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World Leprosy Day

World Leprosy Day is observed on the **last Sunday of January,** seeks to increase public awareness about leprosy and focuses on the target of zero cases of leprosy-related disabilities in children.

- This year's theme for World Leprosy Day is **'ending discrimination, stigma, and prejudice'.**
- In **India, it is celebrated on the 30th January each year** to commemorate the **death of Mahatma Gandhi.** This day was chosen as a tribute to the life of Gandhi who had a lifelong compassion for people affected by leprosy.
- Recently, **Shri Yohei Sasakawa** has been awarded **Gandhi Peace Prize** for the year 2018 for his contribution in Leprosy Eradication in India and across the world.
- In India, though we **achieved leprosy elimination** (<1 new leprosy case per 10,000 population) in 2005, 60% of the world's leprosy patients are in our country.
- Further, a sample survey for leprosy conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in 2008-2011 estimated that there may be 2,50,000 new cases every year.

Steps Taken to Eliminate Leprosy

- In 2017, government launched nationwide **Sparsh Leprosy Awareness Campaign (SLAC)** which aims at communicating the importance of early detection and treatment of leprosy.
- **National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP):** It focuses on both prevention and cure, especially in endemic regions. A Leprosy Case Detection Campaign was launched in March 2016, involving house-to-house screening and referral of patients for diagnosis.
- Introduction of an **indigenously developed vaccine** for leprosy into the **National Leprosy Elimination Programme (NLEP)**. The vaccine, known as **Mycobacterium**

indicus pranii (MIP), has been developed by **National Institute of Immunology.** This vaccine will be administered as a preventive measure to those staying in close contact with leprosy patients.

- Indian research contributed to the development of **Multi-Drug Therapy or MDT,** now recommended by WHO, which led to the shortening of treatment and higher cure rates.
- **Removal of social stigma:** The fight against leprosy has to be measured against sensitivity displayed by society. Removal of the stigma is vital. More than laws, our attitude to leprosy has to change, doing away with discrimination.

Leprosy

- **Leprosy (Hansen's disease)** is an infectious disease caused by **Mycobacterium leprae** that involves the **skin and peripheral nerves.** The disease mainly affects the skin, the peripheral nerves, mucosa of the upper respiratory tract and eyes.
- While the mode of transmission of leprosy is not known, the most widely held belief is that the disease was transmitted by contact between those with leprosy and healthy persons.
- More recently, the possibility of transmission by the respiratory route is gaining ground. There are also other possibilities such as transmission through insects which cannot be completely ruled out.
- Although leprosy affects both sexes, in most parts of the world males are affected more frequently than females, often in the ratio of 2:1, according to WHO's Global Leprosy Report.
- Leprosy is c**urable with MDT (multi drug therapy)** and treatment in the early stages can prevent disability. The disease is not hereditary, leprosy does not transmit form parents to children.

South Africa's President Visit to India

Recently, President of South Africa Cyril Ramphosa visited India on a two-day visit.

- President Ramphosa was the chief guest at 70th Republic Day Celebrations in New Delhi.
- He is the second president of South Africa after Nelson Mandela to be the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations.

Outcome of Visit

- During the visit, a **Three-Year Strategic Programme of Cooperation (2019-2021)** was signed which is aimed at further enhancing the strategic partnership between the two countries.

- Strategic Programme of cooperation covers overall relations with South Africa in defense, security, economic, trade & investment relations, development partnership, and capacity building etc.
- Both countries recalled the Strategic Partnership established between India and South Africa through the **Red Fort Declaration of March 1997** in New Delhi and the **Tshwane Declaration of October 2006** in Pretoria, South Africa which reaffirmed the Red Fort Declaration of 1997.
- **During the visit of President Mandela to India in March 1997**, **the two countries signed the historic Red Fort Declaration for Strategic Partnership between India and South Africa.**
- Both countries emphasized the need to further deepen relations in the political, economic, defense, scientific, consular and socio-cultural spheres.

International Cooperation
  - India and South Africa share a common vision on a range of global issues and closely cooperate in multilateral forums like the **UN, <u>BRICS</u>, <u>G-20,</u> Commonwealth, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and IBSA.**
  - Both India and South Africa are **supportive of reforms in UN Security Council (UNSC)** to achieve a more representative and equitable UNSC and **reform in the global governance architecture such as World Trade Organization (WTO).**
  - India and Africa also cooperate in the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** as a common platform for cooperation among solar resource-rich countries.

