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IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR PRELIMS VOL 29

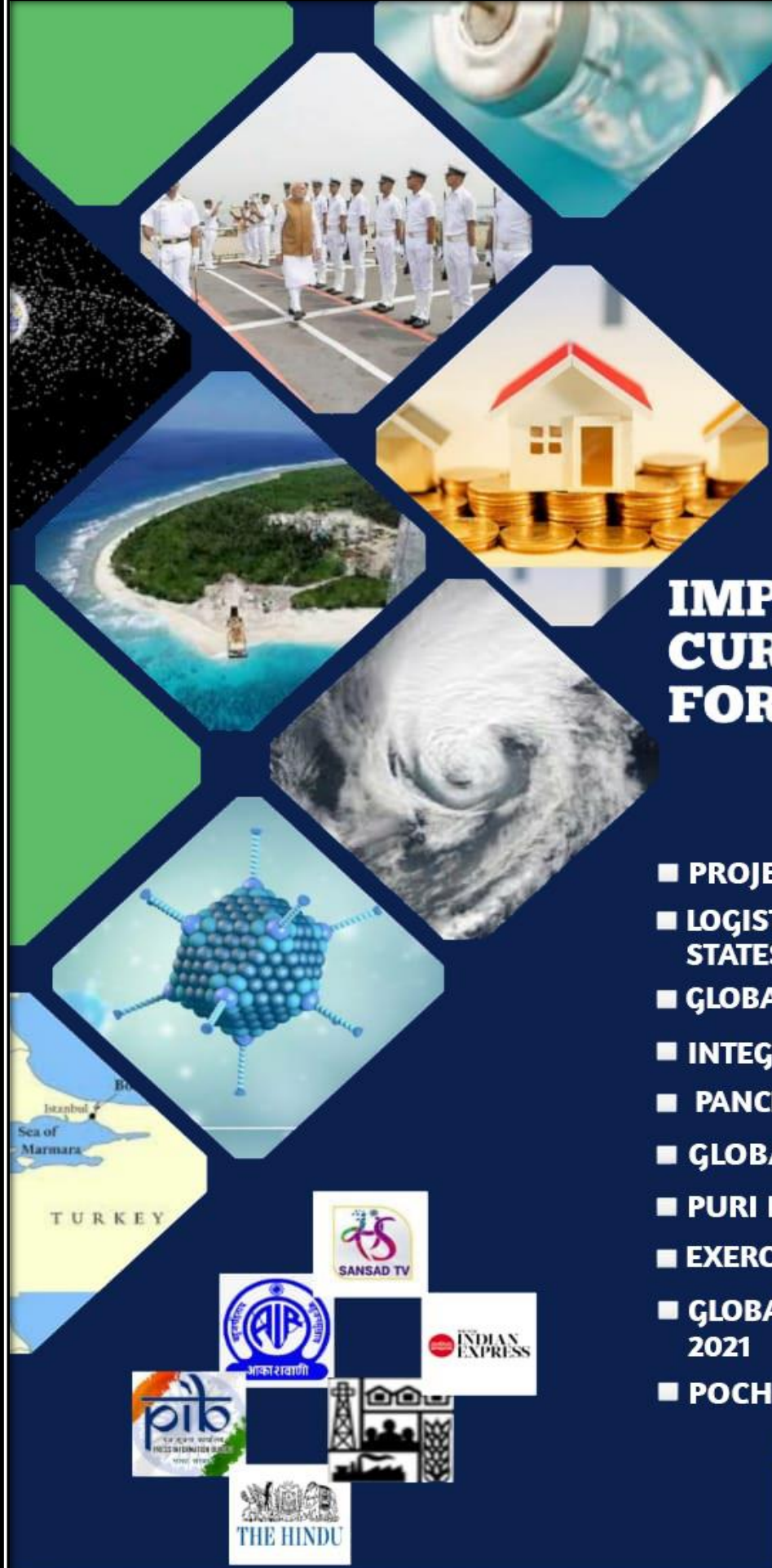
- PROJECT SAMPOORNA
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IMPORTANT CURRENT AFFAIRS

