Shimla in danger

RINGING the death knell for Shimla's **ecology**, the Himachal Pradesh Cabinet has cleared the way for construction activity in the town's 17 green belts, spread over 414 acres. It notified the Draft Shimla Development Plan on Tuesday after receiving the **go-ahead** from the Supreme Court last month. However, all may not be lost. **A sliver of hope lies** in the SC's **rider**: that the document not be implemented for a month after the notification; the next **hearing** is **slated** for July 12. These green areas are the 'lungs' of Shimla. Even as the town is already **reeling under haphazard** growth and construction and **catering to** a population that is much more than its carrying capacity, plus lakhs of tourists, further **concretisation would** **lead to** the **collapse** of the 'lungs', **suffocating** the town. It is feared that **throwing** open **lush** green land **would** lead to a **surge** in building activity and the condition of limiting construction to one floor and an **attic** be **violated rampantly**.

These **belts** were declared no-construction zones in 2000 in order to protect Shimla. **Endorsing** the views of experts and environment impact studies, the NGT and HP High Court have **upheld** the ban ever since.

But **the private owners** of prime property in these green belts, **backed** by the powerful real estate **lobby**, **have** kept the issue locked in legal battles. **Lamentably**, **successive** governments have **tilted** towards the **realtors**, who are **eyeing a quick buck**, **caring two hoots** for the town's survival. However, it is understandable that land owners would want to **monetise** it. The government should, thus, buy land in the green belts from them to end the **impasse**. It would be money well spent as it would protect the green belt zones and let Shimla retain its **exalted** status of the 'Queen of Hills'. **[Practice]**

- Red/blue coloring of words in the sentence indicates subject verb relationship; where 'red' denotes 'subject' and 'blue' denotes 'verb'.

Vocabulary

1. **Ring the death knell** (phrase) – a warning of the end of something मौत की घंटी बजना

2. **Ecology** (noun) – the branch of biology that deals with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings. परिस्थितिकी

3. **Go-ahead** (noun) – Permission to do something.

4. **A silver of hope** (phrase) – a sign of hope in an unfortunate or gloomy situation उम्मीद की किरण

5. **Lie** (verb) – Exist, remain, stay, be, होना

6. **Rider** (noun) – a recommendation or comment added by the jury to a judicial verdict. टिप्पणी

7. **Hearing** (noun) – Trial, court case, inquiry, inquest, tribunal, legal proceedings सुनवाई

8. **Slated** (adjective) – Scheduled, के लिए निर्धारित

9. **Reel under** (phrasal verb) – struggle or deal with something से जूझना

10. **Haphazard** (adjective) – Random, disorganized, chaotic, slapdash, messy, arbitrary बेतरतीब, अव्यवस्थित

11. **Cater** (to) (verb) – provide someone with what is needed or required. आवश्यकताएं पूरी करना

12. **Concretisation** (noun) – an act of making something concrete

13. **Lead** (to) (verb) – cause, give rise to, result in, bring about वजह बनना

14. **Collapse** (noun) – Breakdown, failure, ruin, disintegration, crumbling ढहना

15. **Suffocate** (verb) – Choke, stifle, smother, asphyxiate, strangulate दम घुटना

16. **Lush** (adjective) – Rich, luxuriant, verdant, flourishing, abundant हरा-भरा

17. **Surge** (noun) – Increase, rise, upswing, upsurge, escalation वृद्धि

18. **Attic** (noun) – Loft, garret, sky parlor, upper story अटारी

19. **Violate** (verb) – Breach, infringe, transgress, disobey, flout उल्लंघन करना

20. **Rampantly** (adverb) – Uncontrolledly, wildly, unrestrainedly, riotously अनियंत्रित रूप से

21. **Belt** (noun) – Zone, region, area, sector, stretch क्षेत्र

22. **Endorse** (verb) – Approve, support, back, uphold, ratify समर्थन करना

23. **Uphold** (verb) – Maintain, preserve, protect, sustain, defend कायम रखना

24. **Back** (verb) – Support, endorse, uphold, champion, stand behind समर्थन करना

25. **Lobby** (noun) – Pressure group, interest group, advocacy group समर्थन समूह

26. **Lamentably** (adverb) – Regrettably, unfortunately, sadly, distressingly दुखद रूप से

27. **Successive** (adjective) – Consecutive, sequential, following, ensuing क्रमिक

28. **Tilt** (verb) – Lean, incline, tip, slant, angle झुकाव

29. **Realtor** (noun) – a person who acts as an agent for the sale and purchase of buildings and land, in particular a member of the National Association of Realtors; an estate agent.

