



# CURRENT CONNECT JULY - 18

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GS- I	Culture-Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.	Indian history significant events, personalities, issues and the Freedom Struggle	Post independence issue, National boundary and disputes	Indian society features, globalization and diversity	Women - issues and developments	Urbanization - problems and remedies	Distribution of industries and resources - India and world	Geophysical phenomena such as earthquakes, Tsunami, Volcanic activity, Cyclone etc	Culture- Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.		
GS- II	Indian constitution- Acts and bills.	Legislative, executive and judicial processes.	Constitutional, non-constitutional, judicial, quasi-judicial, administrative and other types of bodies.	Federal structure and local bodies. Their powers and functions.	Government policies and various governance issues like transparency, accountability and - governance	Committees and schemes.	Non-government self-help groups and role of civil society	Vulnerable sections of our society and social sector issues and initiatives.	International Relation-India and other countries, various Indian and international agreements, effects of other countries on India and international institutions.		
GS- III	Various measures to boost Indian economy- planning, policies, management.	Government budgeting and issues related to budget.	Agriculture, animal husbandry and transport	Food security- measures to boost food security and food processing. Issues related to land- land reforms	Industries and infrastructure their growth and investment model	Space and technology, IT space, robotics and computer	Disease, biotechnology and human welfare	Innovations, intellectual property, Awards, POJ and other import and aspects of S&T	Environment and disaster- government initiatives, various judgment, pollution, degradation and conservation efforts	International agreements and works of various international bodies, effort awards, by individuals and misc.	Challenges to internal security, Various Security forces and agencies and their mandate. Cyber security, money laundering and its prevention.
GS- IV	Ethical issues related to family society, education, Corruption etc.	Ethics in public and private administration	Issues	Related laws and rules	Governance/e-Governance	Ethics in international issues	Personalities and their teachings	Other import and topics			
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## Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2018

### Why in News?

Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2018 was recently passed by Parliament which provides for punishment to both bribe-givers and takers and extends some relief to public officials. The bill was first floated in 2013.

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The Bill makes specific provisions related to what will be considered as offering a bribe to a public servant and offering a bribe by a commercial organisation. It also modifies the definitions and penalties for offences related to taking a bribe, being a habitual offender and abetting an offence. Instances of corruption and provisions to punish the guilty are provided in the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988.

**INSULATING PUBLIC SERVANTS: Lowdown on the significant changes in the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, adopted by both Houses of Parliament**

<p><b>Bribery</b> <b>What is new</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Giving a bribe is now an offence, punishable by a 7-year prison term</li> <li>Except when one is forced to give a bribe. But it should be reported it to within seven days</li> <li>Bribe is termed "undue advantage", defined as "gratification other than legal remuneration"</li> </ul> <p><b>What it was</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No specific provision, except as abetment</li> </ul> <p><i>It could empower the public to refuse to give a bribe but seven-day limit may not be enough. As to what happens if citizen's report of coercion is not registered by the police is unclear</i></p>	<p><b>Pre-investigation approval</b> <b>What is new</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Police officer cannot begin probe without prior approval of relevant authority or govt (except when caught red-handed)</li> </ul> <p><b>What it was</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No such provision in the Act, but a rule similar to it was struck down by Supreme Court</li> </ul> <p><i>Protection formerly available to officials of rank of joint secretary and above (before SC struck it down) is extended to all public servants</i></p>	<p><b>Sanction for prosecution</b> <b>What is new</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sanction needed for prosecuting former officials for offences done while in office</li> <li>Centre may notify guidelines for sanction</li> <li>Decision on request for sanction within 3 months, which may be extended by a month*</li> </ul> <p><b>What it was</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sanction was required under PCA for serving officers only</li> </ul> <p><i>Sanction for IPC offences covered both serving and retired officers. Guidelines and time-limit may help make sanction process easier</i></p>	<p><b>Criminal misconduct</b> <b>What is new</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only be two forms of criminal misconduct.</li> <li>Misappropriation of property entrusted to public servant</li> <li>Intentionally enriching oneself illicitly</li> </ul> <p><b>What it was</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There were five kinds; omitted ones are taking bribe habitually, getting anything free or at a concession, obtaining pecuniary advantage for oneself or for another without public interest</li> </ul> <p><i>This is to protect public servants from being wrongly prosecuted for official decisions. Earlier it was a crime to "obtain advantage to a private party without public interest"</i></p>	<p><b>Forfeiture of property</b> <b>What is new</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section introduced for Special Court under this Act to attach and confiscate property</li> </ul> <p><b>What it was</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This was not done under the Prevention of Corruption Act, but under a 1944 ordinance through civil courts</li> </ul> <p>Compiled by <b>K. Venkataraman</b></p> <p><i>This helps avoid a fresh procedure to confiscate property obtained through corruption, enables court conducting trial to do so itself</i></p>
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### Key Highlights of the Bill:

- Giving bribe is a specific and a direct offence. Bribe-givers have also been included in the legislation for the first time and they can be punished with imprisonment for up to seven years, a fine or both.
- It makes a provision for providing protection to coerced bribe-givers if the matter is reported to the concerned law enforcement agencies within a week.
- It redefines criminal misconduct and will now only cover misappropriation of property and possession of disproportionate assets.
- The Bill proposes a shield for government servants, including those retired, from prosecution by making it mandatory for investigating agencies to take prior approval from a competent authority before conducting an enquiry against them. But such

- ❖ Transparency International, the global coalition against corruption, has ranked India 81st out of 180 countries in its global corruption perception index for 2017.
- ❖ In 2011 India ratified the United Nations Convention Against Corruption.
- ❖ Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 mandates to appoint a lokpal at the centre and lokayukta at the state level.

permissions shall not be necessary for cases involving the arrest of a person on the spot on the charge of accepting or attempting to accept any undue advantage for himself or for any other person. Earlier this provision was applicable for serving banking staff and public officials as well as public servants above the joint secretary level.

5. The factor of "undue advantage" will have to be established against a public servant in any corruption case.
6. The trial in cases pertaining to the exchange of bribe and corruption should be completed within two years. Further, even after reasoned delays, the trial cannot exceed four years.
7. The Bill covers bribe-giving commercial organisations to be liable for punishment or prosecution. However, charitable institutions have been left out of its ambit.
8. It provides powers and procedures for the attachment and forfeiture of a corruption-accused public servant's property.

### Concerns

There is a provision now to get prior permission for starting an investigation and that has prompted many to say that the law has been "diluted" from its original draft. There is no provision of independent inquiry as the investigating agency will have to seek the government's permission. Moreover, the 7-day window given to the coerced bribe givers is too short.

### Way Forward

The Prevention of Corruption Act amendments will help bankers and public sector officials to carry out their duties fearlessly and on merit, while doing away with any paralysis in decision making.

Need of the hour is to promote laws that promote transparency and accountability, whistle-blower protection and setting up anti-corruption agencies to reduce corruption in public life. There is law for all these, but their implementation has been flawed.

## Personal Data Protection Bill 2018

### In News

The Personal Data Protection Bill 2018 has been submitted by the Justice BN Srikrishna committee on Data protection after nearly a year of consultations. The Committee has submitted the draft bill and its report on Data Protection to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeiTY).

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### Bill Summary

1. Rights of the individual: The Bill sets out certain rights of the individual. These include: (i) right to obtain confirmation from the fiduciary (ii) right to seek correction of inaccurate, incomplete, or out-of-date personal data, and (iii) right to have personal data transferred to any other data fiduciary in certain circumstances.
2. Obligations of the data fiduciary: The Bill sets out obligations of the entity who has access to the personal data (data fiduciary). These include: (i) implementation of policies for processing of data, (ii) maintaining transparency (iii) implementing security safeguards and (iv) instituting grievance redressal mechanisms.

Definition of personal data: The committee defined personal data to include data from which an individual may be identified or identifiable, either directly or indirectly. The Committee sought to distinguish personal data protection from the protection of sensitive personal data, since its processing could result in greater harm to the individual. Sensitive data is related to intimate matters where there is a higher expectation of privacy (e.g., caste, religion, and sexual orientation of the individual).

3. Data Protection Authority: The Bill provides for the establishment of a Data Protection Authority. The Authority is empowered to: (i) take steps to protect interests of individuals, (ii) prevent misuse of personal data, and (iii) ensure compliance with the Bill. It will consist of a chairperson and six members, with knowledge of at least 10 years in the field of data protection and information technology. Orders of the Authority can be appealed to an Appellate Tribunal established by the central government and appeals from the Tribunal will go to the Supreme Court.

International Conventions

- General Data Protection Regulation
- Personal Data Protection Convention - “Convention 108”
- APEC Privacy Framework 2004
- 34th International Conference of Privacy and Data Protection Commissioners
- OECD Guidance on Policy and Practice: Privacy Online

4. Grounds for processing personal data: The Bill allows processing of data by fiduciaries if consent is provided. However, in certain circumstances, processing of data may be permitted without consent of the individual like to respond to a medical emergency, threat to public health or breakdown of public order, whistle blowing.

PEPPER IT WITH UNCTAD, Council of Europe Privacy Convention, Shine the Light Law

5. Exemptions: The Bill provides exemptions from compliance with its provisions, for certain reasons including: (i) state security, (ii) prevention, investigation, or prosecution of any offence, or (iii) personal, domestic, or journalistic purposes.

6. Offences and Penalties: Under the Bill, the Authority may levy penalties for various offences by the fiduciary. Failure to promptly notify the Authority can attract a penalty of the higher of Rs 5 crore or 2% of the worldwide turnover of the fiduciary.

7. Amendments to other laws: The Bill makes consequential amendments to the Information Technology Act, 2000. It also amends the Right to Information Act, 2005, and to permit non-disclosure of personal information where harm to the individual outweighs public good.

Sensitive personal data includes passwords, financial data, biometric data, genetic data, caste, religious or political beliefs, or any other category of data specified by the Authority. The Bill includes the ‘**right to be forgotten**’, which is the right of a data principal to restrict or prevent continuing disclosure of personal data by a data fiduciary.

Concerns

There are two main reasons that governments should pursue comprehensive data protection frameworks:

- **Laws need to be updated to address today’s reality**
- Corporate co- and self-regulation is not working to protect our data

Way Forward

Data protection is directly related to trade in goods and services in the digital economy. Insufficient protection can create negative market effects by reducing consumer confidence, and overly stringent protection can unduly restrict businesses, with adverse economic effects as a result. Ensuring that laws consider the global nature and scope of their application, and foster compatibility with other frameworks, is of utmost importance for global trade flows that increasingly rely on the Internet.

The information economy is increasingly prominent and promises to provide many opportunities but could also generate some potential drawbacks. Data protection regulation must carefully correspond to the evolving needs and possibilities associated with these changes to facilitate potential benefits.



## NCTE amendment Bill

### Why in News?

The Lok Sabha recently passed a bill to amend the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) Act seeking to provide *post-facto* approval to those approved institutions which are funded by the Centre or states, but do not have recognition under the 1993 law.

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### Major Amendments

- The Bill amends the section 14 and section 15 of National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993 and establishes the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). All institutions running teacher education courses, such as B.Ed and D.El.Ed have to obtain recognition from the NCTE under section 14 of the NCTE Act.
- Retrospective recognition of certain teacher education institutions: The Bill seeks to grant retrospective recognition to institutions: (i) notified by the central government, (ii) funded by the central government or state/union territory government, (iii) which do not have recognition under the Act, and (iv) which must have offered teacher education courses on or after the establishment of the NCTE until the academic year 2017-2018.
- Retrospective permission to start new courses: The Bill also seeks to grant retrospective permission to start a new course or training in teacher education to certain institutions
- The Bill provides for amendment of the Act to provide deemed permission by the Regional Committee to the course or training in teacher education offered under amendment of Section 15 of the Act.

### **Manipur People's Protection Bill**

- ❖ Manipur assembly passed a bill to **regulate the entry and exit of "outsiders"**. The Bill demands to introduce an Inner Line Permit system, similar to other states in the North East (demanded by Meiti community of the Imphal valley).
- ❖ **According to the bill, 'Manipur people'** include Meitis, the Pangal Muslims, scheduled tribes as listed under the Constitution in terms of Manipur and all those citizens of India who have been living in Manipur before 1951.
- ❖ The rest have been put in the category of 'non-**Manipuris**' and will have to register themselves within one month of the notification of the law. They will be issued a pass extendable up to six months. Those who have trade licences can get a pass extendable up to five years, which will have to be renewed every year. Any outsider visiting Manipur would need a pass (ILP).

PEPPER IT WITH  
 NCPDR, NEET, National  
 Digital Library, Samagra  
 Shiksha Scheme, SATH-E  
 roadmap, Development Impact  
 Bond, ILP

### Significance

- The legislation has been brought for the benefit of the students who have appeared for B.Ed, M.Ed and various other exams, but their institutes are not recognised.
- This has been done as a one-time measure to ensure that the future of students studying in these institutions is not jeopardised. The one-time measure put in place by the bill will apply to 20 public institutions that are running such courses without the UGC approval.

### About NCTE

The NCTE Act, 1993, came into force in 1995 and applies to all parts of India, except the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It is a statutory body.

The main objective of the NCTE is to achieve planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system throughout the country, the regulation and proper maintenance of Norms and Standards in the teacher education system. The mandate given to the NCTE is very broad and covers the whole gamut of teacher education programmes including research and training of persons for equipping them to teach at pre-primary, primary, secondary and senior secondary stages in schools, and non-formal education, part-time education, adult education and distance (correspondence) education courses.



## Census of India

### In News

The data collected during the 2021 Census will be stored electronically, the first time since the decennial exercise was conducted in 1951 in Independent India.

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### Present Scenario

According to an amended rule notified by the Registrar General of India (RGI) recently, **“The schedules and other connected papers shall be disposed of totally or in part by the Director of Census Operations, after creating an electronic record of such documents.”**

### About

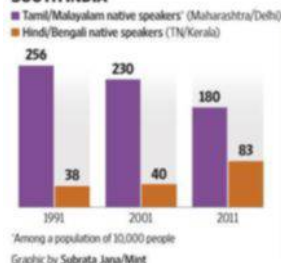
- The Census 2011 was the 15th National census survey conducted by the Census Organization of India. Mr. C. Chandramouli was the Commissioner & Registrar General of the Indian 2011 Census.
- After 1949, it has been conducted by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.
- The 2011 Indian National Census has been conducted in 2 phases - house listing and population. The national census survey covered all the 28 states of the country and 7 Union territories.
- India is 2nd rank in population with 17.64% decadal growth & China is 1st rank with decadal growth 19% (over 1.35 billion).
- The motto of census 2011 was **“Our Census, Our future”**

### SECC-11

SECC 2011 has three census components which were conducted by three separate authorities but under the overall coordination of Department of Rural Development in the Government of India.

- In Rural Area has been conducted by the Department of Rural Development (DoRD).
- In Urban areas is under the administrative jurisdiction of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MoHUPA).
- Caste Census is under the administrative control of Ministry of Home Affairs: Registrar General of India (RGI) and Census Commissioner of India.

**CHART I: THE ECONOMIC PULL FOR MIGRANTS INCREASINGLY LIES IN SOUTH INDIA**



Total Person Literacy Rate	74%
Males	82.14%
Females	65.46%
Highest Literacy Rate in State	Kerala (94%)
Lowest Literacy Rate in State	Bihar (61.8%)

Least Populous of the Country	
Lakshadweep	64,473
Daman and Diu	2,43,247
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	3,43,709

Highest Populous UT	Delhi
Least Populous UT	Lakshadweep
Highest state Populous	Uttar Pradesh
Least populous state	Sikkim

Top Populous of the Country	
Uttar Pradesh	19,98,12,341
Maharashtra	11,23,74,333
Bihar	10,40,99,452

Sex ratio in India	943
Highest sex ratio in state	Kerala (1084)
Lowest sex ratio in state	Haryana (879)

### Data & Statistics

- India has as many as 22 official languages. Moreover, there are at least 41 more languages demanding inclusion in the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India, which accords a tongue official status.
- While Hindi grew by 161% between 1971
- and 2011, for example, the four largest Dravidian languages grew at half that rate – 81% – over the same period.
- The economic centre of the country is shifting to the South, according to the released census 2011 data, tracking the movement of languages as there is rise in Hindi speakers in South-India.

World Population day- 11<sup>th</sup> July  
 Theme: **“Family Planning is a Human right”**  
 World population: 7 billion  
 (adding 83 mil people every year)

PEPPER IT WITH  
 IT Act, 2000, SECC-11  
 parameters

### SVEEP

#### In News

A dedicated portal of the ECI’S Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) to be launched.

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#### SVEEP

- SVEEP, is the flagship program of the Election Commission of India for voter education, spreading voter awareness and promoting voter literacy in India.
- **SVEEP’s** primary goal is to build a truly participative democracy in India by encouraging all eligible citizens to vote and make an informed decision during the elections.
- SVEEP began with the introduction of planned IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) and presently enhanced interaction with the citizens through social media, online contests **and voters’ festivals**; awareness about new initiatives of linking EPIC with AADHAAR **and National Voters’ Service Portal**.
- Target:women, youth, urban voters, marginalised sections, inclusion of groups like service voters, NRIs, persons with disabilities, prospective voters/ students is of primary focus.
- SVEEP-III is aimed at identifying the barriers or gaps in the **inclusion of PwD’s** in the electoral process, to assess the existing accessibility initiatives and to find solutions for **the challenges being faced by the PwD’s**.

PEPPER IT WITH  
 Part XV, Art 325, Art 326,  
 Exit Poll, Opinion Poll,  
 Simultaneous elections

Cvigil  
 It is a mobile app launched by the Election Commission of India to enable citizens to report on violation of election code of conduct.

#### About ECI

1. A permanent constitutional body
2. Appointment & Tenure
  - The President appoints Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners. They have tenure of six years, or up to the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
  - They enjoy the same status and receive salary and perks as available to Judges of the Supreme Court of India. The Chief Election Commissioner can be removed from office only through impeachment by Parliament.
3. Advisory Jurisdiction & Quasi-Judicial Functions
  - Under the Constitution, the Commission also has advisory jurisdiction in the matter of post-election disqualification of sitting members of Parliament and State Legislatures.

- Further, the cases of persons found guilty of corrupt practices at elections which come before the Supreme Court and High Courts are also referred to the Commission for its opinion on the question as to whether such person shall be disqualified and, if so, for what period. The opinion of the Commission in all such matters is binding on the President or the Governor to whom such opinion is tendered.
- The Commission has the power to disqualify a candidate who has failed to lodge an account of his election expenses within the time and in the manner prescribed by law. The Commission has also the power for removing or reducing the period of such disqualification as also other disqualification under the law.

### ECI recent Initiatives

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) has organized a two-day “National Consultation on Accessible Elections in pursuit of its mission ‘leave no voter behind,’ with special focus on “Persons with Disabilities”.
- The theme of “Inclusion of PwD’s” has been given a special focus in the ECI’s Strategic Plan 2016-2025.

## Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB)

### In News

The Union Ministry of Finance has amended Intellectual Property rules to revoke the power vested with Customs authorities to seize imported products based on complaints of patent infringement.

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### Issue

- In the past, mobile phone companies have faced issues because of the earlier rules. For instance, in 2007, Madurai-based Ramkumar, who held a patent for a dual SIM, sought seizure of products imported by Samsung and Spice Mobile, which affected several importers.
- The amended law will permit the Customs authorities to cancel his patent from its records based on the order passed by the Intellectual Property Appellate Board.

PEPPER IT WITH  
WIPO, Finance Act, 2017, TRIPS  
agreement, Patents  
(Amendment) Act 2002

### Amendments

- The Ministry made two amendments to the Intellectual Property Rights (Imported Goods) Enforcement Rules, 2007. Firstly, the Intellectual Property Rights (Imported Goods) Enforcement Amendment Rules, 2018, omits all reference to the Patents Act, 1970.
- Another amendment incorporates further conditions that oblige the right-holder to notify the Commissioner of Customs of any amendment, cancellation, suspension or reaction that concern Intellectual Property rights, and require the Customs authorities to accordingly amend, suspend or cancel the corresponding protection provided by them.

### What is IPAB?

- IPAB was constituted by the Indian Government to hear and resolve the appeals against the decisions of the registrar under the Indian Trademarks Act, 1999 and the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.
- Since 2007, IPAB has been authorized to hear and adjudicate upon the appeals from most of the decisions, orders or directions made by the Patent Controller under the Patents Act. Therefore, all pending appeals of Indian High Courts under the Patents Act were transferred to IPAB.

### Composition

#### 1. Board

Chairman, Vice Chairman and Other Members as central govt deems fit

#### 2. Bench

Each Bench of the IPAB includes a Judicial Member and a Technical Member.

Jurisdiction

- IPAB currently exercises jurisdiction over Trademarks, Patents, Geographical Indications and Copyright Cases. The IPAB has its headquarters at Chennai.
- Exclusive Jurisdiction: IPAB can receive, hear and dispose all appeals from any order or decision of the Controller and all cases related to the revocation of a patent, rectification of register; other than through a counter-claim in a suit for infringement. IPAB has the authority to proceed with the matter either de novo or from the stage at which it was transferred on appeal.

Terminologies

TRADEMARK: It is a recognizable insignia, phrase or symbol that denotes a specific product or service and legally differentiates it from all other products. A trademark serves to exclusively identify a product or service with a specific company and is a recognition of that company's ownership of the brand. Trademarked products are generally considered a form of property.

PATENT: It is the grant of a property right by a sovereign authority to an inventor. This grant provides the inventor exclusive rights to the patented process, design, or invention for a designated period in exchange for a comprehensive disclosure of the invention. Government agencies typically handle and approve applications for patents.

GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION: GI is a sign used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. GI right enables those who have the right to use the indication to prevent its use by a third party whose product does not conform to the applicable standards.

However, a protected GI does not enable the holder to prevent someone from making a product using the same techniques as those set out in the standards for that indication.

COPYRIGHT: It refers to the legal right of the owner of intellectual property. In simpler terms, copyright is the right to copy. This means that the original creator of a product and anyone he gives authorization to are the only ones with the exclusive right to reproduce the work. Copyright law gives creators of original material, the exclusive right to further develop them for a given amount of time, at which point the copyrighted item becomes public domain.

**Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)**

In News

KVIC recently launched its, in-house developed, single-umbrella e-marketing system named Khadi Institution Management and Information System (KIMIS).

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KVIC

- KVIC was established under the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956 is a statutory organization engaged in promoting and developing khadi and village industries for providing employment opportunities in rural areas, thereby strengthening the rural economy.
- The KVIC has been identified as one of the major organization for the decentralized sector for generating sustainable rural non-farm employment opportunities at a low per capita investment. This also helps in checking migration of rural population to urban areas in search of the employment opportunities.
- The Commission is headed by full time Chairman and consists of 10 part-time Members. In April 1957, it took over the work of former All India Khadi and Village Industries Board.
- It is an apex organization under the administrative control of the Ministry of MSME as the single nodal agency.

PEPPER IT WITH  
PMEGP, REGP, PMRY,  
Coir Board, NSIC, MSME

KVIC objectives

- The social objective of providing employment.
- The economic objective of producing saleable articles.
- The wider objective of creating self-reliance amongst the poor and building up of a strong rural community spirit.

Significance

1. It will help to generate continuous and sustainable employment opportunities in Rural and Urban areas of the country
2. It will help to provide continuous and sustainable employment to a large segment of traditional and prospective artisans, rural and urban unemployed youth in the country through setting up of micro enterprises.
3. It will help to facilitate participation of financial institutions for higher credit flow to micro sector.
4. The KVIC is also charged with the responsibility of encouraging and promoting research in the production techniques and equipment employed in the Khadi and Village Industries sector including the use of non-conventional energy and electric power with a view to increasing productivity.

KIMIS

KVIC IT team has developed a software, which may have cost millions of rupees if purchased from a third party. This software will give real-time data of sales and will also give the updated status of stocks of khadi bhawans and godowns, allowing better planning and control of inventory of the KVIC.

**National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST)**

In News

Chairperson NCST has presented **Special Report on “Indira Sagar Polavaram Project Affected Tribal People** to President of India.

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Issue

- The commission noted that many ST people without land holdings were also shifted. They were hitherto depending on minor forest produce for their livelihood.
- Now that they are shifted, they are deprived of their livelihood. The state government needs to take care of them by providing alternative means of livelihood.
- The commission visited Iddikulakotta village and it received complaints that in the village, many newly constructed houses were destroyed due to flash flood and so far, they had not been re-built.

Recommendations by Commission

1. The report and recommendations are under Article 338A(5)(e) of the Constitution on the measures to be taken by the Government of Andhra Pradesh for the effective implementation of constitutional safeguards and other measures for the protection, welfare and socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes who are affected because of Polavaram Irrigation Project.
2. The compensation packages in respect of Polavaram Irrigation project need to be revised on *suo-moto* basis by the Government of Andhra Pradesh keeping in view the observations and modalities suggested by the Supreme Court as per the provisions of the Right to Fair Compensation, Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act.

About Project

- Polavaram irrigation project is a multipurpose irrigation project across Godavari river in West Godavari district with its reservoirs spreading across states of Chhattisgarh and Orissa as well.

- It is implemented and monitored by the Central Water Commission. The project is slated to be complete by 2019. Indirasagar Polavaram an interstate project on river Godavari has been conceived as a part of recommendations of Godavari Water Disputes Tribunal (GWDT).
- The project is for development of Irrigation, Hydro power and drinking water facilities to East Godavari, Vishakhapatnam, West Godavari and Krishna districts of Andhra Pradesh.
- The project implements Godavari (Polavaram) -Krishna (Vijayawada) link under Interlinking of rivers project. Polavaram Vijayawada Link project is part of the interlinking of Mahanadi – Godavari – Krishna – Pennar – Cauvery - Vaigai rivers which is the most important and major part of the inter-basin water transfer proposal in Peninsular India.
- The project is likely to displace over 1.88 lakh people across 222 villages and so far, 1,730 persons in six villages have been rehabilitated by the government.

#### NCST

The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) was established by amending Article 338 and inserting a new Article 338A in the Constitution through the Constitution (89th Amendment) Act,

2003. By this amendment, the erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was replaced by two separate Commissions namely- (i) the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), and (ii) the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST).

#### Composition

The Commission consist of a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and three full time-member (including one lady member). The Chairperson has been given the rank of Union Cabinet Minister, and the Vice-Chairperson that of a Minister of State and other Members have the ranks of a Secretary to the Government of India.

#### Function and Duties

1. To inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the Scheduled Tribes.
2. To participate and advise in the planning process of socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes and to evaluate the progress of their development.
3. To make in such reports, recommendations as to the measures that should be taken by the Union or any State for effective implementation of those safeguards and other measures for the protection, welfare and socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Art.244, Art. 275, Art.  
330, Prevention of  
Atrocities Act, NCSC

#### Reports

The commission submits its report to the President annually on the working of safeguards and measures required for effective implementation of Schemes relating to welfare and socio-economic development of STs.



## Brus tribe of Mizoram

### In News

In a breakthrough on repatriation of displaced Bru persons from Mizoram since 1997, an agreement has been signed by Government of India, Governments of Mizoram and Tripura and Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF).

### About tribe

Bru (or Reang) tribals inhabit parts of some North-eastern states. In Mizoram, they are largely restricted to Mamit and Kolasib districts.

### Issue

- o In 1995, following a clash between Mizos and Brus, the Young Mizo Association and **Mizo Students' Association demanded that Brus be removed from the state's electoral rolls**, contending that the tribe was not indigenous to Mizoram.
- o This led to an armed movement led by the militant outfit Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF), and a political one by the Bru National Union (BNU). In 1997, a bout of ethnic violence forced thousands of people from the Bru tribe to leave their homes in Mizoram.
- o As many as 32,876 people belonging to 5,407 families are living in the refugee camps in the Jampui Hills of Tripura.
- o In December 2017 a landmark year, the Mizoram government announced that it had identified 32,857 people belonging to 5,413 families for repatriation and the process would begin soon.

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### Tribal Atlas of Odisha

- Odisha Government has unveiled first-ever '**Tribal Atlas of Odisha**', a compilation of demographic and cultural information of the tribal population in the state.
- The book was published by SC and ST Research and Training Institute in collaboration with Academy of Tribal Language and Culture (ATLC).
- As per Census 2011, Odisha has the second highest tribal population in the country after Madhya Pradesh.

### Initiatives by govt.

1. The Union Cabinet has given its approval for continuance of the 8 existing schemes of the Ministry of Home Affairs upto March 2020 for relief and rehabilitation of migrants and repatriates under the Umbrella scheme "Relief and Rehabilitation of Migrants and Repatriates". Scheme for Brus tribe are:
  - I. Grant-in-Aid to Government of Tripura for maintenance of Brus lodged in relief camps of Tripura.
  - II. Rehabilitation of Bru/Reang families from Tripura to Mizoram.
2. The central government will provide financial assistance for rehabilitation of Bru community members in Mizoram and address their issues of security, education, livelihood, etc. in consultation with the governments of Mizoram and Tripura.
3. A Committee under Special Secretary (Internal Security) will coordinate the implementation of this agreement.

Gujarat is third state in India to grant religious minority status to Jews after West Bengal and Maharashtra. Synagogue Judah Hyam Hall is the only place of worship in Delhi for Jews.

Main Jews groups in India:

1. Cochin Jews
2. Chennai/Madras Jews
3. Bene Israel
4. Baghdadi Jews
5. Delhi Jews
6. Bnei Menashe
7. Bene Ephraim (Telugu Jews)

4. A financial package of Rs 435 crore was agreed on.
5. The help package includes a special development project, Eklavya residential schools, access to jhum cultivation land, permanent residential certificates and ST certificates, and free transportation from Tripura to Mizoram.
6. They will be provided with the Voting Rights too. The Tripura government will ensure that Aadhaar cards are issued, bank accounts opened, and ration cards updated for each Bru community.

#### Sambal scheme

It is a power bill waiver scheme and subsidised power scheme for labourers and poor families launched by the Madhya Pradesh Government.

PEPPER IT WITH  
NRC, Assam Accord

## Delhi Vs Centre

### In News

The Lieutenant-Governor should act as a “facilitator” for good governance in the national capital and not as an “obstructionist”, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court unanimously held recently.

### 1987 Balakrishnan Committee report observations

- The report had envisaged that Delhi could not have a situation in which the national capital had “two governments run by different political parties. Such conflicts may, at times, prejudice the national interest.”
- The report foresaw that if Delhi becomes a full-fledged State, there would be a constitutional division of sovereign, legislative and executive powers between the Union and the State of Delhi. Parliament would have limited legislative access and that too only in special and emergency situations. The Union would be unable to discharge its “special responsibilities in relation to the national capital as well as to the nation itself

### Key points from the SC judgment:

1. The court concluded the L-G is bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. In case of difference of opinion, the L-G should straightaway refer the dispute to the President for a final decision.
2. LG cannot exercise his discretion in “each and every matter” of daily governance. His discretionary powers are in fact limited to only matters in the State List — public order, police and land — over which the legislative power of the Delhi Legislative Assembly stand excluded under Article 239AA.
3. NCT government need only to inform the L-G of its “well-deliberated” decisions. The government need not obtain his “concurrence” on every issue of day-to-day governance.
4. L-G cannot be given the status of a “State Governor”. In fact, he is nothing but an ‘Administrator’, that too, in a limited sense. “The status of NCT of Delhi is sui generis, a class apart.
5. The SC held that the legislature is elected by people, while the executive is responsible to the Council of Ministers. Hence, a “Constitutional morality” argument was taken, saying that this morality works as a check against lapses.
6. The next step was the “Constitutional objectivity” argument. Here, it cited the famous Indra Sawhney case to hold that checks and balances are integral to the Constitutional scheme.
7. Separation of power has a very important meaning. This was the court’s way of reminding both sides that no one institution is supreme. “Each member of the

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CJI quotes from the 1987 Balakrishnan report to conclude that Delhi is not a State; ‘Control of the Union over Delhi vital in the national interest’ Lieutenant-Governor has free hand in judicial, quasi-judicial functions’

‘Administrator has to be more active than the Governor of a State’

Cabinet has a personal responsibility to conscience and responsibility to government.”

