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Success is born of action...

Topic 1: LAKSHADWEEP ISLANDS

Importance for Prelims: Geography



With the entire Lakshadweep group of islands being declared an organic agricultural area, the island administration is eyeing an expansion of the traditional business in coconuts and coconut products.

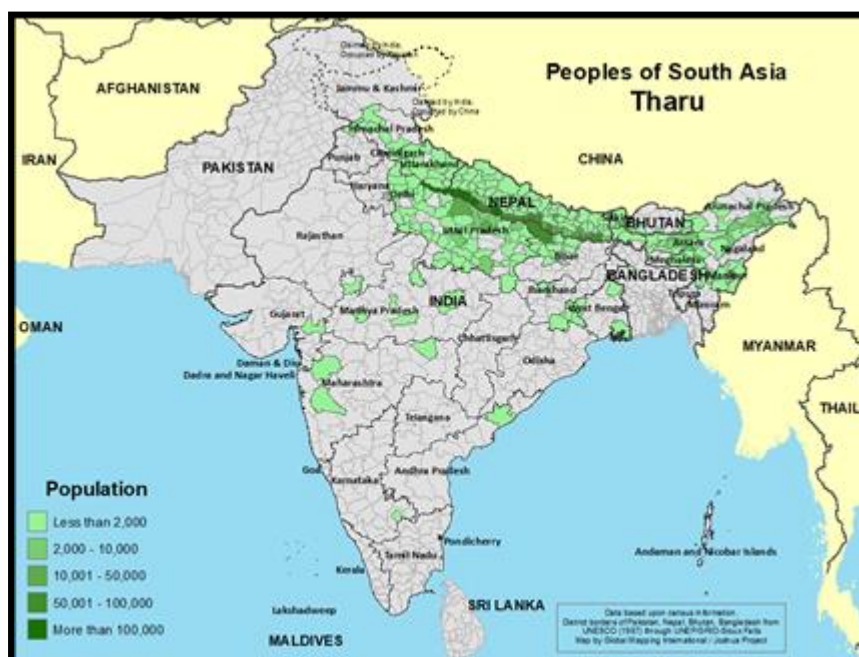
- It consists of three major islands. They are , **Amindivi Islands** (consisting of six main islands of Amini, Keltan, Chetlat, Kadmat, Bitra and Perumul Par). [don't have to remember all these names] **Laccadive Islands** (consisting of five major islands of Androth, Kalpeni, Kavaratti, Pitti and Suheli Par) and **Minicoy Island**.
- At present these islands are collectively known as Lakshadweep.
- The Lakshadweep Islands are a group of 25 small islands.
- They are widely scattered about 200-500 km south-west of the Kerala coast.
- Amendivi Islands are the northern most while the Minicoy island is the

southernmost.

- All are tiny islands of **coral origin** {Atoll} and They are **surrounded by fringing reefs**.
- The largest and the most advanced is Lakshadweep Islands the Minicoy island with an area of 4.53 sq km.
- Most of the islands have low elevation and do not rise more than five metre above sea level (Extremely Vulnerable to sea level change).
- Their topography is flat and relief features such as hills, streams, valleys, etc. are absent.

Topic 2: THARU TRIBALS

Importance for Prelims: Social Issues



The Uttar Pradesh government has recently embarked upon a scheme to take the unique culture of its ethnic Tharu tribe across the world.

- The community of Tharu people belongs to the **Terai lowlands, amid the Shivaliks or lower Himalayas**. Most of them are forest dwellers, and some practice agriculture.
- The word tharu is believed to be derived from sthavir, meaning followers of Theravada Buddhism. Tharus worship Lord Shiva as Mahadev, and call their supreme being “Narayan”, who they believe is the provider of sunshine, rain, and harvests.
- The Tharus live in both India and Nepal. In the Indian terai, they live mostly in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar.
- Members of the tribe survive on wheat, corn and vegetables grown close to their homes.
- A majority still lives off the forest.

- They speak various dialects of Tharu, a language of the Indo-Aryan subgroup, and variants of Hindi, Urdu, and Awadhi. In central Nepal, they speak a variant of Bhojpuri, while in eastern Nepal, they speak a variant of Maithili.
- Tharu **women have stronger property rights** than is allowed to women in mainstream North Indian Hindu custom.

Scheme by UP government:

- The state government is working to connect Tharu villages in the districts of Balrampur, Bahraich, Lakhimpur and Pilibhit bordering Nepal, with the home stay scheme of the UP Forest Department.
- The idea is to offer tourists an experience of living in the natural Tharu habitat, in traditional huts made of grass collected mainly from the forests.

Topic 3: HAVANA SYNDROME

Importance for Prelims: Science & tech



Recently, a report by the National Academies of Sciences (NAS), USA has found directed microwave radiation to be the plausible cause of the Havana syndrome.

- In late 2016, USA diplomats and other employees stationed in Havana (capital of Cuba) reported feeling ill after hearing strange sounds and experiencing odd physical sensations.
- The **symptoms included nausea, severe headaches, fatigue, dizziness, sleep problems, and hearing loss**, which have since come to be known as the Havana Syndrome.
- The more chronic problems suffered by Havana personnel included mainly vestibular processing and cognitive problems as well as insomnia and headache.

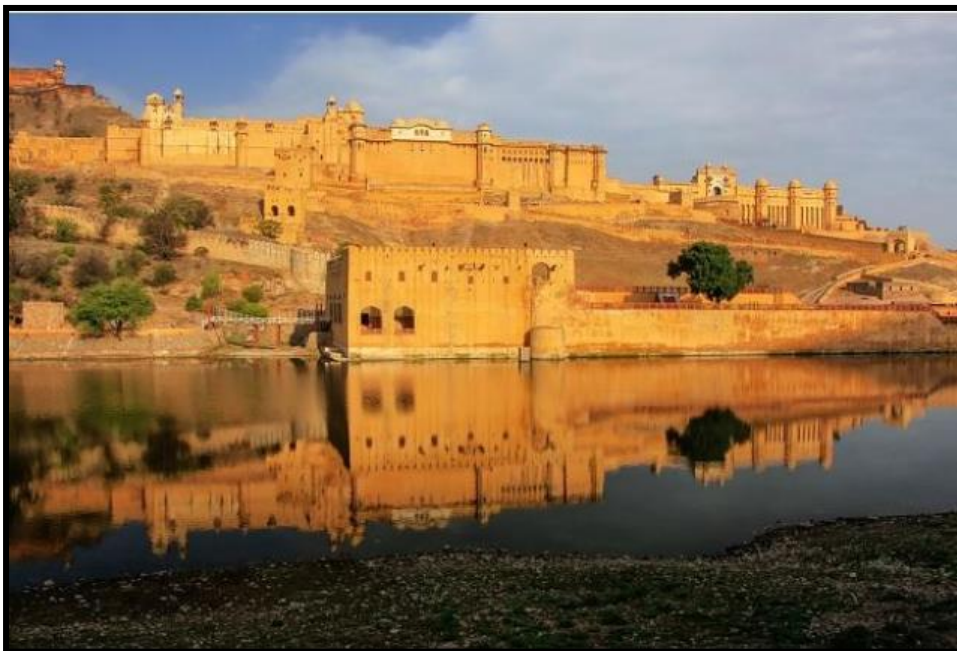
- While the symptoms have resolved for some of the affected employees, for others, the effects have lingered and posed a significant obstacle to their work and affected the normal functioning of lives.

