

January - 06

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ In 2019, the number of farmers' suicides in the Marathwada of Maharashtra was recorded to be as high as 835, till November.

NATIONAL

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA)

- ❖ The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) announced that eight states namely Maharashtra, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Nagaland, Assam, Tamil Nadu, Punjab and Karnataka finalized their action plan to boost agricultural exports.
- ❖ The product clusters selected were at Jalandhar (Potato), Sangli (Grapes), Salem (Poultry products), Theni (Banana), Chittoor (Mango).
- ❖ The Agricultural Export Policy was introduced in December 2018.
- ❖ The policy aimed at doubling agricultural exports from 30 billion USD to 60 billion USD by 2022.
- ❖ In 2016, India's share in global agricultural exports was merely 2.2%.

Cyber Safe Women' initiative

- ❖ The Maharashtra government has launched a 'cyber safe women' campaign across the state, on January 3, the birth anniversary of Indian social reformer, Savitribai Phule.
- ❖ It will educate women about how the web is used by anti-social elements to commit various types of crimes.
- ❖ Savitribai Phule was the first female teacher of India.

Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan Yojana

- ❖ The National Pension Scheme for traders, Shopkeepers and Self-Employed persons, also called the Pradhan Mantri Laghu Vyapari Maan-dhan Yojana was launched in July 2019.
- ❖ It aimed at benefitting 3 crore small traders and shopkeepers
- ❖ The Government set a target of 50 lakh enrolment by the end of March 2020.



- ❖ But it attracted only 25000 beneficiaries.
- ❖ Among all states Uttar Pradesh has highest registrations with 6,765 persons.
- ❖ No one has so far registered in the scheme in the states of Mizoram and Lakshadweep.
- ❖ The scheme is being implemented by Ministry of Labour and Employment.

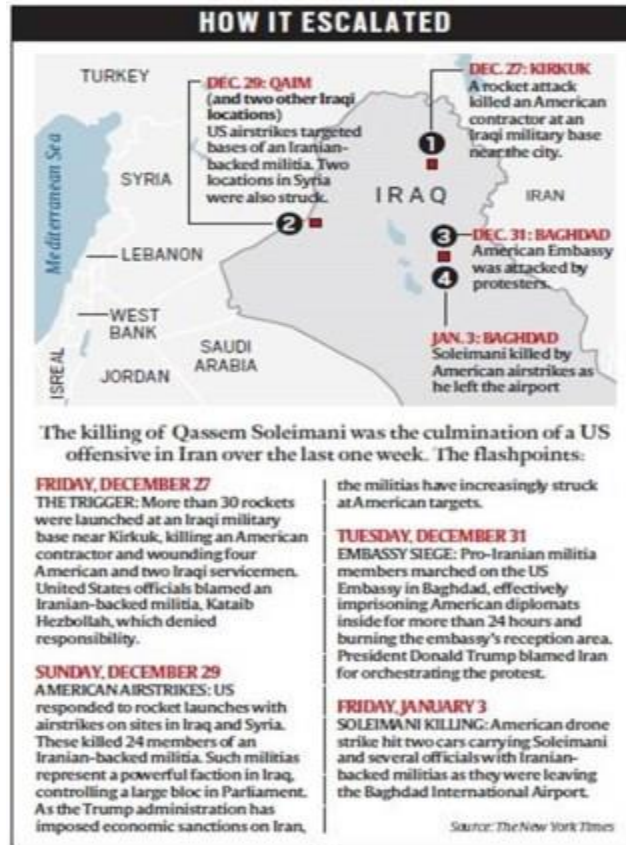
INTERNATIONAL

UNESCO creative Cities Network (UCCN)

- ❖ The government of Hanoi recently held a ceremony to formally announce that the Vietnamese capital city is joining the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN).
- ❖ UCCN was created in 2004.
- ❖ The Network covers seven creative fields: Crafts and Folk Arts, Media Arts, Film, Design, Gastronomy, Literature and Music
- ❖ There are five Indian cities in UCCN.
 - Jaipur - Crafts and Folk Arts (2015).
 - Varanasi - Music (2015).
 - Chennai - Music (2017).
 - Mumbai – Film (2019).
 - Hyderabad – Gastronomy (2019).

USA vs Iran

- ❖ The US army killed Iran's most powerful military commander General Qasem Soleimani.
- ❖ He was killed at Baghdad airport of Iraq.
- ❖ He was the head of Quds Force.
- ❖ Quds is the Arabic word for Jerusalem.
- ❖ It is the overseas operations wing of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) and a US-designated Foreign Terrorist Organisation.
- ❖ Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini set up the IRGC in 1979 after the Iranian Revolution ended to protect the Islamic order of the new Iranian government.



