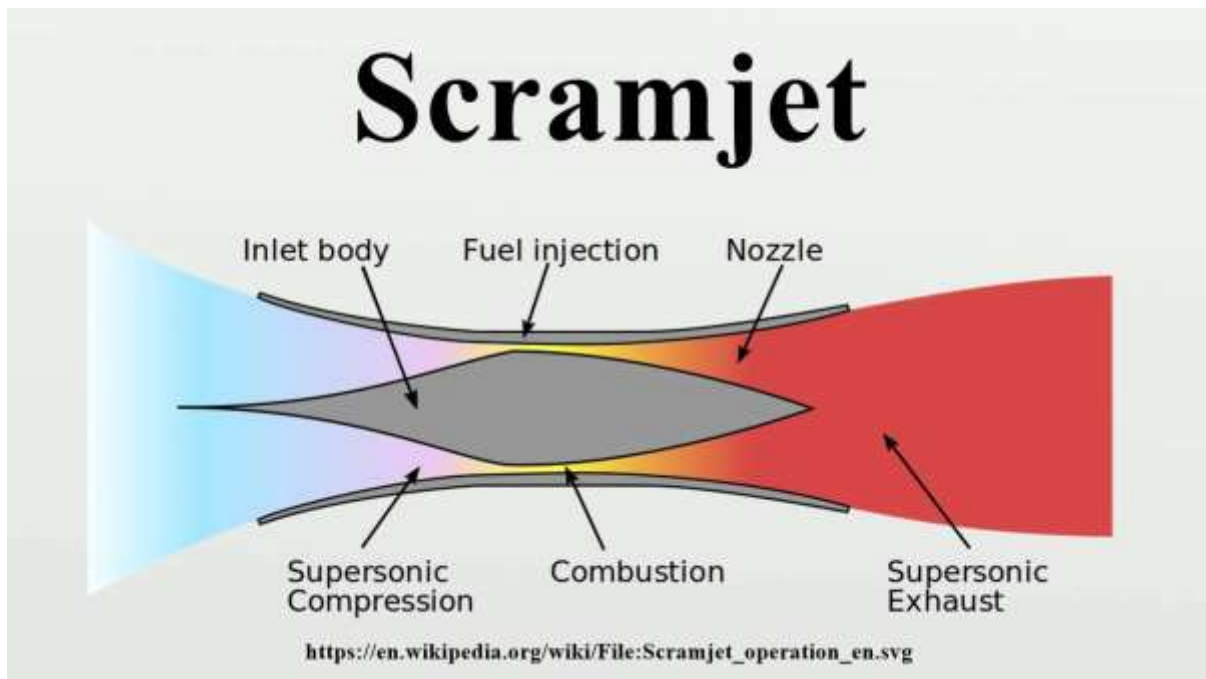
The Climate Centre for Cities under National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) is supporting MoHUA in implementation of CSCAF.

The Streets for People Challenge

- It is the response to the **need for making our cities more walkable and pedestrian friendly.** The Challenge builds on the advisory issued by MoHUA for the holistic planning for pedestrian-friendly market spaces, earlier this year.
- It aims to **inspire cities to create walking-friendly and vibrant streets through quick, innovative, and low-cost measures.**
- Fit India Mission, under Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, along with the India program of the Institute for Transport Development and Policy (ITDP) have partnered with the Smart Cities Mission to support the challenge.

Topic 32: Scramjet engine

Importance for Prelims: Science and tech



The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) performed a major technological feat by launching cruise vehicle Hypersonic Technology Demonstrator Vehicle (HSTDV). The centrepiece of the HSTDV was the indigenously developed airbreathing scramjet engine.

- A ramjet is a **form of air-breathing jet engine that uses the vehicle's forward motion to compress incoming air for combustion** without a rotating compressor.
- Fuel is injected in the combustion chamber where it mixes with the hot compressed air and ignites. **A ramjet-powered vehicle requires an assisted take-off like a rocket** assist to accelerate it to a speed where it begins to produce thrust.

