

1. GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX

Tag: Economics- Industries; Governance- Policies; Reports

Context: India climbs five ranks in Global Innovation Index to the 52nd position

- ▶▶ Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Railways launched the **Global Innovation Index (GII) 2019** in New Delhi
- ▶▶ **GII theme of this year:** Creating Healthy Lives - The Future of Medical Innovation
- ▶▶ It is focusing on not just curative but preventive healthcare where wellness becomes a part of society.
- ▶▶ It also features in the GII ranking on the world's top science and technology clusters, with Bengaluru, Mumbai and New Delhi included in the global top 100 clusters.

About Global Innovation Index:

- ▶▶ The GII has been jointly developed by Cornell University, Paris-based business school Insead and WIPO.
- ▶▶ It includes more than 80 indicators exploring a broad vision of innovation, including political environment, education, infrastructure and business sophistication.
- ▶▶ **Aim:** It is aimed at helping policy makers better understand how to stimulate and measure innovative activity.
- ▶▶ **Highlights:** This is the **first time** that the **GII has been launched in Asia** or in an emerging economy.
- ▶▶ **Ranking:** **Switzerland** continued to **top the index in 2019** while Israel made its way into the top 10. China, too, improved its ranking to 14th from 17th last year.

2. DRACAENA CAMBODIANA

Tag: Environment- Plant/ Animal Species; Biodiversity, Medicine

Context: Researchers discover *Dracaena cambodiana*, **India's first dragon blood-oozing tree** in Assam's West Karbi Anglong district

- ▶▶ Assam has added to India's botanical wealth a plant that yields dragon's blood — a bright red resin used since ancient times as medicine, body oil, varnish, incense and dye.



- ▶▶ The team's report has been published in the latest issue of the Journal of the **Botanical Research Institute of Texas**.
- ▶▶ This is for the **first time** that a dragon tree species has been reported from India.

About:

- ▶▶ In India, the *Dracaena* genus belonging to the **family Asparagaceae** is represented by nine species and two varieties in the Himalayan region, the northeast and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- ▶▶ But ***Dracaena cambodiana* is the only true dragon tree species**.

Benefits:

- ▶▶ It is an important **medicinal plant** as well as an **ornamental tree**.
- ▶▶ It is a major source of dragon's blood, a precious traditional medicine in China.
- ▶▶ Several antifungal and antibacterial compounds, antioxidants, flavonoids, etc., have been extracted from various parts of the plant.

Threats:

- ▶▶ Recent overexploitation to meet the increasing demand for dragon's blood has resulted in rapid depletion of the plant

3. UKEIRI MOBILITY PROGRAMME: STUDY IN INDIA

Tag: International- Policies & Schemes

Context: New India-UK scheme to fund students from UK to visit India

- ▶▶ A new India-UK bilateral pilot scheme has been launched to support Britain's universities to collaborate with Indian partners to send UK students to India during their studies.
- ▶▶ The "**UKEIRI Mobility Programme: Study in India**", an initiative of Universities UK International (UUKI) and British Council India
- ▶▶ **Aim:** To **generate up to 200 opportunities** for undergraduate students at UK universities to visit India by March 2021.
- ▶▶ Priority for the programme to visit India during their courses will be given to students from traditionally underrepresented groups.
- ▶▶ The programme will be funded by the UK and Indian governments as part of Phase 3 of the UK-India Education Research Initiative (UKEIRI) and delivered by the British Council, Universities UK International and EdCIL in India.

4. NATIONAL HEALTH ACCOUNTS ESTIMATES 2015-16

Tag: Social Issues, Health

Context: Public spending on health: Jammu & Kashmir, Assam lead

▶▶ Jammu and Kashmir and Assam spent the largest fraction of their Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) on public health, according to National Health Accounts Estimates 2015-16, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

- ▶▶ Haryana and Maharashtra are towards the lower end of the table.
- ▶▶ The NITI Aayog's 'Three Year Action Agenda, 2017-18 to 2019-20' calls for a significant increase in government expenditure on public health "to cover screenings for the entire population, active case detection, and disease surveillance from the private sector".
- ▶▶ It also envisions the mainstreaming of "evidence-based preventive health interventions" such as breastfeeding and infant and young child feeding during up to the age of two through adequate budgetary allocations and national level action plans.

GOVERNMENT HEALTH EXPENDITURE (GHE) AS %AGE OF GSDP

MOST		LEAST	
Jammu and Kashmir	1.7	Haryana	0.6
Assam	1.5	Maharashtra	0.7
Himachal Pradesh	1.4	Gujarat, Karnataka, Punjab, Tamil Nadu	0.8
Uttar Pradesh	1.3	Telangana, Uttarakhand	0.9
Bihar, Rajasthan	1.2	Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Odisha	1
<i>Select states only</i>			

Source: National Health Accounts Estimates 2015-16

5. CHANDRA SHEKHAR AZAD

Tag: History

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Indian revolutionary Chandra Shekhar Azad, on his birth anniversary.

