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Prelims 2020 – Module 2

1. Three scientists won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry for their work developing lithium-ion batteries, which have reshaped energy storage and transformed cars, mobile phones and many other devices and reduced the world's reliance on fossil fuels. The prize went to John B. Goodenough, 97, a German-born engineering professor at the University of Texas; M. Stanley Whittingham, 77, a British-American chemistry professor at the State University of New York; and Japan's Akira Yoshino, 71, of Meijo University. The three each had a set of breakthroughs that laid the foundation for the development of a commercial rechargeable battery. Lithium-ion batteries, the first truly portable and rechargeable batteries, took more than a decade to develop. He harnessed enormous tendency of lithium, the lightest metal, to give away its electrons to make a battery capable of generating over two volts. By 1980, Mr. Goodenough had doubled the capacity of the battery to four volts by using cobalt oxide in the cathode one of two electrodes, along with the anode, that make up the ends of a battery. But that battery remained too explosive for commercial use and needed to be tamed. That's where Mr. Yoshino's work in the 1980s came in. He substituted petroleum coke, a carbon material, in the battery's anode. This step paved the way for the first lightweight, safe, durable and rechargeable commercial batteries to be built and enter the market in 1991.
2. Interconnect usage charge (IUC) - IUC is paid by one operator to another, when its customers make outgoing mobile calls to the other operator's customers. These calls are known as mobile off-net calls. IUC charges are fixed by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and currently stand at 6 paise per minute. The IUC is determined based on the cost per call. The terms 'On-Net' and 'Off-Net' are used to describe call or messaging types. 'On-Net' is used when your call or message originates on your home operator's network and terminates to another mobile number that resides with your operator. It does not matter if the person you are calling is using the home network or is off Island roaming with a different provider. 'Off-Net' applies when the call or message is made on a different network, e.g. whilst you are roaming, or if you are using your home network and make a call or send a message to a number that resides with a different network provider.
3. India has moved down 10 places to rank 68th on an annual global competitiveness index, largely due to improvements witnessed by several other economies, while Singapore has replaced the U.S. as the world's most competitive economy. India, which was ranked 58th

in the annual Global Competitiveness Index compiled by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF), is among the worst-performing BRICS nations along with Brazil (ranked even lower than India at 71st this year).

4. The coastal town of Mamallapuram is evocative of ancient maritime links between the Pallava empire and China 2,000 years ago. Bodhidharma, the founder of the Dhyana school of meditation at the Shaolin monastery in Henan province in China, hailed from this region.
5. The 8th India-China joint training exercise 'HAND-IN-HAND 2019' with the theme counter terrorism under United Nations mandate was conducted at Umroi, Meghalaya in December 2019. The aim of the 14 day exercise was to practice joint planning and conduct of counter terrorist operations in semi urban terrain. Two tactical exercises are scheduled during the training; one on counter terrorism scenario and the other on Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations. The exercise was previously held in December last year at Chengdu, China. The exercise didn't take place in 2017 due to the 72-days long standoff between Indian and Chinese troops in Doklam.
6. The 2019 Turkish offensive into north-eastern Syria, code-named Operation Peace Spring by the Turkish Armed Forces, was a cross-border military operation conducted by the Turkish military and the Syrian National Army against the Syrian Democratic Forces and the Syrian Arab Army in northeastern Syria.
7. A Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) is a company registered under the Companies Act, 2013 of India, engaged in the business of loans and advances, acquisition of shares, stock, bonds, hire-purchase insurance business or chit-fund business, but does not include any institution whose principal business is that of agriculture, industrial activity, purchase or sale of any goods (other than securities) or providing any services and sale/purchase/construction of immovable property. The working and operations of NBFCs are regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) within the framework of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 (Chapter III-B) and the directions issued by it. On November 9, 2017, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a notification outlining norms for outsourcing of functions/services by Non-Bank Financial Institution (NBFCs) As per the new norms, NBFCs cannot outsource core management functions like internal audit, management of investment portfolio, strategic and compliance functions for know your customer (KYC) norms and sanction of loans. Staff of service providers should have access to customer information only up to an extent which is required to perform the

outsourced function. NBFCs perform functions similar to that of banks but there are a few differences-