- Ramjets work most efficiently at supersonic speeds around Mach 3 (three times the speed of sound) and can operate up to speeds of Mach 6. However, the ramjet efficiency starts to drop when the vehicle reaches hypersonic speeds.
- **A scramjet engine is an improvement over the ramjet engine as it efficiently operates at hypersonic speeds** and allows supersonic combustion. Thus it is known as Supersonic Combustion Ramjet, or Scramjet.

Topic 33: 'Five Points' agreement

Importance for Prelims: IR



The Foreign Ministers of India and China arrived at a 'Five Points' agreement to **reduce the prevailing tension on the Ladakh border** during their talks in Moscow on the sidelines of the SCO Summit

- The points include **dialogue aimed at quick disengagement, maintaining proper distance between troops** of the two sides and easing tensions, **abiding by all agreements and protocols on border management**, and working on **new confidence-building** measures once the situation eases.
- All this was comprehensively dealt with in the previous five agreements given below:
 - ✓ 1993 – 'Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility Agreement' forms the basis of all followup agreements.
 - ✓ 1996 – 'Confidence Building Measures' denounced the use of force

- ✓ 2005 – ‘Standard Operating Procedures’ and patrolling modalities.
- ✓ 2012 – ‘Process of Consultation and Cooperation’
- ✓ 2013 - ‘Border Cooperation Agreement’, signed as a sequel to Depsang intrusion by PLA

Topic 34: Hybrid warfare

Importance for Prelims: Science and tech



Early this month, the Chinese-only website of Zhenhua Data Information Technology Co, the company monitoring foreign targets, was pulled down

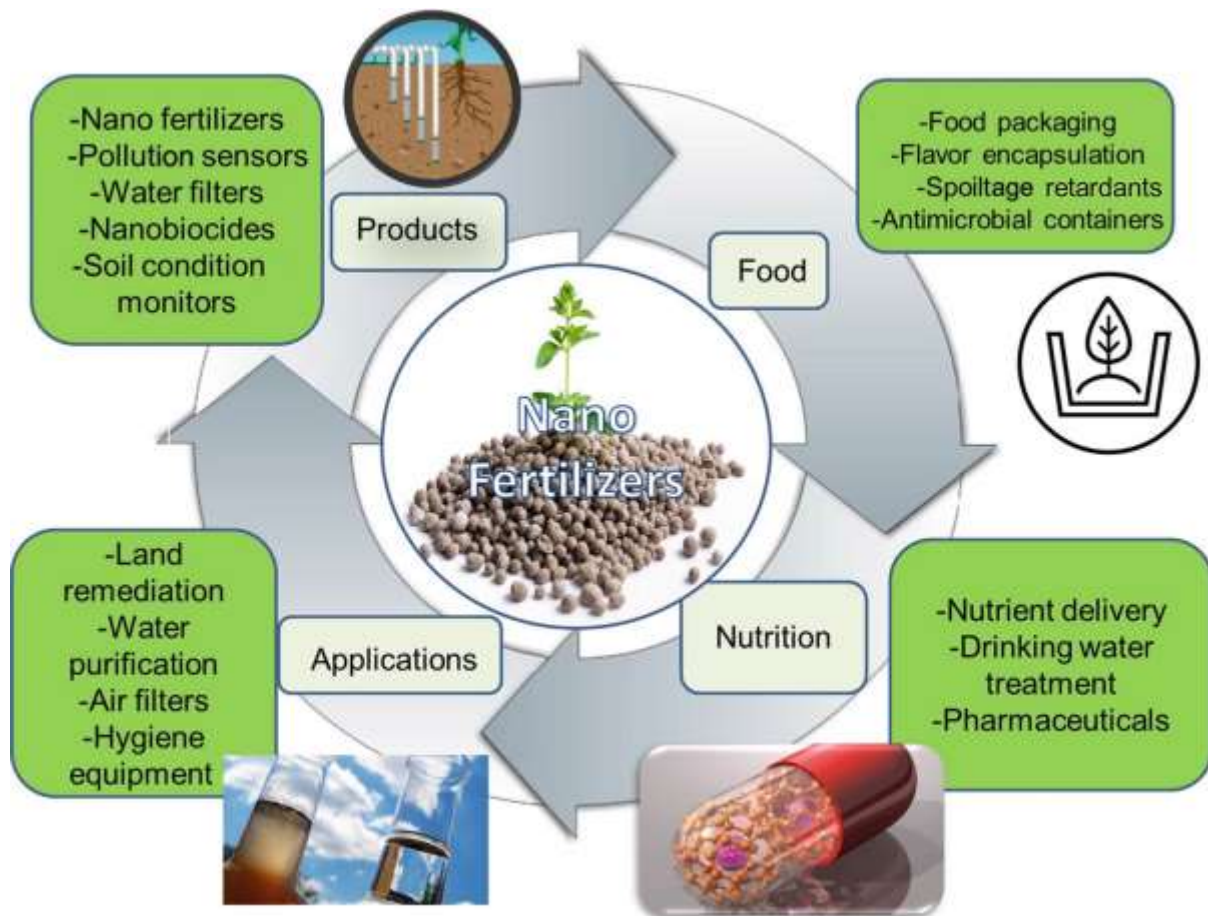
- It targets individuals and institutions in politics, government, business, technology, media, and civil society.
- Claiming to work with Chinese intelligence, military and security agencies, Zhenhua monitors the subject's digital footprint across social media platforms, maintains an "information library," which includes content not just from news sources, forums, but also from papers, patents, bidding

