

# Current Affairs



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March 2019

march

International Women's Day



**JAN AUSHADHI DIWAS**

To be celebrated  
on 7th March  
2019 across  
India



**World TB Day**  
March 24

**Find  
TB.  
Treat  
TB.**  
Working together to eliminate TB.

**WORLD  
ECONOMIC  
FORUM**

**Gender gap**

**-PAY**

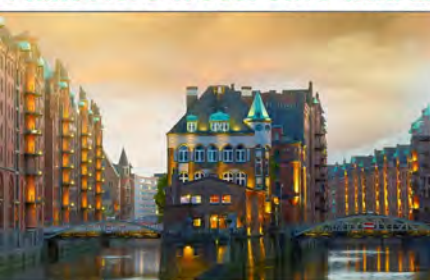


**World  
Forestry  
Day**  
21<sup>st</sup> March



**Plant More Trees! Save Wild Life**

**Indian Railway**  
E-Ticket Booking **Annual 2018-19**



**RCTC**  
93.1% of household  
have access to toilets  
90.7% of villages are  
ODF  
95.4% of the villages  
have minimal litter and  
minimal stagnant water

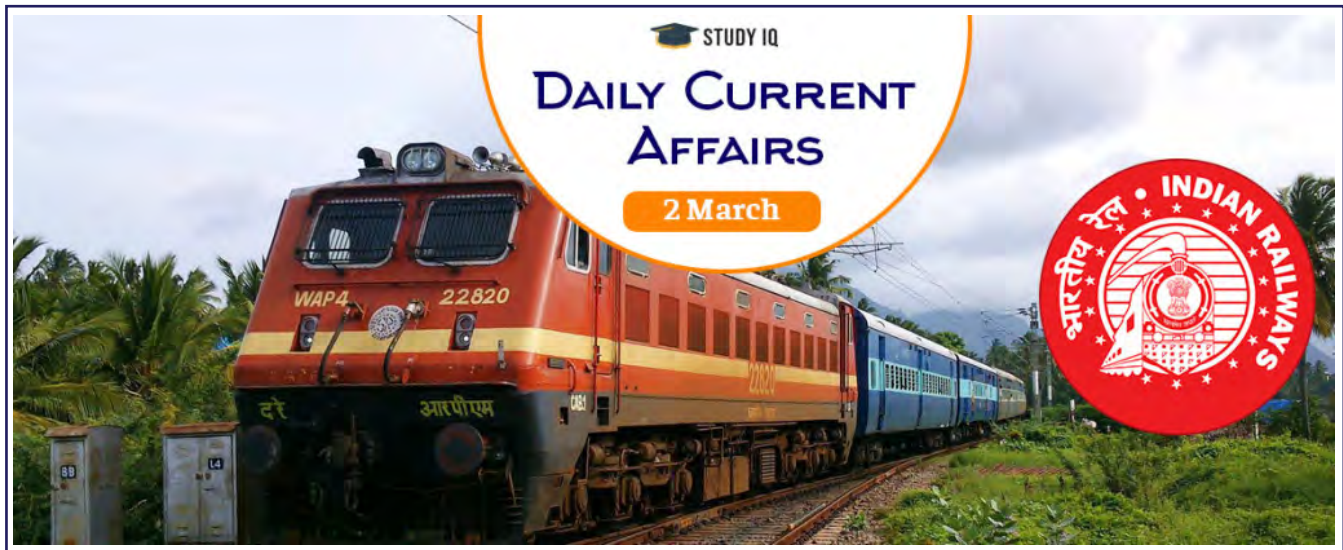


**World  
Water Day**  
March 22

# Miscellaneous



## iPay: IRCTC launches payment aggregator



Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has launched its own payment aggregator system named IRCTC iPay in a bid to promote digital transactions. It is step towards promoting the government's Digital India initiative.

### IRCTC iPay

It is exclusive digital payment gateway aimed at providing improved online digital payment convenience and ease of doing business to passengers availing online travel related services through IRCTC website

It is prepaid card cum wallet. Using it, passengers will not need any third-party platforms as it provides payment options like credit card, debit card, UPI (Unified Payment Interface), International Card.

Under this new arrangement, IRCTC will have full control of payment system because of its direct relationship with acquiring banks, card networks and other partners.

This will help reduce the gap between IRCTC and banks, and eventually lead to substantial reduction in payment failures.

It will help IRCTC to directly get in touch with bank instead of relying on intermediate source which usually delays the process in case an online transaction is unsuccessful or some other error occurs.

### Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)

It is subsidiary of Indian Railways that handles catering, tourism and online ticketing operations of Indian railways. It is headquartered in New Delhi. Its mandate is to enhance customer services and facilitation in railway catering, hospitality, travel and tourism with best industry practices.

It claims that it has 30 million registered users on its website and is the world's second busiest with around 550,000 to 600,000 bookings everyday.

## April 2019-March 2020: Construction-Technology year



Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared 'April 2019-March 2020' as Construction-Technology year in a bid to increase use of modern technology in the construction sector. He made this announcement after inaugurated of Construction Technology India-2019 Expo-cum-conference in New Delhi

### Construction-Technology year (April 2019-March 2020)

It seeks to give emphasises to the important role of advanced technology to meet the increasing demand for housing in the country caused by rapid urbanization.

It also aims to give housing sector new pace by using latest technologies available in the world. This in long run will lead to integration of modern technology in housing and construction sector which make it more dynamic and vibrant.

### PM Modi also launched

**GHTC-India mobile application:** It is interactive platform for all stakeholders for exchange of knowledge on innovation and alternative housing technologies.

**3rd edition of Vulnerability Atlas of India:** It is collation of the existing hazard scenario of the entire country.

### Construction Technology India-2019

It was aimed at identifying innovative and globally established technologies that can be used in the Indian context. It was organised by Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

It provided common platform to developers, academia, technology providers, researchers etc.