About the Report:

- The NAS report examined four possibilities to explain the symptoms viz. infection, chemicals, psychological factors and microwave energy.
- So far, only this report provides the clearest and detailed estimation of what may have transpired.
- In earlier attempts by various other government agencies, scientists talked about psychological illness due to the stressful environment of foreign missions or brain abnormalities in the diplomats who had fallen ill.

Topic 4: WORLD HERITAGE CITIES

Importance for Prelims: International Events



The historical fort cities of Gwalior and Orchha in Madhya Pradesh have been included in the list of UNESCOs world heritage cities under its urban landscape city programme.

- **Gwalior** was established in 9th century and ruled by **GurjarPratiharaRajvansh**, Tomar, BaghelKachvaho and Scindias. The

memorabilia left by them is found in abundance in memorials, forts and palaces in the area.

- Gwalior is known for its palaces and temples, including the intricately carved SasBahuKaMandir temple. The Gwalior Fort occupies a sandstone plateau overlooking the city and is accessed via a winding road lined with sacred Jain statues.
- Within the forts high walls is the 15th-century Gujar Mahal Palace, now an archaeological museum.
- **Orchha** is popular for its temples and palaces and was the capital of the Bundela kingdom in the 16th century. The famous spots in the town are Raj Mahal, Jehangir Mahal, Ramraja Temple, Rai Praveen Mahal, and LaxminarayanMandir.

World Heritage City

- UNESCO World Heritage Sites are designated specific locations such as forest areas, mountains, lakes, deserts, monuments, buildings, or cities, etc.
- These **are selected by the World Heritage Sites Committee**. This committee oversees these sites with the help of UNESCO.
- The objective of this program is to select and preserve such places of the world which are important for humanity in terms of world culture. UNESCO provides financial assistance to such sites under certain circumstances.
- Each heritage site is the property of the particular country in which that site is located.
- But, it is also important for the international community to protect them for the coming generations.
- UNESCO believes that the entire world community is responsible for its protection.

- According to the official website of UNESCO, there are six cultural and four natural criteria for the selection of a world heritage site.

Topic 5: PAGRI SAMBHAL JATTA

Importance for Prelims: History



• आबादकारी बिल 1906
मार्ग : जमीनों को साहूकारों से मुक्त कराना

9 महीने लंबा चला अब तक का इकलौता किसान आंदोलन

ब्रिटिश शासन काल में आबादकारी नामक बिल लाया गया था। इसका उद्देश्य किसानों की जमीनों को हड़पकर बड़े साहूकारों के हाथ में देना था। इस बिल के अनुसार कोई भी किसान अपनी जमीन से पेड़ तक नहीं काट सकता था। अगर किसान ऐसा करता पाया जाता तो नोटिस देकर 24 घंटे में उसकी जमीन का पट्टा कैसिल करने का अधिकार शासन के पास था। दूसरी सबसे खतरनाक बात यह थी कि जमीन किसान के बड़े बेटे के नाम पर ही चढ़ सकती थी। अगर उसकी औलाद नहीं होती और मुखिया किसान मर जाता तो जमीन अंग्रेजी शासन या रियासत को चली जानी थी। इस बिल को लाकर अंग्रेजों ने बारी दोआब नहर से सिंचित होने वाली जमीनों का लगान दोगुना कर दिया था। बिल के खिलाफ 1907 में किसानों ने आंदोलन शुरू कर दिया। इसकी अगुवाई सरदार अजीत सिंह ने की। इस लहर को हुंकारा 22 मार्च 1907 तो तब मिला जब लायलपुर में किसानों के जलसे में लाला बांके दयाल ने पगड़ी संभाल जट्टा पगड़ी संभाल ओए... गीत गाया। किसानों के दबाव के आगे शासन को झुकना पड़ा और नवंबर 1907 को कानून वापस ले लिए गए।

पगड़ी संभाल जट्टा किसान आंदोलन की अगुवाई करने वाले सरदार अजीत सिंह। शहीद-ए-आजम भगत सिंह के चाचा जी थे।

Sardar Ajit Singh Sandhu, the brain behind the 'Pagri Sambhal Jatta' movement is now being remembered in the ongoing agrarian resentments by punjab farmers.

'Pagri Sambhal Jatta' Movement

- In 1879, the British constructed the Upper Bari Doab canal to draw water from the Chenab river and take it to Lyallpur (now in Pakistan and renamed Faisalabad) to set up settlements in uninhabited areas.
- Promising to allot free land with several amenities, the government persuaded peasants and ex-servicemen from Jalandhar, Amritsar and Hoshiarpur to settle there.
- In 1907, in Lyallpur, Ajit Singh Sandhu also Bhagat Singh's uncle headed the movement that articulated this discontent.
- The catchy slogan, Pagdi Sambhal Jatta, the name of the movement, was inspired by the song by Banke Lal, the editor of the Jang Sayal

newspaper.

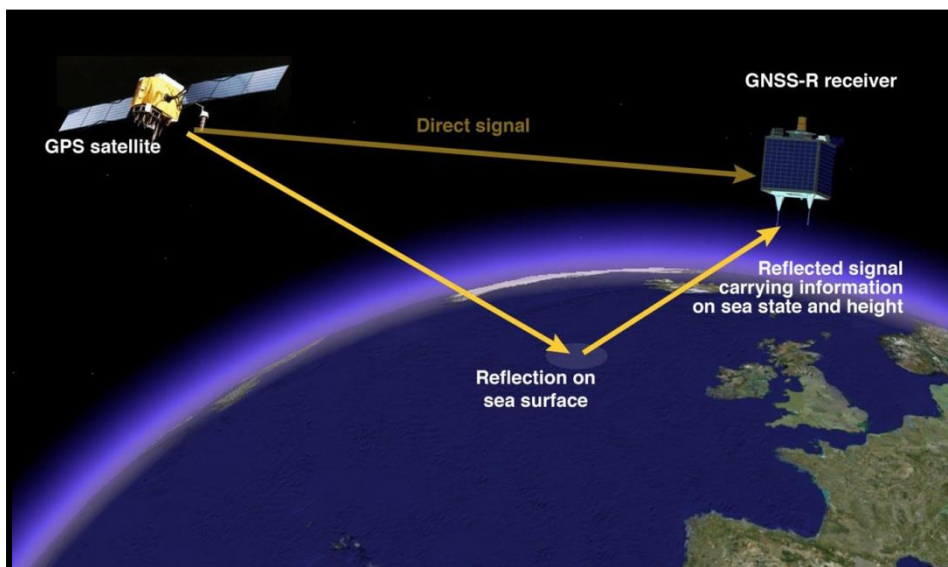
- The agitated protestors ransacked government buildings, post offices, banks, overturning telephone poles and pulling down telephone wires.

