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## **DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS 18-12-2024**

### **GS-1**

1. Tabla Maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain

### **GS-2**

2. On the parliamentary debate on the Constitution
3. Athlete Biological Passport

### **GS-3**

4. RBI Raises Collateral-Free Loan Limit for Farmers to ₹2 lakh
5. India sets up its first diabetes biobank

## **Tabla Maestro Ustad Zakir Hussain**

**Syllabus: GS-1: Art and Culture.**

**Context:**

- Tabla maestro Zakir Hussain dies at 73.

### **Zakir Hussain: Life and Contributions**

#### **Personal Details**

- **Full Name:** Zakir Hussain Allarakha Qureshi
- **Date of Birth:** 9 March 1951
- **Date of Death:** 15 December 2024
- **Profession:** Indian tabla player, composer, percussionist, music producer, and film actor
- **Parentage:** Eldest son of tabla maestro Alla Rakha

#### **Achievements and Awards**

- **Grammy Awards:**
  - Received 7 nominations and won 4 Grammy Awards, including three in 2024.
  - First Grammy win: 1992 for the album *Planet Drum* (Best World Music Album).
  - Won Grammy for *Global Drum Project* (Best Contemporary World Music Album, 2009).
- **National and International Awards:**
  - National Heritage Fellowship by the United States National Endowment for the Arts (highest award for traditional artists and musicians).
  - **India:**
    - Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1990).
    - Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship, Ratna Sadsya (2018).

#### **Contributions to Music**

- **Albums and Collaborations:**

- Played on notable albums:

- George Harrison's *Living in the Material World* (1973).
- John Handy's *Hard Work* (1973).
- Van Morrison's *Into the Music* (1979).
- Earth, Wind & Fire's *Powerlight* (1983).
- Collaborated with Mickey Hart (*Grateful Dead*) for the *Planet Drum* album and *Global Drum Project*.
- Member of Bill Laswell's world music supergroup *Tabla Beat Science*.

➤ **Film Contributions:**

- Composed, performed, and advised on Indian music for films such as:
  - *Vanaprastham* (1999), which won international accolades.
  - Soundtracks for *Apocalypse Now*, *Little Buddha*, *In Custody*, and *The Mystic Masseur*.
- Acted in films like:
  - *Heat and Dust* (1983), co-starring as Inder Lal and serving as associate music director.
  - Documentaries: *Zakir and His Friends* (1998), *The Speaking Hand* (2003).

➤ **Philosophy of Music:**

- Avoided performing at private gatherings, corporate events, or weddings.
- Believed music should be the central purpose of any event where it is performed.

## Global Recognition and Contributions

➤ Invited to the **International Jazz Day 2016 All-Star Global Concert** at the White House by President Barack Obama.

## Written Work

➤ **Book:**

- *Zakir Hussain: A Life in Music* by Nasreen Munni Kabir (2018):
  - Based on 15 interview sessions between 2016 and 2017.
  - Chronicles his life, training, and journey as a musician.

## Legacy and Influence

- Instrument Maker:
  - Haridas Vhatkar, who exclusively crafted tabla for Zakir Hussain for over 18 years.
- Cultural Impact:
  - Credited with bringing Indian classical music to a global audience.
  - Known for blending Indian rhythms with international music styles.

## On the parliamentary debate on the Constitution

**Syllabus: GS-2: Parliamentary debate.**

### Context:

- Occasion: Commemorating the 75th year of the Indian Constitution.
- Participants:
  - **Ruling Alliance** led by Prime Minister.
  - **Opposition** led by Leader of Opposition.

### Tone and Outcome

- **Supremacy of the Constitution:** Both sides acknowledged its importance but accused each other of undermining it.
- **Missed Opportunity:**
  - Debate failed to explore common ground amidst political polarization.
  - Focus shifted from constructive discussion to partisan attacks.

### Key Points of Contention

- **Opposition's Criticism:**
  - Opposition accused BJP and PM Modi of being disloyal to the Constitution.
  - Linked the BJP's actions to the **Hindutva ideology**.
- **Ruling Alliance's Response:**

- PM criticized the Nehru-Gandhi family for undermining the Constitution historically.
- Highlighted alleged acts of omission and commission by Congress.

## Partisan Approach

- Selective use of facts and historical references by both sides.
- The Constitution became a tool for political propaganda rather than a subject of constructive discourse.

## Constitution as a Living Document

- **Dynamic Framework:**
  - Provides a foundation for a fairer social, political, and economic order.
  - Constitutionalism evolves with time, requiring constant introspection.
- **Key Learning from History:**
  - Dark moments such as the **Emergency** need acknowledgment, but focusing solely on past mistakes hinders progress.
  - The brighter aspect is the Constitution's resilience in maintaining India's secular and pluralist ethos.

## Constructive Engagement Lacking

- **Blame Game:** Both BJP and Congress accused each other of dividing the nation while claiming to work for unity.
- **Missed Reflection:** Debate lacked introspection on collective shortcomings and forward-looking solutions.

## PM's Perspective

- Described the Constitution as a unifier of the nation.
- Highlighted the government's push for a **Uniform Civil Code** as an example of fostering unity.

## Future Challenges and Opportunities

- **Key Issues Needing Attention:**
  - Uneven demographic and economic trends.
  - Reimagining the constitutional framework to meet future needs.

- **Political Responsibility:** Unified attention from political actors is crucial to strengthen the constitutional ethos.