ECONOMY

India's Forex reserves

- ❖ India's foreign exchange reserves touches a record high of 457.468 billion USD in the week ended on 27th December 2019.
- ❖ India's foreign exchange reserves are mainly composed of US dollar in the forms of US government bonds and institutional bonds with nearly 6% of forex reserves in gold.
- ❖ The Foreign Currency Assets also include investments in US Treasury bonds, bonds of other selected governments and deposits with foreign central and commercial banks.
- ❖ India is at 7th position (December 2019) in List of countries by foreign-exchange reserves, just below Republic of China (Taiwan).

Composition

- Foreign currency assets - 424.936 billion USD
- Gold reserves - 27.392 billion USD

- Special Drawing Rights with the International Monetary Fund - 1.441 billion USD
- country's reserve position in the IMF - 3.7 billion USD

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

AK-203 assault rifles

- ❖ The Indian Army will sign MoU with Russia to procure AK-203 assault rifles.
- ❖ Apart from the AK-203 rifles, the Indian army recently received the first batch of 10,000 SIG-716 assault rifles from US.
- ❖ Currently Indian army is using indigenous INSAS (Indian National Small Arms System) rifles.
- ❖ INSAS is a light machine gun that is currently being manufactured at Ordnance Factory Trichy, Ishapore Arsenal and Kanpur.



Project NETRA

- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organization signed a pact with Indian Institute of Astrophysics to establish an optical telescope under "Project NETRA".
- ❖ Project NETRA was launched by ISRO in September 2019.
- ❖ Under the Project, ISRO plans to set up observational facilities that will help in making early warnings to satellites about debris and hazards in their orbit.
- ❖ The project will help India detect threats to Indian satellites from debris.
- ❖ Currently, India operates 15 communication satellites, 13 remote sensing satellites and eight navigation satellites.

- ❖ Apart from ISRO, DRDO (Defence Research Development Organisation) operates NETRA (Network Traffic Analysis).
- ❖ It is a software network used to analyse internet traffic.
- ❖ It is used by Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), Intelligence Bureau (IB) and other intelligence agencies of Government of India.

ENVIRONMENT

Red brittle star

- ❖ Researchers have shown that red brittle star, which are relatives of starfish, can see even though it does not have eyes.
- ❖ The red brittle star lives in the coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea.
- ❖ It becomes only the second creature, after a sea urchin species, known to have this ability (barring freak cases in other species).
- ❖ The ability to see without eyes is known as extraocular vision.
- ❖ The extraocular vision is facilitated by the photoreceptor cells found on their bodies.



STATES

Bhitarkanika National Park

- ❖ According to the recent census at the Bhitarkanika National Park, the population of salt water crocodiles have increased to 1,757 as compared to 1,742 in 2018.
- ❖ The IUCN status of salt water crocodile is Least Concern.
- ❖ The Park obtained the status of Ramsar site in 2002.
- ❖ It was the second area to get the status after Chilika lake.
- ❖ The Park is the second largest mangrove ecosystem in India.



Farm loan waiver

- ❖ The new Maharashtra government has announced a loan waiver for farmers who had up to Rs 2 lakh in pending loans between April 1, 2015 and March 31, 2019.
- ❖ Maharashtra thus became possibly the only state to have offered two consecutive farm loan waivers within two-and-a-half years of each other.
- ❖ Back in 2008-09, the then UPA government at the Centre had announced a loan waiver scheme for the entire country.
- ❖ States like Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and others have announced similar schemes in the recent past.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS, AND EVENTS

Marine Ecosystems-Challenges and Opportunities (MECOS)

- ❖ The Marine Ecosystems-Challenges and Opportunities (MECOS), the third international symposium, is to be held in Kochi.
- ❖ The symposium is conducted by the Marine Biological association of India.
- ❖ The symposium is to focus on the Sustainable Development Goal of the United Nations, SDG-14.
- ❖ SDG-14 says, “Conserve and Sustainably use the oceans and its resources for sustainable development”.

Antarrashtriya Yoga Diwas Media Samman Award

- ❖ The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will confer “Antarrashtriya Yoga Diwas Media Samman” award to 30 media houses.
- ❖ The award is being presented for the first time.
- ❖ The aim of the award is to acknowledge positive role of media in disseminating outreach of Yoga.

