

1. Maha Bodhi Temple Complex

Why in News?

- Bhutan's Foreign Minister recently visited Maha Bodhi Temple in Bodh Gaya, Bihar.

About:

- The Maha Bodhi Temple Complex is one of the four holy sites related to the life of the Lord Buddha, and particularly to the attainment of Enlightenment (Bodhi).
- The other three are: Lumbini (Birth) in Nepal, Sarnath (Dharma-Chakra-Pravartana - 1st Sermon) and Kushinagar (Mahaparinirvana- death) in Uttar Pradesh.
- The original structure was built by the Mauryan emperor Ashoka. However, it was reconstructed entirely in brick in late Gupta period. The present temple dates from the 5th or 6th centuries.
- The site of the Maha Bodhi Temple provides exceptional records of the events associated with the life of Buddha and subsequent worship.
- A descendant of the Bodhi tree under which the Buddha is said to have sat until he attained enlightenment stands adjacent to the temple.
- Ashoka's stone slab purporting to mark the exact position where the Buddha sat is traditionally called the Buddha's vajrasana (literally "diamond throne" or "thunder seat").
- It was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2002.



2. Russia-led Resolution on Cyber Crime

Why in News?

- India has voted in favour of Russia-led resolution on Global Cybercrime.

About Russia-led Resolution:

- The Russian proposal entitled “Countering the use of information and communications technologies for criminal purposes” passed in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
- This recent UN proposal follows previous Russian initiatives, including the “Draft United Nations Convention on Cooperation in Combating Cybercrime” in 2017 to develop a UN convention on cybercrime.
- The proposal, which India voted in favour of, creates a committee to convene in August 2020 in New York to establish a new treaty through which nation-states can coordinate and share data to prevent cybercrime.
- The Draft Convention proposes going far beyond what the Budapest Convention allows for regarding cross-border access to data, including by limiting the ability of a signatory to refuse to provide access to requested data.
- Several human rights groups and American entities have criticized the UN proposal as a way to extend a Chinese and Russian form of internet governance, or so-called “closed internet” or “state-controlled internet.”
- It is to be noted that India recently opposed Budapest convention which is already in place and supported Russia led resolution in UN for a new convention.

About Budapest Convention:

- It is an international treaty that seeks to address Internet and computer crime (cybercrime) by harmonizing national laws, improving investigative techniques, and increasing cooperation among nations.
- It came into force on 1 July 2004. India is not a signatory to this convention.
- The convention is the sole legally binding multilateral treaty that coordinates cybercrime investigations between nation-states and criminalizes certain cybercrime conduct.

3. Toll Operate Transfer Model

Why in News?

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, CCEA, has approved the amendments proposed in the Toll Operate Transfer (TOT) Model by National Highways Authority of India.

WHAT IS TOT?

In toll-operate-transfer model, a concessionaire bids for roads already built and operational

For stipulated period, bidder manages road and collects toll. At end of tenure, project is transferred back to the authority

Toll Operate Transfer (TOT) Model:

- TOT was introduced in 2016 to monetise publicly funded highways.
- Under this model, investors make a one-time lump sum payment in return for long-term toll collection rights.
- This model is more attractive for investors as they don't have to build an infrastructure project from scratch.

4. GLOBAL BIO-INDIA 2019

Why in News?

- Global Bio-India 2019, is a mega international congregation of biotechnology stakeholders, held for the first time in India.



DEPARTMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY
Ministry of Science & Technology
Government of India



Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)



Global Bio-India 2019
Power to Transform Lives
Bioscience to Bioeconomy - USD 100 Bn by 2025
Led by Department of Biotechnology, Govt. of India

21-23 November 2019: Aerocity, New Delhi

SAVE THE DATE

Bio-Pharma

Bio-Agri

Bio-Industrial

Bio-Energy

Bio-Services

30+ Countries	CEOs Roundtable
200+ Exhibitors	Global Regulators Meets
3500+ Delegates	Investors Roundtable
250 Startups	Country Pavilion
B2B, B2G, G2G Meetings	Ministries and Departments' Pavilions
Media Interaction	State Pavilion
Awards	Start-up Biotechnology Grand Challenge Program
Policy Dialogues	Workshops/ Bootcamp
Bio-partnering	Startup Pavilion
Key Global Giants	

