

# DNYANJYOTI FREE LEARNING UNIVERSITY

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NOTES 15

## Leadership for Academicians Program (LEAP)

**News:** Union Human Resource Development Minister has launched the Leadership for Academicians Programme (LEAP), 2019.

**Facts:**

**About LEAP:**

- LEAP is a three weeks leadership development training programme (2 weeks domestic and one week foreign training) for second level academic functionaries in public funded higher education institutions.
- The main objective is to prepare second tier academic heads that are potentially likely to assume leadership roles in the future.
- The programme would provide senior faculty with high academic credentials, the required leadership and managerial skills including skills of problem-solving, handling stress, team building work among others.
- The implementation of programme will be through 15 NIRF top ranked Indian Institutions namely. The foreign Universities identified for the training are also within the top 100 in the world global rankings.

**Additional information:**

**About National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)**

- The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in 2015. It provides ranking to institutions and universities across India.
- The different parameters taken into account for ranking are: a) Teaching Learning and Resources, b) Research Professional Practice & Collaborative Performance, c) Graduation outcome, d) Outreach and Inclusivity and e) perception by the institution by its stakeholders.

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- The different categories for which rankings are given include Engineering, Management, Pharmacy, Medical, Architecture, Law, Universities and Colleges. The rankings are being published annually since 2016.
- The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-Madras) has topped overall in the NIRF rankings, 2019.

### Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT)

**News:** Union Human Resource Development Minister has launched the Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT), 2019.

**Facts:**

**About ARPIT:**

- ARPIT is a major initiative of online professional development of 15 lakh higher education faculty using the Massive Open Online Courses platform SWAYAM.
- The courses are meant for all in-service teachers and faculties in order to enhance their career prospects.
- The courses cover a diverse range of topics such as Indian culture & Heritage Studies, Pedagogical Innovations & Research Methodology among others.
- For implementing, 75 discipline-specific institutions have been identified and notified as National Resource Centres (NRCs) in the first phase.
- These institutions are tasked to prepare online training material with focus on latest developments in the discipline, new & emerging trends, pedagogical improvements and methodologies.

**Additional information:**

**About SWAYAM:**

- SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active–Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) is a programme initiated by the Government of India. It is designed to achieve the three cardinal principles of Education Policy namely access, equity and quality.

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- The objective of this effort is to take the best teaching learning resources to all including the most disadvantaged.
- It seeks to bridge the digital divide for students who have remained untouched by the digital revolution and have not been able to join the mainstream of the knowledge economy.
- This is done through an indigenous developed IT platform that facilitates hosting of all the courses taught in classrooms to be accessed by anyone, anywhere at any time.

### Nirvik Scheme

**News:** Ministry of Commerce & Industry through Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) has introduced a new Export Credit Insurance Scheme (ECIS) called NIRVIK.

**Facts:**

**About the scheme:**

- The scheme aims to ease the lending process and enhance loan availability for exporters.
- Under the scheme, the insurance cover guaranteed will cover up to 90% of the principal and interest. The insurance cover will include both pre and post-shipment credit.
- Currently, the Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC) provides credit guarantee of up to 60 percent loss.

**Benefits of the scheme:**

- This scheme will help make Indian exports competitive and make ECGC procedures exporter friendly, benefiting MSME exporters.
- The insurance cover is also expected to bring down the cost of credit due to capital relief, less provision requirement and liquidity due to quick settlement of claims.

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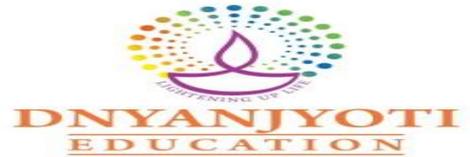
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### Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC):

- ECGC is a premier export credit agency of the Government of India to provide Export Credit Insurance Services to facilitate exports from the country. It was founded in 1957. It is headquartered at Mumbai.
- The ECGC offers credit insurance schemes to exporters to protect them against losses due to non-payment of export dues by overseas buyers due to political or commercial risks.

### SITMEX-19

**News:** A maiden trilateral exercise involving the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN), Royal Thailand Navy (RTN) and Indian Navy (IN) has commenced at Port Blair.

### **Facts:**

#### **About the exercise:**

- The maritime exercise is a five-day-long exercise.
- The exercise is aimed at bolstering the maritime inter-relationships amongst India, Singapore and Thailand and contributes significantly to enhancing the overall maritime security in the region.
- The exercise would also strengthen the mutual confidence amongst three navies in terms of interoperability and development of a common understanding of procedures.
- The ships that are participating from the Indian side are (a) Ranvir- a Guided Missile Destroyer (b) Kora- a missile corvette (c) Sukanya- an Offshore Patrol Vessel and (d) P8I- Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft.