- 8. **This is important because the court next interpreted what “aid and advice” of the Council of Ministers means to the L-G.** It held that aid and advice is essential and binding, subject only to the proviso that allows the L-G to make a reference to the President. He cannot act independently and must consult the Council of Ministers.

Way Forward

The spirit of collective responsibility in the Constitution should not be lost in drama. Constitutional discord should be avoided. There is a need for real discipline and wisdom. A freeze on government decisions by the L-G **negates the very concept of “collective responsibility”**. **The governance of the national capital demands a “meaningful orchestration of democracy” and a “collaborative federal architecture.”**

It must be participative governance. There must be some kind of harmony. It should be value oriented, reason oriented; our role is as a final interpreter. We cannot carve out area of discretion what the parliament envisaged must be in order and what was intended by the amendment cannot be disturbed.

**Animal kingdom declared as legal entity**

In News

The Uttarakhand HC declared entire animal kingdom, including avian and aquatic ones as legal entities having a distinct persona with corresponding rights, duties and liabilities of a living person. The move **aims to ensure “greater welfare” of animals.**

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Legal Entity

- In common law jurisprudence, there are two types of persons — natural persons or human beings and artificial person, which are also known as juristic persons, juridical entity or a legal person other than a natural person.
- Legal or juristic persons are created by law and recognised as a legal entity, having distinct identity, legal personality and besides duties and rights. They include private business firm or entity, non-governmental or government organisations, trusts and societies, besides others.

Uttarakhand HC recommendations

1. The court also went into the aspect of animal safety, highlighting the need for fluorescent reflectors in carriages and animals, certificates of unladen weight of vehicles, compulsory shelter of suitable size for horses, bullocks and stray cattle and a direction to the veterinary doctors of Uttarakhand to treat any stray animals brought to them or by visiting them.
2. The order came on a public interest lawsuit seeking restrictions on the movement of horse-drawn carts between Indian and Nepal through Banbasa.
3. Check on maximum weight to be carried by draught animals and certain pack animals.
4. The use of spike stick or bit, harness or yoke with spikes, knobs or projections or any other sharp tackle or equipment is banned throughout the State of Uttarakhand to avoid bruises, swelling, abrasions or severe pain to the animal.
5. The court said as the carts driven by animals have no mechanical devices, animal-drawn carriages must be given Right of Way over other vehicles.

Girinka Programme

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifted 200 cows to villagers from Rweru villages as part of Rwandan **Government’s Girinka Programme.**
- The programme initiated by President Paul Kagame is based on premise that providing dairy cow to poor, transforms livelihoods, reconciles communities improving agricultural productivity through use of manure as fertilizers.

## Minimum Support Prices (MSPs)

### In News

Vice President stated that hike in MSP for Kharif crops for 2018-19 Season will go a long way in improving the incomes of the farmers.

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### What is Minimum Support Price?

MSP is the price at which government purchases crops from the farmers, whatever may be the price for the crops. MSP is price fixed by Government of India to protect the producer - farmers - against excessive fall in price during bumper production years. The minimum support prices are a guarantee price for their produce from the Government.

PEPPER IT WITH  
FCI, PDS, Procurement  
Price, CACP, Doubling  
Farmers Income by 2022

### Aim

1. Assure remunerative and relatively stable price environment for the farmers by inducing them to increase production and thereby augment the availability of food grains.
2. Improve economic access of food to people.
3. Evolve a production pattern which is in line with overall needs of the economy.

### What is open ended MSP?

Government considers that some types of crops are vital for food security. To ensure and encourage the production of such crops the government follows a much liberal procurement policy known as open ended MSP.

In this case, there is no procurement target. The government allows the procurement agencies like the FCI to buy whatever is offered by the farmers for sale at MSP like wheat and rice.

### Who declares and who prepares it?

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), Government of India, determines the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) of various agricultural commodities in India based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Cost and Prices (CACP).

#### Determinants Of MSP

- demand and supply
- cost of production
- price trends in the market, both domestic and international
- inter-crop price parity terms of trade between agriculture and non-agriculture
- likely implications of MSP on consumers of that product

### How many commodities are covered under the MSP?

At present, the MSP covers 24 crops that includes seven cereals (paddy, wheat, barley, jowar, bajra, maize and ragi); five pulses (gram, arhar/tur, moong, urad and lentil); eight oilseeds (groundnut, rapeseed/mustard, toria, soyabean, sunflower seed, sesamum, safflower seed and nigerseed); copra, raw cotton, raw jute and virginia flu cured (VFC) tobacco.

### Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP)

- CACP is an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India. Currently, the Commission comprises a Chairman, Member Secretary, one Member (Official) and two Members (Non-Official). The non-official members are representatives of the farming community and usually have an active association with the farming community.
- CACP is mandated to recommend MSPs to incentivize the cultivators to adopt modern technology and raise productivity and overall grain production in line with the emerging demand patterns in the country.

Fair and Remunerative Price FRP is the minimum price that sugar mills must pay to sugarcane farmers. It is determined on basis of recommendations of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP) and after consultation with State Governments and other stakeholders.

- CACP submits its recommendations to the government in the form of Price Policy Reports every year, separately for five groups of commodities namely Kharif crops, Rabi crops, Sugarcane, Raw Jute and Copra.
- After receiving the feed-back from National Organisations like NAFED, CCI, JCI etc the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) of the Union government takes a final decision on the level of MSPs and other recommendations made by CACP.

### CJI as 'Master of Roster'

#### In News

The Supreme Court recently reiterated, third time in the last eight months, that the Chief Justice of India is the master of roster in allocating cases to different benches and his power cannot be delegated to collegium comprising of CJI and four senior-most judges.

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#### What does 'master of the roster' mean?

- **'Master of the Roster' refers to the privilege of the Chief Justice to constitute Benches to hear cases.**
- **SC further said that "no Judge can take up the matter on this own, unless allocated by the Chief Justice of India, as he is the master of the roster."**
- This privilege was emphasised last year, when a Constitution Bench, led by the Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, **declared that "the Chief Justice is the master of the roster and he alone has the prerogative to constitute the Benches of the Court and allocate cases to the Benches so constituted."**

PEPPER IT WITH  
Article 139A, Article 145,  
Article 126, Article 128

#### Observations from SC judgment

1. Moral Responsibility: The moral responsibility the CJI owes to his colleagues and the public at large while flexing his powers as 'Master of Roster' to allocate cases. The CJI is the "ultimate authority to distribute judicial work".
2. CJI is not the Collegium: Neither Article 145 (rules of court) and the Supreme Court Rules say the 'Chief Justice of India' as the Collegium. The role of the CJI as the Master of Roster was qualified by the consensus from other judges. The CJI took into consideration the expertise, capacity and interest of his fellow judges while allocating cases to them. This duty should be left to his wisdom.  
Unlike the Collegium to recommend new judges, a collegium to allocate cases would mean judges deciding for themselves which cases they should hear. Better have the CJI decide for all as the Master of Roster
3. CJI only first among equals: The CJI is only 'first among equals' in his judicial functions on the Bench. The opinion of the CJI on the Bench carries the same weight as any other member of the Bench. This way, the CJI may hold the minority view in a case while the majority opinion on the Bench becomes the law.

Appointment of CJI  
The Chief Justice of India and the Judges of the Supreme Court are appointed by the President under clause (2) of Article 124 of the Constitution.

1. Appointment to the office of the Chief Justice of India should be of the senior most Judge of the Supreme Court considered fit to hold the office. The Union Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs would, at the appropriate time, seek the recommendation of the outgoing Chief Justice of India for the appointment of the next Chief Justice of India.
2. After receipt of the recommendation of the Chief Justice of India, the Union Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs will put up the recommendation to the Prime Minister who will advise the President in the matter of appointment.

- 4. Position of CJI: Although the constitution is silent on the CJI’s role as the master of the roster, his power is based on a healthy practice and “convention-engrafted in the Supreme Court Rules - have moulded the powers and duties of CJI office. This is aimed at maintaining discipline and decorum.” **He is described as “first among equals.”**

Steps of CJI impeachment

- I. A removal motion signed by 100 members of Lok Sabha or 50 members of Rajya Sabha must be submitted to the Speaker of the Lower House or Chairperson (ie Vice President) of the Upper House. This can be in either of the Houses of Parliament.
- II. The Speaker/Chairperson can either accept or reject the motion.
- III. If the motion is admitted, then the Speaker/ Chairperson forms a three-member committee comprising a senior judge of the Supreme Court, a judge of a high court and a distinguished jurist to investigate the charges leveled against the CJI.
- IV. If the committee supports the motion, it can be taken up for discussion in the House where it was introduced. It must be passed by a special two-third majority of MPs in both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. This means, in case of a full House seated, at least 364 Members should be have voted for the motion in the Lok Sabha, and 164 Members in the Rajya Sabha.
- V. After it is passed in both Houses, it is presented to the President, who can pass a Presidential Order for removal of the CJI.

Central govt officers for village outreach

In News

A battalion of Central government officers has been drafted to ensure on the ground implementation as the Centre races to saturate 117 “aspirational districts” with seven flagship social welfare schemes by Independence Day.

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Welfare Delivery Model

At least 800 Deputy Secretaries, Under-Secretaries and Director-level officers, drawn from Ministries as diverse as Defence and Urban Affairs, have been assigned about 75 villages to visit, as part of the Extended Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (EGSA) from June 1 to August 15. In total, 49,178 villages — most with a majority SC/ST population — are being targeted.

PEPPER IT WITH Federalism, marble-cake federalism, GSA, Saubhagya

- Over the two-and-a-half-month time span, these Central authorities are being consumed into EGSA obligation for no less than 15 working days.
- In every town, the Central group assembles a gathering of villagers and recipients alongside a State government or region official, a lead bank delegate and neighbourhood authorities from the organizations in charge of enlisting individuals into the plans.

- Types of democracy
1. Direct democracy
  2. Representative democracy
  3. Presidential democracy
  4. Parliamentary democracy
  5. Authoritarian democracy
  6. Participatory democracy
  7. Islamic democracy
  8. Social democracy

Monitoring Mechanism

- The teams can also directly input the day’s progress into a data system which can be tracked live on the EGSA dashboard.
- Senior Ministry officials also make direct daily calls to a section of District Collectors to monitor progress, while third-party observers for each district —mostly from NGOs or academia — have been drafted in to do random checks of villages and report back to the Ministry.



### Concerns

1. Questions are being raised about Centre-State relations under this model, in an election year. The involvement of Central officers raises eyebrows about the viability of such initiatives and undermines the rationale of federalism.
2. This is a profoundly dangerous method for going about welfare delivery. Constitutionally, while the Center has higher forces of tax assessment, most of the consumption on welfare is to be finished by the States. This type of administration bypasses State Administration failing to empower the local human resources.
3. This will create a huge work load at place from where the central government officers are being deployed causing hindered administrative functioning.

Cooperative federalism, by definition, is a system where the national and state governments of a country work together to solve common problems. This is in contrast to an arrangement where there is a strict separation of powers between the various levels of a government, or to a unitary system of government in which a more powerful federal government tries to enforce its will on the subordinate governments.

### Extended Gram Swaraj Abhiyan(EGSA)

- In continuation of “Gram Swaraj Abhiyan”, started on the occasion of Ambedkar Jayanti, Govt. of India has extended it in 117 Aspirational Districts identified by the NITI Aayog.
- This campaign which, undertaken under “**SabkaSath, Sabka Gaon, Sabka Vikas**”, is to promote social harmony, spread awareness about pro-poor initiatives of the government, reach out to poor households to enroll them as also to obtain their feedback on various welfare programmes.
- During this abhiyan, saturation of eligible households/persons would be made under seven flagship pro-poor programmes namely:
  1. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana
  2. Saubhagya
  3. Ujala scheme
  4. Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
  5. Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana
  6. Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana
  7. Mission Indradhanush

### Institution of Eminence

#### In News

Government declared **6 educational Institutions of Eminence**; 3 Institutions from Public Sector and 3 from Private Sector.

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#### Background

An Empowered Expert Committee (EEC) in its report recommended selection of 6 institutions (3 from public sector and 3 from private sector) as Institutions of Eminence. The details of these Institutions are as under:

Public Sector: (i) Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (ii) Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay and (iii) Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi.

Private Sector: (i) Jio Institute (Reliance Foundation), Pune under Green Field Category; (ii) Birla Institute of Technology & Sciences, Pilani and (iii) Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal.

#### What are Institutes of Eminence?

After no Indian University found a place in World University Rankings last year, the government proposed to set up Institutions of Eminence in India. Under this proposal, it planned to establish 20 such world class institutes in the country.

PEPPER IT WITH HEERA, HEEFA, UGC, AICTE, NIRF, AISHE

“The Institution of Eminence shall continue to be ranked in the National institutional Ranking Framework and, within five years of notification, shall get itself ranked in an International Ranking index of repute.

Criteria as per EEC

1. Top 50 in the National institution Ranking Framework in their category are eligible to apply.
2. Top 500 in internationally recognised rankings like the Times Higher Education World University Rankings or QS University Rankings or Shanghai Ranking Academic Ranking of World Universities are eligible to apply.
3. Central Universities, Government-owned and controlled Deemed to be Universities.
4. Institutions of National Importance such as IITs, NITs, etc.
5. State Universities set up under a law made by Legislative Assembly of a State.

Benefits of IoE

1. The institutes of eminence will have three key benefits—complete freedom from regulatory interference in terms of academic and administrative requirements, added funds for the state-run institutions, and more collaboration opportunities with top global universities.
2. The Institutions of Eminence would be free to fix and charge fees from foreign students without restriction as well as have freedom to change domestic students fee structure.
3. Each public Institution selected as ‘Institution of Eminence’ will get financial assistance up to Rs. 1000 Crore over the period of five years under this scheme.
4. Unlike the other institutions in the country, these institutions will have the liberty to enrol up to 30 per cent foreign students and recruit up to 25 per cent foreign faculty.

Way Ahead

The education system in India has struggled for a long time. With the country set to become one of the youngest nations in the world by 2030 – around 140 million people will be in the college-age group. Despite strong ambitions, the higher education system in India still lags behind the **standards of the world’s best** universities. In the QS World University Rankings 2015/16, only two Indian universities were featured in the top 200. India today educates only half as many young people from the university age group as China and ranks well behind most Latin American and other middle-income countries.

The business links it already has with nations across the globe, suggest that it could become a major education destination as well. Already known for engineering and mechanics, with solid investment and a well-structured development programme, this identity could be transferred to the entire higher education system in India.

N Gopalaswami committee

- As per the Guidelines and Regulations, an EEC/N Gopalaswami Committee has been constituted to select 10 Private and 10 Public Institutions of Eminence (IoEs) from the 114 applications which have been received in the Ministry for the status of IoEs.
- The committee consist of one chairman and 3 member and Shri N Gopalaswami headed as Chairman- formerEEC.
- The committee was constituted by the UGC
- The private Institutions of Eminence can also come up as greenfield ventures provided the sponsoring organisation submits a convincing perspective plan for 15 years.

**Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018**

In News

The Parliament recently passed the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018 making it an act which ensures stringent punishment for those convicted of raping girls below 12 years of age. The bill was passed in the Lok Sabha last month and recently it was unanimously passed in Rajya Sabha by voice

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vote.

The bill replaces the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018, promulgated by President. It amends certain laws related to rape. Key amendments are as follows:

#### Amendments to Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860:

1. Enhanced punishment for rape: Under IPC, 1860, the minimum imprisonment has been increased from seven years to ten years.
2. New offences: It creates new offences to increase punishment for rape of minor girls.

Table for New offences

Age	Offence	IPC, 1860	2018 Bill
Below 12 years	Rape	Minimum: 10 years Maximum: life imprisonment	Minimum: 20 years Maximum: life imprisonment or death
	Gang Rape	Minimum: 20 years Maximum: life imprisonment	Minimum: life imprisonment Maximum: life imprisonment or death
Below 16 years	Rape	Minimum: 10 years Maximum: life imprisonment	Minimum: 20 years Maximum: no change
	Gang Rape	Minimum: 20 years Maximum: life imprisonment	Minimum: life imprisonment Maximum: no provision
16 years and above	Rape	Minimum: 7 years Maximum: life imprisonment	Minimum: 10 years Maximum: no change

3. Repeat offenders: IPC, 1860 states that a person who commits rape for the second time may be punished with life imprisonment or death. This provision has been extended to cover rape under the new offences.

Amendments to Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012: The POCSO, 2012 contains provisions for punishment of rape of minors. It states that the punishment which is higher between the POCSO, 2012 and the IPC, 1860 will apply to rape of minors. This provision has been extended to cover the new offences.

#### Amendments to Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), 1973:

1. Time-bound investigation: The CrPC, 1973 states that an investigation into rape of a child must be completed within three months. The provision reduces the time for completion of investigation to two months. Further, it extends this timeline to all offences of rape (i.e. irrespective of age of victim).
2. Appeal: The provision states that any appeal against a sentence related to rape cases must be disposed of within six months.
3. Anticipatory Bail: The CrPC, 1973 lists conditions for grant of anticipatory bail. It makes the provision of anticipatory bail not applicable to rape and gang rape of minor girls below 16 years of age.
4. Compensation: The CrPC, 1973 provides that all rape victims will be given free medical treatment and compensation by state government. This provision has been extended to cover rape and gang rape of minor girls below 16 years of age.
5. Prior sanction: The CrPC, 1973 states that prior sanction is required for prosecution of all public servants, except for certain offences, like rape. This provision has been extended to cover rape and gang rape of minor girls below 16 years of age.

As per the provision of the bill, fast-track special courts will be set up to exclusively deal with rape cases. Apart from this, only a woman judge will hear the rape case and a woman police officer will record the statement of rape victims.

- 6. Amendments to Indian Evidence Act, 1872: Under Evidence Act, in determining whether the action was consensual or not, past sexual experience or character of the victim is disregarded. This provision has been extended to cover rape and gang rape of minor girls below 16 years of age.

Justice JS Verma Committee & Nirbhaya Act

- ❖ A week after the horrific attack on Nirbhaya in 2012, the Justice JS Verma Committee was set up to review our criminal laws and recommend amendments to them.
- ❖ Objectives: Properly addressing all sorts of sexual crimes and ensuring speedier trials and enhanced punishment.
- ❖ The Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2013/Nirbhaya Act expanded the definition of rape to include oral sex as well as the insertion of an object or any other body part **into a woman’s vagina, urethra or anus.**
- ❖ The amendments also included an improved standard of consent – consent now needs to be unequivocal and clearly communicated, and lack of physical resistance **isn’t assumed as consent.**
- ❖ **In a crucial move, recognising India’s massive problem with acid attacks, the 2013 Act** also introduced provisions specially criminalising them, and for protecting victims of these attacks.

Issues on horizon

- The Bill amends the IPC, 1860 to increase the punishment for rape of girls. However, punishment for rape of boys has remained unchanged. This has resulted in greater difference in the quantum of punishment for rape of minor boys and girls.
- It imposes death penalty for rape of girls below the age of 12 years. There are differing views on death penalty for rape. Some argue that death penalty has a deterrence effect on the crime and therefore helps prevent it. Others argue that death penalty would be disproportionate punishment for rape as there is no empirical data on deterrence by capital punishment.

*\*\*The President gave his assent to the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018 making it an Act on August 12, 2018\*\**

Telecom Commission on net neutrality

In News

The Telecom Commission (TC), the highest decision-making body in the Department of Telecom approved the recommendation made by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Net neutrality.

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What is net neutrality, and why is it important?

- In simple terms, net neutrality means unrestricted access to the internet – a space where all websites are treated equally by all service providers. The primary aim of the net neutrality movement in India was to restrict ISPs from slowing down or promoting certain websites or apps.
- When net neutrality is in force, individuals will gain unrestrained access to all content on the web, regardless of how big or small an app or a website is. The speed at which each website loads, and online video and music streaming speeds would be the same.
- If net neutrality does not exist, ISPs could make a huge amount of money from web content creators. The absence of net neutrality could affect small, emerging players who might not be able to pay ISPs to boost their content.

To define the term **“throttling”**, many TSPs and a few others suggested that **this should mean “intentionally degrading quality of service”** when accessing particular content/services or applications. Others, however, proposed a broader scope covering any type of practice that slows down, alters, restricts, interferes with, degrades, discriminates, or otherwise unreasonably manipulates Internet traffic.

What is excluded from net neutrality's purview?

- Under the Department of Telecom (DoT), a separate committee has been established to examine what these critical services/specialised services will be. The concerned authorities mentioned that these services might include **“autonomous vehicles, digital healthcare services or disaster management.”**
- Content delivery networks, or CDNs, have also been kept out of the purview of net neutrality. CDNs allow a telecom company to deliver content without the need to access public internet.

PEPPER IT WITH  
TRAI, NDCP 2018, IoTs,  
Universal Services Obligation  
Fund, EU Net Neutrality  
Guidelines

Pro  
Freedom of expression  
Promotes innovation and competition  
Unfettered access  
Costs Consumers Less

Cons  
Increasing Governmental Influence  
Resistant to Development  
Porn and objectionable content thrives  
No free internet access & Price Fixing

TRAI Recommendations

- A Licensee providing Internet Access Service shall not engage in any discriminatory treatment of content, including based on the sender or receiver, the protocols being used or the user equipment.
- The mobile operators, internet providers and social-media and internet companies cannot engage in, or seek, preferential treatment as there will now be prohibition on any kind of interference in the treatment of content, including practices like blocking, degrading, slowing down or granting differential speeds or treatment to any content.
- Those critical IoT services, which may be identified by DoT as satisfying the definition of specialised services (as stated above), would be automatically excluded.
- The Authority proposes to supplement its existing disclosure and transparency requirements by framing additional regulations in this regard.
- Authority recommends that for monitoring and enforcement, DoT may establish a multi-stakeholder body with framework for collaborative mechanism among the stakeholders.
- Any efforts to create zero-rated platforms have now been blocked. Zero-rated platforms, which had earlier been tried (by companies such as Airtel and Facebook) but barred, offer only a certain category of services and websites as free, thus creating paid layers and stifling competition and innovation.
- **Facebook’s Free Basics** initiative that aimed to “bring more people online” but was just a hub of “western corporate content”. Free Basics will remain illegal in India.

**“Discriminatory treatment”** shall include any form of discrimination, restriction or interference in the treatment of content, including practices like blocking, degrading, slowing down or granting preferential speeds or treatment to any content.

Telecom Commission

- ❖ The TC was set up by the Government with administrative and financial powers of the Government of India to deal with various aspects of Telecommunications.
- ❖ The TC consists of a Chairman, four full time members and four part time members.
- ❖ The TC is responsible for:
  1. Formulating the policy of Department of Telecommunications for approval of the Government.
  2. Preparing the budget for the Department of Telecommunications for each financial year and getting it approved by the Government.
  3. Implementation of Government's policy in all matters concerning telecommunication

Significance

Net neutrality is a bit of a hot-button issue at the moment and is one of the most fiercely-fought battlegrounds when it comes to the intersection of technology and policy. At its core, net neutrality is the concept that all internet traffic should be treated fairly, without unfairly penalising or prioritising traffic from a given domain, service or publisher.

## Adultery Law

### In News

The Centre has sought dismissal of the petition challenging the vires of Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code, informing the Supreme Court that the issue is already being deliberated upon by the Law Commission of India.

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### Background

The legal definition of adultery varies from country to country. Laws related to adultery vary from statute to statute and at some places adultery is considered a crime and the adulterer may even have to face death penalty, while at some places it is not punishable. In few statutes, if either individual is married to someone else, both parties to an adulterous liaison are culpable to the crime. According to Indian jurisdiction, the adultery law comes under Section 497 of the Indian penal code.

Section-498- Enticing or taking away or detaining with criminal intent a married woman “Whoever takes or entices any woman who is and whom he knows or has reasons to believe to be the wife of any other man, from that man, or from any person having the care of her on behalf of that man, with intent that she may have illicit intercourse with any person or conceals or detains with that intent any such woman, shall be punished with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to two years, or with fine, or with both”.

### Issues highlighted by plea

1. It contended that **Section 497 was “prima facie unconstitutional on the grounds that it discriminates against men and violates Article 14, 15 and 21 of the Constitution”**. Plea demands Section 497 of the IPC to be scrapped, contending it does not treat men and women equally.
2. The plea in the court centered on the question whether Section 497 demeans a woman to the extent of her being considered the husband's "commodity".
3. The Plea also challenged Section 198(2) of CrPC, which deals with the prosecution for offences against marriages. The Plea contended that only husband is liable for the offence, but the other-half is absolved, and that the concept of gender neutrality, on which criminal law normally proceeds, is absent.
4. **“The provision (Section 497) really creates a dent in the individual independent identity of a woman when the emphasis is laid on the connivance or consent of the husband. This tantamount to subordination of a woman where the Constitution confers (women) equal status.”**

Adultery is not a crime in most countries of the European Union, including Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Finland, Sweden and even Britain.

### SC on Section 497 not be scrapped

1. Striking down section 497 of IPC and Section 198(2) Cr. P.C. will prove to be detrimental to the intrinsic Indian ethos which gives paramount importance to the institution and sanctity of marriage.
2. The provisions of law under challenge in the present writ have been specifically created by the legislature in its wisdom, to protect and safeguard the sanctity of marriage, keeping in mind the unique structure and culture of the Indian society.
3. The apex court had earlier on three separate occasions, in 1954, 1985 and 1988, upheld the constitutionality of Section 497.
4. The Malimath Committee in its report has held that the object of this section is to preserve the sanctity of the marriage. In report on reforms in the criminal justice system had suggested making section 497 gender-neutral instead of scrapping it.
5. The SC felt it was about time to examine whether affirmative action mandated under Article 15(3) of the Constitution to benefit women in general could legally and judicially translate into absolving them of prosecution in a crime.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Malimath Committee, Law  
Commission Report on  
Adultery, Article 15(3), Section  
198(1)



### Way Ahead

**Adultery isn't such a grave crime for which one gets a sentence of 5 years (maximum).** It is at best a violation of the terms of agreement between a married couple. As long as it serves as a basis of getting a divorce, makes a man feel morally guilty, hurts his conscience, the punishment has been given, divorce will serve as the punishment. Imprisonment may further destroy his social and family life and may bring defamation along. It also scars the minds of the children as they may not even understand why the father has been imprisoned.

#### Section 198(2) in The Code Of Criminal Procedure, 1973

For the purposes of sub-section (1), no person other than the husband of the woman shall be deemed to be aggrieved by any offence punishable under section 497 or section 498 of the said Code: Provided that in the absence of the husband, some person who had care of the woman on his behalf at the time when such offence was committed may, with the leave of the Court, make a complaint on his behalf.

**It's not necessary that the woman is always a victim of such crime and not the author of it.** The time has now come when all these questions must be answered. **Vague and illogical laws shouldn't find a place in society. It will make the subjects distant from the rulers and create instability in the legal system.**

### Right of First Refusal (ROFR)

#### In News

A proposed move by the Centre to abolish the Right of First Refusal (ROFR) clause for transportation of Indian cargo by Indian-flagged vessels — the only benefit available to Indian shipping companies — is threatening the existence of the domestic shipping industry.

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#### Concerns

1. Indian shipping companies are mulling over de-registering their vessels from India and flag them in tax havens of Panama and Bahama to survive and compete with foreign lines.
2. **Currently, 92% of India's export import trade is carried by foreign flag ships.** And the 8% that is assured to Indian ships is likely to go if the ROFR is scrapped. This benefit is provided since foreign flag vessels do not pay any tax in India while Indian companies are costlier since they must pay multiple taxes.
3. Indian domestic shipping companies -combined fleet of 1,372 ships with a total capacity of 12.35 million Gross Tonnage (GT) will lose the opportunity of doing this business if ROFR is scrapped hurting Indian economy.
4. The integrity and security of transportation of critical cargo in times of war or economic sanctions seem to have been completely ignored without any consultative process.

In 2017 alone, Indian shipping companies have made investments of around ₹4,700 crore in assets in anticipation of business. All this investment is at stake. Some experts feel the objective of the government is to shift cargo movement from railways and roadways to the waterways to reduce logistics costs and ensure faster movement of cargo, which the domestic lines have failed to deliver.

#### Background

In the real estate context, a Right of First Refusal (ROFR) and a Right of First Offer (ROFO) are contractual rights that permit the purchase of property, or the lease of space, upon the occurrence of certain events, often referred to as trigger events.

#### What is a 'Right Of First Refusal'?

Right of first refusal is a contractual right, but not obligation, to enter into a business transaction with a person or company before anyone else can. If the entity with the right of first refusal declines to enter into a transaction, the owner of the asset who offered the right is free to open the bidding up to other interested parties.

Example: In the business world, rights of first refusal are commonly seen in joint venture situations. The partners in a joint venture generally possess the right of first refusal on buying out the stakes held by other partners, should the latter wish to leave the joint venture.

What is a 'Right of First Offer'?

A right of first offer is a contractual obligation by the owner of an asset to a rights holder to negotiate the sale of an asset with the rights holder before offering the asset for sale to third parties. If the rights holder is not interested in purchasing the asset or cannot reach an agreement with the seller, the seller has no further obligation to the rights holder and may sell the asset.

Example: The most common situation where a right of first offer is used in practice is between a commercial tenant and a landlord. In such a case, the tenant may want to have a right of first offer to avoid being forced to relocate.

Way Forward

Any dilution/withdrawal of RoFR will work completely against the spirit of the 'Make in India' campaign. This will wipe out Indian shipowners who have invested in this highly volatile and challenging sector. The Shipping Ministry has relaxed the cabotage rule for a variety of cargo segments, opening-up India's coastal trade to foreign ships.

This will hurt the Indian economy and will deprive many Indians from job in shipping industries.

Cabotage Law refers to the transport of goods or passengers between two ports / places within the same country by a foreign shipping / transport operator. This term was earlier applicable to only shipping industry but is now applicable for road, rail as well as aviation transports. However, in aviation, still there are strict restrictions on Cabotage.

**India's Cabotage policy is enshrined in the Merchant Shipping Act, 1958.** Foreign flagged vessels are permitted to carry only if Indian flagged vessels are not available.

PEPPER IT WITH  
VHCPL-ADCC Pingalai  
Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd. & Anr  
v. Union of India & Ors

Counter-drone strategy for airports

In News

Aviation security watchdog BCAS has finalised a strategy to neutralise drones near airports, with the government set to unveil a framework to regulate unmanned aircraft systems in the country.

