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LIVE & INTERACTIVE CLASSES



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1 'Ayurveda for Covid-19'- the main theme of 5th Ayurveda Day

Potential role of Ayurveda in the management of the Covid 19 pandemic remained the focus of this year's 'Ayurveda Day' observation.

ABOUT

- What is Ayurveda Day?
- The Ayurveda Day is being observed every year from 2016, on the day of Dhanwantri Jayanti.
- This year it was celebrated on 13th November 2020.
- Objective: The main objectives of the day is:
 - To focus on strengths of Ayurveda and its unique treatment principles,
 - To work towards reducing the burden of disease and related mortality by utilising the potential of Ayurveda
 - To tap into the potential of Ayurveda to contribute towards National Health Policy and National Health programmes
 - To promote Ayurvedic principles of healing in society.
- Thus, Ayurveda Day is more an occasion of re-dedication to the profession and the society, than one
 of festivities or celebrations.

2 Mahila Kisan Diwas celebrated

The Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare organized **Mahila Kisan Diwas** on 15th October, 2020.

ABOUT

- What is Mahila Kisan Diwas?
 - 15th October is celebrated as National Women Farmer's Day or Rashtriya Mahila Kisan Diwas' in India.
 - Every year, on this day of activities and programmes, are organized mainly to empower women in the field of agriculture.
 - The awareness campaign launched by the government as part of the initiative looks at how Agricultural Science centres can play a significant role in empowering women farmers and shifting the existing biased perceptions regarding women's role in agriculture.

Role of women in Agriculture

- Women have always been the core of farming ever since agriculture is known to mankind.
- Approximately more than 80% of women in rural India depend on agriculture for their livelihood.
- Among the entire farming community, more than 30% of women are cultivators themselves and more than 45% are the ones that serve as agricultural laborers.

Recent Government initiatives to promote women

To recognize and promote this capacity of women, there are number of initiatives taken by Government as well as private organisations.



- On one hand, initiatives like Self Help Groups (SHGs), Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Prayojana (MKSP) etc. are taken by Government.
- While on the other hand projects like '**Prerna'** are under taken by the private sector organisation, to provide women-friendly, efficient and ergonomic farm tools and equipment.

3 Celebration of 78th EME Corps Day

The Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers celebrated its 78th Corps Day on 15 Oct 2020.

ABOUT

- The Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers was raised on 15 October 1943 as Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers.
- Ever since its inception, the Corps of EME has been an integrated, intertwined and inseparable component of the gallant Indian Army.
- It is responsible to provide integrated engineering support to the entire range of equipment and weapon systems of the Indian Army during complete life cycle from design to discard.
- Thus, it enhances the Army's combat potential by exploiting the power of technology and innovation.

Achievements

- The Corps has always taken the lead in the field of adventure sports in Indian Army.
- It has given tremendous impetus in the field of mountaineering, sky diving, sailing, hot water ballooning, para sailing, hang gliding, skiing, rafting, canoeing and exploration to Antarctica.
- Padamshree Awardee Milkha Singh, also known as Flying Sikh, represented India in three Summer Olympics and Commonwealth Games. Col JK Bajaj, VSM, SM excelled in the field of mountaineering.
- More recently Lt Col Bharat Pannu won the 'VirtualRace Across America', while Lt Col Vishal Ahlawat, a marathon runner has brought laurels by creating records in numerous half marathons.

4 Zozila Tunnel

Work on the Zozila Tunnel in J&K has began.

ABOUT

- The Zozila tunnel will provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar valley and Leh (Ladakh plateau) on NH-1.
- It will bring about an all-round economic and socio–cultural integration of Jammu & Kashmir (Now UTs of J&K and Ladakh).
- It involves construction of a 14.15 Km long tunnel at an altitude of about 3000 m under Zojila pass (presently motorable only for 6 months in a year) on NH-1 connecting Srinagar and Leh through Dras & Kargil.
- It is one of the most dangerous stretch in the world to drive a vehicle & this project is also geostrategically sensitive.