Technologies identified during this event will be invited to design and build lighthouse projects of around one thousand affordable housing units each in seven states viz. Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Jharkhand, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.

### Background

India is among the few countries where demand for houses is increasing at rapid pace due to urbanization. Government has given major thrust on affordable housing to meet growing housing demand and also has brought changes in laws governing real estate sector. Government is implementing programmes such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana, National Urban Livelihoods Mission, HRIDAY, AMRUT and Smart Cities to facilitate urgent needs of country's fast urbanization.

Notes



## India's first Centre for Disability Sports to come up in Gwalior



Union Government has approved proposal of setting up Centre for Disability Sports in Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh. It will function under the name of Centre for Disability Sports, Gwalior. **It will be first specialized sports training facility in country for Divyangjans or Persons with Disabilities (PwDs). Centre for Disability Sports, Gwalior**

It will be registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860. Its construction will be completed in two years by March 2021 and begin its operations from September 2021.

It will create necessary improved sports infrastructure to ensure effective participation of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in sports activities.

It will also enable them to compete at national and international levels. It will also facilitate their integration in society

**Facilities:** It will have outdoor athletic stadium, indoor sports complex, aquatic Centre having 2 swimming Pools, one covered pool and one outdoor pool.

It will also have high performance centre with classrooms, medical facilities, sports science centre, hostel facilities for athletes, support facilities etc.

These facilities will multi-functional centres with provision for training, selection, sports academics and research, medical support, spectator galleries and suitable for holding national and international events.

**Sports identified for training in this Centre**

**Integrated sports (Indoor):** Badminton, Basketball, Table Tennis, Volleyball, Judo, Taekwondo, Fencing and Rugby.

**Adapted sports (Indoor):** Boccia, Goalball, Football 5 a side, Para Dance Sport and Para Power Lifting;

**Integrated sports (Outdoor):** Athletics, Archery, Football 7 a side and Tennis; and

**Integrated sports (Indoor & Outdoor):** Swimming.

### Background

Section 30 of Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016 mandates Central Government to take measures to ensure effective participation of PwDs in sports activities. It also includes provision of infrastructural facilities for sports activities for them. Union Finance Minister in his Budget Speech of 2014-15 announced setting up of Centre for disability sports. It was proposed to fill existing gaps in sporting infrastructure to allow persons with disabilities (Divyangjan) to undergo rigorous and specialized training.

Notes

## 96% usage of toilets in rural India under Swachh Bharat: NARSS 2018-19



According to National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) 2018-19, 96.5% of the households in rural India who have access to toilet use it. It also re-confirmed Open Defecation Free (ODF) status of 90.7% of villages which were previously declared and verified as ODF by various districts/States.

### About Survey

It was conducted from November 2018 and February 2019 by Independent Verification Agency (IVA) under World Bank support project to Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G).

It had covered 92040 households in 6136 villages across States and UTs of India.

It also covered schools, anganwadis and public/community toilets in these villages.

**Methodology:** It had used Probability Proportion to Size (PPS) sampling methodology, which yields results within confidence interval of 95% Data was collected using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) platform.

### Key findings of NARSS 2018-19

96.5% of households in rural India who have access to toilet use it.

93.1% of households were found to have access to toilets during survey period (corresponding figure as per SBMG MIS in November 2018 was 96%)

96.5% of people who had access to toilets used them.

90.7% of villages which were previously declared and verified as ODF were confirmed to be ODF. Remaining villages also had sanitation coverage of about 93%



95.4% of villages surveyed found to have minimal litter and minimal stagnant water.

### Background

Since its launch in October 2014, Swachh Bharat Mission, the world's largest sanitation program, has changed behaviour of hundreds of millions of people with respect to toilet access and usage.

Around 500 million people have stopped defecating in open since its launch, down from 550 million at its beginning to less than 50 million at present.

Over 9 crore toilets have been built across rural India under it. Over 5.5 lakh villages and 615 districts have been declared ODF, along with 30 ODF States/UTs.

Notes

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## 7th March 2019 celebrated as Janaushadhi Diwas



Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers has decided to celebrate 7th March 2019 as **Janaushadhi Diwas** across the country. Observance of this day aims at providing further impetus and create awareness about use of generic medicines provided under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP). It also seeks to highlight initiatives undertaken by Government in direction of making quality healthcare affordable for all like Ayushman Bharat, Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) etc.

### **Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana**

It aims to make available high-quality medicines to all at affordable prices, especially to poor and underprivileged in order to reduce out of pocket expenses in healthcare.

It makes quality drugs available at affordable prices through special kendras known as Jan Aushadhi Medical store. Government aims to have atleast one such Kendra in each block of the country by 2020.

These are dedicated stores for selling generic medicines, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs.

**Objectives:** (i) Promote greater awareness about cost effective generic drugs and their prescription. (ii) Make available unbranded quality generic medicines at affordable prices through public-private partnership (PPP) (iii) Encourage doctors, more specifically in government hospital to prescribe generic medicines. (iv) Enable substantial savings in health care, especially in case of poor patients and those suffering from chronic ailments requiring long periods of drug use.

**Implementation:** It is implanted by Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Union Ministry of Fertilizers and Chemicals.

**DoP has established** Bureau of Pharma Public Sector Undertakings of India (BPPI) with support of all CPSUs for co-coordinating procurement, supply and marketing of generic drugs under this scheme.

### Performance of Scheme

Over 5050 Janaushadhi stores functional across 652 districts in the country. Around 10-15 lakh people have benefited from generic medicines per day. Market share of generic medicines has grown over three fold from 2% to 7% in last 3 years.