FOR PRELIMS VOL- 29

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GOVERNANCE AND SCHEMES**1) PROJECT SAMPOORNA**

IN NEWS: - Project Sampoorna which was successfully implemented in Bongaigaon district of Assam is a model that can be easily implemented anywhere in reducing child malnutrition

ABOUT PROJECT SAMPOORNA

- The Bongaigaon district of Assam has 2,416 malnourished children, 246 cases of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and 2,170 instances of Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM).
- Project Sampoorna was launched to target the mothers of SAM/ MAM children with the tagline being 'Empowered Mothers, Healthy Children'.
- It was based on the success of the community-based COVID-19 management model (Project Mili Juli).
- Under this project, the mother of a healthy child of an Anganwadi Centre was paired with the target mother and they would be Buddy Mothers.
- They were given diet charts to indicate the daily food intake of their children and would have discussions on all Tuesdays at the AWC.
- Since the major hindrance to the project was patriarchy, the mothers were enrolled in Self Help Groups (SHGs) under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM).
- Meanwhile, 100 millilitres of milk and an egg on alternate days for the children for the first 3months were provided so that their mothers could stabilise themselves in the newly found jobs.
- Sampoorna is in accordance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and those set by the UN Secretary General António Guterres in the 2021 Food Systems Summit.

Impact of the Project Sampoorna

- After three months of Project Sampoorna, out of 246 SAM children, 11% continued to be SAM, 11.4% improved to MAM and 76.8% became normal.
- By September 2021, 92.3% SAM and 98.9% MAM children were normal.
- Children who had not improved were checked and treated by doctors under the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK).
- Project Sampoorna had prevented at least 1,200 children from becoming malnourished over the last year.
- The National Nutrition Mission and the State government recognised the project in the 'Innovation Category'.
- This model is successful in both women empowerment as well as tackling the malnutrition.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. Project Sampoorna was launched in Delhi
2. Under this project, the mother of a healthy child of an Anganwadi Centre was paired with the target malnutrition affected mother and they would be Buddy Mothers.

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - b

2) GLOBAL DRUG POLICY INDEX

IN NEWS: - The inaugural Global Drug Policy Index, has been released by the Harm Reduction Consortium.

ABOUT GLOBAL DRUG POLICY INDEX

- It is a data-driven global analysis of drug policies and their implementation.
- It is composed of 75 indicators running across five broad dimensions of drug policy: criminal justice, extreme responses, health and harm reduction, access to internationally controlled medicines, and development.
- It is a project of the Harm Reduction Consortium. The Harm Reduction Consortium is a global consortium of networks aiming to challenge the global “war on drugs”, scale up access to harm reduction services, and advocate for increased resources for harm reduction.

KEY FINDINGS

- Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, the UK and Australia as the five leading countries on humane and health-driven drug policies.
- The five lowest-ranking countries are Brazil, Uganda, Indonesia, Kenya, and Mexico.
- India’s rank is 18 out of 30 countries. India has an overall score of 46/100.
- The global dominance of drug policies based on repression and punishment has led to low scores overall, with a median score of just 48/100, and the top-ranking country (Norway) only reaching 74/100.
- Inequality is deeply seated in global drug policies, with the top-ranking 5 countries scoring 3 times as much as the lowest-ranking 5 countries. This is in part due to the colonial legacy of the ‘war on drugs’ approach.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The Global Drug Policy Index is released by United Nations Office On Drugs and Crime
2. It is a data-driven global analysis of drug policies and their implementation

Which among the above statements are incorrect?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - a

INDIAN ECONOMY

3) LOGISTICS EASE ACROSS DIFFERENT STATES (LEADS)

IN NEWS: - The Logistics Ease across Different States (LEADS) 2021 Index Rankings has been recently released.

