5th Sep 2018 current affairs

‘Rashtriya Poshan Maah’ (GS2: Issues related to Health)

**Issue:** The Minister of Women and Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi has urged the Ministers of partner Ministries and all the Members of Parliament to extend full support to the ongoing Rashtriya Poshan Maah with outreach activities. The Government is celebrating the month of September, 2018 as the National Nutrition Month under the Poshan Abhiyan

**About the mission**

1. The programme seeks to bring convergence amongst various ministries to work in a coordinated manner so that malnutrition can be quickly and progressively reduced. The key features of this programme is mobilization of communities across the country and get their participation in addressing various aspects of the nutritional challenges

2. POSHAN Abhiyaan seeks to synergise efforts of key stakeholders by leveraging technology and intends to take Nutrition Awareness to the level of Jan Andolan or People’s Movement. This People’s Movement intends to reach 11 crore beneficiaries during the Rashtriya Poshan Maah itself.

3. National Nutrition Month has eight Key Themes, namely, Antenatal Care, Optimal Breastfeeding, Complementary Feeding, Anemia, Growth Monitoring, Education; diet and right age of marriage for girls, Hygiene and Sanitation and Food fortification. All the Departments of the Government and other associated organisations have adopted an integrated approach towards accomplishing a target of malnutrition-free India.

4. This programme through use of technology, a targeted approach and convergence strives to build a Healthy nation. To ensure a holistic approach, all States/UTs and 718 districts will be covered in a phased manner by the year 2020.

**Source:**
http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1544895

‘Coffee Connect’ (GS3: E-governance)

**Issue:** Minister for Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu today launched Coffee Connect - India coffee field force app and Coffee KrishiTharanga - digital mobile extension services for coffee stakeholders

**About the application**

This application provides solution by harnessing the power of mobility comprising the latest technology in easing the whole process of the field activities like digitization of Coffee Growers & Estates with Geo Tagging, collecting the Plantation details. It will also help in transparency in the activities of the extension officers and officials, transparency in subsidy disbursement and real time report generation.

The Coffee KrishiTharanga services are aimed at providing customized information and services to increase productivity, profitability, and environmental sustainability. The customised services are two ways, 24 X 7 service supports.

**About Coffee plantation in India**

www.iasjnana.com
Coffee is cultivated in India in about 4.54 lakh hectares by 3.66 lakh coffee farmers and 98% of them are small farmers. Its cultivation is mainly confined to Karnataka (54%), Kerala (19%) and Tamil Nadu (8%) which form traditional coffee tracts. Coffee is also grown in non-traditional areas like Andhra Pradesh & Odisha (17.2%) and North Eastern states (1.8%), with main emphasis on tribal development and afforestation.

Source: http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1544891

‘KAZIND 2018’ (Facts that could be asked in Prelims)

Issue: Indo-Kazakhstan Joint Army Exercise 'KAZIND' will be conducted between the Indian and Kazakhstan Army from 10 to 23 Sep 2018 in Otar region, Kazakhstan

About the exercise

The aim of the exercise is to build and promote bilateral Army to Army relations and exchange skills and experiences between Kazakhstan Army and the Indian Army. The exercise will also serve as a platform for exchange of drills and procedures.

Source: http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1544903

‘Semi-Artificial photosynthesis’ (GS3: Science)

Issue: Scientists have developed a semi-artificial photosynthesis system that uses sunlight to produce hydrogen fuel from water.

About the invention

Hydrogen which is produced when the water is split could potentially be a green and unlimited source of renewable energy. Researchers from the University of Cambridge in the UK used semi-artificial photosynthesis to explore new ways to produce and store solar energy. They used natural sunlight to convert water into hydrogen and oxygen using a mixture of biological components and manmade technologies.


‘National Teachers’ Award’ (GS2: Issues related to Education)

Issue: The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, interacted with the awardees of National Teachers’ Awards, 2017 on the eve of Teachers' Day.

About Teachers’ day

The birth date of the second President of India, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, 5 September 1888, has been celebrated as Teacher's Day since 1962.

During the interaction, Prime Minister urged the awardees to mobilize the community and to make them an integral part of school development. He also exhorted the teachers to work towards bringing out the inherent strength of students, especially those from poor and rural background.

Source: http://pib.nic.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1544903
‘Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)’ (GS3: Indian Economy)

**Issue:** Members of the proposed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade deal have conceded to India’s demand to liberalize their services market and allow movement of skilled professionals. This may help India, which had so far been a reluctant participant, to conclude RCEP negotiations by the year-end.

