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Daily News Discussion (DND)

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Table of Contents

1. History	1
1.1.Sikh fighter pilot memorial in UK to honour Indians who fought in World Wars .1	
2. Polity	2
2.1.All-women crew of MT Swarna Krishna makes history	2
2.2.Revisiting the quota template	3
3. Economy	5
3.1.International Women’s Day: 10 million more girls at risk of child marriage due to COVID-19, warns UNICEF.....	5
3.2.International Women’s day: How Telangana’s women farm hands turned farmers	5
3.3.MSMEs seen as next stress area as banks wary of loan repayments under ECLGS	6
3.4.Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare signs MoU with Central Silk Board, Ministry of Textiles for promotion of Agroforestry in Silk Sector.....	8
4. Environment	12
4.1.Olive Ridley.....	12
5. Science & Technology	13
5.1.Gender bias in medicine and medical research is still putting women’s health at risk Male bias affects clinical studies.....	13
5.2.New virus hits Europe	13
Current affairs Worksheet (09 March 2021)	15

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1. History

1.1. Sikh fighter pilot memorial in UK to honour Indians who fought in World Wars

- Recently, England has approved the design for a sculpture of an early 20th century Sikh fighter pilot “Hardit Singh Malik” for a new memorial to be erected in the port city of Southampton.
- The memorial is built in memory of all Indians who fought in the World Wars.
- The memorial will be created by English sculptor Luke Perry

Hardit Singh Malik

- First arrived in the UK in 1908 as a 14-year-old to Balliol College at the University of Oxford and went on to become a member of the Royal Flying Corps during World War I.
- As the first Indian and turbaned pilot with a specialised helmet, he became famous as the “Flying Sikh”.

2. Polity

2.1. All-women crew of MT Swarna Krishna makes history

About

- This is the first time in the world maritime history that a cargo ship is being sailed by all women officers.
- The initiative is a part of Shipping Corporation of India's ongoing Diamond Jubilee celebrations and also to commemorate the International Women's Day (8th March).

About International Women's Day

National woman's day

- Acknowledged by the U.S. on February 28, 1909 because of the labour movement which was started in 1908 where 15000 female employees went on strike in New York City to protest against poor working conditions.

About International Women's Day

- Later it was recognised as International Women's Day only in 1910 after German women's rights activist Clara Zetkin suggested at an International Conference.
- It was on this day that women in Soviet Russia gained the right the vote in 1917, hence March 8 was declared a national holiday for them.
- The United Nations General Assembly invited member states to proclaim March 8 as the UN Day for women's rights and world peace in 1977
- First time celebrated by UN in 1975

Theme 2020

- Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights".

Theme 2021

- UN has decided to keep the theme as "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a Covid-19 world".
- some groups of women have called for the theme to be "Choose to challenge", claiming that the world only became alert about such issues if it was challenged.

About Shipping corporation of India

- The Shipping Corporation of India was established on October 2nd, 1961, by the amalgamation of Eastern Shipping Corporation and Western Shipping Corporation
- The Government of India has conferred "Navratna" status to SCI on 01.08.2008
- Headquarters is located at Mumbai
- It is a Government of India Public Sector Enterprise. It operates and manages vessels that service both national and international lines.

- The SCI is today the only Indian shipping Company operating: break-bulk services, international container services, liquid/dry bulk services, offshore services, passenger services.

The Beijing Declaration

- is an agenda for women's empowerment and considered the key global policy document on gender equality.
- During 4th World Conference on Women (WCW), held in Beijing, was one of the largest ever gatherings of the United Nations

2.2.Revisiting the quota template

- The Supreme Court, while examining the constitutional validity of the Maratha reservation, said on Monday that it will look into whether the landmark 1992 decision in Indra Sawhney v Union of India needs to be revisited

Why is the Supreme Court considering revisiting the Mandal case?

- A Constitution Bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan is currently hearing the challenge to the Maharashtra law providing quotas for Marathas in jobs and admissions in the state. While the Bombay High Court had upheld the constitutional validity of the quota, it said the quota should be reduced from 16% to 12-13%, as recommended by the State Backward Classes Commission. The ruling was challenged before a Supreme Court Bench, which referred it to a larger Constitution Bench.