## Conclusion

- The debate revealed a sharp political divide and a lack of focus on actionable ideas.
- The Constitution continues to offer a robust framework for nation-building, but its true potential requires introspection, cooperation, and visionary leadership.

## **Athlete Biological Passport**

### **Syllabus: GS-2; Governance**

#### **Context:**

- The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) approved the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL) in New Delhi, enabling NDTL to manage the Athlete Biological Passport (ABP).

### **Athlete Biological Passport (ABP)**

The ABP is an advanced anti-doping tool used to monitor an athlete's biological markers over time. It focuses on detecting anomalies in:

- **Blood variables:** Identify potential blood doping or use of erythropoiesis-stimulating agents.
- **Steroid profiles:** Monitor changes in hormonal levels for potential anabolic steroid abuse.

Instead of directly detecting substances, the ABP tracks deviations from an athlete's established biological baseline, enabling long-term scrutiny.

### **Significance of WADA's Approval**

- **Global Credibility:** India joins 17 countries with a recognized Athlete Passport Management Unit (APMU), elevating its position in the global anti-doping network.
- **Strengthened Anti-Doping Framework:** Enhanced ability to monitor and manage doping cases in compliance with international standards.

### **Role of the National Dope Testing Laboratory (NDTL)**

- **APMU Administration:**
  - Oversees ABP implementation, including testing and data analysis.

- Assists in detecting patterns indicative of doping.
- **Regional Collaboration:** Supports anti-doping efforts in South Asia, boosting collective regional integrity in sports.

### Benefits for Clean Athletes

- **Promotes Fair Play:** Protects athletes who comply with anti-doping regulations, ensuring they are not at a disadvantage.
- **Encourages Integrity:** Fosters a culture of fairness and transparency in sports, deterring doping practices.

### Conclusion

WADA's approval of the NDTL to manage ABP operations is a pivotal step in India's anti-doping journey. It enhances the nation's commitment to clean sports and supports regional cooperation. This development strengthens India's ability to promote fairness and integrity in athletics, paving the way for robust anti-doping practices.

## **RBI Raises Collateral-Free Loan Limit for Farmers to ₹2 lakh**

**Syllabus:** GS-3: Agricultural Credit.

### Context:

- In a significant move to support the agricultural sector and address rising input costs, the Reserve Bank of India has announced an increase in the limit for collateral-free agricultural loans, including loans for allied activities.

### **RBI's Increase in Collateral-Free Loan Limit for Farmers**

#### Key Announcement

- **Loan Limit Increase:**
  - The collateral-free loan limit for farmers has been raised from ₹1.6 lakh to ₹2 lakh.
  - Effective from: **January 1**.
  - Target Beneficiaries: **Small and marginal farmers**, constituting over 86% of the farming community.

## Objective

- **Support Small and Marginal Farmers:** To address the financial challenges posed by escalating agricultural costs.
- **Enhance Financial Inclusion:** Increase accessibility of loans to farmers with limited landholdings.

## Implementation by Banks

- **Directive:** Banks are mandated to offer loans up to ₹2 lakh without collateral or margin money.
- **Focus:** Streamline access to loans for small and marginal farmers.

## Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Loans

- **Simplification:** The new limit simplifies the process of obtaining KCC loans.
- **Significance:** KCC loans provide essential credit for:
  - **Crop Production**
  - **Investment in Agriculture**
  - **Allied Activities**

## Interest Subvention Scheme

- **Modified Interest Subvention Scheme:**
  - Loans up to ₹3 lakh are available at a subsidized interest rate of **4%**.
  - The initiative aligns with the collateral-free loan policy to reduce farmers' financial burden.

## Significance of the Initiative

- **Boost to Financial Accessibility:** Addresses the credit needs of small and marginal farmers.
- **Economic Relief:** Helps farmers manage rising agricultural costs.
- **Inclusive Growth:** Supports the agricultural sector, a critical contributor to India's economy.

## Way Forward

- Timely implementation by banks and robust monitoring to ensure intended beneficiaries reap the benefits.
- Enhanced awareness campaigns to educate farmers about the new limits and related schemes.

## **India sets up its first diabetes biobank**

**Syllabus: GS-3: General Science**

### **Context:**

- The state-of-the-art facility, which will be operating from Madras Diabetes Research Foundation in Chennai, is aimed at facilitating advance research on diabetes

### **Overview**

- **Initiative:** Collaboration between the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Madras Diabetes Research Foundation (MDRF).
- **Purpose:** Facilitate advanced research on diabetes, especially its variations specific to the Indian population, and related disorders.
- **Location:** Chennai.

### **Features of the Biobank**

- **Function:** Collects, processes, stores, and distributes biospecimens to support scientific studies.
- **Sample Repository:**
  - Blood samples from various types of diabetes:
    - Type 1 Diabetes.
    - Type 2 Diabetes.
    - Gestational Diabetes.
  - Blood samples from the **ICMR Young Diabetes Registry**.
- **Research Goals:**
  - Identification of novel biomarkers for early diagnosis.

- Development of personalized treatment strategies.
- Longitudinal studies for tracking disease progression and complications.
- Enhanced management and prevention strategies for diabetes.

### **Significance of the Biobank**

- Addresses the unique clinical features of diabetes in Indians.
- Acts as a critical resource for biomedical research.
- Supports studies to understand the epidemiology and progression of diabetes in the Indian population.
- Aims to contribute to public health by improving diabetes care and prevention strategies.