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VOCABULARY

- 1. Prowess:** Exceptional skill or expertise in a particular area.
 - Synonyms: Mastery, competence, proficiency.
 - Antonyms: Incompetence, inability, ineptitude.
 - Sentence: His prowess in playing chess has earned him numerous accolades.
- 2. Fillip:** Something that acts as a stimulus or boost to activity.
 - Synonyms: Boost, encouragement, impetus.
 - Antonyms: Discouragement, hindrance, deterrent.
 - Sentence: The new policy is expected to provide a fillip to the country's economy.
- 3. Exacerbated:** Made worse or more severe.
 - Synonyms: Aggravated, intensified, worsened.
 - Antonyms: Alleviated, mitigated, improved.
 - Sentence: The pollution was exacerbated by the heavy traffic during peak hours.
- 4. Pejorative:** Expressing contempt or disapproval.
 - Synonyms: Derogatory, disparaging, insulting.
 - Antonyms: Complimentary, laudatory, flattering.
 - Sentence: The manager's pejorative remarks demotivated the entire team.
- 5. Besieged:** Surrounded by armed forces or overwhelmed with demands.
 - Synonyms: Surrounded, encircled, overwhelmed.
 - Antonyms: Liberated, freed, released.
 - Sentence: The customer service team was besieged with complaints after the product malfunctioned.

- 6. Opaque:** Not transparent; difficult to understand or interpret.
- Synonyms: Obscure, unclear, murky.
 - Antonyms: Transparent, clear, comprehensible.
 - Sentence: The contract's opaque language confused even the most experienced lawyers.
- 7. Scrupulous:** Very careful and thorough; having moral integrity.
- Synonyms: Meticulous, conscientious, honest.
 - Antonyms: Careless, negligent, unscrupulous.
 - Sentence: The accountant was scrupulous in ensuring the financial records were accurate.
- 8. Tenacity:** The quality of being determined or persistent.
- Synonyms: Perseverance, determination, resilience.
 - Antonyms: Weakness, indecision, surrender.
 - Sentence: His tenacity in solving complex problems earned him great respect.
- 9. Doyen:** The most respected or prominent person in a particular field.
- Synonyms: Veteran, authority, maestro.
 - Antonyms: Novice, amateur, newcomer.
 - Sentence: Viswanathan Anand is regarded as the doyen of Indian chess.
- 10. Stalemate:** A situation where no further action or progress is possible.
- Synonyms: Impasse, deadlock, standstill.
 - Antonyms: Breakthrough, progress, resolution.
 - Sentence: The negotiations ended in a stalemate, with neither side willing to compromise.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

13th December, 2024

1. Parliament approved changes to railway laws. The Railway Board's structure is now part of the 1989 Railways Act. The minister assured the public about the railways. He confirmed no privatization plans. The railways will remain under government control. The budget for the Railway Board is confirmed. It will receive over ₹440 crore.
2. Gita Jayanti was celebrated across India with grand events, marking significant milestones in religious and cultural history. Bhopal achieved a remarkable milestone on Gita Jayanti as over 5,000 Acharyas collectively recited 'Shlokas' or verses from the third chapter of the Bhagavad Gita, 'Karma Yog', creating a new Guinness World record.
3. Japan's sake, a quintessential rice wine integral to its cultural heritage, has been added to UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage list. This recognition celebrates the thousand-year-old brewing tradition and its significance in Japanese ceremonies and cuisine. Amid declining domestic consumption, the accolade is expected to revitalize interest in sake both locally and globally, boosting its growing international popularity.
4. India has made a striking achievement in reducing malaria cases and deaths, contributing significantly to the overall decline in the World Health Organisation (WHO) South-East Asia Region.
 - The WHO World Malaria Report 2024 revealed that in 2023, the South-East Asia Region reported eight malaria-endemic countries accounting for four million cases, making up 1.5% of the global malaria burden. India alone contributed to half of the region's cases, followed by Indonesia with nearly one-third.

5. Jayen Mehta's tenure as Managing Director of Amul has been extended until 2029-2030. Mehta, who joined GCMMF in 1991 and has held key marketing roles, took over as interim MD in January 2023 after R.S. Sodhi's departure.
6. IIT Delhi secures the top spot among Indian universities in the 2025 QS Sustainability rankings, jumping 255 places to 171st globally. Nine of India's top 10 universities improved their rankings, with 78 Indian universities featuring overall. IIT Delhi and IIT Kanpur ranked among the global top 100 for environmental impact, while IISc Bengaluru made the top 50 for environmental education.
7. Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel has launched "Mukhyamantri Paushtik Alpahar Yojana" under the Suposhit Gujarat Mission to fulfil Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of 'Poshan Bhi, Padhai Bhi.'
 - In addition to the midday meal provided under the PM Poshan Yojana, students from Balvatikato Grade 8 in government and grant-in-aid primary schools across the state will receive nutritious snacks through this initiative.
8. The 2025 Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj, India, anticipates over 400 million attendees. AI-powered cameras will monitor the ghats, aiming for a 95% accurate headcount. This technology, previously tested during Magh Mela, will track devotees from 3 am to 7 pm, setting a new standard for crowd management at large-scale events.
9. The KheloIndia Winter Games dates have been announced. The Union Territory of Ladakh will host ice sports including Ice Hockey & Ice-Skating events from January 23 to 27, next year.
 - This will be the second year that UT Ladakh will host a portion of the KheloIndia Winter Games. Before the 2024 edition, J&K used to host all the events.