What is under challenge in the Maratha quota

- There are two main constitutional questions for the court to consider in the challenge to the Martha quota law. First, is whether states can declare a particular caste to be a socially and educationally backward class. The second is whether states can breach the 50% ceiling for "vertical quotas" set by the Supreme Cour

What is the Indra Sawhney case that the Bench has referred to?

- In 1979, the Second Backward Classes Commission (Mandal Commission) was set up to determine the criteria for defining the socially and educationally backward classes. The Mandal report identified 52% of the population at that time as "Socially and Economically Backward Classes" (SEBCs) and recommended 27% reservation for SEBCs in addition to the previously existing 22.5% reservation for SC/STs.
- In 1990, when the V P Singh led-government set out to implement the Mandal report, it was challenged in court amidst widespread protests against the move. The case came up before a nine-judge Bench and a 6:3 verdict was delivered in 1992.

What did the verdict say?

- The court upheld the office memorandums that essentially implemented the Mandal report. The majority opinion, penned by justice Jeevan Reddy, said the executive orders mandating 27% reservation for backward castes were valid and that the reservation was made not just on the basis of caste, even if it appears so, but on the basis of objective evaluation of social and educational backwardness of classes, which is the criteria previously laid down by the court.

- The landmark Indra Sawhney ruling set two important precedents. First, it said that the criteria for a group to qualify for reservation is “social and educational backwardness”. Additionally, the court also reiterated the 50% limit to vertical quotas it had set out in earlier judgements in 1963 (M R Balaji v State of Mysore) and in 1964 (Devadasan v Union of India), reasoning that it was needed to ensure “efficiency” in administration. The court said this 50% limit will apply – unless in “exceptional circumstances”.
- While the social and educational backwardness criteria stemmed from interpretation of various constitutional provisions, the 50% limit is often criticised as being an arbitrary limit.

How does the Maratha reservation relate to the Indra Sawhney case?

- Based on the 102nd Amendment to the Constitution, which gives the President powers to notify backward classes, the court will have to look into whether states have similar powers. Also, since this power flows from the Constitution, whether the President is still required to comply with the criteria set by the Supreme Court in the Mandal case.
- The relevance of the Indra Sawhney criteria is also under question in another case in which the validity of the 103rd Amendment has been challenged. The 103rd Amendment, passed in 2019, provides for 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions for the economically weaker section in the unreserved category.
- Similar to the Maratha issue are the cases of Patels in Gujarat, Jats in Haryana, and Kapus in Andhra Pradesh.
- Additionally, with the implementation of the Maharashtra law, the vertical quota in the state could go up to 68% which was earlier 52% before the passing of the law. This aspect will also come under question. Since the Indra Sawhney verdict gives a pass to breach of the 50% quota rule only in exceptional circumstances, the court will have to test if the Maharashtra law qualifies to be an exception.

Have any other states breached the 50% ceiling before?

- States have breached the 50% ceiling before and intend to bring more reservation.
- A notable example is Tamil Nadu. The Tamil Nadu Backward Classes, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Reservation of Seats in Educational Institutions and of Appointments or Posts in the Services under the State) Act, 1993, reserves 69% of the seats in colleges and jobs in the state government. However, this was done by amending the Constitution, to place the law in the Ninth Schedule after the Indra Sawhney judgment.
- The Ninth Schedule provides the law with a “safe harbour” from judicial review under Article 31A of the Constitution. Laws placed in the Ninth Schedule cannot be challenged for reasons of violating any fundamental right protected under the Constitution.
- However, when the Tamil Nadu law was challenged in 2007 (I R Coelho v State of Tamil Nadu), the Supreme Court ruled in a unanimous 9-judge verdict that while laws placed under Ninth Schedule cannot be challenged on the grounds of violation of fundamental rights, they can be challenged on the ground that it violates the basic structure of the Constitution.
- A later Bench was to decide whether the Tamil Nadu law itself (breaching the 50% ceiling) violates basic structure, based on the I R Coelho verdict. The Bench has not yet been set up.

