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Nanofibers

- Researchers at Massachusetts Institute of Technology have constructed small molecules which when added with water form nanofibers.
- These hard and rigid molecules become so tough that they it can hold about 200 times their own weight.
- Nanofibers are fibers with diameters in the nanometer range.
- They can be generated from different polymers and hence have different physical properties and application potentials.
- The diameters of nanofibers depend on the type of polymer used and the method of production.

Saturn’s Obliquity

- Obliquity of a planet is the angle between its equatorial plane and the orbital plane, i.e the tilt of a planet.
- During Saturn’s formation, its obliquity was 26.7°. But recent observations have shown that it has increased to 27°.
- This tilt may have been caused due to its satellites, which are moving away much faster than what was estimated before.

EDISON Alliance

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) launched the Essential Digital Infrastructure and Services Network (EDISON) Alliance.
- This alliance will work towards ensuring global and equitable access to the digital economy.
- It will work with governments and industries to accelerate digital inclusion.
- Its goal is to ensure a cross-sectoral collaboration between the technology industry and other critical sectors of the economy.
- It will be steered by a multi-sector board.
- WEF will serve as the secretariat and platform for the Alliance.
- A group of 'Champions Leaders' will advise and support the Alliance.

Corruption Perception Index 2020

- Transparency International (TI) has released the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2020.

- India's rank has slipped six places to 86th among 180 countries.
- The CPI score for India is 40, which is almost constant this year as well as the previous year score.
- The index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and business people.
- It uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. A country with a higher score has a higher rank.

Patharughat Uprising

- Before the Jallianwallah Bagh massacre, in 1894, more than a hundred peasants fell to the bullets of the British in Patharughat village of Assam.
- The unarmed peasants were protesting against the increase in land revenue levied by the colonial administration.
- **Reason** - After the British annexation of Assam in 1826, surveys of the lands of the state began.
- On the basis of such surveys, the British began to impose land taxes.
- In 1893, the British decided to increase agricultural land tax by 70 - 80%.
- Up until then the peasants would pay taxes in kind or provide a service in lieu of cash.
- Across Assam, peasants began protesting the move by organising Raij Mels, or peaceful peoples' conventions.
- Despite these gatherings being democratic, the British perceived them as breeding grounds for sedition and came down on them heavily.

World Economic Outlook

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has released its World Economic Outlook report for January 2021.
- It had projected a growth rate of 11.5% for India's economy in 2021.
- This report suggests that India will be the only major economy to register a double-digit growth this year, followed by China.
- Earlier, a separate report released by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, estimated India's economy contract by 9.6% in 2020, while it is projected to grow at 7.3% in 2021.

M-sand Policy

- Rajasthan government has brought the policy on M-sand (manufactured sand), which would be a "game changer" for the construction industry.
- [M-sand is produced after crushing hard granite stones and rocks extracted from quarries.]
- This policy would give industry status to the units producing it for

construction work.
- It would reduce the dependence on natural bajri (riverbed sand).
- The policy will enable the investors to set up M-sand units by utilising the incentives and facilities offered by the State government.

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express, Outlook India, Scroll, Economic Times