30. **Eye** (verb) – Observe, watch, view, look at, stare at निगाह डालना

31. **A Quick buck** (phrase) – Fast money, easy money, quick profit तेजी से कमाई

32. **Care two hoots** (phrase) – Not care at all, disregard, ignore, not give a damn बिल्कुल चिंता नहीं करना

33. **Monetise** (Verb) – Convert into money, realize, capitalize, cash in धनीकरण करना

34. **Impasse** (noun) – Deadlock, standstill, stalemate, gridlock गतिरोध

35. **Exalted** (adjective) – Elevated, high, lofty, grand, sublime उन्नत

Summary of the Editorial

1. The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet has approved construction activities in Shimla's 17 green belts covering 414 acres.

2. The move follows approval from the Supreme Court last month, and the Draft Shimla Development Plan was officially notified on Tuesday.

3. The Supreme Court has stipulated a one-month delay before the plan can be implemented, with a further hearing scheduled for July 12.

4. The green areas are vital to Shimla, serving as the city's 'lungs.'

5. Shimla is already struggling with overpopulation, haphazard construction, and heavy tourist traffic, and further urbanization could overtax these 'lungs.'

6. Experts fear that opening these green areas to construction could spur rampant building activity, potentially violating the limit of one floor and an attic per construction.

7. The green belts were designated as no-construction zones in 2000 to protect Shimla's environment.

8. The National Green Tribunal (NGT) and HP High Court have upheld the construction ban, echoing the findings of environmental impact studies.

9. Private owners of property within these green belts, with the backing of a powerful real estate lobby, have kept the issue tied up in legal disputes.

10. Past governments have unfortunately favored the real estate lobby, prioritizing short-term financial gains over the city's long-term survival.

11. Private landowners' desire to monetize their property is understandable.

12. To resolve the issue, the government should consider buying the land in the green belts from the owners.

13. This purchase could be a wise investment, helping to preserve the green belt zones.

14. Keeping these areas green will help Shimla maintain its revered status as the 'Queen of Hills.'

15. The fate of Shimla's green zones now hinges on the Supreme Court's decision in the July 12 hearing.

Practice Exercise: Banking pattern based

1. **Which of the following inferences can be drawn from the passage?**   **[Editorial Page]**
   A. The Supreme Court has given unconditional permission for the construction activity in Shimla's green belts.
   B. Shimla's ecology is currently unaffected by any haphazard growth and construction.
   C. The further concretization of Shimla could have detrimental effects on its environment, possibly leading to its 'suffocation.'
   D. The population of Shimla is significantly less than its carrying capacity.
   E. The Supreme Court has completely rejected the Draft Shimla Development Plan.

2. **Which of the following statements is incorrect according to the passage?**
   A. The Himachal Pradesh Cabinet has given a green light for construction activity in 17 green belts of Shimla, covering an area of 414 acres.
   B. The Draft Shimla Development Plan was notified after receiving approval from the Supreme Court.
   C. The Supreme Court has instructed that the draft plan will not be implemented for two months following the notification.
   D. The green areas are considered the 'lungs' of Shimla and further concretisation is feared to lead to a surge in building activity and potential violation of construction restrictions.
   E. Shimla is currently grappling with disorganized growth and is catering to a population that exceeds its carrying capacity, in addition to handling many tourists.

3. **From the passage, it can be inferred that all of the following are true about the situation with the green belt zones around Shimla EXCEPT that:**
   A. The belts were declared no-construction zones in 2000 with the aim of protecting Shimla and its status as the 'Queen of Hills'.
   B. Despite various legal battles initiated by private property owners and the real estate lobby, the NGT and HP High Court have consistently upheld the construction ban.
   C. The government has consistently taken a strong stand against the real estate lobby and private property owners to protect the green belt zones.
   D. The real estate lobby and private owners of the prime property have shown little concern for the survival of Shimla and are primarily interested in quick profits.
   E. One suggested solution to the ongoing dispute is for the government to purchase the land in the green belts from the private property owners.