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Global Bio-India 2019:

- Global Bio-India 2019 would showcase key biotechnological innovations, products, services, technologies from national and international companies, start-ups and Research Institutes.
- **The Event is Organised by**
 - ✓ DBT, Ministry of Science & Technology
 - ✓ Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a PSU under DBT
 - ✓ Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)
 - ✓ Association of Biotechnology Led Enterprises (ABLE)
 - ✓ Invest India
 - ✓ Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Bio-Technology in India:

- India is among the top-12 destinations for biotechnology in the world, with approximately 3% share in the global Biotechnology industry.
- Indian Biotechnology industry's economy is valued at \$51 billion during 2018-19.
- Indian Biotechnology sector is poised to grow exponentially over the next decade.
- Policy initiatives such as Make in India program are aimed to develop India as a world-class Biotechnology and Bio-manufacturing hub.

5. ICGS Annie Besant

Why in News?

- Defence PSU Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) recently handed over Fast Patrol Vessel ICGS Annie Besant to the Indian Coast Guard.

India's Coastal Security:

- The total length of India's coastline is 7516.6 kilometers.
- Of this, mainland coastline length is 5422.6 kilometers whereas Island territories coastline length is 2094 kilometers.
- States/UTs having coastlines are Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Daman and Diu, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal.
- **India's Coastal Security is jointly ensured by - three-tier Security Arrangement:**

- ✓ Indian Navy (IN)
- ✓ Indian Coast Guard (ICG)
- ✓ The marine police

Indian Coast Guard:

- It is a multi-mission organization, conducting round-the-year real-life operations at sea.
- Despite being relatively small, it has a wide range of task capabilities for both surface and air operations. The Maritime Zones of India are divided into five Coast Guard Regions - North-West, West, East, North-East and Andaman & Nicobar.
- In addition, there are Coast Guard Air Stations (CGAS) and Air Enclaves (CGAE) for air operations from various locations along the coastline.

Role of Indian Coast Guard:

It includes:

- Safety and Protection of Artificial Islands and Offshore Terminals
- Protection of Fishermen
- Assistance to Fishermen in Distress at Sea
- Preservation and Protection of Marine Environment
- Collection of Scientific Data
- Surveillance exercises with the neighbouring countries

Fast Patrol Vessels:

- These vessels help in securing the Nation's Coasts by patrolling within the Exclusive Economic Zone and Coastal Patrol.
- They are used to carry out anti-smuggling, anti-piracy and search and rescue operations, and for fisheries protection and monitoring.

6. Sowa-Rigpa

Why in News?

- Cabinet approves establishment of the National Institute of Sowa-Rigpa (NISR) at Leh.

Highlights:

- The setting up of the National Institute of Sowa-Rigpa would provide an impetus for the revival of Sowa-Rigpa in the Indian subcontinent.
- The Institute will also provide opportunities for students of Sowa-Rigpa not only in India but also from other countries.

- The Institute will be an autonomous National Institute under the Ministry of AYUSH with the mandate to undertake interdisciplinary education and research programmes in Sowa-Rigpa in collaboration with premier national and international institutes and facilitate the integration of different systems of medicine.
- This will facilitate quality education, scientific validation, quality control & standardization and safety evaluation of Sowa-Rigpa products; standardized Sowa-Rigpa based tertiary health delivery and the promotion of interdisciplinary research & education of Sowa-Rigpa at undergraduate, postgraduate and postdoctoral levels.
- NISR would identify the best Sowa-Rigpa treatment – including their standard procedures-within the framework of traditional Sowa-Rigpa principles and possible correlation with bio-molecular western medicine in providing health care facilities to the general public.

