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National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP)

- NITI Aayog has released vision plan for the National Data and Analytics Platform (NDAP).
- The platform aims to democratize access to publicly available government data.
- The NDAP proposes a simple, interactive, visual, and robust platform that will host various Central and state government datasets.
- It will host the latest datasets from various government websites, present them coherently, and provide tools for analytics and visualization.
- NDAP will cater to a wide audience of policymakers, researchers, innovators, data scientists, journalists and citizens.
- An inter-ministerial committee will oversee the progress of the development of platform, which will take place over a period of one year.
- The first version of the platform is expected to be launched in 2021.
- The process will follow a user-centric approach, and will incorporate feedback received from various users and stakeholders throughout the course of its development.

Sagarmatha Sambaad

- Sagarmatha Sambaad is the first ever multi-stakeholder diplomatic initiative of Nepal.
- Leaders of the member countries of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and other global leaders are invited for the event.
- The event will be focusing on the threat of climate change to the modern world.
- Given the large number of global leaders, the event is expected to serve as a venue for bilateral interaction among leaders from various countries.
- The event is planned on April 2-4, 2020 which will highlight Nepal's ability to assert its point of view before the global audience.

SAARC

- The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is the

regional intergovernmental organization and geopolitical union of states in South Asia.

- SAARC was founded in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 1985, Its secretariat is based in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- Its member states are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.
- Approximately SAARC comprises 3% of the world's area, 21% of the world's population and 4% of the global economy. .
- The organization promotes development of economic and regional integration and it launched the South Asian Free Trade Area in 2006.
- SAARC maintains permanent diplomatic relations at the United Nations as an observer.

Corruption Perceptions Index

- The Corruption Perceptions Index is an index published annually by Transparency International since 1995.
- It ranks countries "by their perceived levels of public sector corruption, as determined by expert assessments and opinion surveys.
- The 2019 CPI draws on 13 surveys and expert assessments to measure public sector corruption in 180 countries and territories, giving each a score from zero (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean).
- In the last eight years, out of 159 countries taken up for assessment only 22 countries significantly improved their CPI scores.
- India’s ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI-2019) has slipped from 78 to 80 compared to the previous year.
- In democracies like India and Australia, unfair and opaque political financing, undue influence in decision-making and lobbying by powerful corporate interest groups, has resulted in stagnation or decline in the control of corruption, observed the report.
- The latest CPI report has revealed that a majority of countries are showing little to no improvement in tackling corruption.

Democracy Index 2019

- The Economist Intelligence Unit releases democracy Index annually.
- It provides a snapshot of the state of world democracy for 165 independent states and two territories.
- The Index is based on five categories:

1. Electoral process and pluralism.

2. Civil liberties.
3. Functioning of government.
4. Political participation.
5. Political culture.

- Based on the scores on 60 indicators within these categories, each country is then itself classified as one of four types of regime

a. Full democracy
b. Flawed democracy
c. Hybrid regime
d. Authoritarian regime.

- In 2019, India slipped 10 places to 51st position, It is placed in the "flawed democracy" category.
- Its score, down from from 7.23 in 2018 to 6.90 in 2019, is its lowest ever since the Democracy Index was begun in 2006.
- The report mentioned the stripping of Jammu and Kashmir's special status with the repeal of Articles 370 and 35A, the various security measures that followed the bifurcation of the state including restriction of Internet access, and the exclusion of 1.9 million people from the final NRC (National Register of Citizens) in Assam, eroded civil liberties in the nation.

Vyommitra

- Vyommitra is ISRO's first woman half-humanoid astronaut.
- It will simulate human functions before real astronauts in Gaganyaan crew take off.
- It will be used for an unmanned flight of ISRO's GSLV III rocket (Gaganyaan Mission) in December 2020, which, along with a second unmanned flight in July 2021.
- ISRO will send the human-resembling model in a space capsule around the end of 2020 or early 2021 to study how she and later real astronauts respond to living outside earth in controlled zero gravity conditions.
- She can detect and give out warnings if environmental changes within the cabin get uncomfortable to astronauts and change the air condition.
- She can take up postures suited for launch and tasks and take commands.
- It can also able to perform following functions

1. Replacing carbon dioxide canisters,
2. Operating switches,
3. Monitoring of the crew module,

4. Receiving voice commands,
5. Responding via speech (bilingual).

Yarrabubba Crater

- The Yarrabubba crater is an asteroid impact structure, the eroded remnant of a former impact crater, situated in the Mid West Western Australia.
- It as an precise age of 2.229 billion years, it is the oldest known impact structure on Earth.
- According to recent study, Australia's Yarrabubba asteroid impact crater is oldest on earth and it may have been responsible for ending an ice age.
- Other older asteroid crater are the Vredefort Dome in South Africa (2.023 billion years old) and Canada's Sudbury Basin (1.850 billion years old).
- These are the only other precisely dated Precambrian impact structures that are currently known.
- Originally stretching roughly 70 km wide, the Yarrabubba resisted reliable estimates of its age because of erosion and plate tectonics.
- It is now an elliptical structure with a diameter of approximately 20 km.
- NASA scientists sought to assign the crater an exact age by studying concentrations of uranium, thorium, and lead in rocks collected from the crater.
- The team submerged the rocks in water, exposed them to electricity, and searched the grains for zircon and monazite.



Geological time scale

- The geologic time scale (GTS) is a system of chronological dating that relates geological strata (stratigraphy) to time.
- It is used by geologists, paleontologists, and other Earth scientists to describe the timing and relationships of events that have occurred during Earth's history.
- The International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS) sets the nomenclature of geologic time spans.
- Few classification of geological time scale are as follows

1. Age - is millions of years long
2. Epoch - contains more than one age
3. Period - contains more than one epoch
4. Era - contains more than one period

5. Eon - contains more than one era and is the longest division.

- The current eon is (Phanerozoic) for 542 million years.
- The previous eon (Proterozoic) lasted about two billion years; an eon does not correspond to a particular duration.

Source: PIB, Indian Express, the Hindu, The Scientist