4. **Based on the passage, which of the following best describes the tone of the author?**
   A. Amused
   B. Concerned
   C. Optimistic
   D. Apathetic
   E. Enthusiastic

5. **What is the primary theme of the passage?**
   A. The beauty of Shimla's green belts.
   B. The legal battles concerning Shimla's green belts.

C. The commercialization and urbanization of Shimla's green belts.
D. The ecological diversity of Shimla.
E. The tourism industry in Shimla.

Directions (Q6 – Q9): Five sentences P, Q, R, S, and T are given below, you need to rearrange the sentences so that the five sentences can together form a meaningful paragraph.

P. This is the second time in a week that the RBI Governor has highlighted the perils of new-age currencies, while raising doubts about the number of investors trading on them and their claimed market value.

Q. The RBI Governor, Shaktikanta Das, has rightly flagged 'far deeper issues' involved in virtual currencies that could threaten India's economic and financial stability.

R. He has emphasised the need for well-informed discussions before any decision on cryptocurrencies is taken at the highest level.

S. Former Finance Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg has drawn attention to the crypto challenges faced by the government: hawala dealings;

T. investments worth billions of dollars routed abroad; and evasion of capital gains tax.

6. Which of the following should be the **FIRST** sentence after rearrangement?
   A. (P)
   B. (Q)
   C. (R)
   D. (S)
   E. (T)

7. Which of the following should be the **SECOND** sentence after rearrangement?
   A. (P)
   B. (Q)
   C. (R)
   D. (S)
   E. (T)

8. Which of the following should be the **THIRD** sentence after rearrangement?
   A. (P)
   B. (Q)
   C. (R)
   D. (S)
   E. (T)

9. Which of the following should be the **FOURTH** sentence after rearrangement?
   A. (P)
   B. (Q)
   C. (R)
   D. (S)
   E. (T)

10. **Direction: In the following questions, a sentence is given with four words marked as (A),(B), (C), (D). These words may or may not be placed in their places. Four options with different**

arrangements of these words are given. Mark the option with the correct arrangements the answer. If no change is required, mark 'No arrangement required' as your answer.

In an **unprecedented(A)** display of ecological awareness and assertiveness, villagers, both environmentally sensitive and remarkably cognizant, have taken to protesting **dumping(B)** against the ongoing disruption to their tranquil lives caused by irresponsible waste **vehemently(C)**, and have even escalated their collective outcry to the point of **boycotting(D)** elections in a bold stance against potential environmental damage.

   A. ADCB
   B. ACBD
   C. DBCA
   D. ABDC
   E. No arrangement required

Direction (Q11 – Q12): Read the given sentences to find out whether there is any grammatical error in them

11. He have faced (A)/ failures and (B)/ disappointments without (C)/ feeling defeated. (D)/ No Error. (E)

12. Since time immemorial, (A)/ India's spiritual (B)/ wisdom has being (C)/ its strength. (D)/No Error. (E)

Direction (Q13- Q19): Read the passage given below and answer the following questions.

India must use its supercomputers beyond weather forecasts

Later this year, India will have a new 'supercomputer' or, more correctly, an upgraded 'high performance computing (HPC)' system that will arguably be its fastest. This system is to be made and installed by the French corporation, Atos — an information technology service and consulting company. The Narendra Modi government signed a deal in December 2018 with France to procure high-performance computers worth ₹4,500 crore by 2025. These HPC systems will run at two institutions, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, and the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting, Noida, that currently host two of India's most powerful such machines, Mihir and Pratyush. Like their predecessors, the Atos machines will be used primarily to run sophisticated weather models that, for some years now, _____(a)_____ being used to prepare a range of forecasts, from long-term monsoon to fortnightly as well as daily weather changes. Extremely powerful machines are needed for this purpose as accurate forecasts are _____(b)_____ on being able to simulate the state of the atmosphere and oceans. 'Supercomputers' is a buzzword and term that is in constant _____(c)_____. Supercomputers of two decades ago are today's student laptops and gaming consoles.