It has played big role in bringing down the out of pocket expenditure of patients suffering from life threatening diseases in India.

It has led to total savings of approximately Rs.1000 crores for common citizens, as these medicines are cheaper by 50% to 90% of average market price.

Notes



## 8 March: International Women's Day



International Women's Day is observed every year across world on March 8 to highlight achievements of women while calling for greater gender equality. It aims to empower women in all settings (rural and urban) and celebrate work of individuals and organisations that constantly to assert women's rights and realise their full potential.

The theme for year 2019 is '**Think equal, build smart, innovate for change**'. It focuses on innovative ways to advance gender equality and empower women, particularly in areas of social protection, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure.

This day also provide opportunity to achieve **goal 4** (ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning) and **goal 5** (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls) of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

### **International Women's Day (IWD)**

It was proclaimed by United Nations during International Women's Year 1975. It was officially announced through UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution adopted in 1977 which declared March 8 as United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace.

**Note:** Charter of the United Nations, signed in 1945, was first international agreement to affirm principle of equality between women and men. Since then, UN has created historic legacy of internationally-agreed strategies, standards, programmes and goals to advance the status of women worldwide.

**Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:** It is historic roadmap signed by 189 governments, envisions world where each woman and girl can exercise her choices, such as participating in politics, getting education, having income, and living in societies free from violence and discrimination. It focuses on 12 critical areas of concern.

## Kerala's Marayoor Jaggery receives GI tag



### KERALA'S MARAYOOR JAGGERY RECEIVES GI TAG

The traditional and handmade Marayoor Jaggery from Idukki district of Kerala was recently accorded Geographical Indication (GI) tag by Chennai based Geographical Indication Registry. It received this coveted tag two year after Agricultural Department of the state had applied for it. It will provide more windows of opportunity to traditional sugarcane farmers in Marayoor region of Kerala.

#### Marayoor Jaggery

It is produced in Marayoor town in Idukki district of Kerala. It is one of sweetest jaggeries produced in Idukki.

It is dark brown in colour and high in sweetness and iron. It has less sodium content and insoluble impurities.

It is made from sugarcane which is completely chemicals free (pesticides and fertilizers free). It is prepared in traditional way in small sheds located on the sugarcane farm and not in commercial scale in modern factories or using modern equipment.

#### Significance of GI Tag

It will provide more windows of opportunity to traditional sugarcane farmers in Marayoor to get more market and price.

It will also rejuvenate traditional way of production and ensuring safe market for Marayoor Jaggery in future.

It will allow only natives of the area to produce and market Marayoor jaggery exclusively.

It will help prevent fake product being sold as Marayur jaggery, especially from Tamil Nadu which has crashed prices and harmed traditional farmers.



**Geographical Indication (GI)**

It is name or sign used on products which corresponds to specific geographical location or origin (can be town, region or country).

It acts as authenticity certification that product possesses certain qualities and is made according to traditional methods and enjoys certain reputation due to its geographical origin.

It plays very important role to increase realm of market for the original product. It also indirectly leads to sustainable development, boosts exports as well tourism.

Notes

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## Women greatly outnumbered by men in political power: IPU



According to statistics from Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), women are totally outnumbered by men in politics, accounting for less than 7% of world's leaders and only 24% of lawmakers.

### Findings of IPU Statics

The percentage of female elected heads of state dropped from 7.25 to 6.6%, i.e. 10 out of 153 from 2017 to 2018.

The percentage of female heads of government dropped from 5.7% to 5.2%, i.e. 10 out of 193 in the same period.

In parliaments, the global share of women had increased by nearly one percentage point to 24.3% from 2017 to 2018.

Women parliamentary speakers' share across the world also increased by 0.6 percentage points to 19.7%. Besides, share of women deputy speakers also increased by 1.6 percentage points to 28.2%.

Countries with no women ministers has decreased from 13 in 2017 to 11 in 2018. These 11 countries are Belize, Brunei Darussalam, Azerbaijan, Kiribati, Iraq, Lithuania, Saint Vincent, Papua New Guinea, Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Thailand and Vanuatu.

Moreover, there is also shift in types of portfolios held by women ministers. More women are now in charge of portfolios traditionally occupied by men. 52.9% more women across the world held Finance minister's portfolio, 30% more women held Defence portfolio and 13.6% more women held Foreign Affairs in 2018.

Nine countries have 50% or more women in ministerial positions (up from six in 2017). They are Spain, Nicaragua, Sweden, Albania, Colombia, Costa Rica, Rwanda, Canada and France.



### Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

It is global inter-parliamentary institution. It is first permanent forum for political multilateral negotiations.

It was established in 1889 by Frédéric Passy (France) and William Randal Cremer (United Kingdom). It is headquartered Geneva, Switzerland.

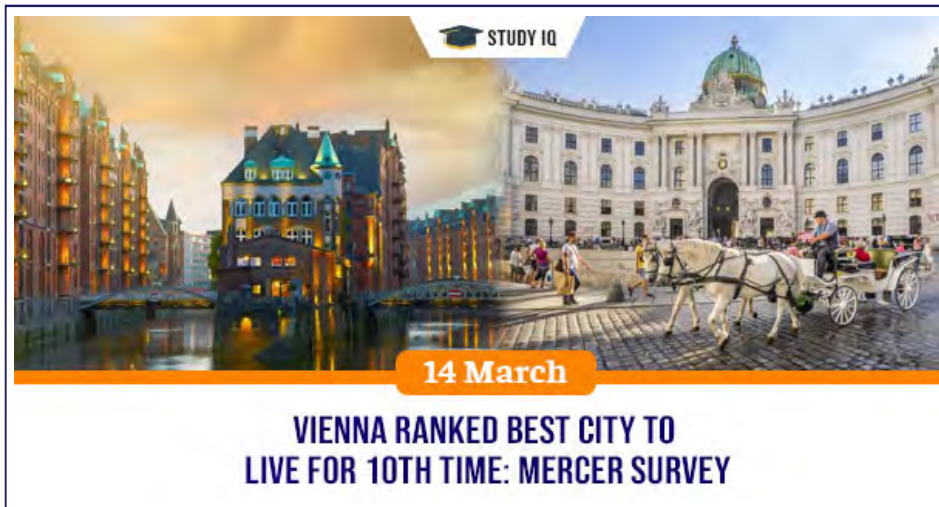
National parliaments of 178 countries are its members and 12 regional parliamentary assemblies are associate members.