Ajit Singh

- He was a **revolutionary and a nationalist** during the time of British rule in India.
- With compatriots, he organised agitation by Punjabi peasants against anti-farmer laws known as the **Punjab Colonization Act (Amendment) 1906** and administrative orders increasing water rate charges.
- He was an early protester in the Punjab region of India who challenged British rule and openly criticized the Indian colonial government.
- In May 1907, with LalaLajpat Rai, he was exiled to Mandalay in Burma.
- Due to great public pressure and apprehension of unrest in the Indian Army, the bills of exile were withdrawn and both men were released in November 1907.

Topic 6: GLOBAL NAVIGATION SATELLITE SYSTEM

Importance for Prelims: Science & tech



Global Navigation Satellite System (GNSS) refers to a constellation of satellites providing signals from space that transmit positioning and timing data to GNSS receivers. The receivers then use this data to determine location.

- By definition, GNSS provides global coverage. Examples of GNSS include Europe's Galileo, the USA's NAVSTAR Global Positioning System (GPS), Russia's GLONASS) and China's Bei Dou Navigation Satellite System and India 's IRNSS –

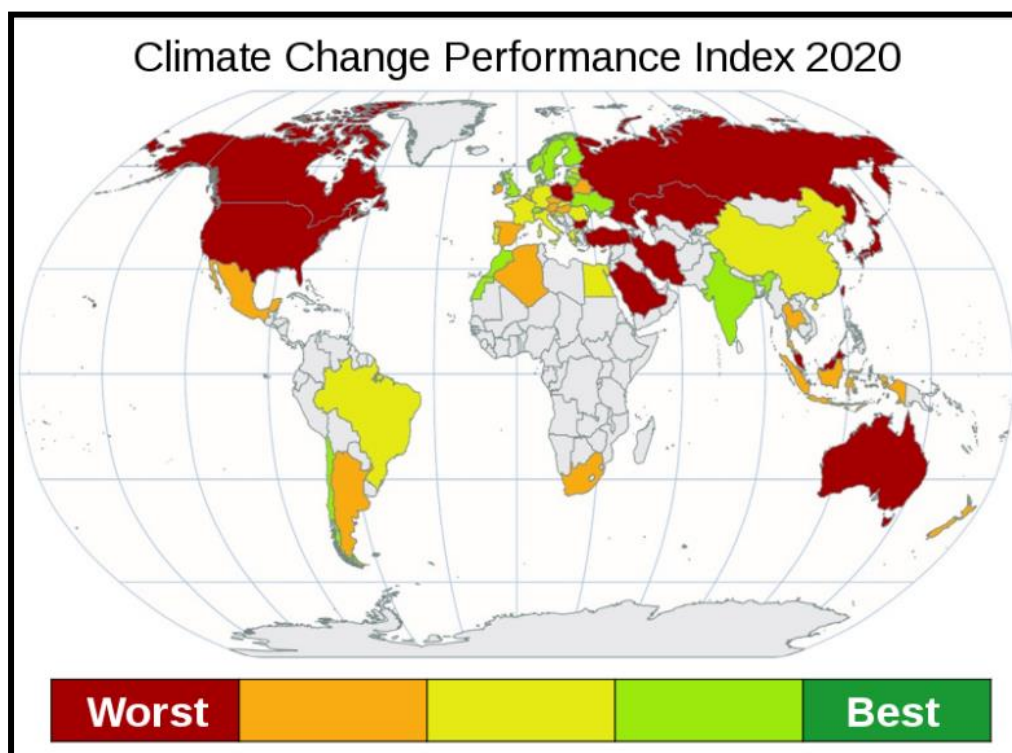
NAVIC.

The performance of GNSS is assessed using four criteria:

- **Accuracy:** the difference between a receiver's measured and real position, speed or time;
- **Integrity:** a system's capacity to provide a threshold of confidence and, in the event of an anomaly in the positioning data, an alarm;
- **Continuity:** a system's ability to function without interruption;
- **Availability:** the percentage of time a signal fulfils the above accuracy, integrity and continuity criteria.

Topic 7: CLIMATE CHANGE PERFORMANCE INDEX (CCPI)

Importance for Prelims: Environment



India remains in the top 10 for the second year in a row in the latest global Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) released in Germany.

- The biggest current emitter of greenhouse gases (GHG) China figures at 33rd rank while the largest historical polluter, the USA, appears at the bottom of the list.
- Though India slid one position down from ninth in 2019 to 10th this year, the country's journey towards climate protection has been consistent with it improving its ranking from 31st in 2014.
- Globally none of the countries assessed for the annual CCPI report are, however, on the path to meet their Paris Agreement commitment of keeping global warming increase below 2 degree celsius by the end of the century and restrict it to 1.5 degree celsius rise.
- The CCPI 2021, covering the year 2020, shows that only two G20

countries – the UK and India – are among the high rankers while six others – the USA, Saudi Arabia, Canada, Australia, South Korea and Russia (52nd) – are at the bottom of the index.

About CCPI

- The CCPI is developed by not-for-profit organisations **German watch and New Climate Institute** (Germany) together with the Climate Action Network (CAN International).
- It is an important tool to enhance transparency in international climate politics and enables comparison of climate protection efforts and progress made by individual countries.
- The latest list is prepared by assessing performances of 57 countries and European Union (as a whole) in four categories – GHG emissions (40%), renewable energy (20%), energy use (20%) and climate policy (20%). These 57 countries and the EU collectively are responsible for about 90% of global GHG emissions.

Topic 8: UN INVESTMENT PROMOTION AWARD

Importance for Prelims: Current Events



The United Nations (UNCTAD) has declared Invest India as a winner of the 2020 United Nations Investment Promotion Award.

- The award ceremony took place on 7th December 2020 at UNCTAD Headquarters in Geneva.
- The award recognizes and celebrates the outstanding achievements and best practices of Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs) across the globe.
- This United Nations Investment Promotion Award is the most coveted award for Investment Promotion Agencies.
- **UNCTAD** is a central agency that monitors performance of IPAs and identifies global best practices. Germany, South Korea and Singapore have been some of the past winners of the award.

Invest India

- Invest India is the National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of India, set up as a non-profit venture under the aegis of Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.

- It facilitates and empowers all investors under the ‘Make in India’ initiative to establish, operate and expand their businesses in India.
- Operationalized in early 2010, Invest India is set up as a joint venture company between the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) (now renamed as Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)), Ministry of Commerce & Industry (35% equity), Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) (51% equity), and State Governments of India (0.5% each).