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Proposal

- The counter-drone plan prepared by a committee headed by Director General of BCAS (Bureau of Civil Aviation Security) Kumar Rajesh Chandra has proposed **neutralising drones through a "soft kill" approach which will include entrapping or jamming drones instead of destroying them.**
- The committee will check the capabilities, functional efficacy and ease of handling of this anti-drone technology. The committee highlights need to train a specific team either of the CISF personnel or the Air Traffic Controllers (ATC) staff at airports for drone tackling.
- The Ministry of Civil Aviation had released draft rules for unmanned aircraft systems last year and proposed to ban their operation within 5 km radius of an airport and 50 km from an international border.
- The strategy deals with drones operating near aerodromes as the body is mandated to ensure aviation security. The Ministry of Home Affairs may prepare a separate plan to deal with drone attacks in sensitive zones such as Parliament.

PEPPER IT WITH  
About Rustom 2,  
NETRA, ICAO, FASTags

Atal Innovation Mission, NITI Aayog & MyGov (a citizen centric platform of the Government of India) have launched portal **"Innovate India Platform"**.

### What is soft kill?

- The soft kill technology means that any rogue drone that flies into a secured air space can be destabilized and its system will get frozen. The hard kill technology means that the drone itself can be destroyed.
- A “soft kill” approach instead of a hard kill approach has been suggested because destroying a drone with a payload of explosives or biochemical will result in an attack and serve the purpose of their handlers.

**NITI Aayog’s Women Entrepreneurship Platform and Shri Ram College of Commerce (SRCC), Office of International Programmes (OIP) University of Delhi, had jointly organised Two-Day International conference on “Empowering Women: Fostering Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Sustainability”. Country’s first state-run all-woman hotel named ‘Hostess’ in Kerala launched by Kerala Tourism Development Corporation.**

### BCAS

- The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security is an attached office of the Ministry of Civil Aviation of India.
- The main responsibility of BCAS are lay down standards and measures in respect of security of civil flights at International and domestic airports in India.
- BCAS is the regulatory authority for civil aviation security in India. It is headed by an officer of the rank of Director General of Police and is designated as Commissioner of Security (Civil Aviation).
- Commissioner of security (CA) is the authority for implementation of Annexure 17 to Chicago convention of International civil aviation organization (ICAO).
- Commissioner of security (CA) is responsible for the development, implementation and maintenance of the National Civil Aviation Security Programme.

## Assam Witch Hunting Act

### In News

President has approved the Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2015, converting it to an Act.

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### Key Highlights

- The Act contains provisions for imprisonment up to seven years along with a fine up to Rs 5 lakh for identifying and calling a person witch.
- The Act would be imposed, along with Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), if someone is killed after being branded as witch.
- The punishment for leading a person to commit suicide after intimidating, stigmatising, defaming and accusing her as witch, may be extended to life imprisonment, along with Rs 5 lakh fine.
- The Act also talks about various measures that the administration and police should initiate, along with NGOs and civil society, to educate people about witch-hunting.
- It also entails that the fine realised as punishment for an offence shall be paid to the victim or his/her next of kin as compensation.

### Major reasons of witch-hunting in Assam:

1. Old Superstitious Traditions
2. Lack of Education
3. Diseases and poor health care system
4. Poverty
5. Victimization of women over claim on property and denial of sex

The scope of the pardoning power of the President is under Article 72 and the pardoning power of the Governor is under Article 161. The President can grant pardon in all cases where the sentence given is sentence of death, but pardoning power of Governor does not extend to death sentence cases.

### Way Forward

Between 2001 and 2017, 193 people -- 114 women and 79 men -- have been branded as witch and killed and 202 cases have been registered by the police during this period.

Witch-hunting or witch-branding is such a phenomenon which ruin the person’s reputation, property, family and life. It is very surprising that in 21st century, when we talk about women empowerment in all walks of life, the practices like witch hunting still exists. It is also surprising to see that; this practice is also prevalent among educated people; the case of the national athlete Debojani Bora further proves that being national level athlete would neither save one from being victim of witch branding. The Act a move which is one more step towards creating a just and equitable society and empower women with tools to participate in economy building.

PEPPER IT WITH  
CARA, JJ Act 2015,  
Hague Convention, WEP

### No-Confidence Motion

#### In News

Speaker of the Lok Sabha Sumitra Mahajan accepted the no-confidence motion moved by Telugu Desam Party against the ruling government.

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#### No-confidence motion

A no-confidence motion is an attempt, usually by an Opposition party, to get the government of the day to prove its majority on the floor of the House. The motion can only be moved by a member in the Lok Sabha, and, once moved, offers **MPs an opportunity to discuss the government’s performance**, before voting on whether the ruling party has the “confidence” of the House. No prior reason needs to be stated for its adoption in the Lok Sabha.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Voice Vote, Division of Votes,  
Censure motion, Adjournment  
motion, Floor Test

#### Constitution on No-Confidence-Motion & Confidence-Motion/Trust-vote

- Neither a confidence motion nor a no-confidence motion is mentioned in the Constitution. But Article 75 spells it out that “**the council of ministers shall be collectively responsible to the House of the People**”. this implies that the majority of Lok Sabha members must support the prime minister and his cabinet.
- Article 118 of the Constitution permits each house of Parliament to make its own rules for conduct of business.
- There is no special provision in the rules for a confidence motion — such a motion is moved as an ordinary motion under Rule 184. A government can prove its majority by moving a confidence motion as a counter to the opposition parties.
- Rule 198 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha lays down the procedure for moving a Motion of No-Confidence in the Council of Ministers.

Overall, 26 no-confidence motions have been moved in the past, of these, 25 have been unsuccessful, and one did not get to the voting stage as Morarji Desai resigned as prime minister. The Rajya Sabha does not have a procedure for moving of an adjournment motion, censure motion or no-confidence motion against the Government.

#### Procedure

- Once the notice is received and considered to be in order, the Speaker reads out the motion. If more than 50 members of Parliament are in favour of it, the Speaker will allot a date and time to discuss the motion. The Speaker has to put forth every question necessary that will help the House in determining its decision and may also allot a time limit for speeches.
- For it to remain in power, the ruling government will have to prove its majority on the floor, meaning it will need at least 273 votes if all members are present.

What is composite floor test?  
If there is more than one person staking claim to form the government and the majority is not clear the governor may call for a special session to see who has the majority. Some legislators may be absent or choose not to vote. The majority is then counted based on those present and voting. This can be done through a voice vote, where the legislators respond orally, or through a division vote.

- The Prime Minister and Council of Ministers can only hold office if they have the confidence of the Lok Sabha. If they fail to do so, then they are obliged to resign.
- The Prime Minister may also suggest dissolving the House before the vote on either a confidence or a no-confidence motion.

## State Banks (Repeal and Amendment) Act, 2018

### In News

Parliament passes State Banks (Repeal and Amendment) Bill, 2017 making it Act to merge six subsidiary banks with State Bank of India after it was approved by Rajya Sabha.

### Key Highlights

- Repeal: It is to repeal the two Acts:
  1. State Bank of India (Subsidiary Banks) Act, 1959
  2. State Bank of Hyderabad Act, 1956
- The two above-mentioned Acts established the State Bank of Bikaner, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Patiala, State Bank of Travancore, and State Bank of Hyderabad. These banks were subsidiaries of the State Bank of India (SBI).
- By repealing these two acts, five subsidiary banks will be merged with SBI.
- Amendments to the SBI Act, 1955: The Act is to amend the State Bank of India Act, 1955 to remove references related to subsidiary banks. These references include: (i) the definition of a subsidiary bank in the 1955 Act, and (ii) powers of SBI to act as an agent of the RBI for a subsidiary bank.

- ❖ West Bengal state assembly has unanimously passed resolution to **change state's name to 'Bangla'** in all three languages – Bengali, Hindi and English.
- ❖ The renaming of a state requires Parliamentary approval under Article 3 and 4 of the Constitution.
- ❖ A bill for renaming a state may be introduced in the Parliament on the recommendation of the President.

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### Significance of move

- ✓ The purposes of merger are "rationalisation of resources, reduction of costs, better profitability, lower cost of funds leading to better rate of interest for public at large, improved productivity and customer service.
- ✓ Following the merger, the total customer base of SBI increased to 37 crores with a branch network of around 24,000 and nearly 59,000 ATMs across the country.
- ✓ The merger had made SBI one of 50 biggest banks of world.

## Commission for denotified, semi-nomadic, nomadic tribes

### In News

NITI Aayog has backed a proposal by a panel constituted by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to set up a permanent commission for Denotified (DNT), Semi Nomadic (SNT), and Nomadic Tribes (NT).

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### DNT

The people, who were notified as Criminal Tribes during British rule and were denotified after independence in 1952, have been known as Denotified Tribes, based on the report of Ananthasayanam Ayyangar in 1949-50. The Committee listed nearly 163 communities.

### Recommendations

1. The Commission recommended granting Constitutional protection to these communities

The 1931 census noted that "these communities were the most **oppressed**" although they did not undergo the social untouchability as in the case of caste known as scheduled castes. These are the people who were dishonoured by history, branded by law and rejected by societies as experts write volumes on their woes



- under a separate 3<sup>rd</sup> schedule after Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, making them eligible for reservation, and extending the protective cover of Prevention of Atrocities Act to them.
2. It recommended a permanent commission should have a prominent community leader as its chairperson, and a senior Union government bureaucrat, an anthropologist, and a sociologist as members.
  3. It recommended to the Government of India to write to all state governments to form district level Grievances Redressal Committee under the District Collector to hear the grievances of these communities/groups/tribes
  4. It recommended to conduct basic census since data is not available on these tribes/communities and encouraged govt to undertake a socio-economic survey through some reputed social science institutes.

SNT and NT

Hunting and Food-gathering Communities and Nomadic Pastoral and Non-Pastoral Communities which have traditional practise of hunting, food-gathering, migratory game hunting as livelihood support and continue to traverse seasonally to forests for hunting and gathering in search for better habitats, and **what is called 'green pastures', drove people from one place to another.** The difference between Nomadic Tribes and Semi-nomadic Tribes (including pastoral nomads) is based on the frequency of their movement from one place to another.

Government Initiatives

- The NITI Aayog has agreed with the recommendation to set up a permanent commission for the communities on the lines of similar commissions for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes.
- The NITI Aayog has also supported **the panel's suggestion to form a dedicated National Finance Development Corporation for DNT, SNT and NTs.**
- Scheme
  1. Dr. Ambedkar Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes
  2. Nanaji Deshmukh Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Construction of Hostels for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes

Way Forward

Owing to the stigma of criminality bestowed upon them over 150 years ago, these tribes continue to live in abject poverty and amidst discrimination and fear. The British may have **labelled these communities as 'criminal' and done them the biggest disservice but has** independent India by simply de-notifying them on paper and not giving them their due rights and treated them any differently.

Government of India has constituted a National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic & Semi-Nomadic Tribes with a mandate to identify and prepare a state-wise list of DNT/NT, apart from assessing the status of their inclusion in SC/ST/OBC, identification of areas where they are densely populated, reviewing the progress of development and suggesting appropriate measures for their upliftment. This initiative will certainly bring out the plights of these communities and provide them with fundamental right to life with dignity.

PEPPER IT WITH PVTG, TRIFED, Habitat Rights, Forest Rights Act

Privelege Motion

In News

Congress submitted a notice to Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan for a privilege motion against Prime Minister and Defence Minister for allegedly misleading the House on the commercial value of the deal to buy Rafale fighter jets from France.

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What are parliamentary privileges?

The term 'parliamentary privilege' refers to certain rights and immunities enjoyed by each House of Parliament and Committees of each House collectively, and by Members of each House individually, without which they cannot discharge their functions efficiently and effectively. The object of parliamentary privileges is to safeguard the freedom, the authority and the dignity of Parliament. The powers, privileges and immunities of either House of Parliament and of its Committees and Members have mainly been laid down in article 105 of the Constitution.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Art 105, Half-an-Hour  
Discussion, Calling Attention,  
privileges committee

The Speaker/ Chairman is the first level of scrutiny of a privilege motion. The Speaker/Chairman can decide on the privilege motion or refer it to the privileges committee of Parliament.

What is a privilege motion?

Parliamentary privileges are certain rights and immunities enjoyed by members of Parliament, individually and collectively, so that they can **“effectively discharge their functions”**. When any of these rights and immunities are disregarded, the offence is called a breach of privilege and is punishable under law of Parliament.

Procedure to move motion

A notice is moved in the form of a motion by any member of either House against those being held guilty of breach of privilege. Each House also claims the right to punish as contempt actions which, while not breach of any specific privilege, are offences against its authority and dignity.

What is the difference between breach of privilege and contempt of the House?

- When any of the privileges, either of the Members individually or of the House in its collective capacity, is disregarded or attacked by any individual or authority, the offence is called a 'breach of privilege'.
- Contempt of the House may be defined generally as any act or omission which obstructs or impedes either House of Parliament in the performance of its functions, or which obstructs or impedes any Member or officers of such House in the discharge of his or her duty.
- Whereas all breaches of privilege are contempt of the House, a person may be guilty of a contempt of the House even though he does not violate any of the privilege of the House.

Committee on mob lynching

In News

Two high-level committees have been constituted by the central government to suggest ways and legal framework to effectively deal with incidents of mob violence and lynching.

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Background

- Government on the recent directions of the Supreme Court on the issue of mob violence has issued an advisory to State Governments urging them to take effective measures to prevent incidents of mob violence and lynching and to take stringent action as per law.
- As per the Constitutional scheme, 'Police' and 'Public Order' are State subjects. State Governments are responsible for controlling crime, maintaining law and order, and protecting the life

Kherlanji Massacre 2006:  
On 29th September 2006, the first case reported in India relating to lynching. It occurred at Bhandara district in the state of Maharashtra

and property of the citizens. They are empowered to enact and enforce laws to curb crime in their jurisdiction.

About Committees

- To formulate appropriate measures to address the situation, Government has set up a high-level committee chaired by the Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba to deliberate in the matter and make recommendations.
- Government has further decided to constitute a Group of Ministers (GoMs) headed by the Union Home Minister to consider the recommendations of the high-level committee. The GoM will submit its recommendations to Prime Minister.
- External Affairs Minister, Road Transport Minister, Law Minister and Social Justice and Empowerment Minister are members of the GoM.

In the landmark case of Ram Manohar Lohiya and then reiterated in the case of Shreya Singhal, that action of mob lynching may be a bone of contention in both public order and law and order situation. Currently, cases of mob lynching and other incidents related to instant justice are tried under section 34, 120B, 147, 148, 149, 302, 307, 323, 325, and 341 of IPC. At present there is no law that criminalises mob killings.

11- point prescription outlined by SC

1. The state governments shall designate a senior police officer in each district for taking measures to prevent incidents of mob violence and lynching.
2. The state governments shall immediately identify districts, sub-divisions and villages where instances of lynching and mob violence have been reported in the recent past.
3. The nodal officers shall bring to the notice of the DGP any inter-district co-ordination issues for devising a strategy to tackle lynching and mob violence related issues.
4. It shall be the duty of every police officer to cause a mob to disperse, which, in his opinion, tends to cause violence in the disguise of vigilantism or otherwise
5. Central and the state governments should broadcast on radio and television and other media platforms including the official websites that lynching and mob violence shall invite serious consequence.
6. Curb and stop dissemination of irresponsible and explosive messages, videos and other material on various social media platforms. Register FIR under relevant provisions of law against persons who disseminate such messages.
7. Ensure that there is no further harassment of the family members of the victims.
8. State governments shall prepare a lynching/mob violence victim compensation scheme in the light of the provisions of Section 357A of CrPC.
9. Cases of lynching and mob violence shall be specifically tried by designated court/fast track courts earmarked for that purpose in each district. The trial shall preferably be concluded within six months.
10. To set a stern example in cases of mob violence and lynching, the trial court must ordinarily award maximum sentence upon conviction of the accused person.
11. If it is found that a police officer or an officer of the district administration has failed to fulfil his duty, it will be considered as an act of deliberate negligence.

Lynching is a form of instant justice being administered against a presumed offender without any trial or procedure established by law. Additionally, the term 'lynching' and the pseudo 'lynch law' are coined after a Virginia planter and justice of peace during American Revolution, Charles Lynch (1736-96).

Way Forward

There is no denial of the fact that the cases of mob lynching under the labelled term of instant justice are on an expeditious rise since 2015. Power to deliver justice in no manner can be granted to the mob, the display of strength and use of violence is against the very pillars of democracy. There is a compelling need for atleast certain specific provisions if no legislation for the crimes related to mob lynching. The specific provisions will ensure the **speedy trials together with the rehabilitation of victims' families and security of witnesses** which is missing under the current law. It is the right time to understand the gravity of the situation and start a constructive discussion over the mob violence and the law needed.

## Happiness curriculum for school students

### In News

The Delhi government recently **launched a “happiness curriculum”** in state-run schools.

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- The new subject was designed and prepared by a team of 40 Delhi government teachers, educators and volunteers over a period of six months.
  - Students across schools can expect a **‘happiness’ period of 45 minutes**. Each class will begin with a five-minute meditation session. The happiness period will also include value education and mental exercises.
  - The students from nursery to Class **VIII will be taught a ‘happiness curriculum**.
  - It is based on belief that the modern-day problems like terrorism, corruption and pollution can be solved through schools and a human-centric education
- Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana (SSY) is a small deposit scheme for the girl child launched as a part of the BBBP campaign.
  - By amending *Sukanya Samriddhi Account Rules, 2016*, the Union Government has reduced minimum yearly deposit required under SSY to Rs 250 from Rs 1,000 earlier. (max Rs 1.5 lakh can be deposited)
  - The account will remain operative for 21 years from the date of its opening or till the marriage of the girl after she turns 18.
  - To meet the requirement of her higher education expenses, partial withdrawal of 50% of the balance is allowed after she turns 18.

## National Health Stack

### In News

The proposed National Health Stack (NHS) by NITI Aayog will deploy a powerful technology arsenal, from Big Data Analytics and Machine Learning all the way to Artificial Intelligence and a state-of-the-art Policy Markup Language.

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### NHS

- The National Health Stack (NHS) envisages a centralized health record for all citizens of the country to streamline the health information and facilitate effective management of the same.
- The National Health Stack is designed to provide the foundational components that will be required across Ayushman Bharat and other health programs in India. The Health Stack is a nationally shared digital infrastructure usable by both Centre and State across public and private sectors.
- The proposed NHS is an approach to create a unified health identity of citizens - as they navigate across services across levels of care, i.e. Primary, Secondary and Tertiary and across Public and Private.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Ayushman Bharat  
Yojana, PMRSSM,  
National Health  
Policy 2017, RSBY

### Significance

1. The National Health Stack (NHS) is a visionary digital framework usable by centre and state across public and private sectors. It represents a holistic platform that supports a multitude of health verticals and their disparate branches and can integrate future IT solutions for a sector that is poised for rapid, disruptive changes and unforeseen twists.
2. Once implemented, the National Health Stack will significantly bring down the costs of health protection, converge disparate systems to ensure a cashless and seamlessly integrated experience for the poorest beneficiaries, and promote wellness across the population.

- 3. The NHS, a set of building blocks which are essential in implementing digital health initiatives, would be **“built as a Common Public Good”** to avoid duplication of efforts and successfully achieve convergence and accelerate the momentum to achieve the goal of Universal Health Coverage.

Way Forward

The adoption of the National Health Stack will provide a stimulus not only to act in conformity with a globally progressive commitment to health equity, but also enable India to become a leader of the movement by creating one of the best contemporary technology-informed models for universal health coverage.

Global Housing Construction Technology Challenge

In News

The construction of houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U) is moving at a pace far slower than its rural counterpart, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is set to have a global technology challenge to provide more dynamism to the scheme.

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Global Housing Construction Technology Challenge

- The initiative aims to give a major push to construction of houses for the urban poor under the Centres flagship Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).
- The ministry targets to construct 1.2 crore houses under the scheme in a bid to provide houses to all urban poor by 2022. So far, nearly 40 lakh houses have been sanctioned under the scheme.
- The Centre will invite companies from across the world to showcase their construction techniques under the Global Housing Construction Technology Challenge, the technologies selected would be used for building houses under the PMAY(U) scheme.
- The four parameters in the global challenge would be time, cost, quality, and sustainability. The technology will have to be better than the existing ones on all these four fronts.
- The technologies would have to be tried and tested to be found suitable to the geographical conditions like hilly terrain, plain or earthquake prone urban areas across the country.
- The winning technologies, selected based on criteria laid down by a technical committee of the ministry, will be used to construct houses within the next six to seven months, as against the one-year period required to finish such a project.

Under the rural component PMAY-Gramin, 48.26 lakh houses have been built, with the pace almost on course of meeting the target of 2.95 crore houses by 2022.

PEPPER IT WITH IGBC Green Affordable Housing, Smart City Mission, City Challenge Competition, AMRUT, ULB

**First ‘India Tourism Mart’** will be hosted in New Delhi by the Ministry of Tourism in partnership with the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH). India Convention Promotion Board (ICPB) shall coordinate the whole event.

PMAY-U

- The PMAY-U Programme launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation envisions provision of Housing for All by 2022.
- Mission will be implemented as Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) except for the component of credit linked subsidy which will be implemented as a Central Sector Scheme.

- Under PMAY Scheme, subsidy interest rate is provided at 6.5% on housing loan for the term of 15 years to all the beneficiaries.

### Eligibility

- The mission seeks to address the housing requirement of urban poor including slum dwellers. A slum is defined as a compact area of at least 300 people or about 60 - 70 households of poorly built congested tenements in unhygienic environment.
- Beneficiaries include Economically weaker section (EWS), low-income groups (LIGs) and Middle-Income Groups (MIGs). The annual income cap is up to Rs 3 lakh for EWS, Rs 3-6 lakh for LIG and Rs 6 + -18 lakhs for MIG.
- The beneficiary family should not own a pucca house either in his/her name or in the name of any member of his/her family in any part of India.

## Samagra Shiksha Scheme

### In News

Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has announced 'Padhe Bharat- Badhe Bharat' an initiative under 'Samagra Shiksha' to promote the reading culture among students.

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### Padhe Bharat- Badhe Bharat

- Under this initiative, government will give an annual library grant to schools to allow students widen their ambit of learning.
- The grant will be given to Primary to Senior Secondary levels and will vary between Rs. 5000 and Rs. 20000.
- The two tracks of PB-BB are:
  - Early reading and writing with comprehension
  - Early mathematics

PEPPER IT WITH  
BBBP, DIKSHA, SSA

### Samagra Shiksha

- The vision of the Scheme is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education from pre-school to senior secondary stage in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) for Education.
- It subsumes the three Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).
- The scheme envisages the 'school' as a continuum from pre-school, primary, upper primary, secondary to Senior Secondary levels.**

### Make Child Marriages void

- The WCD Ministry circulated a draft cabinet note that proposes to make child marriages **"void ab initio"** (invalid from the outset).
- The ministry seeks to amend section 3 of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, under which a child marriage is only voidable at the option of the contracting parties.
- According to a study based on Census 2011, there are 2.3 crore child brides in the country. The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2015-16 also showed that 26.8% women were married off before they turned 18.
- According to the NFHS 2015-16, nearly 8% girls in the 15-19 age group had already become mothers or pregnant at the time of the survey.
- The West Bengal government won the prestigious UN Public Service Award 2017 for its KanyashreePrakalpa initiative to combat child marriage and ensure education to the girl child in the state.

The major interventions, across all levels of school education, under the scheme are:

1. Gender and Equity
2. Inclusive Education
3. Digital initiatives
4. Vocational Education Sports and Physical Education
5. Strengthening of Teacher Education and Training

Samagra Shiksha on SDG fulfilment

The Goal SDG-4.1 states that “By 2030, ensure that all boys and girls complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

Further the SDG 4.5 states that “By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of Education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations”

Significance

The main emphasis of the Scheme is on improving quality of school education and the strategy for all interventions would be to enhance the Learning Outcomes at all levels of schooling.

Eat Right Movement

In News

FSSAI has launched ‘The Eat Right Movement’ with a view to get industry on board for implementation of draft food labelling regulation.

Eat Right Movement- Aaj Se Thoda Kam

- "The Eat Right Movement" aims to empower the citizens by improving their health and well-being. Led by the FSSAI, it is a collective effort, to nudge the citizens towards making right food and dietary choices.
- It is platform to provide credible information to help make informed and healthful eating choices. It is built on two broad pillars - "Eat Healthy and "Eat Safe".
- "Eat Healthy" is about making healthy food choices. "Eat Safe" is about ensuring food safety from procurement to consumption and disposal of food.

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**‘The Eat Right Movement’ has brought together three on-going initiatives of FSSAI:**

1. Safe and Nutritious Food Initiative is focused on social and behavioral change around food safety and nutrition at home, school, workplace, and on-the-go.
2. the Eat Healthy Campaign is focused on the reduction of high fat, sugar and salt foods in the diet
3. Food Fortification is focused on promoting five staple foods-wheat flour, rice, oil, milk and salt that are added with key vitamins and minerals to improve their nutritional content.

PEPPER IT WITH  
MAA, National Nutrition  
Strategy, Food Fortified Logo,  
FoSCoRIS

Initiatives taken under Eat Right Movement

- ❖ The edible oil industry, bakeries and ‘halwais’ have committed to phasing out trans-fats by 2022 [India@75- Freedom from trans-fats by 2022]
- ❖ Major food companies have pledged to reformulate packaged foods to reduce the level of salt, sugar and saturated fat.
- ❖ Food services sector has promised to provide healthier food options and introduce menu-labeling
- ❖ Major food retail players including e-commerce players have agreed to promote healthier food options and responsible retail practices

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) account for 1 in 5 disease-related deaths, widespread anemia, and other micronutrient deficiencies are on the rise and India is becoming the diabetes capital of the world

FSSAI

- The FSSAI has been established under Food Safety and Standards, 2006 laying down science-based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.



- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is the Administrative Ministry for the implementation of FSSAI.
- The Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is appointed by Central Government. The Chairperson is in the rank of Secretary to Government of India.
- The Chairperson and the Members other than ex officio Members of the Food Authority shall be appointed by the Central Government on the recommendations of the Selection Committee.
- Apart from Chairman and Chief Executive Officer there are 24 members out of which one-third shall be women.

Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations, 2018

- ✓ labeling requirements of pre-packaged foods.
- ✓ display of essential information on premises where food is manufactured, processed, served and stored.
- ✓ It also introduces labelling of genetically modified (GM) food.
- ✓ The draft Regulation emphasises on providing nutrition information for each serving of a food item.
- ✓ The draft Regulation also states that HFSS (high in fat, sugar or salt) food products shall not be advertised to children in any form.

### Target Olympic Podium Scheme

#### In News

The Mission Olympic Cell has included Indian hockey team in the TOP Scheme, rewarding the players for their silver medal-winning performance at the Champions Trophy.

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#### TOP Scheme

- TOP (Target Olympic Podium) Scheme was formulated within the overall ambit of National Sports Development Fund (NSDF) with the objective of identifying and supporting potential medal prospects for 2016 and 2020&2024 Olympic Games.
- The TOP Scheme is a flagship program of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports **which is an attempt to provide assistance to India’s top athletes.**
- TOP Scheme provides customized training under reputed coaches at institutes having world-class facilities.
- TOP Scheme provides out-of-pocket allowance of Rs. 50,000/- (Rupees fifty thousand only) a month to the athletes as an incentive
- Under it, Sports Authority of India (SAI) and federations, which are members of Mission Olympic Cell (MOC), will be nodal agencies for disbursement of fund. They will make payments directly to beneficiary person and institution concerned on behalf of athletes.
- Abinav Bindra Committee was constituted to identify and support potential medal prospects for 2020 and 2024 Olympic Games under the scheme.

PEPPER IT WITH  
POSHAN Abhiyan,  
PMKSY, SHC, PMFBY

Mission Satyanishtha  
This mission aims at sensitizing all railway employees about the need to adhere to good ethics and to maintain high standards of integrity at work.

#### Mission Olympic Cell (MOC)

The Mission Olympic Cell is a dedicated body created to assist the athletes who are selected under the TOP Scheme. The MOC is under the Chairmanship of the Director General, Sports Authority (DG, SAI). The idea of the MOC is to debate, discuss and decide the processes and methods so that the athlete receives best assistance. The MOC also focuses on selection, exclusion and retention of athletes, coaches, training institutes that can receive TOPS assistance.



## Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention (MGISC)

### In News

In a bid to eliminate the need for manual scavenging, the Centre launched a challenge under MGISC asking innovators, NGOs, research institutions, companies and cities to propose technology and business solutions to clean urban sewers and septic tanks without human entry.

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### About MGISC

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, which was entrusted with the task, has now **launched the** “Technology Challenge: Identifying solutions for cleaning of Sewerage Systems and Septic Tanks”. **The said challenge will be a part of the MGISC.**

PEPPER IT WITH  
Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and Their Rehabilitation Act, 2013

The Challenge shall be conducted for two separate categories.

1. Category A-Technological solutions for cleaning and maintenance of sewerage systems that eliminate need for human entry.
2. Category B-Technological solutions for cleaning and maintenance of septic tanks that eliminate need for human entry.

### Key Highlights

- ❖ MGISC is being organised by Swachh Bharat Mission, the world largest sanitation programme. Rural sanitation coverage has significantly improved from 39% in 2014 to 85% till present.
- ❖ It will be launched at the 150th anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi. It will be a first-of-its-kind International Sanitation Convention.
- ❖ The **government will use the occasion to “showcase its performance” and “success story”** in the Swachh Bharat programme in the past four years and have a face-to-face dialogue with the world leaders to share their experiences on sanitation programmes.
- ❖ Ministers from over 70 countries **will be invited and taken on a ‘Gandhi Trail’** in Gujarat.

### Aim

1. Identify technological as well as business process innovations.
2. Endorse viable business models that are suitable for a different size, geographies, and class of cities.
3. Pilot test and handhold to scale the shortlisted technologies/solutions in select project cities.
4. Bridge the gap between innovators/manufacturers and beneficiaries- i.e. ULBs, citizens

#### Invest India

- Invest India and Business France will collaborate to promote business and startup ecosystem cooperation through joint activities and exchange experiences to strengthen institutional knowledge.
- The goal is to facilitate direct foreign investment by providing practical investment information to enterprises and support the companies
- Invest India is the National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of India and acts as the first point of reference for investors in India.
- Invest India is set up as a non-profit venture under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industries, Government of India.
- India registered a record improvement on EoDB ranking from 142 to 100 between 2014-2017

### Way Ahead

The manual scavengers expressed some scepticism about the proposal. The machines to clean sewers and septic tanks are already available globally, but they need

to be adapted to Indian conditions, and the government needs to show the political will to actually use the technology on the ground on a large scale.

This challenge will help highlight the problems of manual scavenging and the importance of sanitation in rural as well as in urban areas. The technology-based approach to solve the problem will paved the future path for the significance of waste management and sanitation in India.

## Purvanchal Expressway project

### In News

The 354-km Purvanchal Expressway project, **the country's longest**, is on stream with the Uttar Pradesh government awarding the eight packages of the project to five companies — PNC Infratech Limited, Gayatri Projects, GR Infra, Oriental Structural Engineering and Apco Infra.