While many challenging research questions, apart from weather modelling, _____(d)_____ extremely dependent on computing — protein biology, aerospace-modelling applications, and now AI-linked applications — the possession of HPCs is also used as a medallion by countries wanting to signify their technological prowess. The Top500 project has for **over (A)** two decades **presence (B)** a list of the top 500 most powerful HPC machines and this is updated twice a year, with countries **prominently(C)** advertising the **maintained(D)** of their systems if they make it to the list. Currently, a

machine housed at Pune's Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) is the only Indian machine in the top 100 with a top speed of 13 petaflops. Floating point operations per second (FLOPS) are an indicator of computer processing abilities and 1 petaflop is a 1,000 trillion flops. The to-be installed French machines are expected to be 18 petaflops and India already has a handful of machines at multiple research institutions in the petaflop range. The possession of powerful supercomputers is certainly a reassurance that Indian scientists, wanting to solve **intractable** problems, **(A)/** can always tapped these behemoths, but whether the use of these machines has translated into **(B)/** significant breakthroughs in fundamental science and **(C)/** engineering commercial products is another matter.**(D)/**

Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate combinations of words

13. Like their predecessors, the Atos machines will be used primarily to run sophisticated weather models that, for some years now, _____(a)_____ being used to prepare a range of forecasts, from long-term monsoon to fortnightly as well as daily weather changes.

    Fill the most appropriate option in (a)
    (i) Is
    (ii) Was
    (iii) Are
    (iv) Were
    A. Only (i)   B. Only (ii)   C. Only (iii)   D. Both (ii) and (iv)   E. None of the above

14. Extremely powerful machines are needed for this purpose as accurate forecasts are _____(b)_____ on being able to simulate the state of the atmosphere and oceans.

    Fill the most appropriate option in (b)
    (i) Capitalised
    (ii) Premised
    (iii) Demonstrate
    (iv) Endorsed
    A. Only (i)   B. Only (ii)   C. Only (iv)   D. Both (ii) and (iv)   E. None of the above

15. Supercomputers' is a buzzword and term that is in constant _____(c)_____.

    Fill the most appropriate option in (c)
    (i) Plaint
    (ii) Precinct
    (iii) Flux
    (iv) Call
    A. Only (i)   B. Only (ii)   C. Only (iii)   D. Both (i) and (ii)   E. None of the above

16. While many challenging research questions, apart from weather modelling, _____(d)_____ extremely dependent on computing — protein biology, aerospace-modelling applications, and now AI-linked applications — the possession of HPCs is also used as a medallion by countries wanting to signify their technological prowess.

Fill the most appropriate option in (d)

(i) Is
(ii) Was
(iii) Were
(iv) Are

A. Only (i)   B. Only (iv)   C. Only (iii)   D. Both (iii) and (ii)   E. None of the above

17. **The following sentence may or may not contain an error in one of its parts. Identify the part containing the error. If the sentence is correct, select 'No error' as your answers.**

The possession of powerful supercomputers is certainly a reassurance that Indian scientists, wanting to solve intractable problems, **(A)/** can always tapped these behemoths, but whether the use of these machines has translated into **(B)/** significant breakthroughs in fundamental science and **(C)/** engineering commercial products is another matter.**(D)/**

A. (A)
B. (B)
C. (C)
D. (D)
E. No Error

18. **Given below is a word, followed by three sentence that consist of that word. Identify the sentence (S) that best express (es) the meaning of the word.**

Intractable

(i) Since very large optimization problems are **intractable** for complete solution methods, heuristic search methods are usually employed.
(ii) The processional music demonstrates an even more **intractable** interaction between the real and imagined.
(iii) Many of the listeners surveyed said that they were not **intractable** with the station's programmes.

A. Only (i)
B. Only (ii)
C. Only (iii)
D. (i), (ii)
E. (i), (ii), (iii)

19. **In the following question, a sentence is given with four words marked as (A), (B), (C), and (D). These words may or may not be placed in the correct order. Four options with different arrangements of these have been provided. Mark the option with the correct arrangement as the answer. If no rearrangement is required, mark option (5) as your answer.**

The Top500 project has for **over (A)** two decades **presence (B)** a list of the top 500 most powerful HPC machines and this is updated twice a year, with countries **prominently(C)** advertising the **maintained(D)** of their systems if they make it to the list.

A. A – D
B. B – A

C. C – D

D. B – D

E. No arrangement

20. **Fill the appropriate preposition in the given blanks**

He has not yet been reconciled _____ his wife.