Modified configuration of project:

SALIENT FEATURES				
Longth	Zojila Tunnel length = 14.15 Km and Approach road length = 18.63 Km.			
Length	Total project length is 32.78 km.			
Scope of Work	 14.150 km long Bi-directional tunnel without Egress/escape passage between Baltal and Minamarg. 18.63 Km approach road between Z-Morh tunnel and Zojila tunnels including two tunnels of length 433m and 1958m in approach road.Net Road length is 12 KMs. Road safety & avalanche protection structures such as Catch Dams, Snow Galleries, Cut & Cover, Deflector Dam etc. 			
Construction Period	Zozila Tunnel = 6 Years	Approach road = 2.5 Years		

BACKGROUND

- The project was first conceived in 2005 and its Detailed Project Report (DPR) was prepared by BRO in year 2013 on BOT (Annuity) mode.
- Attempts to award the project four times weren't successful.
- After due consultation with tunnel experts and other stakeholders, the project was approved in 2020.
- Directorate General of Shipping notified as National Authority for Ships Recycling

The Government has notified the **Directorate General of Shipping** as **National Authority for Recycling of Ships** under the section 3 of the Recycling of Ships Act, 2019.

ABOUT

5

- As an apex body, DG Shipping is authorized to administer, supervise and monitor all activities relating to Ship Recycling.
- DG Shipping will look after the sustainable development of the Ship Recycling industry, monitoring the compliance to environment-friendly norms and safety and health measures for the stakeholders working in the ship recycling industry.
- DG Shipping will be the final authority for the various approvals required by the Ship-Recycling yard owners and State Governments.

Location of the Office

- National Authority of Ship Recycling will be set up in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.
- The location of the office will benefit the Ship Recycling yard owners situated in Alang, Gujarat which is home of Asia's largest ship breaking and ship recycling industry in the world.



Ship Recycling Act, 2019

- Under Ship Recycling Act, 2019, India has acceded to **Hong Kong Convention for Ship Recycling** under **International Maritime Organization (IMO).**
- DG Shipping is a representative of India in IMO and all the conventions of IMO are being enforced by DG Shipping.

6 Buldhana Pattern of water conservation gets national recognition

Maharashtra's 'Buldhana Pattern' of water conservation' has won national recognition and the NITI Aayog is in the process of formulating National Policy on water conversation based on it.

BACKGROUND

- Buldhana, which receives scanty rainfall, was selected for the project: "Water conservation and ground water recharge."
- Under the project, personnel of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), along with the teams of PWD engineers deputed with them, extracted soil from rivers, nullahs, village tanks, minor/ medium irrigation projects in the vicinity of national highways, thereby increasing the storage capacity of these water bodies.
- Total 5,510 TCM (thousand cubic meters) storage capacity was created, benefiting around 152 villages in the district.

What is Buldhana Pattern? Why national recognition?

- Buldhana Pattern is a model based on synchronisation of national highway construction and water conservation.
- Synchronisation of the national highway construction and water conservation was achieved for the first time in Buldhana district, by using soil from the water bodies, nullahs and rivers.
- This consequently led to the increase in capacity of water storage across the water-bodies in Buldana district and it came to be known as 'Buldhana Pattern'.
- With this activity in Maharashtra, 225 lakh cubic metre of soil was used in National Highway construction and the resultant widening/deepening resulted in an increase of 22,500 TMC of water storage capacity with no cost to the state government.
- The Government pressed for adopting the cost-efficient "Buldhana pattern" of road-construction nation-wide, especially in the regions which were facing the problem of water scarcity.

Tamswada Pattern

- ► The "Tamswada Pattern" of water conservation project taken up in Nagpur and Wardha district involved rainwater harvesting, conservation and groundwater recharge works to increase the water storage capacity of natural water bodies in Eastern Vidarbha.
- Tamswada pattern was being implemented in 60 villages in Nagpur and Wardha districts and the work has already been completed in 40 villages.

4 **GSSCORE**

7 Indian Navy – Sri Lanka Navy Maritime Exercise SLINEX-20 off Trincomalee

The Eighth Edition of annual Indian Navy (*IN*) – Sri Lanka Navy (SLN) bilateral maritime exercise SLINEX-20 took place from 19 to 21 October 2020.