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### About Purvanchal Expressway

- The Expressway will connect Lucknow with Ghazipur, will start from Chand Sarai area near NH-56 in Lucknow and ends at Haidaria (District Ghazipur).
- The Project is being implemented on Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Mode. The project is estimated to cost around Rs 23,000 crore.
- The Expressway will provide uninterrupted connectivity to 9 districts of UP namely Lucknow, Ghazipur, Amethi, Barabanki, Sultanpur, Faizabad, Ambedkar Nagar, Azamgarh, Mau and Ghazipur.
- The expressway is to be linked with Varanasi through a separate link road.
- UPEIDA is the nodal agency for implementation of project.

PEPPER IT WITH Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2018, P-T-N Link, Eastern Peripheral Expressway

### Project Benefits

1. accelerated convenient mode of Transportation
2. would provide benefits like fuel saving, time saving and Control in Pollution level, along with reduction in accidents.
3. The areas covered by this Expressway would be benefited in Social & Economical way. The agriculture, commerce, tourism and other industrial development will also get a fillip.
4. become a vast Industrial Corridor connecting Eastern boundary to Western boundary of the state which will result into overall development of the state.

### The Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) Annuity Model

Under BOT annuity, a developer builds the highway, operates it for a specified duration and transfers it back to the government. The government starts payment to the developer after the launch of commercial operation of the project. Payment will be made on a six-month basis.

### BOT Toll Model

In this toll-based BOT model, a road developer constructs the road and he is allowed to recover his investment through toll collection. This toll collection will be over a period of nearly 30 years in most cases. There is no government payment to the developer as he earns his money invested from tolls.

### Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Model

Under this model, the cost is completely borne by the government. Government invites bids for engineering knowledge from the private players. Procurement of raw material and construction costs are met by the government. The private sector's participation is

What is hybrid annuity?  
In financial terminology hybrid annuity means that payment is made in a fixed amount for a considerable period and then in a variable amount in the remaining period. This hybrid type of payment method is attached under the HAM.

minimum and is limited to the provision of engineering expertise. A difficulty of the model is that financial is the high financial burden for the government

The Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM)

In India, the new HAM is a mix of BOT Annuity and EPC models. As per the design, the government will contribute to 40% of the project cost in the first five years through annual payments (annuity). The remaining payment will be made based on the assets created and the performance of the developer. Here, hybrid annuity means the first 40% payment is made as fixed amount in five equal instalments whereas the remaining 60% is paid as variable annuity amount after the completion of the project depending upon the value of assets created.

**IFFCOiMandi**

- Fertiliser major IFFCO has partnered with Singapore-based technology firm iMandi to start an e-commerce platform for farmers, with an investment of about ₹80 crore.
- It is a **“One Stop Shop”** for agri inputs & produce, FMCG, electronics, loans, insurance, etc. iMandi will address all needs of the farming community and aims to cater to captive user base of 55 million farmers.”
- An e-commerce app, ‘IFFCO iMandi’, has been introduced and would cater to 5.5 crore farmers already associated with the cooperative. A web portal has also been developed.
- It has features like buy-sell, communication, entertainment and information/advisory content to keep farmers engaged.
- IFFCO’s subsidiary IFFCO eBazar Ltd has taken 26% stake in iMandi Pte Ltd. The remaining 74 per cent is with I-tech Holdings and some other investors.
- Under the agri inputs marketplace, farmer can presently buy all IFFCO products, including fertilisers, agro chemicals and seeds at a discounted price and get free delivery at their doorstep.
- IFFCO and iMandi are certain that through this Indian Cooperative Digital Platform, they will be able to bring about a large-scale social transformation in every home, every village and will empower a billion lives through its digital inclusive technology.

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DigiYatra

- DigiYatra is an industry-led initiative coordinated by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in line with Digital India programme.
- DigiYatra verified passenger will get hassle free entry at the airport through E-Gates.
- At the entry gate, a single token for the passenger will be created. This will also facilitate walk-through security scanners swiftly owing to advanced biometric security solutions.
- The ID verification will be done by the BCAS-approved Government ID.

**Bansagar canal project**

In News

PM inaugurated Bansagar canal project, 100 Jan Aushadi Kendras in UP.

Bansagar canal project

- This project will provide a big boost to irrigation in the region and will be greatly beneficial for the farmers of Mirzapur and Allahabad districts of Uttar Pradesh.
- A joint venture of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, the canal is 171 km long.
- As per Bansagar agreement -1973, the 4.0 Maf (Million acre-foot) of storage is to be shared among the three states in the ratio of 2:1:1.

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Sone Facts

- The river Sone is 2<sup>nd</sup> largest right bank tributary of the river Ganga
- It originates from Amarkantak high lands in hills of Maikala range
- River outfalls into the Ganga at about 16 km upstream of Patna
- The Sone river system is surrounded by
  - ❖ Vindhachal range in North,
  - ❖ Punpun river system and Chotanagpur plateau on East
  - ❖ Baghelkhand plateau and Mahadeva hills on South
  - ❖ forest clad Maikal and Bhamver ranges on West

- The project is being funded under AIBP with newly allotted dedicated fund of Rs 3400-crore.
- Bansagar Dam is a multipurpose river Valley Project on Sone River situated in the Ganges Basin in Madhya Pradesh.

### No space force for US

The Senate and House did come together on a \$716 billion defense authorization report that could set the stage for a sixth military service dedicated to space. It would create a sub-unified command for space under Nebraska-based U.S. Strategic Command, whose main mission is to oversee the military’s nuclear arsenal.

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#### Background

U.S. President recently announced the establishment of a “space force” as the sixth branch of the United States military, “separate **but equal**” to the U.S. Air Force (USAF), which has overseen U.S. military space operations.

#### Implications if created

- The purpose for creating space force is to deny the Russians and the Chinese advantages in space and to see that the U.S. establishes and maintains dominance in space.
- Ironically, the U.S. Air Force — historically a major constituency and votary for space weapons — is not entirely enthusiastic about this new service, which could take resources away from it and the prestige that comes with being the driver of space military operations.
- Another military arm would only compound the organisational challenges facing the U.S. armed services. First, it could undercut ongoing missions. Second, it could very well increase budgetary allocations in the future. Third, a space corps could undermine American efforts in the domain of joint warfare. A new space force is not merely a brand new service; it potentially increases greater organisational uncertainty within the U.S. military.
- Nevertheless, the fundamental difficulty of a space corps is that the physical environment of space is not conducive to the conduct of military operations without incurring serious losses in the form of spacecraft and debris.

- India would operate Sri Lanka’s loss-making Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport in Hambantota.
- The \$210 million facility, 241km south-east of Colombo, is dubbed the “**world’s emptiest airport**” due to a lack of flights.
- India would operate the airport as a Sri Lanka-India joint venture. The joint venture would see India gain a major stake of the airport.

PEPPER IT WITH  
 PAROS, NHRC, RIMPAC, India-US 2+2 DIALOGUE, India-US two by two ministerial dialogue, Tribal Entrepreneurship Summit

#### Implications for India

American military goals, which are still undefined in space, could still have consequences for India. While India is officially committed to PAROS, or the prevention of an arms race in outer space, it is yet to formulate a credible official response to the US plan. India has yet to establish a credible space command of its own. And, its inter-services rivalries will have to be resolved about the command and control.

India also has to be concerned about Mr. Trump’s move for another reason — China. Beijing’s reaction could be much stronger than its seemingly muted official response and it does possess a formidable space military programme that far exceeds current Indian capabilities. For its part, New Delhi would do well to come out with an official white paper on space weapons. The government needs to engage with multiple stakeholders directly about the role space weapons will play in India’s grand strategy. More than their war-fighting attributes, space weapons have one principal function — deterrence.

## UN Military Observer Group in India, Pakistan

### Why in News?

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed a veteran Uruguayan Army official as head of the United Nations mission tasked with monitoring the ceasefire line between India and Pakistan.

Major General José Eladio Alcain will be Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer for the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). He will succeed Major General Per Gustaf Lodin of Sweden.

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### UNMOGIP

- The first team of unarmed military observers, who eventually formed the nucleus of UNMOGIP, arrived in the mission area in January 1949 to supervise in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the ceasefire between India and Pakistan, and to assist the Military Adviser to the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP), established in 1948 by Security Council resolutions.
- Following the India-Pakistan war in 1971 and a subsequent ceasefire agreement of 17 December of that year, the tasks of UNMOGIP have been to observe, to the extent possible, developments pertaining to the strict observance of the ceasefire of 17 December 1971 and to report thereon to the Secretary-General.

**PEPPER IT WITH**

Link express, Samjhauta Express, Thar express, Sir Creek, CPEC, Chabahar port, TAPI, Ceasefire agreement, Shimla Pact, Kishangangaprojec, Rattle project

### India's stand

India has maintained that UNMOGIP has outlived its utility and is irrelevant after the Simla Agreement and the consequent establishment of the Line of Control (LoC). India has lodged no complaints to UNMOGIP since 1972, though it has continued to provide support to it in terms of security, transport and other services.

Given the disagreement between India and Pakistan about UNMOGIP's mandate and functions, the Secretary-General's position has been that UNMOGIP can only be terminated by a decision of the Security Council. In the absence of such a decision, UNMOGIP has been maintained with those same arrangements since then.

## WIPO Copyright Treaty, 1996 and WIPO Performance and Phonograms Treaty, 1996

### Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal submitted by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry regarding accession to the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and WIPO Performers and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT) which extends coverage of copyright to the internet and digital environment.

The approval is a step towards the objective laid in the National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy adopted by the Government in 2016 which aims to get value for IPRs through commercialization by providing guidance and support to EPR owners about commercial opportunities of e-commerce through Internet and mobile platforms.

### Significance

- It will enable creative right-holders enjoy the fruit of their labour through international copyright system that can be used to secure a return on the investment made in producing and distributing creative works;

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**WIPO**

WIPO is the global forum established in 1967, for intellectual property services, policy, information and cooperation. It is a self-funding agency of the United Nations.

Headquartered in Geneva-Switzerland, its mission is to lead the development of a balanced and effective international intellectual property (IP) system that enables innovation and creativity for the benefit of all.



- It will facilitate international protection of domestic rights holder by providing them level-playing field in other countries as India already extends protection to foreign works through the International Copyright order and these treaties will enable Indian right holders to get reciprocal protection abroad;
- It will instil confidence and distribute creative works in digital environment with return on investment;
- It will spur business growth and contribute to the development of a vibrant creative economy and cultural landscape.

WCT and WPPT

WIPO Copyright Treaty came in force in 2002 and has been adopted by 96 contracting parties till date and is a Special agreement under Berne Convention (for protection of literary and artistic works). It has provisions to extend the protection of copyrights contained therein to the digital environment. Further it recognises the rights specific to digital environment, of making work available, to address "on-demand" and other interactive modes of access.

WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty also came in force in 2002 and has 96 contracting parties as its members. WPPT deals with rights of two kinds of beneficiaries, particularly in digital environment -

- (i) Performers (actors, singers, musicians etc.)
- (ii) Producers of Phonograms (Sound recordings)

The treaty empowers right owners in the negotiations with new digital platforms and distributors. It recognizes moral rights of the performers for the first time & provides exclusive economic rights to them.

Both the treaties provide framework for creators and right owners to use technical tools to protect their works and safeguard information about their use i.e. Protection of Technological Protection Measures (TPMs) and Rights Management Information (RMI).

DIPP

With progressive liberalisation of the Indian economy, initiated in 1991, there has been a consistent shift in the role and functions of this Department. From regulation and administration of the industrial sector, the role of the Department has been transformed into facilitating investment and technology flows and monitoring industrial development in the liberalised environment.

DIPP is responsible for formulation and implementation of promotional and developmental measures for growth of the industrial sector, keeping in view the national priorities and socio-economic objectives. While individual Administrative Ministries look after the production, distribution, development and planning aspects of specific industries allocated to them, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion is responsible for the overall Industrial Policy.

**PEPPER IT WITH**

Global Innovation Index, IP Awards, CIPAM, WIPOs TISC program, Special 301 Report

**World Sanskrit Conference**

Why in News?

Human Resource Development Minister inaugurated the 17th World Sanskrit Conference held at Vancouver, Canada.

- Scholars and delegates from over 40 countries participated in this conference and exchanged their knowledge by presenting papers on various subjects followed by discussions from amongst the members.
- The purpose of this conference is to promote, preserve and practice the Sanskrit language all over the world by the people.
- The conference is held in various countries across the globe once every three years with the support of the International Association of Sanskrit Studies (IASS). So far, it has been held

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**PEPPER IT WITH**

International conference on Dialogue of Civilisation, International conference on climate change, International conference on sustainable biofuels, World sustainable development summit

thrice in India.

- IASS is an organisation whose primary purpose is to arrange the World Sanskrit Conference.
- The first postponed International Sanskrit Conference was held at New Delhi in March 1972, under the joint auspices of the Ministry of Education (Government of India) and the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan.

### Asian Development Bank (ADB)

#### Why in News?

- The Asian Development Bank and the Government of India signed a \$84 million loan that will finance water supply improvements and expansion in Bhagalpur and Gaya towns in the state of Bihar.
- The tranche 2 loan is part of the \$200 multitranches financing facility (MFF) for the Bihar Urban Development Investment Program that was approved by the ADB Board of Directors in 2012 to provide sustainable urban infrastructure and services in four towns in Bihar—Bhagalpur, Gaya, Darbhanga, and Muzaffarpur.
- The loan will have a 25-year term, including a grace period of 5 years, an annual interest rate determined in accordance with **ADB’s lending facility based on the London interbank offered rate (LIBOR)**, and a commitment charge of 0.15% per year.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
 New Development Bank, AIIB, IMF, WB, London interbank offered rate, Asian Development Fund, Ordinary Capital Resource of ADB

#### ADB

- ADB, based in Manila, is dedicated to reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration. Established in 1966, it is owned by 67 members—48 from the region.
- ADB's shareholders consist of 48 developing and developed members within Asia and the Pacific region, and 19 members from outside the region. Japan has highest shareholding in ADB followed by USA, China, India and then Australia.

### India-Korea Technology Exchange Centre Inaugurated

#### Why in News?

The India-Korea Technology Exchange Centre was Inaugurated in New Delhi which has been established at the National Small Industries Corporation premises in New Delhi.

The purpose of the Technology Exchange Centre is to create a platform for micro, small and medium enterprises of India and Korea where they can be assisted to identify and exchange latest technologies, share management expertise, product development and technology applications for product development.

The Technology Centre will also work towards building reliable alliances in Space, Solar Energy, Nano technologies and some other upcoming technologies. Many Korean organizations have showed keen interest to initiate technology transfers in MSME sectors between the two countries and this Centre will provide them reliable partners for effecting business alliances.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
 IFFCO, Sahyog-Hyeoblyeog 2018, Busan, DGFT, Ind-Korea taxation treaty

#### Significance

- South Korea has strong industrial base with well-developed small and medium enterprises (SME) sector, especially in advanced manufacturing technologies such as machinery & equipment, electronics, electrical machinery & equipment and robotics. SMEs of both the countries can learn from each other to enhance their comparative advantages and be competitive in the world.
- **In today’s competitive environment, there is need to share the comparative advantage of MSMEs of different countries.** Indian MSMEs are very competitive in sectors like



auto components, drugs and pharmaceuticals, IT bio-technology, agro and food processing.

- The India-Korea Technology Exchange Centre will work towards identifying Indian technologies which can be exported to Korea and find suitable Korean partners for the same, initiating various cooperative MSME projects **complimenting each other's** strengths in MSME sector, creating Technology Data Bank from each side to encourage technology transfers, production of high quality products in India and encouraging Joint Ventures and business matching between Indian and Korean SMEs, besides others.

On this occasion, an MoU was signed between the Small Business Corporation (SBC) of Korea and the NSIC for cooperation in the field of MSME Sector. The SBC will mobilise the South Korean MSMEs for technical and business alliances with their counterparts in India and organise partner matching events in Korea for Indian delegations.

**UNSC adopts resolution to protect children in armed conflict**

Why in News?

The UN Security Council has adopted a resolution aimed at a framework for mainstreaming protection, rights, well-being and empowerment of children throughout the conflict cycle.

Resolution 2427, which won unanimous approval of the 15 members of the council, strongly condemns the recruitment and use of children by parties to armed conflict as well as their re-recruitment, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and abductions.

- The resolution also condemns attacks against schools and hospitals and the denial of humanitarian access by parties to armed conflict and all other violations of international law committed against children in situations of armed conflict.
- It demands that all relevant parties immediately put an end to such practices and take special measures to protect children. The resolution also emphasizes the responsibility of all states to put an end to impunity and to investigate and prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other egregious crimes perpetrated against children.
- It calls on member states and the United Nations to mainstream child protection into all relevant activities in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations with the aim of sustaining peace and preventing conflict.
- It recalls the importance of ensuring that children continue to have access to basic services during the conflict and post-conflict periods, including education and health care, and urges member states, UN bodies and civil society to take specifically into account girls' equal access to education.
- The resolution stresses the importance of long-term and sustainable funding for mental health and psychosocial programming in humanitarian contexts and ensuring all affected children receive timely and sufficient support and encouraging donors to integrate mental health and psychosocial services in all humanitarian responses.

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This year marks the 50th anniversary of the 1968 International Conference on Human Rights, where family planning was, for the first time, globally affirmed to be a human right.

**The conference's outcome document, known as the Teheran Proclamation, stated unequivocally: "Parents have a basic human right to determine freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children."**

PEPPER IT WITH  
Economic and Social Council,  
Trusteeship Council, ICJ,  
ICC, UN resolution on Syria

Significance

Over 21,000 cases of grave violations of children's rights in armed conflict have been verified by the United Nations for 2017, a drastic increase from the previous year with 15,500 violations, according to an annual report of the

UN secretary-general on children and armed conflict. Among the violations in 2017, some 15,000 were perpetrated by non-state armed groups and about 6,000 were committed by government forces, according to the report.

UNSC

Security Council has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote.

- ✓ 5 permanent members: China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom, and the United States,
- ✓ 10 non-permanent members elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly (with end of term date)

The Security Council takes the lead in determining the existence of a threat to the peace or act of aggression. It calls upon the parties to a dispute to settle it by peaceful means and recommends methods of adjustment or terms of settlement. In some cases, the Security Council can resort to imposing sanctions or even authorize the use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security.

The Council also recommends to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and the admission of new Members to the UN. And, together with the General Assembly, it elects the judges of the International Court of Justice.

**Failure to educate girls could cost world \$30 trillion: WB**

Failing to let girls finish their education could cost the world as much as \$30 trillion in lost earnings and productivity, yet more than 130 million girls are out of school globally, according to the World Bank.

The report was published ahead of U.N. Malala Day which is on 12th July, which marks the birthday of the Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai.

Highlights

- Women who have completed secondary education are more likely to work and earn on average nearly twice as much as those with no schooling.
- About 132 million girls worldwide aged 6 to 17 do not attend school, while fewer than two-thirds of those in low-income nations finish primary school, and only a third finish lower secondary school.
- If every girl in the world finished 12 years of quality education, lifetime earnings for women could increase by \$15 trillion to \$30 trillion, according to the report.
- Other positive impacts of completing secondary school education for girls include a reduction in child marriage, lower fertility rates in countries with high population growth, and reduced child mortality and malnutrition.
- Women who have completed secondary education are at lesser risk of suffering violence at the hands of their partners and have children who are less likely to be malnourished and themselves are more likely to go to school.

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**World Customs Organisation**

Why in News?

India has become the vice-chair (regional head) of the Asia Pacific region of the World Customs Organisation (WCO) for a period of two years till June 2020. WCO has divided its 182 customs administrations into six regions and each region is represented by an elected vice-chairperson to the WCO council.

Being the Vice Chair of AP Region of WCO will enable India to take on leadership role. India is a wealth of experience in promoting security and facilitation of cross border trade.

WCO

World Customs Organisation established in 1952 as the Customs Co-operation Council (CCC) is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations.

WCO collectively process approximately 98% of world trade. As the global centre of Customs expertise, the WCO is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters and can rightly call itself the voice of the international Customs community.

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## Institute of Chartered Accountants of India

### Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved Memorandum of Understanding between the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance (BIBF), Bahrain to work together to strengthen the accounting, financial and audit knowledge base within Bahrain.

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### Significance

- The MoU will provide an opportunity to the ICAI members to expand their professional horizon and simultaneously ICAI will become an entity to aid strengthen building of local national capabilities.
- The aim is to work together to develop a mutually beneficial relationship in the best interest of members, students and their organizations.
- Since Bahrain does not have a local professional accountancy Institute and it is the ICAI which has the collaboration with BIBF, this in turn is likely to build positive impact for Indian Chartered Accountants currently working in Bahraini markets and those intending to move to this country relatively easier.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Bahrain, Gulf Cooperation Council, Al-Nagah, OPEC, Yemen crisis, Qatar isolation

### ICAI

- The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament, viz. The Chartered Accountants Act, 1949, for regulating the profession of Chartered Accountancy in the country.
- The Institute, functions under the administrative control of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India. The ICAI is the second largest professional body of Chartered Accountants in the world, with a strong tradition of service to the Indian economy in public interest.
- Over a period of time the ICAI has achieved recognition as a premier accounting body not only in the country but also globally, for maintaining highest standards in technical, ethical areas and for sustaining stringent examination and education standards.

### Function:

- (i) Regulate the profession of Accountancy
- (ii) Formulation of Accounting Standards
- (iii) Laying down Ethical Standards
- (iv) Exercise Disciplinary Jurisdiction
- (v) Financial Reporting Review
- (vi) Input on Policy matters to Government

Golden Globe Race (GGR)

- ❖ Commander Abhilash Tomy of the Indian Navy (the only invitee from Asia) is participating in the historic GGR, which commenced from the Les Sables d'Olonne harbour in France.
- ❖ The participants are required to sail around the world, single-handed and non-stop. He is representing India in the indigenously built sailing vessel Thuriya, a replica of Suhaili.
- ❖ The uniqueness of the race is that boat designs and technology newer than 1968 is not permitted, so the use of the Global Positioning System (GPS), satellite communication or modern navigational aids is forbidden.
- ❖ The GGR is being conducted by U.K.-based sailing pioneer Sir Robin Knox Johnston to commemorate 50 years since the world's first solo non-stop circumnavigation by him on-board the Indian-built boat Suhaili, in 1968.

## BRICS: Regional Aviation Partnership

### Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding amongst BRICS Nations on the Regional Aviation Partnership Cooperation.

### Salient features:

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The objective is that BRICS countries would benefit from the establishment of an institutional framework to cooperate in the field of civil aviation. Among the areas of cooperation, following areas have been identified:

- Public Policies and best practices in regional services;
- Regional Airports;
- Airport infrastructure management and air navigation services;
- Technical cooperation between regulatory agencies;
- Innovation;
- Environment Sustainability; including deliberation of global initiatives;
- Qualification and Training;
- Other fields as mutually determined

PEPPER IT WITH  
Contingent Reserves Arrangement, New Development Bank, BRICS rating agency, Interbank Local Currency Credit Line Agreement, Xiamen Declaration

Significance

The MoU signifies an important landmark in the civil aviation relations between India and other BRICS Member States and has the potential to spur greater trade, investment, tourism and cultural exchanges amongst the BRICS Nations.

Nelson Mandela International Day

Why in News?

Nelson Mandela International Day 2018 marks 100 years since the birth of Nelson Mandela (18 July 1918). The Centenary is an occasion **to reflect on his life and legacy, and to follow his call to “make of the world a better place.”**

The Nelson Mandela Foundation is dedicating this year's Mandela Day to Action Against Poverty, honouring Nelson Mandela's leadership and devotion to fighting poverty and promoting social justice for all.

Nelson Mandela

- Rolihlahla Mandela was born into the Madiba clan in the village of Mvezo, in the Eastern Cape, on 18 July 1918.
- Mandela, while increasingly politically involved from 1942, only joined the African National Congress in 1944 when he helped to form the ANC Youth League (ANCYL). Mandela rose through the ranks of the ANCYL and through its efforts, the ANC adopted a more radical mass-based policy, the Programme of Action, in 1949.
- He was arrested in a countrywide police swoop on 5 December 1955, which led to the 1956 Treason Trial. Men and women of all races found themselves in the dock in the marathon trial that only ended when the last 28 accused, including Mandela, were acquitted on 29 March 1961.
- **In 1994 he was inaugurated as South Africa's first democratically elected president.** True to his promise, Mandela stepped down in 1999 after one term as President. He continued to **work with the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund he set up in 1995 and established the Nelson Mandela Foundation and The Mandela Rhodes Foundation.** He died at his home in Johannesburg on 5 December 2013.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Nelson Mandela Foundation, 46664, UNESCO, apartheid, Marshall Island

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Israel adopts Jewish nation-state law

Background

- **Israel's parliament adopted a law defining the country as the nation state of the Jewish people.** The legislation, adopted by 62 votes to 55, **makes Hebrew the country's national language and defines the establishment of Jewish communities as being in the national interest.** Arabic, previously considered an official language, was granted only special status.
- The law passed speaks of Israel as the Jewish historical homeland and says Jews have the right to self-determination there. However, a deeply controversial clause that had

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been seen as more specifically legalising the establishment of Jewish-only communities was changed after it drew criticism, including from Israeli President Reuven Rivlin.

- **The legislation becomes part of the country's basic laws, which serve as a de facto constitution.**
- **Netanyahu's government, had pushed for its approval before the parliament's summer session ends.**

PEPPER IT WITH  
 Jerusalem, West bank, Golan Heights, Gaza strip, Two nation theory, Israel-Palestine conflict

The law passed after the changing of a clause that would have allowed the state to "authorise a community composed of people having the same faith and nationality to maintain the exclusive character of that community".

Opposition to bill

- ❖ It provoked fears that it could lead to blatant discrimination against Arab citizens. Arab **lawmakers and Palestinians called the law "racist" and said it legalised "apartheid"** following a tumultuous debate in parliament.
- ❖ **Arab citizens account for some 17.5 per cent of Israel's more than eight million population.** They have long complained of discrimination.
- ❖ A range of opposition politicians denounced the vote. The head of the mainly Arab Joint **List alliance Ayman Odeh called it "the death of our democracy"**.
- ❖ EU has expressed concern at the move and said it would complicate a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict.

Delhi Dialogue (DD X)

Why in News?

External Affairs Minister hosted the 10th edition of the Delhi Dialogue (DD X) in the national capital. The theme of this year's DD X was "Strengthening India-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation." It is a premier annual event to discuss politico-security, the economic and socio-cultural engagement between India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

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DD X was organised in partnership with the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).

ASEAN

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand. Brunei Darussalam, Viet Nam, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Cambodia joined later making it the ten Member States of ASEAN.

AIMS AND PURPOSES:

- To accelerate the economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region through joint endeavours in the spirit of equality and partnership in order to strengthen the foundation for a prosperous and peaceful community of Southeast Asian Nations;
- To promote regional peace and stability through abiding respect for justice and the rule of law in the relationship among countries of the region and adherence to the principles of the United Nations Charter;
- To maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organisations with similar aims and purposes, and explore all avenues for even closer cooperation among themselves.

PEPPER IT WITH  
 Research and Information System for Developing Countries, BIMSTEC, ADMM+, ASEAN India-Business Council, CLMV countries, Mission to ASEAN

India-ASEAN

- **India's search for economic space resulted in the 'Look East Policy'** which has today matured into a dynamic and action oriented

Iran has replaced Saudi Arabia as the largest supplier of oil to India. It's up from 2,79,000 bpd during the same period last year, and is driven by better deals from Iran including inexpensive shipping and extended credit periods.



**‘Act East Policy. India at the 12th ASEAN India Summit and the 9th East Asia Summit** held in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, in November, 2014, formally enunciated the Act East Policy.

- India's relationship with ASEAN is a key pillar of our foreign policy and the foundation of our Act East Policy. The up-gradation of the relationship into a Strategic Partnership in 2012 was a natural progression to the ground covered since India became a Sectoral Partner of the ASEAN in 1992, Dialogue Partner in 1996 and Summit Level Partner in 2002. There are, in total, 30 Dialogue Mechanisms between India and ASEAN, cutting across various sectors.
- India-ASEAN trade and investment relations have been growing steadily, with ASEAN being India's fourth largest trading partner. India's trade with ASEAN has increased to US\$ 70 billion in 2016-17 from US\$ 65 billion in 2015-16. India's export to ASEAN has increased to US\$ 30 billion in 2016-17 from US\$ 25 billion in 2015-16.
- Investment flows are also substantial both ways, with ASEAN accounting for approximately 12.5% of investment flows into India since 2000.
- The ASEAN-India Free Trade Area has been completed with the entering into force of the ASEAN-India Agreements on Trade in Service and Investments on 1 July 2015.

**India-assisted ambulance service launched in Jaffna**

Why in News?

Sri Lankan government flagged off an expanded emergency ambulance service, supported by the Indian government, at a cost of about \$23 million. The event, held in Jaffna in the Northern Province, marked the island-wide expansion of the service that was initially launched in Sri Lanka's Western and Southern Provinces in 2016.

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The ambulance service is the largest Indian grant project in the island, after the India-assisted housing project that supports the construction of over 60,000 houses across the country, with a grant of nearly \$400 million.

PEPPER IT WITH SLOPV project, Hambantota, OPV Suraksha, Mitra Shakti, UN Vesak day

China-Sri Lanka Friendship Nephrology Hospital

A ground-breaking ceremony for the construction of the China-Sri Lanka Friendship Nephrology Hospital in Polonnaruwa, was held too.

The hospital, a gift from the Chinese government, aims to help patients of the Chronic Kidney Disease of Unknown Etiology (CKDu), which has emerged a major medical challenge in the island, especially among farmers. Tipped to be one of the largest nephrology hospitals in South Asia, the facility will span about 6.63 hectares of land area and a gross floor area of 25,210 square metres.

**BRICS Summit 2018**

Why in News?

The heads of state and government of all five BRICS nations met for the 10th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. The theme of this year summit was ‘BRICS in Africa.’ In the summit, the BRICS leaders adopted the 'Johannesburg Declaration' by consensus.

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India reaffirmed its commitment to multilateralism, international trade and rules-based world order in the summit.

Summit highlights

- The 10th summit, framed its deliberations against **U.S. President’s unconventional approach on world affairs**, particularly the looming trade wars. BRICS leaders, therefore, stressed “the centrality of the rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open and inclusive multilateral trading”, based on the World Trade Organisation.

