

SMART ABHYAS

CURRENT AFFAIRS MONTHLY

JANUARY 2019

EXERCISE SEA VIGIL

India Navy, Coast Guard and State Police forces conduct India's largest ever naval defence exercise more than a decade after 26/11 to check defence preparedness in the Indian Ocean



IN THIS MONTH'S MAGAZINE

Chang'e 4 lands on far side of
the Moon

Fourth edition of Raisina
Dialogue

Microsat-R launched

and more.....

INCLUDES

Daily Quiz Compilation of
January 2019

Rajya Sabha TV and Lok Sabha
TV compilations

All India Radio Spotlight
Analysis

Dear aspirants

A note from Smart Abhyas



Smart Abhyas

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WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING TO IMPROVE

Any suggestions that would help us enhance the quality of our content, the presentation of our content or anything important for that matter can be brought to us by mailing us at smartabhyas@gmail.com.

TELL A FRIEND

It would mean the world to us if you think that the content we are providing is worthwhile and spread the word to fellow aspirants out there.

Polity and Social Issues

1. AFSPA to continue in Nagaland
2. Cabinet approves first-ever three way merger in Indian Banking
3. Union cabinet approves committee to safeguard identity, heritage of Assamese people
4. Child care institutions in India in a shoddy state
5. Swachh Survekshan 2019 launched
6. Swachh Bharat Mission failing to spur behavioural change
7. Tribals facing food security woes in West Bengal
8. Cabinet approves 10% quota for economically backward upper castes
9. 10% Reservation for economically weaker sections : What you need to know
10. Universal Basic Income: Is it meant for India ?
11. Aadhar card can be used as a valid travel document
12. Lower House of Parliament passes the Aadhaar And Other Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2018
13. Amendment procedure : What you need to know
14. Cabinet approves Bilateral Swap Arrangement between India and Japan
15. Cabinet approves Signing of the TOR provide tax assistance to Swaziland
16. Right to Disconnect Bill : Is it the most interesting Bill that may never become an Act ?
17. ASER Report 2018 : What you need to know
18. Gandhi Peace Prize winners announced
19. The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 : What you need to know
20. Standing Committee on Affordable Medicines and Health Products
21. Cabinet gives nod to set up GST Appellate Tribunal
22. Northeast Autonomous Councils to be strengthened
23. International Criminal Court (ICC): What you need to know
24. Pakistan team to visit Chenab basin under Indus Water Treaty
25. Corruption Perceptions Index 2018

Geography. Ecology and Biodiversity

1. 'Six monuments were declared monuments of national importance in 2018
2. Rare species of vulture sighted in Jharkhand
3. Invasive species eating up Western Ghat's grasslands
4. Chilika lake : What you need to know
5. Andhra Pradesh's second largest petroglyph site
6. Wildlife Protection Act 1972 : What you need to know
7. Ramsar Convention : What you need to know
8. Clean Air Programme : What you need to know
9. Flamingo Festival
10. 19 amphibian species critically endangered: Zoological Survey of India
11. Swine flu on the rise
12. 'Mugger' crocodile being moved out of the Narmada
13. Fall Armyworm: What you need to know
14. Urban heat islands: What you need to know
15. Amur Tigers: What you need to know
16. Global Tiger Forum : What you need to know
17. Genetically Modified chickens may be used in the manufacture of drugs
18. Global warming and cow urine

19. Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA)

20. Polar vortex brings cold snap to US states

Economy

1. Financial Stability Report December 2018
2. Cryptocurrency : What you need to know
3. Defence manufacturing opened up
4. Tokenisation is the right way to go
5. 32nd Meeting of GST Council
6. Creative goods industry in India a bright spot
7. Index of Industrial Production: What you need to know
8. Cabinet approves recapitalisation of Export-Import Bank of India
9. Banks Board Bureau
10. UN's World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) 2019
11. Interim Budget : What you need to know

