



December - 09

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Gold and silver prizes will likely be given to the devotees who deliver fabric and jute luggage to the Thiruvannamalai Deepavathi pageant.
- ❖ The country's foreign exchange reserves crossed the \$450-billion mark for the first time ever which enabled the central bank to buy dollars from the market, thus checking any sharp appreciation of the rupee.
- ❖ Nirav Modi is the second businessman, after liquor tycoon Vijay Mallya, to be declared a fugitive economic offender under provisions of the Fugitive Economic Offenders (FEO) Act, 2018.
 - Nirav Modi is accused of defrauding the Punjab National Bank of more than Rs 10,000 crore by scamming a software used by banks worldwide.
- ❖ Cyclone Pawan is the 8th cyclone formed in the North Indian Ocean Region. This is the highest number of cyclones in a single year since 1976, when nine cyclonic storms had formed in the region.
 - The name 'Pawan' has been set as per suggestion by Sri Lanka with the guidelines of WMO.
- ❖ Sukapaika is, one of the several distributaries of the mighty Mahanadi river in Odisha, being choked to death gradually due to government apathy. The riverbed has suffered erosion and it is full of hyacinth.

NATIONAL

SPG (Amendment) Bill – 2019

- ❖ Parliament has passed the Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill, 2019.
- ❖ The SPG Bill will amend the SPG Act of 1988.
- ❖ The proposed amendments in the Special Protection Group (SPG) Bill aims to reduce the financial burden of VIP security on the state exchequer.

Amendments

- ❖ Reduced SPG Coverage - The protection to be offered only to the Prime Minister, former Prime Ministers and their immediate family members that will reside with him at his official residence.
- ❖ Time period - The security will be provided only for a period of five years to the former Prime Ministers and their immediate family after they leave the office.

About Special Protection Group

- ❖ The SPG was raised in 1985 to provide security cover to the Prime Minister, former Prime Ministers and their immediate family members.
- ❖ It was established after the assassination of PM Indira Gandhi by her own bodyguards in 1984.
- ❖ The SPG comprises of the personnel from the CRPF, Border Security Force and other Central and State force.
- ❖ The President of India does not come under SPG cover due to low threat. He is protected by the Indian Army's President Bodyguard Regiment.

INTERNATIONAL

China introduces new digital courts

- ❖ China has unveiled a new system of digital justice with artificial-intelligence judges, cyber-courts, and verdicts delivered on chat apps.
- ❖ China developed digital courts with virtual judges conducted over social media.
- ❖ The 'mobile court' option on WeChat - China's leading social-media messaging platform - allows users to complete case filings, hearings, and evidence exchange without physically appearing in court.



ECONOMY

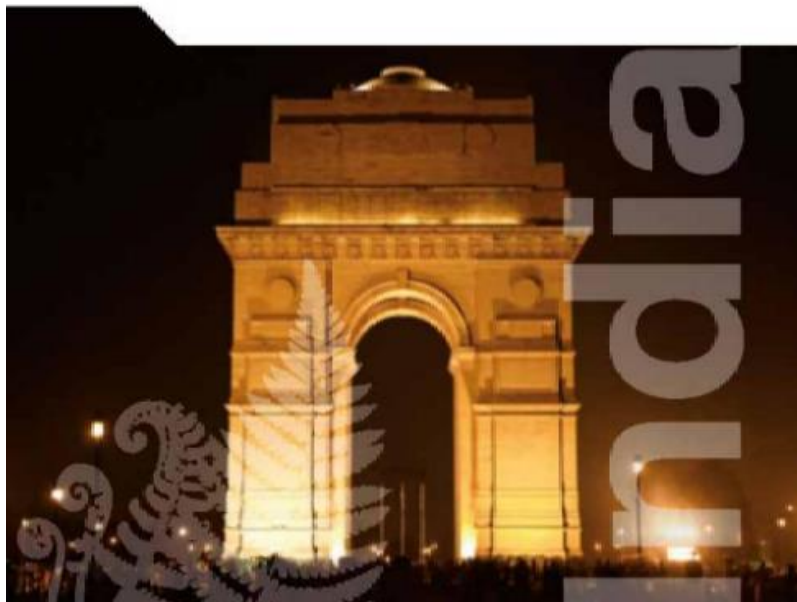
Economy survey of India - OECD

- ❖ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is the Paris-based inter-governmental economic organisation.
- ❖ The 2019 edition of OECD Economic Surveys: India report has projected India's gross domestic product (GDP) to grow at 5.8 percent for the financial year 2019-20.

- ❖ For 2020, the survey projects India's GDP growth to be 6.2 percent and 6.4 percent in 2021.
- ❖ Report has said that creation of quality jobs, underemployment and income inequality remain challenges in India.
- ❖ Higher public spending on health and education and to adhere to the set target on public debt to GDP (gross domestic product).
- ❖ The survey recommends the creation of an independent fiscal council to govern the transparency of off-budget transactions and contingent liabilities.