3. Economy

3.1. International Women's Day: 10 million more girls at risk of child marriage due to COVID-19, warns UNICEF

Key Findings

- At least 10 million more girls are at a risk of being forced into marriage due to the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, according to a new analysis by United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF).
- The proportion of young women who were married as children had declined in the last decade – to 20 per cent from 25 per cent. The gain is now under threat, according to the study.
- School closures, job losses and increased economic insecurity, the interruption of support services for families and parental deaths due to the pandemic put the most vulnerable girls at increased risk of child marriage
- Girls married off in their childhood are more likely to experience domestic violence and are less likely to remain in school
- Child marriage increases the risk of early and unplanned pregnancy, thereby increasing the risk of maternal complications and mortality.

Case study-The story of 114 Odisha villages becoming child-marriage free begins with a small victory in Rugudipali

- Action Aid, a non-profit that works on child and women's rights, has been spearheading the campaign against child marriage with the support of UNICEF in 15 districts of Odisha
- The villagers have gone a step further to create enabling environment for adolescents so that they can continue their education and pursue a career of their choice. This will ultimately strengthen their voices to say no to child marriage.

Case study-The story of 114 Odisha villages becoming child-marriage free begins with a small victory in Rugudipali

- The Women & Child Development and Mission Shakti Department launched the State Strategic Action Plan in October 2019 to end child marriage with an objective to make Odisha child-marriage free by 2030.
- Persistent efforts to motivate parents, influential persons, communities not to marry their girls before the legal age worked. As a result, there is no child marriage in the village Rugudipali and now subsequently in other 113 villages.

3.2. International Women's day: How Telangana's women farm hands turned farmers

Telangana's Jagiripalli village

- The women are not merely agricultural workers but farmers who have sown the crop collectively and share the cost and the income too collectively.

- women are claiming financial and social autonomy by forming small groups and doing collective farming on leased land.
- The land is either leased from one of the group members or from someone else in the village where a group of women collectively manage a crop from sowing till after harvest
- Non-interference of men in group farming is a common narrative across the villages.

3.3. MSMEs seen as next stress area as banks wary of loan repayments under ECLGS

MSME

- contribute around 7% of the manufacturing GDP
- 25% of the GDP from service activities.
- It contributes around 45% of the overall exports from India.
- MSME ministry has set a target to up its contribution to GDP to 50% by 2025 as India becomes a \$5 trillion economy.

Existing and Revised Definition of MSMEs



Existing MSME Classification			
Criteria : Investment in Plant & Machinery or Equipment			
Classification	Micro	Small	Medium
Mfg. Enterprises	Investment < Rs. 25 lac	Investment < Rs. 5 cr.	Investment < Rs. 10 cr.
Services Enterprise	Investment < Rs. 10 lac	Investment < Rs. 2 cr.	Investment < Rs. 5 cr.

Revised MSME Classification			
Composite Criteria : Investment And Annual Turnover			
Classification	Micro	Small	Medium
Manufacturing & Services	Investment < Rs. 1 cr. and Turnover < Rs.5 cr.	Investment < Rs. 10 cr. and Turnover < Rs.50 cr.	Investment < Rs. 20 cr. and Turnover < Rs.100 cr.

Analysis of new definition

- There have been a fear among the MSMEs that if they outgrow the threshold limits. they will lose the benefits they have been enjoying. The fear has been killing their urge to grow in terms of size and turnover.
- A revision in the definition of MSMEs with an upward revision in their investment limit will help in the seamless expansion of small and medium businesses in the country
- In contrast, some sector experts expressed apprehensions that inclusion of more firms in the MSME category could crowd out the real small-scale manufacturers and dim their chances of availing concessional loans and benefits under various government schemes
- On disallowing global companies from participating in government tenders up to Rs 200 crore,

- If the same policy is implemented by the state, only then we will see the benefits. Till then, the benefits will be very partial. Because only if the central PSUs follow the norms and states do not, not much will change.

Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS)

- 100% guarantee coverage to be provided by National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC) for additional funding of up to Rs. 3 lakh crore to eligible MSMEs and interested MUDRA borrowers.
- Facility during the period from the date of announcement of the Scheme to 31.10.2020.
- As part of the AatmaNirbhar Bharat reforms, the GOI extended the Scheme until March 31, 2021
Tenor of the loan under Scheme shall be four years with a moratorium period of one year on the principal amount.

