



Important Facts for Prelims (July 11th, 2018)

Rajasthan signs MoU with Microsoft

Rajasthan became the first State to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Microsoft to provide digital training to 9,500 students of government colleges. It will also train 500 faculty members.

Google's Launchpad Accelerator

- Google launched its India-focused programme "Launchpad Accelerator" to mentor startups that use artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML).
- Google will shortlist 8-10 start-ups that will go through three-month mentorship wherein they can avail support from Google in AI/ML, Cloud, Android, web, product strategy, and marketing. They will also get up to \$100,000 of Google Cloud Credits.
- The application criteria are:
 - The technology start-up should be based in India.
 - Start-ups should have seed funding.
 - They should focus on building a solution that addresses a real challenge for the country, and
 - They should use advanced technology like AI/ML to power the solution.
- The initiative comes after the Google ran a pilot project in Bengaluru last year named "Solve for India".
- The Google accelerator team includes a network of investors, industry experts, and technical professionals who will train the startups.

Rajya Sabha Members Can Use All 22 Scheduled Languages

- The members of Parliament in Rajya Sabha can now speak in any of 22 scheduled languages mentioned in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India from upcoming Monsoon Session.
- The Rajya Sabha has added simultaneous interpretation facility in five more languages: Dogri, Kashmiri, Konkani, Santhali and Sindhi.
- Of the 22 scheduled languages, Rajya Sabha already had Simultaneous Interpretation Service for 12 languages.
- The interpreters of the Lok Sabha are being deployed for five languages: Bodo, Maithili, Manipuri, Marathi, and Nepali.
- However, the members have to give notice of a reasonable period for the interpreter.

Eat Right Movement

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched 'The Eat Right Movement' which aims to engage and enable citizens to improve their health and well-being by making the right food choices.
- The programme is built on two broad pillars of 'Eat Healthy' and 'Eat Safe'.
- It aims to cut down salt/sugar and oil consumption by 30% in three years.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been established under Food Safety

and Standards Act, 2006 which consolidates various acts & orders that have hitherto handled food related issues in various Ministries and Departments.

- FSSAI has been created for laying down science-based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

Western Ghats: Best Tourist Spot

- The Western Ghats bagged the fourth place in Lonely Planet's "2018 Best in Asia" list, a collection of 10 of the best destinations to visit in Asia for the year.
- Neelakurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*), which has started blooming after 12 years in the famed hill station of Munnar (Kerala) has also found mention in the report.

Western Ghats

- The Western Ghats are older than the Himalaya Mountains, running along the entire west coast of India along with Sri Lanka.
- Western Ghats are known as Sahyadri in northern Maharashtra, Sahya Parvatam in Kerala and Nilagiri Malai in Tamil Nadu.
- The Ghats traverse the States of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra and Gujarat.
- A number of flagship species such as the Asian Elephant, Gaur, and Tiger are found in the region.
- Endangered species such as the Lion-tailed Macaque, Nilgiri Tahr, and Nilgiri Langur are endemic to the region.
- The Western Ghats also find mention in the Hottest Biodiversity Hotspots and UNESCO World Heritage site lists.
- Highest peak: Anamudi peak (also the highest peak of peninsular India)
- Important Passes:
 - Thal Ghat: links Nasik to Mumbai.
 - Bhor Ghat: links Mumbai to Pune.
 - Pal Ghat: connects Kerala to Tamil Nadu (link Kochi to Chennai).
 - Senkota pass: located between the Nagercoil and the Cardamom hills, links Thiruvananthapuram and Madurai.
- The rivers that originate in the Western Ghats:
 - West Flowing: Periyar, Bharathappuzha, Netravati, Sharavathi, Mandovi etc.
 - East Flowing: Godavari, Krishna and Kaveri, etc.