- Provides Banking services to People without holding a Bank license,
 - An NBFC cannot accept Demand Deposits,
 - An NBFC is not a part of the payment and settlement system and as such as
 - An NBFC cannot issue Cheques drawn on itself, and
 - Deposit insurance facility of the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation is not available for NBFC depositors, unlike banks,
 - An NBFC is not required to maintain Reserve Ratios (CRR, SLR etc.)
 - An NBFC cannot indulge Primarily in Agricultural, Industrial Activity, Sale-Purchase, Construction of Immovable Property
 - Foreign Investment allowed up to 100 %
 - An NBFC companies working in Financial Body and Money handling.
8. Central Information Commission (CIC) is the highest appeal body under the RTI Act.
 9. Parswanatha was the the 23rd Jain Tirthankara.
 10. “Political Guiding Principles Agreement” is an agreement which was signed between India and China in 2005 to solve the long-standing border dispute. The 2005 agreement had virtually spelt out the contours of a settlement, taking into account the two sides’ “strategic and reasonable interests”. It had prescribed any settlement “should safeguard due interests of their settled populations in the border areas”.
 11. A decision has been taken to establish friendly provincial-city relations between Fujian Province of China and Tamil Nadu, Quanzhou City and Chennai City, as part of “a new chapter of the Maritime Silk Road”— a part of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Both countries have also agreed to explore the possibility of establishing an academy to study links between Mamallapuram and the Fujian province on the lines of the experience between Ajanta (Aurangabad) and Dunhuang, besides conducting research on maritime links. 2020 would be designated the Year of India-China Cultural and People to People Exchanges.
 12. In 2015, sister city agreement between city of Aurangabad and city of Dunhuang was announced. These two cities have deep cultural similarities, which date back to 4th century as the Buddhist monks from the most significant Ajanta caves near Aurangabad carried

the art of cave hewing to China, where the earliest caves complex sculpted were Mogao cave near Dunhuang.

13. The agreements for Chennai and Chongqing and Hyderabad and Qingdao as sister cities were also signed in 2015.
14. Sirumugai is a Panchayat town in Coimbatore district in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, which is well known for Silk Sarees Bazaars.
15. Keeladi excavation site is a Sangam period settlement that is being excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India and the Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department.[1] This excavation site is located 12 km southeast of Madurai in Tamil Nadu, near the town of Keeladi (also spelt as Keezhadi) in Sivagangai district. This is a large-scale excavation carried out in Tamil Nadu after the Adichanallur archaeological site. The settlement lies on the bank of the Vaigai River and it reflects the ancient culture of Tamil people. Epigraphist V. Vedachalam, who served as a domain expert for the excavation, dated the excavated remains between 5th century BCE and 3rd century CE.
16. An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good', 51 and 100 'satisfactory', 101 and 200 'moderate', 201 and 300 'poor', 301 and 400 'very poor', and 401 and 500 'severe'.
17. The Great Nicobar Island of Andaman has an area of about 1044 sq. km. The island is home to one of the most primitive tribes of India — the Shompens. The island includes the Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve (GNBR) comprising of the Galathea National Park and the Campbell Bay National Park. The island harbours a wide spectrum of ecosystems from tropical wet evergreen forests, mountain ranges and coastal plains. The island is also home to giant robber crabs, crab-eating macaques, the rare megapode as well as leatherback turtles.
18. The Indian Army is developing an automated program that will provide real time information to it about the life and present conditions of its tanks, vehicles, guns and air assets and their upcoming problems. The program codenamed 'Project Beehive' will be a centralised and automated system based in Delhi under the army's Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) corps. It will be connected to each of the 2,000 workshops being run by the EME. The EME is tasked with carrying out repair, refurbishing and overhaul of the army's equipment, ranging from tanks, infantry combat vehicles, artillery guns including the new M777 Ultra Light Howitzers, small arms, radars and aviation assets. Each workshop has a two-year old automated program called 'wasp', which compiles all data such as equipment under repair, how many to be repaired and their future life. The wasps will be integrated with the Beehive and thereby provide every data

to it. The Army is collaborating with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology on this project.