A. Of

B. In

C. With

D. To

Answers

1. C   2.C   3.C   4. B   5.C   6. B   7.C   8.A   9.D   10.B   11.A
12. C   13.C   14.B   15.C   16.B   17.B   18.D   19.D   20.C   **[Practice Exercise]**

Explanations

1. **C. The further concretization of Shimla could have detrimental effects on its environment, possibly leading to its 'suffocation.'**
   Option C is inferred from the text which explicitly states that "Even as the town is already reeling under haphazard growth and construction and catering to a population that is much more than its carrying capacity, plus lakhs of tourists, further concretisation would lead to the collapse of the 'lungs', suffocating the town." The other options (A, B, D, E) can be ruled out as they contradict the passage. The Supreme Court has allowed construction but with a condition (ruling out A and E), Shimla's ecology is already affected by haphazard growth and construction (ruling out B), and Shimla's population is already exceeding its carrying capacity (ruling out D).

2. C) The correct answer is C. The Supreme Court has provided a condition that the document should not be implemented for a month after the notification, not two months as mentioned in option C. All other statements accurately represent the information in the passage.

3. C) Option A is true as it is directly mentioned in the passage that these belts were declared no-construction zones in 2000 to protect Shimla. Option B is also true as the passage tells us that despite the legal battles, the NGT and HP High Court have upheld the ban.
   Option D is also mentioned in the passage which indicates that the realtors are primarily interested in profits and show little concern for the survival of the town. Option E is also true because it is suggested in the passage that one solution could be for the government to purchase the land in the green belts from the private property owners.
   Option C is incorrect, making it the answer to this question. The passage indicates that successive governments have tilted towards the realtors, suggesting that they have not consistently taken a strong stand against the real estate lobby and private property owners to protect the green belt zones

4. **B) Concerned**
   The author expresses concern throughout the passage about the potential destruction of Shimla's green belts. This concern is evident through phrases such as "ringing the death knell for Shimla's ecology", "suffocating the town", and "lamentably, successive governments have tilted towards the realtors".

5. **C) The commercialization and urbanization of Shimla's green belts.**
   The primary theme of the passage is the threat to Shimla's green belts due to construction and urbanization. The author discusses how construction activity in Shimla's green belts, which were declared no-construction zones in 2000, might lead to their destruction, negatively impacting the environment and potentially leading to the collapse of the 'lungs' of Shimla. The passage also explores the role of private landowners and real estate developers in this issue.

6. B) Q: The sentence Q introduces the topic and mentions the RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das and his concerns about virtual currencies. Hence, Q is the logical opening sentence.

7. C) R: Sentence R follows Q logically, as it discusses what the RBI Governor emphasised - the need for informed discussions before taking decisions on cryptocurrencies.

8. A) P: Sentence P fits next, providing additional information about the RBI Governor's stance on the issue. This sentence refers to the "second time in a week" which indicates it must follow a sentence where the RBI Governor's opinion was mentioned, which is sentence R

9. D) S: Sentence S introduces another person, Subhash Chandra Garg, and his views on the topic, which is a shift from the perspective of the RBI Governor, hence it logically follows P. Finally, Sentence T adds more details to the issues raised by Subhash Chandra Garg, which completes the thought process initiated in sentence S. So, the correct order of sentences is QRPST

10. B) **ACBD**

    In an unprecedented display of ecological awareness and assertiveness, villagers, both environmentally sensitive and remarkably cognizant, have taken to protesting vehemently against the ongoing disruption to their tranquil lives caused by irresponsible waste dumping, and have even escalated their collective outcry to the point of boycotting elections in a bold stance against potential environmental damage.

11. (A) 'have' के बदले 'has' का प्रयोग होगा क्योंकि वाक्य का Subject 'He' है जिसके लिए Verb हमेशा Singular होता है।

    - 'Has' will be used instead of 'have' because the subject of the sentence is 'He' for which Verb is always Singular.

12. (C) 'being' के बदले 'been' का प्रयोग हगा क्योंकि 'have/has/had/having + V3' का प्रयोग होता है और 'Be' क्रिया का 'V3' रूप 'been' होता है; जैसे-

        i.   He has been ill for a week.
        ii. She has been absent from the class for three days.

