

May – 19

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Indian Army has flagged off Women Officers' Mountaineering Expedition to Mt. Bhagirathi-II to explore maximum potential of women officers in the field of adventure sports.
 - Mt. Bhagirathi-II (6512 meters) is located in the Garhwal Himalayas in Gangotri National Park. The peak rises right above the Gangotri glacier.

TAMIL NADU

First International Rail Coach Expo

- ❖ The first-ever International Rail Coach Expo (IRCE) was held in Chennai, Tamil Nadu to focus on Rail Coaches and train sets.



- ❖ The three-day expo was hosted by Integral Coach Factory (ICF) Chennai, under the Ministry of Railways, in coordination with CII (Confederation of Indian Industries) and RITES Ltd.
- ❖ It provided a unique platform to bring different suppliers under one roof and create synergy for “Make in India”.

NATIONAL

National Policy on Biofuels

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved National Policy on Biofuels – 2018 in order to promote biofuels in the country.
- ❖ The ethanol supply will help to
 - Reduce import dependency on crude oil which will, in turn, result in savings of forex.
 - Reduce CO₂ emissions and Green House Gas emissions by reducing crop burning and conversion of agricultural residues and wastes into biofuels.
- ❖ The policy categorizes biofuels to enable the extension of appropriate financial and fiscal incentives under each category
 - Basic Biofuels - First Generation (1G) bioethanol and biodiesel.
 - Advanced Biofuels - Second Generation (2G) ethanol, Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) to drop-in fuels, Third Generation (3G) biofuels, bio-CNG etc.

INTERNATIONAL

First Essential Diagnostics List

- ❖ The World Health Organisation (WHO) has published its first Essential Diagnostics List, a catalog of tests needed to diagnose most common diseases along with a number of global priority diseases.
- ❖ It aims to address people's inability to access diagnostic services, which results in them from receiving the correct treatment.
- ❖ The essential diagnostics list concentrates on in-vitro tests like tests of blood and urine.

ECONOMY

First India-dedicated investment fund

- ❖ The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC), a top state-run Chinese bank has launched China's first India-dedicated publicly offered investment fund.
- ❖ The fund has been named as Industrial and Commercial Bank Credit Suisse India Market Fund. ICBC is the largest in the world with over \$3.6 trillion in assets.
- ❖ The ICBC Credit Suisse Indian Market Fund (LOF) will invest in exchange-traded funds listed on more than 20 exchanges in Europe and US that are based on the Indian market.
- ❖ The fund opens the way for Chinese investors and provided a good tool for low-threshold investment in India.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

GM mustard

- ❖ The Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) has demanded more tests for genetically modified mustard- Dhara Mustard Hybrid (DMH -11) for "commercial cultivation.
- ❖ DMH -11 is transgenic mustard had been developed by a team of scientists Centre for Genetic Manipulation of Crop Plants at Delhi University led by former Vice-Chancellor Deepak Pental under the Government sponsored project.
- ❖ It is genetically modified variety of Herbicide Tolerant (HT) mustard.
- ❖ GEAC is apex body under Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change for regulating the manufacturing, use, import, export and storage of hazardous micro-organisms or genetically engineered organisms (GMOs) and cells in the country.

ENVIRONMENT

Microhyla kodial

- ❖ Scientists have discovered new frog species named *Microhyla kodial* or Mangaluru narrow-mouthed frog in a small industrial region in coastal Karnataka.



- ❖ It is christened *Microhyla kodial* after the city of Mangaluru (called kodial in Konkani language) from where they spotted it two years ago.
- ❖ The frog is seen only in the small industrial region which was former timber dumping yards surrounded by seaport, petrochemical, chemical and refinery industries.
- ❖ Mangaluru narrow-mouthed frog belongs to *Microhyla* genus which is primarily recorded from south Asia.
- ❖ It is greyish-brown in color with the thick olive-green band on its head, less-prominent dark green bands on rest of its body.

STATES

First all-woman Post Office Passport Seva Kendra

- ❖ The Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) run by an all-woman team began its operations in Phagwara, Punjab.



- ❖ This Kendra was 192nd POPSK in the country and the first one to be operated by an all-woman team.
- ❖ POPSK is Government initiative led by Ministry of External Affairs (India) (MEA) and Department of Posts (DoP), where Head Post Offices (HPO) and post offices are being utilized for delivery of passport related services to citizens.
- ❖ The first POPSK was inaugurated at the Mysuru Head Post office in Karnataka on January 2017.

SAWEN

- ❖ The fourth meeting of South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), an inter-governmental wildlife law enforcement agency was in Kolkata, West Bengal (India).
- ❖ It was the first meeting of SAWEN to be held in India since its inception in 2011.
- ❖ The two-day conference was attended by representatives of seven (excluding Pakistan) out of eight member countries.

- ❖ SAWEN is regional inter-governmental wildlife law enforcement support body of South Asian Countries.



- ❖ It was launched in January 2011 in Paro, Bhutan during the second meeting of the South Asia Expert Group on Illegal Wildlife Trade.
- ❖ Its secretariat is in Kathmandu, Nepal. Its regional network comprises of eight South Asia countries: Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

First woman lawyer to sworn in as SC judge

- ❖ Senior Advocate Indu Malhotra was sworn in as Judge of Supreme Court of India. She was administered the oath to the office by Chief Justice (CJI) Dipak Misra.
- ❖ With this, she became first woman Judge to be elevated directly from the Bar. Her appointment raises total tally of SC judges to 25 from sanctioned strengthened of 31 (including CJI).
- ❖ Overall, she will be seventh woman judge in SC, since it was established 67 years ago. In 1989, Justice M. FathimaBeevi became first woman judge in Supreme Court.



- ❖ In 2007, she became the second woman to be designated as a senior advocate by SC only after legendary Justice Leila Seth, who was given honor in 1977.



Nikkei Asia Prize

- ❖ The founder of Sulabh International, Dr. Bindeshwar Pathak was honored with the Nikkei Asia Prize in Japan for his contribution to Asia's development.



- ❖ Dr. Pathak was described as Indian social reformer tackling two of his country's biggest challenges — poor hygiene and discrimination. He was among three who were conferred with this award.
- ❖ He had founded Sulabh International in 1970. It is an NGO that works to promote human rights, environmental sanitation among other social services.
- ❖ It has built Sulabh flush composting toilets throughout India, contributing to better sanitation, safety for rural women and freedom from manual labor of removing human waste.
- ❖ Nikkei Inc. is one of the largest media corporations in Japan. It has been presenting Nikkei Asia Prize since 1996 to honor people in Asia who have made significant contributions in one of the three areas:
 - Economic and Business Innovation, Science, Technology and Environment and Culture and Community.