19. Nobel prize in economics was awarded to three economists who have worked, and are still working, to understand and alleviate poverty — Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo of Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Michael Kremer of Harvard University.
20. ‘Operation Peace Spring’ by Turkey aimed to create a “safe zone” that is 480 km wide and up to 35 km deep inside Syria. Ankara says it intends to relocate some of the 3.6 million Syrian refugees living in Turkey in this “safe zone”.
21. A FASTag uses Radio Frequency Identification technology to make cashless payments on toll booths through a prepaid account linked to it. The tag is fixed to the windscreen of a vehicle and an RFID antenna in the canopy of the toll gate scans the QR code and the tag identification number, following which the boom barrier lifts to allow a vehicle to pass through it without the need for a vehicle to stop. A FASTag is linked to a bank account. When a vehicle passes through a toll, an SMS with date, time and place of transaction will be sent to the owner of the vehicle. The master data of all transactions will be with the concessionaire of the toll booth concerned, along with the bank with which the owner has registered the FASTag and the National Payments Corporation of India. Usage of FASTag would bring the entire system under the National Electronic Toll Collection programme of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.
22. World Food Day is an international day celebrated every year around the world on 16 October in honor of the date of the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations in 1945. World Food Day is observed annually to address the problem of global hunger. The theme this year is ‘Our Actions are our Future; Healthy Diets for a #ZeroHunger World’.
23. The ODF++ tag, the highest category, is accorded to a ULB if not a single person defecates/urinates in the open, all public toilets are functional and faecal sludge and sewage is treated there. A third-party agency carries out observations at randomised sampled locations to verify claims.
24. The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) is a set of guidelines issued by the Election Commission to regulate political parties and candidates prior to elections, to ensure free and fair elections. This is in keeping with Article 324 of the Constitution, which gives the Election Commission the power to supervise elections to the Parliament and state legislatures. The MCC is operational from the date that the election schedule is announced till the date that results are announced. The MCC includes a list of guidelines used for

regulating political parties and their activities just ahead of elections. The rules not only apply to political speeches, polling day, polling booths, portfolios, rallies, general conduct and even contents of election manifestos. The MCC first came to effect during state assembly elections in Kerala in 1960. It was formally introduced by the Election Commission in 1979 in a bid to regulate the party in power from gaining an undue advantage.

25. Tiger Triumph is a bilateral tri-service amphibious military exercise involving the armed forces of India and the United States. It is the first tri-service military exercise between the two countries. India has previously only held tri-service exercises with Russia.
26. Starting 2002, USA has been negotiating foundational military cooperation Agreements with India. They are GSOMIA (General Security of Military Information Agreement) signed in 2012; LSA (Logistic Support Agreement), signed in 2016 as LEMOA (Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement); CISMOA (Communication Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement), signed in 2018 as COMCASA (Communications Compatibility & Security Agreement); and BECA (Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-spatial Cooperation), yet to be signed. These Agreements provide that the military transporters of USA and allied countries can use Indian military bases for refuelling, repair & refit, and jointness of US-Indian military forces.
27. International law on Transboundary Water Resources management is guided by the Helsinki rules. The Helsinki Rules on the Uses of the Waters of International Rivers is an international guideline regulating how rivers and their connected groundwaters that cross national boundaries may be used, adopted by the International Law Association (ILA) in Helsinki, Finland in August 1966. These rules make provision for the reasonable and equitable beneficial use of water by riparian states. There is an Indus River treaty signed by India and Pakistan, according to which India is bound to release water to Pakistan.
28. Department of Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying has released the 20th Livestock Census report. According to data from the recently released 20th Livestock Census, there are 4.85 crore desi (native) milch cows in the country, less than 1% higher than the 4.81 crore population in the last census in 2012. On the other hand, the milch population of exotic and crossbred cattle — including varieties such as Jersey or Holsteins which have much higher milk yields — saw a whopping growth of 32% over the last seven years, growing from 1.9 crore to 2.5 crore animals. The Livestock Census has been conducted in the country periodically since 1919-20. The Livestock Census covers all domesticated animals and its headcounts. So far 19

such censuses have been conducted in participation with State Governments and UT Administrations. The 20th Livestock Census was conducted in participation with all States and Union Territories. The enumeration was done both in rural and urban areas. Various species of animals (Cattle, Buffalo, Mithun, Yak, Sheep, Goat, Pig, Horse, Pony, Mule, Donkey Camel, Dog, Rabbit and Elephant)/poultry birds (Fowl, Duck, Emu, Turkeys, Quail and other poultry birds) possessed by the households, household enterprises/non-household enterprises and institutions have been counted at their site. Visit this link for a brief summary of the report: <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1588304>