PEPPER IT WITH BRICS Local Currency Bond Fund, BRICS Plus, BIMSTEC, SAARC, New Development Bank, BRICS rating agency



- This stemmed from their broader commitment to cooperate for strengthening multilateralism, the rule of law and an equitable international order. It also called on all WTO members to abide by WTO rules and honour their commitments in the multilateral trading system.
- The grouping said that the WTO Dispute Settlement System is a cornerstone of the multilateral trading system and is designed to enhance security and predictability in international trade.
- The BRICS grouping also re-affirmed their commitment to conclude quota reforms at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) while protecting the voice of the poorest countries by the 2019 spring meetings and no later than the 2019 annual meetings.
- The other big idea emanating from the summit is to help nations to prepare for the Fourth Industrial Revolution. South Africa, as the host, zoomed in on it early and managed to create sufficient enthusiasm for it.
- The summit saw further consolidation of the business pillar. The BRICS Business Council has been actively enhancing trade and economic cooperation in diverse sectors ranging from manufacturing and energy to financial services and regional aviation. **Besides, the leaders renewed their commitment to an inclusive and “people-centred approach” on development. The steady progress in interactions through sports, films, education, culture and tourism has been commendable.**

About BRICS

- **BRICS is an acronym for the grouping of the world’s leading emerging economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.**
- The first BRIC Summit took place in 2009 in the Russian Federation and focused on issues such as reform of the global financial architecture. South Africa was invited to join BRIC in December 2010, after which the group adopted the acronym BRICS.
- The BRICS approach is informed by the need to deepen, broaden and intensify relations within the grouping and among the individual countries for more sustainable, equitable and mutually beneficial development. This approach takes into consideration each **member’s growth, development and poverty objectives to ensure relations are built on the respective country’s economic strengths and to avoid competition where possible.**

**Odisha signs MoU for early warning system**

Why in News?

The Odisha government entered into a collaboration with the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES), a body of 48 members and collaborating countries, aimed at automating risk management, advisory generation and dissemination. Initially, the agreement will be in force for five years with a cost involvement of about Rs. 8 crore.

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Significance

The collaborative effort would enhance early warning system for effective management of all kinds of disasters like flood, drought, heat wave, lightning and road accidents.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Ensemble Prediction System,  
Coalition on Disaster Resilient  
Infrastructure, NDMA, Tsunami,  
Disaster maps by facebook

**The MoU would bring a shift from ‘what weather will be’ to ‘what weather will do’.** Using weather and climate information, sourced from the India Meteorological Department (IMD), efforts will be made to create open-source software platforms and public domain data sets.

RIMES

- The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES) is an international and intergovernmental institution, owned and managed by its Member States, for the generation and application of early warning information.
- RIMES evolved from the efforts of countries in Africa and Asia, in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, to establish a regional early warning system within a multi-hazard framework for the generation and communication of early warning information, and capacity building for preparedness and response to trans-boundary hazards.

- RIMES provides regional early warning services and builds capacity of its Member States in the end-to-end early warning of tsunami and hydro-meteorological hazards.
- It was established in 2009, and was registered with the United Nations in the same year. RIMES operates from its regional early warning center located at the campus of the Asian Institute of Technology in Pathumthani, Thailand.
- 12 Member States: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Comoros, India, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste.

AMCDRR, 2018

Why in News?

A high level Ministerial delegation from India headed by Minister of State for Home Affairs participated in the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2018 (AMCDRR 2018) held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

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The **theme of the AMCDRR 2018: ‘Preventing Disaster Risk: Protecting Sustainable Development’ reflects the essence of the Sendai Framework.** Development that does not take risk into account cannot be sustainable.

Disaster risk reduction is a key instrument to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, as highlighted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The theme of the AMCDRR 2018 is aligned with the theme of the 2018 High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development that focuses on “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies”.

PEPPER IT WITH  
New Delhi Declaration, the Asia Regional Plan, ten stakeholder voluntary action statements, UNISDR, BIMSTEC Disaster management exercise

The Conference closed with participating governments issuing the Ulaanbaatar Declaration which calls for greater accountability for disaster losses in Asia, **the world’s most disaster-prone region.** A two-year Action Plan was agreed to accelerate implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Asia.

Significance

The conference represents a key milestone for reflection on three years into the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. Specifically, the conference enabled governments and stakeholders to review progress made against the commitments at the AMCDRR 2016, i.e. the New Delhi Declaration, the Asia Regional Plan, and ten stakeholder voluntary action statements.

Shri Kiren Rijju represented the Country in AMCDRR, 2018. Shri Rijju, has been designated as the Asia Regional Champion for Disaster Risk Reduction.

The AMCDRR 2018 provided a unique forum for those countries and cities that have not yet developed and/or updated their DRR strategies and thus meet target, the most immediate deadline of the Sendai Framework.

AMCDRR

The Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) is the regional platform for dialogue and action on DRR, under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR). The conference has been held seven times in collaboration with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

Each of the seven Asian Ministerial Conferences has adopted a political declaration and developed action plans that reaffirmed commitment to strengthen disaster resilience and renew regional approaches to implement first the Hyogo Framework for Action and now the SFDRR.

Sendai Framework

The Sendai Framework is the global plan adopted by UN member states in 2015 to reduce disaster losses. It is a 15-year, voluntary, non-binding agreement which recognizes that the State has the primary role to reduce disaster risk but that responsibility should be shared with other stakeholders including local government, the private sector and other stakeholders. The Sendai Framework is the successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters.

## First BS-VI engine certificate

### Why in News?

ICAT has completed the first BS-VI certification for a heavy duty engine model for M/s Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicle Limited. The engine has been developed and manufactured indigenously by Volvo Eicher in India.

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### Significance

The pro-active approach from the Government of India has made the country leapfrog from the conventional BS-IV to directly adopt BS-VI emission norms as the next level for regulatory framework in India.

The BS-VI emission standards are much more elaborate in their scope and integrate substantial changes to existing emission standards ensuring cleaner products to the consumer.

### Reason for direct switch to BS VI

- India is a country with 10 most populated cities of the world. Vehicular emission is a major contributor to the worsening air quality of Indian cities. Emission of NOx, SO2, CO2 and particulate matter **is taking a toll on people's** health. In cities like Delhi, the PM2.5 level is more than 6 times the prescribed levels by WHO.
- India signed Paris Climate Agreement and being a signatory to the agreement, India is obligated to bring down the carbon footprint by 33-55% from the levels recorded in 2005 in the next 12 years.
- This warranted the need for a stricter norm that could reduce the emissions considerably and put India on track to meet the Paris agreement goals. Hence the leapfrog to Bharat Stage VI norms by 2020 had to be planned because of the carbon footprint obligations.

PEPPER IT WITH  
On-board Diagnostic, Paris Climate deal, CoP 23, Saumitra Chaudhary Committee, Dr. R.A. Mashelkar Committee, GIFT, Ethanol Blending, Auto fuel vision policy 2025

### ICAT

- The International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) is a division of NATRIP implementation society (NATIS), under the administrative control of Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, Government of India.
- It is aimed at carrying out Research & Development besides extending homologation facilities in the field of Automotive Engineering.
- It is one of the prime testing agencies recognized by the GoI as one of the accredited 'Type Approval and Homologation' agencies in India under Central Motor Vehicle Rules (CMVR) and has also been recognized as Scientific and Industrial Research Organization by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, by BIS for Tyre Testing, Safety Glasses and by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for emission and noise testing of generator sets.

National Automotive Testing and R&D Infrastructure Project (NATRIP), the largest and one of the most significant initiatives in Automotive sector so far, represents a unique joining of hands between the Government of India, a number of State Governments and Indian Automotive Industry to create a state of the art Testing, Validation and R&D infrastructure in the country.

The Project aims at creating core global competencies in Automotive sector in India and facilitate seamless integration of Indian Automotive industry with the world as also to position the country prominently on the global automotive map.

### BS norms

- ✓ BS norms introduced in 2000 are emission control standards introduced by the government, based on European emission standards.
- ✓ The amount of Sulphur in both petrol and diesel in BS-VI fuel is limited to a maximum of 10 parts per million (PPM). India plans to leapfrog to BS-VI grade fuel in 2020.
- ✓ The main difference between BS-IV and BS-VI (which is comparable to Euro 6) is in the amount of Sulphur in the fuel. BS-VI fuel is estimated to bring around an 80% reduction in Sulphur content — from 50 parts per million (ppm) to 10 ppm. Also,

according to analysts, NOx emissions from diesel cars are expected to come down by nearly 70% and, from cars with petrol engines, by 25%.

Major benefits of Bharat Stage VI norms

- NOx emission will come down by approximately 25% for the petrol engine and 68% for the diesel engines.
- The PM emission will see a substantial decrease of 80% in diesel engines.
- OBD (On-board diagnostics) will become mandatory for every vehicle and it will help monitor the pollution caused by the vehicle in real time.
- RDE (Real Driving Emission) will be introduced for the first time that will measure the emission in real-world conditions and not just under test conditions.
- Bharat Stage VI norms will also change the way particulate matter is measured. It will now be measured by number standard instead of mass standard thereby, regulating the fine particulate matter as well.

NITI Aayog, in collaboration with various ministries and industry partners, is organising ‘MOVE: Global Mobility Summit’ in New Delhi on 7th and 8th September 2018. This Summit will help drive **Government’s goals for vehicle electrification, renewable energy integration and job growth and also speed up India’s transition to a clean energy economy.**

Challenges

- Though the Auto Fuel Policy suggested by expert committee headed by R.A. Mashelkar had earlier set 2024 deadline for BS VI norms, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways advanced the date to 2020.
- It took seven years for the entire country to shift to BS-IV. The attempt this time is to leapfrog one stage — BS-V — altogether, and that makes the switch to BS-VI that much more difficult for both the oil companies and automobile makers.
- The introduction of higher grade fuel will be beneficial only if it is done in tandem with the rollout of BS-VI compliant vehicles. Using BS-VI fuel in the current BS-IV engines or, conversely, running BS-VI engines on the current-grade fuel, may be ineffective in curbing vehicular pollution, and may damage the engine in the long run.
- For automakers, the big hurdle in jumping directly from BS-IV to BS-VI norms lies in equipping cars with two key fitments and road-testing them within the time schedule.

4 species added to recovery programme by Wildlife Board

The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) recently added four species- the Northern River Terrapin, Clouded Leopard, Arabian Sea Humpback Whale, Red Panda- to a Recovery Programme for Critically Endangered Species on the recommendation of a Standing Committee. They fall in the critically endangered to vulnerable categories as per the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

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The programme is one of the three components of the centrally funded scheme, Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH). So far, 17 species have been identified under the recovery programme like Snow Leopard, Bustard (including Floricans), Dolphin and etc.

Northern River Terrapin

The terrapin is one of five freshwater turtles among the world’s 50 most-threatened turtles. Critically Endangered according to IUCN. **It is Asia’s largest** freshwater turtle. Protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972, India, it is included on Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), making international trade in this species illegal. The terrapin is native to India, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia. It is regionally extinct in Myanmar, Thailand, Singapore and Vietnam. Sunderbans is a good habitat range for this species.

Started in 2008-09, IDWH is meant for providing support to protected areas (national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, conservation reserves and community reserves except tiger reserves), protection of wildlife outside protected areas and recovery programmes for saving critically endangered species and habitats.

### Clouded Leopard

The clouded leopard is named after the distinctive 'clouds' on its coat - ellipses partially edged in black, with the insides a darker colour than the background colour of the pelt. The clouded leopard is found across Southeast Asia and the Himalayas. It is believed to be extinct in Taiwan, China. IUCN classified it as Vulnerable.

Threats: Habitat loss and defragmentation, Poaching and illegal wildlife trade, Human-leopard conflict.

### Arabian Sea Humpback Whale

The humpback whale is a cosmopolitan species found in all of the major oceans. It has been categorised Endangered by IUCN. It is native to India, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

### Red Panda

Red Panda is listed as Endangered by IUCN because its population has plausibly declined by 50% over the last three generations. They are on CITES: Appendix I. It is native to Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar and Nepal. WWF-India has initiated a project on the Red Panda in Sikkim, for developing an in depth understanding of the species to help develop a long-term conservation plan.

Golden Jackal

- ❖ Destruction of mangrove cover in the Bandar Reserve Forest is forcing the golden jackal (*Canis aureus*) out of its habitat, triggering a conflict with the local communities.
- ❖ The conservation status of the **animal is the 'least concern'** and it preys on wild crab and fish.
- ❖ In India, jackal populations achieve high densities in pastoral areas such as Kutch, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Haryana.

PEPPER IT WITH

Great Indian Bustard, Wild Buffalos Conservation, red-crowned roof turtle, South Asian narrow-headed softshell turtle, Asian giant softshell turtle

## Nilgiritahr

### Why in News?

NilgiriTahr found only in high **altitudes in India's Western Ghats** — could be losing their footing with increasing climate change. Even under moderate scenarios of future climate change, tahrs could lose approximately 60% of their habitats from the 2030s on.

There are only around 2,500 tahrs left in the wild and their population — **“small and isolated, making them vulnerable to local extinction”** — shows a “decreasing” trend, as per the IUCN.

Features: Nilgiritahrs are stocky goats with short, coarse fur and a bristly mane.

Status: Listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and as Endangered on IUCN Red List

Threats: Nilgiritahrs exist only in small, isolated populations due to extreme habitat fragmentation and illegal hunting. They are, as a result, vulnerable to local extinction.

Location: Chinnar, Eravikulam and Parambikulam in Kerala. KalakkadMundanthurai Tiger Reserve and the wildlife sanctuaries of Peppara, Neyyar, Schenduruny and Srivilliputhur.

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PEPPER IT WITH

Periyar National Park, KalakkadMundanthurai Tiger Reserve, Lion-tailed macaque, Malabar large-spotted civet, Gaur

## Google teams up with UN to track environmental changes

### Why in News?

The UN has entered into a partnership with Google to monitor the impacts of human activity on global ecosystems by using sophisticated online tools. The aim of the partnership is to develop a platform to **enable governments, NGO's and the public to track specific environment-related development targets** with a user-friendly Google

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front-end. The partnership was launched during the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

- It has its initial focus on fresh-water ecosystems including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes. These **areas account for 0.01 per cent of the world’s water** but provide habitat for almost 10 per cent of the world’s known species and evidence suggests a rapid loss of freshwater biodiversity.
- Google will periodically produce geospatial maps and data on water-related ecosystems by employing massive parallel Cloud computing technology. Satellite imagery and statistics will be generated to assess the extent of change occurring to water bodies and made freely accessible to ensure nations have the opportunity to track changes, prevent and reverse ecosystem loss.
- Other areas of collaboration include advocacy and capacity building activities as well as the development of partnerships with organisations.

**PEPPER IT WITH**

The Convention on Biological Diversity, The Minamata Convention on Mercury, The Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions, The Vienna Convention for the Protection of Ozone Layer, Montreal Protocol, The Carpathian Convention, The Bamako Convention, The Tehran Convention

Significance

- In the long term, the partnership hopes to establish a platform for open-source data and analysis of the UNSDG.
- To solve the biggest environmental challenges of our time we need to have the data right. It will enable all countries with equal access to the latest technology and information in support of global climate action and sustainable development.

UNEP

The United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) is the leading global environmental authority headquartered in Kenya, that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

Its mission is to provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.

**Meghalayan Age**

Why in News?

The past 4,200 years have been officially classified as a new chapter **in Earth’s history** – the Meghalayan Age. Beginning with a global drought that had devastating consequences for ancient civilisations from Egypt to China, the new age is the most recent section of a longer period known as the Holocene Epoch, which reflects everything that has happened over the past 11,700 years.

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- The Meghalayan is unique because it is the **first interval in Earth’s geological history** that has coincided with a major cultural event, as agricultural societies struggled to recover from the shift in climate.
- International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS) announced the new division in time, which will now appear on all official charts depicting **Earth’s geological past**.
- Geologists use the International Chronostratigraphic Chart to show the divisions in the **planet’s 4.6 billion**-year history, each of which is marked by major events like the break-up of continents or climate change.
- The concept of the Meghalayan was first proposed seven years ago due to specific chemical signatures found in stalactites and stalagmites. A stalagmite found in

Two other new phases within the Holocene – the Greenlandian and Northgrippian stages – were also identified based on ice cores sampled in Greenland, and together with the stalagmite they have been placed in protected archives for further study.



the north eastern Indian state of Meghalaya has provided the best evidence of this, so far and therefore gave its name to the new age.

International Union of Geological Sciences

The International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) is one of the largest and most active non-governmental scientific organizations in the world. Founded in 1961, IUGS is a member of the International Council of Science. IUGS promotes and encourages the study of geological problems, especially those of world-wide significance, and supports and facilitates international and interdisciplinary cooperation in the earth sciences.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Anthropocene, Holocene  
Epoch, Geological congress  
2020, Geological survey of  
India, Geological time scale

The International Commission on Stratigraphy is the largest and oldest constituent scientific body in the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS). Its primary objective is to precisely define global units (systems, series, and stages) of the International Chronostratigraphic Chart that, in turn, are the basis for the units (periods, epochs, and age) of the International Geologic Time Scale; thus setting global standards for the fundamental scale for expressing the history of the Earth.

Ganga Vriksharopan Abhiyan

Why in News?

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) is running “Ganga Vriksharopan Abhiyan” in five main stem Ganga basin states – Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. State Forest Departments of these states have been made the nodal agencies for the smooth and effective execution of the campaign.

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The campaign, which has been initiated as part of the Forest Interventions in Ganga (FIG) component of Namami Gange programme, is significant as it aims to bring greater awareness among people and other stakeholders regarding the importance of afforestation for the task of Ganga Rejuvenation. A number of schools, colleges and departments have been requested to “Adopt a Plant” for turning this campaign into a people’s movement.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan,  
Ganga Vichar Manch, Forest  
Interventions in Ganga,  
Namami Gange, National Ganga  
Council, Urja Ganga Scheme

Significance

Forests cause higher rainfall and raise water level in the rivers. Through their foliage, craggy bark and abundant leaf litter, trees and forests decrease the speed of water dispersion and favour slow but greater infiltration of rainwater to ensure smooth functioning of the hydrological cycle. Moreover, presence of healthy forest cover along the river provides self-cleaning ability to the river. Thus, afforestation and augmentation of existing forest along the Ganga holds the promise to strengthen the riparian ecosystem thereby contributing to the overarching cause of Ganga Rejuvenation.

NMCG

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) was registered as a society in 2011 under the Societies Registration Act 1860. It acted as implementation arm of National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA) which was constituted under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act (EPA), 1986. NGRBA has since been dissolved consequent to constitution of National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga (referred as National Ganga Council).

The Act envisages five tier structure at national, state and district level to take measures for prevention, control and abatement of environmental pollution in river Ganga and to ensure continuous adequate flow of water so as to rejuvenate the river Ganga as below;

- National Ganga Council under chairmanship of **Hon’ble Prime Minister of India.**
- **Empowered Task Force (ETF) on river Ganga under chairmanship of Hon’ble Union Minister of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.**
- National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG).
- State Ganga Committees
- District Ganga Committees in every specified district abutting river Ganga and its tributaries in the states

NMCG has a two tier management structure and comprises of Governing Council and Executive Committee. Executive Committee has been authorized to accord approval for all projects up to Rs.1000 crore.

### Myanmar joins International Solar Alliance

#### Why in News?

Myanmar has joined the India-initiated International Solar Alliance (ISA), which is aimed at optimum utilisation of solar energy. Myanmar became the 68th signatory to the Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance.

Myanmar handed over the ISA Framework Agreement during a bilateral meeting in India.

#### ISA

Launched by India and France at the Paris climate summit in 2015, the ISA is based on the idea to form a coalition of solar resource-rich countries to collaborate on addressing the identified gaps in their energy requirements through a common approach. Towards this, the ISA has set a target of 1 TW of solar energy by 2030, which requires \$1 trillion to achieve.

It is open to all 121 prospective member countries falling between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. The ISA is the first international body that will have a secretariat in India.

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India is a key development aid partner for Myanmar and is implementing a number of infrastructure projects in that country. These include the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project connecting Mizoram with Sittwe port in Myanmar, the Trilateral Highway Project connecting India with Myanmar and Thailand and the Rhi-Tiddim road.

PEPPER IT WITH  
REDD and REDD+, Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, Convention on Biological Diversity, Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer

### System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting (SAFAR)

#### Why in News?

The state-of-the-art Air Quality and Weather Forecast System- SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting) was unveiled at Chandni Chowk (Delhi). The giant true colour LED display gives out real-time air quality index on 24x7 basis with colour coding alongwith 72-hour advance forecast. The system, first of its kind in the country, was developed indigenously in record time by Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune and operationalized by India Meteorological Department (IMD).

**The system will be an integral part of India's first Air Quality Early Warning System operational in Delhi and will strengthen the existing air quality network of SAFAR, Central Pollution Control Board and Delhi Pollution Control Committee.**

In addition to regular air quality parameters like PM2.5, PM10, Sulfur Dioxide, Ozone, Nitrogen Oxides, Carbon Monoxide, the system will also monitor the existence of Benzene, Toluene and Xylene.

#### Significance

- In addition to monitoring and forecasting of regular air quality and weather parameters, the Chandni Chowk air quality station **will also measure sun's UV-Index** and will

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PEPPER IT WITH  
Air quality index, PM 2.5, Arsenic in water, Unfccc, Stubble burning, National green tribunal, Odd-Even scheme, polluted cities ranking

provide measurement of online automatic ultrafine particles PM1 and Mercury, both of which have direct relevance to human health. Based on UVI, skin advisories will be issued on display.

- SAFAR is implemented in four cities of India – Delhi, Pune, Mumbai and Ahmedabad as an operational service. According to a preliminary economic assessment of the benefits of the system, if 5% of people suffering from air-pollution related diseases follow advisories and precautions in Delhi alone, it would save nearly Rs. 2,500 crores in terms of health-related cost benefit.
- SAFAR will accelerate public awareness and preparedness of air pollution and weather extremes. It will monitor all weather parameters like temperature, rainfall, humidity, wind speed and wind direction.
- Besides health, SAFAR system would benefit cost savings to several other sectors like agriculture, aviation, infrastructure, disaster management skill, tourism and many others, which directly or indirectly get affected by air quality and weather.

### Pangolin

#### Why in News?

A special unit of the Odisha Police has launched a drive to bust an international syndicate with the help of the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT), that peddles "endangered" pangolin, one of the world's most illegally traded mammals.

Organised international network smuggles pangolin for its scales. Pangolin poaching is rampant in districts like Kandhamal, Nayagarh, Ganjam, Kalahandi, Boudh and Rayagada, the "main consumer" of Pangolin scales happens to be China, where they have a huge demand for medicinal purposes.

#### Pangolin

- Pangolins are the most trafficked mammal in the world by a considerable margin. Pangolin scales are most often powdered where they are believed to cure various ailments including nourishing the kidneys, treating asthma and helping new mothers to breast feed.
- There are total of eight pangolin species across Africa and Asia. They are typically elusive, shy creatures whose bodies are covered in hard, keratin scales.
- Four of these species are native to Asia, the other four natives to Africa. The Asian species comprise the Sunda Pangolin, Philippine Pangolin, Chinese Pangolin and Indian Pangolin.
- Their meat is considered a delicacy and pangolin scales are used in traditional medicine and folk remedies. The primary consumer markets for pangolin products are in Viet Nam and China.
- It has been designated as endangered by IUCN. All eight species in the pangolin family are currently listed in Appendix II of CITES. It is listed in Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Indian Pangolin is widely distributed in India, except the arid region, high Himalayas and the North-East. The species also occurs in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
 Javan Rhino, TRAFFIC, CITES,  
 IUCN, Snow leopard, Blackbuck,  
 One horned rhinoceros, Orange  
 national park

### Earth Overshoot Day in 2018

#### Why in News?

On 1 August 2018, humanity have used nature's resource budget for the entire year, according to Global Footprint Network (GFN), an international research organization. This date is called Earth Overshoot Day—the date when humanity's annual demand on nature exceeds what Earth's ecosystems can renew in that year. This means that the world will now be operating in overshoot for the year – exerting excess pressure on the planet for any resources drawn.

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### Statistics

- For India in particular, data suggests that according to our current rate of consumption, we will need 2.5 countries to meet our growing demands. As per LPR data India shifts from the 136th—largest footprint per capita to the third largest in total.
- According to the Living Planet Report (LPR) released by WWF in 2016, the ecological footprint (the rate at which we are consuming vis-a-vis the resources generated by the planet) of the top five countries makes up about half the global total.
- Analysis of the 2014 National Footprint Accounts reveals that China (16 per cent) and **the USA (15 per cent) generated 31 per cent of the world’s total carbon footprint.**
- The date, which has moved from late September in 1997 to its earliest yet in 2018, is symbolic of the unprecedented pressure that human activities are applying on nature and its resources. Last year, this day was marked on August 2.
- According to GFN, the estimated level of resources and ecosystem services required to support human activities at their current rate equals 1.7 Earths, fast moving to 2 Earths by 2030.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Carbon footprint, Carbon budget, Carbon sink, Black carbon, International energy agency, Paris climate deal

### Concerns

Of all the environmental challenges facing India today, water stands out as a key area where better management is most needed. Fourteen of the twenty major river basins already water stressed and will move towards extreme water scarcity. 70 percent of our surface water is polluted and 60 per cent of India’s groundwater resources are expected to be in a critical state within the next decades. This poses direct challenges to livelihoods, health, food production, and energy generation.

## Green Mahanadi Mission

### Why in News?

Odisha government launched the 'Green Mahanadi Mission', a plantation drive under which five crore saplings will be planted in the Mahanadi river basin.

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### Key Highlights

- Under the mission, more than five crore saplings which will be carried on either side of major rivers of Odisha as well along roadside over a period of five years at an expenditure of around Rs 5,000 crore.
- The objective of the mission is to stop soil erosion on river banks and recharge the groundwater reserve.
- This will provide livelihood opportunities for the local communities. Apart from Mahanadi, plantation will also be done on the banks of river Tel and Ib.
- The plantation drive will be implemented jointly by the departments of Forest, Horticulture and Watershed Development.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Krishna river, Godavari River, Narmada River, Cauvery river, water dispute, Indus water treaty, Teesta river dispute

### Mahanadi River

- The Mahanadi River is a river of eastern India. It enters Orissa State below Baloda Bazaar and crosses the eastern Ghats to enter the Plains of Orissa near Cuttack
- It falls into the Bay of Bengal through a series of channels. The Mahanadi rises in the Satpura Range of central India and flows east to the Bay of Bengal.
- The fertile plains of the Mahanadi valley are home to intensive rice cultivation. The Mahanadi and Brahmani rivers together form a large delta where they meet the Bay of Bengal.
- On the basis of physical characteristics, it is classified as partially-mixed coastal plain estuary.
- Tributaries: Tel, Mand, and Hasdo rivers

## India to give flash flood warning to Asian nations

### Why in News?

India has been designated as a nodal centre for preparing flash-flood forecasts by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). That means India will have to develop a customised model that can issue advance warning of floods in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand.

The IMD would be working to customise a weather model, developed by the United States and donated to the WMO, to warn of flash floods at least six hours in advance. Using a combination of satellite mapping and ground-based observation, this system — called the Flash Flood Guidance System — aims to provide forecasts six hours in advance.

Like India, several southeast Asian countries depend on the monsoon and are prone to its vagaries. The proposed model would provide forecasts by computing the likelihood of rainfall and the soil moisture levels to warn of possible floods. Though Pakistan was among the list of countries that would benefit from the forecast, it had refused to participate in the scheme.

The WMO says flash floods account for 85% of flooding incidents across the world, causing some 5,000 deaths each year.

### WMO

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is an intergovernmental organization with a membership of 191 Member States and Territories. It originated from the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), which was founded in 1873. Established by the ratification of the WMO Convention 1950, WMO became the specialised agency of the United Nations for meteorology (weather and climate), operational hydrology and related geophysical sciences a year later. The Secretariat, headquartered in Geneva, is headed by the Secretary-General. Its supreme body is the World Meteorological Congress.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
Central water Commission, Flash floods, Tsunami early warning system, Earthquake early warning system,

## Naturalised exotic or alien species

### Why in News?

A list of naturalised exotic or alien species, ranging from the common guava (*Psidium guajava*) to prolific invasives such as lantana (*Lantana camara*), has been compiled in a recent study published in *Biological Invasions*, an international journal dedicated to the patterns and processes by which organisms invade ecosystems they are not usually found in.

As many as 471 plant species that are alien or exotic — not native to India — are **'naturalised,' for they can thrive in the country's wildernesses by forming stable populations.** A majority of these naturalised plants are herbs such as the invasive Siam weed *Chromolaena odorata*, native to south and central America.

**A study identified India as one of the 'hotspots' of naturalised plant species and among the seven regions in the world that have the highest number of invasive species.**

### Naturalised, Invasive and Exotic species

- When an exotic plant manages to reproduce naturally in its new environment, it is referred to as a naturalized species.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
Keystone species, Flagship species, Umbrella species, Indicator species, Symbiosis, IUCN, CITES

- It reproduces naturally in the environments they colonise. Invasive species do this so prolifically that they alter the workings of the natural ecosystems they colonise or invade.
- A plant is considered native when it grows naturally in each region, with no human intervention. It is said to be exotic when it is introduced, intentionally or otherwise, into an area outside its natural distribution area.]

**Kozhikode, Malappuram districts declared Nipah virus free**

Why in News?

Kozhikode and Malappuram districts, where 17 people died of Nipah, was declared free of the virus by the Kerala government.

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Nipah virus

- According to WHO, the Nipah virus infection is a newly emerging zoonosis, that is, a disease transmitted from animals to humans. The virus belongs to a new genus termed Henipavirus (subfamily Paramyxovirinae).
- The natural host of the virus are fruit bats belonging to the family Pteropodidae. Pigs can also act as intermediate hosts.
- It was first identified in 1998 at Kampung Sungai Nipah village, Malaysia. The virus is named after this village.
- Symptoms: similar to influenza- fever, muscle pain, and respiratory problems. Inflammation of the brain can also cause disorientation. Late onset of Encephalitis can also occur. Sometimes a person can have an asymptomatic infection and be a carrier of Nipah and not show any symptoms.
- The Nipah virus is classified as a biosecurity level (BSL) 4 agent and the tests should be carried out in special labs to prevent its spread.
- Currently, there are no vaccines for both humans and animals. Intensive supportive care is given to humans infected by Nipah virus.

PEPPER IT WITH Ebola virus, CRISPR-Cas9, Zika virus, Gonorrhoea, HIV and AIDS Bill, Arsenic contamination

**CMSMS and ‘Khan Prahari’ App**

Why in News?

Union Ministry of Coal launched the Coal Mine Surveillance & Management System (CMSMS) and Mobile Application ‘Khan Prahari’ developed byCMPDI, Ranchi a Subsidiary of CIL and Bhaskarcharya Institute of Space Application and Geo-informatics (BISAG).

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CMSMS

- The basic objective of CMSMS is reporting, monitoring and taking suitable action on unauthorised coal mining activities.
- The CMSMS is a web-based GIS application through which location of sites for unauthorised mining can be detected. The basic platform used in the system is of Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology’s (MeiTY) map which provides village level information.
- The system will use satellite data to detect changes by which unauthorised mining activity extending beyond the allotted lease area can be detected and suitable action can be taken on it.

In the first quarter for the current financial year, Coal India has produced 136.87 MT of Coal, which is a growth of 15.2% over the corresponding quarter of last year. Coal Indian has dispatched 122.84 MT of the coal to the Power Sector alone compared to the same period last year which was 106.46 MT.



- The system also uses information provided by responsible citizens using smart phones using **the mobile application** “Khan Prahari”.
- The CMSMS will also provide other important information like reclamation work being done by Coal India Limited which is being monitored every year by CMPDI using satellite data. Status of Environmental Clearances /Forest Clearances etc. are also linked for information in this system.