It has permanent observer status at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).

Notes

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## Vienna ranked best city to live for 10th time: Mercer Survey



According to Mercer's 21st annual Quality of Living survey 2019, capital of Austria- Vienna has topped the ranking among 231 cities for 10th consecutive year. Seven Indian cities have featured in this list.

### Quality of Living survey 2019

**Top 10 Cities:** Vienna (Austria), Zurich (Switzerland), Vancouver (Canada), Munich (Germany), Auckland (New Zealand), Dusseldorf (Germany), Frankfurt (Germany), Copenhagen (Denmark), Geneva (Switzerland) and Basel (Switzerland).

**Bottom cities:** Baghdad ranked last, followed by Bangui (Central African Republic), Sanaa (Yemen's capital), Caracas (Venezuela's capital).

**Indian Cities in list:** Pune (143), Hyderabad (143), Bengaluru (149), Chennai (151), Mumbai (154), Kolkata (160) and New Delhi (162).

**Safest countries:** Luxembourg was ranked safest city in the world. In 105th place, Chennai ranks was safest city Asia-Pacific region and Pakistan's Karachi (226) is the least safe.

### Mercer's Quality of Living survey

It is conducted annually to rank 231 cities across the world by New York based global human resources consulting firm Mercer.

It aims to help governments and major companies place employees on international assignments.

It ranks cities based on factors such as socio-cultural environment, school and education, medical and health considerations, recreation, housing, economic environment, consumers goods availability, public services and transport, political and social environment and natural environment.

It also identifies those cities with highest personal safety ranking based which analyzes cities internal stability, crime levels, limitations on personal freedom, law enforcement, relationships with other countries and freedom of the press.



## World Sparrow Day observed on 20 March



The world sparrow day (WSD) is observed every year on March 20 to raise awareness of house sparrow and other common birds in urban environments and educated people about threats to their populations. Observance of this day seeks to provide platform to underscore need to conserve sparrows as well as the urban biodiversity. The theme of 2019 WSD is "I love sparrows". It hopes that more and more people celebrate the relationship between People And Sparrows.

### Declining Population

The sparrow, especially common house sparrow is one of oldest companions of human beings. In last few years its population is declining for various reasons such as destruction of its habitat, lack of insect food for young and increasing microwave pollution from mobile phone towers.

### World sparrow day (WSD)

It is international initiative of Nature Forever Society of India (NFSI), Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France) and also numerous other national and international organisations across the world. The first WSD was organised in 2010 across different parts of the world. In 2012, Delhi Government had launched campaign "Rise of Sparrows" aimed at conservation of House Sparrow. It was also declared as 'state bird' of Delhi for its conservation.

## India wins 2019 SAFF Women's Championship



India has clinched South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Women's Championship for the fifth time in a row. India defeated hosts Nepal by 3-1 goals in the final held at Biratnagar. This was India's 23rd straight victory in the championship since its inception in 2010. In this match, for India goals were scored by Dalmia Chhibber (26th minute), Grace Dengmei (63rd minute) and Anju Tamang (76th minute). For Nepal single goal was scored by Sabitra Bhandari at 33rd minute.

### SAFF Women's Championship

It is also called the South Asian Football Federation Women's Cup. It was launched in 2010.

It is the main association football competition of the women's national football teams governed by South Asian Football Federation (SAFF).

Seven members currently compete in the tournament. It is held every two years.

So far India has won every edition of this tournament (2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2019), beating Nepal four times ((2010, 2012, 2014, 2019) and Bangladesh once (2016) in the final.