29. The Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying (AH&D) is one of the Departments of the newly created Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.
30. Tulagi, less commonly known as Tulaghi, is a small island in Solomon Islands, just off the south coast of Ngella Sule. The town of the same name on the island was the capital of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate from 1896 to 1942 and is today the capital of the Central Province. The island of Tulagi in the Pacific Ocean is now at the center of a strategic game of diplomatic chess. Since Solomon Islands established diplomatic ties with China, the US and Taiwan have sat up and taken notice. An Island with only about 1200 inhabitants, Tulagi has been leased to a Chinese company as part of a 'strategic cooperation agreement.' The company intends to develop a refinery on the island, but its potential use as a military base has experts worried. The deal came about after the Solomon Islands broke off diplomatic ties with Taiwan. The diplomatic loss was a strategic gain for China, which now has an island in waters that have traditionally been under the US sphere of influence. China claims these islands and unilaterally drew this nine-dash line to claim all of this.
31. A Buddhist monastery in Ladakh in Kargil district could soon be given Central protection as the Archaeological Survey of India on Tuesday invited objections or suggestions on declaring the Rangdum monastery a monument of national importance. The ASI invited comments for two months from the notification, after which the monastery could be declared to be of national importance, making it a Centrally protected site. Rangdum Monastery is a Tibetan Buddhist monastery belonging to the Gelugpa sect, situated on top of a small but steep sugarloaf hill at an altitude of 4,031 m at the head of the Suru Valley, in Ladakh.
32. India is ranked 102 of 117 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2019, behind its neighbours Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The report, prepared jointly by Irish aid agency Concern Worldwide and German organisation Welt Hunger Hilfe termed the level

of hunger in India “serious”. In 2018, India was ranked 103 out of 119 countries. In 2000, the country was ranked 83 out of 113 countries. The Global Hunger Index score is calculated on four indicators — undernourishment; child wasting, that is the share of children under the age of five who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition; child stunting, that is children under the age of five who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition; and child mortality, the mortality rate of children under five years.

33. Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently extolled the Gupta ruler Skandagupta for his administrative virtues and for keeping off the “invasion of the Huns”. Skandagupta’s Bhitari pillar inscription suggests that he restored the Gupta power by defeating his enemies, who may have been rebels or foreign invaders. He repulsed an invasion by the Indo-Hephthalites (known as Hunas in India). He seems to have maintained control of his inherited territory, and is generally considered the last of the great Gupta Emperors. The Gupta genealogy after him is unclear, but he was most probably succeeded by Purugupta, who appears to have been his half-brother. Skandagupta’s predecessor was his father Kumargupta I. The Bhitari pillar inscription of Skandagupta, was discovered in Bhitari, Saidpur, Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh, and dates to the reign of Gupta Empire ruler Skandagupta (c. 455 – c. 467 CE). Among other things, the inscription is extremely important in understanding the chronology of the various Gupta rulers. It also mentions the conflict between Skandagupta and the Pushyamitras as well as the Hunas.
34. After the Balakot air strikes in February, the Army fast-tracked procurement of 155-mm Excalibur precision-guided ammunition from the U.S., and it has recently been inducted. The ammunition gives the artillery guns extended range and the ability to hit targets with very high accuracy. The proposal and acquisition were fast-tracked, thanks to the delegation of financial powers to the Service Headquarters and of emergency powers to the Vice-Chiefs of the Service Headquarters. The Excalibur projectile is developed by Raytheon and BAE Systems Bofors. According to information on Raytheon’s website, the Excalibur provides accurate “first-round effects” at all ranges in all weather conditions and “extends the reach of .39-calibre artillery to 40 km and .52-calibre artillery to more than 50 km. The Army inducted its first modern artillery guns in November last year: M-777 Ultra Light Howitzers (ULHs) from the U.S. and K9 Vajra-T self-propelled guns from South Korea. The Army has the older battle- proven Bofors 155-mm guns in service, and is inducting the 155-mm Dhanush towed gun.

