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➤ Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

1. India has announced a contribution of \$22 million to the Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria for the 6th replenishment cycle (2020-22).
2. The Global Fund is an international financial organization designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria as epidemics.
3. The organisation is a partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector and people affected by the diseases. It was formed in 2002. It is headquartered at Geneva, Switzerland.
4. The organisation mobilizes and invests more than US\$4 billion a year to support programmes run by local experts in more than 100 countries.
5. The organisation was initially formed as an independent, non-profit foundation under Swiss law and hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO).
6. In 2009, the organization became an administratively autonomous organization terminating its administrative services agreement with the WHO.
7. India shares a sustained partnership with the Global Fund since 2002 both as recipient and as a donor. In the current funding cycle (2018-21), the Global Fund has allocated US\$ 500 million to India. As a donor, India has contributed US\$ 46.5 million so far till 2019 including US\$ 20 million for the 5th Replenishment.

➤ India, Japan to hold 2+2 dialogue on Indo-Pacific cooperation

1. India's Defence Minister is on a visit to Japan for the annual Defence Ministerial Meeting between the two countries.

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2. The meeting highlighted the significance of the Special Strategic and Global Partnership between India and Japan, especially in addressing the security, stability and regional peace.
3. The two countries have also decided to hold the first Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue (2+2) ahead of the Japan-India Annual Summit this year.
4. The two countries has also welcomed Malabar 2019 which is a trilateral maritime exercise between India, Japan and the US which will be held between late September and early October,2019.
5. Further, they also had a discussion about the second trilateral mine countermeasures exercise (MINEX) between India, Japan and the US, which was held in July, 2019.
6. They also discussed other bilateral exercises namely Dharma Guardian which was held in 2018 between the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) and the Indian Army.
7. SHINYUU MAITRI is the first bilateral exercise between the Japan Air Self-Defense Force (JASDF) and the Indian Air Force which was held in December 2018.
8. In 2018, Japan had also joined the India-US Air Force exercise 'Cope India' as an observer for the first time.
9. They have also welcomed the steady progress in bilateral cooperation in the area of Maritime Domain Awareness based on the agreement signed in 2018 to deepen the cooperation between the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force and the Indian Navy.

➤ India, Maldives sign treaty on legal cooperation in criminal matters

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1. India and Maldives has signed a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) in criminal matters.
2. The treaty aims to enhance the effectiveness of both the countries in investigation and prosecution of crime, through cooperation and mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.
3. A mutual legal assistance treaty (MLAT) is an agreement between two or more countries for the purpose of gathering and exchanging information in an effort to enforce public or criminal laws.
4. MLATs can be bilateral (country to country), multilateral, regional (any regional grouping example ASEAN) and country to regional (India with all the countries of European Union).
5. This assistance may take the form of (a)examining and identifying people (b)places and things (c)custodial transfers and (d)providing assistance with the immobilisation of the instruments of criminal activity. India has already signed Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) with 39 countries.

➤ Indian Ocean Conference 2019

1. India's external Affairs Minister is on a visit to the Maldives to attend the fourth Indian Ocean Conference 2019.
2. The theme of the fourth Indian Ocean Conference(IOC) is "Securing the Indian Ocean Region: Traditional and Non-Traditional Challenges"
3. The conference is organized by India Foundation in association with the Foreign Service Institute of Maldives and S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore.
4. The first edition of the conference was hosted in Singapore in 2016 followed by two successive editions in Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

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5. The IOC will deliberate on developing an effective regional institutional mechanism for implementation of prevailing norms and rules.
6. It will also provide an opportunity for stakeholders of the Indian Ocean Region to deliberate on building an institutional framework for managing the threats to regional peace and human security.