Topic 9: SAARC

Importance for Prelims: International Organizations



SAARC can only be fully effective in the absence of “terror and violence”, Prime Minister said in a message to the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation on its 36th Charter Day anniversary.

- South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established with the signing of the SAARC Charter in Dhaka on 8 December 1985.

Topic 10: CARNATIC CLASSICAL MUSIC

Importance for Prelims: Arts & Culture



For the first time in 93 years, Chennai's iconic December music festival, which brings together the finest exponents of Carnatic classical music and dance and the cultural cognoscenti, will go completely digital.

- Carnatic music owes its name to the Sanskrit term KarnâṭakaSangîtam which denotes “traditional” or “codified” music.
- Composed of a system of Ragam (Raga) and Thalam (Tala), it has a rich history and tradition.
- Carnatic Sangeet has developed in the south Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. These states are known for their strong presentation of Dravidian culture.

Renaissance of Carnatic Music

- The course of the evolution of Indian music saw the emergence of two different subsystems as Hindustani and Carnatic music. Both the terms emerged for the first time in Haripala's "SangeetaSudhakara", written in the 14th century A.D.
- The two distinct styles, Hindustani and Carnatic came into vogue after the advent of the Muslims, particularly during the reign of the Mughal Emperors.
- Purandardas (1484-1564), a prolific poet-composer and mystic of Vijayanagar, is considered to be the father of Carnatic music (Carnatic SangeetaPitamaha).
- Venkatamakhi is regarded as the grand theorist of Carnatic music. In 17th century AD, he developed "Melakarta", the system for classifying south Indian ragas. There are 72 Melakartas at present.
- Tyagaraja (1767-1847), his contemporaries SyamaSastri and MuttusvamiDikshitar are together known as the "Trinity" of Carnatic music.

Difference between Carnatic and Hindustani Music

- Carnatic music originated in South India whereas Hindustani music in North India.
- It is believed that the music of India was more or less uniform before the 13th century.
- Hindustani synthesises with Vedic, Islamic and Persian traditions. Carnatic is comparatively untouched and developed on the original lines.
- Carnatic music has homogenous and Hindustani music has a heterogeneous Indian tradition.
- Carnatic music has a restrained and intellectual character as compared with the more secular Hindustani traditions.
- The major vocal forms of Hindustani music are Dhrupad, Khayal, Tarana,

Thumri, Dadra and Gazals. While Carnatic music has several varieties of improvisation such as Alapana, Niraval, Kalpnaswaram and Ragam Thana Pallavi.

- Hindustani music has various gharanas like Lucknow, Jaipur, Kirana, Agra etc., wherein Carnatic music no such gharanas found.

Topic 11: AIRAVATESVARA TEMPLE

Importance for Prelims: Art & Culture



The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is exploring ways to find a permanent solution to prevent flooding in the Airavatesvara temple in Darasuram, near Kumbakonam in Thanjavur district.

- It was built by the Chola king Rajaraja II (1144-1173 CE):
- It is much smaller in size as compared to the Brihadisvara temple at Thanjavur and Gangaikondacholapuram.
- The temple consists of a sanctum without a circumambulatory path and axial mandapas.
- The front mandapa is unique as it was conceptualized as a chariot with wheels.
- The temple entered the UNESCO World Heritage Site list in 1987 and is also a part of “Great Living Chola Temples” along with the Brihadisvara Temple at Gangaikondacholapuram and Thanjavur.

Topic 12: NORTHERN LIGHTS

Importance for Prelims: Geography



Northern Lights, also known as aurora borealis, are usually witnessed far up in the Polar Regions or the high latitude regions of Europe, like in Norway. But, recently, they could be visible in southern regions, such as in the Pennsylvania in the US.

- This is happening **due to a solar flare, which emerged from a Sunspot.**
- The flare is accompanied by a **Coronal Mass Ejection (CME)** — a large bubble of radiation and particles emitted by the Sun that explodes into space at high speed.
- The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) said the electromagnetic storm could be growing to major status, causing the Northern Lights to be visible in more number of areas than usual.

AURORA

- Auroras occur when charged particles ejected from the Sun's surface — called the solar wind — enter the Earth's atmosphere.
- While flowing toward Earth, the fast-moving solar wind carries with it

the Sun's magnetic field, which disrupts the magnetosphere — the region of space around Earth in which the magnetic field of our planet is dominant.

- When the Sun's magnetic field approaches Earth, the protective magnetic field radiating from our planet's poles deflects the former, thus shielding life on Earth.
- However, as this happens, the protective fields couple together to form funnels, through which charged solar wind particles are able to stream down to the poles.
- At the north and south poles, the charged particles interact with different gases in the atmosphere, causing a display of light in the sky. This display, known as an aurora, is seen from the Earth's high latitude regions (called the auroral oval), and is active all year round.
- In the **northern part of our globe**, the polar lights are called **aurora borealis or Northern Lights**, and are seen from the US (Alaska), Canada, Iceland, Greenland, Norway, Sweden and Finland.
- In the **south**, they are called **aurora australis or southern lights**, and are visible from high latitudes in Antarctica, Chile, Argentina, New Zealand and Australia.
- Generally, the auroral oval is confined to the polar regions. But occasionally, the oval expands, and the lights become visible at lower latitudes.
- This **happens during periods of high solar activity, such as the arrival of solar storms.**

Topic 13: KLI PROJECT

Importance for Prelims: Economy



The Union Cabinet has given its approval for Provision of Submarine Optical Fibre Cable Connectivity between Mainland (Kochi) and Lakshadweep Islands (KLI Project).

- The Project envisages provision of a direct communication link through a dedicated submarine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) between Kochi and 11 Islands of Lakshadweep viz. Kavaratti, Kalpeni, Agati, Amini, Androth, Minicoy, Bangaram, Bitra, Chetlat, Kiltan&Kadmat.
- The estimated cost of implementation is about Rs. 1072 crore including operational expenses for 5 years. **The Project would be funded by Universal Service Obligation Fund.**
- The project will vastly improve telecommunication facility in the Lakshadweep Islands by providing large bandwidth.
- The project is targeted to be completed by May 2023.

Implementation Strategy:

- Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) has been nominated as Project Execution Agency and Telecommunications Consultant India Ltd. (TCIL) as the Technical Consultant of the Project to assist Universal Service Obligation Fund, Department of Telecommunications.
- The ownership of the asset under the project will rest with USOF, the funding agency, under DoT.

Topic 14: NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING

Importance for Prelims: Current Events



Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the New Parliament Building.

- The new parliament building will be the highlight of the ambitious ₹ 20,000 crore Central Vista project that PM Modi said will become “a symbol of a new and selfreliant India”.
- The four-story building will be triangular and its interiors will have three national symbols – the lotus, the peacock and the banyan tree – as its themes.
- The triangular shape of the new parliament was a reference to “sacred geometries in various religions and cultures of India”.
- In the Lok Sabha chamber, the national bird (peacock) will be the theme. In the Rajya Sabha the national flower (lotus) and in the central lounge the national tree (banyan) will be the theme.
- The parliament building alone will cost an estimated ₹ 971 crore and will, the government hopes, be ready before India’s 75th Independence Day (in 2022).