documents, even positions of recruitment.

- Significantly, it builds a “**relational database**”, which **records and describes associations** between individuals, institutions, and information.
- Collecting such massive data and weaving in public or sentiment analysis around these targets, Zhenhua offers threat intelligence services
- A **shift in the arena of violence from military to political, economic and technological** is called hybrid warfare.
- It refers to the use of unconventional methods as part of a multi-domain war fighting approach. These methods aim to **disrupt and disable an opponent’s actions without engaging in open hostilities.**

Topic 35: Nano fertilizers

Importance for Prelims: Science and tech



India will be self-reliant in fertiliser production by 2023 as new units are being set up with an investment of Rs 40,000 crore to reduce dependency on imports. Addressing a webinar organised by cooperative IFFCO for farmers of Karnataka, the minister said the government is promoting nano fertilisers .

- Nano fertilizers are being studied as a **way to increase nutrient efficiency and improve plant nutrition**, compared with traditional fertilizers.
- A nano fertilizer is **any product that is made with nano**

particles or uses nanotechnology to improve nutrient efficiency.

- Three classes of nano fertilizers have been proposed:
 - ✓ nano scale fertilizer (nano particles which contain nutrients)
 - ✓ nano scale additives (traditional fertilizers with nano scale additives)
 - ✓ nano scale coating (traditional fertilizers coated or loaded with nano particles)
- Nano material coatings (such as a nano membrane) may **slow the release of nutrients or a porous nano fertilizer may include a network of channels that retard nutrient solubility.**
The use of nanotechnology for fertilizers is still in its infancy but is already adopted for medical and engineering applications.
- Another promising application of nanotechnology is **the encapsulation of beneficial microorganisms that can improve plant root health.**
- These could include various bacteria or fungi that enhance the availability of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium in the root zone. The development of nano biosensors to react with specific root exudates is also being explored.

