

ENGINEERS' EXCLUSIVE

Current Affairs

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Preliminary Examination



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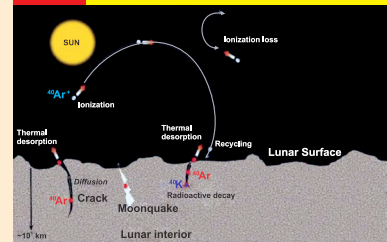


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Census 2021: Digital Collection of Data and Multipurpose Card Proposed

- The Ministry of Home Affairs has decided to implement a multipurpose identity card for citizens with all utilities such as Aadhaar, bank accounts, passport and driving licence. He also announced that for first time in 140-year history of census in India, data is proposed to be collected through a mobile app and people who conduct door-to-door counting would be encouraged to use their own phone.
- National Population Register (NPR) is also being prepared for the first time in 2021 census. NPR is a list of usual residents of the country which could be the basis for a Pan-India version of Assam's National Register of Citizens (NRC). The data for NPR will also be collected along with the census exercise.



Census in India

The last and 15th Census began in 2010. Around 2.7 million officials visited households in 7,935 towns and 600,000 villages. The Government spent around 2,200 crore rupees to conduct the census. In 2011, the transgender population was counted in population census in India for the first time. There were around 490,000 transgenders in the country according to 2011 census.

Key Highlights:

- During Census 2021, the digital collection of data will be adopted through mobile app. The app is being developed indigenously for collecting the data and in Android phones.
- The use of latest technological developments during upcoming Census process is a revolutionary initiative as in this process, people will be able to upload the details of self and family on newly developed mobile app themselves.
- The Census 2021 data will become base for country's future planning, development initiatives and welfare schemes so that India's total 130 crore population gets benefitted from it. Therefore, people's wholehearted participation is key to success of exercise.
- The Union Government has also decided to conduct the 2021 census through mobile phone application. An amount of Rs. 12,000 crore will be spent on India's first digital census.
- Every 10 years the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India operating under the Ministry of Home Affairs carry out the massive exercise to count different aspects of India's billion plus population.
- The official reference date of the census is to be March 1, 2021 and for the snow bound Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh it is to be October 1, 2020. Training of the officials participating in the program is to begin by October 14, 2019. The exercise is to be carried out in 16 different languages at a cost of 12,000 crore rupees
- A total of 33 lakh enumerators would be mobilised for data collection. Enumerators are the persons who conduct door-to-door counting.
- The exercise will be done in 16 languages to facilitate people in filling their details properly.

“ *The upcoming 2021 census exercise is the sixteenth census in the country and eighth census after independence.* ”

Socio-Economic and Caste Census

- The Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) was conducted in 2011. So far, the Gol has conducted SECC census four times in 1992, 1997, 2002 and 2011.
- In 2017, the Gol agreed to use SECC instead of below poverty line as main instrument for identifying beneficiaries.

Jammu & Kashmir Bifurcated into UT of Jammu & Kashmir and UT of Ladakh

- The erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir has now ceased to exist with the two separate UT of Jammu and Kashmir and UT of Ladakh since 31st October, 2019. With this, the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir and the Ranbir Penal code too ceased to exist.
- The total number of States in the Country will now be 28, while the total number of Union Territories will go up to 9.
- The Union Territories to Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh will be headed by Lieutenant Governors GC Murmu and R.K. Mathur respectively.
- Earlier on 5th of August, 2019, Union Government abolished and amended Article 35A and Article 370 altogether, which gave a special status to Jammu & Kashmir. This extended all provisions of the Constitution to the State in one go and allowed all citizens to buy property and vote in the State.
- President Ram Nath Kovind also revoked President's rule in the erstwhile state.
- It divided the region into two Union Territories: Jammu and Kashmir with legislature and Ladakh without legislature.
- The Union Government will be in direct control of the police and the law and order, while the land will be under the elected government of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The UT of Ladakh will be under the direct control of the Central Government.
- The Government of India has released new map for UT of Jammu & Kashmir, and UT of Ladakh.

Key Points:

- This Order comes into force at once and superseded the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1954.
- The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Bill 2019 was introduced in Parliament to bifurcate the State into two separate union territories of Jammu and Kashmir (with legislature), and Ladakh (without legislature). The bill was passed by both the Houses of Parliament.

Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019 was also introduced to extend the reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) in educational institutions and government jobs in Jammu and Kashmir.

Jammu & Kashmir Reorganization Bill, 2019

The bill was passed by Parliament of India which provides for reorganization of the state of Jammu and Kashmir into the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir and Union Territory of Ladakh.