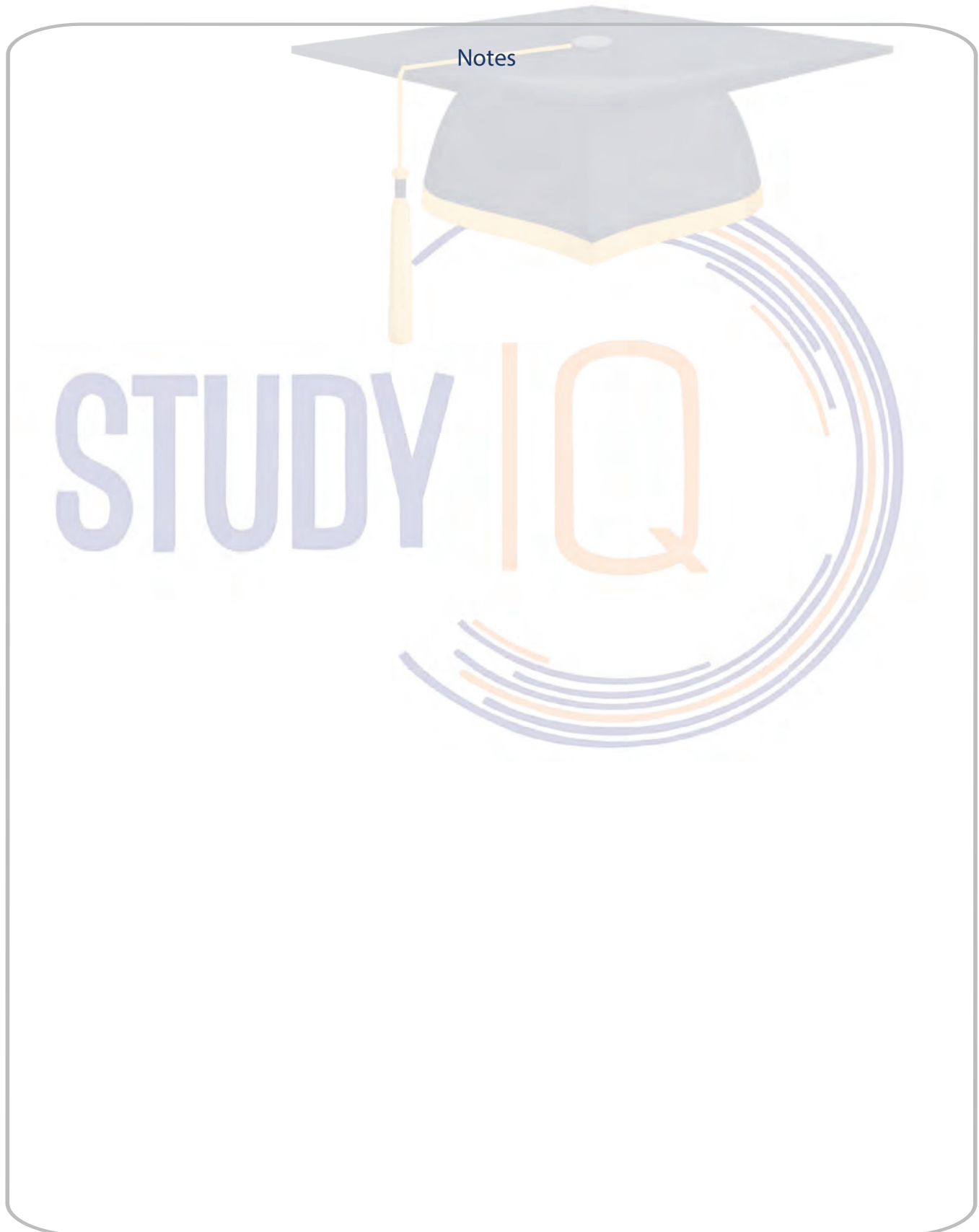
### South Asian Football Federation (SAFF)

It is an association/federation of football playing nations in South Asia. It is part of the larger Asian Football Confederation.

It was established in 1997 and is a byproduct of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), a regional organization of eight South Asian countries.



Its founding members are India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Bhutan had joined it 2000 and Afghanistan in 2005. In February 2015, Afghanistan officially had left SAFF. Now SAFF has total 7 participating nations India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka and Bhutan.



## India ranks 140th in World Happiness Report 2019



India was ranked 140th among 156 countries World Happiness Report 2019 released by United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network. India was rank has 133rd in 2018 report and has dropped by 23 positions since 2015.

### World Happiness Report

It is released very year by United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

It ranks 156 countries on how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be. Rank of countries depend of score ranging from 0 (least happy) to 10 (most happy).

It ranks countries on six key variables that support well-being: income, trust, freedom, healthy life expectancy, social support and generosity.

It offers governments and individuals across the world opportunity to rethink public policies and individual life choices, to raise happiness and well-being.

### Findings of 2019 Report

**Top 10 Countries:** Finland (Rank: 1st, Score: 7.769), Denmark (2nd, 7.600), Norway (3rd, 7.554), Iceland (4th, 7.494), Netherlands (5th, 7.488), Switzerland (6th, 7.480), Sweden (7th, 7.343), New Zealand (8th, 7.307), Canada (9th, 7.278) and Austria (10th, 7.246).

**Bottom 10:** South Sudan (156, 2.853), Central African Republic (155, 3.083), Afghanistan (154, 3.203), Tanzania (153, 3.231), Rwanda (152, 3.334), Yemen (151, 3.380), Malawi (150, 3.410), Syria (149, 3.462), Botswana (148, 3.488), Haiti (147, 3.597)



**BRICS:** Brazil (32nd, 6.300), Russia (68th, 5.648), China (93rd, 5.191), South Africa (106, 4.722).

**India's neighbours:** Pakistan (67, 5.653), Bhutan (95, 5.082), Nepal (100, 4.913), Bangladesh (125, 4.456), Sri Lanka (130, 4.366)

**Global Happiness Scenario:** There has been increase in negative emotions, including sadness, worry and anger across world and overall world happiness has fallen over past few years. None of world's major economic powerhouses was placed in top 10.

**India related facts:** It has witnessed sustained drop in rankings. It is visible from 111st (2013), 117th (2015), 118th (2016), 122nd (2017), 133rd (2018) and 140 in 2019 with score of 4.01 on the scale of 10.

India has featured in list of five countries that have seen largest drop in their rankings since 2005-2008 along with Yemen, Syria, Botswana and Venezuela. India's per capita GDP has only increased progressively over these years, but it is not enough. It is still struggling with health, education, inequality, public services, employment.

Notes

## International Day of Forests observed on 21 March



The International Day of Forests is observed annually on 21 March to raise awareness of importance of forests to people. It also seeks to highlight vital role played by forests in poverty eradication, environmental sustainability and food security. The theme for year 2019 is “**Forests and Education**”. It seeks to raise awareness on how sustainably managed forests provide wide array of contributions in this area. It will also provide opportunity to highlight specific forest contributions to 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goals).

### Background

International Day of Forests was proclaimed by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) by adopting resolution A/RES/67/200 in November 2012. The resolution encourages all Member States to organize activities for creating awareness relating to all types of forests.

The first International Day of Forests was observed on 21 March 2013 and since then it is observed annually.