ABOUT LOGISTICS EASE ACROSS DIFFERENT STATES (LEADS)

- The LEADS index was launched in 2018 by the Commerce and Industry Ministry and Deloitte.
- It ranks states on the score of their logistics services and efficiency that are indicative of economic growth.
- States are ranked based on quality and capacity of key infrastructure such as road, rail and warehousing as well as on operational ease of logistics.

Highlights of the 2021 report

- India's logistics costs account for 13-14 per cent of GDP, compared to 7-8 per cent in developed countries.
- Gujarat, Haryana and Punjab have emerged as the top performers in the LEADS 2021 index respectively.

- West Bengal, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh and Assam were ranked 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st respectively.
- North Eastern States, and J&K and Ladakh have been considered a separate group for LEADS rankings.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The LEADS index was launched in 2018 by the Commerce and Industry Ministry and Deloitte.
2. It ranks states on the score of their logistics services and efficiency that are indicative of economic growth.

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - c

4) INTEGRATED OMBUDSMAN SCHEME

IN NEWS: - Recently Government has launched the integrated Ombudsman Scheme.

ABOUT INTEGRATED OMBUDSMAN SCHEME

- The integrated ombudsman scheme amalgamates 3 ombudsman scheme of RBI - banking ombudsman scheme of 2006, ombudsman scheme for NBFCs of 2018 and ombudsman scheme of digital transactions of 2019.

- It is based on “One Nation-One Ombudsman” with one portal, one email, and one address for the customers to lodge their complaints.
- The new scheme also includes non-scheduled primary co-operative banks with a deposit size of Rs 50 crore and above.
- The responsibility of representing the Regulated Entity and furnishing information in respect of complaints filed by customers would be that of the Principal Nodal Officer in the rank of a General Manager in a Public Sector Bank or equivalent.
- It will improve the grievance redress mechanism for resolving customer complaints against RBI’s regulated entities.
- RBI’s Executive Director-in charge of Consumer Education and Protection Department would be the Appellate Authority under the integrated scheme.
- Customers will be able to file complaints, submit documents, track status, and give feedback through a single email address.
- There will be a multilingual toll-free number that will provide all relevant information on grievance redress.
- It will be cost-free for customers of banks and members of the public.

ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

5) PANCHAMRITA STRATEGY

IN NEWS: - India recently announced new climate targets at COP26 under its ‘Panchamrita strategy’. It has taken a bold leap towards cementing its commitment to clean energy and letting the world know its future approach towards fighting climate change.

ABOUT PANCHAMRITA STRATEGY

The five-fold strategy to fight climate change, termed as Panchamrit, was announced by Indian PM at the ongoing COP26 meeting at Glasgow. The strategy

also includes a target year for reaching Net Zero. India made five big-ticket announcements at the climate change meeting in Glasgow:

- India will increase its non-fossil energy capacity to 500GW (India had earlier extended its target to 450GW out of which 100GW is already installed) by 2030.
- India will meet 50% of its energy requirements from renewable energy by 2030. Please note that renewable energy sources are different from non-fossil sources. Non-fossil sources also include scalable nuclear power and hydroelectricity.
- India will reduce the total projected carbon emissions by one billion tonnes from now onwards till 2030.
- By 2030, India will reduce the carbon intensity of its economy by 45%. India has achieved 25% of emission intensity reduction of GDP b/w 2005 - 2016, and is on the path to achieve more than 40% by 2030.
- By the year 2070, India will achieve the target of Net Zero.

PANCHAMRIT

‘Panchamrit’ is a traditional method of mixing five natural foods — milk, ghee, curd, honey and jaggery. These are used in Hindu and Jain worship rituals. It is also used as a technique in Ayurveda.

