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## VOCABULARY

1. Obstruct: Block or hinder the movement or progress of something.
  - Synonyms: Impede, hinder, prevent
  - Antonyms: Facilitate, assist, enable
  - Sentence: Complex visa regulations obstruct the movement of skilled workers across borders.
2. Grumpy: Easily annoyed or in a bad mood.
  - Synonyms: Irritable, cranky, grouchy
  - Antonyms: Cheerful, pleasant, amiable
  - Sentence: The old man was always grumpy in the morning before his coffee.
3. Pivotal: Of crucial importance in relation to the development or success of something.
  - Synonyms: Crucial, essential, key
  - Antonyms: Insignificant, minor, trivial
  - : The manufacturing and construction sectors are pivotal for workforce demand in the GCC and Australia.
4. Stingy: Unwilling to spend money or share resources.
  - Synonyms: Miserly, tight-fisted, parsimonious
  - Antonyms: Generous, lavish, charitable
  - Sentence: He was so stingy that he hesitated to donate even a small amount to charity.
5. Prevalence: The condition of being widespread or commonly occurring.
  - Synonyms: Ubiquity, dominance, frequency
  - Antonyms: Rarity, infrequency, scarcity
  - Sentence: The prevalence of automation is reshaping global job markets.

- 6.** Eulogize: To praise someone or something highly, often in a speech or writing.
- Synonyms: Commend, extol, glorify
  - Antonyms: Criticize, condemn, denounce
  - Sentence: The professor was eulogized for his contributions to the field of science.
- 7.** Insidious: Proceeding in a gradual, subtle way, but with harmful effects.
- Synonyms: Sneaky, subtle, treacherous
  - Antonyms: Obvious, straightforward, honest
  - Sentence: The disease progressed in an insidious manner, unnoticed by many.
- 8.** Uproot: To pull something out of the ground or to remove someone from their home or position.
- Synonyms: Displace, eradicate, remove
  - Antonyms: Plant, settle, establish
  - Sentence: The war uprooted thousands of families, forcing them to flee their homeland.
- 9.** Sobering: Making you feel serious or thoughtful.
- Synonyms: Serious, thought-provoking, alarming
  - Antonyms: Reassuring, comforting, casual
  - Sentence: The report's findings on poverty levels were sobering.
- 10.** Intricate: Very detailed and complicated.
- Synonyms: Complex, complicated, elaborate
  - Antonyms: Simple, straightforward, easy
  - Sentence: The intricate design of the machine required careful study.

## **CURRENT AFFAIRS**

**24<sup>th</sup> February, 2024**

1. The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) celebrated its 22nd Foundation Day on 19th February 2025, highlighting the Commission's role in protecting Scheduled Tribes(ST) rights.

### **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes**

- Established: 19 February 2004
  - Under the 89th Constitutional Amendment Act 2003
  - Constitutional Body
  - Headquarters: New Delhi
  - Constitutional Provisions: Article 338-A
2. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to visit Mauritius next month to participate as the Guest of Honour at the country's National day celebration. This announcement was made by Mauritian PM Navin Ramgoolam, who emphasized that Modi's presence underscores the deep and historic bilateral ties between the two nations.
  3. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has formed a 7 member committee, chaired by Dinesh Khara to review the Insurance Act, 1938.
    - It aligns with the proposed Insurance Amendment Bill, which seeks to increase the FDI limit from 74% to 100%.
    - Currently, Insurance Act, 1938 provides a broad legal framework to regulate the insurance sector.
  4. Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first edition of the SOUL Leadership Conclave on February 21st at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, addressing the gathering. Prime Minister of Bhutan, Dasho Tshering Tobgay, delivered the Keynote Address.



- The two-day conclave, held from February 21st to 22nd, brings together leaders from various sectors to share their inspiring journeys, foster collaboration, and discuss leadership lessons to inspire young audiences.
5. Central Excise Day is observed on 24th February every year to commemorate the Central Excise and Salt Act, which was enacted on 24th February 1944. This day is celebrated to promote equity amongst the Central Board of Excise and Customs Department officers and aid them in greater tax compliance.
  6. The Arunachal Pradesh government has recently announced enhancements to the Dulari Kanya Scheme. This initiative aims to support the institutional births of girl children.
    - The state cabinet has revamped the Dulari Kanya Scheme, increasing financial support for girls born in institutional deliveries. The fixed deposit amount has been raised from ₹20,000 to ₹30,000, which will mature when the beneficiary turns 18.
  7. The northern white rhino, with only two individuals left, is on the brink of extinction. However, a breakthrough in in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) offers hope for the subspecies' survival, with 36 embryos ready for implantation.
    - The white rhino, also known as the squarelipped rhinoceros, is one of the five rhino species.
    - Its name originates from the Afrikaans word "weit," meaning "wide," referring to its broad muzzle.
  8. For the third consecutive year, Bengal recorded the highest number of bird species during the Great Backyard Bird Count, topping India's list with 543 species. Participation was lower this year due to exam season. Darjeeling had the most species recorded, while South 24 Parganas had the most checklists submitted.

9. The 2nd Simolu Festival began on February 15, 2025, at Bwisang-Na, an ethnic eco-resort in Barunguri, Laokhowa, Assam. This two-day event celebrated the vibrant blooming of Bombaxceiba (Shimul) flowers while promoting eco-tourism, conservation efforts.
10. Indian biologist and wildlife conservationist Purnima Devi Barman has been named "Woman of the Year" by Time magazine. The list honours "extraordinary leaders" working toward a better, more equal world. Purnima Devi, 45, is the only Indian woman on the list.
- Purnima Devi, from Assam, is renowned for her unwavering efforts in protecting the endangered greater adjutant stork, locally known as Hargila. Once among the world's rarest storks, the species faced a critical decline, with only around 450 individuals remaining in the region.
  - However, due to Dr. Barman's relentless dedication, their population in Assam has soared beyond 1,800. This remarkable recovery led the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to reclassify the species from "endangered" to "near threatened" in 2023.
  - The list of 13 women also includes actor Nicole Kidman and Gisele Pelicot of France, who was drugged by her husband, sexually assaulted by over 70 different men, and became a global icon in the campaign against sexual violence.