The theme for each International Day of Forests is chosen by **Collaborative Partnership on Forests**.

### Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF)

It is informal, voluntary arrangement among 14 international organizations and secretariats with substantial programmes on forests.

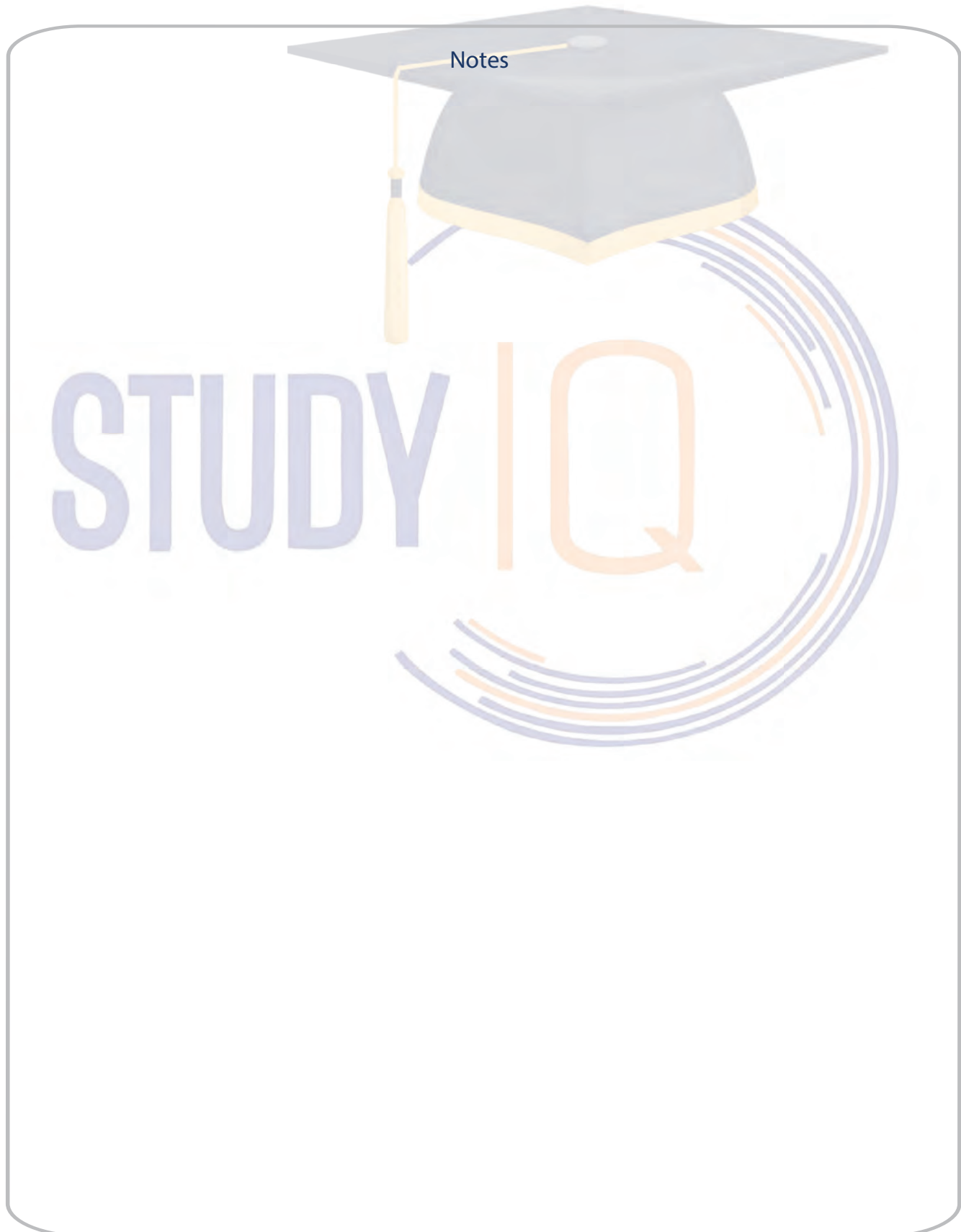
It was established in April 2001. It is chaired by Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and is serviced by the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat.

It aims to promote sustainable management of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end.



Its objectives are to support work of UNFF and its member countries and to enhance cooperation and coordination on forest issues.

It provides common platform to its member organisations to streamline and align their work and to find ways of improving forest management and conservation and the production and trade of forest products.



## Integral Coach Factory becomes World's Largest Rail Coach Manufacturer



Indian Railways' Chennai based Integral Coach Factory (ICF) became world's largest rail coach manufacturer after surpassing top Chinese manufacturers. ICF had manufactured 2,919 coaches from April 2018 to February 2019 as compared to 2,600 coaches by Chinese manufacturers. The number of coaches manufactured were 40% higher than those manufactured previous year in same time period.

### Integral Coach Factory (ICF)

ICF is rail coaches manufacturer located in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. It was inaugurated by first Prime Minister of India Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru in 1955. It is owned and operated by Central Government (Union Ministry of Railways) through Indian Railways.

It primarily manufactures rolling stock for Indian Railways. It manufactures range of coaches, including Linke-Hofmann-Busch (LHB), self-propelled train sets (SPTs) such as electrical multiple units (EMU).

It also exports railway coaches to other countries including Zambia, Philippines, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, Thailand, Myanmar, Taiwan, Vietnam, Mozambique, Bangladesh, Angola and Sri Lanka.

It is one of three coach manufacturing facilities of Indian Railways with the other two being Rail Coach Factory, Kapurthala and Modern Coach Factory, Raebareli.



