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KHABAR

17-20 | February

2024

A Note for Our Students

Current affairs form core component of General Knowledge section in almost all the competitive exams. Observing the recent trends, questions from current affairs has successively increased. But how to find out relevant current affairs from vast data available on numerous websites, apps and videos??

How to efficiently prepare current affairs keeping in mind relevance of the exam??

Don't worry!!

We have the solution; Gyanm team will segregate the important and the most relevant current affairs under heading 'Gyanm recommendations' so that you can prepare this crucial component with complete efficiency!!

So let's begin!!

Gyanm Recommendations!

1. Feb 15: World Hippo Day



This day is celebrated to raise awareness about the plight of hippos, which are one of the most endangered large mammals on the Earth. It also highlights the conservation efforts needed to ensure their survival in the wild.

- The current hippo population is estimated to be between 115,000 and 130,000, with the decline being attributed to poaching, loss of access to fresh water, mechanised farming, and urbanisation.
- Hippos (Hippopotamus) are semi-aquatic herbivorous mammals, native to sub-Saharan Africa, and weigh up to 2,000 kg, making them the third-largest land mammal after elephants and rhinos. They are mostly found in big rivers, lakes, and mangrove swamps.

2. February (17) World Pangolin Day



It is celebrated on the third Saturday of February every year to raise awareness about these unique mammals and to focus on their conservation efforts. They are the only mammals wholly-covered in scales

- Pangolins are one of the most heavily trafficked mammals in the illegal wildlife trade. Over a lakh of them are poached annually for massive illegal trade.
- The demand for pangolins comes mostly from China, where pangolin scales are unfortunately believed to be a cure-all of sorts and pangolin flesh is considered a delicacy. However, there is no evidence to support claims regarding medicinal properties of pangolin scales or any other part of the pangolin.

3. SC nullifies Electoral Bond Scheme

The Supreme Court declared on Feb 15 the electoral bonds scheme as unconstitutional. The scheme allowed individuals and companies to make unlimited anonymous donations to political parties.

- A five-judge Constitution Bench led by CJI DY Chandrachud observed that the information about funding to a political party is essential for a voter to exercise their freedom to vote in an effective manner.

- Certain provisions of the Electoral Bond Scheme curtailed the right to information of the voter by anonymizing contributions, thus violating Article 19(1)(a) (right to freedom of speech and expression”.
- The top court ordered State Bank of India to stop issuing Electoral Bonds immediately and submit all details by March 6 to the Election Commission which shall make all donations public by March 13.
- The Court further ordered that all Electoral Bonds within the 15-day validity period shall be returned by political parties to the purchasers.

4. GROW initiative for restoring wastelands



NITI Aayog unveiled the Greening and Restoration of Wasteland with Agroforestry (GROW) report and portal on Feb 12, aiming to bolster efforts in environmental conservation and transform India's wastelands through agroforestry.

- Utilising cutting-edge remote sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies, the report offers a comprehensive state-wise and district-wise analysis of various government and private agencies engaged in greening and restoration projects.

- Agroforestry, which integrates trees, crops, and livestock, addresses multifaceted challenges related to food security, nutrition, energy, employment, and environmental conservation.
- Presently, agroforestry covers 8.65% of India's total geographical area, encompassing approximately 28.42 million hectares.

5. Germany now 3rd largest economy



Germany is now the world's third-largest economy, after Japan unexpectedly slipped into recession.

With a GDP of \$4.5 trillion, Germany now is next only to the USA and China in terms of size of economy, and narrowly leads Japan, which has a GDP of \$4.2 trillion.

- The change in positions primarily reflects the sharp fall in the value of yen against the dollar while Euro in Germany has remained comparatively stable against the dollar.
- Though it has long been Europe's largest economy, the last time Germany held the number three spot was in 2007, before it was overtaken by China.

6. Prabowo Subianto: Elected as the President of Indonesia, after the largest one-day electoral exercise in the world,



7. Vast iron ore reserves found in Rajasthan

State Mines Department in Rajasthan has indicated presence of deposits of more than 840 million tonnes of iron ore in Karauli district of Rajasthan.

- The area, located near Hindon, spans approximately 1,888 hectares and is poised to significantly impact the state's industrial landscape. Magnetite of magnetic nature and hematite iron ore of normal nature is available here.
- The new deposits of iron ore will also create new opportunities for industrial development and employment in the state.

8. South Indian Bank wins technology prize

South Indian Bank won the prestigious award of “Best Technology Bank of the Year” at the 19th IBA Annual Banking Technology Conference, Expo & Citations on Feb 14 in nMumbai.