Government Schemes and Initiatives

1. Rashtriya Yuva Sashaktikaran Karyakram Scheme to be continued
2. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana achieves 6 crore mark
3. Continuation of Umbrella scheme for "Family Welfare and Other Health Interventions"
4. National Bamboo Mission : What you need to know
5. Restructuring of National Health Agency as "National Health Authority"
6. Global Housing Technology Challenge-India

7. Government launches National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

8. Womaniya on Government e Marketplace

9. Pradhan Mantri Rozgar Protsahan Yojana

10. Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)

11. 'RailWire', RailTel's retail Broadband initiative

12. Comprehensive reforms for Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)

Science and Technology

1. New Horizons: The First Mission to the Pluto System and the Kuiper Belt
2. Chang'e-4 lands on far side of the moon
3. ISRO sets up human space flight centre
4. Interaction between the Moon and the solar wind
5. Congenital Central Hypoventilation Syndrome (CCHS) : What you need to know
6. ISRO's UNNATI training programme
7. ISRO satellites helping Indian Railways
8. Microsat-R to be launched
9. Study of nitrogen pollution
10. Is leprosy back in India?
11. The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) discovers a new planet

International Relations, Summits and Meetings

1. Taiwan's unification with China is inevitable says the Chinese President

2. FATF puts 11 jurisdictions in deficiencies list
3. 4th Edition of Raisina Dialogue
4. India signs agreement with OECD for participation in PISA 2021
5. India-Central Asia Dialogue at Samarkhand
6. Mini 2+2 talks held
7. 9th International Conference on Micro Irrigation
8. Wakhan Corridor : Unknown to the world
9. Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC
10. 'Digital Declaration' at the WEF Annual Meeting
11. India and South Africa seal the deal
12. Exercise SEA VIGIL
12. Second Khelo India Youth Games 2019
13. #WebWonderWomen
14. UGC to set up CARE
15. Know India Programmes (KIP)
16. India's longest single lane steel cable suspension bridge opens
17. 29th Indian Paint Conference – 2019 held in Agra
18. One-day Global Skill Summit 2019
19. US Launches New Innovation Initiative At Raisina Dialogue 2019
20. Macedonia To Be Renamed Republic Of North Macedonia
21. India's Largest Startup Ecosystem
22. India's 2nd Defence Innovation Hub
23. The 4th Edition of Arab Economic And Social Development Summit
24. Rio named as World Capital of Architecture for 2020 by UNESCO
25. Microsoft launches e-platform under Project Re-Weave to help Handloom weavers
26. Education Institutions Ranking by Times Higher Education
27. Global Aviation Summit 2019
28. Arunachal govt declares Pakke Hornbill Fest as 'state festival'
29. India Ranks 80th On Global Talent Competitive Index 2019
30. Domestic Council for Gems and Jewellery
31. International Stock Taking Conference on Tiger Conservation
32. New Delhi Superbug Gene Reaches the Arctic

Point Blank (Facts for prelims)

1. National Nritya Shiromani Award 2019
2. India to grow by 7.5% in 2019 :CII
3. France to introduce tax on global internet, technology firms
4. Asia Reassurance Initiative Act
5. ISRO launches 'Samwad'
6. Parliament passes RTE Act amendment to abolish no detention policy
7. Parliament passes National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018
8. Government launches Green-Ag, GEF-assisted project, in partnership with FAO
9. Andhra tops ACI's Ease of Doing Business index
10. Renewables 2018 Global Status Report
11. RBI set up 5-member panel to boost digital payments

Polity and Social Issues

1. Vote on Account
2. 124th Constitutional Amendment bill
3. Citizenship Amendment Bill 2016
4. Army Day
5. Kumbh Mela
6. Indus Water Treaty

Geography, Ecology and Biodiversity

1. Bird race survey

Economy

1. Insolvency and Bankruptcy code, 2016
2. Universal Basic Income:

Government Schemes and Initiatives

1. Digital India
2. Schemes to promote Digital India programme
3. Startup India: Status Report
4. Startup India

Science and Technology

1. 106th India Science Congress
2. Center for DNA finger printing and Diagnostics
3. Digitization of Indian Army
4. Yutu-2
5. Couple burial in Harappan Settlement
6. Ultima Thule
7. First eclipse of 2019
8. NCPOR
9. Divya Nayan
10. Solar cycle
11. India's Space Programme
12. Chandrayaan-2 mission
13. Kalamsat
14. Unnati Programme
15. Young Scientist programme
16. Research on Animal Behaviour
17. Leprosy
18. Swine Flu