Topic 36: Backwaters of Kottayam

Importance for Prelims: Geography



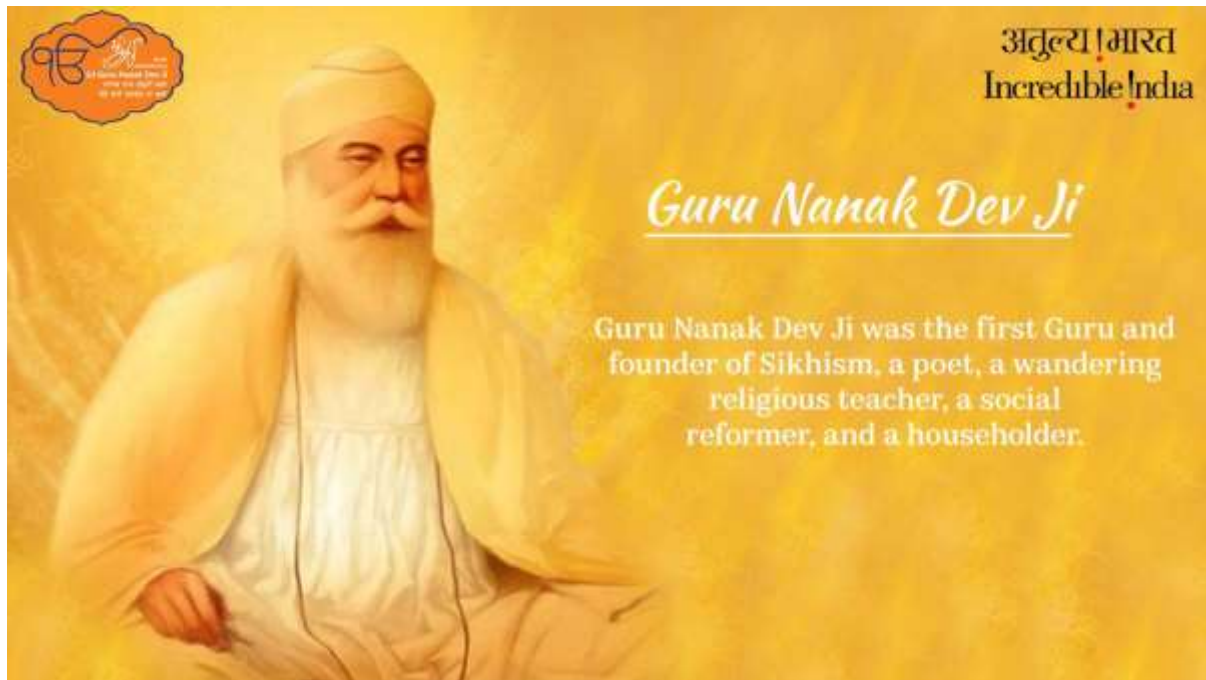
Tourism authorities filming pink blooms in backwater villages to ensure people around the world connected to the destinations.

- The backwaters in the Malabar Coast are called Backwaters are the **shallow lagoons or inlets of the sea, lying parallel to the coastline.**
- The backwaters have a unique ecosystem: **freshwater from the rivers meets the seawater from the Arabian Sea.**
- The kayals are formed by the action of waves and shore currents creating low barrier islands across the mouths of the many rivers flowing down from the Western Ghats range.

- Kayals have facilitated the **functioning of the National Waterway 3 from Kollam to Kottapuram**, and runs almost parallel to the coastline of southern Kerala facilitating both tourism and cargo movement.

Topic 37: Sri Guru Nanak Dev

Importance for Prelims: History



Union Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (IC) has inaugurated a Sangeet Sandhya programme as a part of the 550th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji in New Delhi.

- **Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539) was born in a village, Talwandi Rai Bhoie , near Lahore (it was renamed later as Nankana Sahib).**
- Guru Nanak Dev initiated inter-faith dialogue way back in the 16th century and had conversations with most of the religious denominations of his times.
- **His written compositions were included in the AdiGranth compiled by Guru Arjan (1563-1606), the fifth Sikh guru.**
- The cornerstone of the philosophy of Nanak Dev Ji is that he

was an altruistic, which means that **God is everywhere, that God is present in all the elements, substances and beings of the world and God is everything.**

- **He was opposed to idol worship and in addition he always opposed the evils spread in Hinduism.** He told the path of worship of a divine being. This is the reason that his views are liked by people of both Hindu and Muslim religions.

Topic 38: Himalaya Diwas

Importance for Prelims: Environment



Scientists specialising in different aspects of the Himalayas discussed a **range of areas like landslide disaster risk reduction, Himalayan seismicity, risk awareness, and mitigation, and journey of black carbon** towards Himalayan cryosphere on the occasion of Himalaya Diwas.

- The discussions were part of an online celebration of ‘Himalaya Diwas’ by **Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (WIHG)**, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India.
- A day is celebrated to spread the **message of conservation of the Himalayan ecosystems**.
- From 2015, Uttarakhand government officially started observing September 9 as Himalaya Diwas.