

09 APRIL 2019**New year in different parts of india****NAVREH**

- Navreh is the Kashmiri New Year Festival celebrated by the Kashmiri Pandits.
- The festival falls on the first day of the bright half of the month of Chaitra.
- The word navreh, derived from the Sanskrit nava varsha, literary meaning 'new year'.

BAISAKHI

- Baisakhi is the Punjabi New Year Festival celebrated in the month of April.
- The Punjabi celebrated this festival by performing their folk dance, Bhangra and Gidda.

BESTU VARAS

- Bestu Varas is the Gujarati New Year Festival.
- It is also called as Varsha-pratipada or Padwa, and falls in the month of Kartik, the first month of Gujarati Calendar.
- It falls on the day after Diwali.

GUDI PADWA

- It is a spring-time festival that marks the traditional new year of Marathi and Konkani Hindus.
- It is celebrated on the first day of the Chaitra month. The festival is observed with colourful floor decorations called rangoli.

LOSOONG

- It is the Sikkimese New Year Festival celebrated primarily by the Bhutia tribe but also by the Lepchas tribe.
- Based on the Tibetan Lunar Calendar, the festival falls on the month of December.
- The festival is conducted at the Phodong and Rumtek Monasteries in Sikkim.
- Loosong is not only celebrated in India but it is also celebrated in Nepal and Bhutan.
- The dance forms performed in the festival depict narrativized tales from the life of Padmasambhava

BOHAG BIHU

- Bohag Bihu is the Assamese New year celebrated by performing the folk dance Bihu and a grand buffet.
- It is also known as Rongali Bihu.
- It usually falls on 2 April week, historically signifying the time of harvest.

PAHELA BAISHAKH

- Pahela Baishakh is the Bengali New Year celebrated on 14 April.
- This new year festival is celebrated in the Indian states of West Bengal, Odisha, Tripura and part of Assam by people of Bengali heritage, irrespective of their religious faith.

CHETI CHAND

- Cheti Chand is a festival which marks the beginning of the Hindu New Year for the Sindhi Hindus.
- It falls on the month of Chaitra.
- It also marks the birth of Jhulehal, the primary god of Sindhi community.

Note

UGADI

- Ugadi is the New Year's Day for the people of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states in India.
- It is festively observed in these regions on the first day of the Hindu lunisolar calendar month of Chaitra.
- This typically falls in March or April of the Gregorian calendar.

VISHU

- Vishu is the New Year Hindu Festival celebrated in the Indian state of Kerala.
- The festival follows the solar cycle of the lunisolar as the first day of month called Medam.
- It falls in the middle of April.

PUTHANDU

- Puthandu is the Tamil New Year celebrated in the month of April.

SC directs EC to increase random checking of VVPAT slips

In news:

The Supreme Court on Monday increased voter verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) verification to five random Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) in each Assembly segment/constituency.

In brief:

The court's direction came on a plea by leaders of 21 opposition parties who wanted it to be hiked to 50 per cent of EVMs per Assembly constituency. The opposition parties had argued that the Election Commission was conducting VVPAT matching for less than 0.44 per cent of EVMs in the country.

The Election Commission had raised objection over the increase in the number of verifications, saying that it would require extensive training of a large number senior civil servants and an increase in their number for the deployment which, the EC said, would divert them from other work. And also would delay the election results by six whole days.

The Commission follows a system of counting of VVPAT slips in one polling booth per assembly constituency in Vidhan Sabha elections and in one polling booth in each assembly segment for Lok Sabha polls.

Following the SC order, votes cast in about 20,625 EVMs across the country will be verified through the paper trail.

SC Order: In case of general elections, VVPAT slips of five EVMs in each Assembly segment of a Parliamentary Constituency would be subject to physical counting. In State Assembly elections, the VVPAT verification would extend to five random EVMs in each Assembly constituency.

What is VVPAT?

Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail is only an extended feature of EVM.

VVPAT is attached to the EVM. Once a voter presses a button on the EVM, VVPAT prints the details on a paper slip. The slip contains the name of the candidate and his party, through which a citizen can verify his/her vote.

It is an independent system attached to an EVM that allows the voters to verify that their votes are cast as intended. When a vote is cast, a slip is printed on the VVPAT printer containing the serial number, name and symbol of the candidate voted. This remains visible to you through a transparent window for seven seconds. Thereafter, this printed slip automatically gets cut and falls into a sealed drop box. If need be, these printouts can later be counted.