Key Features:

- The Union Territory of Ladakh will comprise Kargil and Leh districts of erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir. These districts will cease to be part of J&K.
- The Governor of the state will be the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.
- Four sitting members of the Council of States representing the existing state of J&K will be deemed to have been elected to fill the seats allotted to the UT of J&K. The term of the sitting members will remain unaltered.
- For Lok Sabha, five seats will be allocated to J&K and one seat to Ladakh. The Election Commission of India may conduct parliamentary elections for J&K and Ladakh according to the allocation of seats.
- J&K will have a Legislative Assembly, which will be filled through direct elections. Total number of seats in J&K will be 107.
- Ladakh will be administered by the President through a Lieutenant Governor.
- The President can make regulations for peace, progress and good governance of Ladakh.
- The Lieutenant Governor will be assisted by advisors appointed by the Central Government.

ARTICLE 370

- **Article 370** of the Indian Constitution was a 'temporary provision' which used to grant special autonomous status to Jammu & Kashmir.
- Under Part XXI of the Constitution of India, which deals with "Temporary, Transitional and Special provisions", the state of Jammu & Kashmir had been accorded special status under Article 370.
- All the provisions of the Constitution which are applicable to other states were not applicable to J&K.
- According to this article, except for defence, foreign affairs, finance and communications, Parliament needs the state government's concurrence for applying all other laws. Thus the state's residents used to live under a separate set of laws, including those related to citizenship, ownership of property, and fundamental rights, as compared to other Indians.
- Indian citizens from other states could not purchase land or property in Jammu & Kashmir.
- Under Article 370, the Centre had no power to declare financial emergency under Article 360 in the state. It could declare emergency in the state only in case of war or external aggression. The Union government could therefore not declare emergency on grounds of internal disturbance or imminent danger unless it is made at the request or with the concurrence of the state government.
- Under Article 370, the Indian Parliament could not increase or reduce the borders of the state.
- The Jurisdiction of the Parliament of India in relation to Jammu and Kashmir was confined to the matters enumerated in the Union List, and also the Concurrent List. There is no State list for the State of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The power to make laws related to preventive detention in Jammu and Kashmir used to belong to the Legislature of J & K and not the Indian Parliament. Thus, no preventive detention law made in India extended to Jammu & Kashmir.
- Part IV (Directive Principles of the State Policy) and Part IVA (Fundamental Duties) of the Constitution were not applicable to J&K.

NOTE

Under Article 370(3), there is a provision that President, on recommendation of the Parliament, has the power to amend or cease the implementation of article 370, through a public notification.

ARTICLE 35A

- Article 35A was a provision incorporated in the Constitution of India giving the authority to Jammu and Kashmir Legislature to decide who all are 'permanent residents' of the State and confer on them special rights and privileges in public sector jobs, acquisition of property in the State, scholarships and other public aid and welfare.
- The provision mandates that no Act of the State Legislature coming under it can be challenged for violating the Constitution or any other law of the land.
- Article 35A was incorporated into the Constitution in 1954 by Presidential Order, issued under Article 370(1)(d) of the Constitution which gives special status to Jammu and Kashmir.
- This provision allowed the President to make certain "exceptions and modifications" to the Constitution for the benefit of 'State subjects' of Jammu and Kashmir.



Jammu & Kashmir after **ARTICLE 370** is revoked

- No dual citizenship
- Central laws can directly apply
- No separate laws for J&K
- Indian citizens from other states can buy land & property
- No two flags
- Elections every five years
- Centre can declare financial emergency under Article 360
- Police will be managed by the Centre

Government of India on **August 5** revoked **Article 370** of the Indian Constitution by way of a **Presidential Order**

Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid Case: Supreme Court pronounced verdict

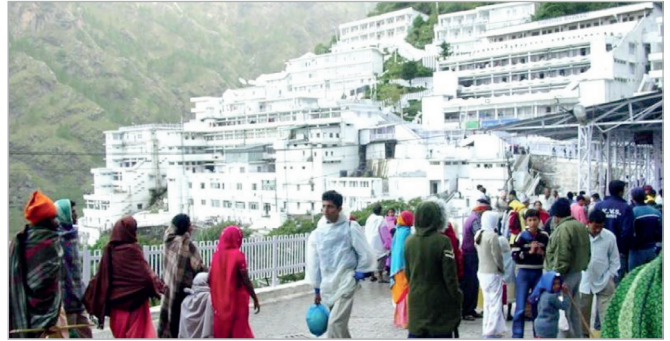


- The Supreme Court of India on 9th November 2019, pronounced the long-disputed and controversial Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi title dispute and ruled that 2.77 area land rights handed over to a trust to build the Ram temple. It also ordered the Government to give an alternate 5 acre track of land in Ayodhya to the Sunni Waqf Board to build the mosque.
- The five judges Supreme Court bench which comprised Justices Ranjan Gogoi (the then CJI), S. A. Bobde, D. Y. Chandrachud, Ashok Bhushan and S. Abdul Nazeer, heard the title dispute cases from August to October 2019.
- Earlier, the Supreme Court had proposed a court-monitored mediation in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute case to arrive at a permanent solution to the politically and religiously sensitive issue.
- **The mediation panel consisted of three members:** Justice Kalifullah (Retired judge of the Supreme Court) spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and Senior Advocate Sriram Panchu.

Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid Land Dispute Case

- The Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi case is a property dispute over the land where the Babri Masjid, a 16th-century mosque once stood. The mosque was razed by kar sevaks on 6 December 1992.
- Hindu groups claim that the exact site of Lord Ram's birthplace is where the Babri Masjid was once located. They argue that the Mughals demolished a Hindu shrine that marked the spot of Lord Ram's birthplace and constructed a mosque in its place, while those oppose to this view argue that such arguments arose only in the 18th century, and that there is no evidence for the spot being the birthplace of Lord Ram.

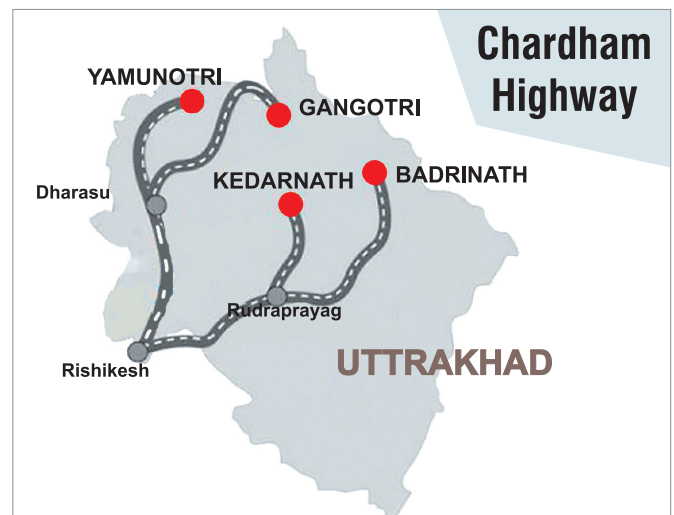
Vaishno Devi Shrine: India's Best Swachh Iconic Place



- Mata Vaishno Devi shrine atop the Trikuta hills in Reasi district of UT of Jammu and Kashmir has been named country's 'Best Swachh Iconic Place'.
- The Rankings of Swachh Iconic Places was released by Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, under the Union Ministry of Jal Shakti.
- Vaishno Devi Shrine which is visited by thousands of devotees daily, received a special award in 2017 from Union Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation for bagging 2nd spot behind Golden Temple.
- The Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine has been adjudged on basis of overall improvement in sanitation brought about by board due to several initiatives taken in last few years to ensure cleanliness of entire shrine area.

Supreme Court approved Chardham Highway Project

- Supreme Court has cleared Chardham highway project, which will connect four holy places of Uttarakhand through 900 km all-weather roads. The apex court also directed Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to form high-powered committee so as to look into environmental concerns.





Schemes / Programmes launched

by

Government of India

PM Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana

- Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has launched the PM Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana to provide old age pension cover to farmers.
- It is new Central Sector Scheme envisioned with an aim to improve life of small and marginal farmers of the country. It is first of its kind pension coverage scheme since independence that has been envisioned for farmers.



Key Features

- It is voluntary and contributory scheme for small and marginal farmer in entry age group of 18 to 40 years and whose cultivable land is 2 hectares or less.
- Under it, beneficiaries on attaining the age of 60 years will get monthly fixed pension of Rs. 3000.
- Beneficiary farmers are required to make monthly contribution of Rs.55 to Rs.200, depending on their age of entry, in Pension Fund till they reach the retirement date i.e. the age of 60 years. Central Government will also equal contribute as contributed by the eligible farmer to Pension Fund. Farmers can opt to allow his/her monthly contribution to this scheme to be made from his benefits drawn from PM-KISAN Scheme directly. Spouse of farmer is also eligible to get separate pension of Rs.3000 upon making separate contributions to this pension fund.
- Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) will be Pension Fund Manager and also responsible for Pension pay out to farmers.
- In case of death of beneficiary farmer before retirement date, the spouse may continue in scheme by paying remaining contributions till remaining age of the deceased farmer. If spouse does not wish to continue, then total contribution made by farmer along with interest will be paid to spouse. If there is no spouse, then total contribution along with interest will be paid to nominee. If the farmer dies after retirement date, the spouse will receive 50% of fixed pension as Family Pension. After death of both the farmer and the spouse, accumulated corpus will be credited back to Pension Fund.

Note

The beneficiary farmers may opt voluntarily to exit from this scheme after minimum period of 5 years of regular contributions. On exit, their entire contribution will be returned by LIC with interest equivalent to prevailing saving bank rates.