- However, construction cannot yet begin as a legal challenge is pending in the Supreme Court.
- To be constructed by Tata Projects Ltd, the new parliament building will overlook the old – which was built nearly 100 years ago at a cost of ₹ 83 lakh and will be turned into a museum.
- The new Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha halls will have increased seating capacities (888 and 384 seats, respectively) in anticipation of an expanded Parliament; a 25- year-old freeze on increasing state-wise distribution of seats ends in 2026.
- In addition, seating in the Lok Sabha hall can be expanded to 1,272 to host joint sessions.
- **Dholpur stone will be the primary construction material** (as it was with the current building) and red granite may replace red sandstone in some interior sections.
- The building will be equipped with modern audio-visual communication systems.
- The new parliament will also be fully wheelchair- and disabled-access friendly.

Topic 15: ISCHAEMUMJANARTHANAMII

Importance for Prelims: Environment



A new species of Indian Muraingrasses known for their ecological and economic importance, such as fodder, have been spotted by scientists in Goa in the Western Ghats, one of the four global biodiversity hotspots of India.

- Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology, has been exploring the biodiversity of the Western Ghats for last few decades.
- A team from ARI has been working on relationships among different groups of plants and their evolutionary development (plant taxonomy and phylogeny) of Indian Muraingrasses (Genus *Ischaemum*) to document the diversity and report novel species.
- The team discovered a novel species named ***Ischaemumjanarthanamii*** from plateaus of Western Ghats of Goa, and a research paper describing this species was published recently in *Annales Botanici Fennici*, a Finland based journal.
- The species was named *Ischaemumjanarthanamii* in honour of Prof. M. K. Janarthanam, Professor of Botany, Goa University, for his contribution to the Indian grass taxonomy and documentation of the floristic diversity of

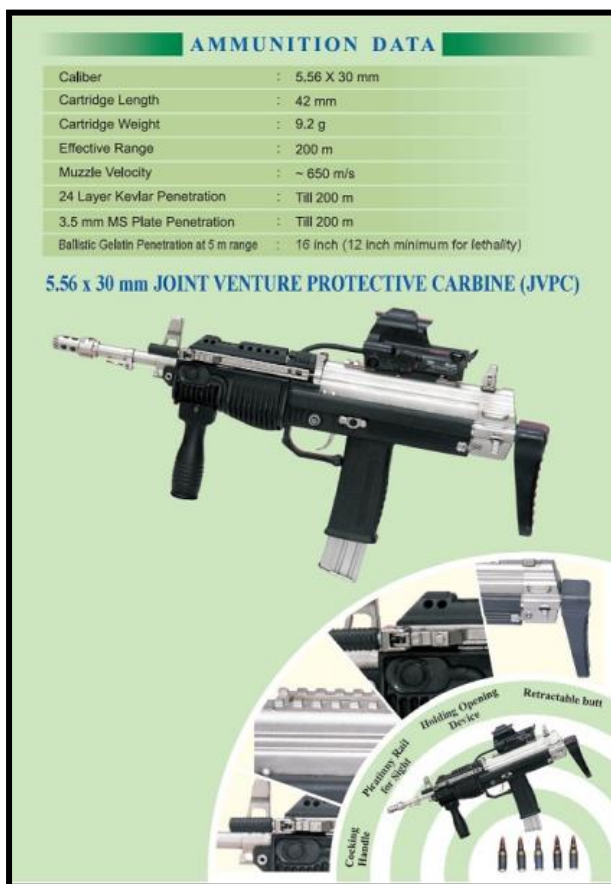
Goa state.

Additional Information

- Ischaemumjanarthanamii grows on low altitude lateritic plateaus in the outskirts of Bhagwan Mahavir National Park, Goa.
- The vegetation is exposed to extreme climatic conditions like desiccation in drier months and soils with low nutrient availability. However, withstanding these, the species has adapted to survive harsh conditions and blossom every monsoon.
- Globally 85 species are known from Ischaemum, of which 61 species are exclusively found in India. The Western Ghats have 40 species with the highest concentration of the genus.

Topic 16: JOINT VENTURE PROTECTIVE CARBINE (JVPC)

Importance for Prelims: Defence



Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) designed 5.56×30 mm Protective Carbine has successfully undergone the final phase of User trials on 7th December 2020. This has paved the way for induction into the services.

- JVPC is a Gas Operated Semi Bull-pup automatic weapon having more than 700 rpm rate of fire.
- The effective range of the carbine is more than 100 m and weighs about 3.0 kg with key features like high reliability, low recoil, retractable Butt, ergonomic design, single hand firing capability, and multiple Picatinny rails etc.
- These features make it a very potent weapon for Counter Insurgency /Counter Terrorism operations by security agencies.

- The carbine has been designed as per Indian Army's GSQR, by Armament Research and Development Establishment (ARDE), a Pune based laboratory of DRDO.
- The Weapon is manufactured at Small Arms Factory, Kanpur while the Ammunition is manufactured at ammunition Factory, Kirkee Pune.

Topic 17: SHAHTOOT DAM

Importance for Prelims: International Relations



The Union Minister of External Affairs recently announced at the Geneva Donors conference that India is to construct the Shahtoot Dam across the Maidan river, a tributary of river Kabul in Afghanistan.

- The Shahtoot dam is to be constructed in Kabul river basin, one of the five river basins of Afghanistan. The dam will provide irrigation, drinking water for the Kabul province of the country.
- The cost of the project has been estimated as 305 million USD.

Benefits of the project

- The dam will provide irrigation facilities to about 10,000 hectares of agricultural land. It will supply drinking water to around 2 million people in the city of Kabul.
- Also, it will recharge the underground water for drinking purposes in and around Kabul.
- It will contribute to national food security by helping in the production of fishery, crops and industries. It will also promote tourism and increase opportunities of income.

Other projects

- Along with the Shahtoot dam, India has pledged to rebuild Afghanistan committing to 80 million USD worth projects. Around 150 projects have been announced by India in the conflict-ridden country.

Topic 18: NO CONFIDENCE MOTION

Importance for Prelims: Polity

NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION	
<p>➤ First-ever no-confidence motion was moved in 1963</p> <p>➤ Total 26 so far (the one on July 20 will be 27th)</p> <p>➤ Indira Gandhi govt had faced maximum number of no-confidence motion 15</p>	<p>Three in last 25 years</p> <p>July 1993 Against the Narasimha Rao govt after Babri Masjid demolition (Govt won confidence vote)</p> <p>April 1999 Against the Vajpayee govt (Govt lost by one vote)</p> <p>August 2003 Against the Vajpayee govt (Govt won confidence vote)</p> <p>July 2008 It was a trust vote after CPM-led Left Front withdrew support from the Manmohan Singh govt over the Indo-US nuclear deal. Govt proved its majority</p>

Stating that he intends to move a no-confidence motion against the BJP-JJP government in Haryana, former chief minister has written to Governor.