6) GLOBAL METHANE PLEDGE

IN NEWS: - The US President has announced the Global Methane Pledge, which is an US-EU led effort to cut methane emissions by a third by the end of this decade. The announcement has come ahead of 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26) of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Glasgow, UK.

ABOUT GLOBAL METHANE PLEDGE

- The pledge was first announced in September by the US and EU. It is not a structured agreement.
- The aim is reducing the global methane emissions across the globe.
- To cut down methane emissions by up to 30 per cent from 2020 levels by the year 2030.
- If implemented globally, this would minimise global warming by 0.2 degrees Celsius by the 2040s, compared to projected temperature rises.
- The planet is presently around 1.2 degrees Celsius hotter than it was before the Industrial Revolution.
- As of now, India, the third-largest source of methane emissions, is not a signatory.
- Independent International Methane Emissions Observatory launched for Methane monitoring at COP26.

ABOUT METHANE

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- It is the second-most abundant greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, after carbon dioxide.
- It is the simplest hydrocarbon, consisting of one carbon atom and four hydrogen atoms (CH₄).
- It is a colourless, odourless, and highly flammable gas.
- Sources include human/anthropogenic sources and natural. Approximately 40% of methane emitted is from natural sources and about 60% comes from human-influenced sources.
- Human sources/anthropogenic sources of methane include landfills, oil and natural gas systems, agricultural activities, coal mining, wastewater treatment, and certain industrial processes.

- Human sources of methane are responsible for 60 per cent of global methane emissions.
- The oil and gas sectors are among the largest contributors to human sources.
- Natural sources include decay of plant material in wetlands, the seepage of gas from underground deposits or the digestion of food by cattle.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

7) GLOBAL STATE OF DEMOCRACY REPORT 2021

IN NEWS: - The recently released Global State of Democracy Report, 2021, the number of countries moving towards authoritarianism in 2020 was higher than that of countries becoming more democratic.

ABOUT GLOBAL STATE OF DEMOCRACY REPORT

- The report aims to influence the global debate and analyses current trends and challenges to democracy, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- It offers specific policy recommendations to spark new and innovative thinking for policymakers, governments and civil society organizations supporting democracy.
- It is released by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International-IDEA).

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

- International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization that supports sustainable democracy worldwide.
- It was founded in 1995 and currently has 33 member states.
- International IDEA advances democracy worldwide, as a universal human aspiration and an enabler of sustainable development, through support to

the building, strengthening and safeguarding of democratic political institutions and processes at all levels.

MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

- Democratic Decline: Democratically elected Governments, including established democracies, are increasingly adopting authoritarian tactics.
- Effect of Pandemic: The pandemic placed considerable stress on democracy across the region by imposing inevitable restrictions on movement and—where governments were sensitive to criticism—also restrictions on freedom of expression.
- The year 2020 was the worst on record, in terms of the number of countries affected by deepening autocratisation.
- The pandemic has thus had a particularly damaging effect on non-democratic countries, further closing their already reduced civic space.
- Popular Support: This democratic backsliding has often enjoyed significant popular support.
- Indian Scenario: The report highlighted the case of Brazil and India as “some of the most worrying examples of backsliding.
- However, India remained in the category of a mid-level performing democracy as it has since 2000.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. Global State of Democracy Report, 2021 is released by the UN
2. The report aims to influence the global debate and analyses current trends and challenges to democracy, exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only

- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - b

8) EXERCISE DOSTI

IN NEWS: - The 15th edition of the biennial trilateral coast guard exercise 'Dosti' involving India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka was held in the Maldives

ABOUT EXERCISE DOSTI

- The aim of this exercise is to further fortify the friendship, enhance mutual operational capability, and exercise interoperability and to build cooperation.
- Both the Maldives and Sri Lanka are of strategic importance to New Delhi and to its maritime security interests.
- 2021 marks 30 years since these exercises were first launched.
- These exercises help during joint operations and missions undertaken by countries and also help enhance interoperability.
- Although piracy is not a major issue in this part of the Indian ocean, these kinds of exercises also help coast guards with training for possibilities.
- These exercises help develop a better understanding of the other nation's coast guard operations and how to enhance coordination during different kinds of missions.
- The scopes of these exercises are wide-ranging.
- India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives have agreed to work on what they called the "four pillars" of security cooperation.
- These involved the areas of marine security, human trafficking, counter-terrorism and cyber security.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. Exercise Dosti is a biennial trilateral coast guard exercise involving India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka
2. 2021 marks 30 years since these exercises were first launched.