Note



Only authorized engineers of the manufacturers, namely Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Electronics Corporation of India Limited (ECIL), conduct the First Level Checking (FLC) of EVMs and VVPATs under control of District Election Officer and direct supervision of Dy. DEO in the presence of representative of Political Parties under videography

High Court orders release of Manipur television journalist in sedition case

In News:

The Manipur High Court has ordered the release of television anchor Kishorechandra Wangkhem who was charged with sedition under the National Security Act (NSA) for criticising Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on social media.

In Brief:

National Security Act

- The National Security Act of 1980 is an act of the Indian Parliament whose purpose is “to provide for preventive detention in certain cases and for matters connected therewith”. The act extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It was passed during the Charan Singh Government.
- This act empowers the Central Government and State Governments to detain a person to prevent him/her from acting in any manner prejudicial to the security of India, the relations of India with foreign countries, the maintenance of public order, or the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the community it is necessary so to do. The act also gives power to the governments to detain a foreigner in a view to regulate his presence or expel from the country.
- The other enactments relating to national security are the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, the Criminal Law Amendment Act, the Official Secrets Act, 1923, Chapters 6 and 7 of the Indian Penal Code etc.
- India had a long history of preventive detention laws like the Defence of India Act of 1858, The Government of India Act of 1935, the Preventive Detention Act of 1950, the Maintenance of Internal Security Act in 1971 and the NSA in 1980.
- The only period in the Indian “republic without any preventive detention law was the three year period, beginning with the repeal of MISA in 1977 to the promulgation of the NSA in 1980.
- The maximum period of detention is 12 months, but the detention should be reported to the State Government along with the grounds on which the order has been made. No such order shall remain in force for more than twelve days unless approved by the State Government.

IIT-Madras tops NIRF higher education rankings

In News:

The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IIT-Madras) has topped the Centre’s ranking of higher education institutions, followed by the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, and IIT-Delhi.

In Brief:

Seven IITs appear in the top 10 list of the National Institution Ranking Framework (NIRF) for 2019.

The rankings, published annually since 2016, are based on multiple parameters,

- Including teaching, learning and resources;
- Research and professional practice;
- Graduation outcomes;
- Outreach and inclusivity; and the
- Perception of the public, academics and employers.

Note



NIRF Survey

NIRF survey is indigenous ranking framework for higher education institutions in country.

It outlines methodology and follows Indian methodology to rank institutions across country based on five parameters broadly covering

- Teaching,
- Learning and Resources,
- Research and Professional practices,
- Graduation Outcomes,
- Outreach and inclusivity and Perception.

It ranks nine categories of institutions including universities, engineering, management, pharmacy, architecture, Law, medical institutions and general degree colleges.

5 About 3,127 institutions applied for different categories of the NIRF this year. A list of the top 5 across categories

	1	2	3	4	5
g	IIT-M	IISc., Bengaluru	IIT-D	IIT-B	IIT Kharagpur
g	IISc., Bengaluru	JNU	BHU	Univ. of Hyderabad	Univ. of Calcutta
g	IIT-M	IIT-D	IIT-B	IIT-Kgp	IIT-K
g	AIIMS, Delhi	PGIMER, Chandigarh	CMC Vellore	SGPIMS, Lucknow	Amrita Vidyapeeth
nt	IIM-B	IIM-A	IIM-C	IIM-L	IIM-Indore
	Miranda House	Hindu College	Presidency College	St.Stephen's,	LSR, Delhi



U.S. designates Iran’s elite military unit as a terrorist organization

In news:

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday designated Iran’s elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps a foreign terrorist organization, an unprecedented step that raises tension in the Middle East.

In brief:

It is the first time the US has labelled another nation’s military as a terrorist organisation.

In retaliation, Iran’s national Security Council declared US Central Command (CENTCOM) a terrorist organisation. CENTCOM is the Pentagon wing that oversees Washington’s security interests across the central area of the world map, most notably Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and Syria.

Labelling the Guards as a terrorist organisation will allow the US to impose further sanctions - particularly affecting the business sector, given the IRGC’s involvement in Iran’s economy.

The fear is that it could encourage the IRGC or its proxies to take action against US personnel or other targets in places where they might be vulnerable, for example in Iraq. And may one day, spill into open military conflict.



Note



Critics have warned that the move could open U.S. military and intelligence officials to similar actions by unfriendly governments.

What is the IRGC?