PEPPER IT WITH IIP, Sand Mining Framework, CIMFR, International Seabed Authority, HELP policy

Khan Prahari

- It is a tool for reporting any activity taking place related to illegal coal mining like rat hole mining, pilferage etc. One can upload geo-tagged photographs of the incident along with textual information directly to the system. Hence, both satellite data and human information will be used to capture information on the unauthorised mining activities.
- Once reported, the information will be automatically directed to the nodal officers to take suitable action on those activities.

Coal Mine Surveillance Management System and “Khan Prahari” was launched on July 5, i.e Swami Vivekananda’s death anniversary.

Pad abort test

Why in News?

The first 'pad abort' test critical for a future human space mission was conducted successfully by Indian Space Research Organisation. The test was conducted at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. The rockets are solid-fuel powered and specially designed for quickly ejecting the crew module and astronauts to a safe distance without exceeding the safe G-levels.

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Pad Abort Test

- The Pad Abort Test demonstrated the safe recovery of the crew module in case of any exigency at the launch pad. PAT (pad abort test) is the first in a series of tests to qualify a crew escape system technology of a manned mission in the future.
- The Crew Escape System is an emergency escape measure to quickly pull the crew module — the astronaut cabin — along with astronauts out to a safe distance from the launch vehicle in the event of a launch abort.

PEPPER IT WITH PARKER Solar probe, GSLV MK III, IRNSS 1I, Chandrayaan II, Beidou, RH 300 Rocket, GSAT-6A, NISAR

Eta Carinae

Why in News?

Eta Carinae is a famous hourglass-shaped gas cloud containing two massive stars orbiting each other: They are 30 and 90 times the mass of the sun, respectively. The system experienced an outburst in the 19th century and briefly became the second-brightest object in the sky.

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A new study with NASA’s NuSTAR space telescope shows that Eta Carinae may act as an accelerator of charged particles, which are also called cosmic rays. Eta Carinae is a stellar system (a small number of stars that orbit each other, bound by gravitational attraction), located about 7,500 light-years away in the southern constellation of Carina.

PEPPER IT WITH Carina, Remove Debris mission, Scramjet Engine, JUNO spacecraft, Quantum Communication, New Horizons Mission

NuSTAR's mission

The NuSTAR mission has deployed the first orbiting telescopes to focus light in the high energy X-ray (6 - 79 keV) region of the electromagnetic spectrum.

During a two-year primary mission phase, NuSTAR will map selected regions of the sky in order to:

- Take a census of collapsed stars and black holes of different sizes by surveying regions surrounding the center of our Milky Way Galaxy and performing deep observations of the extragalactic sky;
- Map recently-synthesized material in young supernova remnants to understand how stars explode and how elements are created; and
- Understand what powers relativistic jets of particles from the most extreme active galaxies hosting super massive black holes.

NASA's Kepler Space Telescope is an observatory in space dedicated to finding planets outside our solar system, particularly alien planets that are around the same size as Earth in the "habitable" regions of their parent star. In March 2018, NASA announced that Kepler is running low on fuel and is expected to cease operations within several months. As of March 2018, Kepler had found 2,342 confirmed planets; add potential planets, and its find of exoworlds stands at 4,587.

In addition to its core science program, NuSTAR will offer opportunities for a broad range of science investigations, ranging from probing cosmic ray origins to studying the extreme physics around collapsed stars to mapping microflares on the surface of the Sun. NuSTAR will also respond to targets of opportunity including supernovae and gamma-ray bursts.

Nasscom unveils centre for data, AI

Why in News?

The National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom), **India's premier software lobby, opened a Center of Excellence (CoE) for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence in Bangalore.**

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- Nasscom also signed a MoU with NITI Aayog to collaboratively foster applied research, accelerating adoption and ethics, privacy and security.
- **With the aim to strengthen the country's AI ecosystem, the CoE and MoU, both aim to serve as a platform for intelligence-sharing and technology collaboration between stakeholders to build collective capabilities for the industry and country in the cutting-edge areas artificial intelligence.**
- Nasscom has partnered with Intel and IBM as its founding members and technology advisors for augmenting and accelerating the data science and artificial Intelligence ecosystem in the country.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Artificial Intelligence, AI in agriculture, N Chandrashekhara task force, 7 point strategy on AI, Big data, IoT

Significance

**Nasscom would support the government's National Strategy for AI and will facilitate collaboration between NITI Aayog and CoEs. It will also include NITI Aayog as a knowledge partner. "Leveraging their skilling platform FutureSkills, Nasscom and NITI Aayog will together accelerate innovation and cultivate skilling in India. The CoE initiative is a nationwide programme on innovation, focusing on solutions in smart manufacturing, automotive, healthcare, agriculture, energy, IoT, banking and financial services, retail, telecom, and host of emerging technologies.**

NASSCOM  
NASSCOM, a not-for-profit industry association, is the apex body for the 154 billion dollar IT BPM industry in India, an industry that had made a phenomenal contribution to India's GDP, exports, employment, infrastructure and global visibility.

## Formalin

### Why in News?

Fish from Chennai have been tested positive for formalin, a cancer-inducing chemical used illegally to preserve fish. This is the first time samples of fish in Tamil Nadu have tested positive for formalin.

Formalin or formaldehyde is sprayed on the fish or injected into the fish or the fish is dipped into the solution. This helps keep the fish fresh for a longer time. Usually people who buy fish check the gills for freshness, if it is red it denotes freshness, when formalin is used the gills remain red for longer periods. In some cases, fishermen also apply kumkum to retain redness.

### Formalin

- Formalin is a dangerous and anti-decomposition agent, which is highly toxic. It is a colourless flammable chemical used in pressed wood products, fabrics, insulation materials.
- It is also used as fungicide, germicide, and disinfectant. In mortuaries it is used as a preservative for bodies and organs.
- Short term damages for formaldehyde are watery eyes, coughing, wheezing, nausea and skin irritation. Formaldehyde increases risk of leukemia, blood cancer and other lymphomas. International agency for research on cancer and US FDA both classify formaldehyde as a human carcinogen.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
 Bharat Biotech, POPs, Diclofenac, Bioaccumulation, Biomagnification, Dirty Dozen, Stockholm convention on POPs, Endosulfan

How to detect formalin in food?  
 ➤ If the fish is preserved with formalin, it gives out a very pungent smell.  
 ➤ If the fishes are preserved with formalin, it will not have any flies sitting on it as flies do not wander near the formalin-preserved fishes.

## RAMA (Reconstituting Asteroids into Mechanical Automata)

### Why in News?

NASA has recently announced it would give funds to a California-based 3D printing company (Made in Space), for finding ways to turn asteroids into giant, autonomous spacecrafts, which could fly to outposts in space.

### RAMA (Reconstituting Asteroids into Mechanical Automata)

- The project, known as RAMA (Reconstituting Asteroids into Mechanical Automata), is part of Made In Space's long-term plan to enable space colonization by helping make off-Earth manufacturing efficient and economically viable.
- The company plans to use 3D printing to turn the asteroids into self-flying vehicles by 2030. The concept received funding through NASA's Innovative Advanced Concepts programme, which will provide \$100,000 for feasibility studies.
- The company is considering sending an advanced robotic "Seed Craft" out to rendezvous with a succession of near-Earth asteroids in space, as part of its long-term project.

The Seed Craft would harvest material from the space rocks, then use this feedstock to construct propulsion, navigation, energy-storage and other key systems onsite with the aid of 3D printing and other technologies.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
 Sprites, Scramjet Engine, GRACE-FO Mission, JUNO probe, Quantum Satellite, Dragon Cargo Capsule, SpaceX, GRACE-FO Mission, NASA's Online Toolkit

### Hubble Telescope

NASA's Hubble Space Telescope has detected globular cluster, a gravitationally bound collection of stars that orbits the Milky Way. Globular clusters are denser and more spherical than open star clusters like the famous Pleiades. They typically contain hundreds of thousands of stars that are thought to have formed at roughly the same time.

Thus transformed into autonomous spacecraft, the asteroids could be programmed to fly to a mining station in Earth-moon space, or anywhere else they're needed. This approach would be much more efficient than launching a new capture probe (or probes) to every single space rock targeted for resource exploitation.

**China successfully launches 2 satellites for Pakistan**

Why in News?

China successfully launched two remote sensing satellites for its ally Pakistan, which will also help the two countries monitor progress as they build the strategic USD 50 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The satellites PRSS-1 and PakTES-1A, were launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China. The launch of the two satellites marks yet another space cooperation between China and Pakistan since the launch of PAKSAT-1R, a communication satellite.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
CPEC, B&R Initiative,  
TAPI, Chabahar port,  
Gwadar port, Baidou

PRSS-1

- The PRSS-1 is China's first optical remote sensing satellite sold to Pakistan. It is the 17th satellite developed by the China Academy of Space Technology (CAST) for an overseas buyer.
- The PRSS-1 will be used for land and resource surveying, monitoring of natural disasters, agriculture research, urban construction and providing remote sensing information for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of the Chinese government.

PakTES-1A

A scientific experiment satellite, PakTES-1A, developed by engineers of the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco), was sent into orbit using the same rocket.

**India's genetically modified crop area fifth largest in world**

Why in News?

India has the **world's fifth largest cultivated area** under genetically modified (GM) crops, at 11.4 million hectares (mh) in 2017. But unlike other big growers, its entire GM crop area is under a single crop — cotton — incorporating genes from the Bacillus thuringiensis or Bt soil bacterium coding for resistance against heliothis bollworm insect pests.

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Highlights of Reports

- ISAAA's latest 'Global Status of Commercialized Biotech/ GM Crops in 2017' report shows farmers across the world to have planted 189.8 mh under transgenic crops last year. Total planted area grew particularly during the first decade of this century, while slowing down in the last five years.
- The report by the Global Crop Biotech Advocacy organisation has estimated the highest share in the world's total 189.8 mh GM crop area for 2017 to be of soyabean (94.1 mh), followed by maize (59.7 mh), cotton (24.1 mh), canola (10.2 mh), alfalfa (1.2 mh) and sugar-beet (0.50 mh).

PEPPER IT WITH  
Bt Brinjal, Genetic Engineering  
Approval Committee,  
Parliamentary committee on  
GM crops, Bio-safety

India

- ❖ In India, the GM crops that are under regulatory consideration — apart from the already commercialised Bt/insect-resistant cotton — include glyphosate-tolerant cotton and biotech hybrid mustard.
- ❖ Both the Bollgard II-Roundup Ready Flex (BGII-RRF) cotton event of Monsanto (incorporating Bt as well as glyphosate-tolerant genes) and transgenic mustard developed by Delhi University's Centre for Genetic

TOP GM CROP GROWING COUNTRIES: 2017 (million hectares)	
US	75.0
BRAZIL	50.2
ARGENTINA	23.6
CANADA	13.1
INDIA	11.4
PARAGUAY	3.0
PAKISTAN	3.0
CHINA	2.8
SOUTH AFRICA	2.7
BOLIVIA	1.3
URUGUAY	1.1
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>189.8</b>

\*Includes other countries.

Manipulation of Crop Plants have undergone all the mandated bio-safety research and open field trials.

- ❖ In the case of BG II-RRF cotton, the developer (Monsanto) itself has withdrawn its regulatory applications, following disputes with the government over intellectual property protection on GM technologies.
- ❖ A high-level expert panel constituted by the Prime Minister’s Office has found 15 per cent of cotton area planted across Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra and Gujarat in the 2017 season — and about five per cent in Punjab — to be under hybrids containing the “unapproved” BG II-RRF event. This is, of course, an indication of demand for GM technology among Indian farmers — whether or not the government and green NGOs like it.

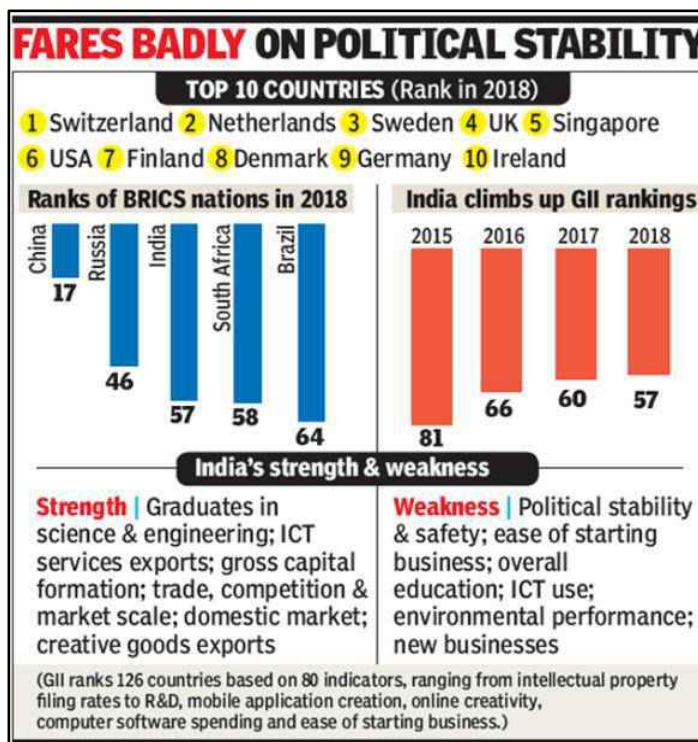
**Global Innovation Index 2018**

Why in News?

The Global Innovation Index (GII)[11<sup>th</sup> Edition] has ranked India as the 57th most innovative nation in the world. The country has improved its ranking from 60th position last year (81st in 2015). Meanwhile, China improved its ranking from 22 in 2017 to 17 this year.

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- The GII is developed jointly by Cornell University, Insead and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). GII ranks 126 economies based on 80 indicators.
- The GII ranks the nations based on 80 indicators, ranging from intellectual property filing rates to R&D, mobile application creation, online creativity, computer software spending, education spending, scientific & technical publications and ease of starting business.



India

After a precipitous drop in 2014 and 2015, India has been steadily improving its GII ranking in the last four years. Although ranked at 57, India is a top performer in the lower middle income group, where it is ranked at fifth position. In the indicators that capture the quality of innovation inputs and outputs, India is ranked second after China in the lower and upper middle-income group combined.

Many Asian nations have been steadily improving their ranking over the last five years. This list includes China, India, Philippines, Cambodia and Vietnam. Four of the top five innovation clusters are in Asia, based on patents and publishing. San Francisco is the only innovation cluster outside Asia among the top five.

Many of India’s innovations are not easily captured in indicators. Bengaluru, for example, ranks at 65 among the top clusters in the world.

Since the city’s innovation is based on software, it does not show up in patents and publishing. The need is to evolve indicators which capture non-technological but game-changing innovations common in India.

PEPPER IT WITH  
 Trade marks rule, GIs, Nilambur Teak, IPR enforcement toolkit, Global Financial Stability Report, World Economic Outlook



## MeerKAT

### Why in News?

South Africa formally unveiled a super radio telescope, first phase of **what will be the world’s largest telescope in a project to try to unravel** the secrets of the universe. The 64-dish MeerKAT telescope in the remote and arid Karoo region of South Africa will be integrated into a multi-nation Square Kilometre Array (SKA).

A panorama captured by the MeerKAT telescope **showed “the clearest view yet” of the black hole at the** centre of the Milky Way Galaxy. The SKA telescope will be the largest of its own kind in the world — with image resolution quality exceeding the Hubble Space Telescope by a factor of 50 times.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
IUCAA, NCRA, Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope, Hubble space telescope, ARIES Telescope

### SKA

- The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) is a multi-billion-dollar international project to build **the world’s largest radio telescope.**
- Co-located primarily in South Africa and Western Australia, the SKA will be a collection of hundreds of thousands of radio antennas with a combined collecting area equivalent to approximately one million square metres, or one square kilometre.
- The project is one of the largest scientific endeavours in history and will be more than 10 times more sensitive and much faster at surveying galaxies than any current radio telescope.
- The SKA will use three different configurations of radio antennas – **Australia’s** Murchison region will host the low-frequency component, whilst the mid to high frequency infrastructure will **be based in South Africa’s** Karoo desert.
- Expected to be fully up and running by 2030, the SKA will comprise a forest of 3,000 dishes over an area of a square kilometre.
- India is participating in the multi-nation Square Kilometre Array (SKA).

We use radio telescopes to study naturally occurring radio light from stars, galaxies, black holes, and other astronomical objects. We can also use them to transmit and reflect radio light off of planetary bodies in our solar system. These specially-designed telescopes observe the longest wavelengths of light, ranging from 1 millimeter to over 10 meters long.

Just as optical telescopes collect visible light, bring it to a focus, amplify it and make it available for analysis by various instruments, so do radio telescopes collect weak radio light waves, bring it to a focus, amplify it and make it available for analysis.

## Vikas Engine

### Why in News?

ISRO has successfully conducted a ground test of its high thrust version of the Vikas Engine that would improve the payload capability of the **space agency’s launch vehicles.**

- The test was conducted by scientists at the ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC) in Mahendragiri in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu.
- The Vikas Engine is the workhorse liquid rocket engine used to power the second stage **of the ISRO’s trusted Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).**
- It is also used in the second stage and also at the four-strap on stages of Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle (GSLV) and in the twin-engine core liquid stage (L110) of GSLV Mk-III.
- The ground test has validated the performance

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PEPPER IT WITH  
GSAT-29, GSAT-6A, GSAT 17, GSAT 19, cryogenic engine, PSLV, GSLV, Geostationary orbit, Geosynchronous orbit



adequacy of the Vikas Engine for its use in the upcoming second developmental flight of GSLV Mk-III.

### Solar parks

#### Why in News?

Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan have topped the list of states with maximum solar power generation capacity approved under solar parks in India, according to fresh data of total 26,449-Megawatt capacity projects released by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

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Experts say commissioning this mammoth renewable energy capacity under the approved 45 solar parks spread across 22 states would broadly require investments in a range between Rs 1 lakh crore and over Rs 132,000 crore.

#### Solar park

A solar park is a concentrated zone of development of solar power generation projects and provides developers an area that is well characterized, with proper infrastructure and access to amenities and where the risk of the projects can be minimized. The solar park scheme also provides for reduced number of statutory approvals to facilitate faster and easier development.

The Delhi Cabinet has approved 'Mukhyamantri Kissan Aaye Badhotri Solar Yojna' under which farmers in the national Capital can lease out not more than one third of his land to private firm to set up solar panels for additional income.

#### Challenges

- Given the large land requirement, around 4 acre per Mw, for execution of solar projects, there are inherent execution challenges related to land acquisition which vary across states, apart from issues of inadequate transmission connectivity.
- As a result, efforts both from central and state governments are required to enable and co-ordinate with nodal implementation agency of a solar park, especially for land acquisition and transmission connectivity, in a time-bound manner so that solar projects of larger size can be attracted through bidding route in such parks.
- According to some experts, the overall target set for solar capacity addition under the solar park scheme is very ambitious. The government should ensure that adequate evacuation capacity is provided on time for these parks apart from payment security for supply.
- Cost is a factor here. An investment of Rs 5 crore may be needed per Mw. The government has set an ambitious target of 175,000 Mw of total renewable power generation capacity by 2022, including 100,000 Mw from solar projects.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Suryashaktikisan yojana, Solar farming, ISA, Solar cities scheme, KUSUM scheme, Solar development fund, GAIL rooftop solar plant

### India to expand polar research to Arctic

#### Why in News?

Three decades after its first mission to Antarctica, the government is refocusing priorities to the other pole — the Arctic — because of opportunities and challenges posed by climate change.

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- India has renamed the National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR) — since 1998, charged with **conducting expeditions to India's base stations** to the continent — as the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research. It's also in talks with Canada and Russia, key countries with presence in the Arctic circle, to establish new observation systems. Now, India only has one Arctic observation station near Norway.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Dakshin Gangotri, Maitri, Bharti, Himadri station, Polar Research Vessel

- Along with the Arctic, India’s earth sciences community also views the Himalayas as a “third pole” because of the large quantities of snow and ice it holds and proposes to increase research spends towards understanding the impact of climate change in the Himalayas. It has already established a high-altitude research station in the Himalayas, called HIMANSH, at Spiti, Himachal Pradesh.
- India is already an observer at the Arctic Council — a forum of countries that decides on managing the **region’s resources and popular livelihood and, in 2015, set up an underground observatory, called IndARC, at the Kongsfjorden fjord, half way between Norway and the North Pole.**

Significance

Sea ice at the Arctic has been melting rapidly — the fastest in this century. That means several spots, rich in hydrocarbon reserves, will be more accessible through the year via alternative shipping routes. A big worry for India is the impact of melting sea ice on the monsoon. Over the years scientists across the world are reporting that the rapid ice-melt in the Arctic is leading to large quantities of fresh water into the seas around the poles. This impedes the release of heat from the water and directs warm water into the seas around India, the theory goes, and eventually weakens the movement of the monsoon breeze into India. Therefore we need more observations and stations in the Arctic countries to improve understanding of these processes.

**ARCTIC COUNCIL**  
 The Arctic Council is the leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic.

The Ottawa Declaration lists the following countries as Members of the Arctic Council: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States.

**‘Rent-a-lab’ policy**

Why in News?

The government has proposed a new policy that could transform scientific instruments in government labs into lucrative assets generating a steady rental income. It plans to hire out to researchers all lab equipment that cost more than ₹10 lakh. This would also reduce the amount of time such expensive instruments remain idle. All equipments funded by it costing more than ₹10 lakh on the Internet, to be accessed by researchers.

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The policy, called the Scientific Research Infrastructure Management and Networks (SRIMAN), **wouldn’t, “for the present,” apply to strategic sectors.**

PEPPER IT WITH BIRAC, AIM, Atal Tinkering Labs, Creative India; Innovative India, CSIR

- It is common to find in Indian laboratories, expensive equipment lying idle. A large number are not shared and are plagued by issues such as maintenance and availability of spares. This adds to the burden of research infrastructure costs.
- The new system, according to the policy, envisages institutions declaring on a website how often their instruments would be available for use by those outside the department or university. Those who would like to use, for example, a DNA-sequencing machine, would have to pay a fee and specify the purpose and time they would want it for.
- Currently, the practice of researchers bidding for time-slots to use lab instruments is typically seen more with very expensive equipment, such as radio telescopes and particle-accelerators, which cost crores of rupees.

## National Viral Hepatitis Control Program

### Why in News?

National Viral Hepatitis Control Program was launched to mark the World Hepatitis Day, 2018. With this initiative, Government is strongly committed to work towards elimination of viral hepatitis by 2030.

### MoHFW has launched the 'National Viral Hepatitis Control Program',

with the goal of ending viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030 in the country. The aim of the initiative is to reduce morbidity and mortality due to viral hepatitis.

The key strategies include preventive and promotive interventions with focus on awareness generation, safe injection practices and socio-cultural practices, sanitation and hygiene, safe drinking water supply, infection control and immunization; co-ordination and collaboration with different Ministries and departments; increasing access to testing and management of viral hepatitis; promoting diagnosis and providing treatment support for patients of hepatitis B & C through standardized testing and management protocols with focus on treatment of hepatitis B and C; building capacities at national, state, district levels and sub-district level up to Primary Health Centres (PHC) and health and wellness centres such that the program can be scaled up till the lowest level of the healthcare facility in a phased manner.

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### PEPPER IT WITH

World Hepatitis day, Zika Virus, Malaria, Sugar tax, World tuberculosis day, TB free India campaign, Japanese encephalitis

Health Ministry has already launched a campaign to end TB by 2025, five years ahead of global target. Government now has more than 1100 CBNAAT machines for rapid diagnosis of TB and provides daily regimen with fixed dose combinations.

Government has also launched the **'Test and Treat Policy for HIV'** wherein as soon as a person is tested and found to be positive, he will be provided with ART irrespective of his CD count or clinical stage.

The government has also launched Rotavirus vaccine, Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV), and the Measles-Rubella (MR), Pneumonia vaccine.

### Hepatitis

- Hepatitis refers to an inflammatory condition of the liver. **It's commonly caused by a viral infection**, but there are other possible causes of hepatitis. These include autoimmune hepatitis and hepatitis that occurs as a secondary result of medications, drugs, toxins, and alcohol.
- Viral infections of the liver that are classified as hepatitis include hepatitis A, B, C, D, and E.
- Hepatitis A is always an acute, short-term disease, while hepatitis B, C, and D are most likely to become ongoing and chronic. Hepatitis E is usually acute but can be particularly dangerous in pregnant women.

## NEW strain of EBOLA found in Sierra Leone

A new strain of the deadly Ebola virus has been found in northern Sierra Leone and there are fears the virus could potentially spread to humans. It has been provisionally referred to as the Bombali virus and is the sixth known species of Ebola.

The environmental nonprofit group EcoHealth Alliance has warned it has the potential to infect human cells. The newly discovered Bombali Ebola virus was found in a bat species of the genus Mops.

### Ebola

- The Ebola virus causes an acute, serious illness which is often fatal if untreated. Ebola virus disease (EVD) first appeared in 1976 in 2 simultaneous outbreaks, one in what is now, Nzara, South Sudan, and the other in Yambuku, Democratic Republic of

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Congo. The latter occurred in a village near the Ebola River, from which the disease takes its name.

- It is thought that fruit bats of the Pteropodidae family are natural Ebola virus hosts. Ebola is introduced into the human population through close contact with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected animals.
- Ebola spreads through human-to-human transmission via direct contact (through broken skin or mucous membranes) with the blood, secretions, organs or other bodily fluids of infected people, and with surfaces and materials (e.g. bedding, clothing) contaminated with these fluids.

PEPPER IT WITH  
ICMR, Rotavirus, Monkey fever, Mission SAMPARK, Mission Inradhanus, Global clubfoot conference

### Deep Ocean Mission

#### Why in News?

Looking to emulate the success of the ISRO in designing and launching satellites, the Centre has drawn up a five-year, ₹8,000 crore plan to explore the deep recesses of the ocean, which is expected to improve India's position in ocean research field

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- The Union Earth Sciences Ministry — tasked with coordinating the exercise — unveiled a blueprint of the Deep Ocean Mission (DOM).
- Among the key deliverables to achieve these goals are an offshore desalination plant that will work with tidal energy and developing a submersible vehicle that can go to a depth of at least 6,000 metres with three people on board.
- India has been allotted 75,000 square kilometres in the Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) by UN International Sea Bed Authority for exploration of poly-metallic nodules. CIOB reserves contain deposits of metals like iron, manganese, nickel and cobalt.
- It is envisaged that 10 per cent of recovery of that large reserve can meet the energy requirement of India for the next 100 years. It has been estimated that 380 million metric tonnes of polymetallic nodules are available at the bottom of the seas in the Central Indian Ocean.
- The 'Deep Ocean Mission' plan will enable India to develop capabilities to exploit resources in the CIOB.

PEPPER IT WITH  
United Nation Ocean Conference, Assumption Island, Marshall Island, MILES 18, ICOSIS, Cyclone Maruttha

International Seabed Authority (ISA) is a UN body set up to regulate the exploration and exploitation of marine non-living resources of oceans in international waters. India actively contributes to the work of International Seabed Authority. Last year, India was re-elected as a member of Council of ISA. India's nominees on Legal and Technical Commission and Finance Committee of the ISA were also elected last year.

#### Poly-metallic nodules

- ❖ Polymetallic nodules are Fe-Mn oxide deposits, potato shape, porous, black earthy colour with size ranging from 2 to 10 cm in diameter. Nodules occur at nearly 4 to 5 km depth in the deep oceans and they take one million year to grow to one millimeter.
- ❖ In the Indian Ocean, nodules occur in different basins such as CIOB Wharton Basin, Crozet Basin, Madagascar Basin, Somali Basin, South Australian Basin and Arabian sea.

### Ramon Magsaysay Award

#### Why in News?

Two Indians -- one a psychiatrist who works for the mentally-ill street persons and another whose initiative to harness science and culture

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creatively for economic progress improved the lives of the Ladakhi youth - were declared the winners of this year's Ramon Magsaysay Award.

Bharat Vaswani and Sonam Wangchuk are among six individuals who were declared winners of the award, regarded as the Asian version of the Nobel Prize.

Ramon Magsaysay Award

- Established in 1957, the Ramon Magsaysay Award is Asia's highest honour.
- It celebrates the memory and leadership example of the third Philippine president after whom the award is named and is given every year to individuals or organisations in Asia who manifest the same selfless service and transformative influence that ruled the life of the late and beloved Filipino leader.

**Domestic Council for Gold**

- Union Government has decided to set up a Domestic Council for Gold to aid exports of jewellery and to create an ecosystem to harness the true potential for jewellery-making in the country.
- The council would work towards industry development, job creation, building of regional clusters and strengthening of value chains.
- The council will provide domestic support for exports and will represent all the jewellers of India who will be the electoral college. They will form different interest groups and elect those who will sit in the council.

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**GDP deflator**

- GDP deflator (also known as implicit price deflator) is a measure of inflation. It is the ratio of the value of goods and services an economy produces in a particular year at current prices to that of prices that prevailed during the base year.
- This ratio helps show the extent to which the increase in gross domestic product has happened on account of higher prices rather than increase in output.
- The deflator is seen as a more comprehensive measure of inflation because it covers the entire range of goods and services produced in the economy as against the limited commodity baskets for the wholesale or consumer price indices.
- GDP price deflator measures the difference between real GDP and nominal GDP. Nominal GDP differs from real GDP as nominal GDP **doesn't include inflation, while real GDP does.** So, nominal GDP will most often be higher than real GDP in an expanding economy.

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How to calculate GDP price deflator:

$$\text{GDP price deflator} = (\text{nominal GDP} \div \text{real GDP}) \times 100$$

PEPPER IT WITH  
 Purchasing Power Parity, Agrarian economy, National Income, Base year, Central Statistical Organisation, Market cost, Factor cost

WPI & CPI

- Consumer price index (CPI) measures changes over time in the general level of prices of goods and services that households acquire for the purpose of consumption. However, it does not capture inflation across the economy as a whole as it is based on a basket of selected goods only and is calculated on prices included in it.
- The wholesale price index (WPI) basket has no representation of the services sector and all the constituents are only goods whose prices are captured at the wholesale/producer level.
- Changes in consumption patterns or introduction of goods and services are automatically reflected in the GDP deflator. This allows the GDP deflator to absorb

changes to an economy’s consumption or investment patterns. Often, the trends of the GDP deflator will be similar to that of the CPI.

- Specifically, for the GDP deflator, the ‘basket’ in each year is the set of all goods that were produced domestically, weighted by the market value of the total consumption of each good.
- Therefore, new expenditure patterns are allowed to show up in the deflator as people respond to changing prices. The theory behind this approach is that the GDP deflator reflects up-to-date expenditure patterns.
- While WPI is seen as a defacto Producer Price Index, CPI considers inflation at the retail end. But since only goods and services directly consumed by households are considered, the CPI does not tell us what is happening to prices of cement, steel or polyester yarn.
- While retail inflation is important, policymakers cannot ignore the prices that producers of consumer and intermediate and capital goods are receiving.

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

It is the value of all final goods and services produced within the boundary of nation during one year. It is a quantitative concept and is used by various international organisations like IMF and World Bank in the comparative analysis of its member nations.