35. A mode-S transponder is an electronic address which is unique to a country and each plane. These are assigned under different categories — IAF, civilian aircraft and the AAI's ground equipment.
36. Indian Navy stealth frigate INS Tarkash joined the UK Royal Navy's HMS Destroyer in the English Channel for their annual Konkan Exercise in August 2019. Konkan is a long-running exercise designed to test the ability of the two Commonwealth navies to operate side-by-side during war and other crunch scenarios. This was the 14th edition of the annual bilateral exercise.
37. Aflatoxin-M1 & Maltodextrin are the contaminants in adulterated milk. Aflatoxin-M1 comes in the milk through feed and fodder that are currently not regulated in the country. India is the world's largest producer of milk. The total estimated milk production in the country was 176.35 million tonnes during 2017-18.
38. What will be the consequences for Pakistan when it is put in FATF 'Grey List' - it would be difficult for the country to get financial aid from the IMF, the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and the European Union.
39. The second edition of 'India Myanmar Naval Exercise' IMNEX-2019 was conducted onboard INS Ranvijay in October 2019. The joint exercise will encompass a variety of operations including anti-air and surface firing exercises, flying exercises using integral helicopter and seamanship evolutions at sea.
40. The Uttarakhand government has put a total ban on the manufacture, distribution and sale of products like gutka and pan masala, which have a high content of tobacco and nicotine.
41. The government is in the process of appointing the Deputy Governor in-charge of Monetary Policy at the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The Financial Sector Regulatory Appointment Search Committee (FSRASC) is responsible for selecting the candidate. The central bank has four Deputy Governors of which two are appointed from outside — one, a commercial banker and the other, an economist. The remaining two are promoted from within the RBI. The importance of the economist-Deputy Governor can be gauged from the fact that the person is on the monetary policy committee that decides on interest rate and also handles the all-important monetary policy department.
42. Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi has recommended Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde as his successor and the 47th Chief Justice of India in keeping with convention and the seniority norm, sources said. The Memorandum of Procedure for appointment of judges to the Supreme Court prescribes that the “appointment to the office of Chief Justice of

India should be of the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court considered fit to hold the office”.

43. In October 2019, members of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) agreed to maintain its funding at \$1 trillion but postponed changes to its voting structure. USA is the funds largest shareholder. The newly agreed package will leave the IMF quotas (the primary source of IMF funds) unchanged. The IMF quotas determine the voting shares. The quotas will be reviewed before the end of 2023. IMF quotas are distributed according to a four pronged formula that considers a member country's GDP, its economic openness, its “economic variability” and international reserves. India's quota is 2.76% and China's is 6.41%, while the U.S.'s quota is 17.46 % (translates to a vote share of 16.52%) giving it a unique veto power over crucial decisions at the IMF, many of which require a supermajority of 85%. Quotas are supposed to be reviewed every five years although these reviews can be delayed — as was the case with the 14th review. The 15th quota review is currently under way.
44. The States need not take the Centre's approval to define what constitutes unclassified land as forest, the Forest Advisory Committee (FAC) of the Environment Ministry, comprising independent experts and officials in the Centre's forestry division, has clarified. The freedom to define land, not already classified as forests by the Centre or State records, as forest has been the prerogative of the States since 1996 and stems from a Supreme Court order, called the Godavarman judgment. The FAC is the apex body that deliberates on granting permission to industry to fell forests. The conundrum of defining forests has been around since the 1980s. The 1996 Supreme Court judgment expanded the definition of forest to include lands that were already notified by the Centre as forests, that appear in government records as forests as well as those that fell in the “dictionary definition” of forest. The latter clause allows the States to evolve their own criteria and define tracts of land as forest, and these would then be bound by forest conservation laws.
45. Fossils of tiny, horseshoe-shaped creatures that inched along the ocean floor in single-line formations some 480 million years ago reveal the earliest known collective animal behaviour, researchers have found. The remains of now-extinct creatures called trilobites were almost perfectly preserved in the Moroccan desert near the town of Zagora, they reported in the journal *Scientific Reports*. Like all arthropods — a phylum that includes insects, centipedes, spiders and crustaceans — trilobites had a segmented body and an exoskeleton.

46. According to a latest report by the Environment Ministry, India has 2,967 tigers, with 526 of them in Madhya Pradesh alone — the highest in the country. There are six tiger reserves in Madhya Pradesh — Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Panna, Satpura, Sanjay-Dubri and Pench.
47. Pettathulal, also known as Petta Kettu, is a historic ritualistic dance held annually on 27th Dhanu at Erumely in the district of Kottayam in Kerala. The bespattering of brightly coloured powders constitutes an indispensable part of the Petta Thullal ritual.
48. The Union Cabinet has decided to hike the minimum support price (MSP) for rabi crops for the marketing season 2020-21. The increase is based on the principle that MSP should be at least 1.5 times the all-India weighted average cost of production. This MSP policy, whereby the farmers are assured of a minimum of 50% as margin of profit, is one of the important and progressive steps towards doubling farmers' income by 2022 and improving their welfare substantively. The highest increase has been recommended for lentils (increase of ₹325 to ₹4,800 a quintal) followed by safflower (increase of ₹270 to ₹5,215 a quintal) and gram (an increase of ₹255 to ₹4,875). The MSP of rapeseed and mustard has been increased by ₹225 to ₹4,425. For both wheat and barley, it has been increased by ₹85 to ₹1,925 and ₹1,525 per quintal, respectively. "In the case of cereals, the Food Corporation of India and other designated State agencies would continue to provide price support to the farmers," the government said. "State governments will undertake procurement of coarse grains with the prior approval of the Government and would distribute the entire procured quantity under the National Food Security Act (NFSA). The subsidy will be provided only for the quantity issued under NFSA.
49. Thotlakonda Buddhist Complex is situated in Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. The Telugu name Totlakonda derived from the presence of a number of rock-cut cisterns hewn into the bedrock of the hillock. Thotlakonda was well within the influence of ancient Kalinga, which was an important source of dissemination of Buddhism to Sri Lanka and various parts of Southeast Asia. It provides an insight into the process of transoceanic diffusion of Indic culture, especially Buddhism. Thotlakonda's peak activity was between the 2nd century BCE and the 2nd century CE owing to brisk Roman trade and religious missions sent abroad.
50. Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a 120-member movement, which began with the "Bandung Process" in 1956 by India, Indonesia, former Yugoslavia, Egypt and other countries. It is a forum of 120 developing world states that are not formally aligned with

or against any major power bloc. After the United Nations, it is the largest grouping of states worldwide.

51. India will commission its first-ever survey to estimate the population and geographical range of the snow leopard, an elusive and endangered predator. The snow leopard is found along the upper reaches of the Himalayan range and, in India, it is reported to have a presence in Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. However, the inhospitable terrain and the reclusive nature of the animal have so far made a scientific estimation impossible. The snow leopard is found in 12 countries — India, Nepal, Bhutan, China, Mongolia, Russia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
52. The Indo-Tibetan Border Police is one of the five Central Armed Police Forces of India, raised on 24 October 1962, under the CRPF Act, in the wake of the Sino-Indian War of 1962. The ITBP was intended for deployment along India's border with Tibet. The ITBP is deployed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China, spanning 3,488 km. There are five pockets, three in Ladakh, one each in Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh, that are not well defined and the territories are claimed by both countries.
53. The Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report (APTIR) is a biennial publication prepared by the Trade, Investment and Innovation Division of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to provide insights into the impact of recent and emerging developments in trade and foreign direct investment on countries' abilities to meet the challenges of achieving sustainable development. As per the 2019 report, non-tariff measures have increased in the past two decades.
54. Government has taken various steps for generating employment in the country like encouraging private sector of economy, fast tracking various projects involving substantial investment and increasing public expenditure on schemes like Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) run by Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA), Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) scheme run by Ministry of Rural Development and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) run by Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs. The Government has also recently constituted Cabinet Committee on Employment & Skill Development among others.
55. Gujarat launched India's first trading programme to combat particulate air pollution on World Environment Day 2019, which has air pollution as its theme. The programme is a

market-based system where the government sets a cap on emissions and allows industries to buy and sell permits to stay below the cap. Being initiated in Surat by the Gujarat Pollution Control Board (GPCB), the emission trading scheme (ETS) was designed with the help of a team of researchers from the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago (EPIC), the Economic Growth Center at Yale University and others from The Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL). Under the cap and trade system, the regulator first defines the total mass of pollution that can be put into the air over a defined period by all factories put together. Then, a set of permits is created, each of which allows a certain amount of pollution, and the total is equal to the cap. Globally, cap-and-trade systems have been used to reduce other forms of pollution, such as programmes that have successfully reduced sulphur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) in the United States. But the Gujarat programme is the first in the world to regulate particulate air pollution.

56. Dangerous level of metals have been found in vegetables grown in fields along the River Yamuna which could cause life threatening diseases like cancer, a study has found. Presence of metals like Lead (Pb), Nickel (Ni), Cadmium (Cd) and Mercury (Hg) was noted. Heavy metal toxicity can lower energy levels, damage the functioning of the brain, lungs, kidney, and liver. They can also damage the blood composition and other important organs. Long term exposure of metals may even cause cancer. Possible sources of lead are industries dealing in automobiles, battery, paint, polythene, pesticides and lead processing units.
57. Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) is the most recent version of the Internet Protocol (IP), the communications protocol that provides an identification and location system for computers on networks and routes traffic across the Internet. IPv6 was developed by the Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF) to deal with the long-anticipated problem of IPv4 address exhaustion. IPv6 is intended to replace IPv4.
58. The government launched PRAKASH (Power Rail Koyla Availability through Supply Harmony) portal. The Portal aims at bringing better coordination for coal supplies among all stakeholders viz - Ministry of Power, Ministry of Coal, Coal India, Railways and power utilities. This is an important step in ensuring adequate availability and optimum utilization of coal at thermal power plants. PRAKASH Portal is developed by NTPC and sources data from different stakeholders such as Central Electricity Authority (CEA), Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) and coal companies.

59. The ease of doing business index is an index by the World Bank Group. In the latest ranking for countries in ease of doing business, the World Bank has placed India 63rd out of 190 countries — an improvement of 14 places from its 77th position last year. The country's score improved from 67.3 last year to 71.0 this year, as per the Doing Business 2020 study. The 10 areas of study are: starting a business, dealing with construction permits, getting electricity, registering property, getting credit, protecting minority investors, paying taxes, trading across borders, enforcing contracts, and resolving insolvency. An 11th area – employing workers – is measured, but not factored into the score. For 11 countries, two cities were selected to construct the indicator – Delhi and Mumbai in the case of India. India also featured, for the third consecutive year, in the list of 10 economies where business climates had improved the most. EoDB rankings - It should also be borne in mind that the rankings are based on samples and audits done in Mumbai and Delhi only (the World Bank has said it would be covering Bengaluru and Kolkata too from next year).
60. Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh has approved issuance of two Open General Export Licences (OGELs) for export of certain parts & components and intra-company transfer of technology to select countries. It will give a boost to defence exports and enhance ease of doing business. The application for grant of OGEL will be considered by Department of Defence Production (DPP) on a case-to-case basis. The countries allowed under the OGELs are: Belgium, France, Germany, Japan, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, UK, USA, Canada, Italy, Poland and Mexico. Export of items to a 'Special Economic Zone' is not permitted. For acquiring the licences, the applicant is mandatory to have Import-Export certificate. The items permitted under OGEL includes components of ammunition & fuse setting device without energetic and explosive material; firing control & related alerting and warning equipment & related system; and body protective items. Complete aircraft or complete unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and any components specially designed or modified for UAVs are excluded under this licence. The transfer of technology to the countries is subject to the condition that the export is an intra-company transfer from an Indian subsidiary (applicant exporter) to its foreign parent company and/or to subsidiaries of the foreign parent company. The OGEL is a one-time export licence to be granted to a company for a specific period (two years initially). India has made significant strides in improving its defence exports. These have grown seven-fold over the last two years and reached to Rs 10,500 crore in 2018-19. This has been made possible due to the reforms brought in the standard operating procedure and ushering in

a portal for online clearance of applications. The processing time has been brought down significantly.

61. In an announcement by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on World Polio Day (October 24), an independent commission of experts declared that wild poliovirus type 3 (WPV3) has been eradicated worldwide. This follows the eradication of smallpox and wild poliovirus type 2. There are three individual and immunologically distinct wild poliovirus strains: wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1), wild poliovirus type 2 (WPV2) and wild poliovirus type 3 (WPV3). Symptomatically, all three strains are identical, in that they cause irreversible paralysis or even death. But there are genetic and virological differences, which make these three strains three separate viruses that must each be eradicated individually. Wild poliovirus type 3 is globally eradicated. This is a significant achievement that should reinvigorate the eradication process and provides motivation for the final step — the eradication of wild poliovirus type 1. This virus remains in circulation in just two countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Global Commission for the Certification of Poliomyelitis Eradication officially declared that wild poliovirus type 3 has been eradicated. The last case of wild poliovirus type 3 was seen in northern Nigeria in 2012. This is the second wild poliovirus to be declared eliminated — the first was in 2015 when type 2 wild poliovirus was declared as eliminated. With two of the three wild polioviruses eliminated, only type 1 wild poliovirus is still in circulation and is restricted to just two countries — Afghanistan and Pakistan. Put simply, it opens up the possibility of switching from the currently used bivalent oral polio vaccine containing type 1 and type 3 to a monovalent vaccine containing only type 1. The globally synchronised switch in April 2016 from a vaccine containing all the three types (trivalent) to a bivalent vaccine was done to reduce the number of vaccine-derived poliovirus (VDVP) cases. Until 2015, the type 2 strain in the trivalent oral vaccine accounted for over 90% of VDVP cases globally. While the type 3 poliovirus in the vaccine is the least likely to cause vaccine-derived polio, it has the greatest propensity to cause vaccine-associated paralytic polio (VAPP). Though the risk of VAPP is small, it is caused when the live, weakened virus used in the vaccine turns virulent in the intestine of the vaccinated child or spreads to close contacts who have not been immunised. VAPP can be greatly reduced if there is a switch from the bivalent to a monovalent vaccine containing only type 1. Alternatively, the risk of VAPP can be reduced 80-90% if every child receives the bivalent vaccine and one dose of inactivated polio vaccine injection. Though India does not count VAPP cases, a 2002 paper and a communication indicated that India had 181, 129 and 109 cases in 1999, 2000

and 2001, respectively. A recent paper suggests that post 2016, India might have 75 VAPP cases annually due to global IPV vaccine shortage and “delay in IPV implementation in India’s national immunisation programme”.