SUMAN Scheme

- SUMAN scheme – Surakshit Matritva Aashwasan Scheme was launched by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to provide free medicines for pregnant women. It focuses to bring down the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) in the country.



Key features

- Under the scheme the mother up to 6 months after delivery and the sick new born will be able to avail free health care benefits.
- All the beneficiaries visiting the health care under the scheme are entitled to free services.
- Free transport will be provided from home to the health institutions by Gol.
- Referral services are to be offered under the scheme with the scope of reaching the health facilities within an hour of critical emergencies

Sabka Vishwas Scheme

- Ministry of Finance has recently launched Sabka Vishwas-Legacy Dispute Resolution Scheme, 2019, a dispute resolution and amnesty scheme to reduce legacy service tax and central excise cases.
- It can be availed by taxpayers for closing their pending disputes relating to legacy Service Tax and Central Excise cases that are now subsumed under Goods and Services Tax (GST) so they can focus on GST.



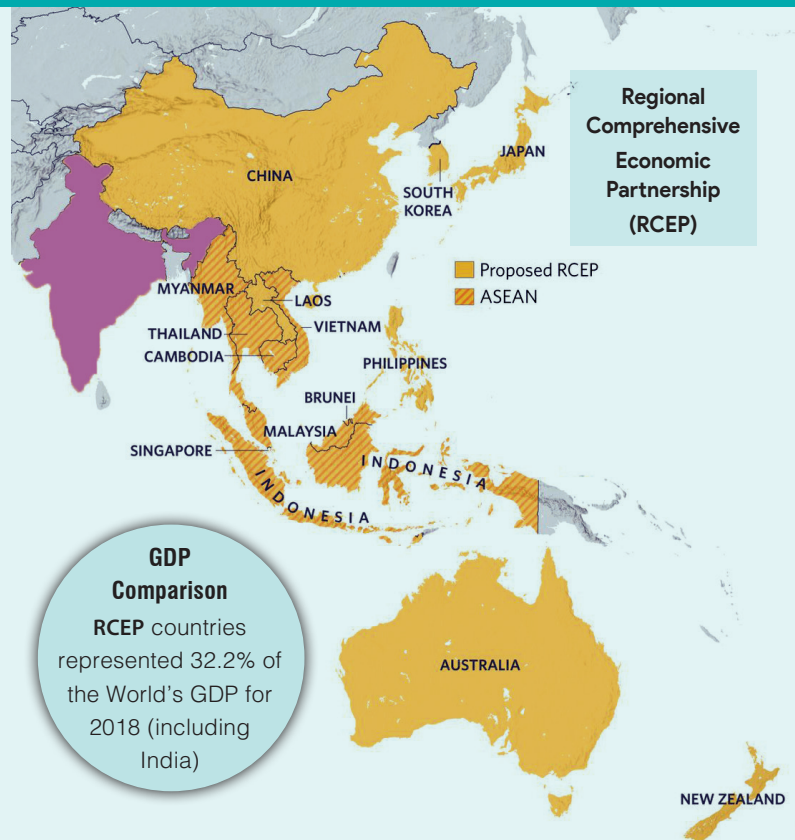
SABKA VISHWAS
(Legacy Dispute Resolution)
SCHEME, 2019
For Service Tax and Central Excise.
Make a New Beginning!

India Quits Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

Recently, India decided to opt-out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade deal held in Bangkok, Thailand. India said that it will not become part of RCEP until significant outstanding issues related to trade are resolved.

Key reasons for India's withdrawal

- **Unfavourable Balance of Trade:** According to a paper published by NITI Aayog, India has a bilateral trade deficit with most of the member countries of RCEP.
- **Dumping of Chinese Goods:** This is the major concern for India, as after signing RCEP cheaper products from China would have flooded the Indian market.
- **Non-acceptance of Auto-trigger Mechanism:** In order to deal with the imminent rise in imports, India had been seeking an auto-trigger mechanism.
- **Protection of Domestic Industry:** India had also reportedly expressed apprehensions on lowering and eliminating tariffs on several products like dairy, steel etc.
- **Lack of Consensus on Rules of Origin:** India was concerned about a possible obstacle regarding rules of origin. Rules of origin are the criteria used to determine the national source of a product.



Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership

- The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a proposed free trade agreement between ten members states of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) [Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam] and the five countries with which the bloc has free trade agreements (FTAs) - Australia, China, Korea, Japan, and New Zealand. India, ASEAN's sixth FTA partner recently opted out of the agreement.
- The RCEP is billed to be the "largest" regional trading agreement. The countries involved account for almost half of the world's population, contribute over a quarter of world exports, and makeup around 30% of the global Gross Domestic Product.
- The pact aims to cover the trade in goods and services, as well as investment, intellectual property and dispute resolutions.