- A no-confidence motion is a parliamentary motion which is moved in the Lok Sabha against the entire council of ministers, stating that they are no longer deemed fit to hold positions of responsibility due to their inadequacy in some respect or their failure to carry out their obligations.
- No prior reason needs to be stated for its adoption in the Lok Sabha.

Procedure to move a “No Confidence Motion”:

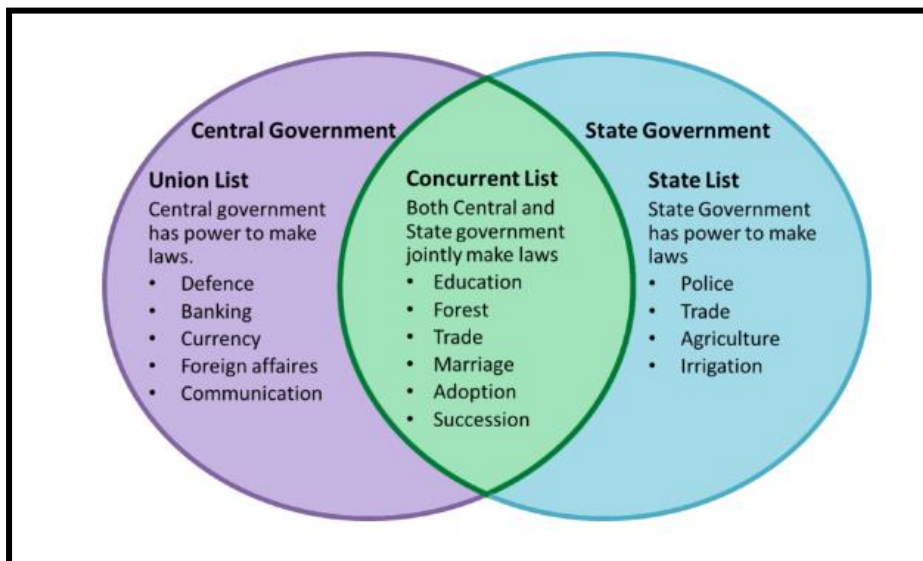
- A motion of “No Confidence Motion” against the Government can be introduced only in the Lok Sabha under rule 198.
- The Constitution of India does not mention about either a Confidence or a No Confidence Motion. Although, Article 75 does specify that the Council of Ministers shall be collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha.
- A motion of No Confidence can be admitted when a minimum of 50

members, support the motion in the house.

- The Speaker then, once satisfied that the motion is in order, will ask the House if the motion can be adopted.
- If the motion is passed in the house, the Government is bound to vacate the office.
- A no-confidence motion needs a majority vote to pass the House.
- If individuals or parties abstain from voting, those numbers will be removed from the overall strength of the House and then the majority will be taken into account.

Topic 19: SEVENTH SCHEDULE

Importance for Prelims: Polity



Fifteenth Finance Commission chairman N.K. Singh has called for a fresh look at the Constitution's Seventh Schedule and hinted at the need to fill an 'institutional vacuum' created by the abolition of the Planning Commission.

- The Constitution provides for a three-fold distribution of legislative subjects between the Union and the states, viz., List-I (the Union List), List-II (the State List) and List-III (the Concurrent List), described in this schedule:
- **Union List:** This List contains matters of national importance and the matters which require uniformity of legislation nationwide. This list has at present 100 subjects (originally 97) like defence, naturalisation & citizenship (entry 17), banking, foreign affairs, atomic energy, communication, census, etc.
- **State List:** This List contains matters of regional and local importance which require state-specific solution and the matters which permit diversity of interest.
- It presently contains 61 subjects (originally 66 subjects) like public order,

police, public health and sanitation, agriculture, local government, gambling, etc.

- **Concurrent List:** This List contains matters on which uniformity of legislation throughout the country is desirable but is not essential. This List at present has 52 subjects (originally 47 subjects) like criminal law and procedure, civil procedure, marriage and divorce, population control and family planning, electricity, economic and social planning, etc.

Topic 20: MAHAKALI CAVES

Importance for Prelims: Arts & Culture



The Mahakali Caves, are a group of 19 rock-cut monuments built between 1st century BCE and 6th century CE.

- This Buddhist monastery is located in the eastern suburb of Andheri in the city of Mumbai (Bombay) in western India. Monument consists of two groups of rock-cut caves – 4 caves more to the north-west and 15 caves more to the south-east.
- Most caves are viharas and cells for monks, but Cave 9 of south-eastern group is chaitya.
- Caves in north-west have been created mainly in 4th – 5th century, while southeastern group is older. Monument contains also rock-cut cisterns and remnants of other structures.
- Caves are carved out of a **solid black basalt rock**, (volcanic trap breccias, prone to weathering).
- The largest cave at Kondivite (Cave 9) has seven depictions of the Buddha and figures from Buddhist mythology but all are mutilated.

Topic 21: NUPI LAN MEMORIAL COMPLEX

Importance for Prelims: Arts & Culture



Manipur observed the 81st anniversary of the “women’s war” at an official function held at the “Women’s War Memorial Complex” in Imphal.

- This memorial complex is dedicated to the memory of several Manipuri women, who lost their lives while fighting for justice against the British on December 12, 1939.

- The word NupiLan in Manipuri means women's war. The memorial complex houses sculptures portraying Manipuri women fighting against the British officials and is worth a visit.
- As the story goes, what began as an agitation against the oppressive policies of the rulers of Manipur and the British government, later turned into a movement for Manipur's constitutional and administrative reform.
- During NupiLan, agitations and protest rallies were held by the women traders in Manipur's ImaKeithel Market. The historical movement paved the way for economic and political reforms in the state during the early 40s.