#### **Additional information:**

- **Exercise SIMBEX**– It is a bilateral naval exercise between Indian Navy and the Republic of Singapore Navy.

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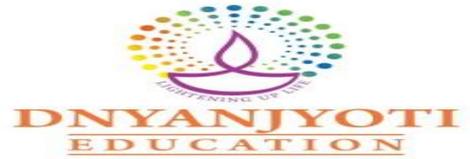
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- **Exercise Maitree-** It is a bilateral military exercise between India and Thailand. The Exercise MAITREE-2019 is being held at Foreign Training Node, Meghalaya from 16-29 Sep 2019.

### Astra Missile

**News:** Indian Air Force has successfully flight-tested Astra missile off the coast of Odisha.

**Facts:**

#### **About Astra missile:**

- Astra is the indigenously developed Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM).
- The BVRAAM technology enables fighter-pilots to shoot precisely at the enemy targets which are beyond their visual range.
- The missile has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The missile has a range of over 70 km. It can fly towards the target at a speed of over 5,555 km per hour.
- The missile has a 15-kilogramme high-explosive pre-fragmented warhead and the missile is also capable of engaging targets of different ranges and altitudes.
- Further, Astra missile also has some highly advanced features like Electronic Counter-Countermeasures or ECCM. This feature enables Astra missile to overcome defensive measures put forth for the target by the enemy.

### Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme

**News:** Government has planned to link MGNREGA scheme wages to an updated inflation index. This is aimed at increasing wages and reviving rural demand.

**Facts:**

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### What is MGNREGA?

- The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is an employment guarantee act
- It was introduced in 2005 through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005.

### Objective:

- The Act aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

### Implementation:

- Ministry of Rural Development (MRD), Government of India in association with state governments monitors the implementation of the scheme.

### Features of the act:

- Demand driven scheme: Worker to be hired when he demands and not when the Government wants it.
- Gram Panchayat is mandated to provide employment within 15 days of work application failing which worker is entitled to unemployment allowance
- Payment of wages within 15 days of completion of work failing which worker is entitled to delay compensation of 0.05%/ day of wages earned.

### Concerns with the scheme:

- Insufficient budget allocation
- Poor wages rate
- Delay in wage payments
- Fabrication of job cards: Payments to fictitious workers
- Ineffective grievance redressal

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- Large number of incomplete work
- Poor quality of assets created.

### Measures to be taken:

- Proper and timely allocation of funds
- Ensuring minimum wages for workers
- Effective monitoring of projects
- Ensuring employment to rural households as per demand for work.
- Proper job card verification
- Ensuring efficient grievance redressal mechanism.

### U.S., India keen to wrap up trade deal

**News:** United States and India are working on ways to resolve long-disputed trade issues to sign a trade deal.

### **Facts:**

### **Issues between India and US:**

### **Trade imbalance:**

- India's exports to the U.S. in 2017-18 stood at \$47.9 billion while imports were at \$26.7 billion. The trade balance is in favor of India.

### **Tariffs:**

- The bilateral tensions have increased over each side's tariff policies.
- India has imposed long pending retaliatory tariffs on US products after the US had imposed 25% steel and 10% aluminum tariffs.

### **Generalized system of preferences (GSP):**

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- USA has terminated India's designation as a beneficiary developing country under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) programme.

### Data localisation rules:

- The United States has been asking India to withdraw the Data localisation rules.
- In April 2018, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had asked payment firms to ensure their data are stored exclusively on local servers. This has affected US firms such as MasterCard and Visa.

### E-commerce rules:

- US concerns regarding India's e-commerce rules which had imposed restrictions on how e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Walmart owned Flipkart conduct business.

### Additional information:

#### Generalized System of Preferences (GSP):

- GSP is a preferential tariff system extended by developed countries to developing countries.
- It is a preferential arrangement in the sense that it allows concessional low/zero tariff imports from developing countries.
- The countries like the United States and United Kingdom as well as the European Union give GSPs to imports from developing countries.
- The objective of GSP is to give development support to poor countries by promoting exports from them into the developed countries.

### About Data localisation:

- Data localisation is the act of storing data on any device physically present within the borders of a country.