NOTE

- The RCEP negotiations were kick-started during the 21st ASEAN Summit in Cambodia in 2012 and all participating countries sought to finalise and sign a deal by 2020.
- The first round of RCEP negotiation was held in 2013 in Brunei

Modi – Xi Second Informal Summit held in Mamallapuram



- PM Modi and China's President Xi Jinping recently visited Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu for the second edition of informal summit between India and China. An informal Summit acts as supplementary to annual summits and other formal exchanges.
- The leaders exchanged views on issues of bilateral and global importance. The summit was to address the imbalances created in the process. They agree that proper management of the bilateral relationship will be conducive for the development of the region.

Mamallapuram city

- The place is also known as Seven Pagodas or Mahabalipuram. It is believed that 6 more temples stood along with the lone standing shore temple. Hence the name Seven Pagodas.
- It is a historic town and was a seaport in the 1st millennium. It was declared as UNESCO World Heritage site. The famous monuments in the town include temples in the form of chariots, giant open rock sculpture, cave sanctuaries, Descent of the Ganges and a Shore temple.
- Descent of the Ganges is a monument at Mamallapuram. It is an open – air relief carved on two monolithic rocks. The monument depicts the story of descent of the sacred river Ganges to the earth from heavens. It also portrays Arjuna's penance. The monument was sculpted in the period of Pallavas.
- The Shore temple overlooks Bay of Bengal. It was built during the Pallava dynasty. It is a cave temple. The structures have multi – storied pyramidal superstructures typical of the Dravidian style.



Union Government launched WHO–India Country Cooperation Strategy 2019–2023

- The Union Government launched the WHO–India CCS for the years 2019 to 2023. The CCS for India is to achieve its health sector goals. It intends to bring about transformative change in the health sector by improving health of the people in the country.
- The Country Cooperation Strategy (CCS) is a document of WHO that guides countries for a medium term. The cooperation supports the country's national health policy, plan and strategy. The strategy generally identifies the country needs, gaps and required areas of strategic collaboration.

Key Highlights of Strategy:

The strategy is basically built on India's National Health Policy 2017 and Ayushman Bharat mission. The strategies have been identified in 4 areas of cooperation namely:

- Accelerating the progress of UHC
- Identifying health determinants and promoting health and wellness by improving the determinants
- Providing better health emergency services to protect the population
- Enhancing India's global leadership in health.

G7 Summit 2019 held in France

- The G7 summit 2019 has been recently concluded at Biarritz, Nouvelle-Aquitaine, France.



Key Highlights

- The USA pressed the G7 group to reinstate Russia as a permanent member of the grouping. However, no consensus was reached on whether or not to invite Russia to the next year's G7 summit in the United States.

- The G7 leaders expressed concern during their summit meeting that USA's trade war with China could spiral outward and called for a sensible resolution. The US-China trade war has had a damaging effect on the global economy and overall GDP.
- The G7 leaders confirmed the existence and importance of the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 on Hong Kong and called for violence to be avoided.

About Group of Seven (G7)

- The G7 is an international intergovernmental economic organization consisting of the seven largest advanced economies in the world: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The European Union has also been an invitee to G7 summits.
- As of 2018, the seven countries involved represent 58% of the global net wealth (\$317 trillion) and more than 46% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) based on nominal values, and more than 32% of the global GDP based on purchasing power parity.
- **Next G7 Summits:** USA (2020), UK (2021)

India signed UN Convention on International Settlement Agreements

- India recently signed United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA) also known as Singapore Convention on Mediation. So far 46 countries have signed this international treaty on settlement agreements.
- It will enhance the growth of mediation in India and the ease of doing business in India will also be improved.

About UNISA

- UN Convention on International Settlement Agreement, also known as **Singapore Convention on Mediation** was adopted on 20 December, 2018 by UN General Assembly (UNGA).
- It provides uniform framework for enforcing international settlement agreements which results from mediation.
- It aims to become essential instrument that facilitates international trade and in promotion of mediation as alternative and effective method of resolving trade disputes. It also seeks to contribute to strengthening access to justice, and to the rule of law.



PM Modi inaugurated Kartarpur corridor

- Prime Minister of India has inaugurated the Kartarpur corridor to Sri Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan. The opening has done on the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev.
- Pakistan has agreed in principle to allow year-long visa-free access for Indian pilgrims to holy Gurdwara of Kartarpur Sahib.



Key Highlights

- Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara is the final resting place of First Sikh Guru Baba Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism. It was here that the Baba Guru Nanak Dev assembled a Sikh community and lived for 18 years until his death in 1539.
- Union Home Ministry has been designated Dera Baba Nanak land post located in Punjab's Gurdaspur district as an authorised immigration checkpoint to exit and enter for visiting Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara in Pakistan.