- The Bank’s exceptional performance was celebrated with a total of six prestigious accolades. South Indian Bank is a Kerala-based private sector bank with a nationwide presence.

9. 58th Jnanpith Award-2023



Renowned Urdu poet Gulzar and Sanskrit scholar Jagadguru Rambhadracharya were selected for the 58th Jnanpith Award-2023.

Gulzar is known for his works in Hindi cinema and is considered one of the finest Urdu poets of this era. He is also a renowned lyricist, author, screenwriter, and film director known for his distinct style.

For the 89 year old maestro, this is yet another feather in his glorious cap, already shining with an Oscar, Grammy, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, 5 National Awards, Padma Bhushan and 22 Filmfare Awards.

Jagadguru Rambhadracharya is the founder and chief of Tulsi Peeth in Chitrakoot, and is a renowned Hindu spiritual leader, educator and writer of more than 240 books. A distinguished Sanskrit scholar, he is recognized for his rich contributions in promotion of the Sanskrit language.

Established in 1944, the prestigious Jnanpith Award is given annually for outstanding contributions to Indian literature. Regarded as the top most literary honour in India, it carries a cash component of ₹11 lakh, a statue of Goddess Vagdevi (Saraswati) and a citation.

10. ISRO launches weather satellite INSAT 3DS



The Indian Space Research Organisation launched GSLV F14 on Feb 17 from Sriharikota to successfully place weather satellite INSAT 3DS.

- The advanced satellite weighing 2,274 kg was placed in a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit. INSAT stands for Indian National Satellite System.
- The satellite will augment meteorological services along with the presently operational INSAT-3D and INSAT-3DR in-orbit satellites.
- It will be used for enhanced meteorological observations, monitoring of land and ocean surfaces, weather forecast and disaster warning, as well as to provide satellite aided Search and Rescue Services, among others.

11. Badminton Asia Team Championships: The Indian Women's Team won their first-ever Asian Team Championships title on Feb 18 by defeating Thailand at Shah Alam, Malaysia. P V Sindhu and Anmol Kharb were the stars of victory. Men's team title was secured by China by ousting Malaysia 3-0.

12. Acharya Vidyasagar Maharaj: Renowned Jain seer breathed his last on Feb 18 at Chandragiri Teerth in Dongargarh in Chhattisgarh, after undertaking the 'sallekhna' ritual. He was 77.



- 'Sallekhna' is a Jain religious practice involving voluntary fasting unto death with observance of total silence for spiritual purification.
- He was widely recognised for his outstanding scholarly pursuits and profound spiritual wisdom. He authored several insightful commentaries, poems, and spiritual treatises.

13. Ex. Vayu Shakti: The Indian Air Force conducted its full-scale firepower demonstration over skies in Pokhran, Rajasthan. The exercise was last conducted in 2019. Over 50 tonnes of ordnance was dropped in a span of two hours.

- Keeping with this year's theme 'Lightning Strike from the Sky', over 120 aircraft displayed their abilities.
- Heavy-lift copter Chinook showed its ability to transport two M777 artillery guns by carrying them in an underslung mode.

14. Ravichandran Ashwin, senior off-spinner, became the second (after Anil Kumble) Indian bowler on Feb 16 to take 500 Test wickets. He achieved the feat during the third Test against England in Rajkot, Gujarat.



15. February (18) World Whale Day

Observed on the third Sunday of February, the day serves as a crucial platform to raise awareness about the threats faced by whale species across the world. It highlights the need for protecting these marine giants and their vital role in maintaining ecological balance.

