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VOCABULARY

1. Prolonging: Extending the duration of something beyond normal limits.
 - Synonyms: Extending, delaying, stretching
 - Antonyms: Shortening, curtailing, ending
 - Sentence: By avoiding consensus, the leader is only prolonging the political crisis.
2. Sordid: Involving immoral actions, dishonor, or unpleasant aspects.
 - Synonyms: Shameful, vile, grimy
 - Antonyms: Clean, honorable, respectable
 - Sentence: The sordid reality of wasting assets came to light after the RTI inquiry.
3. Profligacy: Reckless and wasteful use of resources.
 - Synonyms: Wastefulness, extravagance, lavishness
 - Antonyms: Frugality, thrift, prudence
 - Sentence: The profligacy of the administration in scrapping working locomotives shocked industry experts.
4. Redundant: No longer needed or useful; superfluous.
 - Synonyms: Obsolete, unnecessary, surplus
 - Antonyms: Essential, necessary, relevant
 - Sentence: The rapid electrification made many diesel engines redundant.
5. Desiderata: Things that are wanted or considered necessary.
 - Synonyms: Requirements, necessities, essentials
 - Antonyms: Non-essentials, trivialities
 - Sentence: Economic sustainability is among the desiderata for the railway's long-term success.

6. Corollary: A natural consequence or result.
- Synonyms: Consequence, result, outcome
 - Antonyms: Cause, origin, antecedent
 - Sentence: A reduction in crude oil imports is a corollary of the electrification of railways.
7. Frenetic: Fast and energetic in an uncontrolled or frantic way.
- Synonyms: Frantic, hectic, feverish
 - Antonyms: Calm, relaxed, leisurely
 - Sentence: The government pursued railway electrification at a frenetic pace, disregarding economic viability.
8. Pantheon: A group of particularly respected or famous people or concepts.
- Synonyms: Elite, legends, luminaries
 - Antonyms: Unknowns, mediocrity
 - Sentence: Electrification has joined the pantheon of universal ideals like sustainable energy.
9. Humongous: Extremely large; enormous.
- Synonyms: Gigantic, colossal, massive
 - Antonyms: Tiny, minuscule, small
 - Sentence: The humongous wastage of functional locomotives has raised serious concerns.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

17th December, 2024

1. Britain becomes the first European nation to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), becoming the 12th member.
 - The bloc comprises Canada and Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.
 - Established in 2018, the bloc safeguards against Chinese hegemony in the region and contributes over 15% of the world's GDP.
2. Switzerland has suspended the 'Most Favoured Nation' clause in its tax treaty with India, following a 2023 Supreme Court ruling that altered the interpretation of the clause. This decision means Swiss dividends to Indian entities will be taxed at 10% from Jan 1, 2025, instead of the previous 5%.
3. Zakir Hussain Passes Away: World-renowned tabla maestro Zakir Hussain passed away at 73 in the US on Sunday, December 15, due to heart-related complications. The son of Ustad Alla Rakha Khan, Hussain began his musical journey at a young age, achieving international acclaim for his contributions to Indian classical and world music.
4. The Indian Navy will commission its latest survey ship, INS Nirdeshak, on December 18 in Visakhapatnam. Built by GRSE Kolkata with over 80% indigenous content, the 110-meter vessel is equipped with advanced survey equipment and will enhance India's maritime capabilities, including foreign cooperation surveys.
5. India's first diabetes biobank has been established in Chennai by ICMR and MDRF. The biobank houses samples from two major studies, including the ICMR-INDIAB study, and will facilitate research on diabetes variations and personalized treatments. It aims to improve understanding, diagnosis, and management of diabetes in India.

6. Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday conferred the 'President's Colours' award upon the Chhattisgarh Police, recognising their exemplary service and commitment to ensuring peace and security in the state.
 - This accolade marks a significant milestone for the force, making Chhattisgarh Police the 11th police organisation in the country to receive this honour.
7. Indian women's junior hockey team successfully defended their Women's Junior Asia Cup title in Muscat, Oman, by defeating China 3-2 in the final. India, the previous 2023 edition winner, won the 10th Women's Junior Asia Cup, 3-2 in the penalty shootout in the final played at Muscat on 15 December 2024.
8. A new laurel was brought to Madhya Pradesh on the 100th edition of the Tansen Music Festival after 546 artists performed with nine classical musical instruments together in Gwalior.
 - The ensemble created a Guinness World Record for giving a synchronized performance for nine minutes, which included both instrumental music and vocal contributions.
 - The event took place at the Gwalior Fort in the presence of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav and Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia. The politicians applauded the artists for their dedication to Indian classical music.