About Kartarpur Sahib Corridor

- The Kartarpur Sahib Corridor connects Kartarpur Gurudwara in Pakistan with Dera Baba Nanak shrine in India's Gurdaspur district.
- The Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara is located on the banks of the Ravi River, about three-four km from the border in Pakistan.
- The proposed corridor was institutionalised to facilitate visa-free movement of Indian Sikh pilgrims between Kartarpur Gurudwara in Pakistan and Dera Baba Nanak shrine in India.

Government launched National E-Assessment Scheme

- The National E – assessment scheme was launched to make income tax assessment faster, smoother and hassle – free.
- The system focuses on eliminating the middle men between the tax payer and the officer. It aims at communicating directly to the tax payer when an issue arises in the process of tax assessment.
- The tax payer receives notice under section 143(2) if he under reported his income or stated losses.
- The tax payer is not required to appear physically. He is to reply through his registered account for which he receives an acknowledgement from the NeAC (National e – Assessment Center)



Key Highlights

- The system generated uses digital technology for risk management. Artificial Intelligence, Automated examination tools and machine learning are predominantly used in framing the system.
- The scheme aims at removing physical interface between assessing officer and tax payer.
- The chief commissioner of the Income Tax department will head the Centre in New Delhi.
- The regional E – Assessment Centers are to be established in Chennai, Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Pune.

Section 143(2) of Income Tax Act

- The section allows the Income Tax Department to send 3 types of notices to the tax payers. They include:
 - Limited Scrutiny – These notices are sent when there is a mismatch in reporting. Here the scrutiny is restricted to a particular area of the tax payer's return
 - Complete Scrutiny – In these notices the tax payers return are subjected to complete scrutiny.
 - **Manual Scrutiny** – These are notices that are issued based on predefined criteria. These criteria are listed by the Central Board of Direct Taxes.

Faceless e-assessment scheme will eliminate physical interface between an assessing officer and an assessee

Economic Advisory Council to PM reconstituted

- Government of India has reconstituted Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) under existing Chairman Bibek Debroy.
- Ratan P. Watal will also continue as Member Secretary of the reconstituted EAC-PM. Apart from these two full-time members, EAC-PM will have 2 part-time members as against 3 in outgoing panel.

About EAC-PM

- Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) is an independent body constituted to advise the government (especially Prime Minister) on economic and related issues.
- EAC-PM advises PM Modi on macroeconomic issues and other matters referred to it by PM himself. So far the suggestions made by the EAC-PM to PM on economic matters have not been made public.
- The Council submitted papers on issues such as employment, macroeconomic situation and growth to Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

RBI placed restrictions on PMC Bank

- The Reserve Bank of India has imposed caps on withdrawals made by customers of Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Banks for 6 months. The imposition was invoked by the central bank under Section 35 A of India's Banking Regulation act, 1949.
- During the period of restriction, the customers of PMC bank are not allowed to withdraw more than Rs 1,000. RBI has also imposed restrictions on lending by cooperative bank.
- The restrictions were a precautionary measure to prevent a run on the bank. The gross bad loans of the bank account to 3.76% of its advances and PMC discloses it is much higher than this. Also, these restrictions are precautionary measures while the central bank completes its audit on PMC. Though auditing of cooperative banks is done by state government, RBI has power to audit cooperative banks once a year.

Section 35 A

Section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 provides powers to RBI to give directions to banks. It enables RBI with the power to take action in order to prevent a banking company acting detrimental to the interests of the depositors.

WEF Organised India Economic Summit



- The World Economic Forum organised India Economic Summit in New Delhi. It is hosted in collaboration with CII (Confederation of Indian Industry).
- Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has arrived in India to attend the summit. More than 800 leaders from 40 countries are expected to attend the forum.

Key Points:

- The summit aims to accelerate Fourth Industrial Revolution. It will convene key leaders from government, private sector and civil society to facilitate dialogues on policy tools, industry standards and guidelines.
- Economy of South Asia is to be the top agenda in the summit. Summit will also focus on emerging technologies like AI, environmental reforms, start – ups, education, infrastructure and gender parity.

About Fourth Industrial Revolution

- The first industrial revolution machineries used steam to mechanise production. The second industrial revolution used electric power to mechanise production. The third industrial revolution used electronics and information technology to mechanise production.
- The fourth industrial revolution is building on the third revolution. It is the digital revolution that has been occurring since the middle of the last century.
- The technologies that are ruling fourth industrial revolution includes Internet of Things, Block chain technology, 3 – D printing, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, nanotechnology, quantum computing and energy storage.

CBDT launched Documentation Identification Number

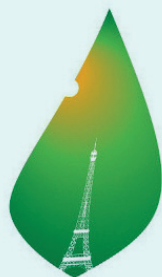
- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has launched a computer-generated Document Identification Number (DIN) to ensure greater transparency and accountability in tax administration.