OECD Economic Surveys **India**



- Promoting solid and sustainable growth
- Addressing social challenges
- Seizing opportunities from enhanced participation in the global economy
- Providing better housing for all
- Greening growth to improve wellbeing and limit climate change



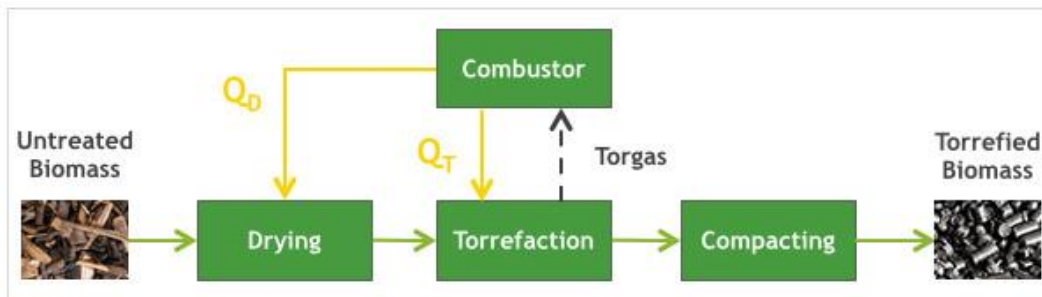
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Swedish Torrefaction Technology

- ❖ To overcome decline in air quality in Delhi issue, India is testing Swedish technology — torrefaction that can convert rice stubble into 'bio-coal'.

- ❖ The government has funded a pilot project at the National Agri-Food Biotechnology Institute in Mohali (Punjab) with a Swedish company to evaluate the feasibility of the technology.
- ❖ Torrefaction is a thermal process to convert biomass (at 250 degrees celsius - 350 degrees celsius) into a coal-like material, which has better fuel characteristics than the original biomass.
- ❖ Advantages - Torrefied biomass is more brittle, and less energy-intensive. It will reduce CO₂ emissions by 95%.
- ❖ It has lower sulfur and ash content (compared with coal), etc.

BASIC TORREFACTION PRINCIPLE



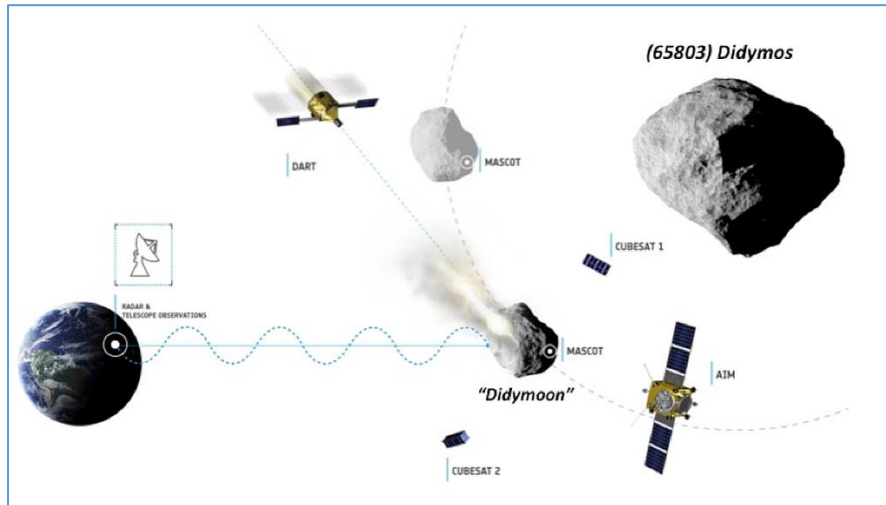
Hera mission

- ❖ The European Space Agency (ESA) has approved the budget of Hera, the European component of the mission to slam a spacecraft into an asteroid.
- ❖ Due to launch in 2024, Hera would travel to a binary asteroid system – the Didymos pair of near-Earth asteroids.

About Hera Mission & DART

- ❖ It is the first spacecraft to explore a binary asteroid.
- ❖ The mission will launch to asteroid 65803 Didymos, a binary pair made up of one large body and a smaller object that orbits around it, in 2023. Aptly nicknamed Didymoon.
- ❖ However, Hera mission won't be the first to reach Didymos.
- ❖ NASA plans to launch the Double Asteroid Redirection Test (DART) between 2020 and 2021, which will target Didymoon as part of its planetary defence programme.
- ❖ DART is a planetary defense-driven test of one of the technologies for preventing the Earth impact of a hazardous asteroid: the kinetic impactor.
- ❖ DART's primary objective is to demonstrate a kinetic impact on a small asteroid.

- ❖ DART and Hera are conceived together as part of the international ‘Asteroid Impact Deflection Assessment’ experiment.



STATES

Odisha's Kalia scheme to be merged with PM- KISAN

- ❖ The Odisha government has decided to merge its flagship scheme - Kalia with the Centre's Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) yojana, apparently due to financial constraint.
- ❖ As per the plan, instead of 10,000 under the KALIA scheme, the state government will now give Rs 4,000 to farmers while the remaining 6,000 will be given to farmers under the PM-KISAN yojana.
- ❖ The state govt will continue to pay 12,000 per year under the KALIA scheme.

About Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi:

- ❖ It is a Central Sector Scheme under Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers welfare.
- ❖ Under this programme, landholding farmer families, having cultivable land up to 2 hectares, will be provided direct income support at the rate of Rs. 6,000 per year.

Darjeeling tea - GI Tag

- ❖ Two tea varieties of Darjeeling were registered under “Geographical Indication of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999”.
- ❖ It includes Green Tea and White Tea of Darjeeling.
- ❖ India enacted the GI of Goods act, 2009 as a member of WTO and as a signatory of TRIPS agreement.



PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS

Yanomami Shaman Davi Kopenawa - Right Livelihood Award

- ❖ Renowned Yanomami shaman Davi Kopenawa, the “Dalai Lama of the Rainforest,” 2019’s Right Livelihood Award.
- ❖ This award is known as the “Alternative Nobel Prize”.
- ❖ The Right Livelihood Award is an international award to “honour and support those offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us.”
- ❖ The prize was established in 1980 by German-Swedish philanthropist Jakob von Uexkull, and is presented annually in early December.
- ❖ Davi led his people’s 20-year campaign to protect their Amazonian territory.