National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd

- NCGTC is a private limited company incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956 in 2014, established by the Department of Financial Services, Ministry of Finance, as a wholly owned company of the Government of India,

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana

- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) is a flagship scheme of Government of India to “fund the unfunded”
- It enables a small borrower to borrow from all Public Sector Banks such as PSU Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Cooperative Banks, Private Sector Banks, Foreign Banks, Micro Finance Institutions (MFI) and Non Banking Finance Companies (NBFC) for loans upto Rs 10 lakhs for non-farm income generating activities.

Eligibility

- Any Indian Citizen who has a business plan for a non-farm sector income generating activity such as manufacturing, processing, trading or service sector and whose credit need is less than Rs 10 lakh

Types of loans provided

- Under the aegis of Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana, MUDRA has already created the following products / schemes.
- Shishu : covering loans upto 50,000/-
- Kishor : covering loans above 50,000/- and upto 5 lakh
- Tarun : covering loans above 5 lakh and upto 10 lakh

Sectors covered

- Land Transport Sector / Activity - Which will inter alia support units for purchase of transport vehicles for goods and personal transport such as auto rickshaw, small goods transport vehicle, 3 wheelers, e-rickshaw, passenger cars, taxis, etc.
- Community, Social & Personal Service Activities - Such as saloons, beauty parlours, gymnasium, boutiques, tailoring shops, dry cleaning, cycle and motorcycle repair shop, DTP and Photocopying Facilities, Medicine Shops, Courier Agents, etc.

- Food Products Sector - Support would be available for undertaking activities such as papad making, achar making, jam / jelly making, agricultural produce preservation at rural level, sweet shops, small service food stalls and day to day catering / canteen services, cold chain vehicles, cold storages, ice making units, ice cream making units, biscuit, bread and bun making, etc.
- Textile Products Sector / Activity - To provide support for undertaking activities such as handloom, powerloom, chikan work, zari and zardozi work, traditional embroidery and hand work, traditional dyeing and printing, apparel design, knitting, cotton ginning, computerized embroidery, stitching and other textile non garment products such as bags, vehicle accessories, furnishing accessories, etc

MSME Credit Health Index

- To provide a measure of the growth and strength of the MSME sector in India.
- By TransUnion CIBIL and Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI)
- Published quarterly.

Parameters

- Two parameters growth and strength.
- Growth
 - ✓ Measured by plotting increase in exposure value (outstanding balances) over time.
 - ✓ An increasing Growth Index indicates improvement in credit growth.
- Strength
 - ✓ Measured by decrease/increase in credit risk in terms of non-performing assets (NPA).
 - ✓ An increasing Strength Index implies better asset quality and therefore denotes an improvement in the structural strength of the sector.

3.4. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare signs MoU with Central Silk Board, Ministry of Textiles for promotion of Agroforestry in Silk Sector

- To incentivize the farmers to take up sericulture based Agroforestry models thereby contributing to the Make in India and Make for the World vision of the Prime Minister.

Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF)

- Aims to encourage farmers to plant multi-purpose trees together with the agriculture crops for climate resilience and an additional source of income to the farmers, as well as enhanced feedstock to inter alia wood-based and herbal industry.
- Hence there is a concerted effort to include medicinal, fruits, fodder, tree-borne oilseeds, lac host etc. in addition to the longer rotation timber species
- The Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DAC & FW) has been implementing the Sub-Mission on Agroforestry (SMAF) since 2016-17 as part of the recommendation of the National Agroforestry Policy 2014.