Iran's most elite military unit was set up shortly after the 1979 Iranian revolution to defend the country's Islamic system and to provide a counterweight to the regular armed forces.

It has since become a major military, political and economic force in Iran, with close ties to the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and many other senior figures hailing from its ranks.

The IRGC is estimated to have more than 150,000 active personnel, boasts its own ground forces, navy and air force, and oversees Iran's strategic weapons, including its ballistic missiles.

The IRGC exerts influence elsewhere in the Middle East by providing money, weapons, technology, training and advice to allied governments and armed groups through its shadowy overseas operations arm, the Quds (Jerusalem) Force.

Sri Lanka seeks enhanced military training from India

In News:

Sri Lanka has sought enhanced military training from India.

In Brief:

Visiting Indian Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra called on Mr. Sirisena on Monday, and wide-ranging matters, including bilateral defence cooperation between the neighbouring countries and regional security.

Why enhanced military training?

1. India and Sri Lanka agreed to increase cooperation in security and defence spheres in several areas, including regional security, curbing drug smuggling and human trafficking and training of members of the security forces.
2. Currently, over 60% of Sri Lanka's military personnel pursue their young officers' course, junior and senior command courses in India.
3. 'Exercise Mitra Shakti', the sixth edition of the joint military training exercise between the Indian Army and the Sri Lankan Army, concluded in Badulla district, in Sri Lanka's Central Province, on Monday.
4. Contingents from the two countries jointly planned and executed a series of "well-coordinated tactical operations based on scenarios that are likely to be encountered in rural and urban environment.

Note

Global cooling coalition

Why in news?

- The Global Cooling Coalition was launched very recently at the first Global Conference on Synergies between the 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement held at Copenhagen, Germany



More on news:

- The Global Cool Coalition is a platform where the actions will be contemplated and executed cutting across the Kigali Amendment, Paris Agreement and Sustainable Development Goals.
- The Global Cooling Coalition is supported by the UN, Climate and Clean Air Coalition, the Kigali Cooling Efficiency Program and Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL).

About Kigali Amendment:

- The Kigali Amendment amends the 1987 Montreal Protocol that was designed to close growing ozone hole in by banning ozone-depleting coolants like chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).
- Thus, amended Montreal Protocol which was initially conceived only to plug gases that were destroying the ozone layer now includes HFCs responsible for global warming.
- This move will help to prevent a potential 0.5 degree Celsius rise in global temperature by the end of the century.
- The Kigali Agreement or amended Montreal Protocol for HFCs reduction will be binding on countries from 2019.
- It also has provisions for penalties for non-compliance. Under it, developed countries will also provide enhanced funding support estimated at billions of dollars globally.

About Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC):

- The Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (CCAC) was launched by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and six countries- Bangladesh, Canada, Ghana, Mexico, Sweden, and the United States on 16 February 2012.
- The Coalition aims to catalyse rapid reductions in short lived climate pollutants like Black Carbon, Methane, Hydrofluorocarbons, Tropospheric or Ground Level Ozone.
- About Sustainable Energy for All (SEforALL)
- It is an international organization launched in 2011 by the then Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon.
- It aims to help mobilize achievement of universal energy access, improve energy efficiency, and increase the use of renewable energy.
- It is headquartered in Vienna, Austria, with an executive office in Washington.

Army gets first batch of Dhanush, home-made Bofors artillery guns, from OFB**In News:**

The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) handed over the first batch of six Dhanush artillery guns to the Army.

In Brief:

1. Dhanush is the indigenously upgraded gun of the Swedish Bofors gun procured in the 1980s.
2. Indigenisation to the extent of about 81%, has already been achieved. By the end of 2019, the indigenisation level of the gun will go up to 91%.
3. The first Dhanush regiment with 18 guns is expected to be ready by the end of next year.
4. The GCF received the Bulk Production Clearance (BPC) to manufacture 114 guns from the Army on February 18, 2019.

Note

What is Dhanush?

Dhanush is a 155 mm, 45-calibre towed artillery gun with a range of 36 km and has demonstrated a range of 38 km with specialised ammunition. It is an upgrade of the existing 155m, 39 calibre Bofors FH 77 gun. It is compatible with all North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) 155 mm ammunition system.

5.All 114 guns are expected to be delivered within four years.

6.The OFB has already undertaken capacity augmentation to manufacture over 400 barrels and 250 ordnances for large calibre weapon systems.



Note