All India Radio (Spotlight Analysis)

A discussion on

1. New government in Bangladesh
2. Cabinet approves high level committee to implement Clause 6 of Assam Accord
3. National Entrepreneurship Awards
4. Khelo India
5. 4th Raisina Dialogue
6. Joint sitting of the Parliament
7. National Voters Day
8. 123rd Birth Anniversary of Subash Chandra Bose
9. "Pravasi Bharatiya Divas
10. Defence Industrial Corridor

POLITY AND SOCIAL ISSUES

AFSPA to continue in Nagaland

What is the issue ?

- Nagaland has been declared a “disturbed area” for six more months till June end under the AFSPA.

What is AFSPA?

- The Act came into force in the context of increasing violence in the Northeastern States decades ago, which the State governments found difficult to control.
- The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Bill was passed by both the Houses of Parliament and it was approved by the President on September 11, 1958. It became known as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958.
- It gives powers to the army and state and central police forces to shoot to kill, search houses and destroy any property that is “likely” to be used by insurgents in areas declared as “disturbed” by the home ministry.
- Security forces can “arrest without a warrant” a person, who has committed or even “about to commit a cognizable offence” even on “reasonable suspicion”.
- It also protects them from legal processes for actions taken under the act.

How is a region declared 'disturbed'?

- A disturbed area is one which is declared by notification under Section 3 of the AFSPA.
- An area can be disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- The Central Government or the Governor of the State or administrator of the Union Territory can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.

- A suitable notification would have to be made in the Official Gazette. As per Section 3, it can be invoked in places where “the use of armed forces in aid of the civil power is necessary”.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs would usually enforce this Act where necessary, but there have been exceptions where the Centre decided to forego its power and leave the decision to the State governments.

What is the state government's role?

- The state governments can suggest whether the act is required to be enforced or not.
- But under Section (3) of the act, their opinion can be overruled by the governor or the Centre.

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements with reference to Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act

1. It was enacted in the year 1958
2. It gives powers to the army and state and central police forces to shoot to kill, search houses and destroy any property that is “likely” to be used by insurgents in areas declared as “disturbed”
3. Security forces can “arrest without a warrant” a person, who has committed or even “about to commit a cognizable offence” even on “reasonable suspicion”

Which of the above mentioned statements are true ?

- a) 1 and 2 b) 2 only
c) 2 and 3 d) All of the above

Solution: d

States under AFSPA

- Assam
- Jammu and Kashmir
- Nagaland
- Manipur (except the Imphal municipal area).
- In Arunachal Pradesh, only the Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts plus a 20-km belt bordering Assam come under its purview.

Cabinet approves first-ever three way merger in Indian Banking

What is the issue ?

- The Union Cabinet has approved the scheme of amalgamation for amalgamating Bank of Baroda, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank, with Bank of Baroda.

More on the issue :

- This marks the first-ever three-way merger in the country's banking sector.
- The merged entity will become the third largest bank in the country, after government-owned State Bank of India and private sector lender ICICI Bank.
- The board of Bank of Baroda will ensure that the interests of all transferring employees and officers of the transferor bank are protected.
- The merger will come into force on April 1, 2019.
- In September 2018, the 'Alternative Mechanism' (AM) headed by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had decided to merge Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with Bank of Baroda.

Why merge banks ?

- Meet credit needs of growing economy.
- Absorb financial shocks
- Improve capacity to raise resources without depending on State exchequer.

