Prelim Bits 22-10-2019

Marawah Island

- The World's oldest known natural pearl discovered at a Neolithic site on Marawah Island, off the coast of Abu Dhabi.
- It is dubbed the 'Abu Dhabi Pearl' that have been radio dated to 5,800-5,600 BCE.
- The discovery proves that pearls and oysters were being used in the UAE nearly 8,000 years ago.
- Prior to this discovery, the earliest pearl was found in another Neolithic site off the coast of Abu Dhabi.



Anthrax

- Two Asiatic water buffaloes in central Assam's Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary was died due to Anthrax.
- Anthrax is caused by the bacterium Bacillus anthracis.
- It is primarily a disease of herbivorous mammals, although other mammals and some birds have been known to contract it.
- It can be fatal for humans who come in contact with infected animals.
- It is characterised by blisters around swellings on the skin, chest pain, vomiting, diarrhoea and fever.
- The disease is generally regarded as being non-contagious. Records of person-to-person spread exist butare rare.
- **PobitoraSanctuary** – It is often called 'Mini Kaziranga' due to similar landscape and vegetation.
- It has the highest concentration of one-horned rhinos in the world.
- Rhinos is also vulnerable to the anthrax attacks whose population in the sanctuary is estimated to be 102.

Digital Bharat Digital Sanskriti

- It is the e-portal of Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) launched by the Ministry of Culture.
- CCRT is an autonomous organization under the aegis of Ministry of Culture.
- It was pioneered by Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan and established in 1979.

- It is one of the premier institutions working in the field of linking education with culture.
- **Main Functions of CCRT** –

    i. It organizes theoretical and theme based academic programmes on Indian art and culture for teachers and students.
    ii. It Conducts Workshops to provide practical training and knowledge in crafts to be incorporated in school curriculum.
    iii. It organizes various educational activities for school students, teachers and children belonging to governmental and NGO.
    iv. It collects and develops a library of resources in the form of scripts, digital photographs, audio and video recordings and films.
    v. It prepares publications and other audio-visual material to provide an understanding and appreciation of the different aspects of Indian art and culture.
    vi. It implements Cultural Talent Search Scholarship Scheme for providing facilities to young talented children in the 10-14 age group to study one or the other art form.

QS Indian University Rankings

- The second edition of QS Indian University Rankings for India's higher education institutions was released recently.
- QS, the global higher education think tank, releases India specific university rankings.
- The rankings include Public Universities, Private Universities and deemed universities.
- The ranking looks into the Indian university system with an international lens.
- The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) dominate the list, with seven IITs figuring in the top ten rankings.
- Like last year, IIT-Bombay leads followed by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc).
- **8 indicators** were used to determine rankings **–**

    i. Academic reputation
    ii. Employer reputation
    iii. Faculty-student ratio
    iv. The proportion of staff with a PhD
    v. Papers per faculty from Scopus database
    vi. Citations per paper from Scopus database
    vii. The proportion of international students and
    viii. The proportion of international faculty (2.5%).

- These India rankings do not necessarily match the QS World University Rankings since it uses different criteria.
- In world university ranking, IIT-Bombay has been ranked the best Indian institution and IIT-Delhi the second best.

Homeward Bound

- It is a global initiative by the French's National Centre for Space Studies, that conducts leadership expeditions for women in science to Antarctica.
- In its 5th edition, Priyanka Das Rajkakati, a 27-year-old woman, originally from Assam, has been selected.
- It is a one-year long programme where women with STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) backgrounds will be trained.

Van Allen Probes mission

- NASA recently decommissioned its 7-year-old Van Allen Probes mission.
- It consists of 2 satellites in Van Allen belts to study space weather and the radiation belts around the Earth.
- Van Allen radiation belts are giant swaths of magnetically trapped, highly energetic charged particles that surround earth.
- The mission studied how these radiation rings acquire and lose electromagnetic particles.
- James Van Allen, a physicist at the University of Iowa, discovered these radiation belts in 1958.

IMNEX-2019

- It is India Myanmar Naval Exercise going to be held in Visakhapatnam.
- INS Ranvijay, a guided-missile destroyer and INS Kuthar, a missile corvette will participate in the exercise.

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express, PIB

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