➤ Centre hikes procurement prices of ethanol for blending with petrol

1. Central Government has increased the prices of different grades of ethanol under the Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme for the forthcoming 2019-20 sugar season.
2. Ethanol Blended Petrol programme was launched in 2003. It aims at blending ethanol with petrol thereby bringing it under the category of biofuels and saving millions of dollars by cutting fuel imports.
3. This programme has been extended to the whole of India except Union Territories of Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands with effect from 01st April, 2019.
4. The government has been notifying the administered price of ethanol since 2014 and is being implemented by the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs).
5. The blending of ethanol in petrol has many benefits including (a) reduction in import dependency (b) support to agricultural sector (c) more environmentally friendly fuel (d) lesser pollution and (e) additional income to farmers.
6. The National Policy on Biofuels, 2018 also aims to increase the percentage of ethanol in petrol and diesel. Its objective is to achieve 20% ethanol blending and 5% biodiesel-blending by the year 2030.

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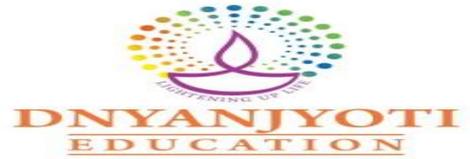
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➤ Task force recommends online loan sale platform

1. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set up a task force to submit a report on the development of a secondary market for corporate loans. It was headed by T.N. Manoharan.
2. The task force has recommended setting up of a self-regulatory body of participants who would work on creating a platform for secondary sale of corporate loans.
3. The task force has also called for amending regulations of SEBI, IRDA and PFRDA to enable participation of non-banking entities such as mutual funds, insurance companies and pension funds.
4. Currently, banks and NBFCs are the only participants in the primary and secondary loan markets.
5. The task force has suggested for setting up an online loan sales platform to conduct auctions/sale process of the secondary market loans.
6. Further, it has also recommended creating a Loan Contract Registry to remove information asymmetries between buyers and sellers.
7. The secondary market is the market where investors buy and sell securities they already own. It is also referred to as the stock market.
8. Secondary loan market in India is largely restricted to asset reconstruction companies and ad hoc sale to other lenders including banks and no formalised mechanism has been developed to deepen the market.

➤ Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2019

1. India and USA will be conducting a joint military training Exercise called Yudh Abhyas.

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2. The exercise will be conducted at Joint Base Lewis, Washington, USA from 5th-18th September 2019.
3. Exercise Yudh Abhyas is one of the largest joint running military training exercises between India and USA.
4. The exercise was started in 2004 under US Army Pacific Partnership Program. This will be the 15th edition of the joint exercise hosted alternately between the two countries.
5. Yudh Abhyas will provide an opportunity to the armed forces of both countries to train in an integrated manner at Battalion level with joint planning at Brigade level.

➤ Asean-US Maritime Exercise (AUMX)

1. The United States and ASEAN Countries will be jointly conducting ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise (AUMX) in the South China Sea.
2. The Maritime Exercise will last for five days starting at the Sattahip Naval Base in Thailand and ending in Singapore.
3. In this exercise, all the members of the Association of Southeast Asian (ASEAN) nations will take part which will include activities such as drilling, boarding of target vessels to simulate search and seizure.
4. The exercise comes after a Chinese survey vessel had extended its activities to an area closer to Vietnam's coastline. In response, the United States has also ramped up its military moves in the South China Sea.
5. South China Sea is a portion of the Pacific Ocean which is bordered by some of the ASEAN countries and China. The dispute involves contesting claims in the region by 7 countries which are Brunei, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

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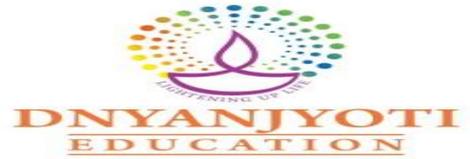
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6. The genesis of the dispute lies in the eleven-dashed line announced by the Chinese government in 1947 which was later changed to “Nine-dash line” in 1949 by Communist China.
7. This line covers most of the South China Sea, which China claims to be a part of its territory. However, these claims are contested by other littoral states in the region.