## World Water Day observed on March 22



The World Water Day (WWD) is observed on 22 March every year to spread message of preservation and rational consumption of water. The theme for WWD 2019 is 'Leaving no one behind'. It aims to encourage people to consider marginalized groups as these are often overlooked and discriminated against when they try to access safe water. It is according to central promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### Importance of Day

It is annual United Nations observance day that highlights importance of freshwater.

It is also used to advocate for sustainable management of freshwater resources.

It seeks to highlight importance of universal access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in developing countries.

### Background

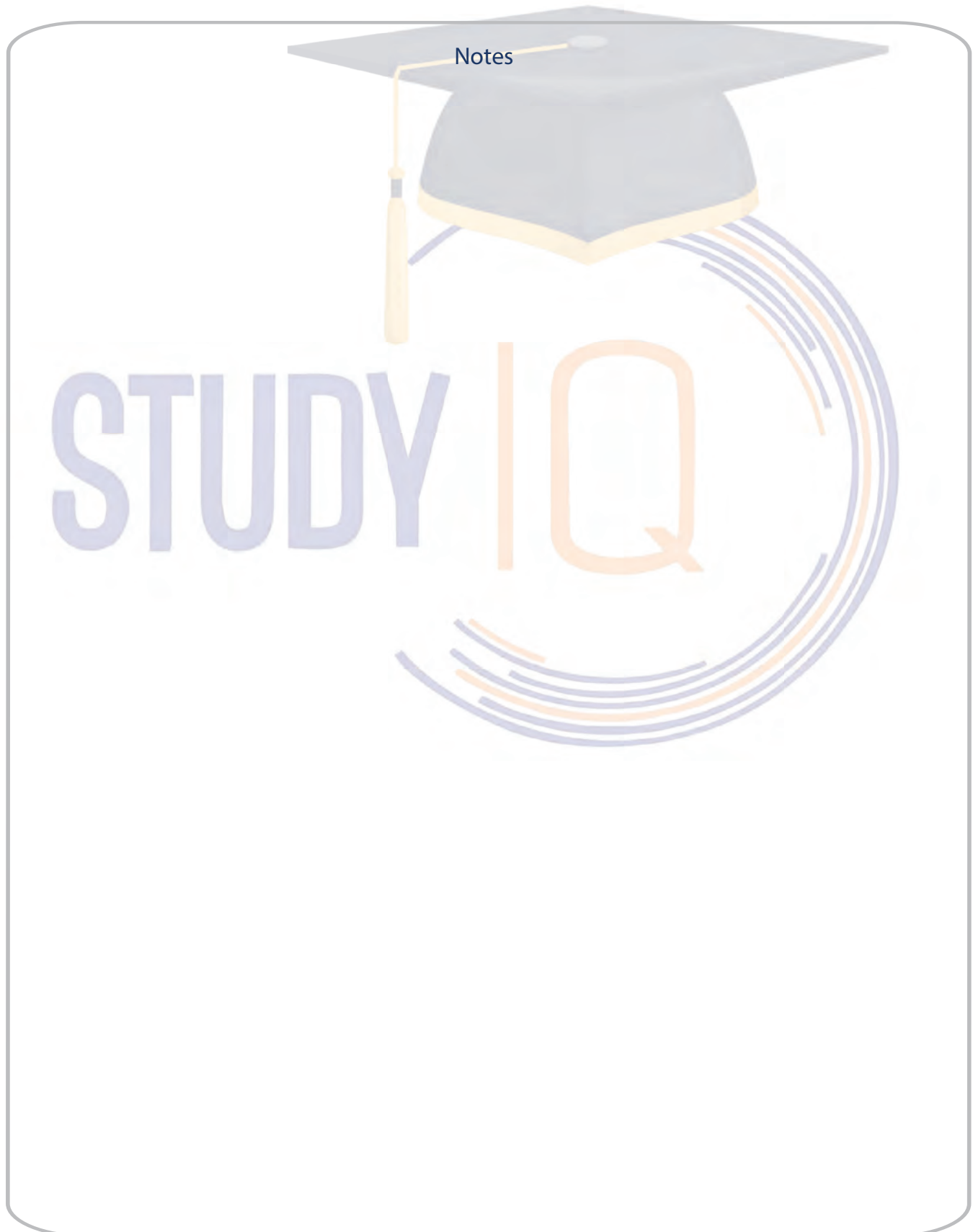
World Water Day was formally proclaimed in Agenda 21 of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992.

Later, UN General Assembly (UNGA) accepted recommendation of UNCED and established this day by adopting resolution A/RES/47/193 in December 1992.

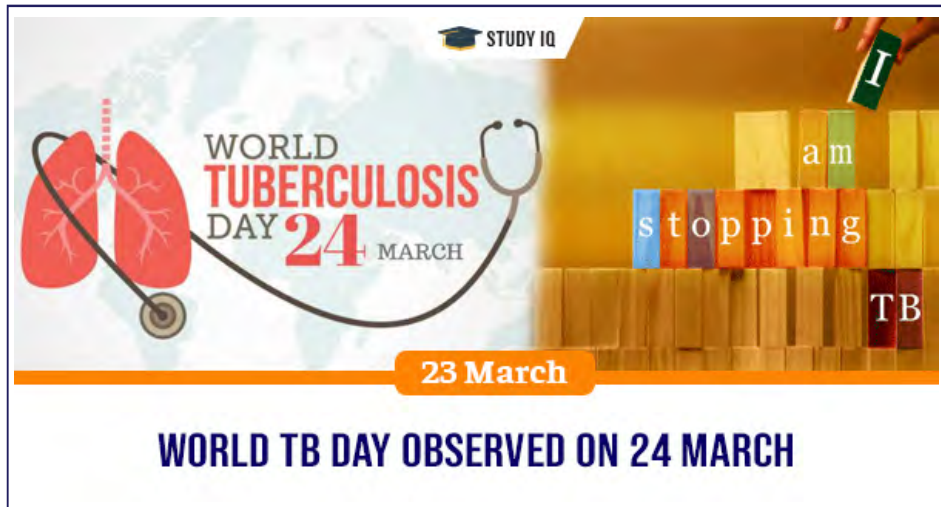
The first WWD was celebrated in 1993. Since then, it is observed annually to draw attention on the importance of freshwater and its sustainable management.

