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National Immunization Day 2020: January 19

In India, the National Immunization Day was observed on 19 January 2020.

As a part of the celebrations, Pulse Polio Immunization programme 2020 was launched where President Ram Nath Kovind administered Polio drops to children below five years at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Under this programme, approximately 17.4 crore children of less than five years of age across the country will be administered polio drops as a part of the immunization drive of the Central Government to sustain polio eradication from the country.

3rd Edition of PM Modi's 'Pariksha Pe Charcha' to be Held in New Delhi on 20 January 2020

The third edition of Pariksha Pe Charcha will be held at Talkatora Indoor Stadium in New Delhi on 20 January 2020.

The Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interaction programme will be attended by a total of 2,000 students and teachers, of which 1,050 students have been selected through an essay competition.

In the Pariksha Pe Charcha 2020 programme, PM Modi will interact with students, teachers and parents and share "valuable tips" with them to ensure they take the upcoming board and entrance exams in a relaxed and stress-free manner.

Piyush Goyal to lead Indian Delegation to World Economic Forum 2020

The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry & Railways, Piyush Goyal, will lead the Indian delegation to the 50th World Economic Forum (WEF) annual meeting at Davos from January 20 to 24, 2020.

The theme of the 2020 meeting is "Stakeholders for a Cohesive and Sustainable World".

Every year, WEF meeting is held to engage the world's top leaders to shape global, regional and industry agendas at the beginning of the year.

Half of World's GDP Moderately or Highly Dependent on Nature: WEF study The World Economic Forum released The New Nature Economy Report titled 'Nature Risk Rising' on 19 January 2020.

The report has been published by WEF in collaboration with PwC, UK.

Key Features of the Report

The latest reports tells that about 25% of our assessed plant and animal species are threatened by human actions, with a million species facing extinction, many within decades.

Businesses are more dependent on nature and biodiversity than expected. Approximately \$44 trillion of economic value generation moderately or highly dependent on nature, which is over half the world's total GDP, and as a result, exposed to risks from nature loss.

Pollination, water quality and disease control are some examples of the services an ecosystem can provide.

Construction (USD 4 trillion), agriculture (USD 2.5 trillion) and food and beverages (USD 1.4 trillion) are the largest industries that depend most on nature either directly, through extraction of resources from forests and oceans, or indirectly, through the provision of ecosystem services.

Industries which are highly dependent on nature generate 15 percent of global GDP (USD 13 trillion), while moderately dependent industries generate 37 per cent (USD 31 trillion).

Also many industries have significant “hidden dependencies” on nature in their supply chain and may be more at risk of disruption than expected.

Conclusion

Business can play a critical role in reversing nature loss by adopting sustainable practices. Governments must make ambitious decisions and adopt a New Deal for Nature and People in 2020 for the future of our economies and society.

RBI Ranks 6th among central banks in buying gold abroad in 2019: WGC Report

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was the sixth largest gold buyer abroad in the year 2019, as per the World Gold Council (WGC) report titled, “World Gold Outlook 2020”. The RBI currently holds 625.2 tonnes of gold, which is 6.6 percent of its forex reserves. RBI bought 7.5 tonnes of gold in October 2019, to increase its foreign exchange reserves to \$450 billion.

The central banks of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Poland bought more than India in 2019 respectively.

NPCI Launches Blockchain-based ‘Vajra Platform’ to Secure Online Payment

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has launched a blockchain-technology based payment system ‘Vajra Platform’ for automating payment clearing and settlement processes.

Vajra platform is based on Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT), to provide highly secure and tamper-evident transactions stored in a distributed and immutable database.

Vajra is a permissioned network that will be set up so that only the parties who have been approved by the Network Administrator can be a part of the network.

The platform has three types of nodes: Clearing House node (CHN) for NPCI, UIDAI node for Aadhaar authentication, and Participant node (PN) for all banks/ASP/PPI/PSP

New Disease Outbreak: Novel corona virus Grips China's Wuhan City

The Wuhan City of China is in a grip of a new disease outbreak caused by new respiratory virus called Novel corona virus, codenamed as 2019-nCoV.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

2019-nCoV is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

The outbreak has so far killed two people in China and sickened at least 45 persons including overseas cases with some new cases being detected in the city.

It is believed to have contracted through exposure to animals market that sells seafood and meat in Wuhan.

SAI Organises Two-day SQAY Competition in Bhopal

The two-day SQAY competition is being held at Sports Authority of India (SAI) in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh on 19-20 January 2020.

The under-21 category tournament is organized under 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' campaign by SAI.

SQAY is a martial art form of Central Asia, in which the players show the skills of fencing.

Teams from eight states across the country including Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Goa, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Bihar and Tripura will participate in the competition.

India beat Pakistan to lift 4th Diplomat Cup Cricket Championship

The team of the Indian Consulate in Dubai defeated the team of the Pakistan Consulate to lift the Diplomat Cup Cricket Championship 2020 on 18 January 2020.

The 4th edition of the was participated by the Consulates of eight countries – India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Australia and the US.

This is the third successive year that India won the Diplomat Cup Championship. The first tournament was won by Bangladesh in January 2017.

NDRF celebrates its 15th Raising Day on 18 January 2020

Eminent Indian classical singer Sunanda Patnaik ("Guguma"), renowned identity in Odia music world, passed away following a prolonged illness. She was 85.