➤ Four more States join ration card portability

1. The government has extended the inter-state portability of ration cards between Kerala-Karnataka and Rajasthan-Haryana to implement ‘One Nation, One Ration Card’.
2. These two new clusters will join the existing State pairs of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana as well as Maharashtra and Gujarat.
3. One nation one ration card scheme is all about inter-state portability of ration cards. It enables the beneficiaries who are taking food grains under the Public Distribution System (PDS) to access the same benefits if they happen to migrate from one part of the country to the other in a seamless manner.
4. The Union Government plans to extend the one nation one ration card scheme to all the states by June 2020 to enable the portability of the food security card.
5. This will provide freedom to the beneficiaries as they will not be tied to any one PDS shop and reduce their dependence on shop owners and curtail instances of corruption.
6. However, there are various challenges such as (a) To update beneficiary data when a person migrates for a shorter span (b) Electronic point of sale (EPoS) machines are there in only 77% ration shops (c) Very few EPoS machines are in high-migration states like West Bengal and Bihar.

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➤ Joint Naval Annual Quality Conclave (JNAQC)

1. The Joint Naval Annual Quality Conclave (JNAQC) will be held in Visakhapatnam on September 5, 2019.
2. The conclave will be hosted by the Naval Quality Assurance Establishments under the aegis of Director General Quality Assurance (DGQA), Ministry of Defence.
3. The theme of the conclave is 'Transformation of QA Paradigm: Opportunities and Challenges'.
4. The conclave will provide a vibrant environment for stimulating discussions on all aspects pertaining to Transformation of Quality Assurance (QA) Paradigm.
5. DGQA functions under the Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence. It was established in 1957. Its headquarters are located in New Delhi.
6. DGQA's mandate is to provide Quality Assurance (QA) cover for entire range of Arms, Ammunitions and Stores supplied to Armed Forces. It is also responsible for import substitution with Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in the development projects.

➤ Lignin from agro-waste helps make useful nanocomposites

1. Researchers have developed a lignin-based nanocomposite from Agricultural waste.
2. The lignin-based nanomaterial could potentially have a commercial value. It can act as additive in coating and packaging materials.

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3. Lignin is a complex organic polymer rich in polyphenols with antimicrobial qualities.
4. It is found in almost all dry plants including crop residues and the woody bark of trees.
5. The abundant quantities of lignin are generated as post-harvest agro-biomass and in paper and pulp industries every year which often go waste.

➤ Telling Numbers: The food we waste, and what it costs the global economy

1. A new report titled “Reducing Food Loss and Waste” by the World Resources Institute (WRI) with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation has quantified global food wastage.
2. The report has said that nearly one-third of the food that is produced globally each year goes uneaten, costing the global economy over \$940 billion.
3. Most of the food loss happens near the farm predominantly in lower income countries and most of the food waste happens near the plate predominantly in higher-income countries.
4. The report has said that when viewed as a proportion by weight, of all the food estimated to be lost and wasted globally, fruits and vegetables make up the largest share of total annual food loss and waste.
5. Further, uneaten food is also responsible for emitting about 8 percent of planet-warming greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.
6. The report has put forward a Global Action Agenda that calls for
(a)developing national strategies for food loss and waste reduction,
(b)creating national public-private partnerships (c)launch supply chain

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initiatives (d)reducing small-holder losses and (e)shifting consumer social norms.

➤ 72nd Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia

1. Recently, India has hosted the 72nd Session of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Regional Committee for South-East Asia.
2. Addressing the session, Union Health minister has said that India's disease burden is shifting from communicable to non-communicable diseases which mean diet-related diseases' such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity are rising rapidly.
3. He said that the government has taken several steps towards healthcare such as it is observing the entire month of September as "Poshan Mah" (Nutrition Month). This initiative aims to intensify the campaign towards a malnutrition free India.
4. Further, citizens are being sensitized through a people's movement called Eat Right India. Its tagline is Sahi Bhojan; Behtar Jeevan which means right diet leads to a better quality of life.
5. The Prime Minister has also launched the 'Fit India' Movement'. This campaign aims at encouraging people to include physical activity and sports as a routine in their everyday life.
6. India also plans to increase full immunization coverage to 90% people through intensification of campaigns under Mission Indradhanush.
7. Hence, these initiatives clearly shows Universal Health for all which means a disease-free India and global standards of excellence in healthcare is the aim of a new India.

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