Topic 22: BHASHAN CHAR ISLAND

Importance for Prelims: International Relations

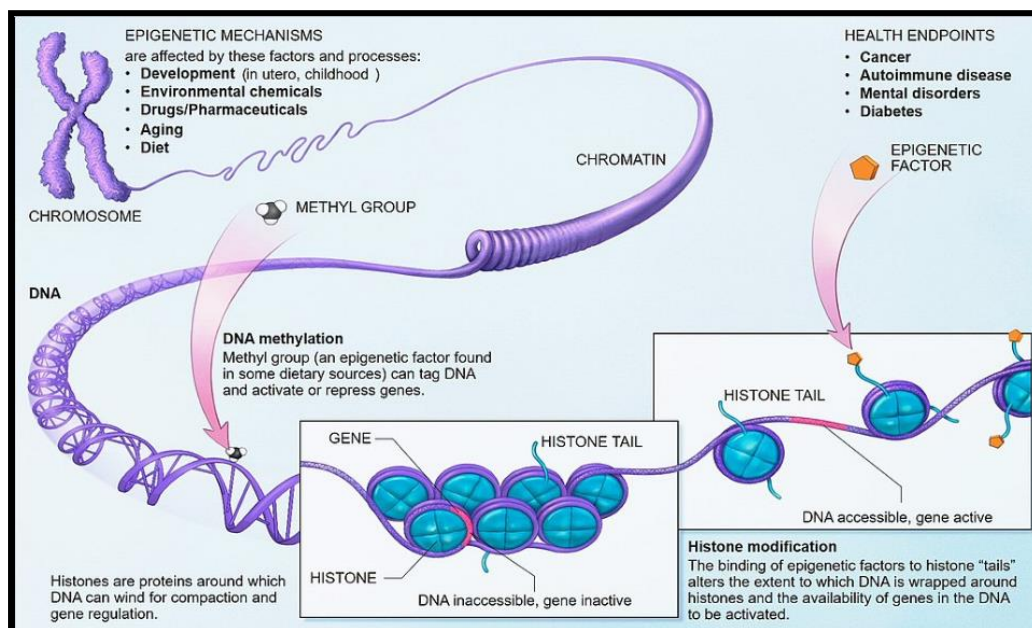


United Nations (UN) human rights investigator had requested Bangladesh to allow a safety assessment of the remote islet of Bhashan Char, where the government had shipped 1,600-odd Rohingya refugees.

- Bhashan Char Island was formed about two decades ago on the mouth of river Meghna.
- The uninhabited island is located around 30 kilometres east of Hatiyaisland in South-East Bangladesh.
- Bangladesh wants to move 100,000 Rohingya refugees to the muddy silt island to take the pressure off the overcrowded border camps.
- The Bhashan Char falls in an ecologically fragile area prone to floods, erosion and cyclone.
- Though the Bangladesh government has built a three-metre-high embankment along its perimeter to keep out tidal surges during cyclones.

Topic 23: EPIGENETICS

Importance for Prelims: Science & tech



Epigenetics refers to chemical changes in our genetic material and proteins that regulate it.

- The best-known epigenetic mark is the methylation, the addition of a methyl chemical group ($-CH_3$) in our DNA. The epigenome consists of all the epigenetic marks of a living being.
- Unlike DNA mutations that are permanent, such epigenetic changes are reversible and are mediated by regulatory proteins such as DNA methyl transferases (DNMTs), histone acetyl transferases (HATs), histone deacetylases (HDACs) and so on.
- These regulatory proteins can add or remove such modifications and can result in turning ON/OFF a specific gene in a tissue or organ specific manner.

Topic 24: INS VIRAAT

Importance for Prelims: Defence



INS Viraat is the second aircraft carrier to be broken in India in the last six years. In 2014, INS Vikrant, which played a crucial role in the 1971 Indo-Pak war, was dismantled in Mumbai.

- Viraat a Centaur class aircraft carrier weighing 27,800 tonnes, served in the British Navy as HMS Hermes for 25 years.
- Viraat played a major role in **Operation Jupiter in 1989 during the Sri Lankan Peacekeeping operation**. It also saw action during **Op Parakram in 2001-2002**, post the terrorist attack on Parliament.
- The indigenous Advance Light Helicopters 'Dhruv' and the Russian twin rotor Kamov-31 have also operated from the ship.
- It was decommissioned in March 2017, and the Navy had been incurring expenditure since then on its upkeep, such as the provision of electricity and water, and repairs.
- It was also taking up space in the crowded Naval dockyard. There had been demands from various quarters to not let Viraat go the way of Vikrant, India's first carrier that was eventually scrapped.

- In 2014, **INS Vikrant**, which played a role in the 1971 war with Pakistan was broken down in Mumbai.
- India is currently doing with only the 44,500-tonne **INS Vikramaditya**, the refurbished **Admiral Gorshkov** inducted from Russia in November 2013.
- The trials of the first indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC-I, to be named as INS Vikrant) being built at the Cochin Shipyard have been derailed by the pandemic.
- The government's approvals for a third carrier, the 65,000-tonne IAC-II (tentatively christened INS Vishal) has been pending since May 2015.
- India needs aircraft carriers to secure the seas of the Indo-Pacific, to maintain peace, secure trade routes, and provide security to the region.

Topic 25: ISRAEL MOROCCO DEAL

Importance for Prelims: International Relations



Recently, Morocco and Israel have agreed to normalise relations in a deal brokered by the USA.

- It makes **Morocco the fourth Arab country, after the UAE, Bahrain (Abraham Accords) and Sudan**, to set aside hostilities with Israel in the past four months.

Highlights of the Deal:

- Morocco will establish full diplomatic relations and resume official contacts with Israel, reopen their liaison offices in Rabat (capital of Morocco) and Tel Aviv (a city in Israel) immediately with the intention to open embassies and promote economic cooperation between Israeli and Moroccan companies.
- Morocco intends to facilitate direct flights for Israeli tourists to and from Morocco.
- The USA has changed its longstanding policy and **recognised Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara**.
- Since 2007, the UN Security Council, of which the USA is a veto-capable permanent member, has called on Morocco and the Polisario to engage in negotiations without preconditions to reach a "mutually acceptable

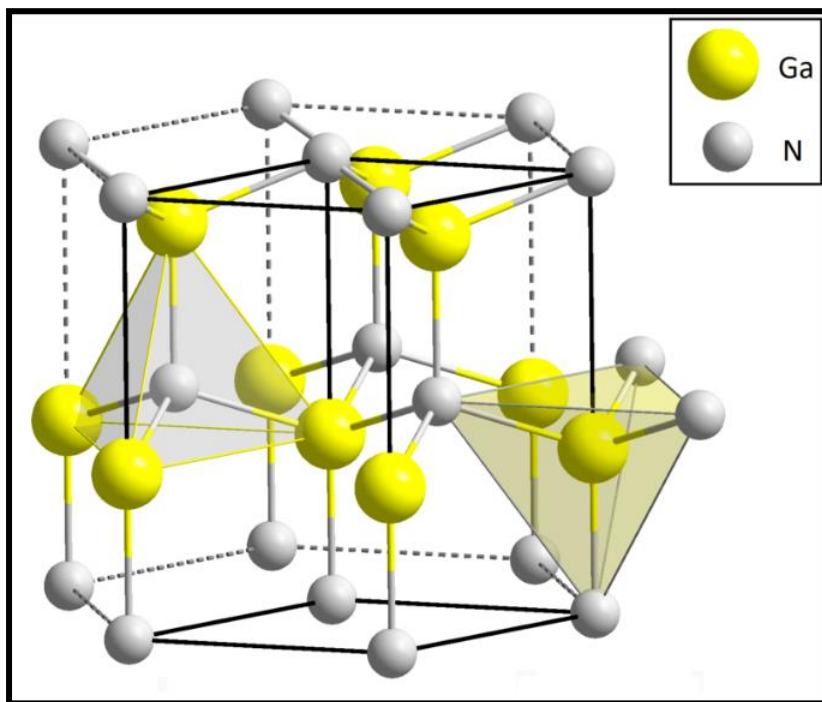
political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.”