ABOUT

- SLINEX-20 aims to enhance inter-operability, improve mutual understanding and exchange **best practices and procedures for multi-faceted maritime operations** between both navies.
- In addition, the exercise also showcased capabilities of our indigenously constructed naval ships and aircraft.
- Surface and anti-air exercises including weapon firing, seamanship evolutions, manoeuvres and cross deck flying operations were planned during the exercise, which further enhanced the high degree of inter-operability already established between the two friendly navies.
- The exercise is being conducted in a non-contact 'at-sea-only' format in the backdrop of COVID-19 pandemic.

8 BrahMos Supersonic Cruise Missile Successfully Test Fired

BrahMos, the supersonic cruise missile was successfully test fired from Indian Navy's indigenously-built stealth destroyer INS Chennai, hitting a target in the Arabian Sea. The missile hit the target successfully with pin-point accuracy after performing high-level and extremely complex manoeuvres.

ABOUT

- BrahMos as 'prime strike weapon' will ensure the warship's invincibility by engaging naval surface targets at long ranges, thus making the destroyer another lethal platform of Indian Navy.
- The BrahMos missile provides the IAF a much-desired capability to strike from large standoff ranges on any target at sea or on land with pinpoint accuracy by day or night and in all weather conditions.
- The IAF is also integrating the Brahmos supersonic cruise missile on over 40 Sukhoi fighter jets which is aimed at bolstering overall combat capability of the force.
- India has already deployed a sizeable number of the original BrahMos missiles and other key assets in several strategic locations along the de-facto border with China in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh.
- BrahMos Aerospace, an India-Russia joint venture, produces the supersonic cruise missile that can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft, or from land platforms.

9 Malabar 2020 Naval Exercise

- The Malabar series of Naval exercises started in 1992 as a bilateral Indian Navy-US Navy exercise.
- Japan joined the Naval exercise in 2015.

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- This annual exercise has been conducted off the coast of Guam in the Philippine Sea in 2018, off the coast the Japan in 2019 and is expected to be held in the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea later this year.
- As India Seeks to increase cooperation with other countries in the maritime security domain and in the light of increased defence cooperation with Australia, Malabar 2020 will see the participation of the Australian Navy.
- This year, the exercise has been planned on a 'non-contact at sea' format. The exercise will strengthen the coordination between the Navies of the participating countries.
- The participants of Exercise Malabar 2020 are engaging to enhance safety and security in the maritime domain.
- They collectively support free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific and remain committed to a rules based international order.

10 IFSCA introduces Framework for Regulatory Sandboxto tap into innovative FinTech solutions

As a step towards attaining this vision, IFSCA has introduced a framework for "Regulatory Sandbox".

What is "Regulatory Sandbox"?

- Under this Sandbox framework, entities operating in the capital market, banking, insurance and financial services space shall be granted certain facilities and flexibilities to experiment with innovative FinTech solutions in a live environment with a limited set of real customers for a limited time frame.
- These features shall be fortified with necessary safeguards for investor protection and risk mitigation.
- The Regulatory Sandbox shall operate within the IFSC located at GIFT City.

Who can participate?

- All entities (regulated as well as unregulated) operating in the capital market, banking, insurance and pension sectors as well as individuals and startups from India and FATF compliant jurisdictions, shall be eligible for participation in the Regulatory Sandbox.
- Entities desirous of participating in the sandbox to showcase their innovative FinTech solutions, concepts and business models shall apply to IFSCA.
- IFSCA shall assess the applications and extend suitable regulatory relaxations to commence limited purpose testing in the Sandbox. The details on the eligibility criteria, the application and approval process and other operational aspects of the Sandbox have been provided in the circular.

Innovation Sandbox

- As an additional steps towards creating an innovation-centric ecosystem in the IFSC, IFSCA has proposed the creation of an "Innovation Sandbox", which will be a testing environment where FinTech firms can test their solutions in isolation from the live market, based on market related data made available by the Market Infrastructure Institutions (MIIs) operating in the IFSC.
- The Innovation Sandbox will be managed and facilitated by the MIIs operating within the IFSC.

International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA)

The International Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA), with an objective to develop a world class FinTech hub at the IFSC located at GIFT City in Gandhinagar (Gujarat, India), endeavours to encourage the promotion of financial technologies ('FinTech') initiatives in financial products and financial services across the spectrum of banking, insurance, securities and fund management.

11 NTPC Dadristrives to become the cleanest coal fired plant of India

NTPC Dadri is striving to become the cleanest coal fired plant in the country and is complying with all the CPCB guidelines on emissions. All the emission parameters are being monitored online and transmitted to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) on real time basis.

About NTPC's efforts towards a sustainable environment:

- NTPC's efforts in leading the energy transition to a decentralised, decarbonised and digitalised energy.
- It provides broad framework for the company's priorities to meet the challenges in Decarbonisation & Air emissions control, Water & Biodiversity Conservation, Circular Economy, Health and Safety, Community Development, Strong Finance & Ethics and Sustainable Supply Chain.
- As part of its commitment towards the environment, NTPC has undertaken a many 'firsts' for the sector.
 - NTPC is working towards utilising agro residue for power generation to discourage in-field crop residue burning.
 - NTPC is also striving hard to install sulphur dioxide-reducing technology flue-gas desulphurisation (FGD) at all its plants across the country.
 - NTPC is also working towards various waste to energy projects for a sustainable environment.
 - NTPC is also taking every possible step to make its energy portfolio greener by adding significant capacities of Renewable Energy (RE) Sources.
 - By 2032, the company plans to have a minimum of 32000 MW capacity through RE sources constituting nearly 25% of its overall power generation capacity.

12 Evidence-based Impact of National Deworming Day in India

- Soil-Transmitted Helminthiases (STH), also known as parasitic intestinal worm infection, is a significant public health concern mostly in low resource settings.
- These are known to have detrimental effects on children's physical growth and well being and can cause anemia and under-nutrition.
- Regular deworming as advised by the **World Health Organization** eliminates worm infestation among children and adolescents living in areas with high STH burden, thereby contributing to achieve better nutrition and health.

• Albendazole tablet, approved by World Health Organization (WHO), is used for treatment of intestinal worms in children and adolescents as part of Mass Drug Administration (MDA) programmes globally.

What WHO Report on STH (2012) says about India?

- There were an estimated 64% children in the age group (1-14 years) at risk of STH.
- The risk was estimated based on the hygiene and sanitation practices and limited STH prevalence data at that point of time.
- To assess the exact burden of STH in India, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare appointed the **National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)** as the nodal agency to coordinate and conduct nationwide baseline STH mapping.
 - In collaboration with partners and government agencies, NCDC completed the baseline STH mapping across the country by the end of 2016.
 - The data showed varied prevalence ranging from 12.5 % in Madhya Pradesh to 85% in Tamil Nadu.

NDD Programme

- To evaluate the impact of the consistently implemented high coverage NDD programme, the Health Ministry recently initiated follow-up prevalence surveys led by NCDC and partners.
- They were guided by the High Level Scientific Committee (HLSC) appointed by the Ministry. As on date, the follow-up surveys are completed in 14 States.
- All 14 States have shown reduction in the follow up survey compared to the baseline prevalence survey and the State of Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Telangana, Tripura, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar have shown substantial reduction in worm prevalence in the STH follow up prevalence survey.
- Implementation of NDD is led by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Education and technical assistance from WHO and the technical partners.
- This Health Ministry is committed to continuing essential health services while managing the COVID-19 pandemic.

National Deworming Day

- Since its launch in 2015, the National Deworming Day (NDD) is a flagship program of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- It is implemented as a biannual single day programme implemented through the platforms of schools and anganwadis.

13

Indigenously built ASW Corvette 'Kavaratti' Commissioned at Visakhapatnam

The last of four indigenously built Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) stealth corvettes "INS *Kavaratti*" under Project 28 (Kamorta class) is commissioned into the Indian Navy.

ABOUT

- Touted as a potent Stealth ASW Corvette, *Kavaratti* portrays the growing capability of the Indian Navy, GRSE and the nation in becoming self-reliant through indigenization, thus, accentuating our national objective of "Atmanirbhar Bharat".
- Designed by: The Indian Navy's in-house organisation, Directorate of Naval Design(DND).
- Built by: Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata, and
- The ship has up to 90% indigenous content and the use of carbon composites for the superstructure is a commendable feat achieved in Indian shipbuilding. The ship's weapons and sensors suite is predominantly indigenous and showcases the nation's growing capability in this niche area.
- *Kavaratti* has a state-of-the-art weapons and sensor suite capable of detecting and prosecuting submarines.
- In addition to its anti-submarine warfare capability, the ship also has a credible self defence capability and good endurance for long-range deployments.
- The ship is commissioned into the Navy as a combat-ready platform as the ship has completed sea trials of all the systems fitted onboard.
- Kavaratti takes her name from erstwhile INS Kavaratti which was an Arnala class missile corvette.
 - The older *Kavaratti* distinguished herself by operating in support of was Bangladesh's liberation in 1971.

14 Regional Raw Drug Repository (RRDR)

The Ministry of Ayush inaugurated the Regional Raw Drug Repository (RRDR) at All India Institute of Ayurveda, New Delhi.

ABOUT

- This RRDR is the second in the series of repositories proposed by National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB), Ministry of AYUSH and will be dedicated to the Trans-Ganga Plain Region.
- RRDR for Trans- Ganga Plain Region covers four states -Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Punjab.
- This region has a huge potential for medicinal raw materials.
- Therefore, this RRDR would play a stellar role in collection, documentation, and authentication of raw drugs collected largely from the respective agro-climatic region.

What was the need?

- There is an increased demand for the natural healing and herbal products across the globe.
- COVID has further pushed the demand and many of the key herbs like Asvagandha, Giloi, Tulsi, Kalmegh, Mulethi are on high demand.
- With the increasing demand for the herbal medicines, the NMPB which is already engaged in the development of a mechanism to ensure supply of quality raw material to the AYUSH industry as well as consumers expedited the process of establishing the Raw Drug Repositories.



15 India Post and United States Postal Service (USPS) signs Agreement for Electronic Exchange of Customs Datarelated

Department of Posts, Government of India (India Post) and United States Postal Service (USPS) have entered into an agreement for Electronic Exchange of Customs data related to postal shipments exchanged between the two countries.

Significance of the Agreement

- The agreement will make it possible to transmit and receive electronic data of international postal items prior to their physical arrival at the destination and would enable customs clearance of postal items in advance in line with the evolving global postal framework.
- This will also improve the performance of postal services in terms of reliability, visibility and security.
- Exchange of Electronic Advance Data (EAD) as per the Agreement will be a key driver towards promoting mutual trade with emphasis on the exports from different parts of India to USA through postal channel considering that USA is a major destination of MSME products, Gems & Jewelry, Pharmaceuticals and other local products from India.
- This will fulfill a major demand of export industry to expedite customs clearances of export items.
- The primary objective that will be served by this agreement is to facilitate 'ease of exports' for small and large exporters through postal channels from different parts of the country and will contribute towards making India an Export Hub for the world.

The numbers

- USA is the top export destination for India (~17%) which is also reflected in exchange of goods through postal channel.
- In 2019, around 20% of outbound EMS and 30% of Letters & Small Packets transmitted by India Post were destined to USA whereas 60% of the Parcels received by India Post were originated from USA.

16 Army launches Secure Application for Internet (SAI)

In the quest for 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', Indian Army has developed a simple and secure messaging application named the "Secure Application for Internet (SAI)".

ABOUT

- The application supports end to end secure voice, text and video calling services for Android platform over internet.
- The model is similar to commercially available messaging applications like Whatsapp, Telegram, SAMVAD and GIMS and utilises end to end encryption messaging protocol.
- SAI scores over on security features with local in-house servers and coding which can be tweaked as per requirements.
- The application has been vetted by CERT-in empaneled auditor and Army Cyber Group.

- The process for filing Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), hosting the infrastructure on NIC and working on iOS platform is currently in progress.
- SAI will be utilised pan Army to facilitate secure messaging within the service.

17 Indian Railways launches OPERATION MERI SAHELI

Indian Railways has launched "Meri Saheli" initiative for focused action on security of women across all zones with an objective to provide safety and security to lady passengers travelling by trains for their entire journey from starting station to destination station.

ABOUT

- An initiative of RPF, the Strategy of the entails interaction with lady passengers especially those travelling alone by a team of young lady RPF personnel at the originating station.
- These lady passengers are briefed about all precautions to be taken during the journey and told to dial 182 in case they face or see any problem in the coach.
- The RPF team collects only the seat numbers of the ladies and conveys them to stoppages enroute.
- The platform duty RPF personnel at the stopping stations en-route keep unobtrusive watch over the concerned coaches and berths and if need arises, interact with the lady passengers. RPF/RPSF escort onboard also covers all the coaches/identified berths during its duty period.
- RPF teams at the destination collect the feedback from the identified lady passengers.
- The feedback is then analysed and corrective action, if any, is taken.
- If some distress call comes from a train covered under "Meri Saheli" initiative, the disposal of the call is monitored at the level of senior officers.

BACKGROUND

• The "Meri Saheli" initiative was started as a pilot project in South Eastern Railway in September 2020 and after getting encouraging response from lady passengers, it was extended to all zones and KRCL w.e.f. 17.10.2020.The operation is gathering momentum.

18 Inauguration of Sardar Vallabhai Patel Zoological Park

The Government inaugurated Sardar Patel Zoological Park and Geodesic Aviary Dome in Kevadia.

ABOUT

- The Sardar Patel Zoological Park, located in close proximity to the Statue of Unity, is called a **Jungle Safari** because unlike other zoological parks, the park is created in an "open design", which recreates the feel of a wildlife safari.
- The animals can be seen in their natural habitat, and not restricted to cages, unlike the other zoos.
- It is interesting to note that the zoo has many animals which have been imported from across the world.
- There is an area called Abode of Carnivores, which houses only carnivorous animals.
- Golf carts are also available for taking a tour of the Sardar Patel Zoological Park. Much emphasis has been laid on **ecological balance.**

- There are more than 5 lakh plants in the zoo distributed across 7 levels.
- Animal models have also been placed at certain points which provide information about the fauna inside the park.
- Some of the animals inside the zoo are Royal Bengal Tigers, leopards, giraffe, zebras, rhinoceros, deer and antelopes.

19 Major step towards Medical Education reform

In a significant step towards affordable medical education, the National Medical Commission (NMC) has notified its first major regulation.

ABOUT

- Titled as "Minimum Requirements For Annual MBBS Admissions Regulations (2020)", the notification issued replaces the "Minimum Standard Requirements for Medical Colleges, 1999 " of the erstwhile Medical Council of India (MCI).
- The new Regulation shall be applicable to all new medical colleges proposing to be established, and to the established medical colleges proposing to increase their annual MBBS intake from the academic year 2021-22.

The key changes:

- The new Regulation has deleted the quantum of land required for setting up a medical college and its affiliated teaching hospitals (all buildings are expected to conform to existing building bye-laws).
- The notification defines the minimum requirements of space for all student centric areas in the institution and the functional areas required.
- Under the new Regulation, a well-equipped "Skills Laboratory" for training students is essential now.
- It also defines a Medical Education Unit for training medical teachers in educational pedagogy.
- **New Departments:** Two new teaching departments have now become mandatory in all medical college hospitals for the training of undergraduate medical students. These include the
- **Department of Emergency Medicine** (which has replaced the earlier Casualty Department)- It will ensure access and prompt, appropriate response to emergencies particularly trauma
- **Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation** which shall fill a large gap for those in need of comprehensive rehabilitative care.
- The Regulation has also outlined "desirable" and "aspirational" goals beyond the minimum requirements stated in the standards so as to stimulate medical institutions to strive for excellence.
- These elements will be utilized by the National Medical Commission while rating the medical institutions in the country.









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