Sowa-Rigpa:

- Sowa-Rigpa is a traditional medical system of the Himalayan belt in India.
- It has been popularly practiced in Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling (West Bengal), Himachal Pradesh and the Union Territory of Ladakh.
- Commonly known as the Tibetan system of medicine, it is one of the oldest, living and well documented medical traditions of the world.
- It originated in Tibet and has spread to India, Nepal, Bhutan, Mongolia and Russia.
- The majority of the theory and practice of Sowa-Rigpa is similar to Ayurveda.
- rGyud-bZhi (four tantras) the fundamental textbook of this medicine was composed by Yuthog Yonten Gonpo, who is believed to be the father of Sowa-Rigpa.
- rGyud-bZhi, which is based on the indigenous medicine of Tibet, is enriched with Ayurveda, Chinese and Greek medicine.

7. Satellites to Assess Pollution Status

Why in News?

- ISRO satellites INSAT-3D & 3DR is assessing the pollution status over the country.

Highlights:

- The Imager payload on-board ISRO's INSAT-3D & 3DR satellites is used to monitor the Aerosol Optical Depth (AOD).
- The AOD is a measure of the extinction of the solar beam by dust and haze.

- In other words, particles in the atmosphere (dust, smoke, pollution) can block sunlight by absorbing or by scattering light.
- AOD tells us how much direct sunlight is prevented from reaching the ground by these aerosol particles. It is a dimensionless number that is related to the amount of aerosol in the vertical column of atmosphere over the observation location.
- A value of 0.01 corresponds to an extremely clean atmosphere, and a value of 0.4 would correspond to a very hazy condition.
- It is found that AOD, PM_{2.5} and PM₁₀ concentrations are higher over the Indo-Gangetic Plains covering parts of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar during October and November.
- High concentration of these pollutants is seen originating from parts of Punjab and Haryana during stubble burning.
- Climatological study of satellite-based fire occurrences and associated pollutant parameters reveal that fire occurrences increased by 4% over Punjab and Haryana region during October-November between 2003 and 2017.
- The model-based analysis suggests that there is a high probability of transportation of smoke aerosols from Punjab & Haryana, towards down-wind regions of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Using medium resolution Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) satellite data, stubble burned area maps are generated at the end of stubble burning activity in the Kharif season. ISRO has been carrying out monitoring of stubble burning since 2015.

8. India – Europe 29 Business Forum

Why in News?

- The India – Europe 29 Business Forum has been organized by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in New Delhi.

India – Europe 29 Business Forum:

- This is the fifth edition of the India-Europe 29 Business Forum (IE29BF).
- This is India's largest European industry platform.
- There would be sector-specific discussions and field visits, apart from B2B meetings, start-up connects and expositions.
- Participants are ministers from the central and state governments of India, diplomats, government representatives from E29 countries, leading industry representatives, entrepreneurs and the media.

- Focus sectors are artificial intelligence, smart cities, IT & ITES, Renewable Energy and Pharmaceuticals.

Europe 29:

- The Europe 29 (E29) region refers to the 29 countries in Central, Eastern and Northern Europe.
- The Europe 29 region comprises Albania, Liechtenstein, Austria, Lithuania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Macedonia, Bulgaria, Malta, Croatia, Moldova, Cyprus, Montenegro, Czech Republic, Norway, Denmark, Poland, Estonia, Romania, Finland, Serbia, Greece, Slovak Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, Iceland, Sweden, Latvia, Switzerland and Turkey.

9. Disinvestment of CPSEs

Why in News?

- Cabinet approves strategic disinvestment of CPSEs.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister, has accorded 'In-principle' approval for strategic disinvestment in select central public sector enterprises (CPSEs).

Highlights:

- The resources unlocked by the strategic disinvestment of these CPSEs would be used to finance the social sector/developmental programmes of the Government benefiting the public.
- The unlocked resources would form part of the budget and the usage would come under the scrutiny of the public. It is expected that the strategic buyer/acquirer may bring in new management/technology/investment for the growth of these companies and may use innovative methods for their development.
- In 2015, the Government reinitiated the policy of strategic disinvestment in order to open up sectors for private enterprise to bring efficiency in management that would contribute to general economic development.
- Strategic Disinvestment is guided by the basic economic principle that the Government should discontinue its engagement in manufacturing/producing goods and services in sectors where the competitive markets have come of age, and such entities would most likely perform better in the private hands due to various factors e.g. technology upgradation and efficient management practices; and would thus add to the GDP of the country.