United Nations-Water (UN-Water) is convener for World Water Day and every year selects new theme in consultation with UN organizations that share an interest in that year's focus.

UN-Water coordinates efforts of various United Nations entities and international organizations working on water and sanitation issues.



## World TB day observed on 24 March



World Tuberculosis Day (WTD) is observed annually on March 24 to raise public awareness about global epidemic of Tuberculosis (TB) and its devastating health, social and economic consequences and highlight efforts to eliminate the disease.

### Significance of day

It commemorates discovery of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, bacillus (bacteria) causing TB on 24th March, 1882 by German microbiologist Robert Koch. This opened way towards diagnosing and curing TB.

The theme of 2019 World TB Day is '**It's time**'. It seeks to put accent on urgency to act on commitments made by global leaders to scale up access to prevention and treatment, ensure sufficient and sustainable financing including for research, build accountability, promote an end to discrimination and stigma and promote equitable, rights-based and people-centered TB response.

### World Tuberculosis Day (WTD)

It is one of eight official global public health campaigns observed by World Health Organization (WHO). Observance of this day seeks to create awareness among all the stakeholders about the disease and the challenges associated with its control. It also seeks to mobilize political and social commitment for accelerate progress to end TB.

### Tuberculosis (TB)

It is disease caused by bacteria "*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*" that most often affect the lungs. It spreads through the air from person to person by coughing, sneezing, and talking or by touching surface with infected saliva or mucus.. It commonly affects lungs and also may affect other parts of the body.



## India ranks 76th on 2019 Global Energy Transition Index



India was ranked 76th out of 115 economies on 2019 Global Energy Transition Index (GETI) compiled by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF). Overall, India has moved up two places from 78th last year GETI. India is only amongst the five economies to improve its rank since last year.

### Global energy transition index

It ranks 115 economies on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability. It considers both current state of countries' energy system and their structural readiness to adapt to future energy needs. The 'transition readiness' component of this index takes into account six individual indicators: capital and investment, institutions and governance, regulation and political commitment, institutions and innovative business environment, human capital and consumer participation, and energy system structure

### 2019 Global Energy Transition Index

Top three Countries: Sweden (1), Switzerland (2nd) and Norway (3rd).

Among major economies, United Kingdom (UK) was ranked 7th, Singapore-13th, Germany-17th, Japan-18th, US-27th.

Within Asia, Malaysia is ranked highest at 31st followed by Sri Lanka-60th, Bangladesh-90th and Nepal-93rd. China was ranked at 82nd position.

**Global Scenario:** Energy systems globally have become less affordable and less environmentally sustainable than they were five years ago.

Though access to energy has improved with less than 1 billion now living without access to electricity.

Small economies have achieved higher scores on readiness, with UK being the only G7 economy in the top 10.

Biggest challenge facing attempts to future proof global energy is lack of readiness among the world's largest emitters.

The 10 countries that score highest in terms of readiness account for a mere 2.6% of global annual emissions.

The world's transition to secure, affordable and sustainable energy has stagnated, with little or no progress achieved in the past five years.

Across 115 economies, more people than ever before now have access to energy. However, this is offset by reduced affordability and almost no progress in making energy systems environmentally sustainable.

**Fossil fuels:** Its share of total primary energy supply was at 81% and has been constant over the past three decades. Consumption of coal increased in 2018, after declining for three consecutive years.

Continued use of coal for power generation in Asia mainly due to increasing commodity prices and slower-than-needed improvements in energy intensity have contributed to this year's stagnation in performance.

**Global CO2 emissions:** They are expected to have increased by more than 2% in 2018, the highest since 2014.

**India related Facts:** India is the second best in this block of emerging economies, with Brazil being the best at 46th place globally.

It is amongst countries with high pollution levels and has relatively high CO2 intensity in its energy system.

Despite this, India has made significant strides to improve energy access in recent years, and currently scores well in area of regulation and political commitment towards energy transition.

India has scored low in terms of system performance, but ranks considerably higher when it comes to readiness.

Notes

## World Meteorological Day observed on 23 March



The World Meteorological Day (WMD) is observed every year on 23 March to mark coming into force of Convention establishing World Meteorological Organization (WMO) on 23 March 1950. The theme for WMD 2019 is "The Sun, the Earth and the Weather". It recognises critical role played Sun in functioning of Earth. Sun delivers energy that powers all life on Earth. It drives weather, ocean currents and hydrological cycle. It shapes our mood and our daily activities. It is inspiration for music, photography and art.

### World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

It is intergovernmental organization of 192 member states and Territories. Its supreme body is World Meteorological Congress.

It originated from International Meteorological Organization (IMO), the roots of which were planted at 1873 Vienna International Meteorological Congress.

It was established by ratification of WMO Convention on 23 March 1950. Its is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

In 1951, it became specialised agency of United Nations for meteorology (weather and climate), operational hydrology and related geophysical sciences.

**World Meteorological Day:** WMO has been celebrating World Meteorological Day since 1961 with a different theme selected for each year.

Its observance aims to showcases essential contribution of National Meteorological and Hydrological Services to safety and wellbeing of society. The themes chosen for this day chosen every year reflect topical weather, climate or water-related issues.





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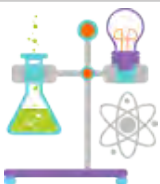


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