- ▶▶ **Chandra Shekhar Azad** popularly known as by his self-taken name **Azad ("The Free")**, was an Indian revolutionary
- ▶▶ He reorganised the Hindustan Republican Association under its new name of **Hindustan Socialist Republican Army (HSRA)** after the death of its founder, **Ram Prasad Bismil**, and three other prominent party leaders, **Roshan Singh, Rajendra Nath Lahiri and Ashfaqulla Khan**.
- ▶▶ He was involved in the **Kakori Train Robbery of 1925**, in the attempt to blow up the Viceroy of India's train in 1926, and at last the shooting of J. P. Saunders at Lahore in 1928 to avenge the killing of Lala Lajpat Rai.
- ▶▶ He died at Alfred Park in Allahabad (now Prayagraj) on 27 February 1931.
- ▶▶ He often used the pseudonym "**Balraj**" when signing pamphlets issued as the commander in chief of the HSRA (Hindustan Socialist Republic Army)

6. BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

Tag: History

Context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, on his birth anniversary.

About:

- ▶▶ **Bal Gangadhar Tilak** (1856 – 1920) was an **Indian nationalist**, teacher, and an independence activist.
- ▶▶ He was born as Keshav Gangadhar Tilak. He was also conferred with the title of "**Lokmanya**", which means "accepted by the people (as their leader)".
- ▶▶ **Triumvirate:** He had popular leaders such as **Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai** as his political companions and the three were popularly known as '**Lal-Bal-Pal triumvirate.**'
- ▶▶ **Swaraj:** Tilak was one of the first and strongest advocates of **Swaraj ("self-rule")** and became popular as the '**Father of Swaraj**'. He is known for his quote in Marathi: "**Swarajya is my birthright and I shall have it**".
- ▶▶ **Education:** To ensure that youngsters in India attain quality education, he founded the **Deccan Education Society in 1884.**
- ▶▶ The Society established the **Fergusson College in 1885** for post-secondary studies. Tilak taught mathematics at Fergusson College.
- ▶▶ **Extremist:**
- ▶▶ Tilak was considered a **radical Nationalist**. He was called "**the father of Indian unrest**" by British author Sir Valentine Chirol.
- ▶▶ During his lifetime he had been tried for Sedition Charges in three times by British India Government—in 1897, 1909, and 1916.
- ▶▶ **Related organizations:**
- ▶▶ He joined the **Indian National Congress Party in the year 1890.**
- ▶▶ He also helped found the **All India Home Rule League in 1916–18**, with G. S. Khaparde and Annie Besant.
- ▶▶ Tilak started his **Home Rule League in Maharashtra, Central Provinces, and Karnataka and Berar region.** Besant's League was active in the rest part of India.
- ▶▶ **Weeklies:** He started weeklies such as **Kesari (The Lion) and Mahratta.** Kesari was Marathi language weekly while Mahratta was English weekly. Through these newspapers Tilak became widely known for his criticisms of British rule.
- ▶▶ **Books:** When Bal Gangadhar Tilak was imprisoned during the freedom struggle, he wrote a book titled '**Gita-Rahasya**'.

- ▶▶ The events like the **Ganapati festival and Shiv Jayanti** were used by Tilak to build a national spirit beyond the circle of the educated elite in opposition to colonial rule.
- ▶▶ In 1916 he concluded the **Lucknow Pact with Mohammed Ali Jinnah**, which provided for Hindu-Muslim unity in the nationalist struggle.

7. CHRYSOMALLON SQUAMIFERUM

Tag: Environment- Plant/ Animal Species; Biodiversity

Context: A rare snail found at only three spots in the Indian Ocean has become the first species to be officially declared threatened due to deep-sea mining.



About:

- ▶▶ The scaly-foot snail (*Chrysomallon squamiferum*) is found at three hydrothermal vents in the Indian Ocean, east of Madagascar.
- ▶▶ It was added by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to its updated Red List of Endangered Species
- ▶▶ Hydrothermal vent: It is a fissure on the seafloor from which geothermally heated water issues.
- ▶▶ When this happens, the hot water mixes with the cold seawater, in turn depositing minerals such as copper and manganese on the ocean floor.

8. ERAVIKULAM NATIONAL PARK

Tag: Environment- Biodiversity

Context: Large-scale burning of grasslands detrimental to invertebrates: study

- ▶▶ Study from Eravikulam National Park says ‘prescribed’ strategy to conserve threatened ungulates adversely impacts many species

About Eravikulam National Park:

- ▶▶ The national park located along the Western Ghats in the Idukki district of Kerala
- ▶▶ It is the first national park in Kerala.
- ▶▶ Eravikulam National Park is a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- ▶▶ Geography: The main body of the park consists of a high rolling hill plateau with a base elevation of about 2,000 m.
- ▶▶ The terrain consists of high-altitude grasslands interspersed with sholas.
- ▶▶ Anamudi, 2,695 meters, the highest peak in India south of the Himalayas is inside this park.

- ▶▶ They merge to form tributaries of the Periyar river in the west and of the Cauvery River in the east.
- ▶▶ **Flora:** Neelakurunji ,a plant endemic to the Western Ghats, blooms once every 12 years is found in this national park.
- ▶▶ **Fauna:** It also is home to and the sanctuary of the Nilgiri tahr, an endangered goat species.