- Currently, the cabinet approval for strategic disinvestment has been given for:
 - ✓ Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. (BPCL)
 - ✓ Shipping Corporation of India Ltd. (SCI)
 - ✓ Container Corporation of India Ltd. (CONCOR)
 - ✓ Tehri Hydro Development Corporation India Limited (THDCIL)
 - ✓ North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited (NEEPCO)

10. Open Defecation Free Status:

Why in News?

- The Bengal government identified 52 municipalities which are yet to achieve open defecation free status.

Open Defecation Free Status:

- It is released by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- The protocol means that all the faecal sludge sewage in these cities is treated scientifically before discharge.
- They are also free of open defecation and open urination, with at least 25% of the community and public toilets in good condition.
- Tiruchirappalli is the first city in India where open defecation free.
- Nadia of West Bengal is the first ODF district in India.
- Sikkim became India's first ODF state.
- **To ensure the sustainability and long-term impacts, Open Defecation+ and Open Defecation++ are used.**
- In general, **ODF protocol** "A city /ward is notified as ODF city/ward if, at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating in the open"
- The **ODF+ protocol** says that a city, ward or circle could be declared ODF+," at any point of the day, not a single person is found defecating and /or urinating in the open, and all community ad public toilets are functional and well maintained"
- In **ODF++ protocol** adds the condition that "faecal sludge/septage and sewage is safety managed and treated, with no discharging or dumping of untreated faecal sludge/septage and sewage in drains, water bodies or open area"

11. Idris Elba- Wasp:

Why in News?

- A new wasp species was named after British actor Idris Elba.

About:

- It is discovered in Mexico which kills an invasive pest threatening crops.
- It is found living as a parasite in eggs of another insect, known as the Bagrada bug, which is a major pest of cruciferous vegetables.
- It is parasite species that researchers hope will deter the stink bug species Bagrada hiliaris, which damages crops across North America.
- It could be the ultimate weapon in battle against the sting bug also known as the painted bug.

12. Pharmaceuticals Purchase Policy

Why in News?

- The Cabinet approved the extension of Pharmaceuticals Purchase Policy (PPP) for pharmaceutical Central Public Sector Undertakings (CPSUs) till their closure or Strategic Disinvestment.

Drugs and Cosmetics Act,1940:

- The act is to ensure that the drugs and cosmetics sold in India are safe, effective and conform to state quality standards.
- It contains provisions for classification of drugs under given schedules and there are guidelines for the storage, sale, display and prescription of each schedule.

These are the Important Schedules under the acts are:

- **Schedule G:** Most of the drugs under this schedule are hormonal preparations. The drug label must display the text 'Caution'. It is dangerous to take this preparation except under medical supervision.
- **Schedule H:** Here the drug label must display the text 'Rx' and "Schedule H drug". This drug to be sold by retail on the prescription of a Registered Medical practitioner only.
- It cannot be sold without a prescription and only the amount specified in the prescription should be sold.

- The time and date of the prescription must be noted. If the drug comes under the preview of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, it must carry the text "NRx" and "Schedule H drug".
- **Schedule X:** All the regulations of Schedule H apply. The retailer must keep a copy of the prescription for two years. The drug must be kept under lock.
- **Schedule J:** It contains a list of various diseases and condition that cannot be treated under any drug currently in market. No drug may legally claim to treat these diseases.

13. Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAS):

Why in News?

- Among individual states, Tamil Nadu saw the most visits by foreign tourists in 2018 over 60 lakhs.

About:

- The statistics is provided by the Ministry of tourism.
- Bangladesh, the United States, and the United Kingdom were the top three countries from where foreign tourists arrived India in 2018.
- The data shows increase in overall foreign tourist arrivals as well as foreign exchange earnings over the year 2016, 2017 and 2018.
- Tamil Nadu the most visits by foreign tourist in 2018 followed by Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