India believes strong commitments in services by RCEP countries will open up opportunities for its burgeoning skilled professionals seeking gainful employment.

**About RCEP**

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) and the six Asia-Pacific states with which ASEAN has existing free trade agreements (Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand). It is reported that a broad agreement is likely to be reached in November 2018.

RCEP negotiations were formally launched in November 2012 at the ASEAN Summit in Cambodia. The free trade agreement is scheduled and expected to be signed in November 2018 during the ASEAN Summit and Related Summit in Singapore, after the first RCEP summit was held on 14 November 2017 in Manila, Philippines. RCEP is viewed as an alternative to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a proposed trade agreement which includes several Asian and American nations but excludes China and India.

In 2017, prospective RCEP member states accounted for a population of 3.4 billion people with a total Gross Domestic Product (GDP, PPP) of $49.5 trillion, approximately 39 percent of the world's GDP, with the combined GDPs of China and Japan making up more than half that amount.

RCEP is the world's largest economic bloc, covering nearly half of the global economy. According to estimates by PwC, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP, PPP) of RCEP member states is likely to amount to nearly $250 trillion by 2050, or a quarter of a quadrillion dollars, with the combined GDPs of China and India making up more than 75% of the amount.

Source: https://www.livemint.com/Politics/zW2jfnWbA20jrV3CTK0IBO/India-wins-key-concession-on-services-at-RCEP-Singapore-Mini.html

‘Odisha storage project’ (GS3: Infrastructure)

**Issue:** India is increasingly looking at hydro pump storage schemes, rather than battery storage, for utility scale projects to solve its energy storage problems. One such instance is the proposed 600 mega watt (MW) pump storage plant of the state-run Odisha Hydro Power Corp (OHPC) to be set up at an investment of ₹3,000 crore to meet peak-hour rural electricity demand.

**About the project**
OHPC will partner with the private sector for the project planned near Upper Indravati multi-purpose reservoir, which already has an operational 600 MW hydropower plant. The idea is to use cheap solar power during off-peak hours to raise water to a height and then release it into lower reservoir to generate electricity.

Solar power generated during day needs to be stored in batteries. Given that battery storage is still expensive and needs to be replaced, pump-storage projects are being looked at as a viable option. This assumes importance given India’s clean energy push, with India’s ambitious target of 175 gigawatt (GW) by March 2022. Of this 100 GW is to come from solar.

Source:
https://www.livemint.com/Industry/XZjpG6vELONZqTESbpO/Odisha-plans-3000-crore-energy-storage-project.html

‘Arif Alvi’ (Facts that could be asked in Prelims)

**Issue**: Arif Alvi, a close ally of Prime Minister Imran Khan and one of the founding members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party, was elected as President of Pakistan

The 69-year-old former dentist defeated Pakistan Peoples Party candidate Aitzaz Ahsan and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz nominee Maulana Fazlur Rehman to become the 13th President.

Source:

‘Lifestyle diseases’ (GS2: Issues related to Health)

**Issue**: More than 1.4 billion adults are putting themselves at heightened risk of deadly diseases by not getting enough exercise, doctors are warning, with global activity levels virtually unchanged in nearly two decades.

Other observations in this regard include:

1. With richer nations enjoying an increasingly comfortable, sedentary lifestyle, a study by the World Health Organisation (WHO) said a third of women and a quarter of men worldwide are in the firing line for killer conditions such as heart disease, diabetes and cancer unless they up their physical activity.

2. The WHO recommends each adult do at least 150 minutes “moderate-intensity” exercise — such as brisk walking, swimming or gentle cycling — each week, or 75 minutes “vigorous-intensity” activity — such as running or team sports.

3. Levels of insufficient activity to guard off non-communicable killers, including dementia and cardiovascular diseases, are more than twice as high in high-income countries compared to developing nations.

4. The link between the lifestyle in wealthier nations — more time indoors, longer office hours, more easily accessible high-calorie foods — and lower exercise levels, was part of a “clear pattern” of poorer health coming with urbanization.

5. Women still lag behind men in nearly every region of the world, with the gender exercise gap highest in
Bangladesh, Eritrea, India, Iraq and the Philippines, the study found.

6. One bright spot on the global exercise map was southeast Asia, where women were equally as active as men in the only region where inactivity has decreased since 2001.