62. Jan Soochna (public information) portal, which is the Rajasthan government’s latest effort to offer wider and easier access to the State’s increasingly digitised databases. The single window portal aims to increase transparency and accountability in governance. It has 82 different information request options for 32 schemes across 13 departments. It not only explains the schemes but also provides real-time information on beneficiaries, authorities in charge, progress, etc.
63. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved changes to the Prime Minister’s Scholarship Scheme for wards of deceased defence personnel under the National Defence Fund. Mr. Modi approved the increase from ₹2,000 to ₹2,500 a month for boys and from ₹2,250 to ₹3,000 a month for girls. The ambit of the scheme was widened to cover the wards of State police officials martyred in terror or Naxal attacks. The scheme is meant to encourage technical and postgraduate education for widows and wards of deceased personnel of the armed forces, the paramilitary forces and the Railway Protection Force. The National Defence Fund is administered by an executive committee that has the Prime Minister as the chairperson and the Defence, Finance and Home Ministers as members. Under the scheme, new scholarships are given to 5,500 wards of armed forces personnel, 2,000 wards of paramilitary forces personnel and 150 wards of forces under the Railways Ministry every year. The fund is entirely dependent on voluntary contributions from the public and does not get any budgetary support.
64. To address the challenges of slowing economic growth and inadequate job creation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi constituted two Cabinet committees — one on investment and growth and another on employment and skill development. The PM will chair both the committees. Government of India’s (transaction of business) rules, 1961, empower the Prime Minister to set up, add, reduce or modify the numbers and functions of cabinet committees. Currently, there are eight Cabinet committees. These are on appointments, accommodation, security, economic affairs, investment, parliamentary affairs, political affairs and skill development. The last new cabinet committee — on skill development — was created by the Congress-led UPA government on June 10, 2013. Barring the Committees on Parliamentary Affairs and Accommodation, all six committees will be headed by the Prime Minister. The two remaining committees will be chaired by Home Minister Amit Shah.

65. The LOP is leader of the largest party that has not less than one-tenth of the total strength of the house. It is not a constitutional but a statutory post defined in the Salaries and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977. The Act extends to LoPs in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha the same official status, allowances and perks that are admissible to Cabinet Ministers. In the case of the Lok Sabha, however, this is subject to recognition of the leader by the Speaker. In 1969, when Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister, the Congress split to form the Indian National Congress (Requisitionists) and the Indian National Congress (Organisation). The Leader of INC(O), Ram Subhag Singh, became the first person to be formally recognised as LoP in the Lok Sabha. Until 1977, there were no emoluments and perks attached to the position of LoP. There is no provision in the Constitution or even in the Lok Sabha Rules of Procedure in regard to the recognition of the LoP. Right from the first Lok Sabha, the practice has been to recognise the leader of the largest party in Opposition as the LoP provided that party has a strength that is enough to constitute the quorum for a sitting of the House, or one-tenth of the total membership of the House — at present that comes to 55 members. From the 9th to the 15th Lok Sabhas, since the requirement of having a minimum strength of 55 members was fulfilled, the Lok Sabha had duly recognised Opposition parties and LoPs, including Rajiv Gandhi, L.K. Advani, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, P.V. Narasimha Rao, Sharad Pawar, Sonia Gandhi and Sushma Swaraj. The 1977 Act defines LoP as that member of the House who is the “Leader in that House of the party in opposition to the Government having the greatest numerical strength and recognised as such by the Chairman of the Council of States or the Speaker of the House of the People, as the case may be.” The Speaker’s decisions in this regard have so far been determined by Direction 121(c) which laid down one of the conditions for recognition of party or group as having “at least a strength equal to the quorum fixed to constitute a sitting of the House, that is one-tenth of the total number of members of the House”. The Leaders and Chief Whips of Recognised Parties and Groups in Parliament (Facilities) Act, 1998 also refers to a recognised party in the Lok Sabha as a party that has not less than 55 members. Since there is no constitutional provision, the 1977 law does not provide for the requirement of 55 members as an essential pre-requisite. As it all depends on the Speaker’s directions and discretion.

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