- India was the first country to have such a comprehensive policy which was launched at the World Agroforestry Congress held in Delhi in February 2014.
- At present, the scheme is being implemented in 20 States and 2 Uts
- The scheme promotes endemic species or tree species that come with medicinal value
- No promotion for Exotic species
- Currently it is implemented only in the states having liberalized transit regulations for the transport of timber and will be extended to other states as and when such relaxations are notified by them
- Funding pattern
- North East and Hilly states of Himachal and Uttarakhand-90:10 (Centre: States)
- UT-100% centre
- Other 60:40 (Centre: States)
- At least 50% of the allocation is to be utilized for small, marginal farmers of which at least 30% should be women beneficiaries/farmers.
- 16% & 8% of the total allocation or in proportion of SC/ST population in the district will be utilized for Special Component Plan (SCP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) respectively
- Farmers must have a soil health card to get the benefit under the programme
- Farmers would be supported financially to the extent of 50% of the actual cost of the interventions (limited to 50% of the estimated cost as indicated in the Cost norms) for the respective interventions
- Farmers groups/Cooperatives and Farmer Producers Organization (FPO) can also avail the benefit

About Soil Health Card

What is Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme?

- Department of Agriculture & Co-operation under the Ministry of Agriculture.
- It will be implemented through the Department of Agriculture of all the State and Union Territory Governments.
- A SHC is meant to give each farmer soil nutrient status of his holding and advice him on the dosage of fertilizers and also the needed soil amendments, that he should apply to maintain soil health in the long run.

What is a Soil Health Card?

- SHC is a printed report that a farmer will be handed over for each of his holdings.
- It will contain the status of his soil with respect to 12 parameters, namely
- N,P,K (Macro-nutrients) ;
- S (Secondary-nutrient) ;
- Zn, Fe, Cu, Mn, Bo (Micro-nutrients) ;
- Ph ,Electrical Conductivity (EC), Organic Carbon (OC) (Physical parameters).

- Based on this, the SHC will also indicate fertilizer recommendations and soil amendment required for the farm.

How can a farmer use a SHC?

- The card will contain an advisory based on the soil nutrient status of a farmer's holding. It will show recommendations on dosage of different nutrients needed.
- Further, it will advise the farmer on the fertilizers and their quantities he should apply to realize optimal yields

Will the farmer get a card every year and for every crop?

- It will be made available once in a cycle of 3 years, which will indicate the status of soil health of a farmer's holding for that particular period.
- The SHC given in the next cycle of 3 years will be able to record the changes in the soil health for that subsequent period.

What are the norms of sampling?

- Soil samples will be drawn in a grid of 2.5 ha in irrigated area and 10 ha in rain-fed area with the help of GPS tools and revenue maps.

Who will draw the soil sample?

- The State Government will collect samples through the staff of their Department of Agriculture or through the staff of an outsourced agency. The State Government may also involve the students of local Agriculture/ Science Colleges.

What is the ideal time for soil sampling?

- Soil Samples are taken generally two times in a year, after harvesting of Rabi and Kharif Crop respectively or when there is no standing crop in the field.

How will soil samples be collected from a farmer's field?

- Soil Samples will be collected by a trained person from a depth of 15-20 cm by cutting the soil in a "V" shape.
- It will be collected from four corners and the centre of the field and mixed thoroughly and a part of this picked up as a sample.

Other

- Village youth and farmers up to 40 years of age are eligible to set up Soil Health Laboratories and undertake testing.
- 75% of laboratory costs are proposed to be funded by the Central and State Governments.

National Productivity Council (NPC) report

- Soil Health Card scheme has led to a decline of 8-10% in the use of chemical fertilizers and also raised productivity by 5-6%.

National Productivity Council

- It is a national-level organization to promote productivity culture in India.

- Established by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India in 1958, it is an autonomous, multipartite, non-profit organization.

About Silk Samagra

- It is initiated by the Central Silk Board.
- The scheme comprises four major components viz. (i) Research & Development, Training, Transfer of Technology and Information Technology Initiatives, (ii) Seed Organizations, (iii) Coordination and Market Development and (iv) Quality Certification Systems (QCS) / Export Brand Promotion and Technology Up-gradation.
- The main objective of the scheme is to maintain Breeders stock, Breed improvement through R&D Projects, Development of mechanized practices, Technology translation through Sericulture Information Linkages and Knowledge System (SILKS) Portal, Mobile Application for Stakeholders and for seed quality monitoring etc.
- The main aim of “Silk Samagra” Scheme is to empower downtrodden, poor & backward tribal families through various activities of sericulture in the country including women.