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- Localisation mandates that companies collecting critical data about consumers must store and process them within the borders of the country.
- The main intent behind data localisation is to protect the personal and financial information of the country's citizens and residents from foreign surveillance and give local governments and regulators the jurisdiction to call for the data when required.

### National Antimicrobial resistance Hub, Kolkata

**News:** The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has inaugurated India's first National Antimicrobial Resistance Hub in Kolkata.

**Facts:**

**About the Hub:**

- The National Antimicrobial Resistance Hub has been developed by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in association with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- The hub will aim to identify antibiotics that work best for diseases and frame a policy for antibiotic use that will prevent resistance.
- It will also carry out basic research and have a repository of viral strains that are being collected from all over the country.
- The Kolkata centre would also be the hub for research on antibiotic resistance, not only for the country but for the entire South Asia.

**Additional information:**

**About antimicrobial resistance:**

- Antimicrobial resistance is the ability of a microorganism like bacteria, fungi, viruses, and parasites to stop an antimicrobial such as antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals and antimalarial from working against it.

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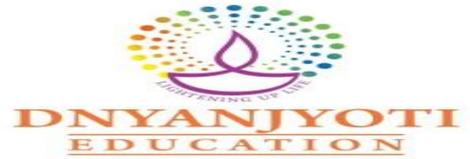
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- The World Health Organization (WHO) recognises AMR as a serious threat to global public health.

### **About ICMR:**

- The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), New Delhi is the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research.
- It is funded by the Government of India through the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

### **Government-funded NGOs come under RTI ambit, says SC**

**News:** The Supreme Court has held that Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) which are substantially funded by the government fall within the ambit of the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

### **Facts:**

### **Key highlights of judgement:**

- The Supreme Court has ruled that NGOs which receive considerable finances from the government fall under the category of “public authority” defined in Section 2(h) of the Right to Information (RTI) Act of 2005.
- This means that they have to disclose vital information ranging from finances to hierarchy to decisions to functioning, to the citizens who apply under RTI.
- An NGO may also include societies which are neither owned nor controlled by the government but if they are substantially funded by the government, directly or indirectly, they come under the RTI Act.

### **What is Substantial Funding?**

- The court said that substantial funding does not necessarily have to mean a major portion or more than 50%. Substantial financing can be both direct and indirect.

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- It said that if the government gives land in a city free of cost or on heavy discount to hospitals, educational institutions or any such body, this could also be substantial financing.

**Additional information:**

**Right to Information Act, 2005:**

- RTI Act provides for timely disclosure of information by citizens from both central and State Public Authorities. It seeks to empower citizens and promote accountability and transparency.
- Under the Act, Public Authorities are required to make disclosures on various aspects of their structure and functioning.
- This includes (a) disclosure on their organization (b) functions and structure (c) powers and duties of its officers and employees and (d) Financial information.

**Maharashtra govt to set up Cleanliness University**

**News:** The Government of Maharashtra has decided to set up 'Swachh Bharat World University'.

**Facts:**

- The 'Swachh Bharat World University' will be located in Wardha to mark Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary.
- The university will focus on research, education and finding permanent solutions for cleanliness.
- This university is being set up despite the Swachh Bharat Mission implementation; rapid urbanisation is generating large amounts of waste which is affecting the health of residents.

**Additional information:**

**About Swachh Bharat Mission**

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- Swachh Bharat Mission is a cleanliness campaign initiated by Govt. of India in 2014. It seeks to achieve a Clean India by 2019 as a tribute to the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- It has two sub-missions (a) Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) which is implemented by Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Jal Shakti Ministry and (b) Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) which is implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

### Reserve Bank wants stricter rules for e-commerce payments gateways

**News:** RBI has asked for stricter rules for E-commerce marketplaces acting as payment gateways and payment aggregators to other merchants.

**Facts:**

#### **What are payment gateways?**

- Payment gateways and payment aggregators refer to entities which provide technology infrastructure to route and facilitate the processing of an online payment transaction and perform other functions without actually handling the funds.
- They also facilitate e-commerce sites and merchants to accept payment instruments from customers for completion of their payment obligations to the merchants.

#### **Draft rules for payment gateways:**

- The draft said the payment aggregators should have a minimum net worth of 100 crore and if they don't manage to arrange that money within one year, they should stop doing their business.
- The entities should have a nodal officer responsible for regulatory and customer grievance handling functions whose details are prominently displayed on their websites.

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- Further, the authorised payment gateways and payment aggregators should also, if required, maintain the funds received from customers in an escrow account with a bank.



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