Net Domestic Product

It is the GDP calculated after adjusting the weight of depreciation. In India ministry of commerce and industry decides the rates by which assets depreciate. So, NDP will always be lower than GDP since there is no way to cut the depreciation to zero.

Gross National Product (GNP)

It is the GDP of a country added with its income from abroad.

Net National Product (NNP)

It is the GNP after deducting the loss due to depreciation. It is the Nation Income of an economy. Dividing NNP with the total population gives per capita income (PCI). It should be noted that higher the rate of depreciation, lower will be the PCI of nation.

However, GDP deflator is available only on a quarterly basis along with GDP estimates, whereas CPI and WPI data are released every month.

**Recapitalisation of RRBs**

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the extension of the scheme of recapitalization of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) for the next three years i.e. upto 2019-20.

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Impact

This will enable the RRBs to maintain the minimum prescribed Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of 9 per cent. A strong capital structure and minimum required level of CRAR will ensure financial stability of RRBs which will enable them to play a greater role in financial inclusion and meeting the credit requirements of rural areas.

About the recapitalisation scheme

The scheme of Recapitalization of RRBs started in financial year (FY) 2010-11 and was extended twice in the year 2012-13 and 2015-16. The last extension was upto 31.03.2017. A total amount of Rs. 1107.20 crore, as GoI share, out of Rs.1450 crore, has been released to RRBs upto 31<sup>st</sup>March, 2017. The remaining amount will be utilized to provide recapitalization support to RRBs whose CRAR is below 9%, during the years 2017-18 to 2019-20. The identification of RRBs requiring recapitalization and the amount of capital to be provided, will be decided in consultation with NABARD.

A committee chaired by Dr. K.C. Chakrabarty reviewed the financial position of all RRBs in 2010 and recommended for recapitalization.



### About RRBs

- The Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) were established in 1975 under the provisions of the Ordinance promulgated in 1975 and Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976. They were set up as government-sponsored, regional based rural lending institutions.
- Its main objective was to provide credit and other facilities, especially to the small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, artisans and small entrepreneurs in rural areas for development of agriculture, trade, commerce, industry and other productive activities.
- Currently there are 56 RRBs functioning in India. RRBs are jointly owned by the Centre, the state government concerned and sponsor banks, with the issued capital shared in the proportion of 50%, 15% and 35%, respectively.

- ❖ The Regional Rural Banks (Amendment) Act, 2015, came into effect in 2016. The Act raises the amount of authorised capital to Rs 2,000 crore and states that it cannot be reduced below Rs One crore.
- ❖ The Act allows RRBs to raise capital from sources other than the existing shareholders - central and state governments, and sponsor banks. Here, the combined shareholding of the central government and the sponsor bank cannot be less than 51%.
- ❖ Finance Minister's Budget Speech for 2018-19 allowed financially strong RRBs to raise capital from sources other than GoI, State Government and Sponsor Bank.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Payment Bank, Small Bank, Commercial Bank, Core Banking, NABARD, Basel accord, Prompt Corrective Action

### What is CAR

- The Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) is a measure of a bank's available capital expressed as a percentage of a bank's risk-weighted credit exposures. The Capital Adequacy Ratio, also known as capital-to-risk weighted assets ratio (CRAR), is used to protect depositors and promote the stability and efficiency of financial systems around the world.
- Two types of capital are measured: tier one capital, which can absorb losses without a bank being required to cease trading, and tier two capital, which can absorb losses in the event of a winding-up and so provides a lesser degree of protection to depositors. The risk weighted assets take into account credit risk, market risk and operational risk.

$$CAR = \frac{\text{Tier One Capital} + \text{Tier Two Capital}}{\text{Risk Weighted Assets}}$$

### World's 6<sup>th</sup> largest economy

#### Why in News?

India with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of USD 2.60 trillion (approx.) emerged as the world's sixth largest economy in 2017 surpassing France (USD 2.58 trillion) and is likely to go past the United Kingdom (USD 2.62 trillion), which is at the fifth position, according to an analysis of data compiled by the World Bank.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
Per Capita Income, Personal Income, Disposable Income

- Indian economy had slowed down last year due to transitory shocks like demonetisation and the implementation of the national goods and services tax (GST), but has since bounced back.
- India's growth accelerated to 7.7 per cent in the quarter ended March, up from 7 per cent in the previous quarter. World Bank has forecast a growth rate of 7.3 per cent for India this year and 7.5 per cent for the next two years, making it the fastest growing country among major emerging economies.
- World Bank noted that the Indian economy has benefitted from robust performances in manufacturing sector driven by increased consumer spending. Overall, India has made rapid progress, doubling its GDP in less than past decade

and emerging as the engine of economic growth in Asia, especially with the Chinese economy showing definite signs of lethargy.

- But the outlook in terms of per capita GDP is rather dismal. Despite India's per capita GDP rising to \$7,170 in 2017, up from \$6,690 the previous year, it only ranks 126th in the world as per IMF data. And France, with a population of 67 million, reportedly boasts a figure roughly 20 times higher than us.

Rank	Economy	GDP*
1	US	19.39
2	China	12.24
3	Japan	4.87
4	Germany	3.68
5	United Kingdom	2.62
6	India	2.60
7	France	2.58
8	Brazil	2.06
9	Italy	1.93
10	Canada	1.65

\*in trillion dollars

India's GDP over five decades

- India's GDP has ballooned, from \$37 billion in 1960, to approx.\$2.6 trillion now. Since the economic reforms announced in 1991, the nation's GDP expanded almost nine times (in 26 years) from \$267 billion in 1991 to \$2.597 trillion in 2017. Prior to that, and in the preceding 26 years, the nation's GDP grew just 3.5 times.
- According to the International Monetary Fund, India is projected to generate growth of 7.4% this year and 7.8% in 2019, boosted by household spending and a tax reform. This compares to the world's expected average growth of 3.9%.

Middle Income Trap

- ✓ Economists calculate that India's per-capita income needs to grow at around 6.5% every year for a decade or so for the country to attain middle income status. But many countries have attained middle income status, and then have remained there for more than 20 years.
  - ✓ Brazil, Mexico and South Africa have spent more than two decades in the middle income category, and it could be that they never make the high-income grade. This possibility is called middle income trap in academic economics.
  - ✓ For various reasons like excessive dependency on a natural resource, or lack of structural reforms in the economy, or poor quality human resources, or some combination of these, countries that escaped the low-middle income category stagnate as middle-income economies.
- ❖ By purchasing power parity (PPP), an exercise that seeks to find the true value of a currency vis-à-vis the dollar, India's current GDP is around \$9.45 trillion, and its global rank is third, behind the US and China.
  - ❖ PPP figures are often cited by experts to say that India is economically weightier than many in and outside the country think.
  - ❖ But even that is an almost meaningless ranking when it comes to the real question: whether India can move out of the category of low-middle income countries.
  - ❖ Only when the average annual individual income of a citizen, in exchange rate terms, is comfortably above \$4,500, is a country classified as middle income. High income countries are those where average annual individual income is above \$12,500.
  - ❖ India's current annual per-capita income in exchange rate terms is a shade under \$2,000, and around \$7,200 in PPP terms.

**Currency Derivatives**

Why in News?

The Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX), **the country's largest** commodity bourse in terms of market share, plans to enter the currency derivatives segment.

Currency derivatives (CD) are considered to be one of the best options to manage any risk against foreign currency exchange rate volatility.

What is CD

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- Currency derivatives are exchange-based futures and options contracts that allow one to hedge against currency movements. Simply put, one can use a currency future contract to exchange one currency for another at a future date at a price decided on the day of the purchase of the contract.
- The term 'Derivatives' indicates it derives its value from some underlying i.e. it has no independent value. Underlying can be securities, stock market index, commodities, bullion, currency or anything else. From Currency Derivatives market point of view, underlying would be the Currency Exchange rate. In India, one can use such derivative contracts to hedge against currencies like dollar, euro, U.K. pound and yen.
- While all such currency contracts are cash-settled in rupees, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) recently gave a go-ahead to start cross currency contracts as well on euro-dollar, pound-dollar and dollar-yen.
- Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), National Stock Exchange (NSE) and Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India (MSEI) have currency derivatives segments but the volumes of MSEI are a fraction of that witnessed on the BSE or the NSE.
- Prior to the introduction of currency derivatives on exchanges (2008), there was only the OTC – over the counter – market to hedge currency risks and where forward contracts were negotiated and entered into. It was kind of an opaque and closed market where mostly banks and financial institutions traded.

- ❖ Under Unified License Regime business in commodity derivatives, currency derivatives and equity spot derivatives may all be done under one entity, contrary to the earlier requirement of doing commodity and equity businesses under different companies.
- ❖ NSE, **India's first fully automated** electronic exchange with a nation wide presence began operations in 1994. S&P CNX Nifty is the benchmark index introduced by NSE.
- ❖ BSE, established in 1875 is Asia's first & the Fastest Stock Exchange in world with the speed of 6 micro seconds. It is also the first exchange in India and second in the world to obtain an ISO 9001:2000 certification and to receive Information Security Management System Standard BS 7799-2-2002 certification for its On-Line trading System (BOLT). The sensitive index (i.e SENSEX) is a 30 stocks index of the BSE.
- ❖ MCX, which operates under SEBI started operations **in 2003 and is India's first listed exchange** that facilitates online trading, and clearing and settlement of commodity derivatives transactions, thereby providing a platform for risk management. The **Exchange's flagship index series** is COMDEX
- ❖ MCX mostly has energy, bullion and metal contracts whereas National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange NCDEX has created a niche for itself with agri-contracts.

PEPPER IT WITH  
World Federation of Exchanges,  
NASDAQ, London Stock Exchange  
group, Capital Markets, IPO, FMC,  
Equity Market

**Benefits**

Currency derivatives are a unique product which gives opportunities for:

- A new asset class for diversification of investments for all resident Indians;
- It helps in hedging the portfolio against the future risk to importers, exporters and borrowers;
- It is a regulated and transparent market;
- It gives arbitrage opportunities;
- It gives trading opportunities because of its volatility and multiplicity and
- Provides highly transparent rates to traders as it is exchange-traded.

**State Finances: A study of Budgets**

Introduction

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) brings out an annual publication entitled "State Finances: A Study of Budgets" which analyses the fiscal position of state governments on the basis of primary state level data.

**In a break from the past, this year's issue eliminates the lag in data availability by covering developments right up to budget estimates for 2018-19 that were presented by states during April-July this year. Accordingly, this year's**

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report analyses the underlying dynamics of revised estimates (RE) for 2017-18 and budget estimates (BE) for 2018-19 against the backdrop of actual outcomes for 2015-16 and 2016-17.

The salient features that emerge from the analysis of state finances in the report are:

- While the states budgeted a gross fiscal deficit (GFD) to gross domestic product (GDP) ratio of 2.7 per cent in 2017-18, the revised estimates place it at 3.1% (It shows that states missed the fiscal deficit target of 3% of GDP for the third year in a row), essentially due to shortfalls in own tax revenues and higher revenue expenditure on account of pay revisions and farm loan waivers. Debt waivers dented state **governments' budget** to the extent of 0.32% of GDP.
- For 2018-19, states have budgeted for a consolidated GFD of 2.6 per cent of GDP with the correction mainly emanating from a revenue surplus of 0.2 per cent of GDP (deficit of 0.4 per cent in the revised estimates of 2017-18).
- Visible fiscal pressures are emerging for several states on the expenditure side, particularly on account of pay revisions, interest payments and other state-specific schemes like farm loan waivers. Given debt sustainability concerns associated with rising market borrowings, improved efficiency of expenditures and fiscal marksmanship may be necessary to sustain growth while maintaining fiscal prudence.
- Revenue mobilisation remains the key to attaining the budgeted targets; as the GST **stabilises, it should boost states' revenue capacity and support the resumption of fiscal consolidation.**

- ❖ The crowding out effect is an economic theory which states that rising public sector spending drives down private sector spending or it is a situation of high government expenditure supported by high borrowing which leads to decrease in private expenditure.
- ❖ The difference between total revenue and total expenditure of the government is termed as fiscal deficit. FD an indication of the total borrowings needed by the government. While calculating the total revenue, borrowings are not included.
- ❖ The 7<sup>th</sup> pay commission was chaired by Ashok Kumar Mathur.

### Issues

- Higher fiscal deficit (FD) at the state level in recent years has moderated the benefit of fiscal consolidation by the Central government. Higher borrowing, either by the Union or state governments, puts pressure on available financial resources and increases interest **rates. India's general government deficit is one of the highest among its peers.**
- Fiscal slippage in recent years has also led to deterioration in the quality of expenditure, with a rise in revenue expenditure. What this means is that higher fiscal deficits have not augmented state capacity, which can push growth.
- State governments are increasingly raising resources from the bond market, higher issuance can complicate fiscal management. The share of market borrowing in the financing of fiscal deficit is expected to top 90% in the current year, compared with about 61% in 2015-16.
- Large general government borrowing keeps interest rates elevated and affects private investment. This is one reason why, despite the currency risk, large businesses tend to borrow from international markets. A sharp movement in currencies can always make debt servicing more difficult and also increase complexity in macroeconomic management.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Bond Market, UjwalDiscom  
Assurance Yojna, FRBM  
Framework, 15<sup>th</sup> FC

### Way Forward

Even though government finances should improve with the stabilization of the goods and services tax, India needs better fiscal management at both the state and Central levels to avoid crowding out the private sector. This will enable higher investment and help attain higher sustainable growth.

It is the States that can set the tone of growth and development at the grassroots. Focussing on making State budgets more responsive, accountable and geared to the needs of the people will give a thrust to growth and development across the nation.

### Central Road and Infrastructure Fund

#### Why in News?

Work related to the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF) has been taken away from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways and brought under the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Finance Ministry.

Budget 2018 amended the Central Road Fund (CRF) Act, 2000, and renamed the Central Road Fund the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund.

- The objective of the amendment was to use proceeds of the road cess under CRIF to finance other infrastructure projects such as waterways, some portion of the railway infrastructure and even social infrastructure, including education institutions and medical colleges.

#### Payment Council of India

- The Payments Council of India was formed under the aegis of IAMA in the year 2013 catering to the needs of the digital payment industry.
- The Council was formed inter-alia for the purposes of representing the various regulated non-banking payment industry players, to address and help resolve various industry level issues and barriers which require discussion and action.
- The council works to promote payments industry growth and to support our national goal of ‘Cash to Less Cash Society’ and ‘Growth of Financial Inclusion’ which is also the Vision Shared by the RBI and Government of India.

#### About IAMA

The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMA), registered under societies act-1860, was established in 2004 by the leading online publishers.

- The amendment prescribes that road cess is first credited to the Consolidated Fund of India and later, after adjusting for the cost of tax collection, should go to the CRIF.
- The government recently also constituted a ministerial panel headed by the Finance Minister to decide on fund allocation for infrastructure projects from the CRIF. Other members of the 4-member committee/panel include the Ministers of Road Transport and Highways, Railways and Human Resource Development.
- CRIF would approve recommendations made by the sub-committee headed by the Economic Affairs Secretary on the list of infrastructure projects to be financed from the CRIF.
- The 15-member sub-committee will examine and evaluate proposals received from Ministries on infrastructure projects to be financed by the CRIF. Besides, it will prioritise the list of infrastructure projects each year for financing from the fund.

PEPPER IT WITH National Highway Development Programme, Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sadak Yojna, AMRUT

#### What is CRIF

The CRF launched in 2000 is basically a cess imposed along with excise duty on petrol and diesel. It is a major source of revenue for government to finance National Highways, railway projects, improvement of safety in railways, State and rural roads and other infrastructure. Nearly Rs 8 is collected per litre of diesel and petrol to the CRF.

Central Road and Infrastructure Fund											
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## Inter Creditor Agreement

### Why in News?

A group of banks, including public sector, private sector and foreign banks recently signed an inter-creditor agreement (ICA) to push for the speedy resolution of non-performing loans on their balance sheets.

The move comes after the banking regulator in February (2018) dismantled all the existing resolution mechanisms, **such as the joint lenders' forum**, and asked lenders to start resolution for the asset even if the default was by one day. It had also mandated that if the resolution plan was not finalised within 180 days, the account had to be referred for bankruptcy proceedings which bankers believe may erode the asset value if there are no buyers at bankruptcy court.

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### What is ICA

An Inter creditor Agreement, commonly referred to as an inter creditor deed, is a document signed between two or more creditors, stipulating in advance how their competing interests are resolved and how to work in tandem in service to their mutual borrower.

### About ICA

- ICA is a part of the recently announced Project Sashakt, the five-pronged strategy to deal with non-performing assets (NPAs) recommended by the Sunil Mehta-led committee and aims the resolution of loan accounts with a size of ₹50 crore and above that are under the control of a group of lenders.
- Although ICA will be voluntary for banks, the mechanism is reportedly expected to iron out the problems faced in consortium lending, help the banks work as a team and not in silos, and remove procedural glitches to ensure timely availability of credit to enterprises.
- The ICA will stand if 66 per cent of the lenders in a consortium agree to it. A majority representing two-thirds of the loans within a consortium of lenders should now be sufficient to override any objection to the resolution process coming from dissenting lenders. Each resolution plan would be submitted to an overseeing committee comprising experts from the banking industry.
- Dissenting/Minority lenders can either sell their exposure to another lender at a 15% discount or buy the entire exposure of all the banks involved, at a 25% premium. But the lead bank has the right and not the obligation to arrange the buyout of the loan facilities. Government hopes that the problem of a few lenders preventing a settlement between the majority lenders, will be solved through ICA.
- The plan would be implemented in a time-bound manner before bankruptcy proceedings kick in. Over the last few years, Indian banks have been forced by the RBI to recognise troubled assets on their books, but their resolution has remained a challenge. It will be a legal document and enforceable in any court of law

### Sunil Mehta's 5-point Formula

Sunil Mehta-led panel's 5-point formula to resolve NPAs in the banking system has been accepted by the government.

- For loans up to Rs 50 crore, the panel has suggested a steering committee within the bank to resolve it within 90 days. Most banks already have this process in place for focused resolution.
- For loans of Rs 50-500 crore, the panel has suggested another bank-led resolution within 180 days. This process already exists under the IBC.
- For loans above Rs 500 crore, the committee has suggested setting up an asset management company with private participation. The panel's other suggestion is to set up an Alternative Investment Fund that will raise resources from banks and institutional investors so that it can bid for the insolvent assets under insolvency and bankruptcy.
- The fourth approach is to go to NCLT for insolvency and bankruptcy which already exists.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Indian Banks Association, Charter of customer rights, Banking Ombudsman, Bad Bank, AMC, AIF, NCLT, NPA, Stressed assets



- It suggested for an asset trading platform for stressed assets. This is the most sensible solution to deal with sale or liquidation of stressed assets transparently.

Way Forward

Bad loans of the 38 listed banks collectively crossed Rs 10.17 lakh crore in the March-2018 quarter, and the RBI expects the Gross NPA (GNPA) ratio of scheduled commercial banks to rise further in the current fiscal. Such an agreement may persuade banks to embark more quickly on a resolution plan for stressed assets. This is an improvement on the earlier model, which relied solely on **the joint lenders'** forum to arrive at a consensus among creditors.

Meanwhile, the biggest obstacle to bad loan resolution is the absence of buyers who can purchase stressed assets from banks, and the unwillingness of banks to sell their loans at a deep discount to their face value. Unless the government can solve this problem, the bad loan problem is likely to remain unresolved for some time to come.

Banking Codes and Standards Board of India (BCSBI)

- ❖ S Starapore committee recommended for setting up of BCSBI which was set up to ensure that the common person as a consumer of financial services from the banking Industry is in no way at a disadvantageous position and really gets what he/she has been promised.
- ❖ It was registered as a society in 2006 and functions as an independent and autonomous body. Membership of BCSBI is voluntary and open to scheduled banks.
- ❖ The main objective of BCSBI is to plan, evolve, prepare, develop, promote and publish comprehensive Codes and Standards for banks, for providing for fair treatment to their customers and to function as an independent and autonomous body to monitor, and to ensure that the Codes and Standards adopted by banks are adhered to, in letter and spirit, while delivering services to their customers.
- ❖ It has in collaboration with the Indian Banks' Association (IBA), evolved two codes - **Code of Bank's Commitment to Customers and the Code of Bank's Commitment to Micro and Small Enterprises.**
- ❖ BCSBI is not a forum for redressal of individual grievances. However, it examines each compliant to identify any systemic issue that may exist and takes up the matter with the respective bank to ensure that systems and procedures are suitably amended so that such complaints do not recur.

FDI confidence Index

Why in News?

India in 2018 has fallen out of the top 10 destinations for FDI in terms of its attractiveness, according to an AT Kearney report, which says this could be due to teething troubles in the **implementation of the goods and services tax and the government's demonetisation decision in 2016.**

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India ranks 11 in the 2018 AT Kearney FDI Confidence Index, down from 8 in 2017 and 9 in 2016 which is released by the management consulting company.

Important Reforms Done

India has held on to its position of being the second-highest ranking emerging market. Notable reforms include the elimination of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board, a government agency responsible for reviewing all potential foreign investment, and the liberalisation of foreign investment thresholds for the retail, aviation, and biomedical industries.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Global Cities Index, Global Retail Development Index, Market Potential Index, Global Innovation Index, FDI, FPI

About the Index

- The Foreign Direct Investment Confidence Index (created in 1998), prepared by A.T. Kearney is an annual survey which tracks the impact of likely political, economic, and regulatory changes on the FDI intentions and preferences of CEOs, CFOs, and other top executives of Global 1000 companies.

- The report includes detailed commentary on the markets and the impact a variety of global trade issues have on their FDI attractiveness, as well as a ranking of the top 25 countries.
- The index ranks countries on a scale from 0 to 3 based on their attractiveness for foreign direct investments. A score of 3 represents the highest level of confidence. The index is topped by USA.
- Along with India, countries like China and Singapore ranked lower than in the previous year in the Index, whereas Australia jumped to the eighth position and New Zealand, on its second year on the index, was placed at the 16th posit.

**Ease of Doing Business ranking of states**

- Andhra Pradesh retained its spot in the second edition of the ease of doing business rankings, followed by Telangana, Haryana, Jharkhand and Gujarat rounding off the top five places according to data put together by the World Bank and Department of Industrial Planning and Promotion (DIPP).
- Parameters on which the states and UTs are ranked include **reforms they've undertaken and the feedback from the government they've incorporated in their policies.**
- The parameters include areas such as construction permit, labour regulation, environmental registration, access to information, land availability, and single window system. The ranking, which was introduced in 2015 with 285 action points, expanded to 372 measures in 2017 spread across 12 areas.
- While in the first two years, the ranking was based only on evidence provided by state governments, DIPP introduced in 2017 user feedback for 78 action points from architects, lawyers and contractors among others to weigh whether reform measures are reaching the users or not. From the next year, the ranking will be based entirely on user feedback.
- The move is aimed at triggering competition among states to attract investments and improve business climate. The ministry releases ranking of states and UTs under the business reform action plan.
- **In the latest Doing Business report of the World Bank, India's rank improved by a number of notches to 100 among 190 nations. The government wants to be among top 50 countries in the overall ease of doing business rankings, released by the World Bank.**

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**Global Slavery Index**

The Global Slavery Index estimates that on any given day in 2016 there were nearly 8 million (down from 18.3 million in 2016) people living in modern slavery in India. In terms of prevalence of modern slavery in India, there were 6.1 victims for every thousand people. The difference between 2016 and 2018 figures reflects changes to counting rules and estimation methods, as well as the presentation of the number who experienced **modern slavery on any given day (a "stock" figure) reported in this year's GSI, as opposed to the much higher number of people in slavery at any time over a five-year period (a "flow" figure), as was presented in 2016.**

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Among 167 countries India ranked 53 (topped by North Korea) in terms of prevalence but as far as absolute number goes, India topped the list. The index is brought by Walk Free Foundation, Australia based Human Rights Group. GSI 2018 focused on the roles of conflict and government repression in modern slavery. The estimation data were drawn from 54 surveys conducted in 48 countries which include a module on modern slavery, with a total sample of 71158 individual interviews. A total of 40.3 million people were in modern slavery in 2016 of which 71% were female.

**India's Stand**

Government of India questioned the definition of modern slavery used in the research and also the sample size for interviews and questions posed to those surveyed. Ministry of Women and Child development said that words like forced labour need a more detailed elaboration as the socio-economic parameters are very diverse and very nuanced in India.

### About Walk Free Foundation

The Walk Free Foundation is a global organisation with a mission to end modern slavery in our generation by mobilising a global activist movement, generating the highest quality research, enlisting business, and raising unprecedented levels of capital to drive change in those countries and industries bearing the greatest responsibility for modern slavery today.

### What is Modern Slavery

Modern slavery is a complex and often hidden crime that crosses borders, sectors, and jurisdictions. Although modern slavery is not defined in law, it is used as an umbrella term that focuses attention on commonalities across these legal concepts. Modern slavery refers to situations **where one person has taken away another person's freedom** — their freedom to control their body, their freedom to choose to refuse certain work or to stop working — so that they can be exploited. Freedom is taken away by threats, violence, coercion, abuse of power and deception. The net result is that a person cannot refuse or leave the situation.

The Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index has developed world leading research to provide measurement of the size and scale of modern slavery, as well as assess country-level vulnerability and governmental responses. Together with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Walk Free Foundation developed the joint Global Estimates of Modern Slavery.

### Steps taken by India

- The *Ujjawala* scheme is specifically for female victims of trafficking and the *Swadhar* program provides support services for victims of domestic violence, homeless women, and women in distress, who are in need of shelter. Both the schemes have been initiated by Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- The government ratified two core ILO conventions in 2017, namely No. 138 on Minimum Age to Employment and No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour.
- With the passing of the Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Amendment Act in 2016, India has set a general minimum working age of 14 years for children and a minimum age of 18 years for hazardous work. This excludes work carried out by the child for his or her family or after school hours and vacations.
- A National Plan for Action for Children was also established in 2016 to strengthen and monitor national, constitutional, and policy efforts in line with the 2013 National Policy for Children.
- The government also supports initiatives such as Track Child and “*Khoya-Paya*” e-portal that help trace and rescue vulnerable children.
- Shelter homes for children are provided under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) and the Child Welfare Committees play an important role in making arrangement for protecting rescued children.

Imports of products at risk of modern slavery to India

Product at risk of modern slavery	Import value (in thousands of \$US)	Source countries
Laptops, computers, and mobile phones	8,338,931	China, Malaysia
Sugarcane	456,472	Brazil
Gold	363,795	North Korea, Peru
Apparel and clothing accessories	360,045	Brazil, China, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam
Diamonds	97,062	Angola

PEPPER IT WITH  
 Forced labour, Human Trafficking, Slavery and Slavery like practises (1926 slavery convention), Debt Bondage, Worst forms of child labour (1999 international labour conference convention No. 182), Bali process on people smuggling, Sumangali schemes

- Additionally, the Indian government revised the guidelines of the National Child Labour Project (NCLP) scheme in 2016 which aims to eliminate all forms of child labour and launched the corresponding Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour (PENCIL), which aims to support effective legislative enforcement and implementation of the NCLP.

### DAC approves implementation of Strategic Partnership Model

#### Why in News?

In a major step towards boosting private sector participation in domestic defence manufacturing, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved the implementation of Strategic Partnership guidelines that incentivises domestic, private as well as foreign firms in military manufacturing in the country.

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#### Strategic Partnership (SP) Model

- It aims to revitalise defence industrial ecosystem and progressively build indigenous capabilities in the private sector to design, develop and manufacture complex weapon system for future needs of armed forces.
- The amplifying guidelines of the ambitious policy which came into effect last year but progress was delayed due to the lack of specific guidelines lay emphasis on incentivisation of transfer of niche technology and higher indigenous content.
- SP model has four segments (i) Submarines, (ii) Single engine fighter aircraft, (iii) Helicopters and (iv) Armoured carriers/main battle tanks. In each segment, only one partner would generally be selected, according to the policy.
- Under this policy one Indian private company would be selected in each segment which would tie-up with shortlisted global equipment manufacturers to manufacture the platforms in India under technology transfer.
- The main criteria for the selection of Original Equipment Manufacturers would be the compatibility of their products with the Services Staff Qualitative Requirements (SQRs), and their commitment to provide technology and other assistance to enable their Indian partners to produce in India with maximum indigenisation.
- Apart from allowing private manufacturers, it also keeps the door open for defence Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) and the Ordnance Factory Board to tie up with foreign original equipment manufacturers to make big-ticket military hardware.
- All procurements under the SP model would be executed by specially constituted Empowered Project Committees to provide focussed attention and ensure timely execution.

- ❖ The Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2016 was promulgated by Ministry of Defence in 2016 which was primarily focused on boosting the 'Make in India' initiative of the Govt. of India by promoting indigenous design, development and manufacturing of defence equipment, platforms and systems.
- ❖ Chapter-VII of DPP-2016 is titled as "Revitalising Defence Industrial Ecosystem through Strategic Partnerships."
- ❖ Defence Acquisition Council is headed by defence minister and was constituted for overall guidance of the defence procurement planning process. For more information on DAC please see CC February 2018.

PEPPER IT WITH  
 Chetak Helicopter, Request for Refusal, Dharendra Singh Committee, Empowered Project Committees

#### Concerns

Despite potential benefits, there are two concerns which need to be addressed to make SPs contribute in a meaningful and time-bound manner.

- Lack of institutional capacity and ability to guide the new process to its logical conclusion. In the past, several promising measures, especially those connected with the 'Make' and 'Buy and Make (Indian)' procedures, have failed to yield the desired results because of these shortcomings.
- Lack of reforms in the structures and decision-making processes surrounding procurement and production that have inhibited the development of a strong defence industry.

## NASAMS

### Why in News?

The process for procuring the National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System-II (NASAMS-II) has been initiated with the US. It is in the Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) stage now.

India is deploying a multi-tiered air defence network to fully secure its airspace from incoming fighter aircraft, missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV).

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### About NASAMS

- The NASAMS was developed by Raytheon in partnership with KONGSBERG Defence and Aerospace of Norway.
- It is a “highly adaptable mid-range solution” for any operational air defence requirement and provides a tailorable, state-of-the-art defence system that can be deployed to identify, engage and destroy aircraft, helicopters, cruise missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles, as well as protect high-value assets and mass population centres against air-to-surface threats.
- NASAMS-II is an upgraded version of the NASAMS and features new 3D mobile surveillance radars and 12 missile launchers for quicker reaction.
- The upgraded system has been in service since 2007 and is in service with the many nations.

- ❖ This system would complement other systems such as the medium and long-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems under procurement.
- ❖ India is also in an advanced stage of talks with Russia for the procurement of very long range S-400 air defence systems.
- ❖ Apart from these imports, India is also developing an indigenous Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Terminal High Altitude Area Defence, Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, Aster, Air Defence Ground Environment System, Base Air Defence Zone

## Student police cadet programme

- The STUDENT POLICE CADET(SPC) Project which was recently launched by Union Home Ministry is a school-based youth development initiative that trains students to evolve as future leaders of a democratic society by inculcating within them respect for the law, discipline, civic sense, empathy for vulnerable sections of society and resistance to social evils.
- The project also enables youth to explore and develop their innate capabilities, thereby empowering them to resist the growth of negative tendencies such as social intolerance, substance abuse, deviant behavior, and anti-establishment violence. Equally, it strengthens within them commitment towards their family, the community, and the environment.
- It is an association between the educational and security frameworks of a state, that trains and encourages youth to develop respect for law and practice abiding by law as a way of life.

