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A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative

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Marawah Island

- The World's oldest known natural pearl discovered at a Neolithic site on Marawah Island, off the coast of Abu Dhabi.
- It is dubbed the 'Abu Dhabi Pearl' that have been radio dated to 5,800-5,600 BCE.
- The discovery proves that pearls and oysters were being used in the UAE nearly 8,000 years ago.
- Prior to this discovery, the earliest pearl was found in another Neolithic site off the coast of Abu Dhabi.



Anthrax

- Two Asiatic water buffaloes in central Assam's Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary was died due to Anthrax.
- Anthrax is caused by the bacterium *Bacillus anthracis*.
- It is primarily a disease of herbivorous mammals, although other mammals and some birds have been known to contract it.

- It can be fatal for humans who come in contact with infected animals.
- It is characterised by blisters around swellings on the skin, chest pain, vomiting, diarrhoea and fever.
- The disease is generally regarded as being non-contagious. Records of person-to-person spread exist but are rare.
- **Pobitora Sanctuary** - It is often called 'Mini Kaziranga' due to similar landscape and vegetation.
- It has the highest concentration of one-horned rhinos in the world.
- Rhinos are also vulnerable to the anthrax attacks whose population in the sanctuary is estimated to be 102.

Digital Bharat Digital Sanskriti

- It is the e-portal of Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT) launched by the Ministry of Culture.
- CCRT is an autonomous organization under the aegis of Ministry of Culture.
- It was pioneered by Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay and Dr. Kapila Vatsyayan and established in 1979.
- It is one of the premier institutions working in the field of linking education with culture.

• Main Functions of CCRT -

- i. It organizes theoretical and theme based academic programmes on Indian art and culture for teachers and students.
- ii. It Conducts Workshops to provide practical training and knowledge in crafts to be incorporated in school curriculum.
- iii. It organizes various educational activities for school students, teachers and children belonging to governmental and NGO.
- iv. It collects and develops a library of resources in the form of scripts, digital photographs, audio and video recordings and films.
- v. It prepares publications and other audio-visual material to provide an understanding and appreciation of the different aspects of Indian art and culture.
- vi. It implements Cultural Talent Search Scholarship Scheme for providing facilities to young talented children in the 10-14 age group to study one or the other art form.

QS Indian University Rankings

- The second edition of QS Indian University Rankings for India's higher education institutions was released recently.
- QS, the global higher education think tank, releases India specific university rankings.

- The rankings include Public Universities, Private Universities and deemed universities.
- The ranking looks into the Indian university system with an international lens.
- The Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) dominate the list, with seven IITs figuring in the top ten rankings.
- Like last year, IIT-Bombay leads followed by the Indian Institute of Science (IISc).
- **8 indicators** were used to determine rankings -
 - i. Academic reputation
 - ii. Employer reputation
 - iii. Faculty-student ratio
 - iv. The proportion of staff with a PhD
 - v. Papers per faculty from Scopus database
 - vi. Citations per paper from Scopus database
 - vii. The proportion of international students and
 - viii. The proportion of international faculty (2.5%).

QS INDIA RANKINGS: THE TOP 10

INSTITUTIONNAME	2019	2020
Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay	1	1
Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore	2	2
Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi	4	3
Indian Institute of Technology, Madras	3	4
Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur	5	5
Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur	6	6
University of Delhi	8	7
University of Hyderabad	7	8
Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee	9	9
Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati	10	10

- These India rankings do not necessarily match the QS World University Rankings since it uses different criteria.
- In world university ranking, IIT-Bombay has been ranked the best Indian institution and IIT-Delhi the second best.

Homeward Bound

- It is a global initiative by the French's National Centre for Space Studies, that conducts leadership expeditions for women in science to Antarctica.
- In its 5th edition, Priyanka Das Rajkakati, a 27-year-old woman, originally from Assam, has been selected.

- It is a one-year long programme where women with STEMM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Medicine) backgrounds will be trained.

Van Allen Probes mission

- NASA recently decommissioned its 7-year-old Van Allen Probes mission.
- It consists of 2 satellites in Van Allen belts to study space weather and the radiation belts around the Earth.
- Van Allen radiation belts are giant swaths of magnetically trapped, highly energetic charged particles that surround earth.
- The mission studied how these radiation rings acquire and lose electromagnetic particles.
- James Van Allen, a physicist at the University of Iowa, discovered these radiation belts in 1958.

IMNEX-2019

- It is India Myanmar Naval Exercise going to be held in Visakhapatnam.
- INS Ranvijay, a guided-missile destroyer and INS Kuthar, a missile corvette will participate in the exercise.

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express, PIB



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