Diaspora
  - There are **1.5 million Persons of Indian Origin in South Africa** and constitute **3% of South Africa's total population.**
  - Both countries agreed to **work on the simplification of the visa agreement** to broaden people-to-people interactions and to increase two-way tourism.

History of Indian Diaspora in South Africa

  - The **major part of the Indian origin community** came to South Africa from 1860 onwards as farm labor to serve as field hands and mill operatives in the **sugar and other agricultural plantations of Natal (which was then a British colony).**
  - Most of these initial migrants were from Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh with some from eastern UP and Bihar.
  - The **second wave of Indians came after 1880.** These were the **"passenger Indians" –** called so because they paid their fares as passengers on board a steamship bound for South Africa. This was the community of traders who mainly hailed from Gujarat.

- **Defense Relation**

- **South Africa has a robust defense industry.** India and South Africa have cooperation in the defense sector encompassing a wide range of engagements including defense production, joint collaboration, manufacturing, research and development, training and joint exercises.
- South-Africa will also participate in India-Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX) in March 2019 at Pune, India.
- India and South Africa also have close naval cooperation through the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS).
- **Trade Relation**
  - **Trade between India and South Africa has also increased to $10.7 billion in 2017-18 with an increase of about 13% over the previous year.**
  - During the visit, both countries agreed to agree to further enhance bilateral investments between the two countries.
  - Both nations also agreed to enhance cooperation in the field of the Blue Economy including in the framework of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- **On terrorism**

  Both countries agreed on early agreement and adoption of the **UN Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)** and condemned terrorism in all its forms. We share common concerns in the area of terrorism, FATF, cyber-security etc.
- **India For Humanity**
  - India has also launched the **"India for Humanity"** initiative in South Africa in the context of Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary to provide artificial limbs by "Jaipur Foot" in South Africa.
  - "India For Humanity" initiative was launched by **Ministry of External Affairs.**
  - It features a year-long series of artificial limb fitment camps in a number of countries spanning the globe.

History of India-Africa Relations

- India's relations with South Africa go back to centuries and have a powerful emotional component. It is here that **Mahatma Gandhi began his political career** and over the decades of the 20th century.
- **India was the first country to sever trade relations with the apartheid Government (in 1946)** and subsequently imposed a complete - diplomatic, commercial, cultural and sports - embargo on South Africa.
- India worked consistently to put the issue of apartheid on the agenda and worked with African National Congress (ANC) in its struggle against apartheid.
- ANC has maintained a representative office in New Delhi from the 1960s onwards.
- **India's relations with South Africa were restored** after a gap of over four decades with the opening of a Cultural Centre in **Johannesburg in May 1993.**

Corruption Perceptions Index 2018 : Transparency International

India has been ranked at **78th place out of 180 countries** in '**Corruption Perception Index**' (CPI) released by **Transparency International** in 2018 against 2017's 81st, where it had slid from 79th in 2016.

- The index ranks the countries 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.

Key Findings

- Continued failure of most countries to significantly control corruption is contributing to a **crisis of democracy** around the world.
- A **general lack of political will**, **weak institutions** and few political rights create an environment where corruption flourishes with little opposition.
- More than **two-thirds of countries score below 50**, with an average score of only **43**.
- **Denmark** and **New Zealand** top the Index with 88 and 87 points, respectively. **Somalia**, **South Sudan**, and **Syri**a are at the bottom of the index, with 10, 13 and 13 points, respectively.
- The **highest scoring region** is **Western Europe** and the European Union, with an average score of 66, while the lowest scoring regions are Sub-Saharan Africa (average score 32) and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (average score 35).
- With a score of 71, the **United States** lost four points since last year, **dropping out of the top 20 countries** on the CPI for the first time since 2011. The low score comes at a time when the US is experiencing threats to its system of checks and balances as well as an erosion of ethical norms at the highest levels of power.

Indian Scenario

- India marginally **improved its score** to 41 (from 40 in 2017).
- Massive public mobilisation against corruption and voter turnout resulted in new governments and anti-corruption reforms in India, Malaysia, the Maldives, and Pakistan.
- Despite these encouraging developments, these are yet to translate into solid action against corruption.

