



Important Facts for Prelims (7th August, 2018)

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Internet Based Science Channel

Under the guidance of the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Vigyan Prasar has launched an Internet-based science channel (Indiascience.in) to showcase the developments in science and technology in India.

Key Facts

- The channel will have a library of theme-based programmes and a live content everyday related to science and technology.
- It envisions to make science done in India accessible to a larger audience.
- It will have a bilingual channel (Hindi and English) which will offer scheduled programming as well as video-on-demand facility.
- It will cover the “entire landscape” of science and technology including engineering, health and medicine, natural science, environment and wildlife, agriculture among others.
- It will mainly focus on India's contribution in science and Technology and will also cover the latest S&T developments from all around the world.

MAITREE 2018

- Forces of Indian Army and Royal Thai Army will conduct a joint military exercise code-named “MAITREE-2018” in August.
- This 14 days exercise aims to build and promote closer relations between both nations and to enhance the ability of Royal Thai Army and Indian Army to undertake joint tactical level operations on the handling of insurgency and related issues in the urban/rural scenario.
- India has participated in the Cobra Gold 2016 multilateral amphibious exercise hosted by Thailand.
- The Royal Thailand Navy and the Indian Navy have been participating in Coordinated Patrols (CORPATs) in the Indian Ocean region since 2005.

Joint Military Exercises of India with Other Countries

Name of Exercise	Country
Garuda Shakti	Indonesia
Ekuverin	Maldives
Hand-in-Hand	China
Kurukshetra	Singapore
Mitra Shakti	Sri Lanka
Nomadic Elephant	Mongolia
Shakti	France
Surya Kiran	Nepal
Yudh Abhyas	USA
Shatrujeet	USA

Project Mausam

- Project 'Mausam' is a Ministry of Culture project to be implemented by Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi as the nodal coordinating agency with support of Archeological Survey of India and National Museum as associate bodies.
- Project 'Mausam' aims to understand how the knowledge and manipulation of the monsoon winds has shaped interactions across the Indian Ocean and led to the spread of shared knowledge systems, traditions, technologies and ideas along maritime routes. These exchanges were facilitated by different coastal centres and their surrounding environs.
- Project Mausam functions at two levels:
 - At the macro level, it aims to re-connect and re-establish communications between countries of the Indian Ocean world, which would lead to an enhanced understanding of cultural values and concerns.
 - At the micro level, the focus is on understanding national cultures in their regional maritime milieu.

Aspirational Districts for RUSA Scheme

- NITI Aayog has identified **117 districts as 'Aspirational Districts'**. These districts have been selected on the basis of composite index which includes published data of deprivation listed under socio-economic caste census, health & nutrition, education and basic infrastructure.
- During the second phase of the Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) Scheme, central assistance is provided for opening of new Model Degree Colleges(MDCs) in 'Aspirational Districts' identified by NITI Aayog and in unserved & underserved districts in North Eastern and Himalayan States.
- RUSA Scheme is the **centrally sponsored scheme** that aims at **providing strategic funding to higher educational institutions** throughout the country. Funding is provided by the central ministry through the state governments and union territories (UT), which in coordination with the central Project Appraisal Board will monitor the academic, administrative and financial advancements taken under the scheme.
- The objectives of Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan are:
 - Improve the overall quality of state institutions by conforming to the prescribed norms and standards.
 - Adoption of accreditation (certification of competency) as a mandatory quality assurance framework.
 - Creation of a facilitating institutional structure for planning and monitoring at the same level.
 - Promoting autonomy in state universities and improving governance in institutions.
 - Ensure reforms in the affiliation, academic and examination system.
 - Ensure adequate availability of quality faculty in all higher educational institutions and ensure capacity building at all levels of employment.
 - Create an enabling atmosphere for research in higher education system.
 - Expand the institutional base by creating additional capacity in existing institutions and establishing new institutions, in order to reach enrolment targets.
 - Correct regional imbalances in access to higher education by setting up institutions in unserved and underserved area.
 - Improve equity in higher education by providing adequate opportunities to the disadvantaged.

Ishan Vikas and Ishan Uday

- Ishan Vikas and Ishan Uday **scholarship schemes** are being implemented for the students of North Eastern region.

- **Ishan Vikas** is a comprehensive plan launched by the MHRD **to bring selected schoolchildren** from the North-Eastern states **into close contact with the IITs, IISERs and NIAS** during their vacation periods to motivate them to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It aims to encourage internship for the engineering college students of North-Eastern states in various institutes of national importance.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has launched "**Ishan Uday**" a **Special Scholarship Scheme for North East Region (NER)** from academic session 2014-15. Under the scheme ten thousand fresh scholarships are to be provided for general degree course, technical and professional courses including medical and para-medical courses.
- The objectives of the Special Scholarship Scheme for North Eastern Region are:
 - To provide equal opportunities for higher studies in NE Region.
 - To increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in NE Region.
 - To focus more on professional education in NE Region.
 - Optimum utilization of NER Budgetary Allocation.