    - 'been' will be used instead of 'being' because 'have/has/had/having + V3' is used and 'Be' is the 'V3' form of verb 'been'
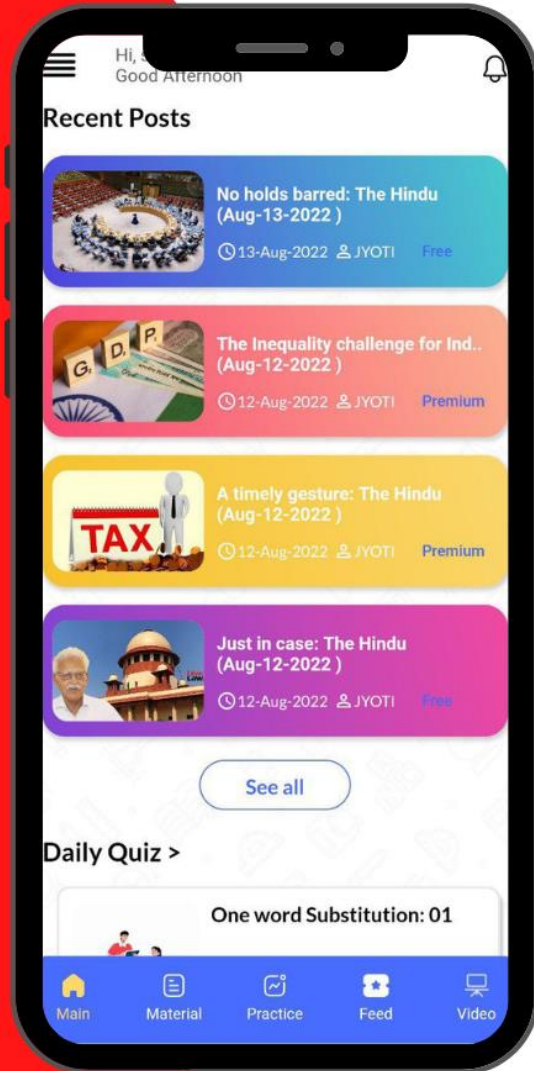
13. The correct answer is 'are.' The blank is referring to the sophisticated weather models that are currently in use and hence a present tense verb is needed. 'Are' is the plural present tense of the verb 'to be' and aligns with the plural noun (weather models)

14. **Premise** (on) (verb) – base, found, establish, ground, rest (on) आधार रखना

    The correct answer is **'premised**.' The verb 'premise' means to base a theory or conclusion on an assumed fact or action. The sentence indicates that accurate forecasts depend on the ability to simulate the state of the atmosphere and oceans

    - **Capitalise** (on) (verb) – Exploit, Take advantage of, Utilise, Benefit from, Profit from फायदा उठाना

    - **Demonstrate** (verb) – Show, indicate, exhibit, reveal, manifest दिखाना

- **Endorse** (verb) – support, approve, sanction, back, ratify समर्थन करना

15. **Flux** (noun) – Change, variation, shift, transition परिवर्तन

   The correct answer is 'flux.' The term 'flux' in this context means a state of continuous change. The term 'supercomputers' is said to be in constant flux as the standards and capabilities of these machines continue to evolve.

   - **Plaint** (noun) – a formal accusation or charge in a court of law अभियोग, मुद्दा

   - **Precinct** (noun) – Zone, area, sector, division, सीमा

   - **Call** (noun) – Appeal, request, demand, plea, entreaty अनुरोध

16. The correct answer is **'are**.' Here, 'are' is the correct verb to use because it refers to 'many challenging research questions,' which is plural. Hence, the verb should also be in plural form. 'Are' is the plural present tense of the verb 'to be' and aligns with the plural noun (research questions).

17. Tap should be used instead of tapped because First form of verb (i,.e V1) is used after the modal verb (i.e can, could, would, should, may, might etc).

18. **Intractable** (adjective) – Stubborn, obstinate, inflexible, uncompromising विकट

   According to the given options only (i) and (ii) are contextually correct.
   Because the (iii) sentences is not giving any meaning and correct sentences should be like Many of the listeners surveyed said that they were not satisfied with the station's programmes.

19. The Top500 project has for over two decades maintained a list of the top 500 most powerful HPC machines and this is updated twice a year, with countries prominently advertising the presence of their systems if they make it to the list.

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