Facts about Silk production

- South India is the leading silk producing area of the country and is also known for its famous silk weaving enclaves like Kancheepuram
- India is the 2nd largest producer of silk in the world after China.
- It is largest consumer of silk in the world.
- It is the only country in the world that produces all 5 varieties of silk on a commercial scale- Mulberry, Oak Tasar & Tropical Tasar, Muga and Eri.
- Holds the global monopoly for production of the famed golden ‘Muga’ silk

The Central Silk Board

- It is a statutory body established in the year 1948 by an Act of Parliament.
- It is working under the administrative control of Ministry of Textiles, Government of India.
- Its headquarter is located in Bangalore.

4. Environment

4.1. Olive Ridley

- The **Olive ridley turtles** are the **smallest and most abundant of all sea turtles** found in the world, inhabiting warm waters of the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans.
- They are best known for their unique mass nesting called **Arribada**, where thousands of females come together on the same beach to lay eggs.
- The species is listed as **Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List, Appendix 1 in CITES, and Schedule 1 in Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.**
- Olive-ridleys **face serious threats** across their migratory route, habitat and nesting beaches, due to human activities such as **unfriendly turtle fishing practices, development, and exploitation of nesting beaches for ports, and tourist centers.**

5. Science & Technology

5.1. Gender bias in medicine and medical research is still putting women's health at risk Male bias affects clinical studies

- Genetic and hormonal factors are likely to be involved. Historically, however, medical research has often excluded women.
- Another reason given for excluding women in clinical studies is that, depending on where a woman is in her menstrual cycle, the variation of her hormones “complicates” the results
- Every cell in a person's body has a sex. This means diseases and medications used to treat them will affect women differently – as we have learned, often at a cost to their health.
- Eight out of ten of the drugs removed from the US market between 1997 and 2000 were withdrawn because of side effects that occurred mainly or exclusively in women
- Lack of funding for women's health remains a huge issue
- Autoimmune diseases, for example, affect approximately 8 per cent of the global population, but 78 per cent of those affected are women.
- Women are less likely to experience the “classic” symptoms of a heart attack – symptoms that were discovered in research led by men, in which most of the participants were men.
- Women's most common heart attack symptom, as with men, is chest pain or discomfort. But women are more likely than men to experience some of the other common symptoms, particularly shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting and back or jaw pain.
- But because the diagnosis method still favours male biology, many women experience a delayed diagnosis or a misdiagnosis.

5.2. New virus hits Europe

Equine Herpes Virus (EHV-1)

- including respiratory disease, abortion and neonatal death.
- Neurological problems, leading to paralysis and in some cases, death.
- It is contagious and spread by direct horse-to-horse contact via the respiratory tract through nasal secretions.
- This virus can also be spread indirectly through contact with physical objects that are contaminated with the virus.
- Treatments include anti-inflammatory drugs

About herpes simplex virus

- also known as HSV, is an infection that causes herpes.
- There are two types of the herpes simplex virus

- HSV - 1: It causes blisters primarily in mouth and face. Children are easily prone to this infection from general interactions with adults that are it may involve sharing same dining utensils, lip balms, toothbrush or kissing.
- HSV - 2: It is a sexually transmitted infection. It mainly causes genital infections. Risk factors arise due to having multiple partners, immature immune system, having AIDS/HIV and female also are more prone to this disease.

Elephant Endotheliotropic Herpes-virus (EEHV)

- killed five elephant
- EEHV is a type of herpesvirus that can cause a highly fatal haemorrhagic disease in young Asian elephants.
- The disease is caused by a virus called EEHV, or elephant endotheliotropic herpesvirus.
- EEHV is lethal for young elephants between the ages of one and 12.
- There is no true cure for herpes-viruses in animals or in humans beings

Current affairs Worksheet (09 March 2021)

Factual sheet for Quick revision

Topic	Description	Update
Env	Olive Ridley status, location	
SnT	Herpes- Human vs Elephant Vs Horse	

Economy	MSME classification ECLGS NCGTC PMMY MSME credit health index SMAF SHC NPC Silk samagra Central silk board vs tea board vs tobacco board vs Coconut board vs Coffee board Farmers classification	
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History	Hardit Singh Malik	
	Women day SCI Beijing declaration	