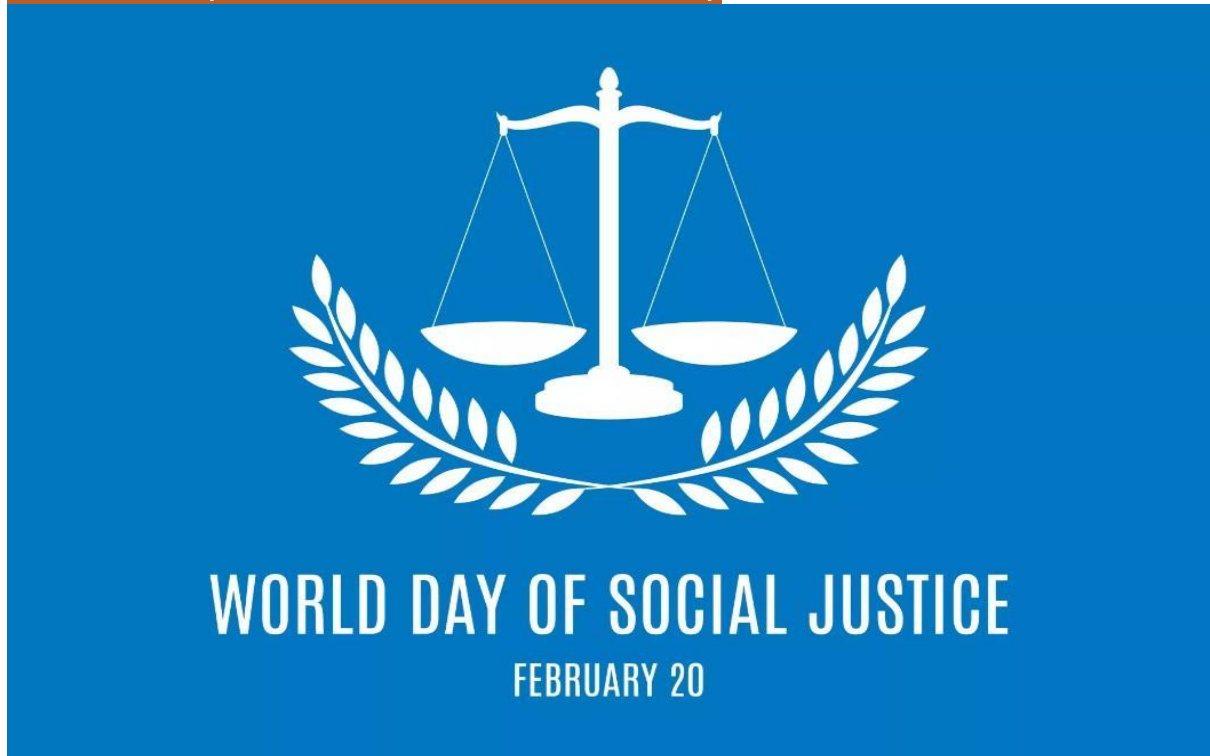
- The biggest threats faced by whales worldwide are ocean pollution, tourism pressure, illegal fisheries, climate change, and increasing marine traffic, all harming them together.

16. February 19: Soil Health Card Day

Celebrated to commemorate the launch of the Soil Health Card Scheme on this day in 2015. It aims to help farmers improve productivity through judicious use of inputs.

- The card carries crop-wise recommendations and scientific advice on nutrients, fertilisers, water etc required by farmers to improve the quality and production of their crops.
- A soil card is issued once every 3 years to regularly monitor soil quality across 12 parameters.

17. February 20: World Social Justice Day



The day is celebrated annually all over the world with support from the International Labour Organisation, Geneva to focus on the plight of social injustice throughout the world and to press for improvements. We advance social justice when we remove barriers that people face because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability. The theme for this year is "Bridging Gaps, Building Alliances." It highlights the importance of collaboration and partnership to address the challenges currently being faced by the world.

18. India placed 85th in Henley Passport Index

Six countries, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Singapore and Spain, secured first rank in the latest Henley Passport Index 2024 released on Feb 18. Passport holders of these six countries enjoy visa-free entry to 194 nations.

- India's passport slipped one step to 85th rank, from 84th in the previous year. However, the number of countries offering visa-free travel to Indian passport holders has risen from 60 to 62 this year.



- Afghanistan's passport ended at the bottom, having visa free access to only 28 countries.
- The Henley Passport Index is issued on monthly intervals. It derives its rankings from the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) specialised data, covering 199 passports and 227 travel destinations worldwide.

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Some Other Minor News!

1. The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has asked airline carriers to ensure that passengers get their baggage within 30 minutes of landing at airports. Initially this system shall be followed at six major airports and later it will be extended to all airports where they fly.



2. CA Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal, has been elected as the President of ICAI - Institute of Chartered Accountants of India for the year 2024-25. Currently, he is the vice president of ICAI.

3. Assam, the state government has officially declared kaji nemu (citrus limon), a variety of lemon unique to the region, as the 'State Fruit'. The oval-shaped elongated lemon is green in colour and has a thin smooth peel. The Kaji nemu is a staple in every Assamese household.



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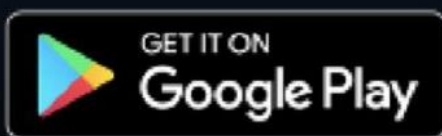
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