6

Environment & Wildlife

Russia joined Paris Agreement on Climate Change

- Russia has formally accepted the Paris agreement on Climate Change. As per the document, Russia will now allocate financial resources towards developing countries for prevention of and adaptation to climate change.
- Now, under the Paris agreement, which allowed countries to set their own targets, Russia pledged to reduce emissions to 25 to 30 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.
- Besides, as the second-largest oil exporter, Russia contributes to the burning of greenhouse gases around the world and is continuing to develop its oil, gas and coal industries.



PARIS2015
UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE
COP21·CMP11

PARIS AGREEMENT

- It is an agreement within United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that was signed in 2016. It deals with greenhouse-gas-emissions (GHG) mitigation, adaptation, and finance.
- This agreement on climate change gives countries a choice in how to join accords by ratification, acceptance, approval/accession to agreement which depends on their national legislation.
- This agreement to set a goal of limiting global warming to well below 2°C compared to pre-industrial levels.
- India signed and ratified in 2016.

NOTE

Russia is the world's fourth largest emitter of Greenhouse Gases (GHGs) and the biggest emitter which had not ratified the landmark global climate deal.

C40 Cities Climate Summit held

- The C40 Summit held in Copenhagen, Denmark, to show how cities are delivering their strong commitments for healthier, sustainable, resilient and inclusive future.
- The 2019 summit in specific aims to build global coalition of cities, citizens and businesses that rallies around ambitious climate action that the earth needs right now.



Key Highlights:

- The summit connects more than 94 world's greatest cities. These cities constitute to more than 700 million population which is one fourth of the global economy. The mayors of these cities are dedicated in delivering the goals of Paris Agreement.
- The 2019 marks 14 year establishment of C40 Leadership group. The organisation takes its climate actions through city to city collaboration.
- The summit intends to Paris agreement of climate change as well.

C40 Climate Summit

The C40 Climate Summit was launched in London in 2005 when the then London Mayor convened representatives from 18 megacities.

About World Cities Summit

- The biennial World Cities Summit (WCS) is an exclusive platform for government leaders and industry experts to address liveable and sustainable city challenges, share integrated urban solutions and forge new partnerships.
- The next edition of the World Cities Summit will be held in Singapore in 2020.



UN Climate Action Summit, 2019 held in New York

- The UN Climate Change Summit, 2019 held in New York to accelerate the actions to implement Paris Agreement. This summit focuses in 9 independent tracks that are led by 19 countries supported by international organizations.

Action Portfolios of the summit

- ♦ **Energy transition:** To accelerate the shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy
- ♦ **Industry transition:** To transform industries like steel, chemical, oil and gas, cement.
- ♦ **Nature based solutions:** To increase sink capacity and increasing resilience of oceans, forestry and agriculture by reducing emissions
- ♦ **Cities and local action:** Building low – emission buildings, transport.
- ♦ Resilience
- ♦ Climate finance and carbon pricing
- ♦ **Mitigation:** To create momentum for ambitious NDCs (Nationally Determined Contributions) and long term strategies that can achieve Paris agreement
- ♦ **Public mobilization and Youth Engagement:** To take actions against climate change
- ♦ **Social and political drivers:** To increase commitments in the areas like reduction in air pollution, generating jobs, protect vulnerable groups that affect well – being of the people.

Two International Initiatives:

- **Leadership Group:** India and Sweden together with other countries have announced a new 'Leadership Group for Industry Transition' that will drive transformation in hard-to-decarbonize and energy-intensive sectors.
- **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI):** An international partnership that will support countries-developed and developing- to build climate and disaster resilient infrastructure. The Coalition's secretariat, based in Delhi, will facilitate knowledge exchange, provide technical support and support capacity building. The Government of India, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) and partners have together worked on the CDRI initiative to reduce damage to critical infrastructure at the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2016.

COP-14 of UNCCD held in New Delhi

- The 14th meeting of Conference of Parties (COP-14) to United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) recently held in New Delhi.
- At this event, Union Government announced that India has set target to restore 50 lakh hectare of its degraded land by 2030.



Key Announcements:

- 29% land of India's total geographical area is degraded which has to be restored.
- Centre of excellence to combat desertification of fertile land will be set up at Forest Research Institute (FRI) in Dehradun. It will study the causes of desertification and devise solutions and technologies for land degradation neutrality. It will also function as resource and training centre.

Desertification is the process by which fertile land becomes desert, typically as a result of drought, deforestation, or inappropriate agriculture.

About UNCCD

- Established in 1994, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.
- The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the dry-lands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and people can be found.
- The 197 parties of this convention work together to improve the living conditions for people in dry-lands, to maintain and restore land and soil productivity, and to mitigate the effects of drought.