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Working of the Alternative Mechanism :

- The proposals received from banks for in-principle approval to formulate schemes of amalgamation will be placed before the Alternative Mechanism.
- A Report on the proposals cleared by Alternative Mechanism will be sent to the Cabinet every three months.
- Alternative Mechanism may also direct banks to examine proposals for amalgamation.
- Alternative Mechanism will receive inputs from Reserve Bank of India (RBI) before according in-principle approval.
- Alternative Mechanism shall devise its own procedure for appraisal of amalgamation proposals by banks, and be guided overall by the objectives of the Nationalisation Acts {Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Acts, 1970 and 1980}.
- The Final Schemes formulated will be approved by the Central Government, and laid in both the Houses of Parliament.
- Alternative Mechanism will be serviced by the Department of Financial Services for this purpose.

Union cabinet approves committee to safeguard identity, heritage of Assamese people

What is the issue ?

- The Union cabinet has decided to set up a high-level committee for implementation of Clause 6 of Assam Accord and measures envisaged in the Memorandum of Settlement, 2003.
- Retired IAS officer M.P. Bezbaruah is the chairman of the 9-member Committee.

About Clause 6 of Assam Accord :

- The Clause 6 of Assam Accord states that the central government will come up with Constitutional, legislative and administrative measures to safeguard, protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people.

- The Assam Accord was signed in 1985 to end a six-year-long mass movement demanding detection and deportation of illegal immigrants, mostly from Bangladesh, who threatened the culture, identity and economic future of the indigenous people of Assam.
- To implement the various Clauses of Assam Accord a new Department has been established in the name of “**Implementation of Assam Accord Department**” during the year 1986.
- Successive central and state governments have failed to implement key clauses of the agreement.
- The accord was signed between the Central and Assam governments on one side and the All Assam Students’ Union (AASU) and the now defunct All Assam Gana Sangram Parishad (AAGSP).
- According to the accord, all those foreigners who had entered Assam between 1951 and 1961 were to be given full citizenship, including the right to vote; the entrants between 1961 and 1971 were to be denied voting rights for ten years but would enjoy all other rights of citizenship; and those who had done so after 1971 were to be deported under the provisions of the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order, 1964.
- However, it has been felt that Clause 6 of the Assam Accord has not been fully implemented, and therefore the Committee shall examine the effectiveness of actions since 1985 to implement Clause 6 of the Assam Accord.
- The detailed report shows that only 46.7% of the total homes had an adequate number of caregivers per child and only 28.7% centres were able to tend to inmates showing signs of hunger or illness.
- Only 65.9% of homes were able to actively supervise children under trauma, according to the report titled ‘Mapping and Review Exercise of Child Care Institutions’.
- The report also says that the lack of infrastructure facilities is “glaring” and finds that more than 1,000 homes did not have a dormitory for children, raising questions about sleeping arrangements made for them.
- The report finds that even though there are several mechanisms for monitoring, regular inspections of these shelters were not being carried out.

Swachh Survekshan 2019 launched

What is the issue ?

- Swachh Survekshan 2019, the fourth edition of the cleanliness survey, to be conducted from January 4 to 31, was launched.

Survekshan 2019 survey toolkit, ODF plus and ODF plus plus toolkit and swachh manch

- The Swachh Survekshan 2019 survey toolkit contains the detailed survey methodology and component indicators with scores to help cities prepare themselves for taking the survey.
- ODF plus and ODF plus plus protocol focusses on sustaining ODF tag by ensuring toilet functionality, cleanliness and maintenance and faecal sludge management.
- A web portal ‘Swachh Manch’ was launched with a motive to bring together different stakeholders under one roof. It is for the citizens to connect and contribute to the overall cleanliness of their respective areas.

What are ODF Plus and ODF Plus Plus protocols ?

- The ODF+ and ODF++ protocols aim to ensure sustainability in sanitation outcomes.

Child care institutions in India in a shoddy state

What is the issue ?

- A report titled ‘Mapping and Review Exercise of Child Care Institutions’ based on a pan-India survey of child care institutions (CCI) conducted by the Centre has highlighted once again the unacceptable state of child care institutions in the country.

More on the issue :

- The survey conducted between December 2015 and March 2017, was recently made public by the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MoWCD).