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - c

ART AND CULTURE**9) PURI HERITAGE CORRIDOR PROJECT**

IN NEWS: - The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has written to the Odisha government warning it of potential threats of the Puri Heritage Corridor project to the structural safety of the Puri Jagannath Temple.

ABOUT PURI HERITAGE CORRIDOR PROJECT

- Conceived in 2016, the Project aims to transform the holy town of Puri into an international place of heritage.
- A total of 22 different projects will be executed in a phased manner.
- Funds have been allocated under the state government's Augmentation of Basic Amenities and Development of Heritage and Architecture at Puri (ABADHA) scheme.
- The project includes redevelopment of Puri lake and Musa river revival plan.

ABOUT PURI JAGANNATH TEMPLE

- It is an important Vaishnavite temple dedicated to Jagannath, a form of Sri Krishna in Puri in Odisha.
- The temple is believed to be constructed in the 12th century by King Anatavarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty.
- Jagannath Puri temple is called 'Yamanika Tirtha' where, according to the Hindu beliefs, the power of 'Yama', the god of death has been nullified in Puri due to the presence of Lord Jagannath.
- This temple was called the "White Pagoda" and is a part of Char Dham pilgrimages (Badrinath, Dwaraka, Puri, Rameswaram).
- The Puri temple is famous for its annual Ratha Yatra, or chariot festival, in which the three principal deities are pulled on huge and elaborately decorated temple cars.

PRACTICE QUESTION

Consider the following statements

1. The Puri Heritage Corridor project aims to transform the holy town of Puri into an international place of heritage.
2. The Puri Jagannath Temple is an important Vaishnavite temple dedicated to Jagannath, a form of Sri Krishna in Puri in Odisha

Which among the above statements are correct?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 or 2

Answer: - c

10) POCHAMPALLY VILLAGE

IN NEWS: - Pochampally village in Telangana was selected as one of the Best Tourism Villages by United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO).

ABOUT POCHAMPALLY VILLAGE

- Pochampally in Nalgonda district is often referred to as the silk city of India for the exquisite sarees that are woven through a unique style called Ikat.
- This style, Pochampally Ikat, received a Geographical Indicator (GI Status) in 2004.
- Pochampally's unique weaving styles and patterns received special focus through the Prime Minister's mantra of Vocal 4 Local as a part of Atmanirbhar Bharat.
- In 2015, to recognise the diversity of weaving techniques and our rich handloom tradition, the Prime Minister inaugurated the first National Handloom Day on 7th August as a tribute to the formal proclamation of the Swadeshi Movement that was made in a meeting at the Calcutta Town hall on the same day in 1905.
- Pochampally is also known as Bhoodan Pochampally to commemorate the Bhoodan Movement that was launched by Acharya Vinobha Bhave from this village on 18th April, 1951.
- Vinoba Bhave was the first international figure to receive the Ramon Magsaysay Award in 1958. He was awarded Bharat Ratna posthumously in 1983.
- The Ministry of Tourism recommended three villages for the UNWTO Best Tourism Village entry from India. However, Pochampally, was awarded as one of the best Tourism Villages by UNWTO.
- These were Kongthong in Meghalaya, Ladhpura Khas, Madhya Pradesh and Pochampally in Telangana.