Way Forward

To make real progress against corruption and strengthen democracy around the world, **Transparency International calls on all governments to**:

- **strengthen the institutions** responsible for maintaining checks and balances over political power, and ensure their ability to operate without intimidation;
- **close the implementation gap** between anti-corruption legislation, practice and enforcement;
- **support civil society organisations** which enhance political engagement and public oversight over government spending, particularly at the local level;
- **support a free and independent media**, and ensure the safety of journalists and their ability to work without intimidation or harassment.

Transparency International

- Transparency International, an **international non-governmental organization** which is based in **Berlin**, Germany was founded in 1993.
- Its nonprofit purpose is to take action to combat corruption and prevent criminal activities arising from corruption.
- It publishes various reports such as the **Global Corruption Barometer** and the **Corruption Perceptions Index**.

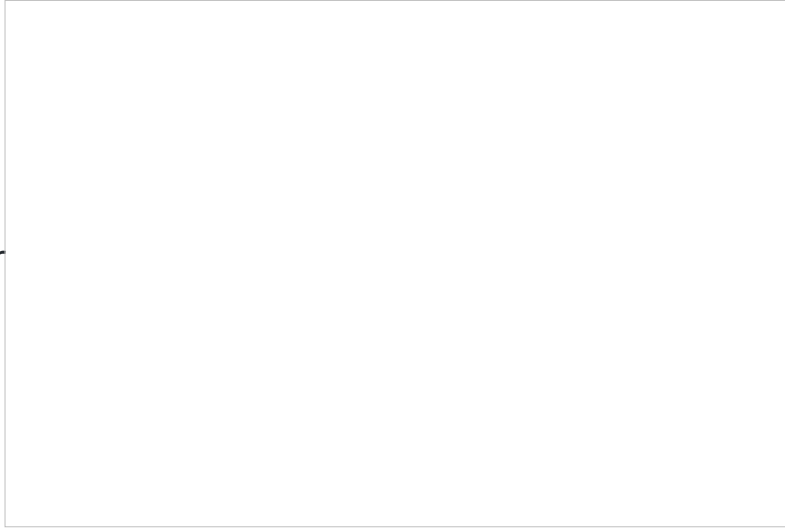# Important Facts for Prelims (30th January 2019)

National Statistical Commission (NSC)

- NSC was set up by the Government through a **resolution in 2005.**
- The setting up of the NSC followed the decision of the Cabinet to **accept the recommendations of the Rangarajan Commission**, which reviewed the **Indian Statistical System in 2001.**
- NSC is the **apex advisory body** on statistical matters as it was constituted to evolve policies, priorities, and standards in statistical matters.
- The NSC has **four Members besides a Chairperson,** each having specialization and experience in specified statistical fields.

Domestic Council for Gems & Jewellery

- **Ministry of Commerce and Industry** has announced the formation of a **Domestic Council for Gems & Jewellery** to bring the industry's domestic business stakeholders under one umbrella so that they could evolve a unified approach to promote growth in the sector.
- This Council will help in tapping new opportunities in the already existing large domestic market.
- The basic objective of the government is making this unorganized sector, organized and structured so that additional jobs can be created.

Golden Langur

- Recently, **the Assam State Zoo, Guwahati** welcomed the birth of a baby **Golden Langur** at langur breeding facility.
- The **Central Zoo Authority, New Delhi** entrusted the state zoo with the project for the conservation breeding of **golden langur in Assam in 2011.**
- **Gee's golden langur (Trachypithecus geei),** or simply the golden langur, is an **Old World Monkey** found in a small region of **western Assam, India** and in the neighboring foothills of the **Black Mountains of Bhutan.**
- It is one of the **most endangered primate species** in India.
- It is listed in **Appendix I of CITES,** as **Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species,** and in **Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.**

Central Zoo Authority

- Central Zoo Authority is a **statutory body** whose main objective is to enforce minimum standards and norms for upkeep and health care of animals in India zoos.
- Zoos are regulated as per the provisions of **Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972** and are guided by the **National Zoo Policy, 1992.** The **Wild Life Protection was amended in 1991 to establish the Central Zoo Authority.**