‘Genetically Modified (GM) crops’ (GS3: Science)

Issue: The environment ministry is set to convene this month a “special meeting” of the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) to decide on field-trial approvals for the controversial transgenic mustard developed by the University of Delhi.

About GEAC

Bio-safety concerns have led to the development of regulatory regimes in various countries for research, testing, safe use and handling of GMOs and products thereof. India is one of the earliest countries to establish a bio-safety system for regulation of GMOs. The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC) has notified the Rules for Manufacture, Use/Import/Export & Storage of Hazardous Micro Organisms/ Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells.

Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) established under MoEFCC is the apex body to accord notified under Rules 1989. For approval of activities involving large scale use of hazardous microorganisms and recombinants in research and industrial production from the environmental angle. The GEAC is also responsible for approval of proposals relating to release of genetically engineered organisms and products into the environment including experimental field trials.

About GM crops

Genetically modified crops are plants used in agriculture, the DNA of which has been modified using genetic engineering methods. In most cases, the aim is to introduce a new trait to the plant which does not occur naturally in the species. Examples in food crops include resistance to certain pests, diseases, or environmental conditions, reduction of spoilage, or resistance to chemical treatments (e.g. resistance to herbicide), or improving the nutrient profile of the crop. Examples in non-food crops include production of pharmaceutical agents, biofuels, and other industrially useful goods, as well as for bioremediation.

Farmers have widely adopted GM technology. It is the fastest adopted crop technology in the world. Acreage increased from 1.7 million hectares in 1996 to 185.1 million hectares in 2016, some 12% of global cropland. A 2014 meta-analysis concluded that GM technology adoption had reduced chemical pesticide use by 37%, increased crop yields by 22%, and increased farmer profits by 68%.

However, opponents have objected to GM crops on grounds including environmental impacts, food safety, whether GM crops are needed to address food needs, whether they are sufficiently accessible to farmers in developing countries and concerns over subjecting crops to intellectual property law. Safety concerns led 38 countries, including 19...
in Europe, to officially prohibit their cultivation.


‘Space elevator’ (GS3: Science)

**Issue:** A Japanese team working to develop a "space elevator" will conduct a first trial this month, blasting off a miniature version on satellites to test the technology.

**About the experiment**

The test equipment, produced by researchers at Shizuoka University, will hitch a ride on an H-2B rocket being launched by Japan's space agency from southern island of Tanegashima next week.

The test involves a miniature elevator stand-in—a box just six centimetres (2.4 inches) long, three centimetres wide, and three centimetres high.

If all goes well, it will provide proof of concept by moving along a 10-metre cable suspended in space between two mini satellites that will keep it taut.


‘Indian Airline industry’ (GS3: Indian Economy)

**Issue:** Taxes on jet fuel in India along with lack of competition for fuel suppliers at airports is “strangling the lifeblood from the airlines.” International Air Transport Association (IATA) Director General and CEO Alexander de Juniac opined

**Challenges faced by airline industry in India**

1. Concerns over the Goods and Services Tax (GST) imposed on international flight tickets.
2. At present, 5% GST is levied on economy class tickets and 12% on business class tickets for international travel. The recent spurt in fuel prices has led to industry players reiterating the additional burden imposed on Indian players, who also have to pay extra taxes on fuel.
3. Fuel accounts for about 24.2% of an airline’s average cost structure. In India, it is 34%, making India’s carriers particularly sensitive in this area. All airlines are already suffering from the rise in fuel prices and India’s regulatory and tax framework around fuel hits airlines serving this market harder.
4. Lack of competition among fuel suppliers at airports ensure that there is little commercial incentive to keep fuel prices competitive.
5. There is also challenge of the recently announced transaction structure for Greenfield airports which will be based on fixed fee per passenger to be paid by the winning bidder.

**Way forward**

Bringing jet fuel under GST with full input tax credit, removing the fuel throughput fee, providing common use open access infrastructure for fuel at airports and reducing excise duty on fuel as measures that will ensure a level playing field for Indian players and ensuring competitive fuel prices.
‘Lockheed Martin and Tata group’ (GS3: Indian Economy)

Issue: Lockheed Martin has announced it is to build all wings for the F-16 fighter jet in partnership with Tata’s in India.

In 2016, the United States declared India a "major defense partner" and this week sees the beginning of "2+2" dialog on strategic affairs between the two countries. Talks are set to begin on Thursday when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defense Secretary James Mattis will sit down for talks with India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

Source: