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VOCABULARY

1. Exacerbated: Made a problem, bad situation, or negative feeling worse.
 - Synonyms: Worsened, aggravated, intensified
 - Antonyms: Alleviated, improved, mitigated
 - Sentence: The drought was exacerbated by the lack of rainfall this season.

2. Denuded: Stripped of its covering, possessions, or assets.
 - Synonyms: Stripped, bared, uncovered
 - Antonyms: Covered, protected, clothed
 - Sentence: The forest was denuded by the logging activities, leaving the soil exposed to erosion.

3. Proliferation: Rapid increase or spread.
 - Synonyms: Spread, expansion, multiplication
 - Antonyms: Reduction, decrease, decline
 - Sentence: The proliferation of smartphones has changed the way we communicate.

4. Feasibility: The state or degree of being easily or conveniently done.
 - Synonyms: Viability, practicality, workability
 - Antonyms: Impracticality, unlikelihood, infeasibility
 - Sentence: The feasibility of the new project was thoroughly evaluated before approval.

5. Precipitating: Causing something to happen suddenly or unexpectedly.

- Synonyms: Triggering, provoking, instigating
- Antonyms: Preventing, hindering, deterring
- Sentence: The sudden drop in temperature was precipitating heavy snowfall across the region.

6. Abject: Extremely bad, unpleasant, and degrading.

- Synonyms: Miserable, wretched, deplorable
- Antonyms: Exalted, commendable, splendid
- Sentence: They lived in abject poverty, without even the basic necessities of life.

7. Prognosis: The likely course of a disease or ailment.

- Synonyms: Forecast, prediction, outlook
- Antonyms: Retrospection, hindsight, recounting
- Sentence: The doctor gave a positive prognosis for the patient's recovery.

8. Deliberate: Done consciously and intentionally.

- Synonyms: Intentional, planned, premeditated
- Antonyms: Accidental, unintentional, haphazard
- Sentence: The team took deliberate steps to ensure the safety of the workers.

9. Deleterious: Causing harm or damage.

- Synonyms: Harmful, damaging, detrimental
- Antonyms: Beneficial, helpful, advantageous
- Sentence: The deleterious effects of pollution on health cannot be ignored.

IDIOMS AND PHRASES

10. Wolf in sheep's clothing: someone who hides malicious intent under the guise of kindness
11. Whistleblower: a person who informs on someone engaged in illegal activities
12. Whole nine yards: everything you can possibly want, have, or do in a particular situation.
13. Zip your lip: to stop talking immediately
14. Catch someone's eye: to get someone's attention

CURRENT AFFAIRS

1st August, 2024

1. For investor protection, the Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has started its Virtual Assistant (SEVA) –an Artificial Intelligence (AI) based conversation platform for investors.
 - The Beta version of the chatbot includes features like citations for generated response, speech-to-text and text-to-speech functionality for accessibility and follow-up questions.
2. India was the second country after the US in initiating and imposing anti-dumping duties among World Trade Organisation (WTO) members last year, Financial Express reported, citing WTO data.
 - Despite increasing the use of non-tariff measures in 2023, India's average tariffs fell to 17 per cent from 18.1 percent in 2022.
3. Hamas's political chief Ismail Haniyeh has been assassinated in Iran's capital, Tehran. Haniyeh and one of his bodyguards were killed after the building where they were staying was struck, the statement said, adding that Haniyeh was in Tehran to attend the inauguration ceremony of Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian on July 30.

4. India, a founding member of the International Labour Organization (ILO), is likely to raise a complaint against the UN agency over its India Employment Report 2024, released in March this year. A Union Labour Ministry official said the “model” ILO had used to assess the employment scenario in India was not suitable and India has its own assessment of the situation.
 - Weeks before the general election, the report prepared by the ILO and the Institute of Human Development (IHD) said India’s youth account for almost 83% of the unemployed workforce and the share of youngsters with secondary or higher education in the total unemployed youth has almost doubled from 35.2% in 2000 to 65.7% in 2022.
5. The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) is poised for a significant leadership change as Mohsin Naqvi, the current chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), is expected to assume the role of ACC president later this year.
6. Three prominent payment companies—Amazon Pay, Adyen, and Mumbai-based BillDesk—have secured the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) cross-border payment aggregator license. This follows Bengaluru-based Cashfree’s earlier acquisition of the same license. Cashfree received its license on July 22, Adyen and Amazon Pay on July 25, and BillDesk on July 29.

7. Aditya Birla Group Chairman, Mr. Kumar Mangalam Birla on July 30, announced the launch of the Group's jewellery retail business, marking the Group's foray into the rapidly expanding Rs.6.7 lakh crore.
8. The Indian delegation has achieved remarkable success at the 54th International Physics Olympiad 2024, held from July 21 to July 29 in Isfahan, Iran. All five Indian participants bagged medals, including 2 gold and 3 silver medals. Rhythm Kedia from Chhattisgarh and Ved Lahoti from Madhya Pradesh bagged gold medals, whereas Akarsh Raj Sahay from Maharashtra, Bhavya Tiwari from Uttar Pradesh, and Jaiveer Singh from Rajasthan were honoured with silver medals. India's delegation was led by Prof. Deepak Garg (DAV College, Chandigarh) and Dr. Shirish.
9. Former Union Health Secretary Preeti Sudan is set to assume the role of Chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on August 1, 2024. This appointment is made under Article 316 A of the Constitution, as confirmed by a government official.

- 10.** Sikkim is the only state in India where residents are exempt from income tax due to Article 371(F) of the Indian Constitution and Section 10(26AAA) of the Income Tax Act, 1961. This unique status, stemming from Sikkim's 1975 merger with India, provides significant financial relief to its residents.

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