Western Sahara

- Western Sahara is a desert region, a former Spanish colony and was annexed by Morocco in 1975.
- Since then, it has been the subject of a long-running territorial dispute between Morocco and its indigenous Saharawi people, led by the pro-independence Polisario Front.
- Morocco says it has always been part of its territory, while the African Union recognises it as an independent state.
- A 16-year-long insurgency ended with an UN-brokered truce in 1991 and the promise of a referendum on independence, which has yet to take place.
- The USA supported the ceasefire between Morocco and the Polisario Front.
- In November 2020, after a border incident, the Polisario pulled out of that deal and announced a return to armed struggle.
- The USA’s backing of Morocco’s claim to sovereignty over Western Sahara is a big deal because it diminishes the hope of a people who have aspired for the independence of that territory for decades.

Topic 26: GALLIUM NITRIDE

Importance for Prelims: Science & tech



Gallium nitride (GaN) is a semiconductor commonly used in light-emitting diodes

- since the 1990s. The compound is a very hard material that has a Wurtzite crystal structure.
- Its wide band gap of 3.4 eV affords it special properties for applications in optoelectronic, high-power and high-frequency devices.

Features

- lower on resistance giving lower conductance losses faster devices yielding less switching losses less capacitance resulting in less losses when charging and discharging devices less power needed to drive the circuit smaller devices taking up less space on the printed circuit board. GaN transistors can withstand higher electric fields, which in turn, increases power density and makes the device smaller.

Applications of GaN:

- Its sensitivity to ionizing radiation is low (like other group III nitrides), making it a suitable material for solar cell arrays for satellites.
- Military and space applications could also benefit as devices have shown stability in radiation environments.
- Because GaN transistors can operate at much higher temperatures and work at much higher voltages than gallium arsenide (GaAs) transistors, they make ideal power amplifiers at microwave frequencies.
- GaN semiconductor devices are already in use in LEDs and power amplifiers for 4G radio base stations, and now GaN-based transistors are becoming a key enabling technology in power electronics products like adapters, power supplies, and solar inverters. GaN is used to manufacture light-emitting diodes (LEDs) with colors that can go from red to ultra-violet.
- GaN-based electronics (not pure GaN) has the potential to drastically cut energy consumption, not only in consumer applications but even for power transmission utilities.
- GaN nanotubes are proposed for applications in nanoscale electronics, optoelectronics and biochemical-sensing applications.

Concern:

- One of the problems with GaN, like any other new technology, has been the high cost.
- While the costs are not as prohibitive as they used to be a few years ago—as per Lux Research, GaN would cost \$1,900 for a two-inch substrate whereas silicon would cost \$25-50 for a six-inch substrate—they are still high as compared to silicon.
- More important, company processes are more attuned to silicon products; a switch to GaN would require more research and development and surety that the products would not fail

Topic 27: POUSH MELA

Importance for Prelims: Culture



The annual “PoushMela”, a heritage cultural event attracting lakhs of travelers to West Bengal’s Santiniketan(visvabharati university) , will not be held this year due to COVID-19 restrictions, an official said.

- The 120-year-old fair and festival (PoushMela) isorganised for 3 to 4 days every year generally at the december end.
- In its history it has been disrupted only twice – in 1943 due to the famine and in 1945 due to the second world war.
- PoushMela takes place in Santiniketan, in Birbhum District in the Indian state of West Bengal, marking the harvest season.
- The central university’s executive council (EC) on Friday decided to scrap the fair, which attracts over two lakh visitors.

Visva-Bharati University

- Visva-Bharati University is a public research central university and an Institution of National Importance located in Santiniketan, West Bengal, India.
- It was founded by Rabindranath Tagore who called it Visva-Bharati,

which means the communion of the world with India.

- Until independence it was a college.

Topic 28: MYRISTICA SWAMP TREEFROG

Importance for Prelims: Environment



Myristica swamp tree frog, a **rare arboreal species endemic to the Western Ghats** has been recorded for the first time north of the Shencottah gap in the Vazhachal Reserve Forest in Kerala's Thrissur district.

- It's scientific name is *Mercurana myristicapalustris*.
- These frogs are rare and elusive for the reason that they are arboreal and active only for a few weeks during their breeding season.
- During this season, there is a large aggregation of males that descend from the high canopy of the trees. The males vocalize in groups from the low perches in the swamps.
- They exhibit unique breeding behavior. The breeding season, unlike for other frogs, starts in the pre-monsoon season (May) and ends before the monsoon becomes fully active in June.
- **Arboreal locomotion** is the locomotion of animals in trees.

Topic 29: KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK

Importance for Prelims: Environment



The Park can now be explored by boats while bicycle tracks are also being finalised. One can go trekking too. But the new activities are beyond the 1,302 sq km Kaziranga's core area of 482 sq km according to officials.

- It is located in the State of Assam and covers 42,996 Hectare (ha). It is the single largest undisturbed and representative area in the Brahmaputra Valley floodplain.

Status of the National park:

- It was declared as a National Park in 1974.
- It has been declared a tiger reserve since 2007. It has a total tiger reserve area of 1,030 sq km with a core area of 430 sq. km.
- It was declared a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** in 1985.
- It is recognized as an **Important Bird Area by Bird Life International**.

Important Species Found:

- It is the **home of the world's most one-horned rhinos**. Pobitora Wildlife

Sanctuary has the highest density of one-horned rhinos in the world and second highest number of Rhinos in Assam after Kaziranga National Park.

- Much of the focus of conservation efforts in Kaziranga are focused on the ‘big four’ species— Rhino, Elephant, Royal Bengal tiger and Asiatic water buffalo.
- Kaziranga is also home to 9 of the 14 species of primates found in the Indian subcontinent.

Rivers and Highways:

- The National Highway 37 passes through the park area.
- The park also has more than 250 seasonal water bodies, besides the Diphlu River running through it.

Other national parks in Assam are:

- ❖ Dibru-Saikhowa National Park,
- ❖ Manas National Park,
- ❖ Nameri National Park,
- ❖ Rajiv Gandhi Orang National Park.

Topic 30: NATIONAL GALLERY OF MODERN ARTS

Importance for Prelims: Culture



NGMA was established in 1954, at the Jaipur House, New Delhi.

It is run and administered as a subordinate office to the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.

- The NGMA has two branches, one at Mumbai and the other at Bengaluru.

Main objectives of the NGMA are :

- to create an understanding and sensitivity among the Indian Public towards the visual and plastic arts in general to promote the development of contemporary Indian art in particular.