Person in News

Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde

- Justice S. A. Bobde has been appointed as new Chief Justice of India, after CJI Gogoi demitted his office on November 17, 2019.
- Sharad Arvind Bobde was Judge of Supreme Court (SC) of India and a former Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh High Court. He is due to retire on 23 April 2021. He comes from a Nagpur-based lawyer family.
- Justice Bobde was also in a bench of Supreme Court which delivered judgement in long-disputed Babri Masjid-Ram Janambhoomi case.



Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi

- Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi al-Qurayshi was the Iraqi born leader of the Islamic state of Iraq and the levant. The group has been designated as a terrorist organisation by the United Nation.
- On 31st October, 2019, ISIS confirmed that Abu Bakr-al-Baghdadi was dead, and named Abu Ibrahim al Hashimi as his replacement..



Sourav Ganguly

- Former Indian captain Sourav Ganguly selected as the new president of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI).
- In an informal setting held in Mumbai, all the BCCI members came together in a unanimous stand against Supreme Court Committee of Administrators' (COA) functioning, and signalled their return to the corridors of Indian cricket administration by choosing Sourav Ganguly to be next president of BCCI.
- It was later agreed that Sourav Ganguly would become hold the next BCCI presidency while Karnataka's Brijesh Patel would now take over as chairman of IPL Governing Council.



Sachin Tendulkar

- Cricket legend, Sachin Tendulkar was awarded "The most effective Swachhata Ambassador" at the Safaigiri 2019 organised by India Today group.
- He had launched Mission - 24 that

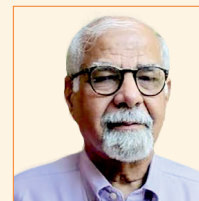


aimed at improving the quality of Mumbai East ward as Mumbai was ranked the lowest in the Human Development Report.

- Safaigiri Award is an initiative of India Today group to celebrate the champions of Clean India campaign.

Surjit S. Bhalla

- The Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has appointed economist Surjit S. Bhalla as Executive Director for India on board of International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- Surjit S. Bhalla is an economist, columnist and also a Contributing Editor with The Indian Express. He holds a PhD in Economics from Princeton University, a Master's in Public and International Affairs (PIA) from Woodrow Wilson School.



Anup Kumar Singh

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has appointed Senior Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Anup Kumar Singh as the new Director-General of National Security Guard (NSG), also known as 'black cats commando' force.
- National Security Guard was raised in 1984 following Operation Blue Star, assassination of Indira Gandhi and Akshardham Temple attack.



Air Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria

- Government appointed present Vice Chief of Air Staff Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria as next Chief of Air Staff.
- He was commissioned into Fighter Stream of Indian Air Force (IAF) in June 1980.
- Apart from being decorated with PVSM, AVSM, VM, he is one of the ADCs to supreme Commander. He took over as the Vice Chief of the Indian Air Force in May 2019.





RECENT CURRENT AFFAIRS QUESTIONS

1. Which among the following is applicable for the Reserve Bank of India's Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) Framework?
 - (a) Commercial Banks
 - (b) Non-Banking Financial Companies
 - (c) Co-operative Banks
 - (d) Micro Finance Institutions
2. Which one of the following international organisations has recently launched "Learning Coin"?
 - (a) Reserve Bank of India
 - (b) International Monetary Fund
 - (c) Asian Development Bank
 - (d) European Development Bank
3. Consider the following statements about National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP):
 1. NRDWP is a centrally sponsored scheme aimed at providing every person in rural India with adequate and safe water.
 2. It is continued co-terminus with the 14th Finance Commission cycle.
 Which of the above statements is/ are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
4. Consider the following statements regarding Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) Scheme:
 1. These bonds are restricted for sale to individuals and Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) only.
 2. The capital gains tax arising on redemption of an SGB has been exempted.
 Which of the statements given above is/are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
5. National Population Register project, recently seen in the news, aims:
 - (a) To create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country
 - (b) To identify the illegal immigrants
 - (c) To provide free grains to below-poverty line residents
 - (d) None of the above
6. Consider the following statements with reference to the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme:
 1. It was prepared by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development on recommendation of R. V. Gupta committee.
2. It is being implemented only by Regional Rural Banks throughout the country.
 Which of the above statement(s) is/ are correct?
 - (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
7. Which institute has been ranked as the 'Best Educational Institution' in the 2019 National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)?
 - (a) IIT Delhi
 - (b) IIT Mumbai
 - (c) IIT Madras
 - (d) IIT BHU
8. Which country is the highest recipient of remittances in 2018, as per World Bank (WB)'s latest report "Migration and Development Brief"?
 - (a) Indonesia
 - (b) China
 - (c) Singapore
 - (d) India
9. Global Cooling Coalition has been launched in which of the following countries?
 - (a) Sweden
 - (b) Finland
 - (c) UK
 - (d) Denmark

ANSWERS

1. (a) 2. (b) 3. (c) 4. (b) 5. (a) 6. (a) 7. (c) 8. (d) 9. (d)