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- SPC uses existing network, infrastructure and leadership qualities of Police to supplement physical, mental and educational development of youth. Also, it enables school communities to create safe school environments and confident youth willing to react against social evils and find solutions to community problems.
- It focuses on students of class 8 & 9 and special care has been taken to ensure that it does not lead to increase in the workload of the students. The programme does not have any prescribed text book nor is any exam envisaged. Only one class in a month is proposed.
- The programme shall be steered by a State level committee to be headed by the Principal Secretary, Home Department with the Principal Secretary, Education and Director General of Police as members. There shall be a similar committee at the district level headed by the District Magistrate with the District Inspector of Schools and Superintendent of Police as members.

Government has set up a committee under the Chairmanship of Shri Anil Swarup to suggest measures to strengthen National Cadet Corps (NCC) and National Service Scheme (NSS).

The Committee will deal with on issues like expansion, strengthening training infrastructure, rationalizing resources, reducing manpower deficiency affecting NCC and NSS. The Committee will also submit recommend for building synergies between these two institutions viz. NCC and NSS and further strengthen them for empowering the youth.

### SOCIAL CONTEXT

The need for a school-level intervention such as this project derives from a combination of philosophic, demographic, sociological and economic factors that are expected to influence the future global standing of the nation. The significance of the SPC Project lies in its potential to positively impact the following:

- DEMOCRACY AND RESPECT FOR LAW
- CHALLENGES OF DEMOCRATIC POLICING
- PROBLEMS OF CONTEMPORARY YOUTH
- IMPACT OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY
- DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND
- CIVIC SENSE, SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS

### National database of arms licenses system

#### Why in News?

Union Home Ministry recently announced that by April 2019, names of all arms license holders - new or old - will be included in a national database and they will be issued a unique identification number (UIN).

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The decision has been taken by exercising powers under Section 44 of the Arms Act, 1959 (54 of 1959) by amending the Arms Rules, 2016. The amendments will eliminate the possibilities of issuing arms license to persons whose antecedents are not bona fide.

#### About National Database of arms licenses system

- Every licensing and renewing authority will have to enter the data system which will generate a UIN and with effect from April 1, 2019, any arms license without UIN shall be considered invalid.
- Additionally, any existing licensee holding multiple licenses under Form III shall on or before April 1 make an application for grant of a single license in respect of all firearms held by him/her under his/her UIN to the concerned licensing authority.
- Where the applicant applying for a license for restricted category of arms or ammunition is also a holder of a license for permissible category or vice-versa, the licensing authority concerned shall issue a new license for restricted or permissible category of arms or ammunition under the existing UIN of the licensee.

Under Section 3 of the Arms Act, it is essential to obtain an arms possession license issued by a competent licensing authority, by any person for acquisition, possession or carrying any firearms or ammunition. The Shekatkar Committee was setup to enhance combat capability and rebalance defence expenditure. It submitted its report in 2016.



- Separate license books will be generated in case of each license, separately for restricted and permissible categories of arms and ammunition with an overall ceiling of three firearms under a single UIN.
- The move is aimed at keeping a tab on authorised private gun holders, many of whom are often found involved in crimes and celebratory firing leading to loss of lives.

### Behdienkhlam Festival

- Behdienkhlam is a traditional annual festival of the Pnars or the Jaintia tribes, celebrated in Meghalaya after sowing is done seeking a good harvest and also to drive away plague and diseases.
- The Behdienkhlam literally means driving away the plague as **“Khlam” means ‘Plague’ and “BehDein” means to drive away the plague.**
- The unique and ancient festival is the ritualistic expression of the relentless struggle of mankind to overcome the destructive forces of nature, including diseases, since the dawn of civilization.
- Interestingly, the festival is celebrated around the same time "Rath Yatra" is celebrated in other parts of eastern India.
- Besides being the most colourful religious festival, it is also the most important and unique dance festival of the Jaintias.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
Aitnar – a sacred pool,  
Scotland of the east,  
jaintia hills, Dance festival

### 37<sup>th</sup> world heritage site

#### Why in News?

At the 42<sup>nd</sup> session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO held at Manama in Bahrain, **India’s** nomination of the **“Victorian and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai”** was inscribed on **UNESCO’s World Heritage list.**

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As recommended by the World Heritage Committee, India accepted the renaming of the ensemble as “Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai”.

- This makes Mumbai city the second city in India after Ahmedabad to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. India now has overall 37 World Heritage Inscriptions with 29 Cultural, 07 Natural and 01 Mixed sites. Khangchendzunga National Park (2016) is the only mixed site.
- While India stands second largest in number after China in terms of number of World Heritage properties in ASPAC (Asia and Pacific) region, it is overall sixth in the world.
- The inscription has been inscribed under Criteria (ii) and (iv) as defined in the UNESCO's Operational Guidelines. Also, 42 sites from the country figures in the Tentative List of World Heritage and the Ministry of Culture would be recommending one property every year for nomination to UNESCO.
- Criterion (ii) refers to the important interchange of human values, over a span of time on development of architecture, monumental arts, town planning and landscape while Criterion (iv) refers to being an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage (s) in human history.

- Reserve Bank of India recently said that it will soon be releasing a new Rs 100 currency note. It will display a photograph of **‘Rani-ki-vav’ (The Queen’s Stepwell), an 11th century architectural wonder located on the Saraswati river at Patan, Gujarat.**
- It was built by Solanki dynasty in the Maru-Gurjara architectural style and is a UNESCO world heritage site.

- The Ensemble comprises of two architectural styles, the 19<sup>th</sup> century collection of Victorian structures and the 20<sup>th</sup> century Art Deco buildings along the sea, conjoined by means of the historical open space of the Oval Maidan.
- Together, this architectural ensemble represents the most remarkable collection of Victorian and Art Deco buildings in the world which forms the unique character of this urban setting, unparalleled in the world.

Background

- In 1972, following the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden, UNESCO adopted the *Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage* and thus the beginning of World Heritage Site listings.
- To be included on the World Heritage List, sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one out often selection criteria.
- Until the end of 2004, World Heritage sites were selected on the basis of six cultural and four natural criteria. With the adoption of the revised Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, only one set of ten criteria exists.
- Only countries that have signed the World Heritage Convention, pledging to protect their natural and cultural heritage, can submit nomination proposals for properties on their territory to be considered for inclusion in **UNESCO's World Heritage List**.The criteria are regularly revised by the Committee to reflect the evolution of the World Heritage concept.

- ❖ In 1982, ICOMOS announced, 18 April as the "World Heritage Day", approved by the General Assembly of UNESCO in 1983, with an aim to enhance awareness of the importance of cultural heritage of humankind, and redouble efforts to protect and conserve the human heritage.
- ❖ IUCN is an international, non-governmental organization that provides the World Heritage Committee with technical evaluations of natural heritage properties. It was established in 1948 and is located in Gland, Switzerland.
- ❖ ICOMOS provides the World Heritage Committee with evaluations of cultural and mixed properties proposed for inscription on the World Heritage List. It is an international, non-governmental organization founded in 1965, with its secretariat in Paris.
- ❖ ICCROM is an intergovernmental organization created to promote the conservation of all forms of cultural heritage, in every region of the world. It was established in 1959 in Rome, Italy.

Nomination process

- ✓ A nominated property by a state is independently evaluated by two Advisory Bodies mandated by the World Heritage Convention: The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The third Advisory Body is the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), which provides the Committee with expert advice on conservation of cultural sites, as well as on training activities.
- ✓ Once a site has been nominated and evaluated, it is up to the intergovernmental World Heritage Committee to make the final decision on its inscription. Once a year, the Committee meets to decide which sites will be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Western Ghats, Keoladeo National Park, Historic City of Ahmedabad, Mountain Railways of India, Group of monuments at Pattadakal

Ramanuja

Why in News?

A 216-foot-tall statue of Ramanuja is being built at Hyderabad. It will **become the world's second tallest statue replacing** Guanyin figure on **Mount Xiqiao in China's Guangdong region, at 203 feet.** Currently, the Great Buddha of Thailand is the tallest statue, at 302-feet.

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## About Ramanuja

- Ramanuja, also called Ramanujacharya, or Ilaiya Perumal was a Hindu theologian, philosopher, and an important exponent of the Sri Vaishnavism tradition within Hinduism.
  - He provided an intellectual basis for the practice of bhakti (devotional worship) in three major commentaries:
    - The Vedartha-samgraha (on the Vedas, the earliest scriptures of Hinduism),
    - The Shri-bhashya (on the *Brahma-sutras*), and
    - The Bhagavadgita-bhashya (on the *Bhagavadgita*)
- PEPPER IT WITH  
Shrivaishnavas,  
Vishishtadvaita, Vedartha-samgraha (Summary of the Meaning of the Veda)
- There are six schools of Hindu philosophy: (a) Nyaya (b) Vaisesika (c) Samkhya (d) Yoga (e) PurvaMimamsa and (f) Vedanta. All schools of Hindu philosophy are based on the Vedas. Vedanta school is based on the Vedanta part of the Vedas, the Upanishads. The Vedantas or the Upanishads define two main realities – Brahman, the Absolute reality, and the world, the relative reality. Based on the definition of the relation between these two, five different schools of Vedanta philosophy are now known today.

  1. Dvaita: the dualistic school, main exponent is Madhava.
  2. BhedaAbheda or DvaitaAdvaita: the founder is Nimbarka.
  3. VishistaAdvaita: the founder is Ramanuja
  4. ShudhAdvaita: the founder is Vallabha.
  5. KevalaAdvaita: the founder is Shankaracharya
- Ramanuja's chief contribution to philosophy was his insistence that discursive thought is necessary in humanity's search for the ultimate verities, that the phenomenal world is real and provides real knowledge, and that the exigencies of daily life are not detrimental or even contrary to the life of the spirit.**
  - In this emphasis he is the antithesis of Shankara, of whom he was sharply critical and whose interpretation of the scriptures he disputed. Ramanuja accepted that any **Vedanta system must base itself on the three "points of departure," namely, the Upanishads, the Brahma-sutras (brief exposition of the major tenets of the Upanishads), and the Bhagavadgita.**
  - By allowing the urge for devotional worship (bhakti) into his doctrine of salvation, Ramanuja aligned the Hinduism religion with the pursuits of philosophy and gave bhakti an intellectual basis.

## National Mission for Manuscripts

### Why in News?

National mission for manuscripts (NMM) has digitized 283 lakh pages of 2.96 lakh manuscripts.

### About NMM

- NMM was launched in 2003 as a Mission mode Project by the Ministry of Culture for documentation, conservation, preservation and digitization of manuscripts. The mission seeks to unearth and preserve the vast manuscript wealth of India
  - NMM is working towards fulfilling its motto, 'conserving the past for the future'**. The manuscripts documented and digitized by the NMM will be made available to researcher and scholars through a Trusted Digital Repository.
  - The ultimate object of the Mission is to establish a Digital Manuscripts Repository at Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) in which researchers and scholars can view and consult the manuscripts to understand our past in its totality.
  - India possesses an estimate of ten million manuscripts, probably the largest collection in the world. These cover a variety of themes, textures and aesthetics, scripts, languages, calligraphies, illuminations and illustrations.
- PEPPER IT WITH  
Naskh, Manuscriptology,

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What is Manuscript

- A manuscript is a handwritten composition on paper, bark, cloth, metal, palm leaf or any other material dating back at least seventy-five years that has significant scientific, historical or aesthetic value. Lithographs and printed volumes are not manuscripts.
- Manuscripts are found in hundreds of different languages and scripts. Often, one language is written in a number of different scripts. For example, Sanskrit is written in Oriya script, Grantha script, Devanagari script and many other scripts.
- Manuscripts are distinct from historical records such as epigraphs on rocks, firmans, revenue records which provide direct information on events or processes in history. Manuscripts have knowledge content.

National Culture Fund

- ❖ It was created in 1996 as a trust under the charitable endowment act 1890 with a view to mobilize extra resources through Public Private Partnerships
- ❖ NCF was established as a funding mechanism distinct from the existing sources and patterns of funding for the arts and culture in India.
- ❖ The donations to the national Culture Fund is eligible for tax benefit under the Income Tax Act 1961.
- ❖ It is managed and administered by a council to decide the policies and an Executive Committee – to actualize those policies. The Council is chaired by the Union Minister of Tourism & Culture

Thotlakonda (2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE Buddhist site)

Why in News?

Heritage conservationists and members of Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) are worried about the proposed tourist amenities centre close to the second century BCE buddhist site Thotlakonda in Vishakhapatnam.

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About Thotlakonda site

- It was first discovered by a helicopter pilot of the Eastern Naval Command in 1976 during a sortie.
- The heritage site houses a Hinayana buddhist complex that flourished from the 2nd Century BC to the 2nd Century AD. The monastery played integral role while Buddhism was spreading to Sri Lanka and other parts of South-East Asia.
- Ruins of the rock-cut troughs which were used as wells can be seen here. These wells were used to store water for the daily usage in the monastery. Infact, the name Thotlakonda in Telugu means 'the hill of stone wells'.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Swadesh Darshan Scheme,  
Archaeological Survey of India

Issues

- As per a Supreme Court judgement in regard to the Jantar Mantar case in 2006, a distance of 100 metres has to be counted from the outer boundary wall of the monument which has protected area of 5.39 acres and not just the physical structures of the observatory.
- Article 49 of Indian constitution states Protection of monuments and places and objects of national importance
- Under article 51A (f) of Indian constitution, it shall be the duty of every citizen of India to value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture.

## India's Magna Carta

### Why in News?

This year marks the 100th year of the publication of the 'Report on Indian constitutional reforms', commonly known as the Montagu-Chelmsford Report (MCR). After many meetings with Indian representatives, Montagu and the then Governor-General, Lord Chelmsford, published the MCR on July 8, 1918.

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The MCR would go on to become the basis for the Government of India Act, 1935, and, ultimately, the Constitution. The key principles of responsible government, self-governance and federal structure grew out of these reforms. The MCR on Indian constitutional reforms along with the Montagu Declaration are, thus, worthy claimants of the title of the Magna Carta of modern India.

### Main features of the Montford or MCR reforms:

#### (i) Provincial Government:

##### Executive:

Dyarchy, i.e rule of two (executive councillors and popular ministers) was introduced. The governor was to be the executive head. Subjects were divided into reserved lists(administered by governors through his executive council of bureaucrats) and transferred lists (administered by ministers nominated from among the elected members of the legislative council).

The ministers were to be responsible to the legislature and had to resign if a no-confidence motion was passed against them by the legislature, while the executive were not to be responsible to the legislature. In case of failure of constitutional machinery in the province the governor could take over the administration of transferred subjects also. The secretary of state and the governor-general could interfere in respect of reserved subjects while in case of transferred subjects, the scope for their interference was restricted.

##### Rowlatt Act:

In 1919 the Rowlatt Act was passed even though every single Indian member of the Central Legislative Council opposed it. This Act authorised the Government to imprison any person without trial and conviction in a court of law, thus enabling the Government to suspend the right of habeas corpus which had been the foundation of civil liberties in Britain.

##### Legislature:

Provincial Legislative Councils were further expanded and 70% of the members were to be elected. The Legislative Councils could initiate legislation, but the **governor's assent was** required. The governor could veto bills and issue ordinances. The Legislative Councils could reject the budget, but the governor could restore it, if necessary. The legislators enjoyed freedom of speech. The system of communal and class electorates was further consolidated. Women were also given the right to vote.

##### PEPPER IT WITH

Simon Commission, Government of India Act 1935, Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, Chauri Chaura incident

#### (ii) Central Government:

##### Executive:

The governor-general was to be the chief executive authority. **In the viceroy's executive council** three members were to be Indians. There were to be two lists for administration (i) central and (ii) provincial. The governor-general **retained full control over the "reserved" subjects** in the provinces and could restore cuts in grants, certify bills rejected by the Central Legislature and issue ordinances.

##### Legislature:

A bicameral arrangement was introduced. The lower house or Central Legislative Assembly (tenure of 3 years) and the Council of State (tenure of 5 years).The legislators could ask questions and supplementaries, pass adjournment motions and vote a part of the budget, but 2/3 of the budget was still not votable.

### Other important features:

1. It provided for the establishment of public service commission and hence a central public service commission was set up in 1926.



2. It created a new office of the high commissioner for India in London and transferred to him some of the functions hitherto performed by the secretary of state for India.
3. It separated for the first time provincial budget from the state budget.
4. It provided for the appointment of a statutory commission after 10 years to inquire into and report on its working after 10 years

Drawbacks of the reform:

- (i) At the centre, the legislature had no control over the governor-general and his executive council;
- (ii) Franchise was very limited;
- (iii) Division of subjects was not satisfactory at the centre;
- (iv) Allocation of seats for Central Legislature to provinces was based on importance of provinces;
- (v) At the level of provinces, division of subjects and parallel administration of two parts was irrational and hence unworkable;
- (vi) The provincial ministers had no control over finances and over the bureaucrats. Ministers could be overruled by the governor on any matter that the latter considered special.

Congress' Reaction:

In the 32nd session of the Indian National Congress, led by theosophist Annie Besant, **there was strong opposition to the Montagu declaration as something that** “was unworthy of England to offer and India to accept”. However, Besant later accepted the reforms as essential for the progress of British India.

The Congress met in a special session in **August 1918 at Bombay under Hasan Imam's** presidency and declared the reforms to be “disappointing” and “unsatisfactory” and demanded effective self-government instead.

**Public Affairs Index**

- Kerala stands as the best governed state for the third consecutive year since 2016 among the large states in the country according to the Public Affairs Index 2018 released by the think tank Public Affairs Centre (PAC).
- Released annually since 2016, the index examines governance performance in the states through a data-based framework, ranking them on social and economic development they are able to provide.
- Founded in 1994 by renowned Indian economist and scholar late Samuel Paul, the think tank works to mobilise a demand for better governance in the country. The states were divided into two categories, large and small, on the basis of their population. States with more than two crore population were considered large.
- Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka and Gujarat followed Kerala among the top five states delivering good governance. Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar ranked the lowest on the PAI, indicating higher social and economic inequalities in the states.
- Among smaller states, Himachal Pradesh topped the list, followed by Goa, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura. Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya were ranked at the bottom of the index among small states.
- The think tank has undertaken the study across all the Indian states considering them across 10 themes such as essential infrastructure, support to human development, social protection, women and children as well as law and order. The index provides a

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International Gaming and Digital Learning Hub in Andhra Pradesh

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) will be setting up a 'Design University for Gaming' in Visakhapatnam for which it entered into an agreement with Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB) for the establishment of 'Gaming Digital Learning Hub'. They will develop edutech gaming in the state, with the target of providing 50,000 jobs in 10 years.



multi-dimensional and comprehensive matrix that attempts to capture the complexities of governing the plural and diverse people of this sub-continent.

- A total of 30 focus subjects and 100 indicators were measured to derive the PAI, relying solely upon government data. This year's PAI also included a separate index on the children of India, giving a measure of how child-friendly each of the states are. Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Mizoram topped the index on being the states to provide better living conditions for all children.
- The PAI 2018 is one example of a data-based framework that provides some basis, even if rudimentary, to assess the performance of states in India. As a young country with growing population, India needs to assess and address its developmental challenges.

### Concept Clearing Assignment

1. Income level is the most commonly used tool to determine the well-being and happiness of a nation and their citizens. Do you think income established as the focal point of development is a better way of analysing the development in a developing economy like India?
2. **“Never keep all your eggs in one basket”**. Do you think financial markets are a classical example of the proverb?
3. **Ancient monuments are our legacy and it's our duty to protect them**. Do you think tourism should be developed but not at the cost of protected areas? Comment.
4. Is it correct to say that children growing up in poverty cannot be blamed for their situation and it is the state's responsibility to ensure that they are provided with opportunities for a better living? Who should have the greatest responsibility for looking after the children trapped in poverty?
5. What is Modern Slavery? What are the steps/initiatives taken by the India to combat the evils of Modern Slavery in country? Also discuss the provision provided in the constitution of India to safeguard the citizens from the shackle of Modern Slavery.
6. Recently NCST has presented Special Report on Indira Sagar Polavaram Project which affected Tribal People to President of India. Throw light on the consequences of the irrigation project and elucidate your answer in shadow of recommendations of NCST.
7. Briefly discuss MSP. How MSP will help India realise the vision of PM of Doubling the Income of Farmer by 2020? Comment.
8. Present an account on the key points of Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018. How this legislation will help combat the crimes against women in India?
9. Write a short note on the process of Appointment and Impeachment of CJI.
10. In recent times there has been a rise in the mob violence cases in India as highlighted by the Supreme Court. Discuss the socio-economic impact of it on Indian democracy and provide suggestion to put a check on the mobocracy in light of the 11-point prescription by SC.
11. The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal submitted by DIPP, Ministry of Commerce and Industry regarding accession to the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and WIPO Performers and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT) which extends coverage of copyright to the internet and digital environment. How will this affect the intellectual property law in India? Analyse economic impact of this move.
12. The India-Korea Technology Exchange Centre was Inaugurated in New Delhi which has been established at the National Small Industries Corporation premises in New Delhi. How will this provide boost to the SME sector of India? Elucidate with examples.
13. The pro-active approach from the Government of India has made the country leapfrog from the conventional BS-IV to directly adopt BS-VI emission norms as the next level for regulatory framework in India. What are reasons and benefits of direct switch from BS-IV to BS-VI? Analyse.
14. FSSAI has launched **‘The Eat Right Movement’** recently as part of National Nutrition Strategy. How will help India combat malnourishment in child in rural areas? Comment.
15. Briefly discuss **CMSMS and ‘Khan Prahari’ App**. How will these initiatives help government combat illegal mining of the coal? Elucidate.

### P.T Oriented Questions

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. Consider the following statements and choose the INCORRECT one/ones?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. GDP will always be lower than NDP</li> <li>2. GDP deflator is calculated annually</li> <li>3. Dividing NNP with the total population gives Per Capita Income</li> </ol> <p>Code:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) 1 and 2 only</li> <li>(b) Only 1</li> <li>(c) 2 and 3 only</li> <li>(d) 3 only</li> </ol> <p>2. Which among the following is INCORRECT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Hepatitis is commonly caused by viral infection</li> <li>(b) Hepatitis E can be particularly dangerous for pregnant women</li> <li>(c) Hepatitis B is always acute and short-term</li> <li>(d) National Viral Hepatitis Control Program has been launched by the government to end viral hepatitis as a public health threat by 2030</li> </ol> <p>3. Kaladan Multi-modal Transit project connects which among the following</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Kaladan to Sittwe</li> <li>(b) Kolkata port to Mizoram</li> <li>(c) Lashio to Sittwe port</li> <li>(d) Kaladan river to Bay of Bengal</li> </ol> <p>4. Consider the following statements about Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. They cannot raise capital from sources other than government securities and sponsored banks</li> <li>2. They are jointly owned by the central government, state governments concerned and the sponsored banks</li> <li>3. Amalgamation of RRBs into sponsored banks and merger have brought down the number of RRBs in the past 2 decades</li> </ol> <p>Which of the statements given above is/are correct?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) 1 and 2 only</li> <li>(b) 2 and 3 only</li> <li>(c) Only 2</li> <li>(d) All of the above</li> </ol> | <p>5. Global Innovation Index is published by</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) World Intellectual Property organisation</li> <li>(b) International Innovation platform</li> <li>(c) INSEAD</li> <li>(d) Both (a) and (c)</li> </ol> <p>6. Which among the following are the benefits of Bharat Stage VI norms</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduction in NOx emission</li> <li>2. on-board diagnostics will become mandatory for every vehicle</li> <li>3. It will introduce Real Driving Emission</li> <li>4. It will change the way measuring Particulate Matter</li> </ol> <p>Code:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) 1,2 and 3 only</li> <li>(b) 2,3 and 4 only</li> <li>(c) 1,3 and 4 only</li> <li>(d) All of the above</li> </ol> <p>7. Consider the following statements and choose the INCORRECT one/ones?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. UNESCO will be setting up a design university for gaming at Vishakhapatnam</li> <li>2. International Seabed Authority is United Nation body</li> </ol> <p>Code:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) 1 only</li> <li>(b) 2 only</li> <li>(c) Both 1 and 2</li> <li>(d) Neither 1 nor 2</li> </ol> <p>8. Consider the following statements about census of India</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The census 2011 was the 15th census of India</li> <li>2. 'Ain-e-Akbari' included comprehensive data pertaining to population</li> <li>3. Census is conducted by ministry of statistics</li> </ol> <p>Which of the statements given above are correct?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) 1 and 2 only</li> <li>(b) 2 and 3 only</li> <li>(c) 1 and 3 only</li> <li>(d) All of the above</li> </ol> <p>9. Consider the following statements and choose the correct one/ones</p> |
|--|---|

1. BSE and NSE follow the same trading mechanism, trading hours and settlements process
  2. Sensex is a free float-market weighted stock market index of 30 companies listed on NSE
  3. The S&P CNX Nifty is owned and managed by India Index Services and Products
- Code:
- (a) 1 and 2 only
  - (b) 2 and 3 only
  - (c) 1 and 3 only
  - (d) All of the above
10. India has been designated as a nodal centre for preparing flash-flood forecasts by the World Meteorological Organization which means India will have to develop a customised model that can issue advance warning of floods to which of the following countries?
1. Vietnam
  2. Sri Lanka
  3. Thailand
  4. Myanmar
- Code:
- (a) 1,2 and 3 only
  - (b) 2,3 and 4 only
  - (c) 1,3 and 4 only
  - (d) All of the above
11. What is Khan Prahari
- (a) It is a tribal group most present in hilly region of Jammu and Kashmir
  - (b) It is a tool for reporting any activity related to illegal mining
  - (c) It is an app which will provide a better access to railways in the hilly areas
  - (d) It is a scheme launched to promote the primitive culture of forest management in the hilly areas
12. Which among the following are correct about Montagu Chelmsford reforms?
1. It introduced dyarchy at the central level
  2. Governor was the executive head of the provincial government
  3. It expanded the legislative council of states
  4. It introduced council of states with a tenure of 6 years
- Code:
- (a) 1 and 2 only
  - (b) 1 and 4 only
  - (c) 2 and 3 only
  - (d) Only 3
13. Consider the following statements and choose the correct one/ones
1. Minimum support price is recommended by cabinet committee on economic affairs
  2. It is determined by commission for agriculture cost and prices
- Code:
- (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only
  - (c) Both 1 and 2
  - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
14. Which among the following is INCORRECT about Eta Carinae
- (a) It is an hour glass shaped gas cloud
  - (b) It contains two massive stars orbiting each other
  - (c) These stars are not bound by gravitational attraction
  - (d) They are the second brightest object in the sky
15. Which among the following is/are correct about Formalin
1. It is a cancer inducing chemical which is used to preserve fish
  2. It is anti-decomposition agent which is non-toxic
- Code:
- (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only
  - (c) Both 1 and 2
  - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
16. Consider the following statements about Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System for Africa and Asia (RIMES) and choose the correct one/ones
- (1) It was evolved in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami
  - (2) It provides end to end early warning of hydro-meteorological hazards
  - (3) Somalia is the only African member of the organisation
- Code:
- (a) 1 and 2 only
  - (b) 2 and 3 only
  - (c) 1 and 3 only
  - (d) All of the above
17. Consider the following statements about Meghalayan age and choose the correct one/one
1. **It is the first interval in Earth's geological history that has**

- coincided with a major cultural event
2. Meghalayan age division was defined by International Commission on Stratigraphy
- Code:  
(a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
18. Which among the following has been inscribed and is a part of the world heritage lists?
1. Qutub Minar
  2. Champaner Pavagarh Archaeological Park
  3. Churches and Convents of Goa
  4. Fatehpur Sikri
  5. Great Living Chola Temples
- Code:  
(a) 1,2,3 and 4 only  
(b) 2,3,4 and 5 only  
(c) 1,3,4, and 5 only  
(d) All of the Above
19. Which of the following states have given the minority status to Jews
1. West Bengal
  2. Gujarat
  3. Maharashtra
  4. Kerala
- Code:  
(a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) 2,3 and 4 only  
(c) 1, 2 and 3 only  
(d) All of the above
20. Girinka programme is related to which country
- (a) Uganda
  - (b) Rwanda
  - (c) Democratic Republic of Congo
  - (d) None of the above
21. The renaming of a state in India requires which among the following
- (a) Parliamentary approval under article 3 and 4 of constitution
  - (b) A special majority in the legislative assembly of the state and the assent of president
  - (c) A resolution passed by special majority in the state assembly and simple majority in the parliament
  - (d) Both (a) and (b)
22. Which among the following is/are INCORRECT?
1. Golden Globe Race is a single-handed non-stop sailing around the world
  2. Boat designs and technology of 20th century is only permitted
- Code:  
(a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
23. Which among the following is correct about Delhi Dialogue
- (a) 12th edition of the dialogue was held at New Delhi in 2018
  - (b) It is held simultaneously with Raisina dialogue
  - (c) It discusses politico-security relation between India and ASEAN
  - (d) None of the above
24. Consider the following statements about Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA)
1. It was earlier known as the Bangkok agreement
  2. It aims to promote economic development through the adoption of mutually beneficial trade liberalization measures
  3. APTA is the only operational trade agreement linking China and India
- Which of the statements given above are correct?
- (a) 1 and 2 only
  - (b) 2 and 3 only
  - (c) 1 and 3 only
  - (d) All of the above
25. Which among the following is INCORRECT about Sendai Framework?
- (a) It is a global plan to reduce disaster losses
  - (b) It is a 15 year binding agreement for the member states
  - (c) Sendai Framework succeeded the Hyogo framework
  - (d) None of the above
26. Consider the following statements
1. Terrapin is a freshwater turtle and is native to India
  2. Humpback whale is found only in the Indian ocean

3. Clouded leopard is found across the Himalayas  
Which among the following are correct?  
(a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) All of the above
27. Consider the following statements about Mahanadi river and chose the correct one/ones  
1. It rises in the Satpura range of central India and flows west to the Bay of Bengal  
2. Hasdo and Mand are tributaries of Mahanadi  
Code:  
(a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2
28. Radio telescopes can be used for which among the following  
1. For collecting visible light  
2. To study naturally occurring radio light from astronomical objects  
3. They can also be used to transmit and reflect radio light  
Code:  
(a) 1 only  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 3 only  
(d) 2 only
29. Consider the following statements and choose the INCORRECT one/ones?  
1. There are 5 schools of hindu philosophy, all based on the vedas  
2. Vedanta school is based on the vedanta part of vedas  
3. VishistaAdvaita was founded by Ramanuja  
Code:  
(a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) 2 and 3 only
30. Consider the following statements about National Database of arms licenses system and choose the correct one/ones?  
1. All arms licenses holders will be issued a unique identification number (UIN) which will be same as the Aadhar number  
2. Under arms act it is essential to obtain an arms possession license issued by a competent licensing authority  
3. Any arms license without a UIN will be considered invalid from April 2019  
Code:  
(a) 1 and 2 only  
(b) 2 and 3 only  
(c) 1 and 3 only  
(d) All of the above