ABOUT BEST TOURISM VILLAGE INITIATIVE

- It is a Pilot initiative by UNWTO to highlight those villages where tourism preserves cultures and traditions, celebrates diversity, provides opportunities and safeguards biodiversity.
- It aims to award those villages which are outstanding examples of rural destinations and showcase good practises in line with its specified nine evaluation areas.
- It also aims to support villages to enhance their rural tourism potential through training and access to opportunities for improvement.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

11) GIANT MAGELLAN TELESCOPE

IN NEWS: - In Chile's dry Atacama Desert, stargazers are scanning the clear night skies to detect the existence of life on other planets and study so-called 'dark energy'. Central to the race to peer into distant worlds is the GMT.

ABOUT GIANT MAGELLAN TELESCOPE

- The GMT is a ground-based extremely large telescope under construction.
- It is US-led in partnership with Australia, Brazil, and South Korea, with Chile as the host country.
- It will consist of seven 8.4 m (27.6 ft) diameter primary segments, that will observe optical and near infrared (320–25000 nm) light.
- It will have the resolving power of a 24.5 m (80.4 ft) primary mirror and collecting area equivalent to a 22.0 m (72.2 ft) one which is about 368 square meters.
- It is expected to have a resolving power 10 times greater than the Hubble Space Telescope.

12) HomoSEP

IN NEWS: - IIT Madras has developed a robot that can, if deployed extensively, put an end to this practice of sending people into septic tanks.

ABOUT HomoSEP

- HomoSEP stands for “homogenizer of septic tanks”.
- It has a shaft attached to blades that can open like an inverted umbrella when introduced into a septic tank.
- This is helpful as the openings of the septic tanks are small and the tank interiors are bigger.
- The sludge inside a septic tank contains faecal matter that has thickened like hard clay and settled at the bottom.
- This needs to be shredded and homogenized so that it can be sucked out and the septic tank cleaned. The whirring blades of the robot achieve precisely this.

13) LEONID METEOR SHOWER

IN NEWS: - The annual Leonids Meteor Shower took place between 6th and 30th November, with peak activity on 17th November.

ABOUT LEONID METEOR SHOWER

- The debris that forms this meteor shower originates from a small comet called 55P/Tempel-Tuttle in the constellation Leo, which takes 33 years to orbit the sun.
- The Leonids are considered to be a major shower that features the fastest meteors, which typically travel at speeds of 71 km per second.

ABOUT METEOR

- It is a space rock or meteoroid that enters Earth's atmosphere.

- Meteoroids are objects in space that range in size from dust grains to small asteroids.
- Most are pieces of other, larger bodies that have been broken or blasted off. These come from comets, asteroids, planets and the Moon.
- When meteoroids enter Earth's atmosphere (or that of another planet, like Mars) at high speed and burn up, the fireballs or "shooting stars" are called meteors.
- Fireballs are larger explosions of light and color that can persist longer than an average meteor streak. This is due to the fact that fireballs originate from larger particles of cometary material.
- When a meteoroid survives its journey through the atmosphere and hits the ground, it's called a meteorite.

ABOUT METEOR SHOWER

- When Earth encounters many meteoroids at once, it is called a meteor shower.
- Comets, like Earth and the other planets, also orbit the sun. Unlike the nearly circular orbits of the planets, the orbits of comets are usually quite lop-sided.
- As a comet gets closer to the sun, some of its icy surface boils off, releasing lots of particles of dust and rock (meteoroids).
- This comet debris gets scattered along the comet's path, especially in the inner solar system (including planets Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars).
- Then, several times each year as Earth makes its journey around the sun, its orbit crosses the orbit of a comet, which means Earth encounters a bunch of comet debris.
- Meteor showers are named for the constellation where the meteors appear to be coming from. So, for example, the Orionids Meteor Shower, which occurs in October each year, appears to be originating near the constellation 'Orion the Hunter'.



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+91 7306994905 | atcivilscafe@gmail.com | www.thecivilscafeias.com

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